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Job 6 - 10



Job - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg explores the dialogue between Job and his friends in the book of Job chapters six through ten. Gregg highlights how Job, despite agony and strife, maintains his faith in God, while his friends contend that suffering reflects sinfulness. The speaker emphasizes the complexity of the relationship between human suffering and divine intervention, noting that Job's experiences challenge theological beliefs. Throughout the discussion, Gregg provides theological analysis and contextual interpretation of the text.

Transcript

We're picking up the story at the sixth chapter, Job chapter six. Eliphaz has given his first speech and Job doesn't initially really answer any of Eliphaz's points initially. He's still not finished pouring out his grief in general, but then he will come around to saying something about Eliphaz's points.

That's interesting. He says, Oh, that my grief were fully weighed and my calamity laid with it in the balances. For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea.

Therefore, my words have been rash. Now, the only words he's spoken really that could be said to be rash are his cursing the day he was born back in chapter three. And he now has some regrets about ventilating like that.

Not that he said anything that is specifically sinful. It was not exactly a good attitude that he expressed, but I mean, he says, I've been my grief is so overbearing. It has squeezed out of me these rash statements.

I should have been more controlled. He says, for the arrows of the almighty are within me, my spirit drinks in their poison. The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

Now, notice that he, along with his friends, agrees that it is God that is the author of his trials. And many people feel that this is a mistake that he's making as are his friends. But when you read the first two chapters, you find that really God is, in a sense, the author of trials.

It's true that the suggestion of afflicting Job was made by Satan. But Satan acknowledged that unless God permitted him to do it, he couldn't. And so God really is the one who permitted it.

And we do have other places in Scripture where we see that even the actions of evil spirits must go through the screening of God. He can screen their actions. So we read, for example, in First Kings 22 of a lying spirit coming before God and asking for permission to go and become a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets.

And God gives permission so that the prophet Micaiah tells Ahab, therefore, the Lord has sent a lying spirit into the mouth of your prophets. And it's true in the Old Testament, whenever somebody was afflicted by an evil spirit, it was said to be an evil spirit from the Lord. An evil spirit from the Lord came against King Saul and made him rave and go crazy.

Now, I think we're supposed to understand that the same way we'd have to understand Job or that other example in First Kings 22, that an evil spirit came to God wishing permission to do something to Saul and God. And God said, OK, I'll let you so that the Bible, although it recognizes the agency of the devil and of evil spirits, it does not shy away at all from God taking full responsibility. Full responsibility in the sense for the suffering in the case of the lying spirit in Ahab's prophets or in the case of the evil spirit that was sent from the Lord against Saul.

These were specific judgments that God justly and deliberately sent against those men and that God can use evil spirits as a means of judging is entirely within God's realm. This is something we have to understand about the spiritual realm. It's not as if over on that side of the universe is God and his angels and over the other side is the devil and his.

And there's this big clash going on and they all retreat to their separate places. And there's like two independent things going on. The devil and his angels can't do a thing unless they come to God and get, you know, written permission.

And God apparently often says, no, we don't read of all the cases when when God says no, nor do we read of all the cases when God says yes, but the cases we read about make it clear that nothing can be done against God's people by the devil unless God gives permission. And because the devil says, I can't touch Job, you put a hedge about it. You have to let me get at him or nothing will ever happen to him.

And so, therefore, we know that the devil is just on a leash. And God, he's he ends up serving God's purposes, though he does not desire to, just like Jacob or Joseph's brothers did not plan to serve God's purposes and selling their brother in slavery. But they did anyway.

The Sanhedrin didn't intend to fulfill God's purposes in condemning Jesus to be crucified, but their plans, God used it anyway. It doesn't mean that what they did in their malice was excusable or that they're not responsible for their evil intentions or that they won't be judged for it. But it means that God permitted it, and if he had not permitted it, it wouldn't they would have been able to do it.

Remember how many times men took up stones to stone Jesus during the course of his ministry? How many times it says, because Jesus said something offended his eyes, they took up stones to stone him, but no one laid a hand on him, or therefore they sought to kill him, but no one laid a hand on him. It doesn't say exactly how Jesus escaped those situations, but it's clear that it often says because his hour was not yet. In other words, there are people who would have killed him sooner if God hadn't prevented it.

And when Jesus was to death is only because God didn't prevent it when he could have even then. So that's what we see. These things really do come from God.

They are from God. And so Job is not really mistaken in seeing these as the arrows of the Almighty hanging out of his body. Like I've been hit a whole bunch of times.

The terrors of God are right against me. Now, of course, he interprets this as God's hostility toward him. And that in that Job is mistaken.

