

# **Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature,**

## **Lecture 25, Job**

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Well, good morning to everyone. Good morning. The announcements, I think, are fairly straightforward.

They all have to do with the paper. Let me simply say, again, I know I'm beating this horse to death, but every year, there's a problem with this. Make sure you turn in your preliminary work with your one-page paper.

I can't emphasize that strongly enough. As I said before, it can come in handwritten form. You can turn it right in with your paper if you wish.

If you have word processed it, then email it all to me, one document, not separate little installments. No real compulsion to have it in by 9 o'clock on Friday morning, but it's got to be in by 5:30. That's when I leave campus, and that's the drop-dead time. So kind of keep that in mind and be aware of it.

I'll be checking my mailbox, checking under my door, but at 5.30, that's the end of it for those of you handing in hard copy. And also, of course, it's so nice that email attachments are timed, and so I know exactly when those come in. At any rate, I don't think there's anything else I need to say about papers.

We're going to try to sing today, and we're going to sing something new. And it actually comes originally from Job. That's why we're singing it today.

Doesn't that make sense? There it is right there. I mean, I'm going to read for you just the tiny little verse actually in one of Job's friends' statements. Job's friends say a lot of wonderful things.

They just misapply what they say. This happens to come from Job 25, verse 2, which says dominion and dread belong to God. He establishes order in the heights of the heavens.

Now, he establishes order in the heights of the heavens is what's up there. Shalom is being translated here in the NIV as an order, and that's perfectly appropriate. I've read it as peace up here, so you can understand shalom, peace.

That's the usual correspondence. So, the one who makes peace in his heights, oseh shalom bimromav. Now, we're going to talk through this whole thing, and then, believe it or not, I'm going to try and sing it for you.

Carrie really needs to be here right now, but we'll see what we can do.  
Oseh shalom bimromav. Oseh shalom bimromav.

Who ya oseh shalom aleinu? In other words, the one who establishes order in the heights of heavens is going to make order for us as well, or peace for us as well. So, who means he. He's going to do that.

Ve'al kol Yisrael, ve'imru. That's imperative. And say, ve'imru, ve'imru, amen.

And amen means? It means amen, yes. But it really means let it be confirmed. This is sure. Let it be confirmed.

And then, there's kind of a chorus thing that picks up, and it goes, ya oseh shalom, ya oseh shalom, let him make peace, let him make peace, shalom aleinu, ve'al kol Yisrael. So, without the microphone, which would really distort, and then we will get on to Job.

Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we so often get caught up in our own issues and challenges and problems. And we take our eyes off the fact that you indeed are master of the universe, and you make order, perfect order in the heavens. So, we're thankful for that, and we pray that you would draw our attention to those profound truths this day, not only as we study the book of Job and how Job wrestles with terrible suffering and the prospect of death.

But Lord, make those truths real for us in this Lenten season as well. Draw our minds to the fact that you have made order and peace with us through Christ. We pray that you would indeed be gentle and tender with those who are wrestling and struggling with trials and pain and frustration.

Bring peace to their hearts, too, and help us to be good friends. Father, we ask all these things because of the mercy of Christ. It's in his name we pray. Amen.

Well, we are going to pick up and talk about Job. Interestingly enough, we're going to review it first.

I thought there was a review slide in here. We should review first, and then we'll go on to Job. Proverbs, of course, is didactic.

It teaches. And we talked last time as we were introducing the book of Proverbs about the fact that even those first six verses are, in essence, a syllabus for the course in life. Job and Ecclesiastes, and of course, Ecclesiastes is what we're going to

pick up with on Friday, are speculative and philosophical, raising all those questions that we addressed in brief last time.

And then finally, Song of Songs will be lyrical poetry, love poetry, which we're also going to try to do Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs together on Friday. Now, what I started to say a moment ago is because Job raises some of these profound, speculative, philosophical questions, I like to take a slightly different tack with this and spend the first, oh, 20 minutes or so posing questions to you. Obviously, if we're really dealing with this text and the issues that it raises, it doesn't fit for me to simply lecture you on it.

It probably doesn't fit to do that with any of the biblical texts, but particularly not Job. So, I've got some questions, and I'm certainly inviting your questions as we start doing some introductory work on this. This is just a quick picture, one of the many artistic representations of the Book of Job.

Here, you see him suffering terribly, his wife in the background, his house torn apart, and his friends, who, as we know, end up being pretty abysmal counselors all the way around. We're going to come to that in a little bit. But some questions first of all.

What's the purpose of Job? You may want to get this one going. Why do we have it in the Bible? What's the purpose? It has 42 chapters, which means there's something worth looking at. Go ahead, Ginger.

Okay, so it's a window into somebody who is full of self-pity. So, you're suggesting, if I'm hearing you correctly, that this is a lesson on how not to be? Maybe? Maybe, okay, we'll go on with that. Susanna.

