

Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1994

For our Bible Lessons this quarter we will go to the book of Job. We will study this man, what God allowed to come his way, and the way God dealt with him through it all. This study will not be a complete coverage of every scripture, but rather the main highlights and important lessons contained therein. I have referred to the Commentary of Adam Clarke several times as I found his observations very inspiring and enlightening. I would refer the student to his writings as a very wholesome and edifying source of knowledge. The book of Job is the first book of the Books of Poetry section of the Bible. And it is a poetical masterpiece so deep and full of meaning. It has been an enjoyable as well as a challenging study for my soul, and I do hope it will be for each one. —Brother Leslie C. Busbee



JANUARY 2, 1994

THE LORD GIVETH, THE LORD TAKETH AWAY

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

MEMORY VERSE: Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Job 1:21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We can and must love and honour and offer praises to God even in the deepest depths of the woes and sorrows of earthly life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 1), "*Perfect and upright*": complete and straight. "*Eschewed evil*": turned away from evil. (V. 3), "*Very great household*": The word translated "household" from the Hebrew means work or service. The Septuagint translation renders the meaning of this word as "ministry." Job's contribution to the economy and welfare of his society was of great value to all. "*His substance*": Adam Clarke notes that the Jewish Targum translation divides the substance of Job seven thousand sheep: a thousand for each of his sons; three thousand camels: a thousand for each of his daughters; five hundred yoke of oxen for himself, and five hundred she asses for his wife. (V. 4), "*Every one his day*": It is likely that these feasts were held as birthday celebrations. "*Sent and sanctified them*": It is very likely that at the completion of each one's feast, Job called his children together and counselled and prayed with them in the fear of the Lord. This along with the offering of sacrifices on their behalf was his earnest effort to help them with relation to their Maker. (V. 7), "*Going to and fro in the earth*": Satan traverses the entire realm of mankind, seeking whom he may take advantage of and devour. II Cor. 2:11, I Peter 5:8. He had no

doubt great desire to do violence and harm to the godly Job, but was unable because of God's protection and shield. (V. 15, 17), "*The Sabeans and Chaldeans*": These were people who lived on robbery and violence, roving bands of evil and covetous men. They were under Satan's control, and he moved them at his will against the possessions of Job. (V. 16, 19), "*The fire of God fallen from heaven, and a great wind from the wilderness*": God evidently gave Satan the controls of the natural forces of weather and storm to carry out his evil purposes to test Job's faithfulness. The fire of God was evidently a massive bolt of lightning and the wind a tornado. (V. 20), "*Mantle*": robe.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The situation of Job is the background for what sorrows and destruction befell him. He was a man who loved and worshipped God, worked righteousness, and did his best to please God, and to influence others to do the same. And it is plain that the blessings and protection of the Almighty God had made him a very wealthy and prosperous man. In our lesson today Satan is given an opportunity to test Job's faithfulness to God. God gave him power to harm and destroy Job's family and possessions. He used people that he already had under his power, and the forces of nature. All the aspects of how this came about may be difficult for us to comprehend, but the most important and wonderful thing about it all is that Job worshipped and glorified God in it all. The example of Job's steadfastness and faithfulness to God has been as a tree of righteousness to the ages. James 5:11 says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." The story of Job has been a great comfort to the Church down through the years. His sufferings were extreme and beyond the ordinary misfortunes that happen to mortals. But he stood true and proved that one can serve God faithfully regardless of the trouble and sorrow that may come.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Satan think that Job would do if his possessions were to be taken away?
2. What can we be assured of concerning what Satan may bring against us?
3. Does God still allow Satan to afflict His saints?
4. Who sets the limit on what Satan can do?
5. Why would Satan want to turn a person against God?
6. Which one of the calamities that befell Job hit him the hardest?
7. What would be the reaction of human reasoning to what happened to Job?
8. What was Job's reaction?
9. Was Job's reaction wise and just?
10. What attitude do you desire to have when loss and sorrow comes as it did to Job?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It pays in many ways to fear God and turn away from evil. One of the greatest benefits in so doing is the help that God gives to us in the adversities of life. The sorrows and troubles of our mortal journey will not overwhelm and conquer us because God is supporting us with His divine power. Adversities are going to come: we can be sure of that. And our faith is going to be contested to prove its reality. It is a great lesson to learn how to trust and praise God in the bad times as well as the good. While the Lord is giving and we are receiving gifts of love and goodness our hearts rebound with praise and thanksgiving. But in the time of adversity and loss we are to still offer the sacrifice of praise and justify God when He takes away as when He bestows. The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy, and His purpose in allowing adversity is our spiritual welfare and betterment. We must cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart in the dark times of trouble. It takes more purpose and decision to hold fast to the Lord in stressful times and times of opposition than in the times of prosperity and ease. Patience is endurance, going through triumphantly without giving in, up, or out. It takes pure decision and loving the Lord with all

