

Dr. Elaine, Phillips, OT History, Lit. and Theology, Lecture 25

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This is Doctor Elaine Phillips in her Old Testament: History, Literature and Theology course, lecture number 25.

Well, good morning to everyone. 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, to 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 a hand-written form, and you can turn it right in with your paper if you wish. If you have word processed it, then email it all to me in one document, not separate little installments. No real compulsion to have it in by 9 o'clock on Friday morning but it has got to be in by 5:30. That's when I leave campus, and that's the drop dead time. So, 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 a 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 the papers.

We're going to try and 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. And then I'm going to read for you just the tiny little verse, actually in one of Job's friend's statements. Job's friends say a lot of wonderful things, they just misapply what they say. And 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 "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, hu yaaseh shalom aleynu*. 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 *hu* means “he,” he’s going to do that. *Ve’al kol Yisrael, ve’imru* – that’s imperative, and save – *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 *hu yasseh shalom, hu yasseh shalom*, let him make peace, let him make peace, *shalom aleynu v’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 in their hearts too, and help us to be good friends. Father, we would 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. And interestingly enough, we’re going to review first – I thought there was a review slide in here – 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 and life. Job and Ecclesiastes, and of course, Ecclesiastes is what we're going to pick up with on Friday, are speculative, 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 also we're going to do, try and 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 tag with this, and spend the first, twenty minutes or so, posing questions to you, because obviously if we're dealing, 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 text but particularly not with Job. So I've got some questions and I'm certainly inviting your questions as well, as we start doing some introductory work on this. 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? Anybody want to get this one going? Why do we have it in the Bible? What's the purpose? It's got 42 chapters, that must mean there's something in there worth looking at.

Go ahead, Ginger. (Student answers)

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, okay, we'll go on with that.

Susanna. (Student answers)

So this is a lesson in 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, you know, 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.

Mary. (Student answers)

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 likeable and these kinds of things. Am I getting it? Not all of it, ok that's alright. I mean, you know, one of the things we're seeing in this book are 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. Because as you read through those you think, I've had enough of Job's and the friend's at this point.

Go ahead Kayla. (Student answers)

Okay, so it reminds us that above all this suffering that we see around us and in ourselves, and Job is kind of our little microcosm of that, God's allowing that to happen. And 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 as sort of an interlude amongst the questions, definition. "Theodicy" is a term that is 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 this base level, justifying God, and so basically what a theodicy is, 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 Kayla was sort of getting at that, in terms 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 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? (Student answers)

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 it deal with the 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?

Makenna. (Student answers)

Okay, yeah Casia. (Student answers)

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.

I'm going to do a little bit of reading today, out of a book that I've found very useful over the years. It happens to be *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes*, by a scholar whose name I've dropped from time to time, because he's a good Old Testament scholar. His name is Derek Kidner, 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." Alright, sorry Katie. "The book is not a theodicy, for humans cannot arrogate to themselves the right to justify God without deifying themselves." Notice, 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 thing, 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 is 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. And he says, “In the passion of Job 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 Job’s 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. You know, 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. (Student answers)

Yes, that’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, 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. (Student answers – Well, I have a question. It seems that it’s 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 it.)

And of course, we don't like the former one very much, do we. 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 is no question about that. He is sovereignly good. In my mind there is 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 7 talks about the God "who creates lights 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 its 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? Well, 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 the 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 5, particularly, and then going on through chapter 7.

So some interesting thoughts in that regard. That’s not the end of the questions. You still want to think a little bit more? Maybe? What did we learn about God? I’ve gotten at this a little bit, but let’s push it a little further. What did we learn about God and the adversary, which is the translation of Satan? *Hasatan*, 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 jump out at you?

Rebecca. (Student answers)

Oh no, things about each one of them that create this picture for us, because this, of course, is the introduction to the whole thing, as it is unfolding in the poetry, this is our narrative introduction, which Job never knows, of course. Go ahead.

(Student answers)

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 1 verse 6, “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, *Hasatan*, 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 some how this adversary has access into 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 did we learn, about God, the adversary, and Job? What did we learn about Job?

I'm sorry, Matt, go right ahead. (Student answers)

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? Yes, chapter five. "When appeared a feasting had run its course, 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, 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? (Student answers)

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. (Student answers)

Yes, and what does it say about his righteousness?

(Student answers)

He was like the most righteous person ever, right. 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 those, 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, truly, godly person. Anything else we need to know about these characters that are a part of this vision that we have into heaven, especially with the first two?

Go ahead, Matt. (Student answers)

Yes, Satan does have to get permission, if you will, but let me, just, I 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 around 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 7, particularly in verses 21 and 22, we're not going to look there now, but, you know, 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 get's out of it." Aren't those often our motives? Aren't they, in some ways, to some degree, 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 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. (Student answers)

And he does, doesn't he, because 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 zapping him, you know, and 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 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, but what's so inappropriate about these friends' responses? And you'll need to know who they are Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, right. After all, they seem to have a good handle on basic principles of justice.

Susanna. (Student answers)

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 that they've misapplied it. Would that be fair to say? And so you're saying they're speaking for God, if that's an appropriate way of saying it, in fact Kidner at one point says, 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? Well we probably need to define pontificate, don't we. What's a pontiff, does anybody know what a pontiff is?