So, this is a lesson for someone who, in humility, in spite of what he's going through, praises God anyway. How do you put those two together? And by the way, as we read this, there are going to be a number of places where what Job says to God doesn't sound a whole lot like he's praising God. I'm going to come back to that.

I'm going to come back to that. Mary. It's not like any of the other stories we read in the Bible, that Job is so upright.

Okay, so this is the story of somebody who is truly faithful to God regardless, and he's upright. So, in other words, you're disagreeing with Ginger as well because she says he's not exactly likable and those kinds of things. Am I getting anything? Not all the time.

Not all, okay, that's all right. I mean, one of the things we're seeing in this book is a number of different perspectives on what it's like to suffer long-term. The very fact

that we've got chapters. Basically three, all the way through 31, tells us, even in the form of the literature, that this is a long-term issue here for him.

As you read through those, you think I've had enough of Job's and the friends at this point. Yeah, go ahead, Kaylin. Okay, so it reminds us that above all the suffering that we see around us and in ourselves, Job is kind of our little microcosm of that, God's allowing that to happen.

Now, of course, we're going to see that in the opening chapters, aren't we? Well, let me move on to just one more, well, sort of an interlude among the questions.

Definition. Theodicy is a term that's often posed as one of the reasons for the book of Job, one of the purposes.

In other words, it's to serve as a theodicy, some folks say. And so, if we're going to have that term being bandied about with regard to the book of Job, it helps to have a definition of it. So here it is.

It comes from Greek, which means sort of, at its base level, justifying God. And so, basically, what a theodicy is a defense of God's goodness and his omnipotence in the face of the existence of evil. In other words, if God is really good and if he's really powerful, why does he allow evil to exist? Those are the questions, aren't they? And Caelan was sort of getting at that in terms of here's a story about somebody who is suffering terribly, and God's not only allowing that, he seems to be prompting it as we read chapter one, particularly.

Now, does that make sense to you? Our next question is, is Job a theodicy? Is part of what's going on in this book a defense of God's goodness and his omnipotence in the face of human suffering? Katie, you're nodding. Do you want to nod out loud? I think there's definitely a defense of God's omnipotence in the four chapters. I'm talking about the very last one, but these four chapters lead up to the last part, where it's just like looking at God and all that he's done.

Look at his incredible powers. Everything that he does, that man, he can never even begin to do it. Can I even begin to understand what he can do? So clearly, we're seeing a sense that this text conveys God's power, his absolute power and omnipotence.

Does it convey his goodness? Is it intended to do that? You can have power in those sovereign realms, but how does suffering, the ongoing suffering of Job, which, as you get from reading chapters one and two, is not just allowed by God? It seems to be initiated by God. Does that convey his goodness, McKenna? I think it does convey that God is so faithful.

It's just like that God doesn't have to be a traitor. Okay. Yeah, Cassia, Cassia.

I think that also, along with that, I think that in order for us to see God's goodness and to see God's will for us, we have to have, as humans, we have a free will. So, we get our little complaints. So, in other words, you're saying that we really appreciate God when we have been reduced to utter dependence and humility and humbleness and so forth? Could be.

Let me read you. I'm going to do a little bit of reading today out of a book that I found very useful over the years. It happens to be *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes* by Derek Kidner, a scholar whose name I've dropped from time to time because he's a good Old Testament scholar.

And he says the following, and this, by the way, is not intended to slap down those of you who are trying to say this is a theodicy. It may be that, but Kidner's going to pose something else here. He says the book is not a theodicy, all right? Sorry, Katie.

The book is not a theodicy for humans cannot irrigate to themselves the right to justify God without deifying themselves. In other words, once we start trying to figure out, this is the way we figure out God's goodness and God's power and all the suffering things. In some ways, we're putting our own mental abilities above God.

He goes on to say, which might pick up on what Mary was saying, it's the story of a spiritual pilgrimage in which Job was set free from the prison of himself and his imagined rights to be saved at the moment of his surrender and to find through God's coming to him what he had not found through tradition or moralizing. And then I'm going to skip a page or two. He says that in Job's passion, we see an early sketch of the greatest sufferer.

What Job longed for blindly has actually happened. God himself has joined us in our hell of loneliness. Here is the final answer to Job and to all the Jobs of humanity, all right? So, he's saying, even in some small ways, what we see Job's enduring here is a little bit of an adumbration ahead to the suffering of Christ when he indeed comes as Job was seeking and longing for somebody to mediate, to arbitrate, to be his redeemer.

That actually happens when we have the ministry of the word incarnate. So, kind of an interesting thought from Kidner. Well, we've got a few more questions.

I'm not in any way saying we're going to answer each one of these questions. Yeah, Rebecca. I was just wondering, is that like what he said about his definition of theodicy? Isn't that such a thing as a theodicy? Is that what we should wait for? Yeah, it's a great question.

