

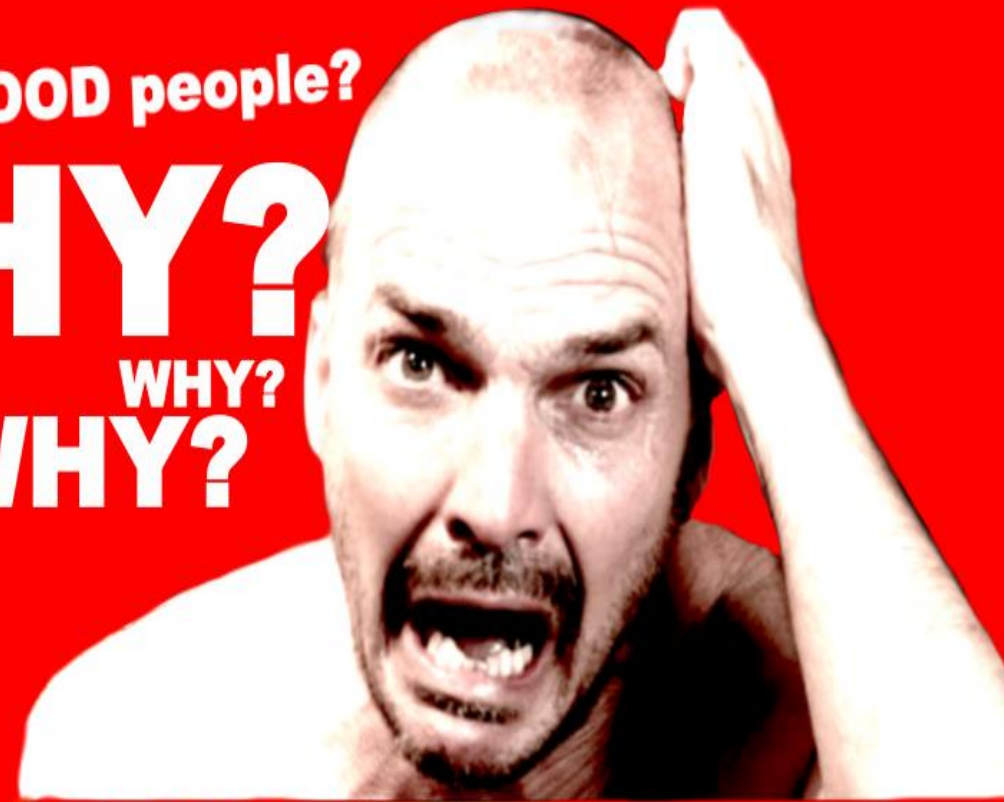
STUDY GUIDE THE PROPHET JOB

WHY do BAD things happen to GOOD people?

WHY?

WHY?
WHY?

WHY?





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Study 1 Background and Introduction

1.1 Date

- Job is a very old book – although there is no exact data, it is likely the events recorded occurred even before Abraham, and certainly before Moses.
 - No mention of the patriarchs or the law of Moses or tabernacle worship
 - No mention of the pantheistic idolatry which spread through the nations after Babel. All Job's friends believed in the true God of creation
 - Detailed descriptions of extinct animals (leviathan and behemoth) which must have been familiar to Job and his friends
 - Job died at around 200 years old (he lived 140 years after his restoration - Job 42:16) which suggests living around or before Abraham (Genesis 25:7)
 - Many detailed references to the Creation, the Fall, the Curse, and the Flood
- Set in the land of Uz, thought to be in eastern Arabia. Uz (Noah's great grandson) was two generations before Babel and Abraham was five generations after Babel.

1.2 Author

- Jewish tradition has it that Moses edited and wrote parts of Job. Highly likely to be true since Moses edited the first 5 books of the Bible and Job is set in the same timeframe as the early chapters of Genesis.
- It is likely that Job wrote down the account of the dialogues (Job 19:23,24).
- Moses probably wrote the prologue and epilogue from oral traditions and, in particular, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the opening chapters.

1.3 Who Was Job?

- He was a real person (Ezekiel 14:14,20 and James 5:11) and the events are real
- He was a leading citizen in his land (Job 29)
- He was very wise, powerful and highly regarded

1.4 Structure of the Book of Job

- Prologue Chapters 1 and 2
- Job's cry of anguish and despair Chapter 3
- First round of discourse Chapters 4 – 14

- Second round of discourse Chapters 15 – 21
- Third round of discourse Chapters 22 – 31
- Elihu's speech Chapters 32 – 37
- God's revelation Chapters 38 – 41
- Epilogue Chapter 42

1.5 The Purpose of the Book of Job

- The purpose is *not* to answer the question "why do the righteous suffer?" That question is not answered in the book of Job.
- Job's fortunes were restored but the book does not teach that relief and restoration are guaranteed. Many Christians suffer and are not restored (e.g. martyrs).
- Why then did the Holy Spirit include Job in the Bible?
- What question to be answered as we study the book!



Study 2 Prologue and Job's First and Second Tests

2.1 A Righteous Man (Job 1:1 to 1:5)

- The greatest man among all the people of the East. God chose the greatest and most righteous man to suffer greatest hardship to prove the sufficiency of faith.
- The fear of God was Job's guiding principle. See Proverbs 8:13 and 16:6.
- Job loves his children and intercedes for them. Even in their adulthood, his paternal authority is evident as they come to him to be purified (1:5).

2.2 The Heavenly Council (Job 1:6-12)

- Who is Satan? He is the adversary of God and man.
 - Created at the beginning (Job 38:6-7, Psalm 148 - the order of creation)
 - Fell after the creation of man (Genesis 1:31, 3:14-15), presumably through envy of man and pride in his own beauty and strength (1 Timothy 3:6).
 - See Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:12-15 for descriptions of his fall. Although these passages are directed to earthly kings, they include references that could only relate to Satan, so evil had these kings become.
- God is in control – he summoned the angels, including Satan, to present themselves before him. Note, Satan doesn't admit to doing any evil in the earth!
- God honours Job and calls him "blameless". There is no-one on earth like him.
- Satan challenges God by accusing Job of being mercenary – that is, of worshipping God only because God had blessed him and made him rich.
 - Note the significance of this challenge – *if Satan could get Job to curse God, he would have proved that God had not one faithful servant and that there was no such thing as true faith and belief and love for God among men. Satan would be de facto king over all mankind!*
- God gives permission for Satan to test Job, but God sets the boundaries. We can take much comfort from the fact that God is in control. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.

2.3 Job's First Test (Job 1:13-22)

- All Job's wealth is destroyed, his servants killed and, most tragically of all, his ten children are killed. News of all these things reaches Job within a few minutes.

- How many Christians could withstand such devastation without losing their love for the Lord, if not their faith as well?
- As the "ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and the "prince of this world" (John 12:31), Satan has significant power over the earth's physical processes and the minds of men – e.g. the Sabeans and the Chaldeans.
 - Not all such phenomena are directly caused by Satan since God and his holy angels can control any of the processes that fallen angels can.
- Amazingly, Job looks past his circumstances and keeps his eyes on God, who alone is the Creator. "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away" Job said. If the Lord has blessed, he has the right to withdraw his blessings. We do not merit his goodness, so what right do we have to complain when he withholds it?
- Job could not have known that Satan was behind all his woes. Although he did not understand it, nevertheless, Job worships and praises God!
- ***The score after round 1 of this Great Cosmic Contest: God 1 : Satan 0***

2.4 The Second Heavenly Council and Job's Second Test (Job 2:1-10)

- The second heavenly council is described in almost exactly the same words as the first, except that now Satan challenges God in relation to Job's physical health.
- Once again, God permits Job to be tested, even more severely than before. But God is in control and he sets the limits (2:6)
- Job is stricken with a hideous skin disease from the soles of his feet to his head.
 - He sits on an ash heap and scrapes himself with a piece of broken pottery (2:8)
 - He is so disfigured even his friends hardly recognize him (2:12)
 - He is infested with worms (7:5)
 - His skin is blackened and peeling and he has a burning fever (30:30)
- Note: Satan is able to cause physical illness when it suits his purpose and when God allows. All physical illness and infirmity finds its ultimate origins in Satan.
- Now even Job's wife deserts him. Remember, she too has lost everything, her possessions and her children, and now she apparently loses her faith, advising Job to "Curse God and die!" (2:9)
- Job corrects his wife gently, reminding her of all the good they had received from God (2:10). "In all this, Job did not sin in what he said".

- **The score after round 2 of this Great Cosmic Contest: God 2 : Satan 0**
- But Satan does not return to heaven to acknowledge defeat – the test is still far from over. It is one thing to suffer terrible hardship but quite another to do so without any relief in sight. Job's suffering was to last for months (29:2).
- Satan has another malicious attempt to break Job's faith.

2.5 The Arrival of Job's Friends (Job 2:11-13)

- Job's three friends hear of his calamities. They, too, are high ranking men. They make plans to meet and travel to Job to mourn with him and comfort him.
- It is likely that some months passed before they arrived.
 - The news had to reach them from the land of Uz
 - They had to make arrangements for the journey and for the management of their affairs whilst they were absent
 - There was the travel time from distant lands to first meet and then go to Uz.

- When they see Job, they weep, tear their robes and sit with him for a week! No-one can think of anything to say, so great is Job's suffering.

