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Job 1 - 2



Job - Steve Gregg

In "Job 1-2", Steve Gregg provides an in-depth analysis of the first two chapters of the Book of Job. He discusses the irony behind Job's counselor accusing him of withholding help for the poor and highlights the meaning behind the term "the adversary". Gregg also delves into the testing of Job by God, examining the concept of adversity in life and the man's ability to maintain a high view of God, no matter the severity of trials encountered. Throughout the lecture, Gregg provides valuable insights into the text and offers a unique perspective on the story of Job.

Transcript

So we turn to Job chapter 1 now to begin going through the text. And as has been pointed out in the introduction, the first two chapters are not written in poetry, although a few parts are. For example, Job's response in chapter 1 verse 21 is written in poetry.

And some would say even the reports of the messengers that brought him news have a certain poetic structure to them. But I wouldn't be surprised if some people simply talked that way. But we have the story beginning with the there was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.

And that man was blameless and upright and one who feared God and shunned evil. So we talked in our introduction about the land of Uz. We've talked about the geography and the time setting and so forth.

I didn't mention, I don't think, the meaning of the name Job, which has been disputed because it's not always agreed by different scholars as to what language the roots of the name come from. And therefore, some have said that the name Job means persecuted or hated or even hatred or something like that. But it seems from what I've read that the majority of scholars would say the name Job comes from the phrase, where is father or where is my father? Some names in the Bible are in the form of a question, sometimes a rhetorical question.

The name Michael means who is like God. And the name Micah means who is like Yahweh. These names actually are like a question.

And Job's name may mean, and many think it means, where is my father? And it would be interesting if that were so, because that is basically Job's question throughout the book. Where is my father? Where's God when I need him? And so that might be the meaning of his name. Now, the narrator tells us that he is blameless and upright, one who feared God and shunned evil.

And of course, this doesn't mean that he had never committed a sin in his life. Everybody has done that. But he kept short accounts with God.

Which is really the only way to be blameless. If you want to be sinless, you're going to be disappointed. So you should you should seek to be sinless.

You should seek to obey. And obviously, a person doesn't live a blameless and upright life unless they're making a priority of being obedient to God. But despite that priority, everyone has their weaknesses and their failures, as Paul made very clear.

And yet, those weaknesses and failures don't have to really permanently impair your blamelessness before God. Because if you confess your sins, if you repent, God forgives. And in the case of Job and people of the Old Testament, if you offer, sincerely offer a sacrifice, this was something that God would take as a token that you were sincere.

And and would essentially cover your failures. So a man who is blameless and upright, that's a relative term. But it would include a person who, even if he isn't always perfect, he keeps short accounts.

He doesn't allow sins to go unatoned and so forth. The same estimation of him is given by God, although the narrator here tells us, first of all, about this. Now, the details of his good character are outlined for us somewhat in one of Job's later speeches in chapters 29 through 31, where he makes it very clear that he took care of orphans and widows and he helped the poor all the time.

And he was a paragon of virtue in his community. Ironically, one of his counselors, when he gets a little bit exasperated with him, starts accusing Job of withholding help from widows and orphans and, you know, being callous toward the poor and so forth. But that's just because the counselor doesn't know what he's talking about.

And he's also getting exasperated and getting less and less rational as he goes on trying to accuse Job. Job's uprightness and blamelessness is attested by the narrator and by God and by Job himself as he reminds his friends of what he used to be like later on in chapters 29 through 31. It says in verse 2, he had seven sons and three daughters were born to him, which was sort of the ideal family.

In a sense, seven is the number of perfection. Altogether, ten children, three daughters. It's like the perfect family.

A man having many children was seen as a blessing from God. Blessed is the man who has his quiver full of them, it says in Psalm 127. And so here he's blessed in this respect.

His wife has been fruitful and productive of children, which is what every man and wife wanted. Also, his possessions were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys and a very large household. So that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.

Now, some have sought to question the historicity of the book and say this sounds like it's mythical or legendary. They point out, well, look at these round numbers. You know, it's almost too perfect to be true.

7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen. These are all round numbers. That doesn't seem like it's sort of an idealized telling of the story rather than a factual thing.

But of course, the numbers could be estimates. After all, if a man does have 7,000 sheep, that number is going to be changing every day because some are going to be having kids, having lambs and others are going to be dying. And, you know, it's not going to be a static number when you have a flock that large.

Now, if you have three or four sheep on your farm, it might stay three or four for months or years at a time, depending on what you do in terms of breeding. When you've got 7,000, that's a continually changing number. And therefore, no doubt, you know, the numbers are given as round numbers or estimates.

It's also possible that he kept his herds to a certain size artificially, that as he got more than 7,000, he sold off the extra and he wanted to keep his flocks at a certain number. So, I mean, there's nothing about these numbers that make it unrealistic. But he is the greatest, that is, the richest of all the men of the east.

