

Job 3-14 - Job and his Friend Talk (Part 1)

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We started the Book of Job last week. We got through the first couple of chapters. We're going to continue on tonight. We'll see how far we get.

If you had to summarize the topic or the purpose of the Book of Job, it's all about human suffering. And the first 2 chapters, in case you missed our study last week, we were repeatedly told that Job was a man who was righteous. He was upright. He feared God. He steered clear of evil.

And yet, when Satan challenged Job's character to God, saying that his love for God was really just a byproduct of the fact that God treated him so well, God allowed Satan to afflict Job. First with the loss of all of his material goods, and then with the loss of all of his children. Terrible stuff.

Later, when Satan further inferred that Job's integrity was based on the fact that he himself was physically untouched by all of those challenges, God once again allowed Satan to afflict Job, this time with painful boils over his entire body.

And this book, these first 2 chapters, this creates great difficulty for people. And I remember somebody even bringing this up to me when I was a new believer and I had no clue how to respond to this guy. And he was newer than I was, and I was brand new. He had just come to the Lord, and don't ask me why he started looking at the Book of Job, I have no idea.

But he came to me and he asked me about. He said basically, is this the way God treats His children? I mean, is this God's m.o.? And it looks very much like God and Satan are playing some kind of sick game of cosmic chess with you and I as the pawns or the pieces of the chess game, and moving them around as they see fit, and so forth.

But I trust that by the time we're finished with our study through the Book of Job that you're going to be more than ever convinced of a few things. First of all, that God is not using you and I as pawns in a chess game on a chess board. But in fact, He loves you and He desires the best for your life.

Secondly I trust that you will learn and understand that God is sovereignly working in your life to bring about the purpose of His will and sometimes He uses Satan to do it.

And that's really the last point that we really learn from the Book of Job. If anyone's a pawn of God, it's Satan. To be used by His sovereign will according to the purpose of His will for our lives. Anyway.

Chapter 2, you'll remember ended with this pathetic picture of Job sitting among the ash heap, scraping himself with shards of pottery in such distress that his wife came to him and said, why don't you just, “*curse God and die.*” Suggesting even that he let go of his integrity. Curse the Lord for all that had come upon him and then just take his life.

You'll remember that Job responded to his wife in a way that just blew us all away. He said, “*Shall we (only) receive good (things) from God, and...*” not bad all the days of our lives? I mean, is it only the good things that we can receive from the hand of God? Let me ask..., some people would answer that question by saying, yeah. But Job had a different attitude.

And then we ended the chapter, it says that Job's 3 friends came and when they saw the depth of his suffering, it says they couldn't even utter a word, and they just sat there for 7 days. For 7 days, they sat and just looked upon his pain, and uttered not a sound. And that is where it ended for us last week, chapter 2.

And now we ready ourselves to move on to chapter 3 and this is where the scene of Job's conflict enters a different arena. Because the battle, although there has been a work of the enemy that has taken place through God's permission, the battleground is now shifting to the heart and soul of the man Job himself.

And questions like, how is he going to choose to think about his suffering? How is he going to choose to think about God in the midst of his suffering? Those are some of the questions that he's going to ponder. It's the questions that every sufferer has to ponder, right? And they will dominate the remainder of the book.

Chapter 3. If you look with me there. Verse 1, it says, “*After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.*” (ESV)

Stop there for just a quick moment. I want to remind you that Satan challenged God saying, that if you allow me to bring these things upon him, he will curse you. And I want you to know something and this is a spoiler alert, okay?

Job never curses God. Throughout the entirety of this book, he does not curse God. Now, he will curse the day of his birth. But that's a completely different thing. And that's what he does here.

Verse 2, *“And Job said: ³ ‘Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, ‘A man is conceived.’ ⁴ Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it. ⁵ Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. Let clouds dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.*

⁶ That night—let thick darkness seize it! Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months. ⁷ Behold, let that night be barren; let no joyful cry enter it. ⁸ Let those curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan. ⁹ Let the stars of its dawn be dark; let it hope for light, but have none, nor see the eyelids of the morning, ¹⁰ because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb, nor hide trouble from my eyes.

¹¹ “Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? ¹² Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should nurse? ¹³ For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest, ¹⁴ with kings and counselors of the earth who rebuilt ruins for themselves, ¹⁵ or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver.”

He's referring to kings that once lived, but who are now lying in the dust of the earth. He's saying, I would be like them now.

“¹⁶ Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? ¹⁷ There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. ¹⁸ There the prisoners are at ease together; they hear not the voice of the taskmaster. ¹⁹ The small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master.

²⁰ “Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, ²¹ who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, ²² who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they find the grave?”