It's not surprising that man would think that if you walk up to me and punch me across the face, I will probably interpret that as a hostile action because I don't know why you're doing it. Now, if you told me afterwards, well, the reason I did that is that person over there said they put a million dollars in your children's bank account if I came up and punched you. And I say, oh, well, then that wasn't a hostile act after all.

It just looked like it to me. You know, there's something going on behind the scenes I didn't know about. And, you know, Job can be forgiven, I suppose, for thinking this communicates the hostility of God toward him because God is shooting at him.

You know, God is allowing these horrible things happen. They're the terrors of God. And he says to in verse five and six or verse five, especially, does the wild donkey brave when it has grass or does the ox low over its fodder? In other words, animals, when they make noises, they mean something.

There's a reason for it. The farmer, the rancher doesn't just get annoyed when the ox is low and he knows it's time to feed him. The ox is hungry.

The animal noises are not just irritating. They make sense. And my wailing makes sense, too.

There's a reason for it. And, you know, you shouldn't just get irritated by my complaints. There's something that lies behind it, just as there is behind the lowing of an ox or the

brain of a donkey when they're hungry.

Now, verse six, can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them. They are as loathsome food to me. Now, this statement, is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them.

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They are as loathsome food to me. Now, this statement, is there any taste in the white of an egg? White of an egg is only a guess at the meaning of the Hebrew words there. It's an ancient one.

The rabbis decided they wanted to translate it white of an egg, but they really don't know what the words in the Hebrew mean. The part that's translated white, really is more literally slime. And the word that's translated egg is an unknown word, but many scholars think it's actually a name of some unidentified vegetable that they knew in those days that we don't.

The slime of something almost maybe like we think of maybe like the the excretions of aloe vera plants or something like that, that slimy stuff. There is something there is something that was in that they knew of, which if you ate it, it was tasteless. Certainly the white of an egg would qualify, but we don't know if that's what he was really referring to.

He's talking about something that's tasteless, even loathsome to eat, that you really wouldn't like to eat it. And he says, can what is flavorless be eaten without salt? Is there any taste in this slime of this plant or this white of the egg? My soul or my palate refuses to touch them. They're loathsome food to me.

Now, what's that mean? How does this figure in his argument? Some feel that what he's saying is that because of his ailment, he's lost his appetite. Everything tastes flavorless to him, though it's not clear why that would be an important part of this discussion. Some feel that he's actually commenting on Eliphaz's speech and saying it's as flavorless and as unappealing as tasteless food without salt.

It's hard to know exactly what he's saying here, so it remains kind of a mystery. He says, oh, that I might have my request that God would grant me the thing that I long for. And that is that God, that would please God to crush me, that he would lose his hand and cut me up, just kill me.

Then I would still have comfort, though in anguish I would exult. That is, if I knew that God was going to quickly crush me, then my sufferings right now, I could actually rejoice in because I know they're coming to a soon end. But I don't know that.

I don't know that I won't be suffering like this long term. Let him not spare, for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. That line, I have not concealed the words of the Holy One, is not entirely clear, but apparently it means I have not suppressed God's words.

Remember, Paul said in Romans chapter one that the wrath of God burns from heaven and is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. And who suppress the truth and their unrighteousness, people who hear the word of God or they hear the truth and they don't like what it says. So they suppress it rather than obey it.

Maybe that's what he's saying. He hasn't done. I haven't suppressed God's words.

I haven't ignored them. In other words, I have obeyed them, not tried to dispense with them some way. What strength do I have that I should hope? What is my end that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones or is my flesh bronze? Is my help not within me and is success driven from me? To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend.

Now, he actually directly kind of rebukes Eliphaz. You know, you see, I'm in misery here. Shouldn't you have shown a measure of kindness to me? Now, Eliphaz kind of thought he was.

He commended Job initially for his early behavior, but then he did suggest that Job had done something wrong. But Eliphaz really believed that was true. And it's not an unkindness to tell somebody they have something to repent of if you can see that that is true and they are ignoring it.

That's the kindness you can give them is to show them that there's something they can do to get right with God. But Job realized that this was really more just a baseless accusation against Job and not a kindness. He says, you know, you really should come here to comfort me, not to accuse me.

He said, even though even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty, even if your friend has departed from God, you should still show some kindness to him in reaching out to him. There is such thing as being tactful. My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away, which are dark because of the ice and into which the snow vanishes.

When it is warm, they cease to flow. When it is hot, they vanish from their place. The paths of their way turn aside.

They go nowhere and perish. The caravans of Tima look. The travelers of Sheba hope for them as they hope for water in the desert.

But the streams are dry. They are disappointed because they were confident and come there and are confused. Now, what he's saying is this.

