

# OpenTheo

## Job 18 - 22



### Job - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg delves into the speeches of Bildad the Shuhite in chapters 18-22 of the book of Job. Bildad accuses Job of being an oppressor to orphans and widows and implies that his suffering is a result of sin. However, Gregg notes that Bildad's view of suffering is limited, as he fails to acknowledge the possibility of innocent suffering. Moreover, Job longs for God to hear his cries, and this desire is sometimes interpreted as a hope for resurrection.

### Transcript

We left off last time having finished Job's response to the second speech of Eliphaz. We've had the first full cycle of speeches given, where Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar have all spoken and Job has answered them. And then the second cycle has now begun, and we have had the first speeches of that cycle.

Eliphaz has basically come out considerably more directly, more in an accusatory way toward Job than he did the first time. And Job has responded pretty much the same way. Now, what's going on a lot of times is that these responses from Job, in some measure, they respond to the accusations of his friends.

And other times, he almost doesn't count them worthy of response. He just moans. He just complains and gives something like a soliloquy, where he's just kind of talking to himself.

And sometimes he's talking to God. His speeches meander around. They drift in and out of hopefulness in a way.

I mean, sometimes he seems to express a little bit of hope that God will somehow vindicate him. Other times he acts like he's doomed and nothing is ever going to be better. He's going to go to his grave this way.

And, of course, the whole thing is he doesn't have any idea what's really going on. And we wouldn't either if we didn't have the first two chapters to give us the historical background of this. But since we do, sometimes it gets a little tedious reading what his

friends have to say, which is completely unenlightened with reference to the case at hand.

And now what they have to say is not completely unenlightened, just as standalone information. Their theology is pretty good. But the problem with their theology is that they consider that they've got everything figured out and that God doesn't ever act outside of the way that they think he should.

And the way their philosophy and their theology says that he does. And now build that the shoe I was going to be speaking in Chapter 18. This is his second speech, and he says, How long till you put an end to words, gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.

Why are we counted as beasts and regarded as stupid in your sight? You see, these guys, like I mentioned yesterday, all of these guys consider themselves to be wise men. They're philosophers. They're respected men.

We find that Job himself in a later chapter in Chapter 31 or 29, it may be when he's recounting his condition before his trials came upon him, talks about how it used to be that whenever he would speak, everyone would just be in awe of his wisdom. And we may find a little bit of self-righteousness or pride in Job in these statements, but it no doubt reflects what really was the case. These Job and his friends who are probably more or less at his level as in their ranking in society, they were men who were esteemed as being wise.

In fact, if you read the final speeches of Job in chapters 29 to 31, it's clear that Job was a judge of some sort. He used to deliver the fatherless and widows from their oppressors. That's what judges are supposed to do.

He sat at the gate of the city and his judgments were generally considered to be final. Well, build that in Eliphaz and Zophar probably were men who had similar reputations in their own land, and none of these men really like to be have it insinuated that they're not smart. And when someone says they're wrong, they kind of take it as a personal affront because they're not used to that.

And Job has been telling his friends that they are wrong. And, you know, build that. Why are you regarding us as stupid? Well, I don't know that Job has ever said that they're stupid.

He's just saying they're not right, that they're seeing things wrongly. But they are saying and seeing things the way that everybody they know sees them and says them. It's kind of the common knowledge that God does good to good people and punishes bad people.

At least that's the accepted orthodoxy of their time. And they and and they think Job is, you know, saying that he's smarter than them by saying it's not true. Of course, Job isn't

claiming to be smarter than them.

He doesn't claim to understand what's going on either. All he knows is that they're not right, that their explanation doesn't fit the facts. Build that says in verse four, you who tear yourself in anger, shall the earth be forsaken for you or shall the rock be removed from its place? In other words, what we've been saying is established truth.

It's established like the earth is established, like a big boulder is established. It can't be moved. You think that for your sake, just because you have your objections that the established realities are going to be unearthed and that we're supposed to give in to your complaint and your protestation that you don't fit the norms.

The earth isn't going to change for you. The whole scheme of the cosmos isn't going to alter itself because of your complaints and suggestions that you're righteous and that this is a case where God is afflicting someone who's righteous, which we know doesn't happen, they say. Now, the rest of his speech, verses five through 21, is essentially a description of the wicked.

And the strong suggestion, of course, is that the wicked is Job, that Job is wicked. And this is not a new thesis. This is what all his friends are basically saying.

They've said it very subtly at first and come out more boldly to say it in the later speeches since their since their opinion has been made known subtly. They don't have to hide it anymore and they can say it more directly. He says, the light of the wicked indeed goes out and the flame of his fire does not shine.

The light is dark in his tent and his lamp beside him is put out. The steps of his strength are shortened and his own counsels cast him down for his cast into a net by his own feet and he walks into a snare. The net takes him by the heel and a snare lays hold of him.

A noose is hidden for him on the ground and a trap for him in the road. Terror is frightened him on every side and drive him to his feet. His strength is starved and destruction is ready at his side.