You'll remember that Job was not going to die from this but he didn't know it. You remember that? When God gave Satan permission to afflict him physically He said, okay, fine, he's in your hands, but you may not take his life. Job was not going to die from this, but again, he didn't know that. And all he knew is that he lingered. That's all he knew. It's terrible to watch someone linger in

suffering, isn't it? It's terrible. Imagine how terrible it is to be the one who lingers.

It wasn't that long ago Sue and I were visiting the room of a woman who was on the doorstep of death and she had asked us to come pray with her and just be there in the room with her for a while. And she was, they had her so medicated, she could hardly keep her eyes open. But I just leaned down to her and I just said, "you're tired, aren't you?" "Yeah, I'm so tired." And I said, "it's okay, you can go. You can go home to be with the Lord." Sometimes people even need to hear that.

But to linger, and to suffer, and to watch that going on, and Job is bemoaning those sorts of things right now. He says, they look for death, but they don't find it. No doubt Job had looked for the end of his suffering, but he wasn't going to die. Although he didn't know it.

Verse 23. *"Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? ²⁴ For my sighing comes instead of my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water. ²⁵ For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. ²⁶ I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes."*

I'd say Job has pretty clearly and accurately described his heart, has he not? You know what that's like to be in total unrest? And you may be sitting in a quiet room. You may be sitting with no noise, no chaos, or even disorder around you. And yet, in your heart, there's no rest, there's no peace, there is no quiet. And that's what's going on inside of the man, Job.

And it's not uncommon for someone who has endured that kind of difficulty, and pain, and tragedy to begin to give voice to their pain or to give vent, if you will, to their pain. People say all kinds of things when they're in pain. And some of them are true, and some of them are not, and some of them are biblical, and some of them are not. But many times it's the pain talking and pain can cause someone to be way off base, but that is what pain can do.

And the next several chapters are going to be filled with Job's words spoken from his pain. But you're also going to be seeing in these next chapters the responses of Job's friends to his pain, and that was where they weren't so smart.

We're going to discover as we go through these chapters that although much of what these men say to Job is in fact true in and of itself, we're going to find out that they will repeatedly misdiagnose Job. And his problem and his issues. And

you know what I mean by misdiagnosing. The diagnosis itself may be right insofar as it goes.

I heard a story once that a pastor shared about a woman in his fellowship who was dealing with some pretty severe back pain. So she went to a chiropractor and the chiropractor looked her over and said, oh, I see the problem, you have these vertebrae that are out of whack. And he prescribed a treatment regimen that she would go through over the next several weeks. And he told her, listen, I've dealt with this before. We'll get you straightened out and you'll be as good as new. The pastor said that within a month, the woman was dead and she had died, not from the issue that particular doctor found, but there was, in fact, a more serious issue that eventually took her life and was, in fact, causing her pain.

Now, the chiropractor wasn't necessarily wrong. Her vertebrae were out of whack, and that could have been causing some element of the pain. But under different circumstances, the treatment plan that he recommended probably would have helped, might have even been enough to take care of the problem.

Except the problem was that the real situation was beyond his ability to diagnose, and therefore, he wasn't wrong in what he said, it just didn't go far enough. It was beyond his ability to find the cause of the problem.

And we're going to find that, that is what Job's friends do to him. They are going to speak words of truth, and that's what makes the Book of Job so difficult to study. You read through the Book of Job and you think, well that sounds good. What this guy just said, it sounds... And it is.

In and of itself, you take some of the things that they say to him, you take those verses out of context, and you look at them for just what they are, and you think that's true.

The problem is that they continually misdiagnose Job and they speak of things for which they have no understanding. It's beyond their pay grade. It's beyond their ability. They're speaking into things for which they don't have the ability to fully understand.

And so many times we enter into the same error when we're dealing with people who are going through painful circumstances and situations in life. I don't know, sometimes it's probably, I think our hearts are probably sometimes in the right place. We want to help. We want to say something that's going to make a difference. But too often we're quick to offer a diagnosis based on what we see

and based on what we understand in the situation, and there's more. There's more that can't be seen. And we forget.

The Bible tells us that the secret things belong to the Lord. (Deuteronomy 29:29) And often, He's not telling. The Bible says that a wise man will search them out. (Proverbs 20:5) But sometimes it takes great searching and so we end up often making some of the same arrogant mistakes that Job's friends make related to his situation. We speak into things of which we know little.

And we're going to see how this error encompasses the things that they say. And we're going to see something else about the things that they say. We're going to see what motivated their understanding of truth. What was behind their truth, and what was the source of their truth.

Chapter 4. We're going to deal with the first speaker. It says, *"Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ² 'If one ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? Yet who can keep from speaking?'"*

Skip down to verse 7. *"Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?"* This is the heart of Eliphaz's argument, by the way.