The east would mean, to an Israelite, east of the Jordan River. And land of us was east of the Jordan River somewhere. Probably not very far east, because, as I said in the introduction, the Jordan was familiar to Job.

He had a, you know, it was perhaps a boundary of the land that he lived in. So he may have just lived in Transjordan. How far north or south, we do not know.

The fact that he was invaded by Chaldeans and by Sabians, the Chaldeans being from a fairly far northeastern region from Israel, and the Sabians the far south, the Queen of Sheba. Sheba was a place in southern Arabia that was pretty far, a distance to go. And yet these Sabian raiders and Chaldean raiders both raided him, some from the south and some from the northeast.

In either case, no matter what spot you had him in, one or both of those tribes would have to go a long way from home to raid him. And so it's hard to really say whether he

was further north or further south. But he was attacked from both sides, from people pretty far away.

Now his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. So this is a tight family. They were rich.

They were probably powerful. They probably had a lot of friends, but they still, the siblings stayed close. And the brothers did not leave their sisters out of their parties.

They wanted to stay close. They were a brotherly and sisterly family. When it says each on his appointed day, many scholars think that means on their birthday.

And so there would have been a lot of birthdays because there were a lot of children. But some feel the appointed day is more frequent than the birthdays, that they regularly, maybe on weekends, after the days, after the weekend, a week's work or something, each had an appointed day to provide hospitality for the family to celebrate the end of the week or whatever. These celebrations could have been in other words more frequent than birthdays.

We don't know. So it was when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them. And he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all.

For Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. And thus Job did regularly. It's not known exactly what it means that he would send and sanctify them.

It may mean that he would send to them and request their presence at these sacrifices he offered on their behalf. It almost sounds like he sent something to them to sanctify them or sent messengers to them, but we're not exactly what it meant to sanctify or consecrate them is not entirely clear, especially in that ancient time. This is before the law that whatever their customs were, whatever their religious traditions were, he would follow them, whatever it meant to try to sanctify his children to God.

One thing it meant was that he'd offer burnt offerings, obviously for their sin. Now, he didn't know that they had sinned. Now, they had these parties, but we are not told that they were bad kids or that they were drunkards or anything like that.

In fact, he did not seem to have any particular concern about that. He was concerned about what might go on in their hearts. Apparently, their outward behavior was not bad.

I mean, they had a good time, but he knew also that once people had a few drinks and you know, they're in merriment and so forth, maybe some of the jokes are not so clean and maybe a little irreverence enters in or maybe even just in their hearts. They began

to have less than respectful thoughts or things that were less than pleasing to God. He didn't know.

He didn't know what had been in their hearts, but he knew that people are sinners and he wanted to make sure that he had his kids covered. And I think it's an encouraging thing, frankly, to think that a man can do that for his kids. These were grown kids who had their own homes.

They weren't children in his household. They were children in their own households. But still, he felt that he had the position as the father, the priest of the family, as it were, to offer sacrifices for his kids, even though they might not offer them for themselves.

We don't read if his children had personal faith or not. But we do read that he had faith for them, and we read later in the chapter that when Satan comes and is complaining about his lack of access to Joe, he mentioned specifically that God had protected not only Joe, but all that he had in his household. Apparently, his children included, because the first ten of this chapter says, have you not made a hedge around him around his household and around all that he has on every side.

That is, Satan is saying, I haven't been able to afflict his household. I haven't been able to touch his property. I haven't been able to touch him because, God, you've protected him.

And I don't know that we're not supposed to see this as an indirect connection with the fact that he was pious for his household as well as for himself. If he was just a good man himself, we might expect the devil not to be able to do much to him. But his household also seem to come under protection because of the offerings he made up for his children.

Now, we don't offer animal sacrifices anymore, but we offer up spiritual sacrifices and prayers and intercessions. And I think that I find this encouraging that even if your children don't seem to have or you don't know if they have personal faith in God, that God will notice. Prayers or intercessions or offerings offered up to him on behalf of children by the parent.

It makes me think that the father is, and perhaps the mother in a single parent household, is viewed by God as having a kind of authority that God will honor in making requests for children. I don't know what that means, but those children would be forgiven or saved, even if they didn't come to personal faith or if it means that maybe through his sacrifice and so forth, his children were brought to religious faith. We don't know.

But we are not told anything about his children being pious or evil. We're not all the things that happen, including what happened to them, both the protection they

experienced in the early stages and the disaster came was not said to be related in any way to their religious lives themselves or their status, their protection in earlier life and the disaster came was all because of God's dealing with their father, Joe. And so the father in the family seemed to have some kind of a determining role to play in the well-being of his children, even after they were grown in this case.

Now, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh and Satan also came among them. Now, Satan, I mentioned in our introduction, literally means the adversary. The word satanist in the Hebrew just means adversary.