2.6 Kingdom Keys from Study 2

- **Like Job, let us always give God the highest place in our lives – above people, possessions, position and power.**
- **God is in control, no matter how desperate the circumstances.**
- **Fear God and shun evil – this is the key to righteousness.**
- **God will not test us beyond what we can stand (1 Corinthians 10:13).**





Study 3 Job's Lament and the First Discourse with Eliphaz

3.1 Job's Lament (Job 3)

- Job curses the day of his birth and forgets that his life has been used by God as a means of blessing to many others. Compare with Jeremiah 20:14 ff.
- One cannot change the past. Job's lament is not really justified but is perfectly understandable as an expression of the depth of his anguish.
- Job longs for death because it will bring relief from suffering.
- Even when he was prosperous, Job feared that the good days may not last (v25). He knew that the blessings were undeserved and that God could withdraw them.
- The blessings we enjoy are gifts of God's grace, not comforts we have earned. We need to prepare ourselves spiritually for days of testing that will surely come.

3.2 Eliphaz's First Speech (Job 4 and 5) Chapter 4

- In verses 1-6, Eliphaz responds to Job's outburst but, sadly, without looking to comfort him. There is no indication that they prayed for Job or about what to say.
 - In verse 5, he chides Job for not being able to stand up under trouble.
 - He reminds Job of his goodness to others and then suggests, in verse 6, that his hope and confidence should come from his good deeds.
- In verses 7-11, Eliphaz states his belief that God punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous. This is *true* in eternity but *false* in our temporal existence.
- Eliphaz tells of a spiritual visitation in verses 12-21. Was it a good or evil spirit?
 - The spirit asks two questions (v17), the answers to which are truly "no".
 - It then implies that God does not trust either his servants or his angels and charges them with making mistakes. But God charged Satan and his cohorts not just with mere error but with *rebellion* and threw them out of heaven as a result (see Ezekiel 28:17 and Revelation 12:4).
 - The spirit then devalues man by comparing him to a moth (v19-21). In a sense this is true but man is precious to God and made in his image (Genesis 1:27 and Psalm 8:5, which reads "You made him a little lower than *Elohim*", which is better translated as "God" than "the angels").

- The spirit makes no mention of God's grace and love or his promise of a coming Redeemer. There is no hope in its words, just empty despair. Compare with other angelic visitations (Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Daniel...).
- The advice brought by the three friends was largely based on the advice from this spirit. God later rebukes them for their erroneous counsel.

We conclude therefore that Eliphaz's visitation was from an *evil spirit*.

- With no recognition of God's grace and mercy in the spirit's message, Eliphaz takes the spiritual high ground and concludes in Job 5 that a holy God must punish evil and bless goodness. Humans eventually die, so he reasons temporal earthly benefits must indicate favour with God.

Chapter 5

- Verses 1-7: Eliphaz repeats his belief that God brings calamity on the wicked.
- In verses 8-27, Eliphaz acknowledges that God can rescue miraculously. Much of what Eliphaz says is true (e.g. Job 5:13 is quoted in 1 Corinthians 3:19).
- The discipline of a loving Father is noted by Eliphaz in Job 5:17. Compare this with Deuteronomy 8:5 and Hebrews 12:7-11.
- Since they had previously conferred (Job 2:11), Eliphaz's speech sets the tone for the advice the three friends give to Job thereafter.

3.3 Job's Reply to Eliphaz's First Speech (Job 6 and 7) Chapter 6

- Verses 1-7 express Job's continued anguish after Eliphaz has offered no comfort.
 - Job excuses his impassioned words.
 - He is deeply troubled in his mind. He is cut to the heart that God, whom he loved and served, has allowed such trials to come his way.
 - When he was wealthy, he did not cry out. Now, even his food is tasteless.
- In verses 8-10, Job asks God to take him home before he falters and denies "the words of the Holy One". Note, he did not threaten suicide but acknowledged God's sovereignty over his life. See Psalm 31:15.
- Verses 11-23
 - In his desperate situation, Job reasons that a man should be able to count on the devotion of his friends, "even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty"

- He laments that his friends are no more dependable than a fickle stream.
- In verse 21, Job rightly observes that Eliphaz is afraid of the spectacle of his suffering.
- In verses 24-30, Job once more asserts his innocence by demanding that they show him his error, if indeed he has committed one.

Chapter 7

- Verses 1-10

- Job once more laments his desperate condition. For months he has been unable to sleep. He skin is festering and he is covered in scabs and worms.
- He believes he will never see happiness again and will die forgotten.
- Verses 11-16
 - He is determined to speak out his agony. His mind is tortured with weird dreams and visions, so much so, that he would prefer death.



- Verses 17-21
 - Job asks God why he scrutinises man so closely, as if to detect his every fault. Compare this with Psalm 8:4 which says God watches us to care for us!
 - In desperation, Job assumes that God does not pardon our offences (v21).

3.4 Kingdom Keys from Study 3

- *The blessings we enjoy are gifts of God's grace, not comforts we have earned.*
- *The enemy subtly mixes truth with error. We need the Holy Spirit to help us discern the difference.*



- **Study 4 Conclusion of the First Discourse**

- 4.1 **Bildad's First Speech (Job 8)**

- Verses 1-7
 - Bildad opens harshly by assuming Job's children had sinned. He becomes more conciliatory but is nonetheless legalistic (v6).
- Verses 8-22
 - Here Bildad appeals to the wisdom of past generations (v8-10).
 - Although he isn't as blunt as Eliphaz, he suggests that God would inevitably cut off the fortunes of the wicked to reveal their true nature (v13).
 - Bildad infers, in verses 20-22, that if Job repents, then God will restore him. But he obliquely suggests that because of his calamities, Job must be evil.

- 4.2 **Job's Reply to Bildad's First Speech (Job 9,10)**

- Chapter 9**

- Verses 1-13
 - Rather than cursing God, as Satan planned, Job honours God for his greatness.
 - In this passage, Job is essentially saying that we are incompetent to judge God because we don't know what he is doing or what he intends to do.
- Verses 14-20
 - God, in his holiness, is so far removed from fallen humanity that Job despairs of any attempt to justify himself. He knows the deceitfulness of his own heart and would not attempt to justify himself before God. See Jeremiah 17:9.
 - Job acknowledges that he is sinful by nature. *He never claims to be sinless.*
- Verses 21-31
 - Job, however, declares himself as *blameless* (verse 21) in that he has done all that God has required of him. He is not relying on his own deeds, as in graceless legalism, but has responded to God out of his dependence on him.
 - He observes that God deals equally with the just and the unjust (verse 22).
 - Job sees his life as fleeting with little hope of restoration but he refuses any form of pretence.
 - Verses 30 and 31 seem to illustrate that although we may clean the exterior, God sees the sinfulness of our inner man. See Matthew 23:27.
- Verses 32-35

- Here, Job speaks of the desperate need for an intercessor between God and man – someone to “lay his hand upon us both”. This is clearly a prophetic reference to Jesus' ministry of reconciliation between God and man.

- Chapter 10**

- Job expresses the hopelessness of not having an intercessor between him and God.
- Verses 1-7
 - Job pleads with God to show him what charges are laid against him (verse 2).
 - Again, he asserts his innocence and God's greatness (verse 7).
- Verses 8-22
 - Job acknowledges God as creator and therefore as sovereign over all things. But he cries out in protest at the apparent harshness of God's judgment.
 - Job regrets the day of his birth and prays for a brief respite before he dies.

- 4.3 **Zophar's First Speech (Job 11)**

- In verses 1-6, Zophar is frustrated at Job's insistence of innocence. He misquotes Job, in verse 4, as claiming to be pure (sinless) which Job never claimed.
 - Zophar suggests in verse 6 that Job is even more sinful than he realises.
- Once again, God's unfathomable ways are spoken of in verses 7-12.
- Zophar then offers some counsel in verses 13-19, speaking prophetically of God's restoration of Job. But his counsel is conditional (verse 13 “Yet if you...”).
- Verse 20 reveals that Zophar doesn't really think Job will listen to his advice.

- 4.4 **Job's Reply to Zophar's First Speech (Job 12-14)**

- Chapter 12**

- Verses 1-12. Job responds briefly to his three friends but the painfulness of his rejection by them quickly overwhelms him.
- But Job declares the sovereignty of God in his situation (verse 9).
- God's wisdom, power and sovereignty are then enlarged upon by Job as he once more gives glory and honour to God (verses 13-25).

- Chapter 13**

- Job now focuses on his friends and exposes their falsehood and partiality (v4-12).
- Note the amazing statements of faith in verses 15, 16 and 18! In the midst of despair, Job declares his utter dependence on God who will yet vindicate him.

- Job then pleads with God to show him his sin (v23) and expresses his complete inability to understand what had provoked God to afflict him.

Chapter 14

- In this chapter, Job reflects on the mortality of man and the brevity of his life.
- Verses 15-17 provide a shaft of light in an otherwise sombre passage.

4.5 Summary of the First Discourse

- The three friends are legalistic in their view of God. That is, they believe God's favour is a result of man's good deeds, which make him acceptable before God. They believe that in this life God punishes the wicked but blesses the righteous, so Job must have sinned profoundly to deserve the calamities that have befallen him. This is contrary to the gospel of God's grace and mercy which teaches that *"there is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and there is nothing we can do to make God love us less!"*
- Job, on the other hand, bases his knowledge of God on relationship. He knows personally what God is like so he will not falsely accuse God of wrongdoing. Without compromising his faith, Job asks honest but hard questions.