It devours patches of his skin. His first born, the first born of death devours his limbs. It's using he is uprooted from the shelter of his tent and they parade him before the king of terrors.

They dwell in his tent who are none of his brimstone is scattered on his habitation. His roots are dried out below and his branch with his above the memory of him perishes from the earth and he has no name among the renowned. He is driven from light into darkness and chased out of the world.

He has neither son nor posterity among his people nor any remaining in his dwellings. Those in the West are astonished at his day and those in the East are frightened. Surely

such are the dwellings of the wicked.

And this is the place of him who does not know God. So the suggestion here is that these things which all have happened to Job actually are the things that happen to those who don't know God and who are wicked. So there's not anything really new here.

It does seem like Bill that likes to pick on Job about his kids a lot. Here he says in verse 19, he has neither son nor posterity among his people nor any remaining in his dwelling. But that's certainly I mean, that's not I mean, that's certainly a poignant thing to Job.

I mean, it must be one of his greatest griefs of all that has happened to his children have died. And Bill that had brought that up earlier in a very insensitive way. When he had in one of his early in his earlier speech in Chapter eight, I believe he had made reference to maybe maybe so far.

I thought it was that it was built out in his first speech. He made reference to Job's children. He said, you know, if your children have done evil, God is something I'm looking.

I thought that was in trouble before. Thank you. Yeah.

If your sons have sinned against him, he has cast them away for their transgression. So build that. I mean, he in saying this, he can't help but know that he's rubbing salt into a raw wound here.

You know, a man's lost his kid. And he said, well, your kids were just jerks. The kids were evil men.

And there's actually no evidence that that was true any more than there's evidence that Job was an evil man. We aren't told that his children were extremely righteous like we were told that about him, but we're not told anything negative about them either. And so it's merely an assumption.

And if your children are killed and some of those really must have been wicked men, too, I mean, that's going to make you upset. And the fact that Job explodes at times is not too surprising. What I find surprising is he doesn't explode more quickly and more angrily at some of these reproaches of his own children and so forth.

But anyway, build that speech is, of course, really nothing new. He gives a long description of the bad things that happened to bad people. A lot of reference to being dark, dark in his tent, his light goes out.

This is an imagery that it do well to take note of because it occurs throughout the book of Job and also throughout poetry and even throughout the prophets. It's a typical image for calamity is darkness. And generally speaking, light is an image for the blessing of

God.

And like even when you get to the prophets in the book of Isaiah, it's very common to make reference to light in terms of God's smile or God's blessing. And darkness is just a general image for calamity. Another very common image, although it didn't come up in this speech, but we'll see it frequently in Job, is of waters or floods coming, overwhelming floods, waves of grief and problems coming up here.

The Psalms make reference to trials in this way, too. And so these are just some of the common images of the Middle Eastern poetry to when they want to talk about how things bad are happening to people. It's usually that they're overwhelmed with floods of water and it's dark for them.

And that's he is the image of light and dark quite a bit in verses five and six. He talks a lot about the tent of the wicked here, and he mentions that he's thrown out of his tent and the people who live in it are not his relatives. And his place has been taken over by people who aren't even his kin.

And we don't know if anyone had moved into Job's tent in his absence, but at least certain people have moved into his position in society. We know that because he mentions that himself as part of his complaint. Well, Job answered and said in verse in chapter 19, how long will you torment my soul and break me in pieces with words? These 10 times you have reproached me.

You are not ashamed that you have brought wrong me. And if indeed I have erred, my error remains with me. If indeed you magnify yourselves against me and plead my disgrace against me, know then that God has wronged me and has surrounded me with his net.

Now, he says God has wronged me. It implies that God has done an injustice. God has done a wrong thing.

Although he may simply be saying anyone can see that I've been wronged, I just want you to know that all these wrongs that have come upon me have been from God, which is in fact true. God had not really committed an injustice because the whole outcome has not been seen yet. It's not an injustice to exact something from someone and then repay them for it later.

It is an injustice to exact something from them and never repay them in any way when they're innocent. But that that's not what God ultimately is doing. Job has not seen the end of the story yet.

And so at this point, he's standing and it seems like God has taken from him without justification and has wronged him. And he says, you know, if I've erred, as you say, well, my error remains to me. None of your words have really helped.

You're tormenting me. You're breaking me in pieces with words. Well, what good has it done? It hasn't brought me to the point where I see my error.

It's still if I'm if I'm wrong, I'm still as wrong as before. Your words have not corrected me. Because why? Because they haven't been able to point out any true things about him.

If they said, you know, we happen to know these things about you because these reports have come back to us about your wrongdoing or we've seen you do these things wrong, that'd be another story. They're just speculating. And that's not any way to get a person to see his error if he doesn't have one, if he doesn't know that he has one.

He says, if I cry out concerning wrong, I'm not hurt. If I cry aloud, there is no justice. He has fenced up my way so that I cannot pass.

It's interesting. It is true that God had previously fenced up or hedged in Job, but that was for Job's protection. Job was never really aware of the fact that God had put a hedge around him for his protection before.