It is used a number of times, but not very many times in the Old Testament as a reference to what we call the devil. But not always the term satanist is used as a general term for an adversary, also in the Old Testament. So if you looked in a concordance at the number at the word adversary, you'd see that many times the word adversary is not talking about the devil.

It's talking about maybe, you know, an army that's attacking Israel as their adversary or something like that. So the word adversary is generic. And for that reason, some scholars are reluctant to make this a reference to a personal devil.

They say, well, it's just the adversary. Who knows what the adversary means? But obviously, this adversary is personal and is superhuman. Now, the Greek form of the word satanist is diabolos.

It's the Greek equivalent. And diabolos means devil. In the New Testament, the word satan and devil are used interchangeably.

And it's interesting that the word satan would be used in the New Testament at all because it's a Hebrew word. And the New Testament is written in Greek. We might expect to find diabolos, the Greek word in the New Testament, because the New Testament is written in Greek.

But we find the name satan, a Hebrew word, used in the New Testament. And the fact that it comes into the New Testament untranslated suggests that it is a proper name. It's not just a generic for an adversary in a general sense.

It is the name of a particular adversary who is also called the devil. In Revelation, it says that was satan or the dragon was that old serpent and, you know, the one who's called satan and the devil. So, obviously, this is the personal devil, but his name means the adversary.

And we see that he appears here as an adversary. He also appears as an adversary in the sense of an accuser, a false accuser of Job. And so the New Testament in Revelation chapter 12 refers to Satan as the accuser of the brethren.

And the story of Job is probably one of the reasons for calling him that. And Yahweh said to Satan, from where do you come? So Satan answered Yahweh and said, from going to and fro on the earth and from walking back and forth on it. Now, we're told in verse six that the sons of God on this day had come to present themselves before the Lord.

Apparently, Satan was obliged to come and give his report also. Now, the sons of God, we don't have time to debate all the possibilities for who the sons of God are, but the two main views would be one. One that's probably most widely held is that they are the angels.

And they are mentioned in this chapter. They're also mentioned in chapter two. They're also mentioned later in Job when God is speaking.

And they it would seem very probable that they are a reference to angels, though the possibility exists that they could be humans. It's easier to see them as humans in these first two chapters than in the later reference, which speaks of the sons of God, you know, how they sang for joy when God laid the foundations of the earth. It's hard to, although it's poetry, if that was taken literally, it'd be hard to make that out.

Anything other than angels. The main view that is mostly held is that these are angels and that they present themselves to the Lord on a regular basis. Now, humans do, too.

It may be that if these were godly men, which is the other alternative, that there was a time that the men of God would on earth would present themselves to the Lord to worship together, a joint worship service. And Satan might be among them, too, as he is even among us when we gather with Christians. I mean, the Lord is among us when we gather with Christians, but Satan is not necessarily absent.

Satan goes to church, too. And that's why temptations occur to people and strife and church splits and so forth occur even among the people of God, because when the sons of God gather together, the devil is present with them. And there's two different ways you could look at this, but I'm going to go with the primary view of the probably the majority view and that this is the angels and that they are gathered to report to God.

In Zechariah chapter one, there's a vision of certain horsemen reporting to the angel of the Lord and the horsemen themselves appear to be angels, too. And they go out and they supervise or they spy or they reconnoiter and see what's going on on earth and they report back to the angel of the Lord in Zechariah chapter one as to what's going on in the world. Now, God doesn't need the angels to bring him information.

God is everywhere at once. But this is the way that this is presented to us. This is anthropomorphic.

I'm sure God didn't have to get information from his angels. That was going on, but the angels are dispatched on missions throughout the world and they answer to God. That is

at least what I think is probably suggested here.

Satan himself is also one who is perhaps not an angel, but of a superhuman class. Certainly one of those that has to answer to God about his activities. And though we don't know very much about all that, we do know that here God calls on Satan to report where he's been.

Where have you been? Where are you coming from? And Satan says, I've been going to and fro on the earth and walking back and forth on it. That's the way he's depicted also for us in first Peter, chapter five and verse eight, where Peter says, Be vigilant, be sober. Your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.

And so Satan is walking about on the earth looking for a victim. And here he doesn't. He's not represented here like a lion, but he is definitely out for no good.

And he's been traveling around the world checking things out. And he always says to Satan, verse eight, Have you considered my servant Job? That there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil. Now, it's interesting that the devil doesn't approach God about Job.

It's not like the devil comes back and says, I've been looking around and I see this guy. He's been untested. I think you should let me test him.

But rather, God calls Job to the devil's attention. It's almost like God initiates this whole problem for Job by kind of rubbing Job in Satan's face. You see, if Satan is the one whose goal is to corrupt men, then Job must have been a particular annoyance to the devil.