4.6 Kingdom Keys from Study 4

- ***When man depends on his own virtue he falls into the trap of legalism which seeks to earn salvation through works (self righteousness).***
- ***Since God is sovereign over all his creation, we cannot begin to understand his judgments. We must***





simply trust that he loves us and will work all things for our ultimate good. See Romans 8:28. Without an intercessor between us and God, our situation is hopeless. Study 5
Second Discourse

5.1 **Eliphaz's Second Speech (Job 15)**

- Verses 1-13. Eliphaz becomes annoyed with Job and, unlike his first speech in which he was more conciliatory, he accuses Job unjustly. He appeals to the wisdom of past generations and is affronted by Job who appears to consider himself to be wiser than them.
- Verses 14-35. The words of the evil spirit are echoed in verses 14-16 and Eliphaz persists in his doctrine that the evil suffer in this life, without relief.

5.2 **Job's Reply to Eliphaz's Second Speech (Job 16, 17) Chapter 16**

- Verses 1-5. Job accuses his friends of being "miserable comforters" and rebukes them for offering no comfort, whereas he would have comforted in their situation.
- Verses 6-21. This passage is directed to God as Job speaks out his misery.
 - In verse 17, Job again declares his innocence.
 - Under the Holy Spirit's inspiration (v18-21) Job realises his intercessor (see Job 9:33-35) *is* his friend and is even now pleading for him before God, foreshadowing the role of Jesus as our High Priest (Hebrews 7:25).

Chapter 17

- In verses 1-9, Job believes he is soon to die, so he asks God to vindicate him as he cannot do so himself. In verse 3, he recognises that man is utterly unable to save himself and that only God can pay the price to set men free.
- Now Job challenges his friends to "try again"! If death is all there is to hope for, Job questions, "where then is my hope?" (v15). By this, he is showing that his hope lies with God in eternity, not in the ephemeral things of this world.

5.3 **Bildad's Second Speech (Job 18)**

- Previously, Bildad had given some indirect encouragement to Job (8:21-22), but now, in verses 1-4, he angrily protests that his views are being dismissed.
- In the remainder of his speech, Bildad asserts his belief that the wicked have disaster and calamity heaped upon them in this life. In

verse 21, Bildad implies that Job is such a wicked man – all the evidence suggests it!

5.4 **Job's Reply to Bildad's Second Speech (Job 19)**

- Job despairs of his friends for their lack of comfort (verses 1-6).
- In verses 7-20, Job cries out in tears of anguish. His brothers, friends, guests, servants, wife, and even little children have turned against him. It seems to Job that even God has ignored him. This is Job's *lowest point* as expressed in verses 21 and 22 where he pleads desperately for them to have pity on him. But in the midst of the ash heap, God is about to give him an awesome revelation.
- Verses 23 and 24 suggest that Job saw the need to permanently record the amazing prophetic words the Holy Spirit was about to give him.
- ***In verses 25-27, we find the most profound prophetic utterance in all of Job.*** These verses are the centre-piece of the discourses between Job and his friends. It is no mistake that they occur in the *second* discourse in Job's *second* speech – at the very mid-point of the debate comes the pinnacle of God's revelation!
 - **The Holy Spirit speaks these words of revelation through Job to tell us;**
 - **our Redeemer lives and will stand on the earth in the end times. This can be none other than the risen Christ;**
 - **at that time, we will receive a resurrection body even though our present bodies will see decay. With our own eyes we will see God!**
 - See 1 Corinthians 15:35-54 and Philipians 3:20-21 for a discussion on the resurrection body which all believers will receive on resurrection day.
 - Remember how old the book of Job is. At the very earliest of times, God in his goodness and grace provided his people with a glimpse of the culmination of all history!
 - In 1741, a man named Charles Jennens, the librettist and unsung hero of Handel's Messiah, was inspired by the same Holy Spirit to place these words immediately *after* that spectacular and universally known end-times chorus "Hallelujah!", the words of which were taken from the book of Revelation. The soprano aria, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" quotes this passage from Job and 1 Corinthians 15:20 together:

*"I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,
And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

*For now is Christ risen from the dead,
The first fruits of them that sleep.”*

- Job concludes (verses 28-29) by warning his friends that if they persist in their unjust pursuit of him, they will bring judgment on themselves.

5.5 **Zophar’s Second Speech (Job 20)**

- Incredibly, Zophar completely misses the awesome prophecy Job has just uttered! Smarting from Job’s rebuke, Zophar replies from his own understanding, but he remains unmoved by and unresponsive to Job’s impassioned plea for pity.
- He reiterates his belief that the godless suffer judgment in their own lifetime. He thus infers that because Job is suffering terribly, Job too must be secretly evil.

5.6 **Job’s Reply to Zophar’s Second Speech (Job 21)**

- Job observes that the wicked often prosper and live comfortably, but nonetheless, he does not accept their counsel because they do not acknowledge God (v16).
- Noting that God’s judgments cannot be questioned, in verses 22-34 Job appeals to the accounts of travelers from other lands which refute his friends’ beliefs.
- Job summarises the wisdom of his three friends as nonsense and falsehood.

5.7 **Kingdom Keys from Study 5**

- ***Words of prophecy bring God’s ultimate perspective on a situation which in turn brings strengthening, encouragement and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3).***



Even in our darkest hour, God's revealed word will supply all our needs.

When the Holy Spirit persuades us of our righteousness in his sight and reveals our ultimate destiny with God, we can stand firm in the face of terrible hardship and criticism, just as Job did.



Study 6 Third Discourse

6.1 Eliphaz's Third Speech (Job 22)

- Eliphaz's opening words strike at the very core of the unseen heavenly contest!
- Infuriated by Job's seeming intransigence, but unmoved by his plight, Eliphaz launches a bitter and vicious attack on Job. He accuses him of oppression and injustice (v5-11) and of apostasy (v12-14), all of which are manifestly untrue.
- Eliphaz appears to allude to the Flood in verse 16. He quotes Job's own words (from 21:16) in verse 18, twisting them to his own purposes when he says "I stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked", meaning however those who suffer.
- In verses 21-30, Eliphaz offers pious counsel which elevates man and dethrones God. Note the "if-then" of verses 23-26 and the "you will" of 27-28 and the "he will" of 29-30. This is man-centred philosophy!

6.2 Job's Reply to Eliphaz's Third Speech (Job 23, 24)

- Job essentially ignores Eliphaz's remarks and appeals to God, begging to have his cause heard, if only he knew where to find his creator (23:1-9).
- In the midst of his complaint, Job reminds himself of his innocence before God, of which God has assured him (23:10-12). In everything, Job honours God.
- Job elaborates on the injustices meted out by the wicked on the poor and defenceless, but God appears to charge no-one with wrongdoing (24:12). While the wicked appear to remain unpunished, nonetheless God's eye is on them (24:23-24) for secret or future judgment. Just as we cannot say all who suffer are wicked, nor can we say all who prosper are righteous.

6.3 Bildad's Third Speech (Job 25)

- Bildad's final speech is short and to the point. He draws attention to God's holiness and man's unrighteousness. This is little more than theological posing, out of touch with the reality of Job's situation.
- He cannot accept that anyone, especially Job, can claim righteousness before God.

6.4 Job's Reply to Bildad's Third Speech (Job 26-31)

Chapter 26

- Verging on sarcasm, Job curtly rebukes Bildad for the shallowness of his counsel. He rightly questions the spiritual origin of Bildad's words (v4).

- In verses 5-14, Job goes on to glorify the might of God as revealed in the creation. The following verses are particularly noteworthy;
 - Verse 7 speaks accurately of the earth being suspended in space
 - Verse 8 recognises that clouds are formed from water droplets
 - In verse 10, the word "horizon" in the NIV (*khoog* in the Hebrew) is better translated as "circle", so the verse could equally well read (as in the RSV);

"He has described a circle on the face of the waters

at the boundary between light and darkness (day and night)"

How could Job have known these things that have only been understood relatively recently by modern science, if not by divine revelation? This is powerful evidence that the Bible was authored by the Holy Spirit! See 2 Timothy 3:16.



Chapter 27

- Job begins with an oath that “as surely as God lives” he will not deny his integrity. His conscience will not reproach him as long as he lives (v1-6).
- Job observes in v8-10 that the godless have no hope when calamity strikes and they call out to God. Compare these verses with Proverbs 1:20-33.
- Surprisingly, in verses 13 to 23, Job seems to adopt the arguments of his friends.
 - An intriguing possibility is that this passage is in fact Zophar’s missing third speech. It is consistent with Zophar’s previous utterances. Compare Job 20:29 with Job 27:13 – the same expression is used. For this interpretation to be true, however, both the introductory line for Zophar at the commencement of verse 11 and the phrase “Then Job replied” at the commencement of chapter 28 must have somehow been lost.
 - Perhaps Job, in anticipation of what Zophar is about to say, puts the words into his mouth before he can utter them, even quoting his last speech. If so, he is successful because Zophar remains silent!

