

Job and the Problem of Pain

David Scott Nichols MD

A Most Perplexing Question...

- ▶ Many people wonder why an all-loving God would allow His people to experience so much pain and suffering.
- ▶ This results in many people rejecting the Christian God... they become atheists or develop a non-Christian conception of God
- ▶ Why does God allow so much pain and suffering? Is there a satisfactory answer?

Outline of this Treatise

- ▶ Section 1: Man's answer to the "*problem of pain*" – the answer from philosophy
- ▶ Section 2: The benefits of pain and suffering
- ▶ Section 3: Job asks God why He is allowing him to suffer so terribly...
- ▶ God answers Job in an intriguing and powerful way!

Class Participation

- ▶ I hope that many in the class will contribute with their own ideas as we broach many difficult, yet important, questions throughout this course.
- ▶ Please don't worry about whether you have the correct answer...for many of the topics we will discuss, only God knows the right answer for certain!
- ▶ Do read along with me as we study the *Book of Job* in the main portion of this course

The Problem of Pain

- ▶ C.S. Lewis wrote a classic book on this exact topic over fifty years ago.
- ▶ Lewis struggled with this issue early in his life... and, at times, even in his later years.
- ▶ Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan also have much to offer on this topic...
- ▶ Our goal here is to find out why God would let the world be as it is...
- ▶ People do experience much pain and suffering.
- ▶ God is perfect.
- ▶ How can these two truths be reconciled?

The Philosophical Defense

- ▶ Man's defense on the issue of why a totally good and loving God would allow pain into His universe.
- ▶ An interesting apparent contradiction exists:
- ▶ God is obligated to create the best possible world...
- ▶ Yet, it seems to most people that we do not live in the best possible world!

A Brief Overview

- ▶ God is all-loving as He proved on Calvary
 - ▶ God does indeed want the best for His people
 - ▶ Therefore, God has created the earth to be the best earth possible to accomplish His divine, eternal purpose.
 - ▶ Let us see if we can understand, using our limited human logic, how this could be true.
- 

Free Will and Evil

- ▶ All throughout the remainder of this section, the concept of *free will* and the resultant *evil* that befalls mankind and our world will be clearly evident.
- ▶ These concepts lead to the type of world God has created for His people.
- ▶ The question becomes... is it the best world possible given our free will?
- ▶ Frankly, we can only make a somewhat feeble attempt at answering this question... I do not believe that God wants us to know the details of His actual reasons.

C.S. Lewis – His Original Premise

- ▶ C.S. Lewis put it this way...
- ▶ “If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty, He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore, God lacks either goodness, or power, or both.”
- ▶ Is this premise correct?
- ▶ What did God want to accomplish?

Possible Worlds to Create

- ▶ God could have created nothing at all
- ▶ God could have created *robots* that never would choose to sin
- ▶ God could have created a world where creatures always chose to sin
- ▶ God could have created creatures that could sin, but never choose to do so
- ▶ God could create a world in which people *really do* have free will.

The World We Live In

- ▶ We live in a world where people have free will.
- ▶ We can choose to accept or reject God and His commandments.
- ▶ Is this the best world to live in?
- ▶ Christian theologians say that this world must be the best possible world since a perfect, omnipotent God made it.
- ▶ Can we show, using our human logic, why this is true?

Our Goal...

- ▶ Can we show why God would create a world like ours as the best type of world to accomplish His perfect and loving purposes?
- ▶ We must expand our view of this world to the view that an omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God has as He looks at His universe from eternity past to eternity future.
- ▶ This cannot be done perfectly... but many theologians believe that a reasonable understanding can be obtained as to the reason why pain and suffering is allowed into this world.

Another Idea...

- ▶ This is *not* the best possible world, but *it is the best possible world to lead mankind to the best possible eternity* in the all-encompassing universe of God.
- ▶ Geisler – “A sinless Heaven is better than an evil earth, but there was no way for God to achieve a sinless Heaven unless He created beings that would sin and did sin in order that out of their sin He could produce the best possible world (Heaven) where beings would not sin.”

The Premise

- ▶ God gives humans free will as this trait is certainly required in a world where love can be expressed or withheld.
- ▶ This free will certainly can result in the choice to sin... the rejection God and His will for one's life. That is what Adam and Eve eventually chose.
- ▶ The *fall of man* resulted in the evil/pain we now see in our world.

- ▶ God, however, uses the suffering in this world to help His children return to Him *and* pursue their individual sanctification.
- ▶ This evil does not come from God... but does come from mankind's misguided use of a wonderful gift from God... the gift of free will.

The Problem of Evil

- ▶ God is the cause of everything
- ▶ Evil exists
- ▶ Therefore God causes evil

Christian Response

- ▶ God is the efficient cause of every finite substance (but nothing else)
- ▶ Evil is not a substance
- ▶ God is therefore not the cause of evil

Free Will Leads to Sin

- ▶ A person may use their free will to reject God's laws – this is sin
- ▶ *This evil act, however, was not caused or created by God.*
- ▶ As Geisler notes, “Evil has no existence of its own; it exists only in substances that God has created but it has no subsistence of its own.”

- ▶ Augustine said that there is an absolutely good God who chose to create men and women with free wills.
- ▶ These creatures freely choose the lesser good for and of themselves over the perfect good of God, resulting in sin and the corruption of the world.

So, what is evil?

- ▶ Evil has no substance of its own. It is a privation or corruption of the essence of another
- ▶ God causes only substantive things. He does not cause evil.
- ▶ God does create people with free wills.
- ▶ Moral evil is rooted in human free will. Free will is a good thing, but its abuse by mankind results in evil.

- ▶ Human nature is never totally corrupted by evil... men and women are always responsible for their actions (except, I believe, when mentally ill with a psychosis or dealing with a similar mental problem such as severe retardation).
- ▶ The grace of God enables men and women to free themselves of their sinful propensities (but only as they submit to the Holy Spirit after being saved by Jesus) and to strive for sanctification as they live out the remainder of their lives on earth.

God and Evil

- ▶ What follows is a discussion of how evil can exist in a world created and sustained by a perfect and loving God.
- ▶ There are various ways people look at this issue...
- ▶ Pierre Bayle stated:
- ▶ Evil exists
- ▶ An omnipotent God would destroy evil
- ▶ A benevolent God would destroy evil
- ▶ Therefore, either:

- ▶ God is not omnipotent
- ▶ God is not benevolent
- ▶ God does not exist
- ▶ The Christian does believe that God will destroy evil... therefore, his answer to God and the “problem of evil” looks like this...

- ▶ God is responsible for those acts He actually performs
- ▶ God never performs evil acts
- ▶ God created mankind with free will to choose to follow Him and His edicts or to reject Him
- ▶ God *cannot do the impossible* and prevent *free* people from choosing sin/evil
- ▶ When mankind, using free choice, rejects God, this is sin... which is evil
- ▶ Therefore, mankind (and fallen angels) freely chooses evil

The Best Possible World

- ▶ God has given mankind free will
- ▶ Can all the evil that free will has caused be justified?
- ▶ *Permitting* evil can lead to a greater good.