our hearts to endure the adverse trials of faith. We can prove to God that we are not serving Him for the profit or gain when we cleave to Him despite the loss His will designs us to suffer.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Job lost more, in a matter of a few moments than most of us will be called upon to give up in a lifetime. In order for Job to retain his integrity with God, there had to be something beyond the natural within his heart. When we read the story of Job's losses, we do so with the advantage of knowing what had taken place between God and Satan. How much easier it would have been for Job if he had had that advantage. We discover, as Satan did as well, that Job didn't serve God because of the livestock and wealth God gave him, but because of a relationship with God that spawned love. This is the only thing today that will hold us on a true course in life. If our integrity with God is due to temporal things, it is possible for them to forsake us and leave us empty, or it is always possible for something of greater temporal value to tempt us to err.

A lesson can be learned at the expense of Job's children. Consider the impact of this: just for Job to be tempted, God was willing to bargain away the souls of ten people. Perhaps values seem to be askew in this trade-off, but let us take warning. God places as much value on one soul as he does another because He is a just and equal God; but if we turn from God He is justified in using us however He pleases, even if it is an example of wickedness and calamity. Pharaoh found that out to his great sorrow. (Rom. 9:17-23). —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 9, 1994

RECEIVING GOOD AND EVIL AT THE HAND OF GOD

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

2 And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

4 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine hand; but save his life.

7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

9 Then his wife said unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

MEMORY VERSE: Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. James 5:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: True wisdom will enable us to rise above every wave of trouble that we meet in life and still love and serve God and never complain or turn against Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 4), "*Skin for skin*": Regardless of what losses he had suffered, Job was still clothed in his own skin in health and comfort. Many troubles can come our way, but if our skin is not invaded or broken into, we can find a great measure of security. (V. 7), "*Sore boils*": The Hebrew says "bad burning ulcers," an "evil inflammation," as Adam Clarke put it. Clarke says further that "some think it was leprosy; and this is the reason why he dwelt by himself, and had his dwelling in an unclean place, (upon a dung-heap outside the city, as states the Septuagint translation) or in the open air: and the reason why his friends beheld him afar off was because they new that the disorder was infectious." (V. 8), "*Potsherd*": a piece of broken pottery. He used this to scrape away the scale and corruption that oozed from his terrible sores. (V. 9), "*His wife said unto him*": The Septuagint translation adds that his wife spake unto him after much time had passed: "How long wilt thou hold out, saying, Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance? for, behold, thy memorial is abolished from the earth, even thy sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows; and thou thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pangs which now beset me: but say some word against the Lord, and die".

LESSON BACKGROUND

Satan had failed in his first assault on Job, but he did not give up on him. He desired and was granted the power to afflict Job bodily in his person and physical condition. And, as

before, Satan was proven wrong. Job held fast and remained faithful even under the bitter criticism of his wife, who sadly chose to withstand her husband instead of upholding him in his faith. Job's three friends who came to comfort him were, according to the research of Adam Clarke, from districts that were celebrated for their knowledge, and that the reputation of these men for wisdom stood on a very solid foundation.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can we, as children of God, expect to be tried in our lifetime in ways similar to the trials of Job?
2. Will the Lord allow Satan to afflict and tempt us as he did Job?
3. What causes a person to become bitter and turn against God in the time of affliction?
4. What is shown in our lesson that makes us know that everything that comes our way is permitted of God?
5. What was Job's attitude toward his wife when she gave way to despair?
6. Did Job have any spiritual conflicts in this trial?
7. How can conquering the spiritual forces of unbelief, gloom, and despair be so important?
8. Where was it that Satan was seeking to break Job down?
9. What did his three friends do to show that they were really in sympathy with Job?
10. Why did they not speak for seven days and nights?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Young people and children do not anticipate the sorrows and reverses of life. Their hopes and dreams look forward to happiness and good times, success and prosperity. But it is wise to take into account that we are on the battlefield of life. There will be adversity and hardship to meet and deal with. There will be, as it was with Job, financial problems, home problems, neighbor problems, physical problems and many other reverses. There are storms, fire, decay and accidents. People will deceive, harm and bring personal injury to your

name and reputation. There are many other things that can and will go wrong. How needful it is for each one to take God for a Friend and Refuge! The earlier you can make the Lord your hope and stay, the better off you will be. We are each one going to be tried and put to the test. It is in these times of trial and adversity that we prove ourselves to be real children of God. The Lord wants us to be strong in faith like Job was. Like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel and all the prophets, God would have us endure suffering affliction with courage and steadfastness. We must set ourselves to be tried in the furnace of affliction and suffering. No one escapes the fiery trials. They are sent to try you, to see if you will really hold on to God. The Lord wants us to make full proof of our faith by enduring the storms of life. Trust God each day for the grace He has promised. He will be there to help and sustain you, and He will bring you forth as pure gold, just like He did faithful Job.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Skin for skin." This is the way human nature operates, and it is the way Satan expected Job to respond. It takes a child of God to turn the other cheek when personally mistreated. Most people take revenge, which is a degraded characteristic of the devil himself. The devil expected revenge from Job, but Job accepted the perceived wrong. People in the world will expect reprisal from us, and this is an opportunity to show them God. It will turn heads if we bless those who curse us.