He's basically asking Job, listen, Job, let me ask you a question, who have you ever known who has endured this kind of junk in their life that wasn't dealing with some kind of sin in their life? Who do you know that ever went through this kind of stuff who was innocent, Job? I ask you.

And then he asks a second question. Do upright people deal with this kind of stuff? The stuff you're going through right now, is that what you see, Job, in your life? And notice that he uses the words, *"cut off"* in verse 7. He says, *"where were the upright cut off?"* Ever cut off? And the words, cut off refer to being forsaken by God. When have you ever seen the upright forsaken by God, Job? Eliphaz has put his cards on the table, as it were, and he's shown, what it is that he's saying.

And I want you to pay special attention to verse 8, because this is going to Eliphaz is going to cite his authority for the things which he says to Job. Look what he says. *"As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same."*

Now, notice the first few words of what he says in this verse. *"As I have seen,"* or as the NIV says, *"I have observed."* And this is where Eliphaz is coming

from. This is what he bases his theology largely on. It's based on Experiential observation. Here's what I've observed. This is where he gets his authority. This is what I've seen. Okay? And that's important for you and I to see. I don't know if you know that type of individual, for whom experience and experiential observation trumps the very Word of God. Have you ever met that kind of a person?

Have you ever seen that kind of thing going on in churches? Where experience rules over the Word of God and what we've seen. Well, we saw God do this and so we build a doctrine about it or around it or something like that. Experience rules, and that's what Eliphaz is saying here to Job. I've observed, and this becomes really the final authority for this sort of a person.

And that basically means that experience is exalted above the Word of God. It's the sole basis for understanding the ways of God. Boy, I tell you, if you put experience, your experience, in the driver's seat, and you let your experience dictate who God is and what He's like, you're in for a roller coaster ride, let me tell you right now. But that's the kind of stuff that's going on here.

And the problem with doing that, the problem with making observation the sole basis for understanding the ways of God is that it's limited to what you can understand. And ultimately it just exalts your human understanding anyway.

Do you remember what God says to you and I when we think we've got Him all dialed in? And we think that our experience and our observational capabilities are able to unlock the mysteries of God?

God says, my ways are not your ways. “...*my thoughts are not your thoughts, ...as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your (ways, or your) thoughts.*” rather. Isaiah, chapter 55. God reminds us, there.

You might be wondering, pastor Paul, are you saying that God cannot be known? No, that's not what I'm saying here at all. I am however saying that God's ways cannot be limited to our observational skills. That's what I'm saying and that's what Eliphaz is essentially doing.

He's saying, so you see my dear friend Job. What I have observed is that those who are going through the kind of stuff that you're going through, they have it coming. That's what he's saying to him. Can you imagine saying that to someone who has experienced this level of loss? Can you imagine? Can you imagine walking up to someone who not only has lost all of his earthly

belongings, all of his wealth, but all of his children; all 10 of them. And now his health, literally from the top of his head to the soles of his feet covered in painful boils.

Can you imagine somebody walking up to an individual like that and saying, Job, get real buddy, people who go through what you're going through, have it coming. That's what I've observed. That's what we see in this life around us.

Look how Eliphaz has gotten so off base, by basing his theology on human observation and the ability for him to comprehend and understand.

Skip down to verse 12. *“Now a word was brought to me stealthily; my ear received the whisper of it.”*¹³ *Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men,*¹⁴ *dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake.*

¹⁵ A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. ¹⁶ It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: ¹⁷ ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?’”

Wow, what's going on here? Well, in a little bit here, Job is going to respond to Eliphaz by saying, listen, I know that already. I know that mortal man can't be right to God. But this just goes on to underscore the kind of a man that Eliphaz was and how he gathered truth.

Notice he is so experientially minded that he becomes this super spiritualist. And what's his authority? Well, we already learned that most of his authority comes from observation and what he's experienced. Now he begins to tell Job about an experience he had and he punctuates it with spiritual language and spiritual kind of sensationalism.

And he begins to talk about how... Job, let me tell you something, in the dark when men are sleeping, and I was aware of the spiritual dynamic all around me, and then a spirit glided past my face and my hair stood on end. Do you see what he's doing? He's giving his authority. A spirit spoke to him, brushed past him, then he had a physical reaction to it. Do you understand?

Do you know the kind of person that we're referring to here that is so experientially minded that it's all about goosebumps? Their spiritual life, their growth, their church is all about goosebumps. They will not go to church unless they get goosebumps. And if they don't get goosebumps, they didn't have

church. There was not a true and genuine spiritual experience unless a spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood up, and I heard a voice. This is where he's coming from, but it all goes back to his observation.

And you'll notice that the statement that this, supposedly the spirit makes to him is essentially true. The question is, "*can a man be pure before his Maker?*" Well, it's put in question form. The answer that is demanded here is obviously, no. And that's true. No man can be pure before his Maker.