Is any attempt at a theodicy then an arrogant attempt on the part of humankind to set themselves above God? Maybe. That's what he seems to be saying. He's certainly saying that with regard to our assessment of the book of Job, we can't think that way.

But you're right to pursue it to its logical conclusion. I don't know what Kidner says about the whole concept of theodicy in general. That would be an interesting question to ask him.

He's still alive, by the way. He lives in Cambridge, England, not here. Well, here's another one.

How does God deal with evil? You know, he doesn't slap it down. It's allowed to sometimes really ruin lives. Trevor.

I have a question. Yeah. It seems interchangeably used that God allowed the evil and God brought the evil.

So, I'm wondering, is there a distinction between the two? I feel like God bringing the evil is way different than allowing the evil to take place. And of course, we don't like the former one very much, do we? No. Right.

It's a great question. Let me just say two things, although we could spend the whole hour on that if we wanted to. I think it would be a problem if we had anything that was outside the sovereignty of God.

Because God is sovereign, there's no question about that. He is sovereignly good.

In my mind, there's no question about that. But something about the complexity of that good sovereignty does indeed have evil as part of it. And interestingly enough, this is my second thing.

Isaiah chapter 45, verse seven. It talks about the God who creates light and creates evil. And those are the words that are used there.

Now, how you work with all that is another question, and that's one for philosophers and theologians. Again, I'm not in any way trying to denigrate the goodness of God.

Maybe the goodness of God is much, much bigger than we ever begin to imagine. And as you know, I think it's Psalm 76 says, even the wrath of humans shall praise him. All those things that we see as intrinsically evil, God's going to use for good in some way.

That's what that Psalm is getting at. And it's also what our garden variety definitions of sovereignty based on Romans 8, 28 say as well. All things work together for good.

And God is working in those things. They're not outside of his control. They're not something he doesn't have his hands on.

So, I haven't answered your question because I don't really know how to put it together, but those are some of the things we need to consider. How does God deal with evil? Let me give you another little Kidner quote. Again, this is not the last word on it, but he says things much better than I say things.

So, it's nice to tap into his wisdom. Where we might wish to argue that omnipotence ought to have stamped out evil at its first appearance, God's chosen way was not to crush it out of hand but to wrestle with it—and to do so in weakness rather than in strength.

Through humans more often than through miracles and through costly permissions, as in Job context, rather than through flat refusals. Putting the matter in our own terms, we might say that God is resolved to overcome evil in fair combat, not by veto. And, of course, we see that in our own lives.

We certainly see it in the life of Jesus, who becomes a human being to wrestle with evil in the same context that you and I wrestle with it, which is why the writer of Hebrews talks about a great high priest who took on humanity and wrestles with the same kinds of things that we wrestle with. That's the point of what the author of Hebrews is saying in chapter five particularly, and then going on through chapter seven. So, some interesting thoughts in that regard.

That's not the end of the questions. Do you still want to think a little bit more? Maybe. What do we learn about God? I've gotten at this a little bit, but let's push it a little further.

What do we learn about God and the adversary, which is the translation of Satan, Ha satan is the adversary in Hebrew or the opponent. And that's the individual who comes into God's presence in chapters one and two. What do we learn about God, the adversary, and Job from the first two chapters? Anything jumps out at you, Rebecca? Are you asking about one thing for all of them? Oh, no, something about each one.

Things about each one of them create this picture for us because this, of course, is the introduction to the whole thing as it's unfolding in the poetry. This is our narrative introduction, which Job never knows, of course. Go ahead.

Well, Satan and the adversary, it was kind of something still common in the promise or something like that. Yeah, their adversary appears in the presence of God, doesn't he? And it seems to be something that doesn't just happen once. Maybe we have it more than once.

One day, chapter one, verse six, the sons of God, I know your NIV translates that angels, but one day the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And the adversary, ha satan, also came with them. And the Lord said to Satan, where have you come from? and so forth and so on.

So, it seems to be something that's not extraordinary. It's part of the scene here. And somehow, this adversary has access to the very throne room of heaven.

We're going to see that again in the Old Testament scriptures. This is not the only place where the adversary is in the presence of God. What else do we learn about God, the adversary, and Job? What do you learn about Job? I'm sorry, Matt, go right ahead.

Okay, he's concerned, isn't he, about his children? And I'm going to push you further on that one. What does he do as a result of his deep concern for the spiritual well-being of his children? Yeah, chapter five. When a period of feasting had run its course, yeah, Jesus, Job would send and have them purified.

Early in the morning, he'd sacrifice a burnt offering, and he would pray for them in conjunction with that. So, we have Job being a mediator. Hang on to that, it's important.