The Norwegian writer, Johan Bojer, in *The Great Hunger*, tells of a man whose little child was killed by a neighbor's dog. Revenge would not long satisfy this man, so he found a better way to relieve the agony of his heart. When a famine had plagued the people and the neighbor's fields lay bare and he had no corn to plant for next year's harvest, the troubled father went out one night and sowed the neighbor's field, explaining, "I went and sowed seed in my enemy's field, that God might exist."

"Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." This too is how human

nature operates; it will do anything to avoid suffering. Again Satan miscalculated the stamina of a child of God. When Satan afflicted Job, it was when time was young. Satan still hasn't adjusted his mode of operation, but after seeing Daniel, the three Hebrew children, the death of the disciples and countless other martyrs, he has undoubtedly qualified his thinking.

—Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 16, 1994

JOB'S AGONY OF SPIRIT

Job 3:1 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

2 And Job spake, and said,

3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

6:2 Oh, that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

8 Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!

7:2 As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work:

3 So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

4 When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;

14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:

15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

16 I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

MEMORY VERSE: What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? Job 7:17-18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God allows the soul of man to pass through agonizing and distressful seasons of sorrow and pain, and also prolonged mental anguish, to bring him to a place of humbleness and brokenness where he can sense the wisdom and majesty of the Lord.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 1), "*Job...cursed his day*": The word cursed here is translated from the Hebrew word which means to make or cause to be light, of no value, trifling, and vain. Job was feeling so small and unworthy and unimportant. (V. 25), "*For the thing which I greatly feared*": The Hebrew expresses this thus, "The dreadful thing that I dreaded." (V. 2), "*Calamity*": ruin. (V. 3), "*My words are swallowed up*": The Hebrew word here means to gulp, which figuratively means to be hasty or rash. The weight of sorrow and anguish upon a person will have a tendency to cause one to speak hastily and, so many times, unwisely. (V. 4), "*The poison drinketh up my spirit*": The Hebrew says, "Their fury (the arrows of God) is drinking my spirit." (V. 2), "*The reward of his work*": his wages. (V. 5), "*My*

skin is broken, and become loathsome": because of it running puss and corruption, his flesh was a thing to be shunned or kept away from. (V. 20), "*Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee?*": The Hebrew words this, "Why have you set me as a target for you?"

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the 3rd, 6th, and 7th chapters of Job we have gathered various expressions of Job's grief and agony of spirit. It is good to study these and know what they mean, because more than likely we will experience these very things sometime in our lives. The three friends of Job have come to try to help and comfort him. They have sat down with him for seven days without uttering a word. They saw that his sorrow was so very great, and they were at a loss to know what to say. It is better to say little or nothing to the weary heart than to speak words of no profit. One brother's son was very ill with typhoid fever and some of those who came to visit told about different people they knew who had suffered many days of the typhoid and had finally died. Such "ghost stories" are not edifying. Weigh your words when you go to visit the ill and distressed. And do not be quick to scold or reprove if they express their dark feelings. Try to understand and express sympathy with cheerfulness. Their feelings are real, and sometimes it is good to let them express themselves without fear of being reproved. It is easy in the time of distress and sorrow to speak rashly. Job should not have counted his birth so lightly, but he felt low-down and of no value. God was not really doing what it seemed to Job that He was doing. But he was passing through the deep waters, and everything was weighing down upon him. It can happen to the strongest and most spiritual person. Be compassionate and patient, for who knows when it will be your turn to go through the deep waters. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What would be the only reason why a righteous man like Job would feel like cursing his birth?
2. How heavy did Job's grief seem to be to him?