And when some people hear something that is true, they assumed that the source from which it came is also true and good, right? And that's what experiential people do.

That's why you get people going up to Canada, to Toronto, to deal with all the Toronto blessing thing that was going on in years past. And people were hopping on airplanes and getting in their cars to go up to Toronto so they could get the blessing. So they can experience the blessing because it's not here, it's up there. We got to go there to get God's blessing, see. So let's go so we can feel that way sort of a thing. This is the same spirit, it's the same attitude, that says...

And then here's the interesting thing. They go up to Toronto and what happens? They receive a blessing from the Lord. And you and I sit back and we go, gee, I wish God wouldn't have done that. I mean, didn't He know that they were off their rocker up there? Those people, some of them? So why in the world did God bless them? Why did He do something that was good in their lives?

Let me tell you why. Because God always meets the seeking heart. And He's not going to look at somebody when they're in the midst of ridiculous activity and say, you know what? Your heart really wants to know me and really wants to meet me but you're in a dumb place, so I'm going to hold back. I'm not going to bless you, because...

No, God's not going to do that. If somebody genuinely wants to meet God, they're going to meet God. They think that it's because they went to Toronto that it happened. Fact of the matter is, it was because they exercised faith that it happened.

God met their faith and He'll do that anywhere. But because the good happened up there, what do they say? Oh, Toronto, that's where the blessing is happening, right? Because something good happened, now, that is good. And you see, this man received a word that was in essence true, and so the assumption is my

experience was good. That's a dangerous assumption to make. Sometimes observation can yield results that are true. All right.

Chapter 5, Eliphaz continues speaking. Look at verse 3. We're obviously not going to take all the verses here because this is poetic language. And you understand that Hebrew poetry is not like English poetry. Our poetry has rhyme and meter.

Hebrew poetry, what makes it poetry is what they call parallelism. And parallelism means, they say it, and then they say it again, and sometimes they'll even say it a third time just for emphasis. But they'll say the same thing they'll say things in, they'll basically make the same statement repeatedly. That is Hebrew poetry alright, so we are going to be skipping some of the stuff here.

Verse 3 of chapter 5. *"I have seen the fool taking root, (again he's talking about his observational skills) but suddenly I cursed his dwelling. ⁴ His children are far from safety; they are crushed in the gate, and there is no one to deliver them."*

Interesting statement, huh? I love, the New Living Translation (NLT) renders this this way, he says, *"I have seen that fools may be successful for the moment, but then comes sudden disaster."* Now he's talking to a man who's just dealt with sudden disaster, and he's essentially referring to him as a fool.

Skip down to verse 17, *"Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty. ¹⁸ For he wounds, but he binds up; he shatters, but his hands heal."*

Now, I want you to stop here because these 2 verses are very typical of what Eliphaz has to say. I'm going to ask you, look at those verses we just read, verses 17 and 18. What's wrong with them as far as what they're saying?

I'll answer the question for you. There's nothing wrong with them. In fact, these statements that Eliphaz is making right here are made elsewhere in the Bible. They're repeated in the New Testament and listen, they are true. What Eliphaz is saying here is true.

God does reprove His children. He disciplines His children. He wounds, but He also binds up. You can find those verses elsewhere in the scripture. So what's wrong about what Eliphaz is saying? Well, it's not what he's saying necessarily. It's to whom he is saying it, because he is misdiagnosing Job's situation.

He is basically assuming that God is disciplining Job. He's assuming that. He's making the statement, hey Job, Job listen to me, buddy, God disciplines. What is Eliphaz saying to Job? He's saying, Job, God has a spanking spoon, and He uses it from time to time, and you're just getting spanked, my friend.

Now, would you say that to somebody who lost everything, including their children and now their health? Personally, I'd like to think that none of us would, but that is what he is saying here. Job, you're just being disciplined.

Does God discipline those whom He loves? Yes. Do we always know whom God is disciplining? No, we don't. Now, the Bible does tell us to consider all hardship as discipline in the New Testament. (Hebrews 12:7) It tells us that in the Book of Hebrews.

But for me to consider hardship as discipline is different than you coming to me and telling me God is disciplining you when you don't know why I happen to be going through this time of hardship. For you to make the assumption, God spanking you, okay, deal with it, is to step out into a place of arrogant assumption. God's just spanking you, my friend, just buck up, it won't last forever, sort of a thing.

Basically, what Eliphaz is saying here is what a man sows, so also shall he reap. And again, that's a true statement. We do reap what we sow, don't we? I mean, you can find that lots of times in the Word of God. But that doesn't mean that every trouble you experience is because you're reaping something you've sown. That is an assumption.