And God knew it. And God said, Have you noticed this fellow? You've not been able to corrupt him. And basically, it's kind of a jab at Satan.

You know, why haven't you been able to corrupt this man? And Satan answered Yahweh and said, Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge around him, around his household and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse you to your face. So Yahweh said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power or literally in your hand.

Only do not lay a hand on his person. Then Satan went out from the presence of Yahweh. Now, a few observations.

I've already commented in our introduction that Satan's cynical view was that men do not serve God without reward. And the suggestion is that God could not be appreciated by people unless he gave them rewards, unless he bribed them, unless they got good things from him. That certainly, as soon as it became not obviously advantageous to serve God, no one would continue to do so.

And as I said, unfortunately, probably Satan's opinion about that was formed from experience, because there appear to be people who are like that. Remember, Jesus talked about the seed that fell on stony ground and it sprang up and these people received the word with joy and began to receive the kingdom of God. But when persecution and tribulation came because of the word, they quickly fell away.

Why? Because they weren't it for themselves. As soon as it began to cost something and it cost them more than they were getting back, they didn't want to stay. And Satan is no doubt seen that phenomenon often enough, and he considered that it was a universal phenomenon.

And the only reason that Job had not fallen away is that he'd been protected by God from those kinds of tests. And in fact, Job had been apparently. Apparently, God had not allowed Job to be tested quite so severely yet.

And so it was Job's time. Everyone needs to be tested. And this accusation of Satan could not easily be ignored.

I mean, God could have ignored it and said, you know what you're talking about, get out of here. But Satan would have gone out thinking, yeah, I was right about God. You know, I mean, that Job, he only serves God because he's paid to.

And God, no doubt, wanted as much as anything to prove to Satan. That this was not the case. We are told in Scripture that what God does in the church is on display to the principalities and powers.

And they are learning stuff about God from what they watch in our lives. This is stated in Ephesians chapter three and verse 10, actually beginning at verse nine, Ephesians 3, 9 and 10. Paul said, and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

That is through what God is doing in the church. He's making his own manifold wisdom known to certain observers who are referred to as the principalities and powers in heavenly places. Now, Paul uses that expression sometimes of angels.

He also uses it of demons in this very same book. In Ephesians 6, he says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. So that's Ephesians 6, of course, verse 12.

So he may be saying that God's wisdom is being demonstrated to the onlooking principalities and powers through how he deals with the church. Peter seems to have the same idea in mind or some idea like it. In first Peter, chapter one.

And verse 12, first Peter 112 Peter says to them, that is, the prophets of old, it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us, they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things which angels desire to look into. There are things that God is doing in God's people that are matters of curiosity to the angels themselves, perhaps the good ones and bad ones. Both the angels are learning about God, and it may be that this test of Job was one way that God wanted his angels and even the devil to learn something.

After all, if the sons of God were angels, it may be that they overheard the conversation between Satan and God. And therefore, if God had just sent Satan away, said nonsense, I'm going to protect him and you don't you might as well just shut up about Job. It's possible the angels could have thought, well, I wonder if Job would be able to stand such a test.

Satan certainly would have gone out thinking that he was correct. Anyway, God did know one way to prove that he was not correct, and that was to allow Job to be tested. And so although Satan said, put out your hand and touch him, God said, well, he's in your hand.

All of his goods are in your hand. In other words, I'm not going to directly afflict him, but I give you a free reign to touch his stuff, but not his body. Don't touch his body.

So that Satan could not afflict him with sickness at this point, nor certainly death, but only by taking away things external to Job. Now, in verse 11, where he says, he will surely curse you to your face. This is a bold assumption on Satan's part, given the fact that Job was sensitive even to cursing God in one's heart.

Because Job was concerned that his children might have cursed God even in their hearts, not out loud to God's face. If he had scruples about cursing God in the heart, he certainly would have scruples even more so about cursing God out loud to God's face. But Satan thought he could get Job to do that.

Now, by the way, the word curse here. In chapters one and two, a curse a number of times, Job's wife uses it, Satan uses it a couple of times. We thought already in chapter one, verse five of his sons cursing God in their hearts.

The word curse here is actually the word bless, which is weird because literally in the Hebrew, it says in verse five. If it may be that my sons have sinned and blessed God in their hearts, and likewise, when Satan speaks, it literally says in Hebrew, if you stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, verse 11, he will surely bless you to your face. And it doesn't make an awful lot of sense to translate it bless.

And so Hebrew scholars have become convinced that there was a usage of this word bless that was ironic, that was sarcastic or that meant the opposite. It clearly means the

opposite in these particular contexts. It's a strange use of the word that it could possibly mean such a thing.

But in some usages, apparently it had the opposite meaning. Of course, you'll notice in the New King James, there's a note on it in your margin, which says literally blessed, but in an evil sense, you know. Well, in what sense could the word bless be evil? But it is.