You guys are like when I saw you guys coming, I thought, oh, I'm going to get some sympathy here. These guys are going to say something encouraging. These guys are going to say something comforting, just like when you're in the desert, you see a riverbed or stream, you're thirsty, you go looking and it's all dried up.

There's nothing there. You hoped in it, but it was it was a deceitful promise. And you guys are like that.

I thought you were going to help me. I thought you were going to encourage me, but you just come and make it worse for me. He speaks about, you know, when the ice melts in the mountains and it gets hot, that's when you especially want the water to be there.

But he says they're like a stream that dries up when it's hot. Well, that's when you want it to have water. And when he's in trouble is when he especially needs the refreshment of the support of some of his friends.

And they're like dry riverbeds. They're providing no water for him. Verse 21, and now you are nothing.

For now you are nothing. You see terror and are afraid. Did I ever say bring something to me or offer a bribe for me from your wealth or deliver me from the enemy's hand or redeem me from the hand of oppressors? In other words, did I ever ask you for anything? Did I ask you to come here? You know, I didn't.

You came here on your own. I didn't request for you to come and deliver me or to do something for me here. If you wanted to do so, that's fine.

But you should do something that would be a welcome gesture rather than something that makes my life worse. I think it's an insightful thing when he says in verse 21, he says, you see terror and are afraid. What's that mean? Well, they see his terror.

They see his affliction. They see the disasters come on him. And it scares them.

Why? Because they always thought of him as a righteous man. And it's frightening for them to think that things like that could happen to a righteous man. After all, if you can live with a theology that says, if I do the right thing, all will go well with me, then you can be in control of your circumstances somewhat.

I mean, if you do the wrong thing, you can expect problems to come. But at least if you want to avoid trouble, you can just watch your steps, keep your nose clean, make sure

you don't do the wrong thing. And then you can feel confident.

I'm safe. You know, it's nice in an uncertain world to feel like you know what to do to stay safe. And in a philosophy that says, just behave well and you'll be safe.

That makes you feel secure. And then you run across a man who behaves exceedingly well and he wasn't safe. And it scares you.

You think, wait a minute, this is an unpredictable world. This is a situation where I can't control the outcome. And it was because of that fear, apparently, that they held so strongly to their view that Job must have done something wrong.

They could not they could not allow themselves to entertain the notion that he might really be innocent and suffering, because not only does that challenge their theology, which they were quite fond of, apparently, but also it raises the issue of their own security. We've been behaving and things have been going well. But what if we keep behaving and things go badly like this? Then I don't have control over my future.

And that's a frightening prospect. And I believe that when I mentioned that I went through something a while ago, many years ago, actually, it was the case, in fact, when my marriage broke up and there were people who were saying, well, you know, you must have done something wrong because if you do everything right, your marriage won't break up. And they even use this illustration that, you know, a woman is like a flower and, you know, the man is the gardener and if the woman is, you know, if she wilts, it's because the gardener failed to take care of it.

If the gardener does his part, the flower will flourish, which, of course, means women are not human. Women are plants. Women are easily controlled by men.

Men can manipulate women and get whatever they want out of them. That's what it's saying. It's saying women don't have free will.

Women are not self-determining. But people wanted to believe that. They wanted to believe if you treat your wife right, she will never leave you.

And my case troubled them because their marriages were still intact. But if it's possible that you can do everything right to your wife and she'd still leave, then they're not secure in their marriages. Maybe they thought as long as I coddle my wife, as long as I treat her well, as long as I make her happy, you know, she'll never leave me.

Well, their wives thankfully have not left them. I hope they never do. But my situation didn't fit their theology.

But they had to make it fit. So they insisted that you did not treat your wife well. They knew of nothing.

They made no specific accusation because they knew of nothing. But they just they knew there must be something. And it was exactly like the situation because I said the same thing Job did.

I said, well, I'm not aware of anything. You know, this is happening to me and I don't have any idea why it's happening. But they got angry just like Job's counselors did.

And it's an amazing thing. This is where I saw that people really do act like this. I'd always read the book of Job, but this is a little unrealistic.

Certainly, these guys are not going to get this angry at him just for saying what he's saying. They're going to be more reasonable than that. But in real life, it really does happen.

If your circumstances challenge somebody's security and their easy philosophy that makes them feel like, OK, I've got control over my circumstances, I can dictate the outcome by my good behavior. And then your situation seems to give the light. They don't want that.

They don't want to change their mind about that. They see terror and they're afraid. They're afraid for their own case.

And I'm sure that that's what Job's counselors were afraid of. You know, and I think that's what he's saying. Verse 24, he says, teach me and I will hold my tongue.