If you're going through a hard time and I look at you and I say, well, sister, brother, we just reap what we sow. Isn't that just trite? I can say that, but I don't know what's going, I don't know exactly what's happening in your life. And it would be arrogant of me to make the assumption. All right. All right.

Now skip down to verse 27. *“Behold, this we have searched out; (again re-exalting powers of observation) it is true. Hear, and know it for your good.”*

It's true Job so listen to this and hear it. I'm only telling you this for your good. You ever had somebody say that to you? I'm just telling you this for your good and may God have mercy on your soul.

Chapter 6, Job's turn to respond here. Now, this back and forth conversation is going to continue throughout the book, until the very end of the book when God is finally going to speak, and He'll chime in and set everyone straight. *“Then*

Job answered and said: ² “Oh that my vexation were weighed, and all my calamity laid in the balances! ³ For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore my words have been rash. ⁴ For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me. ⁵ Does the wild donkey bray when he has grass, or the ox low over his fodder?”

And that last verse is Job's way of saying, if I didn't have a genuine complaint, would I be complaining? I mean, he asks a good question. Does the wild donkey make a lot of noise while he's eating grass? No, he cries out when his belly is empty and he can't find food. Right? Then the ox doesn't low if he's eating. It's only when he's hungry, when there's something to complain about.

Skip down to verse 8. *“Oh that I might have my request, and that God would fulfill my hope, ⁹ that it would please God to crush me, that he would let loose his hand and cut me off! ¹⁰ This would be my comfort; I would even exult in pain unsparing, for I have not denied the words of the Holy One.”*

Okay, guys, this is where Job gets serious. He begins at this point now to ask God to take his life. I don't know if you've ever been there. Been to that place where you prayed that God would take your life. But that's what he's saying. When he says, oh, that God would just crush me and *“let loose his hand and cut me off.”* That's what he's talking about.

Now, you'll notice he goes on, he ends by saying, *“for I have not denied the words of the Holy One.”* Now, that's going to really rile his friends here and upset them quite a bit. Because Job is basically saying, I didn't deserve this. I didn't deserve what I'm getting right now, and if God would just give me a swift death, then I could die knowing that I didn't do anything wrong related to this.

By the way, just to remind you, Job is right, okay. Job is right. He didn't deserve this. God Himself, remember, in chapters 1 and 2, said Job was blameless. Doesn't mean perfect, but it means is not to be blamed. So Job is right on that point, but that is what's gonna rile his friends.

Okay, skip down to verse 14. Notice how Job complains now about his friends. He says, *“He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. ¹⁵ My brothers are treacherous as a torrent-bed, as torrential streams that pass away,”*

In other words, he's saying, my friends are like floodwaters. Have you seen what floodwaters can do? They say that of the elements of the earth, nothing is

more powerful than moving water. And when floodwaters come upon and rush into an area, it can pull over a building. It can pull down trees. It can do incredible damage and that's what he's saying about his friends.

Verse 21. *“For you have now become nothing; you see my calamity and are afraid. ²² Have I said, ‘Make me a gift’? Or, ‘From your wealth offer a bribe for me’? ²³ Or, ‘Deliver me from the adversary’s hand’? Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand of the ruthless’?”*

In other words, Job is saying, did I ask for your assistance? Did I tell you to come and help me out?

Verse 24, *“Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have gone astray.”* Notice what he's challenging them to do. He's basically saying, show me where I did wrong. Show me.

Skip to verse 26. *“Do you think that you can reprove words, when the speech of a despairing man is wind?”* In other words, would you actually bring correction on the words of a despairing man?

Skip down to verse 30. *“Is there any injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern the cause of calamity?”* In other words, don't I know why calamity comes upon people? You have to sit and tell me this.

Chapter 7, he says, *“Has not man a hard service on earth, and are not his days like the days of a hired hand? ² Like a slave who longs for the shadow, and like a hired hand who looks for his wages, ³ so I am allotted months of emptiness, and nights of misery are apportioned to me.”*

In other words, what time I have left on this earth is empty, it's vain, and it's dark, and I'm just, it's miserable.

“⁴ When I lie down I say, ‘When shall I arise?’ But the night is long, and I am full of tossing till the dawn.” In other words, during the day, I'm hoping for night, when it's night, I don't get any rest.

“⁵ My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt; my skin hardens, then breaks out afresh. ⁶ My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and come to their end (look at this) without hope.”

He says, *“⁷ Remember that my life is a breath; my eye will never again see good.”* Now, quite honestly, Job doesn't know this for sure. He's assuming it.

But he has good reason to assume. Remember, he's assuming based on the same thing that Eliphaz assumed on, experience. I've noticed when people get sick like this, they usually don't survive. So he's assuming.

Verse 8, *"The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more; while your eyes are on me, I shall be gone."* And that's Job's assessment of his situation. You guys are looking at me now, but even while you're looking at me, I'm going to pass away.