But now he feels hedged in by, I guess, just his the limits of his options. He feels restricted by God. But God's restriction, the hedge God puts around us, does restrict us in some measure, but obviously it also is there to protect us from outside attacks.

It says he has set darkness in my path, he has stripped me of my glory and taken the crown from my head. He breaks me down on every side and I am gone. My hope he has uprooted like a tree.

He has also kindled his wrath against me and he counts me as one of his enemies. His troops come together and build up their road against me. They encamp all around my tent.

He has removed my brothers far from me and my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My relatives have failed. And as they've failed to remain, you know, close to him and my close friends have forgotten me.

Those who dwell in my house and my maidservants count me as a stranger. I'm an alien in their sight. I call my servant, but he gives no answer.

I beg him with my mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife and I am repulsive to the children of my own body. Even young children despise me.

I arise and they speak against me. All my close friends abhor me and those whom I love have turned against me. My bone clings to my skin and my flesh.

And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth. The expression I've escaped by the skin of my teeth actually is a phrase that has come out of the King James version of the Bible

into actually English nomenclature into the sayings. We use that expression.

I'm not sure what it really means. Escaped by the skin of my teeth, but it means I've barely escaped. I've just barely survived.

And that's what he is saying here. Now, he's mainly concerned in this paragraph about. The loss of all his important relationships, his brothers, his close friends, his wife, his alien children, it's interesting that he mentions his children in verse 17, he says, I'm repulsive to the children of my own body now.

When did he become repulsive? His sickness didn't come up on him until after the report of his children's death. So were they not really dead? Has he now learned that they're not dead? If so, when did he learn that? Because Bildad thinks they're dead, you know, I mean, it's not really it's not real clear here. It's possible, of course, he's just he's just ranting and and just trying to catalog all the relationships that he's lost.

You know, and maybe his children are alienated from him by death, but he's characterizing it as if they're alienated because of his trials, like everyone else has departed from him. It's not entirely clear whether he thinks of his kids as dead or alive here. As far as his breath being offensive to his wife, that that may be because of his sickness.

I mean, he was he was rotting inside. His bones were rotting and things like that. And maybe maybe he was really foul breathed.

I'm sure he probably was. I imagine everyone was back then more than today. They didn't have mouthwash then.

But the thing is, he is also possible that to figure speech to say my wife doesn't want to come to my face as if I had bad breath, you know, and she she doesn't want to get near me. Have pity on me. Verse 21, have pity on me.

Oh, you, my friends, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you persecute me as God does and are not satisfied with my flesh? Because you're not satisfied that I'm suffering in my flesh. You want to make me hurt emotionally, too.

You want to torment my mind as well as my body. Oh, that my words were written. Oh, that they were inscribed in a book.

Well, now they are. That's one wish that God gave him. Actually, God gave him most of his wishes that he wished for.

He wished he'd have a chance to see God and prepare himself, present himself to God and so forth. He asked for a lot of things, most of which God actually granted, including this one that his words were written. Well, they have been written now so that others

could read them, that they were inscribed in a book, that they're engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead forever.

In other words, I want my words to be remembered forever. Well, they have been. If this is the oldest book in the world, then they've been remembered longer than any other human words.

From ancient times have been remembered up to the modern times. Interestingly, in chapter thirty one and verse thirty five, he says something else. He says, oh, that I had one to hear me.

Here is my mark. Oh, that the almighty would answer me and that my persecutor had written a book. He wishes God had written a book about this.

Well, God has written a book about it now. We have we have his wishes fulfilled. There's a book containing his words.

He wanted them to be inscribed and remember. Well, they have been permanently. And God has provided a book for all humanity at Job's request, apparently, for I know that my redeemer lives.

This is chapter 19, verse 25. This is one of the most famous verses in Job, most often quoted by Christians, because, in fact, there's a hymn by that name. I know that my redeemer lives based on this verse.

And it is usually regarded to be an expression of Job's actual belief and hope in a resurrection from the dead, because he says, and I shall stand at last on the earth. And after my skin is destroyed, this I know that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold and not another. How my heart yearns within me now.

The reason some people think this talks about the resurrection from the dead is because he talks about after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God as if to say, OK, after I'm dead and rotted. The day will come when I'll be standing in this body again and looking at God and it'll be me, not someone else doing it, and I'll be able to see him with my own eyes. Now, it is true that does anticipate the doctrine of the resurrection quite well, but it's not necessary to assume that Job understood that that way.

His flesh was already being consumed. His skin was rotting, even on his flesh as he was alive. He could simply be saying, in spite of the fact that my flesh is consumed, my skin is destroyed.

Yet this this trial will have its end and the day will come when I will be healthy again. In other words, not after I die, but after this trial has finished, once my skin disease has passed and so forth, I'll be able to see God. And if that is what he's thinking, it's really



true.

He did see God. Not in the resurrection, but in his lifetime. And we even said so after God speaks to him from the whirlwind for several chapters, then in Job chapter forty two, verse five.