I mean, it's just a matter of ancient usage of this particular word. You know, there are some words in English which have two meanings that are opposite to each other, especially in Old English, like in Old English, the word let. Which we would take to mean to permit actually also had the meaning of to forbid.

To let in Old English means to forbid or to permit. Strangely, the word cleave has both meanings. You find in the Old English that splitting wood was called cleaving wood.

You cleave it. In fact, that's where our word cleavage comes from. It means separation, splitting.

And yet in marriage vows, you know, or even in Genesis chapter two, verse 24, talks about a man leaving his father and mother and cleaving to his wife, which means being joined to. So the word cleave can mean to be split up or to be joined to the word let in English. Old English could mean to permit or to forbid so that in the Old English version of King James, second Thessalonians, when Paul is talking about how there's something that's that's forbidding the rise of the man of sin.

And the King James says, but that which let it will let until it is taken away. All modern translations say that which hinders. Will hinder until it is taken away, something is hindering the rise of the man of sin, but the word let is used in Old English.

What I'm saying is there are words that have opposite meanings, the same word in different settings. Apparently, the word bless was such a word in this kind of a context. So curse really is a better translation of it, although it's the same word as would translate blessed in a different context.

So we see that the Lord gave him a limited opportunity to go out and afflict Job, and he stated what the limits would be. Do not lay your hand on his person. So Satan went out in verse 12 from the presence of Yahweh.

Verse 13, now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house. And a messenger came to Job and said, the oxen were plowing and the donkeys were feeding beside them. When the Sabians raided them and took them away, indeed, they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.

And while he was still speaking, another also came and said, the fire of God fell from

heaven, which in the older biblical stories usually means lightning. Apparently, lightning struck and it says and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them. And I alone have escaped to tell you.

And while he was still speaking, another also came and said, the Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away. Yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword. And I alone have escaped to tell you.

And while he was still speaking, another came also and said, your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house. And suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house and it fell on the young men and they are all dead. And I alone have escaped to tell you now.

Like I said, the way this is told, it almost sounds like a literary fiction, it's just too neat. I mean, as soon as one guy finished speaking, the next guy arrives and it happens with each of these four messages and they all end up saying, I alone have escaped to tell you. It may be that there is something in the retelling of this that has taken on, you know, a literary style.

I mean, to say he had hardly stopped speaking when the next one came. I mean, that could be hyperbole, it could be that a very short time had passed, but hard to say. It is also possible, since there was divine providence in this matter and satanic involvement, that these things did happen in this way.

You know, you wouldn't expect it to happen this way by coincidence, but since this was something that was no coincidence at all, but God was specifically testing Job, things could have happened exactly this quickly. And the news could have been brought to him in such rapid sequence. Now, two of the problems that came upon him were from evil men, the Sabians and the Chaldeans, who raided and took some of his livestock and flew his servant.

And two of the problems came from what appeared to be natural disasters, lightning striking and a whirlwind, apparently like a tornado, came through and knocked a house down. Yet we know what Job did not know, and that is that the devil was behind this, which means we can see that the devil can use wicked men, or he can even use, if God permits, the weather to bring disaster. And, you know, in recent times, when there's been tsunamis, hurricanes and other natural earthquakes in Haiti and so forth, many times people have said, you know, why did God do this? You know, is God angry at these people or whatever? And, you know, God does control the weather, but we also find here that God sometimes lets Satan control the weather.

And so it may have nothing to do with God being angry at anybody. It might be the wrath of Satan against people. You know, you can't really know just from the phenomena.

You need kind of a picture behind the scenes, like we get in chapter one of Job to know, is this really God punishing Job with this whirlwind that takes his kids out of his house? His friends think so. And Job sees God's hand in it, too. But we know also the devil's involved in this case, and so we can't really be too simplistic in our interpretation of disasters.

Some disasters might even just come by natural course without God or the devil having a special interest in them. But certainly, even when there is a divine or supernatural cause, I should say, to natural disasters, we do find that the devil can be the one behind it. When Jesus stood and rebuked the wind and the waves, I think I mentioned before, it's rather unusual for Jesus to rebuke a non-personal entity.

And it is possible that the wind and the waves on that occasion were obeying Satan, and that's why they needed to be rebuked by their maker. And they did submit to him. But the devil may well have been trying to sink that boat because Jesus was on his way across the lake where he would immediately run into the man possessed by a legion of demons.

Satan may well have wished to prevent that encounter, knowing how it would turn out, and may have tried to sink the boat by bringing wind and waves. But of course, it would be wrong to think that all wind and all waves and all destruction comes from Satan. I remember when we opened the Great Commission School in Bandon on the coast of Oregon, that that was a very windy place.

The locals there boasted that sometimes the winds got up around 100 miles an hour and it was windy almost all the time. Winter, summer, you name it. Even the summertime, when it was sunny and warm, or would have been warm, there was this icy wind that blew hard.