3. Does being righteous and godly afford assurance that one will be exempt from grief and sorrow?
4. Will God allow a person to pass through a season of life when his prayers are seemingly of no avail?
5. Of what value is Job's trial of faith to us today?
6. What is God's purpose in allowing us to suffer affliction and pain?
7. Why is God so interested in putting our faith to the test?
8. Can you see any ray of hope or consolation expressed amid Job's agony in our lesson today?
9. What was God's purpose in setting Job as His mark?
10. In what ways can a man become a burden to himself?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Job's expression of grief and suffering in spirit is not a pleasant thing to behold. But it is good for us to look into it, especially if we will realize that we are apt to meet some of these very things ourselves. Satan is going to try to break us down, either by pressure or the alluring powers of sin. If he can't entice us with his pretty allurements, he may well try to crush us with adversity. Watch for either one of these tactics. There are people who have endured great hardship and trial and are overcome when things lighten up for them. And it is possible for a man to resist temptation of great magnitude and be overcome in loss and sorrow. One of the greatest of mortal suffering has to do with skin problems. The devil said, "Skin for skin!" Job's physical suffering was in his skin. There was a disease years ago which was called "the itch." They say it was a terrible thing. I had a patch of poison ivy once on my wrist that gave me misery I had not known for quite awhile. There is also depression of spirit and old giant Despair who would imprison us in Doubting Castle and tell us that we will never get out. But we have some very precious promises in God's Word that we can call to mind that will help us get out of old giant Despair's trap. Let us also notice that Job always reckoned that it was God dealing with him. He never gave the devil credit for anything. It was all the Almighty's doings, and as we shall see, Job nourished hopes that God would eventually bring him out to a wealthy place. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In this lesson we see the depression that Job fell into. He even cursed the day that he was born. Job's comforters didn't know how to handle this. It is without question that they were touched by Job's suffering, for they sat down with him for seven days and seven nights. But when Job questioned why God had ever allowed him to be born, it was too much for them, and they came down on him with both barrels. This is important to understand when judging the things that they said to him. They felt obligated to defend God, and so they proceeded to tell him that he was the one in the wrong, and that God was justified in all that had been done.

In dealing with someone who is going through grief, it is important to know that things will be said that would not be said under normal circumstances. We must learn how to cut people slack and encourage, rather than feel compelled to condemn. One of the best ways to encourage a sufferer is to point them to the compassion of God for them. It is in God's heart that suffering is felt the most deeply. The Bible says of our heavenly Father, "In all their affliction he was afflicted...."

—Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 23, 1994

DESPISE NOT THE CHASTENING OF THE ALMIGHTY

Job 4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?
but who can withhold himself from speaking?

3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

5:3 I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4 His children are far from safety, they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

6 Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

8 I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

9 Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number:

12 He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

24 And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

26 Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Job 5:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The chastening and correction of our heavenly Father is not enjoyable, but if we will submit to it, it will better our lives for the glory of God and will bring us happiness and success in this life and forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 2), "Assay": try. "Wilt thou be grieved?": The Hebrew text says, "You are weary." These men had sat with Job for seven days

without saying a word. They had just heard Job's bitter and sad complaint of his sorrows. They saw that he was weary and pressed sore, yet they yearned to speak in an effort to help their friend. (V. 7), "*Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward*": The Hebrew says: For man is born to toil and wearing effort, and the sons of the live coal rise flying. Clarke comments on this verse thus, "Man must toil and be careful; and if in the course of his labour he meet with trials and afflictions, he should rise superior to them. Who are the sons of the live coal? Are they not bold and fearless men, who rise superior to all their trials; combat chance and occurrence; yield to no difficulties; and rise superior to time, tide, fate and fortune?" (V. 13), "*He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*": God causes their feet to be caught in their own snares, and their evil dealings to fall back upon their own heads. He who digs a pit for his neighbor shall fall into it himself. Force and wrong will ensnare the man who uses them. (V. 24), "*Thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace?* When one fears the Lord and seeks peace with God and man, his chances of peace and safety will be much greater. He can trust God to preserve his house and goods while he is away. "*Shalt not sin*": God will guide our decisions and moves of life and keep us from error and mistakes that could multiply our troubles.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today, Eliphaz carefully endeavors to respond to Job's expressions of sorrow. Although it proves out in the end that he misses the mark in Job's case, yet his sayings are good and worthy of our attention. His words are generally accepted as wise counsel, even as Paul quotes in I Cor. 3: 19 what he said in Job 5:13, "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Adam Clarke observes that though Eliphaz failed to apply his knowledge to Job's case and character, his words contain many wholesome truths, of which the wise in heart may make a very advantageous practical use. We can glean from his sayings, even though it is proven later that he and his friends misjudged Job, and find some wholesome counsels that will help us even today. It is a wise person who,

in the time of being misjudged and misunderstood, can get good counsel from those who are addressing his situation. We find that God works that way, using those who seemingly injure us to bring us profit and help. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Which is easier to do: Give out counsel and help to others, or abide and follow the same counsel when the trouble comes to you?
2. In what way can a man think himself more just or pure than God?
3. What does a godly righteous man have that the wicked does not have when it comes to trouble and sorrow?
4. What can the godly man do concerning the troubles of life?
5. What can God do for the righteous regarding the opposing powers of worldly wisdom?
6. Why is correction and chastisement part of God's plan for man?
7. What are some of the means that God uses to chasten us?
8. Will a man reap the benefits of God's discipline if he fails to be subject to God's dealings?
9. Why is it best not to murmur nor air your troubles out, but rather confide in the Lord alone?
10. Is it easy to bear the chastisements of the Lord?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One of the mistakes that the three friends of Job made in their dealings with Job was that they reckoned that the misfortunes and sorrows that had befallen Job were on account of sin and transgression in his life. And this is a mistake that is often made today. It is true that God uses adversity and pain to punish man for his sin. But in the matter of discipline and chastisement there may not be sin involved as much as a matter of overall improvement and progress that God is wanting to see in His dear child's life and experience. God sends adversity and trouble for a means of our spiritual