Job says, I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you. Job forty two five. So the time did come where in his flesh, after his skin had rotted and so forth.

That he did see God, he did stand as a healthy man again on the earth. He did see God with his eyes. And therefore, one does not have to have the doctrine of the resurrection in this verse in order for it to make sense or even for it to end up being true.

And by the way, not everything Job said was true. He speculated about a lot of things, but this happened to be true. And it had to be true in more than one sense.

It was true just in the sense of his earthly life. He recovered and he did stand before God. He did see God with his eyes somehow.

He said what he claimed. It is also true, if it's taken of the resurrection, but we just don't know if he knew that we don't know if he had the concept of the resurrection or not. These verses don't necessarily prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Verse 28, if you should say, how should we persecute him since the root of the matter is found in me? Be afraid of the sword for yourselves, for wrath brings punishment of the sword that you may know there is a judgment. Now, these verses actually in the Hebrew are very obscure. A lot of parts of Job are.

It's a very old book in some parts of the Hebrew are ancient old words that are not very familiar to the scholars. And there's a lot of passages where virtually every word in a verse has more than one possible meaning. So there are times not not necessarily that often, but there are some passages where we don't really know what how they should be translated.

And our translators have done the best they knew how this may be correct, though, if it is. He seems to be saying, well, you guys are persecuting me and I'm innocent, therefore, you should be worried about your own selves. God may.

You know, there is a judgment, you know, and you will have to stand before that judgment. I will be vindicated before God. I know that even though my skin is rotting, someday I'm going to stand healthy again.

I'm going to be vindicated by God. But you guys need to be careful what he's going to say about you. And he's right about that, too, because when God did show up.

What he did criticize Job's friends, he didn't judge them as being wrong. He did require them to bring a sacrifice to atone for the wrong they had done in their false accusations against Job. So what he's saying is true, if that's what it means.

Then Zophar actually gives his last speech. This is his second. And he's the only one of them that doesn't give a third.

Then Zophar, the Nehemiathite answered and said, therefore, my anxious thoughts make me answer because of the turmoil within me. I have heard the reproof that reproaches me and the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer. Now, he says, Job, you're reproaching me.

This apparently is a reaction to Job saying, you guys, there's a judgment and you're going to be judged. You need to be afraid of that. You need to be aware that God's going to judge you for what you're doing.

And so he's basically saying, you guys are doing the wrong thing and God's going to hold you accountable. And Zophar is taking it as a personal affront. And of course, it is meant to be personal.

And it is saying that they are doing a sinful thing. And so Zophar, not really comfortable being told that he's wrong and that he's going to stand the judgment of God. And he feels like he needs to speak one more time.

He says, do you not know this of old since man was placed on earth that the triumphing of the wicked is short and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens and his head reaches to the clouds, yet he will perish forever like his own refuse. Those who have seen him will say, where is he? He will fly away like a dream and not be found. Yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.

The eye that saw him will see him no more, nor will his place behold him anymore. His children will seek the favor of the poor and his hands will restore his wealth. His bones are full of his youthful vigor, but it will lie down with him in the dust.

Now, he's saying that it is true, as Job has suggested, that the wicked sometimes do. Triumph, you see, the main thesis of Eliphaz and Bildad's speeches and even Zophar's earlier speeches are that wicked people don't triumph, wicked people, they fall into calamity like Job's in and righteous people don't have those problems. And Job is pointing out, well, no, actually, that's not true.

That's not that's not the way it is all the time. And Zophar says, OK, well, sure, sometimes the wicked do seem to triumph for a while, but it's short lived. They'll have their moment of glory and they'll have their moment of prosperity.

But but if they're really wicked, it'll come to an end. And the implication is that's what's happened to you, Job. You had your moment of prosperity and so forth.

But because you were wicked, it was short lived and it's over now. And verse 12, he says, through evil, though evil is sweet in his mouth and he hides it under his tongue, though he spares it and does not forsake it, but still keeps it in his mouth. Yet his food in his stomach turns sour.

It becomes cobra venom within him. He swallows down riches and vomits them up again. God cast them out of his belly.

He will suck the poison of cobras. The viper's tongue shall slay him. He will not see the streams.

The rivers flowing with honey and cream, he will restore that for which he labored and will not swallow it down from the proceeds of his business. He will get no enjoyment for he has oppressed and forsaken the poor. He has violently seized a house which he did not build.

And again, the impression is given that this is what Job has done, that Job savors evil like a man savors wine and keeps it in his mouth to enjoy to enjoy it for a long time. He hides it under his tongue. That's how some men are with evil.

They love evil. They love the taste of evil. And yet evil becomes their own destruction.

It's as if the thing that they're savoring in their mouth is cobra venom, which apparently he assumes will kill a man if they if he swallows it. I don't know if cobra venom is deadly to swallow. I know, for example, rattlesnake venom is not.