- ▶ God is the best being possible. We can conceive of a “world” better than our current world... e.g Heaven. Therefore, we can infer that God is using this world to lead us to Heaven and that this world is the best world for that purpose (or else God would have chosen another)
- ▶ Given the above statement, our world is even better than a morally good world
- ▶ There is evidence that the Heaven we aspire to actually exists (since there is excellent evidence that the Bible is true and it speaks of a perfect place called Heaven)

- ▶ God is perfect, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and all loving
- ▶ Producing anything but the best possible world for God would be evil for such a God
- ▶ An absolutely perfect being cannot produce evil
- ▶ God did make this world
- ▶ The world as it is now is not the best world imaginable
- ▶ Therefore, there must be a better, perfect world to come, of which our current world is a necessary prelude... we call this next “world”... the final “world”... Heaven

A Morally Perfect World vs. Our World

- ▶ Let us discuss why it was better for God to create our imperfect world than a morally perfect world
- ▶ Geisler and Corduan maintain that “permitting an evil world is the best way to achieve the **morally best world.**”
- ▶ Not only that, but free will necessitates an imperfect world

Moral Virtues

- ▶ A world with the greater number of moral virtues is morally better than one with a lesser number of them.”
- ▶ **“Certain virtues like courage, fortitude, mercy and forgiveness are attainable only in a world where sin occurs.”**

Training Ground for Heaven

- ▶ God must produce the morally best world He can... if He is going to produce a moral world at all.
- ▶ *Evil serves as a tool* to help mankind develop and reach to their highest possible virtues while on this earth
- ▶ Given this, an “intermediate world” with sin in it is better than an “intermediate world” where evil never did occur. This is true because this world of ours is only a stopping off place, a place of training as mankind prepares for Heaven.

- ▶ Geisler notes the following: “A world where sin never materializes is *conceivable* but it may not be the *most desirable* morally. **If evil is not permitted, then it cannot be defeated.**
- ▶ “While a world where sin does not occur is *theoretically conceivable*, it would be *morally inferior.*” (C.S. Lewis)

What about other causes of pain?

- ▶ What about pain and suffering that is not a direct result of man's free will?
- ▶ No sin exists apart from Adam's first sin!
- ▶ Therefore, free will leads to all the pain and suffering we see in this world.

- ▶ The kind of world where human beings freely do evil is the best way to produce a morally perfect world (Heaven) – certain lessons are learned in that kind of world that are necessary to best function in Heaven
- ▶ We live in that kind of a world
- ▶ Hence, our world is the best world *to lead to the perfect world...Heaven*

- ▶ *Physical evil* (that evil not caused by man's abuse of free will ... that is, man's sin) is a necessary part of this world we live in
- ▶ Therefore, *physical evil* is needed to produce a morally perfect world (Heaven)
- ▶ Therefore, God must permit physical evil as God must produce a morally perfect world – God cannot settle for “second best”

Physical Evil

- ▶ Pain and suffering that effects humanity due to sickness, pestilence and/or forces of nature.
- ▶ Causes include:
 - ▶ Satan and demons are the cause of some physical evil ... including certain illnesses
 - ▶ Natural Laws create events that result in certain physical evils (such as hurricanes and earthquakes)

What Purpose Does it Serve?

- ▶ Some physical evils are necessary for humans to learn important life lessons, that would otherwise not be learned (for example, sympathy, endurance, courage)
- ▶ Certain physical pain and suffering is needed as important moral and physical warnings

The Laws of Nature

- ▶ Our “fallen world” generally operates according to God’s Laws of Nature – exceptions are called miracles and do occur
- ▶ At times, Satan and his demons cause the pain we experience

The Positive Side of Physical Evil

- ▶ Physical Evil can lead some to develop important positive attributes
- ▶ Physical Evil may lead some directly or indirectly to Jesus
- ▶ God may use Satan as the bearer of physical pain
- ▶ Physical Pain can be an important warning system
- ▶ All causes of pain will be used by God to lead to our continued sanctification

God – Our Heavenly Father

- ▶ God is our Father in Heaven... not our Grandfather in Heaven
- ▶ Life and the pain all experience is used by God as our “training camp” for Heaven.

Conclusion

- ▶ God wanted His children to have free will.
- ▶ Free will gives us the ability to love
- ▶ Free will also leads to sin
- ▶ God created the current world we live in as the best world to lead to the ultimately perfect world --- Heaven

The Value of Pain

- ▶ God can use painful experiences to develop important character traits in His children
- ▶ The following section of our lecture series will review many of the reasons why God may allow “pain” into our lives

Faith

- ▶ Testing and Development of faith
- ▶ “without faith it is impossible to please God”
Hebrews 11:6
- ▶ for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
1 Peter 1:6–8
- ▶ 2 Cor. 1:8–11

Perseverance

- ▶ the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2–4
- ▶ 1 Cor 10:13

The Blessed Hope of Heaven

- ▶ Painful experiences often cause God's children to look forward with blessed anticipation to their eventual entrance into Heaven
- ▶ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1
- ▶ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 1 Cor 15:19
- ▶ Titus 1:2; Titus 2:13–14; 1 Cor 2:9
- ▶ Phil 3:20–21; 2 Cor 4:16–18

Pain is a Sensor Mechanism

- ▶ Pain is interpreted by properly acting senses in the normal human body to help the individual lead a healthy life. When the proper pain mechanisms are missing, the human body is in trouble.

Tribulation may be a deterrent to Pride

- ▶ Probably the worst sin that exists is the sin of pride. At times, God may allow suffering into our lives to keep us from pride.
- ▶ To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.
2 Cor 12:7

Suffering Develops Character

- ▶ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**; perseverance, **character**; and character, **hope**. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Romans 5:3–5

Pain brings us closer to God

- ▶ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Acts 9:15–16
- ▶ if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:20–21
- ▶ The martyr Stephen is a great example
- ▶ Recall your own experiences here...

Trials can keep us from sin

- ▶ Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 1 Peter 4:1
- ▶ trials that bring suffering and pain may also decrease a person's tendency to commit certain particular sins.

Trials can lead to comfort

- ▶ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that **we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.** For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. 2 Cor 1:3-7

A testimony to man and angels

- ▶ Our response to suffering can be a **testimony to mankind and angels**: *Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;* Job 13:15
- ▶ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**
Heb 12:1–3

Trials can show Christ in Christians

- ▶ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and **they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.**

Acts 6:15

- ▶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed . We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, **so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.** For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

2 Cor 4:6-11

Discipline for Sin

- ▶ Sin breaks our fellowship with God. There are times that God allows suffering into our lives as a punishment and a “wake-up” call to bring us back to Him. God is always ready to forgive us for the sin in our lives. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”

1 John 1:9–10

- ▶ Hebrews 12:5–11; Gal 6:7–8; 1 Cor 5:5

Trials may glorify God

- ▶ As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." John 9:1–3
- ▶ Job 1:8–11

Conclusion

- ▶ God will use the pain and suffering that is so obviously present in our world to prepare his children for Heaven. There are innumerable lessons that can and will be learned as every Christian deals with the difficulties that each individual faces because of the free will God has instilled into His creation. Because of this preparation, those entering Heaven will be ready for all the wonderful plans God has in store for them.