Chapters 28, 29 and 30

- The first 11 verses of chapter 28 reveal an astonishing degree of sophistication in mining technology. Our evolutionary mindsets tend to assume such ancient people would not be capable of such advancement, but see Genesis 4:22 where forging iron and bronze are specifically mentioned, just 8 generations from Adam.
- But Job declares that wisdom is harder to find and is more valuable than precious stones. Only God knows the way to find wisdom (28:23) – it is revealed and not learned. Job 1:1 and 28:28 declare “*The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom*”.
- In chapter 29 Job longingly recalls the height of the prosperity, position and power which had once been his. He remembers how he was able to bless so many others around him and how God had so richly blessed him.
- The melancholy words “But now” begin chapter 30 in which Job describes again his abasement before all men. He cries out to God but receives no answer. “My harp is tuned to mourning and my flute to the sound of wailing” (30:31).

Chapter 31

- In this, the concluding chapter of Job’s discourse, he begins by declaring that he has not looked lustfully at a girl. What a challenge in this day of preoccupation with sex! Female fashions that

flagrantly deny the nature of males and the treatment of women as objects of sexual desire dominate today’s social mores with the terrible consequences of broken relationships and hurt people.

- Job declares his integrity, his fidelity, his just dealings, his compassion, his avoidance of idolatry and that he has not been influenced by the fear of men.
- In final desperation, Job calls God his “accuser” and cries out for any charges against him to be written down. He even invites the Edenic Curse on his land – that briars and weeds would come up – if any unrighteousness is found in him.

6.5 Kingdom Keys from Study 6

- ***The astonishingly accurate information in Job about the physical universe reveals that the Holy Spirit is indeed the author of the Bible.***
- ***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To shun evil is understanding.***





Study 7 Reflections on the Discourses

7.1 God's Progressive Revelation to Job

- Job knew he was innocent before God but he was mystified by his situation.
 - To his friends he pleaded “show me where I have been wrong” (6:24)
 - To God he cried “do not condemn me, but tell me what charges you have against me” (10:2) and “I desire to speak to the Almighty” (13:3).
- Job was not being proud or self-righteous – he never claimed to be sinless (14:4) - but he believed in and trusted God and was therefore blameless and righteous in God's eyes. This was affirmed by God himself in 1:8. For Job to have said otherwise would have been a lie and therefore a sin! (27:2-6)
- But heaven was silent – and Job could not understand it. He could have no way of knowing of the heavenly contest being played out in which his faith was the prize! Perhaps he sensed he was being tested for some inexplicable reason when he said “when he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (23:10).
- But God is good and he did not leave Job without a revelation of his word.
 - God had previously revealed himself to Job as creator (9:9ff) and judge (9:15).
 - In 9:33-35, God reveals to Job that he, and all mankind, needs an arbitrator or intercessor between himself and God Almighty.
 - This revelation of the need for an intercessor becomes an affirmation in 16:19-21 that indeed there *is* a friend who pleads with God on behalf of man. Such an intercessor must be present before God and must also identify with man. The intercessor would have to be God/man. (See 1 Timothy 2:5)
 - Finally, out of the depths of his deepest despair, the revelation of the end time resurrection is given in 19:25-27 and Job declares:
“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God”
 - It is interesting to note that after the Spirit gives him this revelation, Job, now secure in his ultimate destiny, seems to soften his passionate pleas and mellow in his criticisms of his friends.

7.2 Can a Man be Righteous Before God?

- Bildad puts the question to Job in his final speech in 25:3:
“How then can a man be righteous before God?”

It seems presumptuous of Job to claim to be blameless and righteous before God, and yet God himself declared Job to be blameless (1:8). How can this be?

- Abraham is the defining example of a man declared by God to be righteous. In Genesis 15:6, we read;
“Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”
Abraham could not possibly have complied with the Mosaic law since he preceded it by 430 years. He simply believed God and acted on that belief.
- We conclude that Job was righteous because of his belief and faith in God, not because he necessarily observed everything God required of him. His practice of offering sacrifices was evidently in response to God's love for him rather than out of any obligation since when Job lived no sacrificial law had been given by God.
- See also Romans 5:1,2 and 8:1,2 where it is clear that our righteousness is a result of belief and not works in any way. This is also emphasized in Ephesians 2:8-9 where “works” refers to attempting to please God by compliance with rules and regulations. Indeed, if we could be saved through our efforts, the cross of Christ is nullified! In Galatians 5, Paul addresses this issue. Someone has defined living in grace as “love God with all your heart then do whatever you like”!
- It is liberating to realise this great truth – we can rest from our labours since righteousness is by faith and faith alone! In Hebrews 4:1-11, Paul speaks of the Sabbath rest for the people of God who, in faith, rest from dead works.

7.3 Devotion to Principles

- Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar believe that God punishes the wicked but blesses the righteous – there can be no such thing as undeserved suffering or blessing. (Psalm 73 clearly refutes this theology). Therefore, they believe Job must have sinned profoundly to have deserved these calamities. They cling to their theology in spite of the fact before them that Job is a righteous, but suffering, man.
 - Their solution is; Job, repent of your secret evil, then God will reinstate you.
- The three friends see Job's denial of any unrighteousness, and consequent refusal to repent, as blasphemous, effectively accusing God of being unjust. To them, it is not possible that God would do such things to a man if he did not deserve them.
- The dilemma confronting Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar is this:

- If Job is right, and he has not sinned grievously, then they too are vulnerable to disaster. There can be no security in clinging to their creed!
- Their devotion is to their theology and not to a personal knowledge of God.
- Job rightly observes that they are afraid (6:21)!

This is a “religious pragmatic atheism” – having an arrogant confidence in one’s own theology, rather than the confidence that comes from personally knowing the attributes of God. In this, they are no better than the atheist because they are depending on their own understanding and not on God.



- The three friends become progressively more and more agitated and vitriolic in their attacks on Job. This is particularly evident after the ultimate revelation Job receives in chapter 19. When God’s assurance of his eternal destiny descends on Job, the enemy is infuriated even more and expresses his rage through the friends.

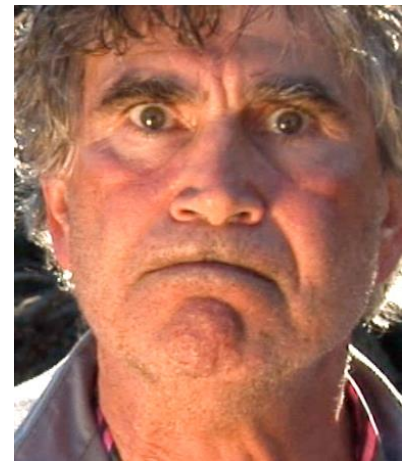
7.4 Devotion to a Person

- In contrast to his friends, Job clings to his relationship with God throughout the whole ordeal, even though his theology has failed him. He can’t understand what has happened to him or why, yet he knows that God will ultimately be shown to be just and righteous and that he himself will be justified.
- Job’s devotion to God is based on personal relationship – he knows what God’s nature is like and he trusts implicitly in him. See Proverbs 3:5 and Mark 10:15.



7.5 Kingdom Keys from Study 7

- *It is by grace we have been saved, through faith - not by works.*
- *We too can stand blameless and righteous in God’s eyes if we stand by faith. Reliance on works for justification is falling away from grace. Galatians 5:4*
- *A disciple of Jesus Christ is devoted to a person, not to principles!*



Study 8 The Final Deception

8.1 The Final Deception (Job 32-33)

- Satan has one last card to play – Elihu! An intelligent and passionate young man, who had apparently joined the gathering some time previously, Elihu had remained silent up to this point out of pious deference to his elders. Convinced of the value of his own counsel, which he commends at length, his monologue lasts for six chapters. Although he appears to do little more than rehash the arguments of his elders, his spiritual pride makes him a subtle weapon in the hands of the enemy for it is Elihu who brings the deadliest deception yet to Job.

Chapter 32

- Elihu commends himself to his hearers and expresses his disappointment that his elders have not refuted Job.
- Elihu believes God has given him understanding (v8) but what spirit is it that compels him to speak (v18)?

Chapter 33

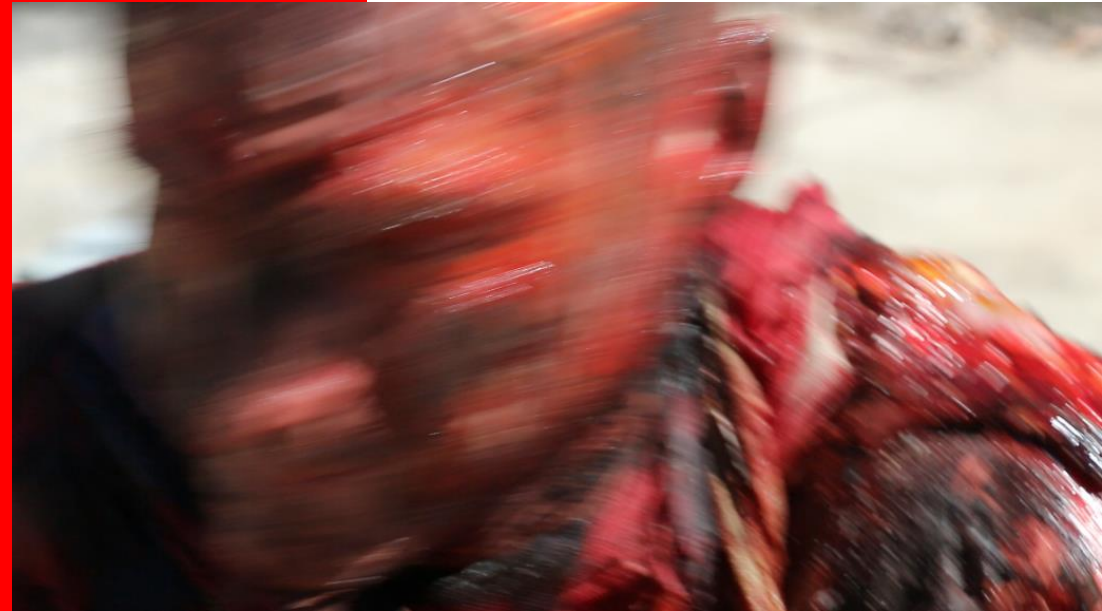
- In v1-5, Elihu states his credentials as one qualified to counsel Job.
- In a most extraordinary statement (v6), Elihu arrogantly represents *himself* as the mediator Job is seeking! The Hebrew word is *tachath* meaning “in place of” or “in stead of”. (See also Job 16:4 and 34:24 where the word *tachath* is used.)