I mean, if you if you should ingest rattlesnake venom, say, while sucking it out of a wound, it doesn't. It's not poisonous to your to your digestive system. It's dangerous in your bloodstream.

And the same is true of cobra. I don't know if it's it may be that cobra venom is also poisonous. Another if you eat it.

But the point is, the man who savors evil, he'll find that what he is savoring is like deadly poison in him and ruin him. He says that man in verse 17 will not see the streams and the rivers flowing with honey and cream, reminiscent of what was probably the later words of God to Moses about how he was leading the children of Israel to a land flowing with milk and honey, honey and cream, milk and honey. This is a figure of speech like so many in the poems of the Bible.

What it means, of course, a land that's abundant in cream or milk and honey is a land that's got a lot of grazing land for cattle. You get your milk from your cattle and therefore

a land that can sustain lots of cattle is going to be able to produce a lot of milk. It's got great pasture lands and honey, of course, comes from flowering plants.

It comes from bees and he's saying that there are some lands that are abundant in their in their foliage now in a dry region of the world, such a land would be rare and especially valuable. Because grazing cattle in a desert is not the easiest thing in the world, and although John the Baptist somehow found wild honey in the desert to eat, there would be, of course, limited amounts because there's limited amounts of plants for these to get the pollen and the nectar from. So anyway, the point here is a land flowing with honey and cream is a land that's abundant, really, in grass, flowers and things like that.

And honey and cream are the products that are produced in such a land. Verse 20, because he knows no quietness in his heart, he will not save anything he desires. Nothing is left for him to eat.

Therefore, his well-being will not last. So, again, the idea of this speech is that the wicked prospers for a short time, but it's short lived in his self-sufficiency, he will be in distress. Every hand of misery will come against him when he is about to fill his stomach.

God will cast on him the fury of his wrath and will rain it on him while he is eating. He will flee from the iron weapon, a bronze bow will pierce him through. It is drawn and comes out of the body.

Yes, the glittering point comes out of his gall. Terror has come upon him. The graphic image of him being shot through with arrows until they come out the other side of his body is pretty, you know, grotesque.

But the whole picture is supposed to be one of coming to an ugly end, a terrible end. Total darkness is reserved for his treasures. An unfanned fire will consume him.

It should go ill with him who is left in his tent. Apparently, his his family after after he's dead, those who are left in his household will be will suffer. Also, the heavens will reveal his iniquity and the earth will rise up against him.

The increase of his house will depart and his goods will flow away in the day of his wrath. That is God's wrath. This is the portion from God for a wicked man, the heritage appointed to him by God.

So these guys, they give this long speech about disaster and, you know, like in Chapter 18, Bill that gave this long speech about the wicked and ends up by saying, surely such are the dwellings of the wicked. And this is the place of him who does not know God. Now, Zophar gives a similar kind of speech talking about these ugly disasters that happen to certain people.

And he summarizes this is the portion from God for the wicked man. And obviously,

these are not very sensitive things to say to Job, since they are suggesting you are the wicked man, you know, and who's forgotten God. Well, Job has anything but forgotten God.

He's he's been talking about God the whole time and talking to God. But they mean forgotten God in the sense of his lifestyle. They mean that he has lived a life which does not take God into remembrance.

He's lived a life that forgets that God is the judge. He's not fearing God. And that was a sinful life.

And that is obviously not what Job has done, but they remain unmoved. There's actually been no improvement of their of their insights from the first speech to the last. These men, they have a position and they don't move from it at all.

Job, on the other hand, he sometimes he considers other things. His his arguments actually move in a certain direction. He seems to kind of after ventilating wildly, he tends to kind of look at things a little more objectively.

And he sees he'll even acknowledge some of the points they make, though he acknowledges that they are not completely right and their points are not universally true. But we have Job's response to this last speech of Zophar in verse 21, chapter 21. Then Job answered and said, listen carefully to my speech and let this be your consolation.

Bear with me that I may speak. And after I've spoken, keep mocking. In other words, you guys are going to just mock me and but give me give me a chance to say a few words.

Then you go on with your mockery. In other words, you're not listening to me. Obviously, I'm telling you that these things are wrong, but you're you're just mocking me and criticizing me anyway.

And I guess I'm going to have to discount on you continuing to do that. But I do get my turn to say my piece anyway. As for me, is my complaint against man and if it were, why should I not be impatient? Look at me and be astonished.

Put your hand over your mouth. Even when I remember, I'm terrified and trembling takes hold of my flesh. Why do the wicked and the why do the wicked live and become old? Now, he's going to go on to a discourse here where he points out that both Eliphaz and Zophar have been mistaken.

Eliphaz had said back in chapter 15 and verse 20, it says the wicked man writhes with pain all his days. But that's not true. Wicked men don't writhe in pain all their days.

Also, Zophar has said in chapter 20 and verse five, the triumphing of the wicked is short.

Job's going to point out that that's not true. The wicked are not in pain all their days and their triumphing is not necessarily short.