- ▶ It is very true that our time on earth is at times very trying. Let us always remember that our omniscient God who loves everyone with an infinite love most certainly knows what He is doing... and He is doing what is best for each and every one of us. This brings us to the third portion of this treatise where we shall see God communicates this to Job, and all who read this great book, in an unusual, yet very effective and powerful manner.

The Book of Job

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ One of the more important books in the Old Testament
- ▶ In His *Book of Job*, God is trying to teach us how to look at the pain we all must face as we go through this world.

Outline of Course

- ▶ Job – an introduction: setting and premise, questions posed Chapter 1 & 2
- ▶ The “Discussion Down at the Dump” Chapter 3–10
- ▶ Job replies to his three friends Chapter 11–14
- ▶ Job and friends’ second round of talks Chapter 15–21

- ▶ The third round of discussion between Job and his three friends
Chapter 22–31
- ▶ Elihu comes on the scene
Chapter 32–37
- ▶ God answers and Job finally..... understands. The essence of God's answer is... I am God... and you are not
Chapter 38–41
- ▶ Restoration – Summation Chapter 42

Introduction continued...

- ▶ Everything in the book of Job is *not true*
- ▶ Let us together search the scriptures and our hearts to answer the questions posed in this great book
- ▶ The book builds to a climax... the time near the very end when God finally answers Job!

Just a few questions to consider...

- ▶ Why does calamity strike down people (even 'righteous' people)?
- ▶ Does God care what happens to His creation?
- ▶ What are the limits of our knowledge?
- ▶ What should be the proper response to suffering?
- ▶ What is the proper response to our seemingly unanswered questions?
- ▶ Is Job a righteous man? What did he think about himself?
- ▶ Why did God create us?
- ▶ What are we supposed to accomplish in our lifetime on earth?

Prologue

- ▶ A great book of history and the Bible
- ▶ Who was the author?
- ▶ When was it written?
- ▶ Where did Job live?
- ▶ What style was used by the author?

Chapter 1 & 2

- ▶ Satan's challenge to God
- ▶ In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. Job 1:1–3

Prologue continued...

- ▶ What does it mean when the Bible says Job was blameless? Is anyone blameless?
- ▶ There is no one righteous, not even one.
Romans 3:10
- ▶ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23
- ▶ Certainly Job had plenty of possessions. What were Job's greatest possessions?
- ▶ Psalms 127:3–5; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 John 3:2; John 14:2–3; Romans 8:19–23; Proverbs 17:6

What can we do to protect our children?

- ▶ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Eph. 6:4
- ▶ Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. Prov. 22:6
- ▶ What are the limitations?
- ▶ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Romans 14:12

The Book of Job

- ▶ A Masterpiece of literature and a poignant look at how one great man dealt with unrelenting pain over time...
- ▶ Eventually, Job had a wonderful epiphany that came directly from God and changed his life for eternity
- ▶ My hope is that you will be blessed by God through the study of this great book on the subject of *pain and discouragement*

The Heavenly Scene

- ▶ Satan comes into Heaven and speaks with God
- ▶ Satan is the god of this world
- ▶ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the **prince of this world** will be driven out. John 12:31
- ▶ The **prince of this world** now stands condemned. John 16:11
- ▶ Our battle against Satan
- ▶ Satan challenges God

The Challenge...

- ▶ God points to His servant, Job
- ▶ "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? Job 1:9
- ▶ The "challenge" is on...
- ▶ First, God allowed Satan to do anything he wanted to do to Job, except cause him any physical harm.

- ▶ Job's world is turned upside down!
- ▶ "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.
Job 1:21–22
- ▶ What do you think about this?
- ▶ Why do you worship and love God?

- ▶ As you think of other reasons that people face painful situations, keep in mind why we are on this earth. Why are we?
- ▶ He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matt 5:45
- ▶ To offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship Romans 12:1
- ▶ It is God's will that you should be sanctified 1 Thess 4:3

The Bottom Line

- ▶ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Romans 8:28–29
- ▶ Some time later, God spoke to Satan to point out how well Job responded to his test. Satan was not impressed and he responded to God...

- ▶ "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

Job 2:4–5

- ▶ God then allowed Satan to come against Job himself... except for actually taking the life of this righteous man. Satan came against Job vehemently...and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head Job 2:7

- ▶ Job's wife is of no comfort at all!
- ▶ How should one be of comfort to a fellow Christian?
- ▶ Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, enter onto the scene
- ▶ **Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was. Job 2:11-13**

Down at the Dump

- ▶ Job (chapters 3–10)
- ▶ Eliphaz the Temanite: a great-grandson of Esau
- ▶ Bildad the Shuhite: in the lineage of Abraham
- ▶ Zophar the Naamathite: Naamah was in northern Arabia
- ▶ Job finally spoke... after seven days. Recall just how much he had suffered and lost

God allowed Job to...

- ▶ lose all of his material wealth
- ▶ lose all of his loved ones – his wife now is really a thorn in his side
- ▶ lose his health
- ▶ lose all emotional support
- ▶ cause Job to fall into deep depression and become suicidal
- ▶ cause Job to question God's justice and love

Job is in agony

- ▶ "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?" Job 3:11
- ▶ There is a similar wish noted in Job 10:18 when Job says, "Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me." Job 10:18
- ▶ Others in the Bible have had similar thoughts... maybe you have too? (as did Robert Kennedy)

Worry

- ▶ What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil." Job 3:25–26
- ▶ Job was worried about “tomorrow” – do you do this at times?
- ▶ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Matt. 6:25

How to Deal with Worry

- ▶ What can we do to stop worrying, as we know it is to our detriment and displeases God?
- ▶ Turn to God **Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you** Psalms 42:5–6
- ▶ Seek the help of Godly friends and family
- ▶ Study the word
- ▶ Recognize just who God is and how much He loves you
- ▶ Use medicines, when necessary, and Christian Counseling
- ▶ Just keep going (or as a favorite poem of mine says... “just keep a’goin’”)! Do not give up... ever!
- ▶ Certainly, easier said than done!