Cause me to understand where and I have erred. How forceful are right words, but what do your arguing prove? Do you intend to prove my words, excuse me, to reprove my words and the speeches of a desperate one which are of wind? What he's saying is I'm speaking rather rashly, I admit it. And some of my words are probably going to have to eat my words later on.

It's like wind blowing out of my it's like, you know, I'm just ventilating. And, you know, are you going to take my words so seriously that you have to reprove them and refute them when these are just the desperate words like wind pouring out of a desperate person? He says, yes, you overwhelm the fatherless and you undermine your friend. Now, he said in verse 14, kindness should be shown by his friend to a man who's suffering.

And he says, but you don't do that. You undermine your friend. And this is really, again, their problem.

Their problem is they weren't true friends. They wanted to be, but they they're they insisted on believing what their pre agreed upon theology insisted on rather than believing their friend when he's telling the truth. Now, therefore, be pleased to look at me, for I would never lie to your face.

I was looking in the eye. I'm telling you the truth. I haven't done anything wrong.

That's what he's saying. Look at me. I wouldn't lie to your face.

Turn now. Let there be no injustice. Yes, turn again.

My righteousness still stands. That is, I still maintain that I'm righteous in this situation. Is there injustice in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavory? Now, that is a metaphor for being discerning.

He says, do you think I can't discern between right and wrong? Do you think I can't? My taste can't discern between different flavors of things. He's using taste as a metaphor for discernment. And he's saying that, you know, I, like you, am sensitized to right and wrong.

And I would be able to know. I would be able to tell if something I'd done was wrong. I could taste that.

Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Verse chapter seven, verse one says, are not his days also like the days of a hired man, like a servant who earnestly desires the shade and like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages? So I have been allotted months of futility and wearisome nights have been appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, when will I arise and the night be ended? For I have my fill of tossing until dawn. My flesh is caked with worms and dust.

My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh. When he says there's a time of hard service for man on earth, he's almost saying, OK, I accept the fact that like a laborer has to go work out in the heat until his shift is over. He's got to be out there.

He's got to suffer the afflictions of the weather and so forth as he's out doing his duty. I accept that life is not easy. Men have to work.

They have to endure hard things. But at least a day laborer can look forward to the end of the day when he can. He doesn't have to work 24 seven.

He works. There's a time of hard service for a man, but it ends. He goes to bed at night and rest.

But I don't rest. I toss all night long. I don't get any sleep all night.

I just wish it was daytime so I could get up because I'm not sleeping anyway. Says I'm not getting the relief that one could expect that everyone would have, although everyone has to have some hardship. There should be times of relief.

He's basically saying I'm never going to get any relief. He says my days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and are spent without hope. Oh, remember that my life is breath.

My eye will never again see good. The eye of him who sees me will see me no more. While your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer be.

As the cloud disappears and vanishes away. So he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore.

He's talking about dying here. But it's interesting that he was wrong. He did see good again.

He said, I will never see good again. Now there's a negative confession. However, he did see good again, even though he never made a positive confession.

I know that God's going to make everything turn out good. Although he might have implied that when he said, I know my redeemer lives a little later. But most people see that as a confession of his belief in a resurrection.

But we'll deal with that later. In any case, he's not positive. He's not making positive confessions at all.

Although even without them, things did turn around for him. Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth. Verse 11, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. At this point, verse 12 through 21, he starts using the word you. And you'll see that the New King James capitalizes the you.

That's because the translators believe that at this point, he's not talking to his friends, but to God and they're right. And we see that down in verse 20, because as he speaks to this person, he calls you. He says, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? He's referring to God as one who's watching what men do.

And so he's now turning to God away from Eliphaz, not speaking to Eliphaz, but speaking to God and giving his complaint directly to God. Am I a sea or a sea serpent that you set a guard over me? Many of the Psalms make reference to God setting a boundary for the sea and telling the waves they can go no further than this amount. So that God is watching over the sea, guarding it, but it doesn't cover the earth is what he's implying.

Am I like the sea that you have to set a guard over me or a sea serpent, some evil animal that has to be kept under control? When I say my bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint, then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions. Apparently, he was having bad dreams he had not previously mentioned. And he's attributing them to God, giving them.

So that my soul chooses strangling rather than my body, because I'd rather die than keep in this body. I loathe my life. I would not live forever.

Let me alone for my days are but a breath. What is man that you should magnify him,

that you should set your heart on him, that you should visit him every morning and test him every moment? You know, it's interesting that he says that when God visits and tests man is, in fact, what was happening to him, he was being tested. But a man is tested with tribulation just as the finding pot is for silver and the fire for gold.

So trials are the way that God tests men. And that's what he's referring to. But he refers to this as God magnifying man.