The Living Bible translates verse 6 more dramatically as;

“Look, I am the one you were wishing for, someone to stand between you and God and to be both his representative and yours”.

- Job said God’s hand was heavy on him (23:2) but Elihu’s hand will be light (v7).
- In verse 9, Elihu misquotes Job, who has never said that he is without sin. He goes on to justify God’s apparent silence towards Job. He believes God does speak to men, sometimes in terrifying dreams, sometimes to chasten them with suffering (v14-22). Elihu is indirectly describing Job in v19-22.
- In verse 23-24, Elihu distorts the revelation God has given to Job, “Yet *if* there is an *angel* on his side...” This does a grave disservice to God’s revelation of the Redeemer who lives and attributes the power for salvation to a mere “angel”!
- If Job confesses his sins (v27), the mediator will prevail upon God to “redeem his soul from going down to the pit” (v28). However, Elihu does not acknowledge that atonement for sin requires the *shedding of blood*, a fact well known to Job as evidenced by his practice of offering sacrifices in the event he or his children had inadvertently sinned. Notice that Elihu is not volunteering for this!

- This is Satan’s final and most subtle attempt at deception. The arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar were easily refuted by Job. But now, claiming to speak from God, Elihu suggests that the promised mediator is now at hand and, if Job will only confess, he will receive renewed health and prosperity.
 - *After months of agonizing despair, this is so tempting to Job because it appears to be consistent with the revelation he has*





just received and it offers relief from his suffering!

In verses 31-33, Elihu invites Job to speak out his "repentance" but Job knows to confess falsely will be a lie - both he and God know he is blameless and upright. This was the enemy's last attempt to cause Job to speak falsely against God!



8.2 The Enemy's Rage in Defeat (Chapters 34-37)

In these next chapters, the enemy, through Elihu, rages against Job for his silence and refusal to repent falsely and so discredit God. Job has truthfully maintained his innocence of any known sin, although Elihu doesn't acknowledge Job's admission of inherent sinfulness. The enemy is now desperate, sensing his complete failure.

Chapter 34

- In 34:7-8, Elihu makes an emotive attack on Job. He deliberately misquotes him again (34:9), presumably distorting Job's words in 21:14-15 which clearly referred to the ungodly.
- The familiar doctrine of temporal judgment is seen in 34:11 and throughout Elihu's speech. See also 34:26-30.
- In frustration, Elihu rants to the three friends "Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost" and accuses him of adding rebellion to his sin (v36-37).

Chapter 35

- Continuing his verbal barrage, Elihu once again misquotes Job, who said nothing at all like 35:3 – this is an outright lie. Elihu is presumably again misquoting 21:14-15, twisting Job's words against him.
- The picture Elihu paints of God is of one exalted in majesty but unmoved by the plight of man. Why should God be concerned by Job's case before him?
- Elihu's tirade against Job ends by accusing him of "empty talk" (35:16).

Chapter 36

- Verses 1-4 show how convinced Elihu is that he represents God. It is Elihu's spiritual pride that made it possible for Satan to use him in this final onslaught.
- In 36:8-12, Elihu states his complaint against Job that he is such a man that refuses to repent and so will "die without knowledge".
- Elihu's words in 36:16-21 are enticing yet condemning at the same time.
- From 36:27, Elihu draws attention to God's awesome power displayed in the weather and to the gathering of a mighty storm (36:33).

Chapter 37

- The conclusion of Elihu's monologue proclaims the grandeur of God in the weather patterns (verses 6-13). These descriptions are consistent with the ice age that would have followed the Flood, characterised by high rainfall in the lower latitudes and heavy snow falls in the high latitudes to supply the glacial ice caps.
- Throughout chapter 37 a great storm is gathering and Elihu uses its presence as an object lesson on the majesty and power of God, not

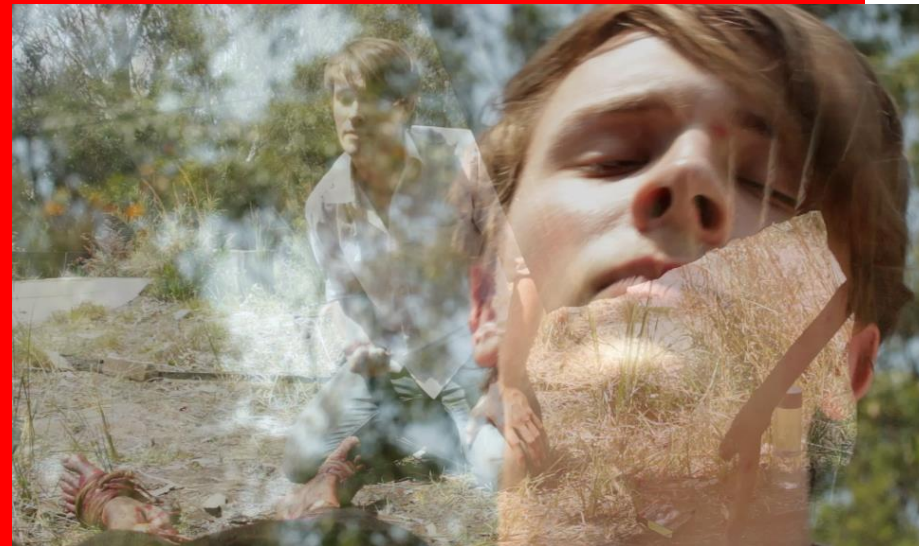
realizing that God himself is about to call a spectacular end to the testing of his beloved servant Job!

Satan's accusation was that no man would worship God for who he is but only for what God has done for him. Touch his possessions or his own body, claimed Satan, and man will curse you to your face. Job could not have known that God and Satan had made a battle ground of his soul, and yet he proved that man could love God simply for who he is! By standing on his personal revelation of God, Job withstands the enemy's attack. We can't take another's experience of God - revelation must be first hand otherwise we can't stand against the enemy's wiles.

8.3 Kingdom Keys from Study 8

- ***Satan masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).***
- ***The enemy will always seek to distort the revealed word of God.***

Resist him!





Study 9 God Reveals Himself

9.1 The Context of God's Revelation of Himself

- After months of suffering, Job has endured the faith stretching onslaught of the misguided advice from his deceived friends with whom he debated in vain. He even endured the enemy's subtle attempt at deception, through Elihu, without faltering in his faith or trust in God. This day must have been most bitter for him.
- Whilst God's confidence in him has been vindicated in front of all the hosts of heaven, there remains the task of vindicating and restoring Job and bringing the light of truth to the confused minds of his deceived counselors.
- God himself now appears in the storm. What revelation will he bring? What will he say to address the desperate pleas from his servant Job or to correct the legalistic theology of his friends? Will the question of undeserved suffering be answered? How valuable it would be when witnessing to unsaved friends or to atheists to be able to answer such a question!

9.2 "Where were you...?" The Question of God's Sovereignty (Job 38:1-4)

- God first dismisses the counsel of Elihu by interrupting him but not bothering to address him directly. He asks of Job "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?" A crushing rebuke for one who was convinced he was "perfect in knowledge" (34:6)! God then directs his questions to Job.
- The question in Job 38:4 firmly places God as sovereign over all creation.
 - *"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?"*
 - Without the benefit of direct observation, man can at best hypothesise about the events of the creation. True science is based upon *repeatable observable* experiments. Therefore, origins are beyond direct examination by science. What we believe about the past is what we *choose* to believe as an act of faith.
 - How could man possibly know what happened at creation? We weren't there! But God, who knows everything and cannot lie, plainly tells us, in the book of Genesis, all we need to know about our origins.
- The notion of God's sovereignty is based on the revelation of God as Creator of all things spiritual and physical. He is the potter, we are the clay. His ways are beyond understanding and his judgments perfect in righteousness.

9.3 Questions About the Early World (Job 38:5-15)

- In these questions, God directs our attention to the early world, described in the first 11 chapters of Genesis, and reveals his glory in the events of those days.
- God describes figuratively the design and establishment of the earth. Verse 6 parallels 26:7 where Job declares that the earth is suspended on nothing.
- In verse 7, reference is made to the angels shouting for joy as they observed the creation of the world. Perhaps they knew this would be their primary place of ministry at the completion of creation.
- God then reminds us of the great Flood (Genesis 6-9) in verses 8-11. Compare with Psalm 104:5-9 where God's authority over the oceans is declared. Verses 12-15 seem to refer to the subsidence of the Flood and the destruction of mankind in verse 15. Psalm 104:8 *"The mountains rose, the valleys sank down..."* (RSV) is parallel to the imagery in Job 38:14.