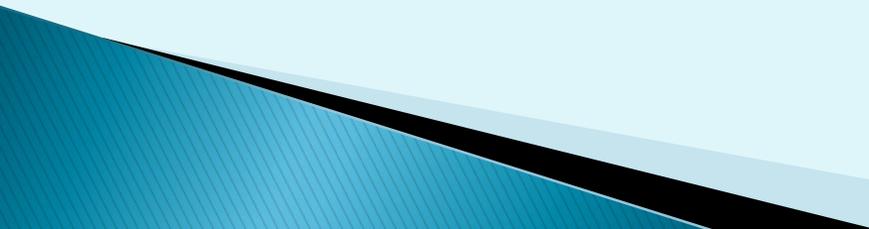
Eliphaz' first speech

- ▶ Job (Chapter 4–5)
- ▶ Eliphaz had the prototypical belief of his time
- ▶ Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish. Job 4:7–9

Eliphaz makes his point

- ▶ “For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground; Yet man is born to trouble, as surely as sparks fly upward. Job 5:6–7
- ▶ "But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him. Job 5:8
- ▶ “Happy is the man whom God reprove! The Almighty’s chastening do not reject. For He wounds, but He binds up; He smites, but His hands give healing.” Job 5:17–18

A Few Questions to Ponder

- ▶ Does Eliphaz know the reason for Job's predicament?
 - ▶ What is the essence of what Eliphaz is saying to Job?
 - ▶ Is he correct? Should Job be happy as Eliphaz says?
 - ▶ Is it true that tragic life situations are the result of sin? Is sin the only reason for these tragedies (i.e. do innocent people ever suffer)?
- 

A Few Answers from the Bible

- ▶ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23
- ▶ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15
- ▶ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever John 8:34–35

Other Causes of *Pain*

- ▶ As we have previously discussed, there are many reasons that men and women experience pain in this world.
- ▶ He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous Matt 5:45
- ▶ When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Eccl 7:14
- ▶ Luke 13:1–5; John 9:1–3

However, God is our *Father*

- ▶ God is working to help us in our quest for sanctification
- ▶ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Heb 12:7–8
- ▶ I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. Deut 5:9–10

Job answers Eliphaz

- ▶ Job (Chapter 6)
- ▶ Job also was convinced that God was the cause of *his* pain... in a real sense, he was correct in that thought.
- ▶ “For the arrows of the Almighty pierce me, and my spirit drinks in their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me.”
Job 6:4

Job continues...

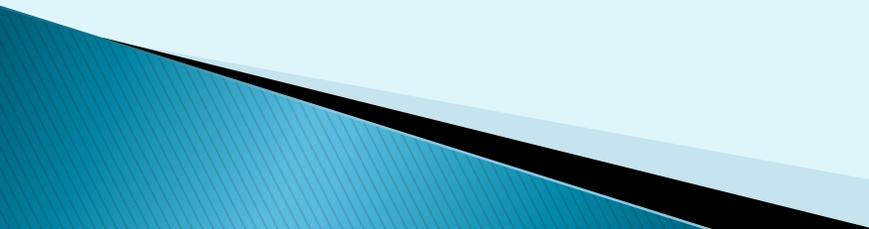
- ▶ Job wants to die while still being true to God
- ▶ "Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for, that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut me off! Then I would still have this consolation-- my joy in unrelenting pain-- that I had not denied the words of the Holy One. Job 6:8-10

- ▶ “A friend owes kindness to one in despair, though he have forsaken the fear of the Almighty.” Job 6:14
- ▶ Job challenges his friend(s) to show him just what he did that deserved this severe punishment (Job 6:21,24,29b)

Job Addresses God

- ▶ Job first complains of his dreadful life on this earth
- ▶ Why have you set me up as an object of attack?
Job 7:12b
- ▶ I despise my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone; my days have no meaning. "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention, that you examine him every morning and test him every moment? Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant? If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target?
Job 7:16–20
- ▶ Have I become a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins?
Job 7:20–21

Questions to Ponder

- ▶ What does Job think about Eliphaz' advice?
 - ▶ What does Job ask God? (there are a few things)
 - ▶ Where does Job say he will soon be? What does he think that place is like?
 - ▶ What positive thoughts or actions, if any, is Job thinking/taking to help his situation?
- 

Bildad's First Speech

- ▶ Job (Chapter 8)
- ▶ Where does Bildad derive his answers for Job's problem?

Wisdom of the World

- ▶ For the **wisdom of this world is foolishness** in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."
1 Cor 3:19–20
- ▶ The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile. Psalms 94:11
- ▶ Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.
James 3:15–16

- ▶ What does Bildad believe about God's justice?
 - ▶ What does Bildad tell Job he needs to do to get out of his terrible predicament?
 - ▶ Is he right? If Job strictly follows his advice (and does no more, yet no less), what do you think the result would be?
- 

- ▶ Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: “How long will you utter such things? The words from your mouth are like a mighty wind!”
Job 8:1–2
- ▶ Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? Job 8:3
- ▶ But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place. Job 8:5–6

- ▶ Bildad appealed to the *wisdom of the ages*
- ▶ "Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned, for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow. Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?"

Job 8:8–10

- ▶ Bildad tells Job that if he were not guilty, God would certainly not be putting him through all of this misery. He must repent!

Job's Response to Bildad

- ▶ Job (Chapter 9–10)
- ▶ But how can a mortal be righteous before God? Though one wished to dispute with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed? Job 9:2–4
- ▶ You cannot argue with God... at least not successfully!

- ▶ Job still cannot see what he has done that is wrong and deserving of his current horrific condition
- ▶ Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself; I despise my own life. It is all the same; that is why I say, 'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked. Job 9:21–22

Job wants an *Mediator*

- ▶ He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. **If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.**

Job 9:32–35

- ▶ An allusion to Jesus Christ!

Job Argues with God

- ▶ Job is really upset and he lets God know it
- ▶ God still remains silent
- ▶ How does Job feel about his chances of successfully arguing with God?
- ▶ Yet, Job wants God to know certain things; what are those things?
- ▶ What does Job think about God's justice? Is God fair to his creation or does He just use His power arbitrarily and at His own whim? What does it mean that God is sovereign?

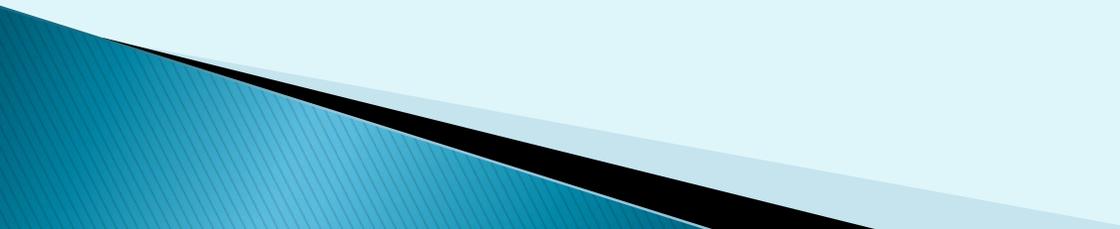
Job has lost all hope

- ▶ Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and deep shadow, to the land of deepest night, Job 10:20–22
- ▶ Bildad and Eliphaz have suggested that Job ask God for mercy. What does Job think about this?

- ▶ What should we remember when we are feeling depressed and rejected by God? Does God remember His creation... does He love His children?
- ▶ God gave His children many promises. When we are feeling terribly depressed or anxious, it is important to remember what He has in store for those who love Him.

Our Changing Relationship with God

- ▶ Notice just how much the relationship changed between Job and God... from Job's perspective, that is.
- ▶ This certainly changed the way Job viewed life and God!
- ▶ And Elijah...
- ▶ And David...
- ▶ How about when this happens to you?