What else do we know about Job? It's kind of the standard expression in describing Job. It shows up in verse, well, it shows up multiple times in these first two chapters. Sarah, were you going to say something that had nothing to do with the standard expression? Well, I'm not sure if this is the standard expression.

I was just going to say that he was very well-being. Okay, we know he's well-off, seems to be in a leadership position as we continue to see the book unfold. And that's certainly part of the circumstances, but that's not the thing that the text emphasizes, interestingly.

Trevor. Yeah, and what does it say about his righteousness? He was like the most righteous person ever, right. Yeah, sorry.

Here's, one of these days I will give my like lecture, but I won't do it today, don't worry. You're not the only target, believe me. Here is the litany that comes through.



Blameless, upright, one who fears God and shuns evil. Do you remember seeing that? Four characteristics: blameless, upright, one who fears God, one who shuns evil. And that shows up more than once.

We see him as a truly godly person. Is there anything else we need to know about these characters who are part of our vision of heaven, especially the first two? Go ahead, Matt. Yeah, Satan does have to get permission, if you will.

But let me, I just want to push something I began to say a little bit earlier. It's God who says, hey, have you considered my servant Job? I mean, God is the one who's drawing the adversary's attention to this upright person. And then, of course, Satan says, well, of course, you know, he's fearing you, he's good, he's shunning evil for what he gets out of it.

That's basically what's going on. He says, have you not put a hedge on him? You've blessed him, et cetera, et cetera. And then the Lord gives the permission, the costly permission, if you will, to go back to Kidner's phrase, both in terms of Satan's ability to smite everything that Job has, and then finally to smite, in chapter two, Job himself.

So those are important things to keep in mind. God is actually setting up a huge test here. It's a huge test.

And we'll have more to say about that, I hope, in a bit—next question. I've just talked about Job's characteristics of being blameless, upright, fearing God, and shunning evil.

Does that mean he's sinless? I'm seeing some shakings of the head. How do you know that? He himself is going to talk about his own sin. Chapter seven, particularly in verses 21 and 22, we're not going to look there now, but Job is not in any way claiming to be sinless.

His vexation is, how on earth have I done something so horrendous to merit this terrible, terrible set of consequences in my life? That doesn't compute in his mind. Well, let's go on. We're not done with questions yet.

Satan's basically said, hey, you know, Job is good for what he gets out of it. Aren't those often our motives? Aren't they? In some ways, to some degree, it was built into the covenant. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 27 and 28.

If you are obedient, you'll have this set of blessings. If you're disobedient, guess what's coming? So maybe Satan's right. Job's motives for being obedient are because God has indeed built a hedge around him, God has blessed him, Job knows that, and he continues to fear God and shun evil.

Close the book, end of story. Yes or no? Or might there be other motives for obedience as well? Yes, all of us have because we are the way we are, and the covenant is basically appealing to that; we have self-protective motives. And if we know that doing something really heinously sinful is going to bring God's judgment and chastisement, if we're smart, we're going to avoid it.

So, there are those clear motives. But are there other reasons, too? Cassia? And Job doesn't care about it. And he does, doesn't he? At the end of chapter two, when his wife basically tells him, why don't you curse God and die? He says, shall we accept good from God and not trouble? Right, and so you're right, I think an awful lot of this has to do with Job's profound relationship.

He has a relationship with God. It's not just a judge up there whapping him, and then he's afraid of that. He's got a relationship with God, and it's one of love, and out of that love is going to flow obedience.

And, of course, as you read this book and the chapters, and particularly what Job has to say in these poetic chapters, the thing that seems to grieve him the most is that he has lost that sense of relationship with God, and he wants it back. He really wants it back. Well, here are a couple more questions, and we won't spend quite so much time on those because we've got a few other things to do today. What's so inappropriate about these friends' responses? And you'll need to know who they are.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, right? After all, they seem to have a good handle on basic principles of justice. Susanna. There was a huge joke, they're like, what is he standing up for? What have you done to merit this? And I feel like that's wrong, that we can just do this due to their stance, that we could do that, even if that was something that they like.

So, in other words, their whole problem is not their theology, which is correct. I mean, there is a sense of justice in the universe. There better be, or else we're in big trouble.

But their problem is they've misapplied it. Would that be fair to say? And so, you're saying they're speaking for God. That's an inappropriate way of saying it.

In fact, Kidner, at one point, says that what the friends are really doing wrong is pontificating. And, of course, you know what a pontiff is. Do you know what a pontiff is? Ah, well, we probably need to define pontificate, don't we? What's a pontiff? Does anybody know what a pontiff is? It's like a king and a pope.

A pope, actually. Yeah, right. I mean, it's someone who is, in terms of a whole system of religion, speaking for God. The pope does that.