Every winter we had to replace shingles from the buildings. We had lots of buildings and every winter, lots of shingles would end up on the ground that had been nailed down real good before. But the wind was like real bad.

It would break windows. The wind would break windows of houses, knock down trees and stuff. And this is commonplace there.

But the very worst wind we ever had, that I can recall, was on Halloween night. I think it was the first Halloween we were there. We decided to have a worship service because there was a lot of witchcraft in that town, a lot of occult.

And we thought, well, this is their celebration night. We're going to worship God and do spiritual warfare that way. And so we spent an evening, a Halloween evening, in our gymnasium having a worship service with ourselves and some of the town's Christians.

And it had not been stormy before that. But as we were worshipping, this wind came up

that was stronger and different than any I ever experienced before. It actually, after the meeting, I remember as we were walking home to my house, which is at the other end of the campus, it just seemed really eerie because the winds were howling.

Like, I mean, it sounded like such artificial sounds as a horror movie might make of, you know, ghosts or wolves or a combination of the two or something. It was very, very eerie. And I, you know, I'm not trying to make anything spooky out of it.

I just I just sensed that we were, you know, seeing in this particular storm, which did take a lot of our shingles off that night. And the trees were swaying. I think God kept them from falling on our houses because I was concerned about that.

We prayed about that. But it seemed like those winds that particular day were not just the natural winds that come. It seemed like they definitely were.

They had a sinister element to them, you know. And sometimes I think it does come from the devil, though I wouldn't want to say that universally. So we have these disasters come to him and the worst of all, of course, would be the loss of his children.

Now, did his children really die? He's told that they died. But really, I mean, the servant who saw the wind blow the house down may have assumed they were dead. Maybe they were just injured.

We don't know. Because the thing that makes you wonder is that the end of his life, God gave him double everything he'd had before, except the same number of kids, seven sons and three daughters, the number of kids he had at the end. Now, whether God just replaced the children one for one or whether it was the same kids, but they weren't they hadn't really died.

I don't know. The Book of Job does not commit itself to the fact that his children died. It only tells us that a servant came and reported that they had died.

Whether he had looked through the rubble of the fallen house and discovered their dead bodies before he came with the report or whether he just saw the house fall and thought, I better run and tell Job because his kids were in there. They're dead now. But they weren't.

I don't know. We don't really have. Again, the commitment of the book is not that the children are dead.

And some of the speeches that Job gives later on sound like maybe they weren't. Although one of the speeches that Bill that gives sounds like they were. So, I mean, I think it's an ambiguous point in the book, whether his children actually were killed or whether that's just the report that came to him at this point.

And later it was found that they had not died. But it'd be the same all the same to him. He thought they were dead.

At this point, his reaction was the same reaction he would give whether they were dead or alive because he believed they were dead. And so it says Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, which were both traditional Middle Eastern ways of grieving. And he fell to the ground and worshipped.

Now, I can see a man falling to the ground just because he's so overwhelmed by such a lambast of trials coming against him in so rapid succession. But when he fell down and he worshipped God, which is the opposite of what Satan thought he would do. And he said, naked, I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return there.

Now, return there. He's not going to go back to the womb. He's not being literal there.

Basically, he's saying I came from non-existence. From my mother's womb, naked, and I will return to non-existence, naked, too. I mean, returning to a state of not being alive.

That's what he's talking about. He's not talking about literally going back into the womb. But he's saying that, you know, I'm not in any different condition right now.

Even if I die without a stitch of clothing, even if I die without owning anything, that's no different than I was born. So, I mean, it's not really... There's no injustice in God here in taking away what he gave me. God gave me these things because I didn't have them when I was born.

I was born without a stitch of clothing. But in my lifetime, God has given me these things. And therefore, he has the right to take them away and have me leave this world the same way I came in.

That is, without a penny and without any clothing. The Lord has given or the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

So instead of cursing God, he blessed the Lord. And by the way, he uses the word Yahweh here. Which means that Job knew that name for God, although he doesn't usually use it.

Now, it's important to note that Job attributed his losses to God. God gave him his stuff and God took them away. And there are some who say, well, if Job had really known the true story behind this, he would have said the devil took it away.

In fact, they say that God, Job made a mistake here of blaming God for what the devil did. Kenneth Hagan, one of the principal founders of the Word of Faith teaching, who does not believe that God ever makes men poor or sick. He wrote a book once called Don't Blame God, in which he said it's wrong to say that, you know, your trials come

from God or it's the will of God for you to go through trials.

He said, God only wants you to have good things and if you had enough faith, you would. But in that case, Job was wrong because Job said that his trials came from Yahweh. And the verdict of the writer of the book agrees in verse 22.

In all this, Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. So he did not say the wrong thing about God. This was true.