9.4 Questions About the Present Physical World (Job 38:16-38)

- In this section, God addresses the present physical world – the wonders of the sea, the dimensions of the earth, the power of the storm, the bitter cold of deepest winter, the beauty of the constellations, the physical laws of the universe, and the vagaries of the weather – to declare his wisdom, knowledge and might!
- In verse 21, God gently mocks Job and reminds him that he (man) is finite and all man's years of learning will never plumb the depths of these questions.
- Immediately following the Flood, the ice age began. Verses 29-30 describe the frozen sea, which must have been known to Job even though he lived in Uz.
- Verse 31 is one of the most amazing testimonies of God's authorship of the Scriptures. The Pleiades is a beautiful faint group of stars which modern astronomical measurements have revealed to be a bound cluster. That is, the stars are moving as a group with similar velocities so Pleiades will never cease to be a constellation. Conversely, the stars that make up the constellation of Orion are moving apart rapidly so the constellation will not remain the same. In effect, God is saying, "Can you do what I have done in the heavens?" How could a human author have known such things 4,000 years ago? There is only one answer. *Clearly, God himself is the ultimate author!* (See 2 Timothy 3:16)

9.5 Questions About the Animal Kingdom (Job 38:39 – Job 39:30)

- God spent 12 verses questioning Job about the history of the earth, 22 verses on the present physical universe and now he devotes 33

verses to describing animal life, excluding behemoth and leviathan. Perhaps there is an implied rebuke here because man's original mandate was to have dominion over and to subdue the earth and the animal kingdom (Genesis 1:28). Neither Job nor the rest of mankind has fulfilled that commission, having instead, abdicated to Satan.

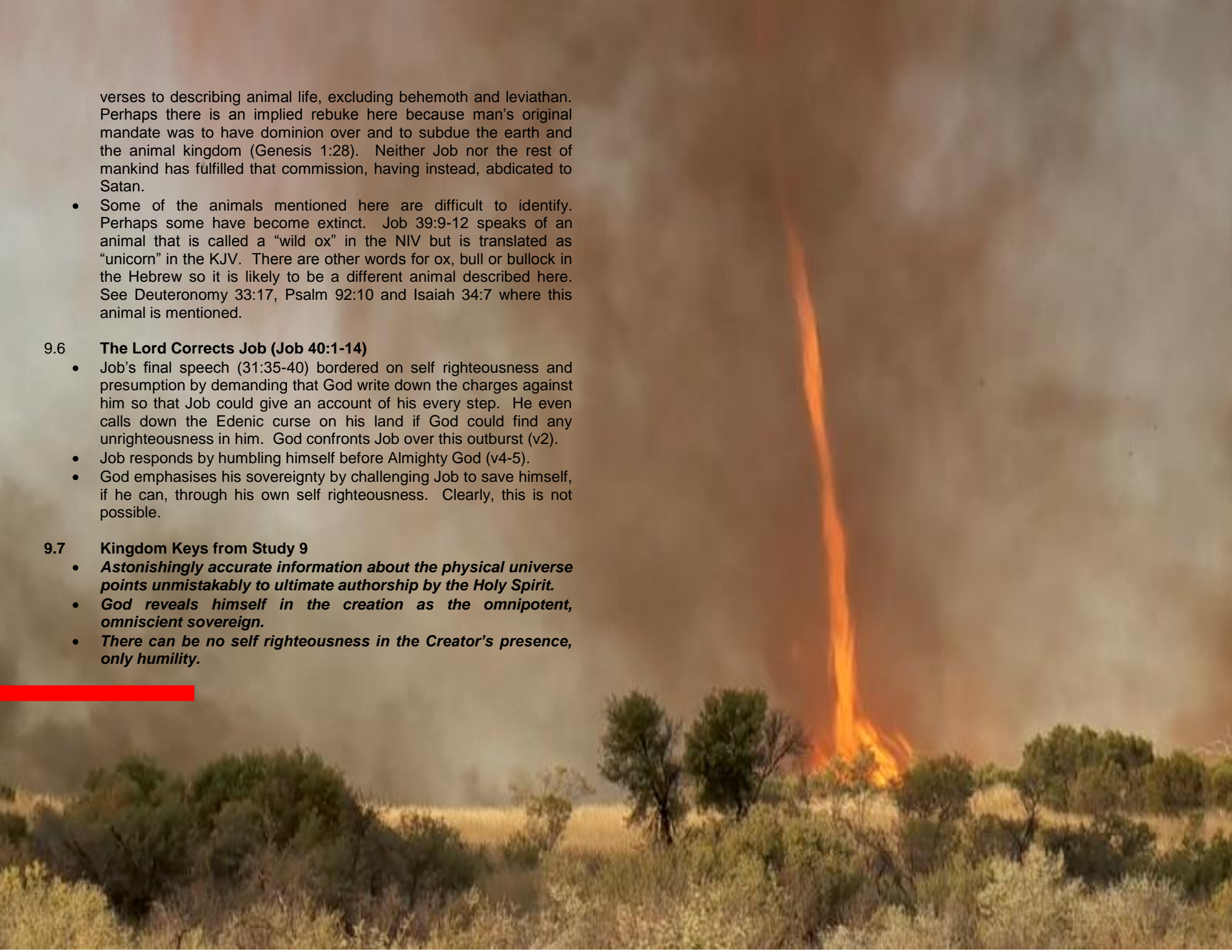
- Some of the animals mentioned here are difficult to identify. Perhaps some have become extinct. Job 39:9-12 speaks of an animal that is called a "wild ox" in the NIV but is translated as "unicorn" in the KJV. There are other words for ox, bull or bullock in the Hebrew so it is likely to be a different animal described here. See Deuteronomy 33:17, Psalm 92:10 and Isaiah 34:7 where this animal is mentioned.

9.6 The Lord Corrects Job (Job 40:1-14)

- Job's final speech (31:35-40) bordered on self righteousness and presumption by demanding that God write down the charges against him so that Job could give an account of his every step. He even calls down the Edenic curse on his land if God could find any unrighteousness in him. God confronts Job over this outburst (v2).
- Job responds by humbling himself before Almighty God (v4-5).
- God emphasises his sovereignty by challenging Job to save himself, if he can, through his own self righteousness. Clearly, this is not possible.

9.7 Kingdom Keys from Study 9

- *Astonishingly accurate information about the physical universe points unmistakably to ultimate authorship by the Holy Spirit.*
- *God reveals himself in the creation as the omnipotent, omniscient sovereign.*
- *There can be no self righteousness in the Creator's presence, only humility.*



Study 10 First Among the Works of God

10.1 Fact or Fiction?

- God goes on to describe two amazing creatures – behemoth and leviathan. Scholars have struggled to identify these creatures but no known animals fit the descriptions. It is reasonable to assume they are now extinct.
- That both these animals were real and alive in Job's day is evident from 3:8 and the logical flow of the passage. God is describing to Job his majesty and power as evidenced in the creation, the pinnacle of which, in the animal kingdom, are these two creatures. If they were fictitious creatures, how would their description have any meaning to Job? What value would be added to God's revelation?

10.2 What Were They?

- The events of Job are set in a time not long after the subsidence of the Flood. Job is likely to have lived before Abraham, who was born 352 years after the Flood. All the animals were present on the ark of Noah (Genesis 6:19-20), which must have included behemoth and leviathan.
- The fact that the fossil remains of countless animals are buried in sedimentary rock layers found all over the world is exactly consistent with what would be expected as a result of a global catastrophic flood, as described in Genesis 6-8.
 - The fossil record reveals evidence of the existence of huge creatures, given the name "dinosaurs" (terrible lizards) in 1840 by Sir Richard Owen.
 - Based on their descriptions, it is almost certain that *behemoth and leviathan were dinosaurs*.
- Immediately after the Flood, the animals dispersed across the earth. Many types of animals would have failed to re-establish, being eaten by predators or hunted into extinction by man. It is likely that the climate was spectacularly different after the Flood than before, so food supplies may have been too scarce for the larger animals to develop significant populations. Ultimately, the surviving dinosaurs became extinct, but behemoth and leviathan still existed in Job's day.
- Modern Bible scholars, for the most part, are so conditioned by evolutionary thinking that they cannot imagine how man could have lived with these great animals now found only in the fossil record.
 - Genesis tells us that all the land animals, including man, were made on Day 6 of the Creation Week. Thus, *man and the dinosaurs must have lived together*. (Fred Flintstone was right after all!) See Genesis 1:24-31 and Job 40:15.

- Many cultures have stories and legends about huge animals that once roamed the earth and terrified local communities e.g. St George and the dragon, the prominence of dragons in Chinese culture, aboriginal drawings of bunyips which look distinctly like dinosaurs, the epic poem (around A.D. 700) about Beowulf, a mighty warrior, who aids the king of Denmark by killing the fire-breathing monster Grendel etc.
- The footnotes in the NIV, and other versions, suggest behemoth and leviathan are modern day animals, such as the hippopotamus, elephant or crocodile, but the descriptions clearly don't fit. One commentator actually suggested that the text showed "quaint imagery" and "delightful inaccuracies"! (The Story of the Bible, Volume 2, p548).