So, when you pontificate, you are basically, as you've just said, taking it upon yourself to articulate what you're pretty sure God would say in this case. And that, of course, is their problem, because they don't really understand where the Job is. And they are, I mean, they start out gently, and we'll talk about this in a moment.

They really do start out gently. They get really harsh towards the end of things. Well, this is interesting.

How does Job respond to his friends? Did you notice anything as you were reading through the little bit that I had you read for today? Is he gracious? Not really. At one point, Essence calls them a bunch of windbags. And basically, it says, if you were in my shoes, you wouldn't be saying the kinds of things you're saying.

So, his responses to his friends, and maybe we should put friends in quotation marks, well, it's what they deserve to hear. But he doesn't mince words with them. I would suggest to you that he's not disagreeing with them whatsoever about the nature of God.

They both agree. They both, I mean, both, including the friends on the one hand and Job on the other, have a good sense of proper Orthodox theology. They both have it.

It's just that the friends misapply it, and Job doesn't understand how on earth it's working with regard to his situation right now. This one's interesting too. Susanna, I'm going to come back and pick on you a little bit.

And it's not for saying like, it's for, sorry. It's because you said Job was praising God. Yeah? Well, let me be really rude and push you a little bit and ask how chapter 16 fits into that.

All right? Starting at verse seven. Surely, oh God, you've worn me out. You've devastated my entire household.

Verse nine, God assails me, and he tears at me in his anger, and he gnashes his teeth at me, and my opponent fastens on me his piercing eyes. Verse 11, God has turned me over to evil men and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked. All was well with me, but he shattered me.

He seized me by the neck. He crushed me. He made me his target.

His archers surround me. Without pity, he pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the ground. Again and again, he bursts upon me and rushes at me like a warrior.

I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust. My face is red with weeping, and deep shadows ring my eyes. Is that a song of praise? Okay, but? We've had Saul, so you can pick on Saul.

That's fine. But I feel like even if there's an honesty and that even that is, it's like if you were like asking somebody who's a friend of yours, why have you done this to me? Now, it's not an act of reason, but you're saying, like, we love each other. Why are you, why are you passing me? And being honest and saying, you have done this to me.

You have done this to me. Yeah, you're right. The honesty is certainly part of a demonstration of his relationship with God.

Again, I keep coming back to that because that's such an important focus as we're talking about this. And you're also correct to rebuke me, although you didn't put it quite in those terms, for taking this out of context. Because as you back up, for example, chapter nine or chapter 12, what do we see? Job is acknowledging God's utter sovereignty.

And that is a declaration of praise. It really is. Job has what I would like to call a maximalist view of sovereignty.

It's not just God's sovereignty and when things are good and we're so happy that he's in control of my life and the universe and I'm going to trust him for my next step. It's acknowledging that those ugly things, those painful things, those things are destructive in my life are also coming from God. There must be a purpose.

I don't know what they are. But you're right. The bigger context has obviously got to be part of the picture.

Good. Well, do I have one more question? Well, what do we learn from God's responses? Once he enters the scene, what do we learn from these responses? Rebecca. Did you confirm what Job is saying? Okay, go ahead.

Okay, so these spoken responses, starting with chapter 38, going right on through 41, which we're going to look at a little more detail in a moment, say something about God's utter control, don't they? How else does God respond? He responds in those poetic responses. What does he say in chapter 42? What does he do in chapter 42? Chapter 42. Matt.

Yeah, so God is paying restitution, isn't he? Isn't that interesting? Who paid restitution? If we go back to the Torah? Someone who had stolen something, right? You had to pay double if you'd stolen something. God pays Job back double of all of what he's had. That is a very interesting statement here.

Now, the next thing you could probably say is, well, aren't the friends right after all? It's over with. God's doubly blessing Job. Job has, if you look at, trying to find the particular statement here.

Chapter 42, verse six. I despise myself, I repent in dust and ashes. Some folks look at that and say, okay, he's repented. Now God pays him back all over and is done with it. Friends were right.

Yes, no? Nobody wants to tackle that one, huh? Go ahead, Matt. Ah, very good. What do we have in chapter 42, verses seven and eight? Job is speaking, sorry, and the Lord is speaking to Eliphaz.

I'm angry with you and your friends. You've not spoken. Now, what's next is interesting because you're NIV, and just about every translation says, you've not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

And it's going to say the same thing in verse eight. You've not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Let me just throw this out to you.

Make a little note in your Bible for future reference to think about. The Hebrew there is best translated. The most common way of using this verb plus preposition, spoken something, should be rendered to or unto.

You've not spoken to me, as my servant Job has. You've not spoken to me, unto me, as my servant Job has. And it may be that God is critiquing them for that problem.

What's Job been looking for all along? Somebody to mediate on his behalf. Somebody to serve as arbitrator. The friends are sitting there preaching at him.