It was the Lord who took it away. It was the Lord that let the enemy come. It was the Lord who took away the hedge that had protected him.

It was the devil who brought these trials. It was the Lord who sent them. And it was the Lord's intention to test Job.

And God has every right to do that to his creatures. And Job realized that. He didn't realize it was a test, but he realized that God had every right to take away the things he had given.

Which means, of course, that Job never did see his possessions as his possessions. He saw them as on loan from God. God could reclaim them anytime he wishes.

Lots of times people would say, if God gives me this and he takes it away, he's an Indian giver. Well, we use the term Indian giver to refer to someone who actually gives you something, then changes their mind, says, no, I want it back. After you've had reason to believe it's yours and now they want it back.

But Job didn't say God's an Indian giver. He gave and he took away. It's obvious that Job's attitude was when God gave it, it was just it's still God's.

He gave it to me as it were on loan, but he has every right to take it away, too, because it's really his from beginning to end. And so that's the right way to view one's possessions. And in chapter two, again, there was a day when the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord.

And Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, from where do you come? So Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro on the earth and from walking back and forth on it. And Yahweh said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? Now, up to that point, of course, everything is verbally identical to the previous interview.

And almost when God says, have you considered my servant Job, it's even more of a jab at Satan than before, because Satan had boasted that at this point, Job would have caved in. And of course, Satan has found himself to be mistaken. And God is kind of

rubbing that in, it sounds like, because he goes on to say, and he still holds fast to his integrity.

Although you incited me against him to destroy him without a cause. Now, Satan incited God to destroy Job without a cause, not destroy ultimately, not like smash him like a bug, but actually to bring this kind of destruction into his life without a cause. It was not because of Job's anything in Job.

It was without a cause. This is just something that God did because he sovereignly chose to test Job this way. There's nothing in Job that caused it.

So Satan answered Yahweh and said, skin for skin. Yes, all that a man has, he will give for his life. Now, this expression, skin for skin, no commentator knows what it means, and they all say so.

They all say they don't know what it means. Some speculate about it, but it's an obscure old saying. It's obvious that to the readers of the book of Job, this meant something.

It was perhaps a common saying, but to deduce its meaning, we would have to probably see the second part of this statement as sort of an application of it. Like there's a general thing, skin for skin. And the explanation of it is everything that a man has to give in exchange for his life and different suggestions have been made that skin might refer to pelts that were purchased in the marketplace.

But but then it's very unlikely that skins were exchanged for skins. I mean, skins might be exchanged for money, but not for skins. The fact that the thing that happened to Job after this was an affliction of his skin suggests that it's some kind of a reference to a man's skin.

And it's probably just a proverb, some kind of an axiom, a saying that was a short form of a longer set of presuppositions. I have a theory myself, but I don't know any more than the scholars do about it. But it strikes me as it may be it may be a saying that came from the marketplace.

Where, you know, persons will sell things or trade things, but not for less value than than it is to them. And if one would imagine that someone would offer you any amount of money for your life or for your skin, as it were, to save your skin, you know. Of course, you wouldn't take any amount of money in exchange for it.

You wouldn't take anything less than skin for your skin. That is, you wouldn't take anything less valuable than your life. If someone wanted to purchase your life from you, they'd have to give you life back.

You wouldn't trade it for money. Nothing less than the value of your skin would be received in exchange for your skin. Skin for skin and nothing less than that from your

skin.

That that seems to agree with what Satan says after this, because whatever a man has to give in exchange for his life, that is, his life is worth more to him than any number of possessions. And that may be what skin for skin meant. It might have been a short way of a well-known way of summarizing some longer thought that we that has been lost to us.

But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse you to your face. So Yahweh said to Satan, behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life. So God gives him a little more rope here before he let him take his possessions, but don't touch him now.

He says, OK, you can touch him, but you can't kill him. But then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job. Notice how rapid this is.

In the previous case, in chapter one, verse 12, it says Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. And then verse 13 says, now there was a day which could have been sometime later. There's at least the possibility of a passage of time between this deal that Satan made with God and Satan choosing the particular opportune time to carry out his malice.

But here it's like Satan is impatient and he goes out directly from the presence of the Lord and smites Job without any delay, with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Now, the nature of this illness has been speculated about. Scholars sometimes want to make it leprosy.

If so, his friends would not really be able to get very close to him as they seem to have. A number of ancient scholars have wanted to make it elephantiasis, which is a disease that mostly people in Africa get and in that region, which is a horrible, dreaded and incurable disease. And some say that elephantiasis is actually a form of leprosy, too.

But the Bible doesn't use the term leprosy or anything specifically. He's just covered with boils. Could be any number of conditions that would cause that infections or whatever.

We do know that he elsewhere describes his symptoms. For example, in Chapter 30, verse 17 and verse 30, he describes an aching and burning in his bones. That was part of his symptoms.