Follow me now to verse 11. *"Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."* He says, I'm going to let loose now. And he's right, he's about to cut loose.

But I want you to notice something. I want you to notice how Job's comments from this point onward, he stops talking to his friends for the most part. He will refer to them.

But from here on, he's going to largely talk to God and he is going to vent his bitterness and his anger and his frustration and his disappointment in God. He is going to let it fly and you're going to see it here. Things are going to get dark here. Check this out.

Verse 12. *"Am I the sea, or a sea monster, that you set a guard over me?
¹³ When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,'
¹⁴ then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, ¹⁵ so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones."*

In other words, rather than living in the flesh of this body, I think to myself, oh, I can finally go to sleep and get a little comfort. And then when I fall asleep, my dreams torment me, I'm scared. He's saying to God now, you've brought me to the point where I want death. I'm looking for death as a release from this.

He says, *"¹⁶ I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath. ¹⁷ What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him, ¹⁸ visit him every morning and test him every moment?
¹⁹ How long will you not look away from me, nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit?"*

And by the way, that's a local proverb and it means something about, you don't even give me a moment to catch my breath.

He says in verse 20, *“If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of mankind?”* In other words, even if I do sin, what have I done to you? Have I harmed you in some way?

“Why have you made me your mark? (or your target?) Why have I become a burden to you? ²¹ Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I shall lie in the earth; you will seek me, but I shall not be (found).”

Now, I want you to stop there for just a moment. Understand that even though Job is confessing here that he is a sinner, he says here, why don't you just forgive my iniquity? Job freely confesses that he's a sinner, just like you and I, but he still maintains that he didn't do anything to deserve this. Are you with me? He knows he's a sinner. Job knows that, but he also maintains his innocence related to what has happened to him. And I want to remind you again, he's correct.

Now as we go on, you're going to notice in the conversation and as it progresses that we're going to see how Job begins to make some false assumptions, as do his friends. They'll continue to condemn him and Job is going to come to the point of assuming, because of his pain, that God is unfair and unjust. Okay? He's going to assume that, and he's going to begin to speak to God along those lines.

Chapter 8 begins with the words of Bildad. Look at verse 2. *“How long will you say these things, and the words of your mouth be a great wind?”* In other words, you're just a big bag of hot air.

Verse 3, *“Does God pervert justice? (really?) Or does the Almighty pervert the right? (listen) ⁴ If your children have sinned against him, he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.”*

Can you imagine? His kids are dead. He says, listen, if your kids sinned, then they got what they deserve, Job. You obviously deserved what's happening to you. Your kids sinned, okay? It's simple.

Skip down to verse 8. *“For inquire, please, of bygone ages, and consider what the fathers have searched out. ⁹ For we are but of yesterday and know nothing, for our days on earth are a shadow. (but) ¹⁰ Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding?”* So what is this man all about?

Remember Eliphaz was all about personal observation? Well, Bildad's emphasis is on the collective wisdom of the ages. He's on human tradition and that sort of thing. Honored wisdom passed down from generation to generation. Do you know that there are people who believe that because something is old, it's good.

And that the age of something is the only marker that you need to understand or to know that is a good thing. If it's old, it's good. And that's where Bildad is coming from. He says, let's think for a little bit about the wisdom of the ages. And it's really just another form of human pride.

Skip down to verse 20. *“Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers.”* Interesting, isn't it? He says God won't reject a blameless man. We know, however, Job was blameless and yet he's saying, he's inferring that he has been rejected by God. But he's asking, does God reject a blameless man? In other words, are you really truly blameless since you have obviously been rejected by God? Okay.

Chapter 9, Job responds. *“Then Job answered and said: ² ‘Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God? ³ If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times.’* In other words, even if I wanted to argue my case, before God, I couldn't do it.

“How then can I answer him, choosing my words with him?” Then check this out. Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't tell you, I skipped down to verse 14. Now 15. *“Though I am in the right, I cannot answer him; I must appeal for mercy to my accuser.”* Look what he's saying here.

Job is saying, listen, even though I'm right and He's wrong, He's too big for me. He's too powerful for me to talk to. I know that I'm right and I know that He's wrong but He can beat me up. There's nothing I can do. I mean, what can I do? All I can do is cry out for mercy. That's all I can do, say, God have mercy on me. Although, I didn't do anything to deserve this. Right? He's saying that's his only option.

Verse 16. *“If I summoned him and he answered me, (look at this) I would not believe that he was listening to my voice.”* Now, isn't that an interesting attitude? So let's say, Job says, I summoned Him. Let's say, He answered, He came and then I started pouring out my complaint to Him. I don't think He would even listen. I don't think He cares.