They don't ever pray once. Job is the one who's talking to God and sustaining his relationship and working very hard at it with honesty and everything else we've been talking about. Early translations, by the way, the Greek translation of way back in the Septuagint, did this properly.

You have not spoken to me. The Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible do the same thing. You've not spoken to me.

It's somehow in our English. By the way, I got to say this too. Translation, as you know, is a huge problem because how do you represent the meaning that may be a very complicated, rich meaning of one word and just choose one representative word to get it into another language? I'd suggest that the Hebrew term there has both built into it.

To, about, concerning, et cetera. But the to-ness, the unto-ness, I think is something we need to look at here. Am I making sense with that? Therefore, this is why it's important to head back to chapter one.

Job has mediated on a very regular basis an intercessor. Job's an intercessor. He's doing it for his family.

He knows what that looks like. His friends fail terribly. God's going to rebuke those friends for not coming and being a mediator, an intercessor on behalf of Job.

Now, as a result of that, Job's going to find out that his mediator is in heaven, and that's an even bigger realization. But I would suggest that part of what's going on here is what I've just explained to you. Am I making sense with that? Interestingly enough, there are now several people who are going in this direction in terms of interpreting it this way.

So, this is not my own lonely thing that I'm harping on. I'm not the only one to be doing it. What we need to do is something, probably now, a little bit more background-ish for this book.

Those are things to think about, questions to think about. When it says that Job is from the land of Utz, I know you can pronounce it Uz if you want to, but it's Utz, right? I am not exactly certain where it is, but there are enough parallels in other parts of Scripture that suggest it's in Edom, somewhere in the vicinity of Edom, all right? Lamentations 4:21 uses Uz in parallel with Edom, and we also have the name Eliphaz, who's one of the friends, showing up in the genealogy in chapter 36 of Genesis, which are the descendants of Esau. So maybe we've got some possible location there.

It may imply a patriarchal period. This is mostly an argument from silence, but I want to tag one more thing onto this. How old is Job at the end of the story? Do you remember any little hints along these lines? After all this, in chapter 42, Job lived another 140 years.

Now, if we're going to take seriously the numbers, and again, that's an if that you need to resolve for yourselves, but if we're going to take seriously the numbers and the ages, then we need to just remember back, well, my goodness, Abraham is living to be 175, and the patriarchs are really up there, aren't they? 187. So it may be that Job's lifespan indicates that he's going to be somewhere located in that patriarchal period, because when the story unfolds, the man has 10 kids. He's one who sits in the city gate and has a position of authority and respect.

So obviously, he's well into his, I'm going to guess here, 60s maybe, 50s, 60s, 70s, something like that. So even that age span, that lifespan would suggest, again, if we

take it seriously, that he probably lived during the patriarchal period. Having said that, I would suggest possibly, again, that even though this is representing a scene outside of Israel, maybe somewhere in Edom, and even though it's representing a time period prior to the establishment of Israel, it may come into a narrative slash poetic form.

In other words, the book is going to get compiled as a book under the umbrella, if you will, of a covenant community because it's pretty clear that this whole theme of Redeemer, for example, shows up, and a Redeemer is very much a concept that's part of the covenant. So complicated stuff, we could spend a whole hour talking about date and authorship suggestions, but I'll just pose that one to you. Maybe after a long oral tradition of this narrative and the poetry we have, perhaps during the heyday of wisdom literature in Israel's time, and that would be around Solomon, this book came together.

There are people who put it a whole lot later than that, a whole lot later, but I don't think we need to spend much more time there. So far, so good? All right, let's do a couple more things in terms of outlining this book. I've already talked quite a bit about what we see in the narrative framework here.

So let me just reiterate now in prose form for you, as opposed to our question form, some of the things I've been trying to emphasize as we were having our discussion. Job's character is established. That's really important.

You have a narrative framework for this book, and the first two chapters are emphatic that we're dealing with someone here who is a righteous person, and as I've already said, don't lose sight of the fact that he knows because he himself has served as someone who intercedes on behalf of others. He knows that role. He knows it well.

We have the heavenly scenes with God and Satan, and I've talked about those already as well. Satan's being given permission, but God's sort of moving the thing forward by saying, haven't you considered my servant Job? Have a look at him, et cetera. We also have the epilogue.

That's chapter 42, in which the friends are rebuked, and I can't say strongly enough what I think the implications of that are in terms of Job's relationship with God and God's acknowledging that. Job speaks to God as opposed to the friends. Lack or absence of speaking to God on behalf of Job.

Now, a further issue in that whole rebuke is whether these friends are there and whether Job is speaking what is correct theologically about God. That's another whole issue. If we had a couple more lectures, we could wrestle through that one, but I'll just pose that for you as well, and then we do have, as I mentioned a moment

ago, the restoration of Job. Let me simply suggest with regard to the restoration of Job.