He's not really taking it as a flattery from God, but he is. He is making a true point. And that is that God would even pay enough attention to man, to care about how man turns out, is to magnify man who's a man is like a little speck, like a little insect on a planet that itself is a speck in the universe.

How could God even pay attention to man? Remember what the psalmist said in Psalm 8, along these same lines. In Psalm 8, in verse 3, he says, when I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you've ordained. What is man that you're mindful of or the son of man that you visit him? Same thing that Job has.

God's the great watcher of men. Why does he even watch? Why does he attribute such significance to man? Why does he magnify man to a place significant enough in his estimation to actually care what man does or even test him? There's a sense in which God's testing us is a flattery because he might otherwise have just ignored us. He might have thought you're not important enough for me to even care about.

But then he tests us and he sends trials to see if we'll pass or fail is basically him humbling himself even to behold the affairs of men and elevating man to a status that man does not inherently deserve, but which God attributes to him. How long, verse 19, will you not look away from me and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? Have I sinned? What have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you set me as your target so that I'm a burden to myself? Why then do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? In other words, I don't know what I've done. Have I sinned against you? Let me know.

And, you know, if I have, why don't you just pardon me and take away my iniquity? For now, I will lie down in dust and you will seek me diligently. I will no longer be. And as God, I'm going to go to the place where even you can't find me.

That's that was his opinion about death. Later on, he talks about Sheol in a very similar way in Chapter 10, verses 21 through 22, talking about the place where the dead go in Chapter 10, verse 21. He says, before I go to the place from which I will not return to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, the land of dark as dark as darkness itself.

As the shadow of death without any order, where even the light is like darkness. This is the ancient people that had no idea what happened after death. All they knew is it goes

dark.

It's as dark as dark. You don't come back from that. Even God can't find you there.

It's too dark. That was at least how Job poetically phrased it. Now, Job is obviously speaking rather defiantly to God in a way.

And it makes us feel a little uncomfortable because we think, well, he should be more respectful of God. And yet at the end of the book of Job in Chapter 42, verses six and seven, God says that Job has spoken rightly of me and the three friends have not. God does rebuke Job.

So does Elihu later on for his what I guess flying off the handle for his ventilating. He should have restrained some of his speech, but his speech was not really wrong. He was right in saying that God was the one who was testing him.

He just couldn't figure out why God was doing it. He didn't even say that God was wrong to do it. He was just saying that he doesn't understand why God's doing it.

If God wants to, why doesn't he just kill him? That would be easier. Certainly, although I've never felt I would never feel comfortable speaking to God in these terms, apparently this book gives us the impression that God is not insecure. He's not threatened.

He's not doesn't get easily get angry if people are ranting at him if they are, in fact, people that are trying to understand their relationship with him. Job is not an atheist. Job is not an adversary of God trying to find fault with God.

He's trying to understand because he's had a relationship with God. He's hoping to keep and which he misses because it feels like it's over. And he's definitely whining about that.

But that's it's only a manifestation that he cares about his relationship with God and God took it as such. God doesn't get angry with him necessarily for for these kinds of challenges. Now, build that the second man speaks, the Shuaite, the Shuaite was a descendant of Shua, who was one of Abraham's other sons by Keturah, according to Genesis 25, verses one and two.

And this man was descended from that man, apparently. And build that speaks up and says, how long will you speak these things and the words of your mouth be like strong wind? Well, Job had said that his speech was like strong wind. Remember back in chapter six, verse 26, he admitted it.

Yeah, this is these are the words of desperate man coming forth like wind. And he says, well, how long are you going to ventilate like this? Does God subvert judgment? That means does God subvert justice or does the almighty pervert justice? You see the

parallelism, I'm assuming you're noticing this all the way through the parallelism, not in every single verse, but in most verses, you see the same thing said twice, because that's what the poetry is here. If your sons have sinned against him, he has cast them away for their transgression.

If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the almighty, you were if you were sure and upright, surely now he would awake for you and prosper your rightful habitation, though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly for inquire, please, of the former age and consider the things discovered by their fathers. For we are of but of yesterday and know nothing because our days on earth are a shadow. Will they mean our elders, our ancestors, will they not teach you and tell you in utter words from their heart? Now, Bill, dad, unlike Eliphaz, is not depending on experience, but on tradition.

Eliphaz says, I saw I have seen the spirit appeared to me and told me this. My experience proves that this is true. Bill that has the same theory that Eliphaz has, but he doesn't claim that he knows it from experience, but rather that it's the tradition.

It's what the ancestors said. Our opinions don't make any difference at all because we're just a shadow. We only live one lifetime.

And what is that? It's a flash in the pan and we're gone. We don't know anything. We're just creatures of a day like a like certain species of flies that the larva hatches develops into a fly.