Have you ever talked to someone who said God doesn't care? Why should I pray God doesn't care anyway? Have you been there yourself? That's where Job's at. I would talk to Him, but He doesn't care.

Listen to verse 17. *“For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds (important last two words) without cause; ¹⁸ he will not let me get my breath, but fills me with bitterness.”* Now it's God's fault that Job is full of bitterness.

Verse 19. *“If it is a contest of strength, (well, yeah, okay, fine) behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him?”* In other words, who can make Him answer for His injustice?

“²⁰ Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.” Somehow. You see what Job is saying?

Verse 21, look it. *“I am blameless; I regard not myself; (in fact) I loathe my life. ²² It is all one; therefore I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’”* Boy, you've gone somewhere, haven't you, when you start saying things like that. God *“destroys both the blameless and the wicked.”*

“²³ When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent. ²⁴ The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges— if it is not he, who then is it?”

What Job is saying here is, when justice turns a blind eye, so does God. And if it's not Him, then who? And you and I have seen this, we've seen justice turn a blind eye. We've seen injustice.

And Job is now in so much pain that this is the way he now views God. God is unjust. God is a big bully who won't listen, who won't talk. And even if He would talk, He can't be trusted to even listen to Job's words of complaint.

Skip down to verse 32. *“For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. ³³ There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.”*

And what Job is saying here is, in order for an arbiter to do his job, to arbitrate between two parties, the arbiter has to have authority over both parties. And he has to say, no, you're wrong in this, but you're wrong in that, and so I'm going to make you guys resolve this issue. But an arbiter has to have that power.

And Job is saying, hey, first of all, I can't even get Him to come to court. And if I could, who's going to look at God in the face and say, you're wrong, and hold Him to it. Nobody can. Nobody has that kind of power over God. So he's saying, it's not going to work anyway.

Verse 34, *“Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me.”*³⁵ *Then I would speak without fear of him, for I am not so in myself.*” It's hard to understand that last phrase. But he's basically saying, if God would just back off for just a little while I would speak to Him without fear, but as it is, I don't have it in me to do it because He's God and I'm me.

Chapter 10. He says, *“I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; (and boy that is a dangerous thing to do) I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.”*² *I will say to God, Do not condemn me; (okay) let me know why you contend against me.*” Let me know why you're fighting against me.

“³ Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands and favor the designs of the wicked?” Does this make you happy? To make my life miserable while you turn a blind eye to the wicked and you give your favor to them? Is that what pleases you? Is that how you get your jollies, God? That's what he's saying.

He says, *“⁴ Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees? ⁵ Are your days as the days of man, or your years as a man's years, ⁶ that you seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, ⁷ although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand?”*

He says, so you go looking for things to accuse me of, even though I'm not guilty of this. But still who's going to deliver me when you condemn me who can deliver me out of your hand. There's no one stronger than You.

Skip down to verse 12. Listen to this. This is amazing, these 3 verses. *“You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. ¹³ Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. ¹⁴ If I sin, you watch me and do not acquit me of my iniquity.”*

Isn't that crazy? See, Job isn't forgetting all of the years he had that were so blessed of God. But now, he's brought to come to this place where he's saying, I think I get it now.

You brought me to this place of great blessing, and you cared for me. But I know what was in your heart. You were just waiting. You were waiting and watching for an opportunity to snatch it all away. Just to take it all away and you were going to just pounce on me and snuff me out like a candle. I know this is what's in your heart. Wow.

Can you imagine saying to God? I know what's in your heart.

Verse 16. *“And were my head lifted up, you would hunt me like a lion and again work wonders against me.”¹⁷ You renew your witnesses against me and increase your vexation toward me; you bring fresh troops against me.¹⁸ “Why did you bring me out from the womb? Would that I had died before any eye had seen me*

¹⁹ and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave.

²⁰ Are not my days few? Then (stop) cease, and leave me alone, that I may find (just) a little cheer²¹ before I go—and I shall not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow,²² the land of gloom like thick darkness, like deep shadow without any order, where light is as thick darkness.” He's saying, listen, I'm dying soon. Why don't you just leave me alone? Let me go.

Now Zophar takes a shot at Job. *“11 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:² “Should a multitude of words go unanswered, and a man full of talk be judged right?³ Should your babble silence men, and when you mock, shall no one shame you?*

⁴ For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in God's eyes.’⁵ But oh, that God would speak and open his lips to you,⁶ and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For he is manifold in understanding. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.”

Let me ask you a question. Is anything Zophar basically saying here wrong about God? No it's really not. Again, again, again, it's the person to whom he's speaking that makes his comments inappropriate.

Here's a man, again, who has literally lost everything, and Zophar says, oh, how I wish God would speak up and set you right. How I wish He would tell you a thing or two.