It sometimes lasts their whole lifetime. So he's pointing out to them that everything they're saying sounds good in theory, but that's just not what anyone observes to be true. It's an amazing thing how much people feel they need to ignore facts in order to defend God or defend their theology or something.

It's almost like if someone gives a testimony in public and they say, well, I prayed for such and such, but it didn't happen. I almost feel like someone will. That's going to make some people think that God doesn't answer prayer.

But then I know, well, God doesn't always answer prayer. There are prayers that God doesn't answer. I mean, it's almost like you want to hide that from people.

You almost want to make you don't want reality to shed its light on your on what we think should be true of our theology. But obviously, our theology, if it doesn't jive with the truth, then the theology needs to be adjusted to agree with the truth. And so Job is saying that they're wrong about this.

He says, why do the wicked live and become old? Yes, they become mighty in power. Their descendants are established with them in their sight and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear.

Neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull breeds without failure. Their cow calves without miscarriage.

They send forth their little ones like a flock and their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and harp and rejoice to the sound of the flute. They spend their days in wealth and in a moment go down to the grave.

Now, basically saying they go quickly and suddenly to the grave rather than linger like he's doing. He suffers. He expects to suffer for a few more years and go into the grave.

He says they go down in a moment. They die suddenly. Everyone dies.

But dying suddenly is the best way to go. And it seems like these people do not have the time. In many cases, it does not happen to them that they are miserable in their life, not even at any point in their life.

To the day of their death, they triumph. Yet they say to God, depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of your ways. Who is the almighty that we should serve him? And what profit do we have if we pray to him? That's what they say.

Indeed, their prosperity is not in their hand. The counsel of the wicked is far from me. Now, this verse has been much.

Confusing to commentators, they say that different commentators have tried to attach different meanings to this verse, but no one knows exactly what it means. Their prosperity, indeed, is not in their hand because he is actually saying something about them being fortunate, whereas this sounds like it's not fortunate. And then he says the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

Some think that that means, you know what, the way they think, you know, the way they think about saying who is the almighty, why should we serve him? That's that's not what I'm thinking. I don't think that way. That's far from the way I think.

I'm not I'm not like them in that respect. But, yes, verse 16 is a little obscure. How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? How often does their destruction come upon them now? By saying how often does it happen? He's acknowledging it does happen sometimes.

But what Zophar and Eliphaz and others have said is true. Sometimes sometimes it is true that the wicked have their lamp put out. Sometimes disaster does come upon them.

But really, how often is it not all the time? Certainly an awful lot of time. It isn't the case. How often does their destruction come upon them and the sorrows of God distributed in his that the sorrows God distributes in his anger? They are like straw before the wind and like chaff that a storm carries away.

But the question is, how often is it that this is so? They say God lays up one's iniquity for his children. Now, this may be what he anticipates, Zophar and those guys to say. Because Job is saying some people actually are wicked and they live prosperous and happy life to the day they die.

And so he maybe anticipates that that the answer his friends will give. Well, OK, well, that's true. But in those cases, the punishment comes on their children.

God stores up the iniquity of the fathers and delivers it to their children, because it's obvious that sometimes men themselves don't suffer their own misdeeds. And so they say God lays up one's iniquity for his children. Let him recompense him that he may know it.

Let his eyes see his destruction and let him drink of what of the wrath of the almighty. What does he care about his household after him when the number of his months is cut in half? In other words, OK, you say that this man is punished by his children suffering after his death. But what does he care about that? He should be punished in his own lifetime.

Let him see with his own eyes the recompense that God brings upon him. That's that's the justice we would seek. It's not some justice to him that after he's dead and knows nothing that his children suffer.

Can anyone teach God knowledge since he judges those who are on high? One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and secure, his pails are full of milk and the marrow of his bones is moist. Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul, never having eaten with pleasure. They lie down alike in the dust and worms cover them.

This sounds a lot like something from Ecclesiastes, because in Ecclesiastes, Solomon says this a lot, that the same thing happens to the wise man is the fool. Everyone dies. Some people, you know, they live a happy life.

Some live an unhappy life. But in the end, they all die. And death is the great equalizer.

So that I think he's following up on the previous paragraph where he said, you know, what good does it do to say this man's punished through his children being punished after he's dead? Once he's dead, he's equal to everybody else, you know, whatever happens, his children is not going to be any skin off his nose. He's not going to care about that. He's gone to the place that everyone go.

Whether he lived miserably or comfortably is all a matter of the past now, and nothing in the future is going to affect him. Look, I know your thoughts and schemes with which you would wrong me. For you say, where is the house of the prince and where is his tent, the dwelling place of the wicked? Have you not asked those who travel the road and do you not know their signs for the wicked are reserved for the day of doom? They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.

Who condemns his way to his face and who repays him for what he has done? Yet he shall be brought to the grave and a vigil kept over his tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him. Everyone shall follow him as countless have gone before him.

How then can you comfort me with empty words since falsehood remains in your answers? Now, this last portion of Chapter 21, what he's saying is. You're saying that the wicked, you know, he's dead now, he dies and it's all over for him. Well, OK, but haven't you heard sometimes the wicked that you talk to travel such people who've seen more than you guys have.