They mate and die in the same day. Creatures of a single day of a moment, shadows that just pass by quickly. That's what we are.

So we need to listen to what the ancestors said. It's like G.K. Chesterton said that honoring tradition is simply giving our ancestors a vote. And he, of course, he's Roman Catholic and Roman Catholics are all about tradition.

But it sounds like a fair suggestion. Well, we should give our ancestors a vote. The only trouble is truth isn't decided by majority vote.

There is a way that seems right to a man in the end of it are the ways of death. And maybe that the majority are on the wrong path. Often is case.

But build that is basically saying, Job, you are an arrogant person to think that you can know more of than our ancestors have known. And that does kind of I mean, when someone hears a man protesting that he's right and the ancestors are wrong, it does sound kind of arrogant. But the psalmist made the same claim himself in Psalm 119, verse 100.

The psalmist said, I understand more than the ancients because I keep your precepts.

That doesn't sound humble for a man to say, I know more than the ancients knew. But I keep your precepts and they didn't.

And therefore, what can I say? I understand things they didn't. And build that is saying that that's Job's position. Now, Job has not challenged the ancestors.

He's just saying, this is what I know. There's a lot I don't know. What I don't know is why this is happening.

But what I do know is it's not happening because of anything I did to make it happen. Now, if the ancestors didn't agree with that, the worst for them. That's what's true.

It's a fact. But build that basically saying, no, we need to submit to the judgment of the ancestors because they I mean, they've been around longer and they know more. Verse 11, can the papyrus grow without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water? While it is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other plant.

So are the paths of all who forget God. And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, whose confidence shall be cut off and whose trust is a spider's web. That's what he what he leans on, what he trusts in is as weak as a spider's web.

He leans on his house, but it does not stand. He holds it fast, but it does not endure. He grows green in the sun and his branches spread out in the garden.

His roots wrap around the rock heap and look for a place in the stone. If he is destroyed from his place, then it will deny him saying, I have not seen you. Behold, this is the joy of his way and out of the earth others will grow.

Behold, God will not cast away the blameless. Nor will he uphold the evil doers. He will yet fill their mouth, your mouth with laughing and your lips with rejoicing.

So he's seeking to be comforting here. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing. Now, there's some things in this speech that the Hebrew scholars are not sure what they mean.

For example, in verse 19, almost every word in verse 19 can have more than one meaning. And there's a wide variety of opinions about what it means. Therefore, I won't even I won't even try to suggest what verse 19 means.

But the part versus 11 through 18 is basically saying that just like the papyrus needs to grow in the water. So a man needs to grow in a relationship with God. And as if you take away the water with papyrus withers and shrivels.

So if a man separates from God like a hypocrite, as he puts it in verse 13, those who forget God, well, they're going to perish, too, just like the papyrus does. Papyrus does when its proper environment is not present to maintain it. God is the proper environment

to maintain man.

And, you know, the man who forgets God, he likens to some plant that's trying to grow. It's putting out its suckers all over the garden, looking for nourishment somewhere else. It wraps its roots around rocks, trying to find a firm place to be.

But it is nonetheless temporal because it's because he's a man who forsakes God. Now, Job answered and said, truly, I know it is so. In other words, you know, you're not telling me any philosophy that I wouldn't have told others before.

This is familiar stuff to me. We all know this is true. I don't know why you're telling me this is if I don't know it.

I know this is true, he says. But how can a man be righteous before God? Now, we might understand that word to be how can a man be pure? How can a man be holy and so forth? But the word righteous there is a forensic word, a legal term. It means how can a man win a legal dispute? How can a man be justified in a legal court of law if he's in a legal dispute with God? He says if one wished to contend with him, and this word contend also means to conduct a lawsuit.

This is this speech of Job in this chapter all the way through is the idea that if I want to stand before God and bring my case against God, as a man would bring a case against another man in court, it's a hopeless case. Who can win against God in court? We can see that that is what he's got all the way through this chapter, because in chapter in verse 32, he says, for he is not a man as I am, that I may answer him and that we could go to court together. I can't go to court against God.

If a man wanted to win a case against God, he'd be hopeless. It says, if one wished to contend with him, verse three, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. God is wise in heart and mighty in strength who has hardened himself against him and prospered.

He removes the mountains and they do not know when he overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth out of its place and its pillars tremble. He commands the sun and it does not shine.

He seals off the stars. He alone spreads out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. He made the bear Orion and the Pleiades.

These are, of course, constellations in the sky and the chambers of the south. He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number. If he goes by me, I do not see him.

If he moves past, I do not perceive him. If he takes away, who can hinder him? Who can say to him, what are you doing? God will not withdraw his anger. The allies of the proud

lie prostrate beneath him.