- ▶ What things must Job recognize before he can solve his problem(s)? What is God trying to teach him?
 - ▶ Accept what is happening to him
 - ▶ He will learn (later) why he should accept this
 - ▶ Bury his pride!
 - ▶ Repent
- 

Zophar's Advice

- ▶ “Shall your babblings keep men silent, and shall you deride and no one give rebuke?”

Job 11:3

- ▶ "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens--what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave --what can you know?" Job 11:7-8

Can You *Properly* Question God?

- ▶ What does the Bible say?
- ▶ Eccl 5:2; 6:10–11; 8:16–17; Job 11:7–8
- ▶ "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" -- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. 1 Cor 2:10
- ▶ Zophar's final words of advice to Job

Job's Reply to Zophar

- ▶ Job (Chapter 12)
- ▶ “No doubt you are the people and wisdom shall die with you.” Job 12:1–2
- ▶ “but I have intelligence as well as you...”
Job 12:3a
- ▶ Job points out how he is totally perplexed at how God deals with humanity
- ▶ Job 12:4–6, 12, 17, 23

- ▶ How does Job view his current situation?
 - ▶ How is Job saying that God rules His creation?
- 

Job Wants an Audience with God

- ▶ Job (Chapter 13)
- ▶ Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. Job 13:3
- ▶ "Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may. Why do I put myself in jeopardy and take my life in my hands? **Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before him!** Job 13:13–16

Job continues to plead with God

- ▶ Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die. "Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply. *How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin. Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?* Job 13:19–24
- ▶ Job finally recognizes he actually has sinned... but, still he wonders why he has suffered so very much!
- ▶ How much should one suffer for the sin in one's life?

Job's Lament Continues

- ▶ Job (Chapter 14)
- ▶ "Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure. Do you fix your eye on such a one? Will you bring him before you for judgment? Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed. So look away from him and let him alone, till he has put in his time like a hired man. Job 14:1-6

The Meaning of Life?

- ▶ “For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch will not cease. but man dieth, and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?” Job 14: 7&10
- ▶ Job wonders about the meaning of life.
- ▶ What do you believe the purpose is of life on this earth.

The *Preacher*

- ▶ The Preacher from the book Ecclesiastes has thoughts on this topic...
- ▶ But then, the bottom line...
- ▶ Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: **Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man.** Eccl. 12:13
- ▶ What does this mean to you? How does this relate to Job's situation? Is this a good answer for people to live by?
- ▶ Please do not forget this... ever.

And what after death?

- ▶ “If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my renewal come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin. Job 14:14–17
- ▶ Here we see Job is expressing hope that God will forgive him his sin and someday, after his time here on earth, will restore him to life.

- ▶ Quickly, his melancholy attitude returns, however...
- ▶ "But as a mountain erodes and crumbles and as a rock is moved from its place, as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil, so you destroy man's hope. You overpower him once for all, and he is gone; you change his countenance and send him away. If his sons are honored, he does not know it; if they are brought low, he does not see it. He feels but the pain of his own body and mourns only for himself."

Job 14:18–22

The First Round Closes

- ▶ Job is struggling very much... between faith at times... then utter despair.
- ▶ He wonders about life after death... just what is Sheol? Hades? Paradise?
- ▶ Just what does the Bible teach us about life after death? What does Jesus say about this topic?

Death and the life thereafter

- ▶ How does Job's view of his afterlife prospects affect his view of his suffering?
- ▶ Apparently, God left Heaven somewhat of a "mystery" in Old Testament times.
- ▶ How does your belief in Heaven affect your attitude toward life and the inherent suffering found throughout one's lifetime?

Second Round of Talks

- ▶ Job (Chapter 15–21)
- ▶ Eliphaz speaks out again...
- ▶ But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God. Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you.
Job 15:4–6
- ▶ Eliphaz suggests that Job is sinning in the manner of his response to his situation. What do you think? Is Job being blasphemous?

- ▶ Eliphaz blasts Job with...
- ▶ "Are you the first man ever born? Were you brought forth before the hills? Do you listen in on God's council? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? What do you know that we do not know? What insights do you have that we do not have? The gray-haired and the aged are on our side, men even older than your father. Are God's consolations not enough for you, words spoken gently to you?" Job 15:7-11
- ▶ Then, Eliphaz rips into Job!

A Few Questions...

- ▶ What is Eliphaz implying concerning Job?
- ▶ Is this what actually does happen to evil people in the world we live in?
- ▶ How may this relate to the time in which he lived? What about 'grace' (the unmerited favor of God toward mankind)?

Job answers again...

- ▶ Job (Chapter 16)
- ▶ Job tells the three men that they are miserable at comforting him
- ▶ Job says that God has just turned him over to wicked men... and he does not understand
- ▶ Then he has some interesting words to say about his future... that future lying after death here on earth.

- ▶ My face is red with weeping, deep shadows ring my eyes; yet my hands have been free of violence and my prayer is pure. "O earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry never be laid to rest! Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend. "Only a few years will pass before I go on the journey of no return.
Job 16:16–22

Thoughts of the afterlife continue...

- ▶ Job (Chapter 17)
- ▶ "Give me, O God, the pledge you demand.
Who else will put up security for me?
Job 17:3
- ▶ Just what is Job asking God to do now?
- ▶ God is both judge and defense attorney
- ▶ Job tries desperately to hang on to some hope for his future

Bildad chimes in again...

- ▶ Job (Chapter 18)
- ▶ Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:
"When will you end these speeches? Be sensible, and then we can talk. Why are we regarded as cattle and considered stupid in your sight? Job 18:1–3
- ▶ Bildad tells Job of his eventual plight... the plight of the unrepentant sinner
- ▶ We know the Job believes that he is getting a raw deal from God...

- ▶ Who is right? Why? How does your faith depend on this answer, or does it?
- ▶ What do you think God wants us to be getting out of this book *up to this point*?
- ▶ If Job is right (that is, God allows the wicked to prosper and the just to suffer), what does this say about God? Elaborate on this point concerning the suffering/prospering of people. That is, when do people prosper..... When do they suffer?

A few words from the Bible...

- ▶ *The result of living a righteous or wicked life...*
- ▶ The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.
Prov 11:18
- ▶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Heb 11:6
- ▶ **"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. Rev 22:12**
- ▶ **Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Matt 13:43**

The Plight of the Wicked

- ▶ Wicked men are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous stands firm. Prov 12:7
- ▶ When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge. Prov 14:32
- ▶ Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 2 Tim 4:14
- ▶ You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. Psalms 91:8
- ▶ The LORD preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full. Psalms 31:23
- ▶ So what will the wicked reap... and when?

- ▶ So what will the wicked reap?
- ▶ When?

Job speaks again to Bildad

▶ Then Job replied:

"How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me. If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone. If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me. Job 19:1-6

Job Seeks Comfort

- ▶ Job cries out for some pity and comfort...
- ▶ “My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.”
Job 19:20
- ▶ "Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you pursue me as God does? Job 19:21–22

“My Redeemer Lives”

- ▶ "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!
- ▶ Apparently, Job has something very, very important to say...
- ▶ 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; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
Job 19:23–27

Redeemer Kinsman

- ▶ The word translated “Redeemer” here is used forty-four times in the Old Testament. It means “to lay claim to a person or thing; to free or deliver”.
- ▶ Just who do you think Job is referring to when he says his Redeemer lives?
- ▶ What is meant by the Redeemer standing on earth... in the end?
- ▶ What do you think Job means when he says that he will see God in his flesh... after his skin is destroyed?