You guys must have lived in an ivory tower somewhere to think what you think. If you talk to people who travel the road, who've been around and seen a few things, apparently things you haven't seen. You'll find out that many times wicked people do die, but they die comfortably.

They have a sweet burial. They've got lots of people honoring them after they're dead. And you know what happens then they do.

They go the route that others before have gone before them and others will go after them. It's not really like that's their that's not much of a punishment compared to the things that many people suffer in their lifetime. Everyone dies.



The wicked man dies, but that's not really a just judgment for all that he's done since even righteous men die, too. There should be some other retribution, he's saying. Now, Eliphaz speaks his third time in Chapter 22.

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, Can a man be profitable to God, though he who is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous or is it gain to him that you make your way as blameless? The implication is no. What he's saying, essentially, is Job, you claim that you're righteous. That's your defense.

But really, does God owe anything to you? If you're righteous, does he have any particular pleasure in righteous people? Now, here, Eliphaz is quite wrong because God did take pleasure in Job's righteousness. He even boasted about it to the devil. God does take pleasure in righteous men.

But Eliphaz is trying to say, OK, even if you claim to be righteous, why should God, you know, be impressed with that? Why should God spare you? It is because he says, is it because of your fear of him that he reproves you and enters into judgment with you? Is it not your wickedness? Excuse me. Is not your wickedness great and your iniquity without end? Now, he's saying, you say you fear God and that God, you know, is somehow going to be impressed or indebted to you for that. But it certainly isn't for your fear of God that this is coming upon you, says Eliphaz.

But he's wrong. That is exactly why it came upon him. It came upon Job because God said Job fears God, a man who fears God and departs from evil.

And it was because of this condition in Job that he came under this testing. But Eliphaz is saying the opposite is no, it's not because you fear God, it's because your wickedness is great and your iniquity without end. For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason and stripped the naked of their clothing.

You have not given weary water to drink. You have withheld bread from the hungry, but the mighty man possessed the land and the honorable man dwelt in it. You have sent away widows empty and the strength of the fatherless was crushed.

Therefore, snares are all around you and sudden fear troubles you. These accusations are false. Every one of them he denies in Chapter 31.

The idea that he had taken pledges and stripped naked the poor. This is referring to the fact that when when a poor man was really in financial trouble and he came to a rich man for a loan, the rich man might take something from him as a pledge. That is his collateral.

But a poor man often didn't have much to leave in the way of collateral except his own clothes. And later on in the book of Exodus, the law actually forbade somebody if they

lend to the poor, forbade them to take their cloak as collateral or as a pledge for the loan. Or he says, if you do take it, you have to give it back to him at night so that you so he can sleep in it because it's all he's got.

What's being accused here in verse six is that he has taken pledges from it is implied from the poor who have borrowed money from him and stripped their clothes off of them. That is, he's done the unmerciful thing that the law itself later would forbid taking people's clothes as pledged. Now, Job hasn't done that in Chapter 31 in verse 19.

He says, if I've seen anyone perish for lack of clothing or any poor man without covering, which, by the way, is in the midst of a rhetorical statement, if I've done any of these things, then let these disasters come on me. And by implication, I haven't done them. And therefore, these disasters should not.

But he mentions that he has not seen anyone perish for lack of clothing or any poor man for lack of covering. In fact, in verse 20, he says of Chapter 31. If his heart has not blessed me and if he is not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.

Now, again, this is stated as a rhetorical thing that we're in the middle of it, the statements themselves sound awkward. But what he's saying is, in fact, I have never taken clothing from him. In fact, every poor person I know has blessed me because he has warmed himself with fleece from my sheep that I've given him.

So it's the opposite of what he's accused of in verse seven of Chapter 22. LFS says you have not given the weary water to drink, you've withheld bread from the hungry. But in Chapter 31, verse 17.

He says, no, I have not eaten my morsel by myself so that the fatherless may not eat of it, says, from my youth, I reared him as a father. And from my mother's womb, I guided the widow. That is, I've always from the time I was young, assisted the fatherless and the widows, I've always had them at my table, I've always cared for them.

So that in Chapter 22, verse nine, when LFS says you have sent widows away empty. Of course, this is just all lies. He's just all false accusations.

It's amazing that Job waits almost nine chapters or so to answer them, because when a man's behavior has been exemplary in these areas and someone's just accusing him of being the opposite, it seems like you don't want to just jump in and say, no, that's a lie. Job does eventually say that's a lie, but he doesn't do it right away. He just kind of sits and absorbs these insults.

Now, verse 11 or darkness, we better pick up verse 10. Therefore, snares are all around you and sudden fear troubles you or darkness so that you cannot see. And an abundance of water covers you.

There's those two images I mentioned. There's so common in the poetry, darkness and abundance of waters covering you, being flooded with troubles. It's not God in the height of heaven and see the highest stars, how lofty they are.