betterment. Job was a perfect and upright man, but God allowed Satan to tempt and try him. In tempting and trying Job, God was bringing out his faithfulness, and at the same time improving his character and relationship with God. Eliphaz gave Job some good counsel, counsel that would be worthwhile for us to consider today. Whether we have failed, come short, or missed the mark, or whether we have not done such, we still need discipline, chastisement, and correction. It is a never ending process. This life of serving God is a progressive and learning way. Many times it takes the whole of a man's life to finally get him to where God really wants him. The Lord is so patient and longsuffering about it. He works persistently and patiently to accomplish His divine ends. He wants us all to experience the joy of a successful life and a triumphant end. If we will but submit to His dealings and humble ourselves to the depth of lowliness and meekness that we see in Christ our blessed Saviour, we can experience that joy that comes with being faithful to Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong." This was said by one of Job's comforters and it is true. Anyone who lives and operates outside of what is right and moral will dig a pit which they will fall into. People may think that they are ever so clever in underhanded tactics, but the law of God will find out any who trespass; it is self-enforcing.

A story which illustrates this truth is told about a Communist agitator who peddled into a city park on his bicycle one day. There he leaned the bike against a tree, mounted a soap box and began to address the crowd. "If you want something," he shouted, "raid a shop and take it! If your wife doesn't have a good coat, pick the best one you see. Ignore the law if it's against your best interest." After finishing his harangue, he went to get his bicycle and, finding it gone, fumed, "Where's the bum who took my bicycle?"

Although Job's comforter spoke truth, he misapplied it. He was saying it for Job's benefit, but it was not due to frowardness or craftiness that Job lost his possessions. This comforter possessed truth, but not wisdom. It is also a true principle that "...happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:" but Job was not being chastised. He was enduring temptation. It is a spiritual gift to not only know the Word of God, but how to apply it; one that all of us should seek. —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 30, 1994

**"WHO HATH HARDENED HIMSELF AGAINST GOD,
AND HATH PROSPERED?"**

- Job 9:1 Then Job answered and said,
2 I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?
3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.
4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?
5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.
6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.
7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.
8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.
9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.
10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.
11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.
12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

13 If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

25 Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:

28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

30 If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands ever so clean;

31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

33 Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

MEMORY VERSE: He [God] is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Job 9:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is not only useless for humans to work or strive against the will of God, but to do so will bring us to destruction and ruin. There is no way that we can prevail against him in our human ability and strength.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 2), "*How should man be just with God?*": Without Christ's atonement and intercession for man, his case is hopeless with God. (V. 3), "*If he will contend with him*": dispute or have controversy with. "*One of a thousand*": In a thousand questions or challenges man cannot settle or satisfy the wisdom of God. (V. 9), "*Arcturus*": The heavenly constellation known as the Great Bear. "*Orion and Pleiades*": Two other great constellations of

the heavens, Pleiades being the same as the seven stars mentioned in Amos 5:8. Surely a God who is massive and great enough to manipulate such vast and unending realms should not be resisted or trifled with. *"Chambers of the south"*: Much diversity of opinion arises in defining this term. Use your imagination. It could refer to the great weather system that circles the globe, the winds, the tides and the evaporation process, all of which is under God's jurisdiction and control. (V. 13), *"If God will not withdraw his anger"*: The word "if" is an added word. Adam Clarke expresses it very well here: "It is no use to contend with God; He cannot be successfully resisted; all his opposers must perish." (V. 25), *"Swifter than a post"*: A post is a runner. (V. 30), *"Snow water"*: The Hebrew says "snow," probably alluding to its whiteness as a means of purifying. (V. 33), *"Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both"*: The meaning of the word "daysman" is an arbitrator, one who is, by the consent of both parties, to judge between them, and settle their differences. Thank God, there has come such a One from heaven who took upon Him humanity that He might lay hand upon God and man and settle the differences between us!