A Battle of Faith

- ▶ So what has just happened?
- ▶ In painful life situations, what are the thoughts that go through your mind? Is there sometimes a strange dichotomy – a battle of your faith (that which is unseen) against what you “see”?
- ▶ What is faith?
- ▶ What does God say about faith?

Zophar and Job continue to *spar*

- ▶ Job (Chapter 20–21)
- ▶ Zophar spends every verse in the twentieth chapter telling Job of the terrible plight of the wicked. Of course, he is telling Job this because he is convinced that Job is wicked and currently being punished while still living, while certain disaster awaits his death...
- ▶ Job 20:5, 15, 23, 27–29
- ▶ Is Zophar correct?

Job closes second round of talks

- ▶ Job (Chapter 21)
- ▶ **Job answers to end the second round of talks:**
Job is convinced that the basic premise of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar is simply wrong. They are only saying those things that they have been told are true or those things that they believe should be true
- ▶ Job is asking them to take a look at the facts of real life!

- ▶ Job says that God sometimes seems to save his wrath for the evil-doer's children (and Zophar and Eliphaz agree). But, Job strongly suggests that it would be much better if God let the wicked person see his own destruction and drink of the wrath of the Almighty himself!
- ▶ What do you think about children suffering for their parents' sins?
- ▶ Or the other way around? Does it happen? Does God play a role in this situation?

The Sins of the Father

- ▶ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. Ex 20:5–6
- ▶ For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. **The soul who sins is the one who will die.**
Ezek 18:4

- ▶ "I know full well what you are thinking, the schemes by which you would wrong me. You say, 'Where now is the great man's house, the tents where wicked men lived?' Have you never questioned those who travel? Have you paid no regard to their accounts--- Job 21:27-29
- ▶ Job points out that if those three men (his so-called friends) would only listen to the accounts of other observers of the world... and get the facts straight... they would know what Job is saying is correct.

- ▶ “One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.” Job 21:23–26
- ▶ Job points out that it seems that the wicked sometimes prosper all through life while the righteous suffer; then both end up in the same place. So, he asks, what is the point?
- ▶ What is God doing? What do you say? Is this fair?

- ▶ Job completes his argument against his friends with... "So how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!" Job 21:34
- ▶ What are your feelings about the wicked seeming to prosper? Does this bother you?
- ▶ Isn't it true that the wicked do seem to skate by pretty nicely in their life on earth?
- ▶ How about the fact that strong Christians many times suffer terribly? Does this bother you?

- ▶ Let us take a look at what Jeremiah and the Psalmist have to say about this situation...
Jer 12:1; Psalms 73 & 37
- ▶ Do your religious beliefs require an orderly and logical world? Do you need to understand why God does what He does? Why or why not? How does your faith play a role in the answer to these questions?
- ▶ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. Isaiah 40:28

Third Round of Talks

- ▶ Job (Chapter 22–31)
- ▶ Eliphaz berates Job once again
- ▶ “Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will He reprove thee for fear of thee? Will He enter with thee into judgement? Job 22:3,4
- ▶ Is there anything that God requires from us (humanity)?
- ▶ Why do you think God created man?

Eliphaz berates Job

- ▶ During this next portion of scripture, Eliphaz outlines many of the sinful deeds of Job ... all lies!
- ▶ Then, he makes one more plea to Job...
- ▶ "Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you remove wickedness far from your tent..."

Job 22:21–23

- ▶ God never promised us a rose garden...
- ▶ **In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** John 16:33
- ▶ They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Acts 14:21–22
- ▶ God is telling us in these two verses that we can expect trouble in this world.
- ▶ What is the essence of the words of Jesus on this point?

Job's Third Round Replies

- ▶ Job is aching to face his accuser... who is God, in his opinion
- ▶ If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. Job 23:3-4
- ▶ Would he oppose me with great power? No, he would not press charges against me. There an upright man could present his case before him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge. Job 23:6-7

- ▶ But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. Job 23:10
- ▶ Is Job correct here? Prov. 16:5; Rom 3:23; Col 2:13
- ▶ Job is still very much terrified because of God's omnipotence and the perplexity of his current situation.
- ▶ "But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him." Job 23:13–15

We All Should “*Fear*” God

- ▶ What does *fearing* God mean?
- ▶ Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery." 2 Chron 19:7
- ▶ 'The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'" Job 28:28
- ▶ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. Psalms 19:9
- ▶ Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. Psalms 34:9

Fear of the Lord

- ▶ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. Psalms 111:10
- ▶ To fear the LORD is to hate evil; Prov 8:13
- ▶ He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death. Prov 14:26–27

Fear of the Lord

- ▶ Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil. Prov 16:6
- ▶ Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life. Prov 22:4

Job 24–28

- ▶ Job (Chapter 24–28)
- ▶ A little commentary on these five chapters
- ▶ Bottom Line: God wrote them all!
- ▶ Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days? Job 24:1
- ▶ The fatherless child is snatched from the breast; the infant of the poor is seized for a debt. Job 24:9

Job Complains

- ▶ The groans of the dying rise from the city, and the souls of the wounded cry out for help. But God charges no one with wrongdoing. "There are those who **rebel against the light**, who do not know its ways or stay in its paths. Job 24:12–13
- ▶ When daylight is gone, the **murderer** rises up and kills the poor and needy; in the night he steals forth like a **thief**. The eye of the **adulterer** watches for dusk; he thinks, 'No eye will see me,' and he keeps his face concealed. In the dark, men break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; **they want nothing to do with the light**. Job 24:14–16

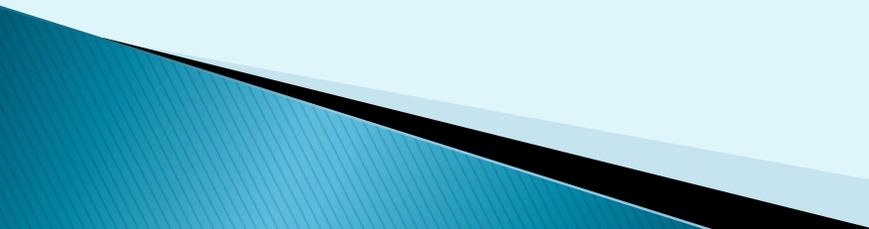
Job begins to understand...