Skip down to verse 13. *“If you prepare your heart, you will stretch out your hands toward him.¹⁴ If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not injustice dwell in your tents.”* Like I'm sure you already have.

“¹⁵ Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure and will not fear. ¹⁶ You will forget your misery; you will remember it as waters that have passed away.” Zophar is saying, listen, if you just come to God and repent of all the things you've done wrong and turn away from this sin, then you'll have nothing to fear. You can forget all this misery if you'll just repent of your sin, Job.

Job responds in chapter 12 and he says, he answers. He says, *“Then Job answered and said: ² “No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you.”*

Little sarcasm there, but he says, *“³ But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Who does not know such things as these? ⁴ I am a laughingstock to my friends; I, who called to God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, am a laughingstock.”*

Skip down to verse 6. *“The tents of robbers are at peace, and those who provoke God (yeah, they) are secure, who bring their god in their hand.”* In other words, idolaters. They're doing great. They're just doing hunky dory. Job is saying, and guys, he says, you can't deny it. Those who thumb their noses at God are getting along just fine.

You see, what's happening here? Pain has twisted his view of God's justice. Now he sees God as unfair. God is unjust. God is the kind of God who acquits the guilty and condemns the innocent. That's the way Job sees Him. That's what pain and bitterness will do to your heart.

Chapter 13, *“Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. ² What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. ³ But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God. ⁴ As for you, you whitewash with lies; worthless physicians are you all. ⁵ Oh that you would keep silent, and it would be your wisdom!”*

That's Job's way of saying, you know what, you guys would appear smart if you just keep your yaps shut. That's what he's saying. Just be quiet and you'll look like you guys are really smart.

Verse 12, he says, *“Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay. ¹³ “Let me have silence, and I will speak, and let come on me what may.”* In other words, whatever God's going to bring, let Him bring.

*“¹⁴ Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand?
¹⁵ Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face.
¹⁶ This will be my salvation, that the godless shall not come before him.”*

Verse 23. *“How many are my iniquities and my sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin. ²⁴ Why do you hide your face and count me as your enemy? ²⁵ Will you frighten a driven leaf and pursue dry chaff? ²⁶ For you write bitter things against me and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
²⁷ You put my feet in the stocks and watch all my paths; you set a limit for the soles of my feet. ²⁸ Man wastes away like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten.*

*14 “Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. ² He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not.
³ And do you open your eyes on such a one and bring me into judgment with you?”*

In other words, he's saying, God, you've made me like, my life is like a fleeting shadow. I'm like a flower that blooms for a second and then withers. I'm nothing and yet you would judge me. You'd be so harsh in your judgment toward me.

Verse 4. *“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one.”* Listen to what Job is saying here. *“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean (thing)?”* Here's what he's saying.

He's saying, my mom and dad were sinners. My grandparents were sinners. I am from their lineage. I'm a sinner, okay? That's what you get. When you take two sinners and put them together, guess what you get? You get a sinner. This is the way you made me. This is the way I am. Of course, it's not the way God made him. But you understand what he's saying?

He's saying, now are you going to throttle me when I act exactly the way I was born to act? Do you hear the anger? Do you hear the frustration?

Verse 5, *“Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass, ⁶ look away from him and leave him alone, that he may enjoy, like a hired hand, his day.”*

Here, Job basically says, since you've made man's days so few and disappointing, why don't you just leave him alone for a minute, and let him find some moment of enjoyment out of this pathetic life that you've given man to live on the earth.

Skip down to verse 20. We're going to close here. *"You prevail forever against him, and he passes; (in other words, he dies) you change his countenance, and send him away."* Again, those are statements referring to death.

"²¹ His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he (doesn't even) perceives it not. ²² He (only) feels only the pain of his own body, and he mourns only for himself."

Well, we've seen some rather disturbing things in these chapters. First of all, we've seen that people can be pretty cruel in the face of human suffering, haven't we? Cruel toward those who have suffered and are suffering some kind of a loss.

Secondly, we've seen that men will grab a hold of all kinds of things to underscore their authority, like we saw in these men. Intellectual observation, human tradition as the source.

And then thirdly, we've seen the danger that Job entered into a viewing God through the eyes of his pain and giving full vent to his frustration and his disappointment with God because it leads to bitterness. And then bitterness blinds a person from the reality of who God is.

You cannot see God through eyes of bitterness. You cannot. You will see a monster. You will see a monster. That's what bitterness will do. And when you hear somebody, and I've seen videos on YouTube. Somebody saying, if there is a God and there is a heaven and I stand before Him one day, here's what I'm going to say to Him. And out comes the most arrogant, vile sort of thing about God and every accusation you can imagine under the sun.

Listen, when you hear that, those are words spoken out of bitterness. That's where they come from. That's the wellspring that brings them forth.