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our last two lessons we had Job pouring out his complaint and Eliphaz, the first of his friends who came to comfort him, trying to help him. Job spoke, then Eliphaz spoke, and then Job spoke again. Then the next friend, Bildad, spoke, suggesting that there surely must be some sin in Job's life, and declaring that if Job were pure and upright God would awake for him and make the habitation of his righteousness prosperous. He also stated that God would not cast away a perfect man, neither would he help evildoers. In our lesson today Job does not contend so much that he is just with God, speaking of His greatness and awesome power in comparison to man's futility and weakness. Job presents a picture of man pitted against the judgment of God as a useless, vain, and hopeless venture. You cannot work against Him. You cannot harden yourself against Him, argue or erase the controversy that exists. Even Job's own spotless character and blameless

life falls short in prevailing with God. In one sense it all seems to be a dark and hopeless situation. And this should be realized for this is the condition of man before His Maker without the intercession of the Blessed Son of God from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. God purposed, as Paul states in Romans 3:19, "...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." This will help prepare our hearts for the light of mercy that shines through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of spirit and attitude should we have toward God?
2. Does His greatness and vast power dictate an humble approach to Him?
3. Are we not absolutely helpless before Him and at His mercy?
4. Is there any reason for us to boast or lift ourselves up before Him?
5. Will God take note of our human abilities or achievements as a means of gaining his favor?
6. Is it very necessary for us to feel in our hearts what Job has expressed here?
7. Has there been any relief and mercy to this condition of man before God?
8. In what way does Jesus perform the role of a "daysman?"
9. Can we claim any merit with God on account of how well we live and behave?
10. Should we give over to despair and cease trying to seek God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How diligently we need to consider what Job has spoken in our lesson today! God is not to be contended with and resisted. We have the privilege in Christ to approach His throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. But this is because the "daysman" has come and arranged a peaceful settlement through His blood between us

and God. But we still need to remember that in our own strength and righteousness there is not a chance of the obtaining of His favor. In the midst of all of Job's sorrowful expressions of hopeless and helpless feelings of despair in himself there shines the rays of sweet anticipations of the coming Redeemer. Jesus would fulfill that emptiness and that longing for reconciliation with God. The hungrier a man is, the greater will be his appreciation of bread. The poorer a man is the more it will mean for help to come. The greater the vacuum in a man's heart and his own sense of helplessness and need, the sweeter will be the Saviour who will fill it! Think how great and mighty God is! Look up at the star-spangled heavens on a clear moonless night. They say that some of those stars are many light-years away. Think about this world, and how vast are its regions and areas of the habitations of man. It is all in the hollow of His hand. Oh, let us humble ourselves and reach out to Him for His mercy and goodness that He has brought to us in His precious Son, Jesus! He has laid His loving hand upon both man and God, and brought us together in a happy and everlasting fellowship!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I have seen a situation in a courtroom where an attorney could confuse and humiliate a person, and bring doubt upon his testimony, even if he was telling the truth. I have also witnessed a senator stand and debate an issue in which he seemed to make his opponents quail and their arguments diminish to an insignificant size. But no one has seen anything in comparison until they have faced God. Job said, "If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" Man's ignorance and frailty would instantly disqualify him from replying to any of God's accusations. God, in His wisdom, could be endless in His succession of questions to the guilty so much so that he would be confounded, overwhelmed and paralyzed to answer even one of them. There would be no use to plot against God, or try to formulate a plan of entrapment,

for God is a discerner of the heart. It would not only be useless to strive against God, but it would be positively ruinous. By putting these things in their true and proper light, it is unreasonable for someone to think they can oppose God and prosper, yet many do.

Job goes on to catalog all the mighty things that God can do. It is to our eternal advantage to humble ourselves before Him, accept His plan for our lives and have Him our stalwart Friend rather than our accusing enemy. —Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 6, 1994

“IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?”

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

16 For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

19 The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

MEMORY VERSE: O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! Job 14:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through faith in Christ and obedience to Him we have a living hope of being raised from the grave to live forever in the presence of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 3), "*Dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one?*": What is vain man that God would want to take account of him? (V. 4), "*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*" None but God in His mercy can make an unclean person clean. (V. 6), "*Turn from him*": Clarke rephrases this: Cease to try him by afflictions and distresses, that he may enjoy some of the comforts of life before he be removed from it." (V. 14), "*My appointed time*": The Hebrew word is "my warfare." (V. 15), "*A desire to the work of thine hands*": This desire the Hebrew expresses as a longing, yearning, panting desire. Of this Adam Clarke beautifully comments: "God has subjected the creature to vanity, in hope; having determined the resurrection. Man is one of the noblest works of God. He has exhibited him as a masterpiece of his creative skill, power and goodness. Nothing less than the strongest call upon justice could have induced God thus to