And you say, what does God know? Well, Job had never said, what does God know? So, I mean, there I will tell you this as a person who says a lot of things, some of them controversial. When I hear people say things back to me, which they claim I said, and it's the opposite of what I said, it's. It's aggravating and you think I took pains to say what I meant and now you speak back to me as if I said something entirely different than what I even believe.

And I'm sure that Job had that same feeling every time they say, oh, you say that God doesn't know you say God is, you know, not not wise. And Job hadn't said any of those things. So that he holds his peace and tells his turn to speak again, although these things must be grading on him.

Can he judge through the deep darkness, thick clouds cover him so that he cannot see and he walks above the circle of the heaven. Now, this is how he's representing what Job said in verses 13 and 14, he says, you say, what does God know? Can God judge through the deep darkness? God's hiding behind clouds. Maybe he can't see us through them.

He walks so high above the circle of the heaven that he can't see us way down here, so God can't really know what's going on. That's what he's representing Job's position to be, which Job has never said any such things as that. Verse 15, will you keep to the old way which the wicked men have trod who were cut down before their time, whose foundations were swept away by a flood? I'm not sure he's referring to Noah's flood here, he could be alluding to Noah's flood, although he doesn't say the flood.

And there are floods and a flood of waters, for example, chapter I mean, verse 11, he says, a flood of waters has overflowed Job. So the flood here might not be a reference to Noah's flood. It may just mean a flood of troubles, waves of trials.

They said to God, depart from us, what can the almighty do to them? Yet he filled their houses with good things, but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. Now, this the counsel of the wicked is far from me is also found back in that verse that I said so difficult to interpret. Chapter 21, verse 16, Job had said that.

So maybe Eliphaz is here still quoting Job. Verse 19, the righteous see it and are glad the innocent laugh them to scorn. Surely our adversaries are cut down and the fire consumes their remnant.

So notice what this really implies. He's saying the wicked men suffer, but the righteous men laugh and rejoice at their suffering. Well, haven't they been saying that Job is a wicked man? And by implication, they are not, because these things haven't happened

to them.

They're righteous men. Are they laughing? Are they rejoicing at his calamity? It almost sounds like they're saying that the righteous see what happens to the wicked and they're glad the innocent laugh them to scorn. And then verse 20 is sort of what the innocent and the righteous say, surely our adversaries are cut down and their fire consumes their remnant.

Now, actually, verses 21 through 20 to the end is often quoted. It almost makes a good evangelistic sermon. And I actually knew a person who said these verses to music years ago.

Very beautiful song. You know, an appeal to come to know God and the promises that are made to those who will acquaint themselves with God. Everything Eliphaz says in verses 21 to the end of the chapter are excellent things.

They just aren't applicable to Job. If he is talking to a man who really was alienated from God, you could hardly hope for a more tender and more winsome appeal to repentance. I mean, Eliphaz is a good man.

He is someone who wants Job's death. He's quite sure that Job is ignoring the cause of his problems and not confessing them. But what he says to Job in these last verses is would just be wonderful.

A wonderful sermon. If it applied to Job, which it does not, he says, now, acquaint yourself with him and be at peace. Thereby, good will come to you.

Receive, please, instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up. You will remove iniquity far from your tents.

Then you will lay your gold in the dust and the dust of Ophir among the stones of the brooks. Yes, the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver, for then you will have your delight in the Almighty and lift up your faith to God. You will make your prayer to him and he will hear you and you will pay your vows.

You will also declare a thing and it will be established for you. So light will shine on your ways when they cast you down. And you say exaltation will come.

Then he will save the humble person. He will even deliver one who is not innocent. Yes, he will be delivered by the purity of your hands.

That is to say that if you get right with God and you put iniquity out of your tent, which, of course, is something Job can do because there was no iniquity in his tent. But if it had been applicable, he's saying if you get right with God, then your fortunes will change. God will listen to your prayers.

You'll lift your face to God without shame. God will be your riches. God will be your delight.

Even people who are not innocent will be delivered because of your purity. This could be a reference to like when Job, by his purity and offerings, took care of his children's spiritual well-being. Remember, his children were, we don't know if they were innocent or not.

He didn't even know if they were innocent. He thought maybe they have cursed God in their hearts. Maybe they're not innocent, but he counted on the fact that his own standing before God and the sacrifice he offered on their half would cause God to deliver even them.

Well, it didn't in the sense that they died, but it's perhaps a reference to something like that, that even those that you care for, even if they're not innocent, God will deliver them when you're a friend of God. We know that God delivered Lot and his family because of Abraham's intercession. And of course, Lot is himself called a righteous man, but we don't know that his daughters would ever be regarded that.

Sometimes God delivers those who are not as innocent because they are attached to, because they are the concern of someone that is innocent. I think the statements that Eliphaz makes here in this section are doctrinally true and good and appealing. And if Job had been in sin, they would have been probably one of the greatest things he could have said to him.

But since he wasn't, the sermon is entirely inapplicable. Well, we're going to stop there and take a break.