In other words, God's giving him all this stuff back, and that's not a payback for being righteous. I don't think it's that at all. I think it's an indication that now the test is over.

The test is over, all right? Job's been under test, and now it's over and done with, and Job needs to know that. Remember that nobody's aware of these heavenly scenes going on. It's just that we as readers are.

Yeah, Susanna. No, we don't know who the author is. I have no idea.

It's a good question, and all I can say is no. All right. In terms of the structure of the book, I'm still kind of trying to map out some things here.

Chapter three is Job's initial statement. Remember the friends have come. The friends are pretty good at the get-go because they sit silently with him for seven days.

That's impressive. That's impressive, and they allow him to speak first. They have to.

It's a matter of the whole cultural thing. Job does speak first, and I want you just to notice a couple of the things that he says. First of all, he's crying out for the whole of the created order to be upturned.

That's what's going on in these first 10 verses. May darkness and deep shadow cover the day of my birth. In other words, the day orderliness of creation.

He's basically saying, let it be completely upended. And in the context of that, he makes the following statement. Verse eight.

May those who curse days or perhaps curse the seas, curse that day, and those who are ready to rouse, what's the next word? Leviathan. All right. Now, the question's going to be, who and what is Leviathan? Hang on to that because it shows up again, of course, in chapter 41.

But Job's already intimating that he knows something about this Leviathan character as well. And there's something pretty, well, ominous about it. Well, then we have three poetic cycles.

And I'll just say this. Each of these cycles kind of ups the ante in terms of the tension and the anger and the frustration. The first friend, Eliphaz, starts out pretty nicely.



Job, think how you've comforted other people. You've been a wonderful person. But then Eliphaz does something that he's going to continue to do, and that is he appeals to fear.

And he makes this rather interesting statement in chapter four. A word, verse 12, was secretly brought to me. My ears caught a whisper of it.

Verse 14, fear and trembling seized me, made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face. The hair on my body stood on end.

It stopped. I couldn't tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice.

And here's what the hushed voice said. Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his maker? If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more would those who live in houses of clay be? In other words, Eliphaz has this very clever way of sort of beginning to accuse Job of sin.

If even the angelic creatures succumb to sin, you are certainly made simply out of dust and clay. And he isn't saying, oh, I'm just coming up with this off the top of my head. He gets this whole scenario of a spirit coming and scaring the daylights out of him and letting him know this message.

Then, of course, he pans right along to Job, letting Job know that this is God's word to him. And of course, then he goes on and basically says, you appeal to God. If you appeal to God in the right way, everything's going to be fine.

But it's a pretty nice treatment, pretty nice treatment. Once you get to the second cycle, and then the third cycle, Eliphaz has changed radically. In the second cycle, he, along with the other two friends, are going to say, here's what happens to sinners.

And they think of all the really terrible things that could happen to sinners. Things are just going to go totally wrong. I mean, really scary stuff.

It's kind of as if you've ever read Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, which, by the way, isn't a bad sermon. And too bad it's taken out of all the rest of his corpus because Jonathan Edwards was a remarkable preacher. That's the only one that anybody ever refers to.

In some ways, a cycle of two of the speeches of friends can remind us of that. They still don't put Job into the equation directly. They just say, here's what happens to really terrible sinners.

And, of course, the implicit message is, that's you. Why don't you confess? By the time we get to the third cycle, Eliphaz is angry because Job's not thinking the way Eliphaz thinks Job should think. And so Eliphaz in chapter 22 is going to outright accuse Job of all sorts of sins, flat out.

He's going to say, you've done this and this and this. You've abused the poor. You've done all these sorts of things.

Terrible social sins. And the friends will follow suit, although by the time you get to round three, Bildad and Zophar, Bildad's is really short. In fact, we sang part of it this morning.

He only says the little bit that's in chapter 25, and then that's it for Bildad and Zophar, who don't even dare say a thing. It's Eliphaz who's carrying the brunt of it. And so maybe why Eliphaz is the one who's kind of focused on in God's response as well, because he's been the one who's really outright made false accusations of Job.

Now, there's so much more to say about how all this works. But the thing that I would suggest to you is that Job continually after he says some, you know, interesting things to his friends, is going to come back to God. And I just want to make a note of three, three passages that are important in terms of Job's recognition of his need.

Interestingly enough, each one of them is going to follow some of his strongest outbursts against God. Right? If you've got your Bible, look at chapter nine first. In chapter nine, he starts out with a very profound declaration of God's sovereign control of the entirety of the created order, which God himself was going to say when we get to chapter 38.

But then he goes on and says, you know, even if I were clean, and I washed up with soap, this is verses 30 and 31, you, God, would plunge me into a slime pit so that even my clothes would detest me. But then he says, right after that, in verse 33, if only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand on us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, then I would speak up without fear of him. As it stands now, I cannot.