His bones burned in him. His bones ached in him. In Chapter 30 and verse 30, he mentions his skin was darkened and peeling and falling off of him.

In Chapter 5, excuse me, Chapter 7, verse 5, it looks like he's talking about continually erupting pustules. You know, he's scraping himself with a posture, perhaps to alleviate the itching or possibly scrape away the pus that's continually coming out of his skin. He

doesn't want it to accumulate.

But he's in a miserable shape, obviously in pain and agony. And it says he took for himself a potsherd, verse 8, with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Now, sitting in the midst of ashes, most scholars think that means he went outside the city and sat in the ash heap or the garbage dump.

Some think this is an evidence that he was rejected by the town because they assume the same things his friends did. That this disaster had come upon him because he must be an evil man and that he was socially ostracized or because of his disease. It was leprosy or something that he had to be quarantined and sent out.

And he sat in the rubbish heap. Others think that sitting in the ashes was simply a deliberate act of repenting in dust and ashes, as it were, that he chose ashes as his place to sit because repenting in dust and ashes was a common or mourning in dust and ashes is a common phenomenon. But he was sitting in the ashes in any case, and we don't get his response immediately, as we did in chapter one.

Instead, we have his wife showing up and she's the only living member of his family left that he knows about. And she said to him, do not do you still hold to your integrity, curse God and die. Now, again, it's the word blessed, but meant in an evil sense.

His wife becomes obviously a mouthpiece for the enemy. She doesn't know it. She's probably sympathetic toward him.

She's probably hates to see her husband in this condition. Thinks, well, you'd be better off just dying and being put out of your misery. So why don't you just curse God and let him strike you? You can't commit suicide directly, but you could incur the wrath of God sufficiently to get him to strike you dead.

And that'd be that'd be better than this. Again, they didn't have the concept of an afterlife. So it's not like if you died under the stroke of God, you could expect to go to hell or heaven.

But rather you die in the stroke of God, you're put out of your misery. So whether she's sympathetic toward his misery or whatever, she is obviously urging him in the directions the devil wants him to go. And therefore, she becomes an instrument of Satan in his life, just as Peter was with Jesus when Peter urged Jesus to not accept the death of the cross.

And Jesus said, get behind me, Satan, you're an offense to me. Sometimes our trusted friends or loved ones will be the ones who actually inadvertently are used to speak what the devil wants us to hear. But he said to her, you speak as one of the foolish women speaks.

He doesn't say she's evil, but he says she's being foolish. Her advice is to curse God.

That's not good.

He says, shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity? So again, he's got the same idea. God is one who gave us our good and God's one who gives us adversity. Shouldn't we accept one as readily as the other? Why should we accept good and think that that's normal and that's our due and not think that adversity is also.

He's being very reasonable for a man in such agony, but it is possible for a man to maintain his integrity and his high view of God, no matter how severe the trials get. And in all this, Job did not sin with his lips. Now, when Job's three friends heard of all the adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place.

Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Neanothite. For they had made an appointment together to come and to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they raised their eyes from afar and did not recognize him, that's not that they thought he was someone else, but rather they didn't recognize him as the man they had known because he's so different.

They lifted their voices and wept and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. That's, again, a typical way of showing mourning. So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him.

And they saw that his grief was very great. We'll say more about this when we have more time. We're going to have to end here.

But these three friends obviously came with good intentions. They had heard about their mutual friend's troubles. They'd made an appointment.

They'd conferred with each other, thought apparently it'd be better to visit him as a group than just individually. So they made an appointment to meet together with him, hopefully to come and give him some comfort. But their idea of comfort was to bring him to repentance because their view was that he had done something evil and that the only way he could be brought to a better place would be to repent.

And, you know, there are times when that's true of people, and it's not really an uncharitable way for them to think. They don't know otherwise at this point, and they assume that this is the thing that'll be good for him. And so they come to try to be of help.

And their sensitivity and sympathy toward him is seen in the fact that they are willing to sit seven days and seven nights on the ground with him. Now, these were all noble men in their societies, I'm sure. Job was the greatest of the men of the East, and his friends were probably of similar rank in their societies.

They come from different countries or different tribes, all of them there. It's an international gathering. But Job had international friends.

He was notable. And so they come and they humble themselves and sit on the ground with him and sit silently for seven days and seven nights. It may be that they're preparing their speeches during that time, but they are refraining themselves from speaking.

Perhaps this was a time of mourning for his children if they had, in fact, died. Or this could be considerably later than his children's death. For all we know, we don't know the time lapse.

Anyway, we find them not speaking until Job speaks and he speaks in the next chapter. But we will not speak about that until tomorrow. So if they could refrain for seven days and nights from speaking, I guess I have to refrain for one day and one night before speaking further about this.

So we'll stop with that.