destroy the work of his hands. No wonder that He has an earnest desire towards it; and that although man dies, and is as water spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again; yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him. Even God is represented as earnestly longing for the ultimate restoration of the sleeping dust. He cannot, He will not, forget the work of His hands." (V. 16, 17), "*Watch over my sin, seal up my transgression, sew up mine iniquity*": God does two things with man's sin: He marks it well, making man fully aware of its deadly potential; and, He makes full provision for his sin to be fully forgiven and cleansed from his soul. (V. 19), "*Thou destroyest the hope of man*": God takes away every prop, support or aid for man's salvation but that which He Himself will provide.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our last lesson we had Job's speech on the vanity of man striving against God. He followed this with a prayer uttered in the bitterness of his soul to God, pleading for mercy and tolerance, asking God to cease and let him alone that he might "take comfort a little" before he had to go from whence he would not return. Then Zophar, the third friend, tried to reason with Job, wishing that God would speak and open his lips against him, saying, "Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." But Job is steadfast in his confidence of his integrity with God, maintaining that God's severity with him is with a great purpose for his good. He calls these three "friends" of his forgers of lies and physicians of no value. He firmly declares: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." "He also shall be my salvation." In our lesson today we have the beautiful expression of Job's hope concerning the resurrection. Death is pictured in its dark sentence that affords no release. But Job's faith foresees the ultimate victory of life over death, to be remembered of God for a change to life immortal! He holds fast this confidence, knowing that God is keeping track of everything and will do justice to him in the end.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we account for God's interest in such a fleeting and lowly object as man?
2. Why would Job want God to cease from man and let him alone?
3. Is there any natural law that could make possible a restoration of man from death?
4. What was Job's hope in God concerning him living again?
5. What is God's feeling and desire concerning the death of mankind?
6. What was the "change" that Job was hoping would come?
7. How does God deal with sin in a person's life?
8. Does God seal up man's sin with the purpose of using it to condemn man?
9. What does God want done with man's sin?
10. For what purpose would God seek to destroy the hope of man?

ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

As the life of a flower, so is the life of man. In childhood and innocency the bloom of love and beauty are bright and sweet. The learning, the opening up and unfolding of the charms and thrills of young love and life absorb the mind and keeps one from sensing the threat of death and the dangers of the world. Life is full of joy and pleasure, and the few thorns and snares of woe are quickly quenched and healed as the strength of youth asserts itself to newer joys and thrills that appear. But after a few years the forces of sickness and disease, the decay and break down of the flesh, along with the powers of sin and evil begin to take their toll. It does not take long for the realities of death and the cutting off of life to show up. Oh, how needful it is that the fear of God find a place in the heart! This fear of God, the true wisdom, will guide a person in discovering the hope and salvation that God affords in Christ for sin, death and the judgment to follow. How sad that so many live their mortal days without this knowledge and understanding! If a

person will seek God and His righteousness above all else, the Spirit of God will reveal the blessed plan of salvation from sin and death. He will open up the scriptures and make fully known the blessed hope of immortality to the soul of man. His hope will be sure and steadfast as an anchor unfailing. Christ will be devoutly followed and obeyed, making their calling and election sure, and affording them an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord Jesus. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Job asked a philosophical question, but for him it certainly stretched beyond just an idea to be debated. "If a man die, shall he live again?..." Job was facing death, and he was asking the question of the ages. There have been many people who have not believed the Bible's teaching of a resurrection, but there are many things that point to a life after death. The apostle Paul brought to the mind of the Corinthian church that even a grain of seed shows the process and feasibility of a renewal of life. (I Cor. 15:35-39.)

God has put needs within man, and for every one of them He has provided an answer. Man becomes hungry and thirsty, and God has made food and water to satisfy those needs. The body requires oxygen and God provided air and fashioned a means to inhale it. Children are born with psychological needs and God ordained that every child would have a father and mother to fill these yearnings. Also, there is great grief in losing a loved one; grief that comes from the soul. Time has a way of healing the fresh hurt of the person who loses a loved one, but a certain type of void always remains in the heart. It would be a cruel trick indeed if God didn't provide some way for our longings to be satisfied. This is done through a resurrection.

—Wayne Murphey

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FEBRUARY 13, 1994

"I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH"

Job 16:11 God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

16 My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

17 Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.

19 Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

17:9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.

15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.

19:20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

MEMORY VERSE: For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. Job 19:25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: This natural life in the flesh is subject to adversity, sorrow, decay, and death; but if we will hold fast our integrity with God we will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into eternal life with our Redeemer, Jesus.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 12), "*Mark*": target (V. 16), "*Foul with weeping*": reddened (V. 25), "*Redeemer*": The Hebrew meaning for this word is "next of kin," or kinsman. This opens up a wonderful truth about Christ. There was a statute in the law of Moses that charged a man to buy or take over his dead brother's property and marry his widow. We have it beautifully illustrated in the story of Ruth and Boaz. Christ is our kinsman. Adam brought us to death, but Christ, as the Son of God, is our near kinsman and He redeems our lost estate and marries us. Oh, praise the Lord! "*He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*": The Hebrew says, "And at last on the dust he shall stand." (v.27), "*Retns*": this word denotes the vital organs of the body.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we had Job's precious testimony of his hope of triumphing from his troubles, yes, even from death and the grave. This was followed by a speech from Eliphaz. In this discourse he accused Job of speaking iniquity and turning his spirit against God. He also spoke some true and wise things concerning the wicked in their affront against God. Job followed this beginning with calling them miserable comforters. (16:2.) From chapters 16, 17 and 19 we have gleaned various expressions of Job concerning his troubles and concerning the hope that he was maintaining in God. In chapter 18 we find Bildad speaking about the curse of God on the dwellings of the wicked, feeling as the other two that Job had some wickedness about him. Included in our lesson is Job's pitiful plea to his friends for pity and compassion, "for," he said, "the hand of God hath touched me." He was longing