Now, what he's saying is that God is well, man is no match for God. OK, I'm I'm trying to tell you that I'm innocent. You're telling me that God's got a case against me.

How can I prove myself innocent? I mean, how can any man really be fully innocent in the sight of God? If God wants to make a case against him, the man has no hope. God controls the sun and the moon and the stars and the waves of the sea. He alone walks on the waves of the sea.

Of course, Jesus did that, too. An interesting point he makes in verse eight. God says he alone spreads out the heaven and treads on the waves of the sea.

So no one walks on the sea except God and those that God permits like Peter. But certainly Jesus proves himself to be God by walking on the water. And he says, you know, not only can no man stand against God's opposition, but his allies will fall under God.

If a man gathers a lot of allies on his side against God, well, those allies like prostrate under God, too. I mean, God just mows them down. It says in the Proverbs, though hand join in hand, the wicked will not go unpunished.

But that means if all the wicked would join forces together against God, they'd still get punished. They would not win against God. And that's what he says there in verse 13, verse 14.

How then can I answer him and choose my words to reason with him? For though I were righteous, I could not answer him. I would beg mercy of my judge. If I called and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice.

For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to catch my breath. He fills me with bitterness.

If it is a matter of strength, indeed, he is strong. And if of justice, who will appoint my day in court? Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me. Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse.

I am blameless. Yet I do not know myself, I despise myself. It is all one thing.

Therefore, I say he destroys the blameless and the wicked. Now, what he is saying here is he's using hyperbole. He's not actually saying what is entirely what he means to be taken literally.

Where he says, if I was, even if I was righteous, I couldn't answer him. I'd still be found guilty even if I was righteous. He's not saying that God really does find righteous people guilty.

He's saying that in a court of law, God is got so much got the upper hand that. You know, he'd win even against the righteous man. Even a man who had an airtight case, even a man who'd done nothing.

God could prove him wrong if he wished. I don't think he's saying that God intends to prove righteous men wrong. But I think he's saying that, you know, God is such a great lawyer.

God has so many arguments. God has so many ways that he could answer everything that even a righteous man would not stand a chance of winning in court against him. I think that's what he's saying in all of that verbiage there.

But he says at the end of verse 20, though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse. And even if I didn't, even if I wasn't guilty going to court against God, I'm sure he'd find something, some way to make me look perverse. I would come out condemned because I couldn't answer God.

And then he says, I am blameless, yet I do not know myself. Now, I'm not sure what he means by that. Paul says something a little bit like that in 2 Corinthians, where he says, I do not even judge myself.

He says, he says, let me see how he words that. Actually, it might. I'm working from limited memory.

I might be thinking, actually, of 1 Corinthians chapter four. Oh, yeah. Yeah, it is.

It's 1 Corinthians four. In verses three and four, Paul says, but with me, it's a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I don't even judge myself, for I know nothing against myself.

Yet I am not justified by this. But he who judges me is the Lord. Now, what he says is you people are judging me, and frankly, I don't give a hoot.

I don't consider your judgment to be ultimate. I don't even consider my judgment to be ultimate. He says, I don't know anything against myself, but I can't really be sure that I'm innocent.

I mean, it's just like he says, I know nothing against myself, yet I'm not justified by this. God's my judge. He's kind of rambling a little like Job is, but he's basically saying, as far as I know, I'm innocent.

But I'm not I'm not resting in my own judgment on that, because I really don't know everything. Maybe I'm not so innocent. God's going to have to judge that.

But but Paul saying, I don't care what your judgment is, because your judgment's not even as good as my own. And I don't even trust my own. I just trust God's judgment.

And Job is not making that same point, but he's saying something a little like it when he says, I'm blameless, yet I don't know myself. That is OK. I don't have anything I have done.

I'm pretty sure I haven't done anything to bring these trials on myself, but I don't know everything about myself. You know, maybe there's something there God could find. And he does say in verse 22, though, therefore, I say he destroys the blameless and the wicked.

And this would be just a direct contradiction of Eliphaz and Bildad's speeches so far, because they say, no, God only destroys the wicked. He does not destroy the innocent. He says, well, no, that's not really true.

Everyone God seems to destroy blameless people, too, like me. If the scourge slays suddenly, he laughs at the plight of the innocent. Now, this is not true, but Job feels like it is.

He's expressing his feelings about God and he's wrong. God does not laugh at the plight of the innocent. But Job kind of feels like that's what's going on.

The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If it's not he, who else could it be? Now, this is a searching question, isn't it? Like, OK, the innocent suffer, the wicked have the earth handed over to them.