Job is longing for an arbitrator. In chapter 16, the same kind of thing happens. I read earlier the things that Job says to God in that context, powerful stuff, recognizing God's responsibility for what's happened to him.

And then notice what he says, even now my witness is in heaven, my advocate is on high. My friends mock me; I'm not reading the NIV right now; I'm reading the other, the better translation, I think. As my ears, eyes pour out tears to God.

But he recognizes his witness is in heaven, his advocate is on high. And then, of course, in chapter 19, we know that if we've ever sung Handel's Messiah, I know my redeemer lives. After that, he will stand on the earth.

After my skin has been destroyed, from my flesh, I will see God. I myself will see him. Now, how we interpret that is a huge thing that I would invite you to take wisdom literature for us to get into.

But one of the things he's saying is he knows God is his redeemer. And he will see God. He knows he's going to see God.

Now, we have a tendency from a Christian perspective to say that's going to be after he rises from the dead. I think Job is expecting to see him in that life. And, of course, that's exactly what happens because God does appear to him.

All right, we need to do a couple more things here. Job, after the dialogue sort of winds down because the friends have nothing more to say, Job has some things to say about himself and his own innocence. And then this friend Elihu comes in and spends four chapters kind of arbitrating between the two.

There's a lot more to say about Elihu. The language is different as Elihu comes in. More Aramaic in it.

One wonders exactly what he's doing there. But he's there, even though God never responds to him. I would suggest the most important thing that Elihu does is to set the stage for God's appearance.

Did you notice that when you read Job? Starting with chapter 36 after Elihu has gone through lots of other things, then he says, God draws up, I'm in verse 27, drops of rain, the clouds, the showers, the thunder, the lightning, the lightning, the thunder announces the coming storm. Listen to the roar, and I'm in chapter 37 now. Rumble, lightning befall the whole heaven.

God's voice thunders, verse five. And he carries on through all of chapter 37. What is he doing? How does God appear? Chapter 38, then the Lord answered Job out of the storm.

Part of Elihu's role and how this works, I'm not going to even begin to try and tell you. But part of Elihu's role as we're reading this text is to set the stage for the appearance of God. He talks about the remarkable power of the thunderstorm, and then God shows up in the storm.

Now, God's verbal responses are in chapters 38 through 41. And just going to run through this fast, because I want to get to our Leviathan thing. You've got this in the lecture outline, I don't need to spend a lot of time with it.

And I've said it already. Job has a profound sense of God's sovereignty. He also will say that as far as his experience is going, at this point of suffering, God is his adversary.

And he'll say so. Nevertheless, God is also his advocate, and we've read those already. Now, let's get on to what God is going to say in his four-chapter verbal response.

First of all, as God appears in the storm, he takes Job on a tour of the entire created order. It's a verbal tour, but he takes Job on this tour. And it's a wonderful tour because it works from the outside.

And you know what's fascinating about it? Do I say this? Yes. It never mentions humans whatsoever. Goes through everything else.

God's architect of the universe. It talks about laying the foundations, and so forth and so on. God is a midwife controlling the sea.

The sea was something that these people were scared to death of. God presents the sea as a baby that he's in control of, midwifing, if you will. Fascinating imagery.

God's commander-in-chief, telling the stars what to do, et cetera. That's part of his tour of the created order. So, he's demonstrating his own control over this.

Allusions to all the wild animals. And the beauty of all of this natural creation that Job knows. And of course, that's setting the stage.

These allusions to horses and ostriches and eagles and all those things. That's setting the stage for Leviathan. Because Leviathan, of course, is a scary creature.

And Job has to face a whole bunch of questions. Can you control Leviathan? Of course, implicit in that is, God can. Now, who is it? What is it? Well, the footnotes in your NIV probably say it's a crocodile.

I don't think it's quite as easy as all that. Maybe initially. But as you look at these other passages, and of course, we don't have time to look at them, but particularly chapter 27 of Isaiah, verse one, where it talks about the Lord.

And this is part of Isaiah's prophecy. It's called his little apocalypse. And it's God's judgment that's going to come about.

It also talks about the Lord's sword taking on that coiling serpent, that twisting serpent named Leviathan. All right? And there are enough other passages where we see Leviathan as representative of something that is cosmically evil. And I'll close with this.

Isn't it interesting that in the book of Job, Leviathan appears at the end of the book, not as something humans can control but implicitly as something completely under the control of God because it's part of that whole tour of God's created order? And I hope you noticed that Satan never shows up again. Somehow, I would suggest, in God's response, he's winding in this idea of Leviathan being under his control, and the Satan figure that was so powerful and so destructive in the beginning of the book, chapters one and two, of the scene, don't even need to mention him, because God will take care of that too.

Well, a lot more to be said there, but we need to stop. So, I will see you with your papers in hand on Friday, or having sent them in.