(Student answers)

A pope, actually. Yes, right. 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 just said, taking 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 it is that Job is. 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, in essence he calls them a bunch of windbags, and basically 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," its because you said Job was praising God.

(Student answers)

Well, let me be really rude, and push you a little bit, and ask how chapter sixteen fits into that. Starting with verse seven, "Surely, O God, you've worn me out, you've devastated my entire household," verse 9, "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've sowed 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?

(Student answers – I feel like, no, not overtly.)

Okay, but? (Student answers)

We've had Saul, so you can pick on Saul, that's fine. (Student answers)

And being honest and saying, you have done this to me. Yes, 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 in chapter 9 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 did we learn from the responses of God? Once he enters into the scene, what do we learn from these responses?

Rebecca. (Student answers)

Did you say "confirm what Job is saying?" Okay, go ahead.

(Student answers)

Okay so these spoken responses, starting with chapter 38, going right on through 41, which we're going to look at in 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?

Matt. (Student answers)

Yes, 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 had stolen something. God pays Job back double, of all of what he's had. A very interesting statement here. Now, the next thing that 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, I'm trying to find the particular statement here. Chapter 42, verse 6, "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 done with, friends were right. Yes, no? Nobody wants to tackle that one.

Go ahead, Matt. (Student answers)

Very good. What do we have in chapter 42 verses 7 and 8? The Lord's speaking to Eliphaz, "I'm angry with you and your friends. You've not spoken." Now what's next is interesting, because your NIV and just about every translation says, "You've not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." And its going to say the same thing in verse 8, "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 unto 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 the 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, and by the way, I've 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 chose 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?

And so therefore, this is why it's kind of 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 is going to find out that his mediator is in heaven, and that's even a 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 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.

Well we need to do 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, not exactly certain where it is, but there's enough parallels in other parts of Scripture that suggests it's in Edom, somewhere in the vicinity of Edom. Alright, Lamentations 4:21 uses Utz 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 on to this. How old is Job at the end of the story? Do you remember any little hints along these lines? "After all this," chapter 42, "Job lived another 140 years." Now if we're going to take seriously the number, 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 already when the story unfolds, the man's got ten 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, sixties maybe, fifties, sixties, seventies, something like that. So, even that age span, that life span, would suggest, again if we take it seriously, that he lives probably 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 its representing a time period prior to the establishment of Israel, that it may come into a narrative/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, 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 in the poetry, we have, perhaps during the heyday of wisdom literature in Israel's time, and that would be around Solomon, perhaps this book comes 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 that 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 talked quite a bit already 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 are having our discussion. Job's character's 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 friend's lack, or absence of speaking to God on behalf of Job.

Now, a further issue in that whole rebuke is, are these friends, and is Job speaking what is correct theologically about God. That's another whole issue. If we had a couple more lectures we could wrestle through with 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, that 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. Job has been under a 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 reader are.

Yes, Susanna. (Student answers)

No, we don't know who the author is. We have no idea. It's a good question, and all I can say is, no.

In terms of the structure of the book, still kind of trying to map out some things here, chapter 3 is Job's initial statement. Remember, the friend's have come, the friends are pretty good at the get-go, because they sit silently with him for seven days. 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 ten 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 8: "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." Now, the questions 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 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 4: "A word," verse 12, "was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it." Verse 14: "Fear and trembling ceased 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 the more those who live in houses of clay?” 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, certainly you, who are made simply out of dust, 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, you know, scaring the daylights out of him and letting him know this message, that of course then 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 is going to be fine. But you know, it’s a 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 that are just going to go totally wrong, I mean really scary stuff. It’s kind of, if you’ve ever read Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the Hand 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, cycle two of the speeches of the 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'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 doesn't even dare say a thing. It's Eliphaz who's carrying the brunt of it, and so that is 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 against Job.

Now there's so much more to say about how all of this works, but the thing that I would suggest to you is that Job continually, after he says some, interesting things to his friends, is going to come back to God. I just want to make a note of 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.

If you've got your Bible look at chapter 9 first. In chapter 9 he starts out with a very profound declaration of God's sovereign control of the entirety of the created order, which God himself is 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, 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 without fear of him. As it stands now, I cannot." Job is longing for an arbitrator.

Chapter 16, same kind of thing happens. I read earlier the things that Job says to God in that context. Powerful stuff, recognizing God's responsible 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 eyes pour out tears to God." But he recognizes his witnesses in heaven, his advocate is on high.

And then of course, chapter 19, which we know 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 as a whole 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 this life. And of course, that's exactly what happens, because God does appear to him.

Alright, 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," I'm in chapter 37 now, "Rumble, lightning before the whole heaven, God's voice thunders," verse 5. 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 even going to 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. As 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 I'm 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, 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 in, and you know what's fascinating about it, do I say this? Yes, he never mentions humans whatsoever. He goes through everything else.

God's the architect of the universe, he 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 your footnotes in your NIV probably say it's a crocodile. Don't think it's quite so 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 1, where it talks about the Lord. And this is part of Isaiah's prophesy. It's called his "Little Apocalypse" and it's God's judgment that's going to come about and it talks about the Lord's sword taking on that coiling serpent, that twisting serpent, named Leviathan.

Alright, 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, off 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.

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