If it's not God doing it, who is it? Well, what did the devil say to Jesus in the temptation in the wilderness? He said, all these kingdoms of the world I'll give to you because they are delivered in my hand and their mind to give to whoever I want. The devil claimed that he gave the kingdoms to the wicked. And Job says, well, God does that.

And if it's not God, who is it? Well, Job didn't know. He had never read chapters one and two. He didn't probably even know there was a devil.

The question is a good question. He just doesn't know the answer to it. We do.

Verse 25. Now my days are swifter than a runner. They flee away.

They see no good. They pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey. If I say I will forget my complaint, I'll put off my sad face and wear a smile.

I'm afraid of all my sufferings. I know that you will not hold me innocent. If I'm condemned, why then do I labor in vain? If I'm going to be condemned anyway, why do I work so hard at being good? Why do I take my responsibilities so seriously if I'm just going to be condemned at the end of it anyway? I might as well just not do it.

If I wash myself with snow water and cleanse my hands with soap, yet you will plunge me into the pit and my own clothes will abhor me for he is not a man as I am that I may

answer him and that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us who may lay his hand on us both. Let him take his rod away from me and do not let dread of him terrify me.

Then I would speak and not fear him. But it is not so with me. Now he continues talking.

His speech continues in chapter 10. My soul loathes my life. I will give free course to my complaint.

Not always a good idea, but he figures what the heck. I'm going to die anyway. Might as well ventilate everything I'm thinking.

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God, do not condemn me. Show me why you contend with me.

See, all the way through here, he's not saying that God has no reason. He's just saying, God, show me what it is. I don't know what it is.

He's trying to get a grip on how to get back on good terms with God. And he doesn't have any idea what he did to damage that relation. Does it seem good to you, God, that you should oppress, that you should despise the work of your hands and shine on the counsel of the wicked? Do you have eyes of flesh or do you see like a man sees? Are your days like the days of a mortal man? Are your years like the days of a mighty man that you should seek for my iniquity and search out my sin, although you know that I'm not wicked and there is no one who can deliver me from your hand? Now, he's saying, do you see the way my friends do here? These humans, they don't see everything like you do.

They have to guess they're searching out my iniquity by their guesses. But, you know, I'm not wicked. You know, I haven't done it.

Do you see as limitedly as men do? And by implication, he's saying, no, of course you don't. You know better. God, you know that I'm innocent.

He said, your hands have made me and fashioned me and an intricate unity, yet you would destroy me. Remember, I pray that you have made me like clay. By the way, God does remember that according to Psalm 103 and verse 14.

Psalm 103, verse 14 says he he remembered that we are dust. The first part of that, let's just say he says he knoweth our frame. He remembers that we are dust.

He says, well, remember that I am I'm clay, I'm dust and you will turn me into dust again. Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothed me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? It's interesting, this ancient idea of conception in the womb. A child begins by being poured out like milk and then curdling

like cheese and then later skin and bones and stuff are added in the womb.

This is a very graphic and ancient, pre-scientific way of understanding how a baby is formed in the womb. But it's interesting how the ancients would see it that way. You know, it's like semen is like milk and they figure it must curdle like cheese in order to become something solid inside the womb.

And then it starts taking shape and so forth. It says you have granted me life and favor and your care has preserved my spirit and these things you have hidden in your heart. I know that this was with you.

If I sin, then you mark me and will not equip me of my iniquity. If I'm wicked, woe to me. Even if I'm righteous, I cannot lift up my head.

I'm full of disgrace. See my misery. If my head is exalted, you hunt me like a fierce lion.

And again, you show yourself awesome against me. You renew your witnesses against me and increase your indignation toward me. Changes in war are ever with me.

Why, then, have you brought me out of the womb? Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me. I would have been as though I had not been. I would have been carried forth from the womb to the grave.

Are not my days few? Cease, leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort. Before I go to the place from which I shall not return to the land of darkness, the shadow of death, a land as dark as darkness itself, as the shadow of death without any order, for even the light is like darkness. Well, then we have the third speech.

I mean, the speech of the third man, I think we'll save it. We'll take a break at this point and we'll come back to this last man's speech. It's not the last speech.

It's just the last man of the three. We've heard from Eliphaz, the Temanite. We've heard from Bildad, the Shuhite.

Now we have Zophar, the Nehemiathite, who's going to speak. And he is the most rude and most inconsiderate of the three. But maybe that's because Job has already answered a couple of times and he's starting to get irked by that because Job is definitely not buying it.

They've given their sound theological advice and Job's just not buying it. And that's irritating to them. You're supposed to go along with the Orthodox theology, you know.

But Job happened to be right and they were wrong in this case. So sometimes Orthodox theology might need to be rethought in view of reality. It wouldn't hurt sometimes.

We'll stop there.