10.3 Behemoth (Job 40:15-24)

- Behemoth was a huge land animal which ate grass. Perhaps it was actually visible at the time since in verse 15 God says "Look at behemoth..."
- Notable in the description is verse 17 where its tail is likened to a cedar tree. This surely eliminates the hippopotamus or the elephant as candidates, both of which have thin rope-like tails.
- Behemoth is called "first among the works of God" (v19) indicating that it must have been the largest of all the land animals.
- God reassures Job that the maker of behemoth "can approach him with his sword" signifying that God is in control and even a mighty beast like this is constrained.

10.4 Leviathan (Job 41)

- God now describes the greatest aquatic animal, leviathan. Some commentators have suggested this may be a crocodile or a whale, but both animals fail to match the descriptions given. Verses 7-9 and 26-29 indicate that leviathan was impervious to human efforts to capture or slay him, and yet crocodiles and whales have been hunted to the point of being endangered!
- The passage in Job 41:18-21 tells us that this animal breathed fire. Is such a thing even possible? Many legends tell of fire breathing dragons. Could all these have arisen without a basis in fact? Note the following points.
 - Certain insects can give out light or fire. The most interesting is the bombardier beetle which sprays a vapour out of cannons in his tail that is not only toxic but heated to over 100°C. When a predator receives a face full it backs off quickly indeed! This remarkable defence mechanism has;
 - twin chambers containing hydroquinone and hydrogen peroxide;

- a combustion chamber where the solutions can spontaneously ignite;
 - an inhibitor system to prevent unwanted reactions; and
 - an anti-inhibitor to trigger the explosive reaction when in danger.
- Interestingly, some dinosaurs have a large bony crest on their heads with two hollow chambers. Perhaps these were fire-breathing dragons?
- Leviathan is also mentioned in Psalm 104:26 as very large sea dwelling creature.
 - Verses 33-34 are interesting since they seem to attribute spiritual power to leviathan since “he is king over all that are proud”. Perhaps Satan, who sought to elevate himself in pride, had possessed the body of this great creature. Isaiah 27:1 and Psalm 74:13-14 seem to suggest leviathan is the personification of the enemy.

10.5 The Doom of the Great Dragon

- Revelation 12:7-10 tells of the fate of the dragon, who was Satan. It was Satan who accused Job and accuses us today. The great dragon will be defeated as in Revelation 20:1-3 and held for a thousand years. He will be released for the final battle and his final doom is described in Revelation 20:7-10.

10.6 Kingdom Keys from Study 10

- *Although discounted by evolutionary belief, behemoth and leviathan were real creatures (dinosaurs) that co-existed with man, consistent with God’s word.*
- *In describing the greatest animals in his creation, God says in Job 41:11, “Everything under heaven belongs to me”. Again, God declares his sovereignty.*





The book of Job does not directly address the question of suffering, as is so often claimed. Nothing in what God says in chapters 38-41 deals directly with the question. Why then did the Holy Spirit include this extraordinary book in the canon of Scripture? There are two aspects to the answer – one directed heavenwards, the other earthwards.

11.1 The Heavenly Purpose

- The drama began with Satan's challenge to God in the presence of all the heavenly hosts – both angels and demons. Ephesians 3:10-11 tells us something of God's purposes in revealing the mystery of the church, which was to make known his wisdom "to the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms". Therefore, Job's ordeal, and his faithfulness through it, was a marvelous testimony – to Satan and to the entire hosts of heaven – of God's divine purposes.
- The problem of human suffering, particularly undeserved suffering, has perplexed many. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar attempted to explain it in terms of punishment for secret sin. Elihu said that God uses suffering for instruction and for chastisement (Job 33:19-28). But Job's sufferings were not to teach him about his shortcomings, but to teach Satan what God's grace can accomplish in a human life wholly dedicated to serving the Lord.

11.2 The Earthly Purpose

- The second aspect of the answer is directed earthwards. What God says when he appears gives us the clearest statement of its earthly purpose. When God speaks, particularly for four whole chapters, it is probably worth listening to what he says! Interestingly, the issues of undeserved suffering and legalistic theology are not addressed. What then does he say?

God simply reveals himself as the creator!

- This is the key to the earthly purpose of the book. Believing that God is the creator, and that he created as he said he did in his word, is a vital key to confident Christian living. *We can trust him for our salvation and know that he is in control, simply because he is the creator!* This was sufficient for Job also.
- Further, the events of creation, as described in the early chapters of Genesis, under-gird every aspect of Christian doctrine, including the great themes of;

The sovereignty of God;

- Since God is the creator, he alone has power and authority over all things.

The origin of sin and death;

- God created a perfect world in which there was no death (Genesis 1:31). The original man and woman lived in sinless

relationship with God, but man's sin ushered sickness, suffering and death into the world (1 Corinthians 15:21). Therefore, **death is the consequence of sin** (Romans 6:23, 5:12).

The whole plan of redemption;

- Jesus, the sinless son of God, paid the price for our sins, a price we could not pay, by giving his life for us at Calvary (Romans 5:15-19). The seal of God's approval was placed on this act by raising him from the dead (Romans 1:4).

Unless the events of the Genesis creation are historical facts, there is no basis to the gospel and no meaning to Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross!

11.3 Does the Bible Mean What It Says in the Genesis Account of Creation?

- The following is an extract from a letter written in 1984 by Professor James Barr, Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford. Note that Barr does not claim to believe that Genesis is literally true, he is just saying what it means.

“Probably, so far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1-11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that

- (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same days of 24 hours we now experience*
- (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the Biblical story*
- (c) Noah’s flood was understood to be world-wide and extinguish all human and animal life except for those in the ark.*

Or, to put it negatively, the apologetic arguments which suppose the “days” of creation to be long eras of time, the figures of years not to be chronological, and the flood to be a merely local Mesopotamian flood, are not taken seriously by any such professors, as far as I know.”

- Sadly, many Christians believe in vast ages for creation, contrary to Scripture!

11.4 Is Biblical Creation Defensible?

- In the light of all the evidence that apparently proves evolution, how can we defend an historical view of Genesis, which clearly teaches creation in six 24 hour days in the relatively recent past?
- A full answer to this question is beyond the scope of this study but there is much literature available on the topic. However, the following observations are made.
 - Any statements about the past require belief since science requires repeatable observable experiments. *Evolution (like creation) is a belief system.*
 - Biological evolution from simple to complex organisms requires the addition of information. Only an external intelligence can create information. There is no known mechanism for adding information through natural processes.
 - Natural selection *reduces* the information in the gene pool.
 - Mutations delete, corrupt or change information but *never* create it.

- Evidence of intricate design abounds everywhere in the universe. Design always requires a designer.
- The characteristics of the observable universe are best explained by the Genesis account of creation – including a global catastrophic flood (Genesis 6-8) and a young age for the earth (Genesis 1, Luke 3:23-38).

- This issue is critical for the church since evolution puts millions of years of death and suffering *before* man and, therefore, before sin – this is contrary to the gospel!

11.5 Kingdom Keys from Study 11

- ***Now, as never before, the world needs to understand there is a creator God!***
- ***Belief in evolution, which is the basis of secular humanism, the religion of our society, robs people of the ability to even see the relevance of Christianity, let alone respond to it. Belief in millions of years directly opposes the gospel.***
- ***The Biblical account of creation is more relevant today than ever before.***



Study 12 Rebuke, Reconciliation and Restoration

12.1 Job Humbles Himself Before Almighty God (Job 42:1-6)

- When God completes his revelation to Job of the majesty and purpose of his great creation, Job is awestruck and humbled.
- God's words affirm to Job that God is indeed all-powerful (42:2) and that no plan of his can be thwarted.
- Even though God's rebuke in 38:2 was directed at Elihu, Job realises that he too spoke "without knowledge". He acknowledges that even the prophetic words he spoke by the Holy Spirit were "things too wonderful for me to know" (42:3).
- Job had heard of God but now his eyes see him (compare with Daniel 10:8).
 - Whenever God appeared in human form (a theophany) in the Old Testament it was as the pre-incarnate Jesus.
 - Job actually sees his Redeemer, Jesus, while still in his suffering body. Not only had Job been promised that he would see God in his resurrection body (19:26) but God now gives him a double blessing in that while still alive, he sees the Lord!

In such a glorious presence, Job despises himself and repents in dust and ashes.

12.2 Rebuke and Reconciliation (Job 42:7-9)

- Although angry with them, in his mercy God merely rebukes the three friends for not speaking rightly about him. Job had spoken truly about God, but the others had spoken falsely.
- God requires that the friends offer a sacrifice for themselves and request Job to pray for them. Note that Job is not required to offer a sacrifice, so God honours Job in front of his friends. Elihu is not even mentioned.
- Remember, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had made great personal sacrifice to come and comfort their friend Job. Even though they were deceived, their hearts were genuine and God recognised that.
- Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar respond obediently and the Lord accepts Job's prayer on their behalf. Thus they are reconciled with both God and Job.