- ▶ the grave snatches away those who have sinned.
Job 24:19
- ▶ The womb shall forget him: the worm shall feed sweetly on him: he shall be not more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree. But God drags away the mighty by his power; though they become established, they have no assurance of life. He may let them rest in a feeling of security, but his eyes are on their ways. For a little while they are exalted, and then they are gone; they are brought low and gathered up like all others. Job 24:22–24

Bildad's Short Reply

- ▶ Job (Chapter 25)
- ▶ "Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven. How then can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is but a maggot-- a son of man, who is only a worm!" Job 25:2,4-6

Test of Our Faith

- ▶ Can you think of other beliefs that you or others may have that have never been put to the test?
 - ▶ Are you afraid to have any of your beliefs challenged? If so, what are they?
 - ▶ Why are you so concerned?
- 

Job Mocks Bildad

- ▶ Job (Chapter 26)
- ▶ Then Job replied: (to Bildad)
"How you have helped the powerless! How you have saved the arm that is feeble! What advice you have offered to one without wisdom! And what great insight you have displayed! Who has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth? Job 26:1-4

Job Speaks of God's Majesty

- ▶ He spreads out the northern [skies] over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness. The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke. By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent. Job 26:7–13

Job Begins to Understand...

- ▶ God's power and majesty is without bounds
- ▶ And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?" Job 26:14
- ▶ What is Job beginning to understand about God... and himself?
- ▶ "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you... 2 Sam 7:22

Job Still Maintains His Innocence

- ▶ Job (Chapter 27)
- ▶ And Job continued his discourse:
"As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made me taste bitterness of soul, as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit. I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live..."
Job 27:1–6
- ▶ Does he have a good point? If not, where is Job wrong?

- ▶ For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul.” (Job 27:8)
- ▶ Job next tells his listeners that he will remind them about God’s nature.
- ▶ "I will teach you about the power of God; the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal. You have all seen this yourselves. Why then this meaningless talk? Job 27:11–12

The Fate of the Wicked

- ▶ "Here is the fate God allots to the wicked, the heritage a ruthless man receives from the Almighty: However many his children, their fate is the sword; his offspring will never have enough to eat. The plague will bury those who survive him, and their widows will not weep for them. Job 27:13–15
- ▶ He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more; when he opens his eyes, all is gone. Terrors overtake him like a flood. Job 27:19–20

The Abilities of Man and the Wisdom of God

- ▶ Job (Chapter 28)
- ▶ Job speaks of man's impressive, God-given capabilities
- ▶ But, where is true wisdom found?
- ▶ But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me.' It cannot be bought with the finest gold.
Job 28:12-15

- ▶ What is Job saying here? What are man's limits? What is the point of this chapter?
- ▶ **"Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air. Job 28:20–21**

God Alone has Ultimate Wisdom

- ▶ God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'" Job 28:22–28

Wisdom

- ▶ What is wisdom? From whence does it come?
How does man get wisdom?
- ▶ For Christians, what things are better in youth
..... And what things get better with age?
- ▶ What do various cultures think about wisdom
and age?
- ▶ Some biblical views on wisdom...

“Good Old Days”

- ▶ Job (Chapter 29)
- ▶ "How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness! Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God's intimate friendship blessed my house, when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me."
Job 29:1–5
- ▶ "Men listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel. After I had spoken, they spoke no more; Job 29:21–22
- ▶ What is Job doing here? Do you ever do this? What help is it ---- any?

Job Bemoans His Miserable Condition

- ▶ Job (Chapter 30)
- ▶ With respect to the useless youth of the day:
"But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs." Job 30:1
- ▶ "They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face." Job 30:10

- ▶ **“Terrors overwhelm me; my dignity is driven away as by the wind, my safety vanishes like a cloud. And now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones; my gnawing pains never rest.”** Job 30:15–17
- ▶ **“I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me. You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me. You snatch me up and drive me before the wind; you toss me about in the storm. I know you will bring me down to death, to the place appointed for all the living.** Job 30:20–23
- ▶ Job tells God that he always tried his best to help others... why is God allowing this misery to overtake him?

Good and Faithful Servant

- ▶ Job (Chapter 31)
- ▶ "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. For what is man's lot from God above, his heritage from the Almighty on high? Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong? Does he not see my ways and count my every step?" Job 31:1-4

- ▶ Maybe Job was not always perfect...
- ▶ “If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let me be weighed in the balance that God may know mine integrity.” Job 31:5,6
- ▶ Then Job goes through a litany of sins that he considers great (however, he says he has not committed any of them)
- ▶ For I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things. Job 31:23

- ▶ Then Job says if he were guilty of any of them that God would be justified in punishing him..... but, he says he isn't!
- ▶ I sign now my defense--let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing. Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown. Job 31:35-36
- ▶ “If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.” (Job 31:39&40)
- ▶ As Job finishes his defense here, does he still say that he is blameless? Is he?

- ▶ Therefore, he vacillates between thinking that he someday will be justified (likely in some mysterious manner) and that he will simply have to face destruction without recourse.
- ▶ Job is missing a big point or two. What is it (What are they)? Job concludes his harangue with the oft-repeated point that he is not guilty of those heinous sins of which he is accused. He obviously believes that God is punishing him for those perceived sins, but is quite perplexed knowing that God knows all things, is all powerful, therefore he wonders how this can be happening to him.

Elihu Intervenes

- ▶ Job (Chapter 32–37)
- ▶ Introduction: But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him. Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.
Job 32:2–5

- ▶ But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. "Therefore I say: Listen to me; I too will tell you what I know. Job 32:8&10
- ▶ Elihu brags of his wisdom... For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me; inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst. I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. I will show partiality to no one. Job 32:18–21

- ▶ Why is Elihu angry at Job and his friends?
- ▶ What does Elihu plan to do?
- ▶ Where does Elihu suggest he got his wisdom for this conversation?

Elihu begins his presentation to Job

- ▶ Job (Chapter 33)
- ▶ "But now, Job, listen to my words; pay attention to everything I say. My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know. Answer me then, if you can; prepare yourself and confront me. I am just like you before God; I too have been taken from clay. Job 33:1,3&6
- ▶ 'I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt. Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy.' Job 33:9-10

- ▶ "But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than man. Why do you complain to him that he answers none of man's words ? For God does speak--now one way, now another-- though man may not perceive it. Job 33:12-14
- ▶ Elihu speaks to Job concerning the methods by which God may communicate with mankind.
- ▶ Job was "blameless and upright" as noted in chapter one... but was he righteous?
Rom 3:10; Phil 1:11

- ▶ What has Elihu added to the discussion so far? Anything?
- ▶ What other ways may God communicate with humanity?

- ▶ He prays to God and finds favor with him, he sees God's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. Then he comes to men and says, 'I sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the light.' **"God does all these things to a man-- twice, even three times-- to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him. Job 33:26-30**

Elihu Defends God

- ▶ Elihu says, "Job says, 'I am innocent, but God denies me justice. Although I am right, I am considered a liar; although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.' Job 34:5–6
- ▶ Is that what Job actually said?
- ▶ Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins? Job 7:21
- ▶ For you write down bitter things against me and make me inherit the sins of my youth. Job 13:26

- ▶ Elihu also states that Job says...
- ▶ For he says, 'It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God.' Job 34:9
- ▶ Yet, Job's words and actions suggest strongly that he does believe that it is not worthless to attempt to "please God".
- ▶ Elihu also claims that...
- ▶ Job speaks without knowledge; Job 34:35

- ▶ Is Elihu correct on this topic?
- ▶ Elihu really just was a “bag of wind”. Later, God would put him in his place...
- ▶ After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, *as my servant Job has.* Job 42:7

- ▶ One more point from Elihu...
- ▶ Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong. He repays a man for what he has done; he brings upon him what his conduct deserves. It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice. Job 34:10–12
- ▶ Does God always repay man for what he has done? If so, how and when does God do so?

- ▶ Elihu suggests the following relating to God's recent response (or lack of response) toward Job:
- ▶ if He remains silent, who can condemn Him?
If He hides his face, who can see Him?
Job 34:29
- ▶ Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man! To his sin he adds rebellion; scornfully he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God Job 34:36–37

Self-righteousness is condemned

- ▶ Job (Chapter 35)
- ▶ Elihu speaks concerning how man's sinful actions affect God.
- ▶ Elihu also says... He does not answer when men cry out because of the arrogance of the wicked. Indeed, God does not listen to their empty plea; the Almighty pays no attention to it. Job 35:12–13

- ▶ What is Elihu telling Job with these words. Do you believe he is right?
- ▶ Was Job approaching God properly? If not, how should he (and anyone) approach God when in pain?

God, the Great Teacher

- ▶ Job (Chapter 36)
- ▶ Elihu tells Job and the other three elder “friends” that he is about to impart to them some great concept.
- ▶ However, he just goes on to re-hash the common ideas (in that time of history) about how God deals with sinful men vs. just men.
- ▶ God may speak to God through their pain.

- ▶ But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold of you. Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction. Job 36:17&21
- ▶ God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him? Job 36:22
- ▶ How great is God--beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out. Job 36:26

The Wonder of God

- ▶ Job (Chapter 37)
- ▶ At this my heart pounds and leaps from its place. Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth. He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth. After that comes the sound of his roar; he thunders with his majestic voice.

Job 37:1–4

- ▶ God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.'
Job 37:5–6
- ▶ The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. Job 37:10–11

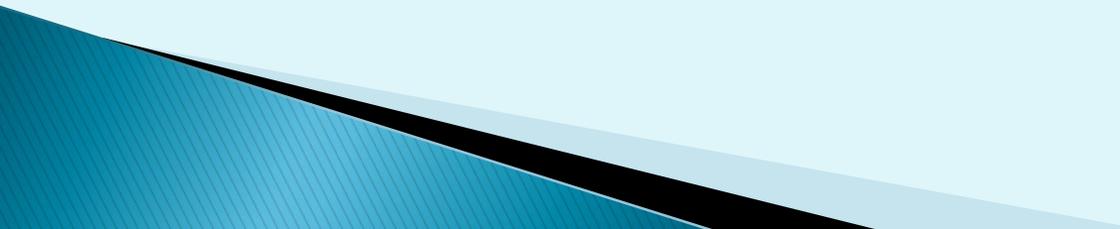
- ▶ He brings the clouds to punish men, or to water his earth and show his love. **"Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders. Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash?"** Job 37:13–15
- ▶ Out of the north he comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty. **The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress. Therefore, men revere him, for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?"** Job 37:22–24

- ▶ What right does a man or woman have to question the way God runs His universe?
- ▶ Do you ever find yourself asking or arguing with God with the way your life is progressing? If so, exactly how do you do this?

God Comes Onto the Scene

- ▶ Job (Chapter 38)
- ▶ God Answers..... and Job..... Finally.....
“Understands”
- ▶ **I Am God, You Are Not**
- ▶ Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm.
He said:
"Who is this that darkens my counsel with
words without knowledge? Brace yourself like
a man; I will question you, and you shall
answer me. Job 38:1–3

- ▶ God finally intervenes in the discussion. What does He say to Job with His first words? Is he impressed with the various arguments put forth by the five men?
- ▶ "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Job 38:4–5
- ▶ God goes on to describe all of His power and omniscience... all those things He has created

- ▶ Does God next answer Job's questions concerning why Job was experiencing all of these terrible things?
 - ▶ Does God tell Job why He is not addressing Job's questions?
- 

- ▶ Job (Chapter 39)
- ▶ "Do you give the horse his strength or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? Do you make him leap like a locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the fray".
Job 39:19–21
- ▶ "Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build his nest on high?" Job 39:26–27

God Questions Job

- ▶ Job (Chapter 40)
- ▶ In chapter 40, God asks a pointed question...
- ▶ The LORD said to Job:
"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!"
Job 40:1–2
- ▶ So, what is Job's response?
- ▶ Then Job answered the LORD:
"I am unworthy--how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer-- twice, but I will say no more." Job 40:3–5
- ▶ What do you think about this answer? What would you have said to God in a similar situation?

- ▶ When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth--his eyes not seeing sleep day or night-- then I saw all that God has done. **No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.**

Eccl 8:16-17

- ▶ Eccl 1:18; Prov 18:10; 21:2; 1 Cor 1:25

- ▶ God continues His lesson...
- ▶ Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the whirlwind and said:
"Gird up thy loins now like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?"
Job 40:6–8
- ▶ God then challenges Job

- ▶ Job (Chapter 41)
- ▶ God continues His *lesson* to Job
- ▶ What has God done to prove to mankind that He has their best interests at heart as well? That is, what has God done to earn our faith and trust? Think about Jesus.
- ▶ Is it ludicrous to question God's actions?
- ▶ Given the answers to the previous questions, might it be detrimental for us to question and doubt God's actions? If so, why?

- ▶ He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. **Eccl 3:11**
- ▶ The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. **Isaiah 40:28**

- ▶ Does God finally respond to Job's questions directly?
 - ▶ Does God tell Job why he is going through his current misery?
 - ▶ How do you relate this to your life?
 - ▶ What does God feel the real issue is?
- 

Job has an Epiphany

- ▶ Job (Chapter 42)
- ▶ Then Job replied to the LORD:
"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."
Job 42:1–6
- ▶ Does Job finally “understand”?

- ▶ Does Job now know about the conversation between Satan and God that led to his current difficulties?
- ▶ How important, to Job, is the answer to that specific question (i.e. “why?”) now that Job has his new understanding of God and his place in God’s universe?
- ▶ Do we ever “have all of the facts” about our varied circumstances in life?
- ▶ What does God, through the *Book of Job*, want us to remember and then do in our life when we face difficult times?

- ▶ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Prov 3:5–6
- ▶ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." John 13:7
- ▶ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8–9

The Restoration

- ▶ God restores Job as the book comes to a close
- ▶ God reprimands Job's friends for their poor advice
- ▶ Conclusion: God gives Job, and all of His children, an important lesson on how He wants all of us to view the painful experiences that everyone faces during a lifetime on this fallen earth.
- ▶ God never answered Job's multiple questions of "why". Instead, God taught Job the proper way to look beyond this simplistic question to view his life as a loved son of the omnipotent, omniscient, and all-loving God.
- ▶ We must trust in God completely!!!

Job and the Problem of Pain

- ▶ Conclusion – let us talk about it together for a moment