12.3 Restored with a Double Portion (Job 42:10-17)

- A measure of Job's spiritual stature is that he forgives all those who had rejected him (19:13-20) and they honour him by coming to eat with him in his house.
- God moves on the people to give gifts to Job and so he blesses Job greatly. His possessions are doubled (v12) compared to what he had originally (1:3).

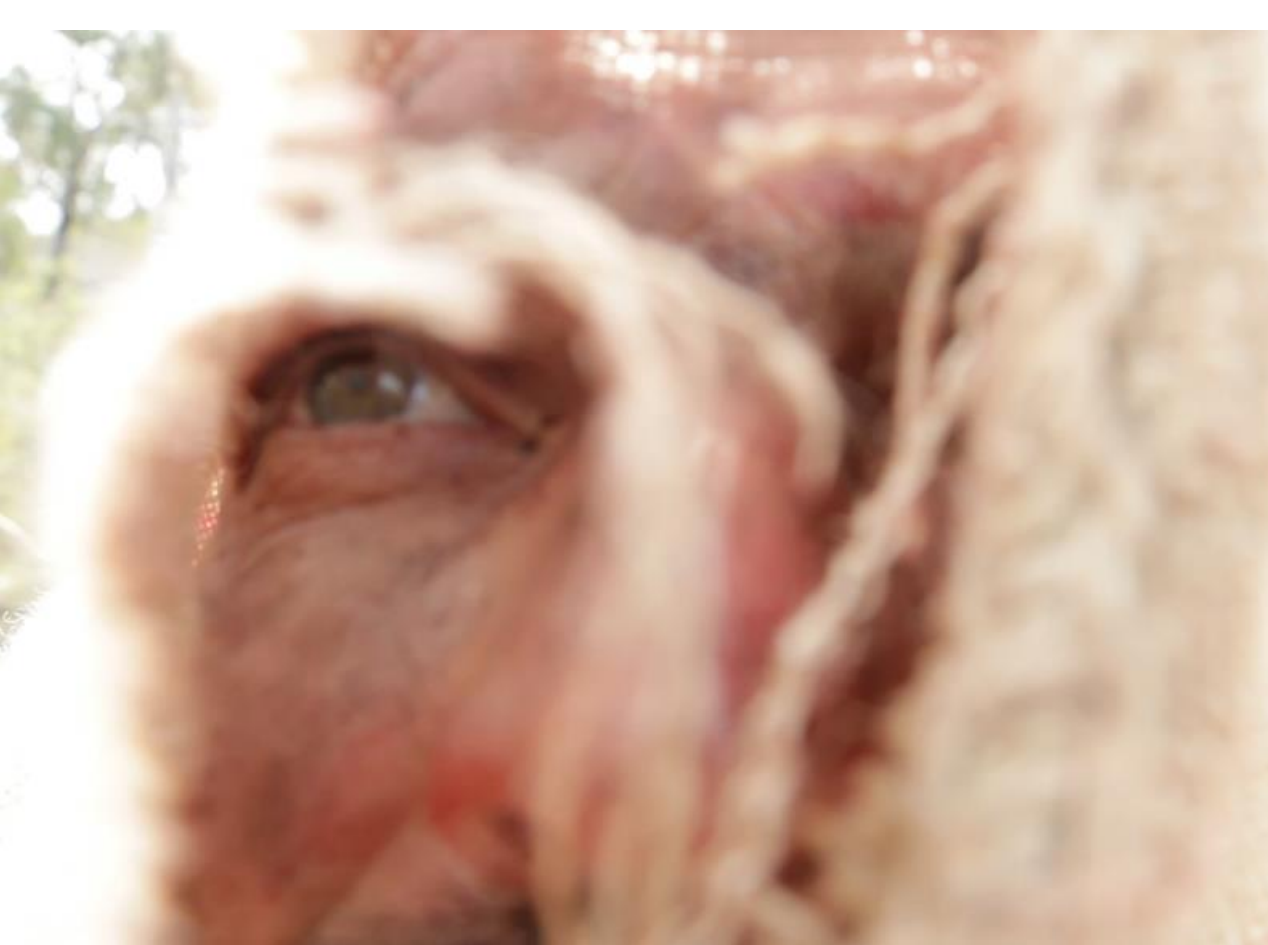
- Importantly, Job has another 10 children, 7 sons and 3 daughters. Since his first 10 children were faithful and godly, and now dwelling in heaven, Job would see them again some day. God, therefore, doubles the number of his children also!
- Although not usual practice in those days, Job gives his daughters an equal portion of his inheritance with their brothers.
- After the events of the book, God strengthens Job so that he lives another 140 years. He must have been at least 60 years old when his testing took place since he had 10 adult children. Thus, Job was at least 200 years old when he died, consistent with living in pre-Abraham times.

12.4 A Matter of Perspective

- We have the whole revelation of God in the Bible – Job had very little by comparison. But God's revelation of himself as creator was sufficient for Job! Even his great suffering paled into insignificance compared to an encounter with the creator God himself.
 - Romans 8:18 says our earthly sufferings do not compare with the glory to be revealed in us.
 - 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 focuses the Christian on the fact that our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an assured and eternal glory.
- Understanding God as creator brings perspective into any situation. He is the potter, we are the clay. What he does is right, by definition. See Jeremiah 18:2-6 and Romans 9:20-21.
- The comfort Job received from God was not only the revelation of his eternal destiny but the assurance that God would do what he said he would do and he has the power to do it. Why? – *because he is the creator!* Similarly, we too can be confident of our eternal destiny because God, who has promised it, has the power and authority to fulfill that promise. See 2 Timothy 1:12.
- The whole revelation of God, particularly that he is the creator, is sufficient for us.

12.5 The Relevance of Job Today

- In these last days, the church will be subject to much persecution and testing.
 - Matthew 24:9-14 tells us that the love of most will grow cold and they will fall away in times of great persecution and suffering.
 - Job stood firm in the face of indescribable and inexplicable suffering, and so too must we, should we be called upon to bear the privilege of suffering for Christ (see James 1:2-4).
 - The basis of Job's strength was his personal relationship with God and his devotion to the person of God. Job *knew* what God



- ***The Lord is full of compassion and mercy towards Job as he is towards us. Therefore, let us persevere in our faith as Job did (James 5:11).***
- ***Let's make the Bible the basis of all our thinking in every area of life.***
- ***Now, as never before, the world needs to hear the message of the book of Job!***

was like and so was able to withstand all that the enemy could hurl at him.

- The Lord was full of compassion and mercy towards Job, as he is towards us. Therefore, let us persevere in our faith, just as Job did (James 5:11).
- Isn't it interesting that we tend to be surprised by what God says to Job? Doesn't that show that our understanding of the importance of the message of creation is inadequate? Sadly, many Christians compromise their belief in the Bible by accommodating human philosophies, like evolution or millions of years of earth history, into their thinking and so undermine the basis of the gospel.
- Let's make the Bible the basis of *all* our thinking in *every* area.

12.6 Kingdom Keys from Study 12

- ***Our earthly sufferings are light and momentary but are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all! (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)***





Appendix Job	Parallels between Job and Jesus Jesus
Blameless but not sinless <i>Job 1:1</i>	Perfect and sinless <i>1 John 3:5</i>
Rich, exalted but lost everything <i>Job 1:3, 13-19</i>	Rich, exalted but gave up everything <i>2 Corinthians 8:9, John 19:23,24</i>
Tested by Satan <i>Job 1:12, 2:6</i>	Tempted by Satan <i>Mark 1:12-13</i>
Rejected by family and friends <i>Job 19:13-19</i>	Rejected by all mankind <i>John 7:5</i>
Endured great suffering <i>Job 16:10, 30:10, 2:8</i>	Endured suffering and death <i>Psalms 22:7-8, 16 Isaiah 50:6</i>
God apparently forsook Job even though he was the most righteous of men <i>Job 13:24, 19:7, 23:3, 30:20</i>	God forsook Jesus because he took on himself the sins of all mankind <i>Matthew 27:46</i>
Delivered and restored <i>Job 42:12</i>	Seated at the right hand of the Father <i>Ephesians 1:19-21</i>



References

These notes were prepared with reference to the following texts and material. Occasionally, extracts from these references have been quoted in these notes although, given the nature of this series of studies, no attempt has been made to specifically identify and reference such passages.

Books

Henry Morris* "The Remarkable Record of Job" Baker Book House 1988

Oswald Chambers "Baffled to Fight Better" Discovery House 1931

Gordon Fee "The Threat of Arrogance" Sermon on 4th March 1984

* This book provided great insight into the book of Job and was the principal reference in the preparation of these studies.

Commentaries

Matthew Henry "Commentary for the NIV" Marshall Pickering

"The Bethany Parallel Commentary on the Old Testament"
This volume includes the commentaries of Matthew Henry
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Adam Clarke

"New Bible Commentary" 21st Century Edition Inter-Varsity Press

James Strong "Exhaustive Concordance of the KJV of the Bible"

Most of the commentaries listed above, although consulted and of some value, failed to identify the key revelations that these notes have endeavoured to draw out.

The most important reference is, of course, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the insights he alone can give into his marvelous book, the Holy Bible.

Postscript

These studies have shown that the message of Job is as relevant today as it was all those years ago when the events of the book occurred. My prayer is that you will have been blessed by these studies as much as I have been in preparing them. May God continue to bless you in your walk with him and strengthen you daily in your relationship with him.

Mark Harwood