for a true friend, one who would understand and not accuse him. He said that his kinsfolk had failed, his familiar friends had forgotten him, his children despised him, and his breath was strange, or repulsive, to his wife. He said, also, that he was escaped with the skin of his teeth. His troubles were great indeed. He longed to be heard and remembered. Thank God, he was heard. His words are written in the greatest Book ever written, all preserved for us to read and benefit from!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what purpose do you think that God set Job up for His mark, or target?
2. Is Job's witness in heaven and record on high the same as our names in the Book of Life?
3. Why did Job sometimes fail to see his hope and at other times expressed it bright and clear?
4. What did Job mean by the expression, "escaped with the skin of my teeth?"
5. In what book were Job's words printed?
6. Where else can they be written?
7. How is Christ likened unto the one who, as near kinsman, would redeem the property of his dead brother's wife?
8. How can we in our flesh see God even though the worms destroy this body?
9. What is it going to take for us to get to see our Redeemer?
10. Why is it so vital that we live so that we can see Christ for ourselves?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We have in our lesson today the expressions of the depths of Job's suffering and dark sorrow, but we have also the heights of his joyous anticipation and hope. We who are endeavoring to follow the Lord today will share in that suffering and hope. Job's sufferings were so greatly similar to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Himself. He suffered the depths of despair and anguish when He cried on the cross, "My God,

my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" In fact, Job, in his sufferings, was a type of Christ. Bearing the reproaches of his near kinsmen of the flesh, Jesus held fast to His faithfulness to God even as Job did. He knew that being true and obedient to God would bring Him out in the end. He looked beyond the cross and saw the glittering crown of eternal life that He would gain for Himself and make possible for others to gain. We can have that same hope today. We can endure the cross and the things that we suffer on account of our faith with respect to that recompense of reward that God has promised. Our witness, too, is in heaven, and our record is on high. High up in heaven's book of life our names can be written. We, too, will go down to the pit and sleep in the dust. But in that resurrection morning we can sing with the redeemed of all ages the songs of eternal life. Oh, let us cling to this hope! It was the hope of Job, the hope of Jesus, and it is our hope still today!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"I know that my redeemer liveth,..." Job says, "I know." He is not vaguely feeling after truth. He has it, and he holds it firmly. How different is this great passage from chapter 3. [When he regretted the day of his birth.] In what way can we account for the new triumphant tone of the sufferer? How does Job **know** that his Redeemer liveth? This passage bears evidence to its Divine origin in its tone and spirit and exalted thought. The patriarch is carried out of himself. He is almost like St. Paul in the third heavens. (II Cor. 12:2.) Yet he is in no wild ecstasy; his tone is one of calm, solemn, glad assurance. The greatest truths of redemption and resurrection are from God.

"Through the discipline of suffering Job knew his Redeemer lived. Job did not see all this at first, but sorrow gave him a marvelous power of intuition. It trained him to see the highest truth. Thus God's revelation comes to the prepared soul. Suddenly the black clouds are rent asunder, and the much-suffering man looks right up to the eternal blue, while the very light of God illumines and transfigures his countenance."

—Taken from writings by W. S. Lewis

FEBRUARY 20, 1994

"HE KNOWETH THE WAY THAT I TAKE"

Job 23:1 Then Job answered and said,

2 Even today is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

6 Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.

7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:

10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

MEMORY VERSE: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job 23:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Although we cannot always feel God's presence or blessings, yet we know He is near, beholding us in the times of our trials, and that, if we will but cling unto Him and be faithful, we will come forth to a large place with victory, refined in our spirits as pure gold.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 2), "*My stroke is heavier than my groaning*": The Hebrew says, "My hand is heavy on my groaning." The meaning is obvious: His stroke and suffering is much heavier than what his groanings reveal. (V. 7), "*Delivered for ever from my judge*": from his judgment and condemnation. (V. 12), "*More than my necessary food*": The word "food" is an added word, and the Hebrew says simply, "More than my share I have treasured the words of His mouth." (V. 16), "*The Almighty troubleth me*": Adam Clarke gives this sense to the last two verses: "The Lord hath beaten down my strength, and my soul has been terrified by His fear. For it is not this deep night in which I am enveloped, nor the evils which I suffer, that have overwhelmed me; I sink only through the fear which the presence of His majesty inspires. This is my greatest affliction; sufferings, diseases, yea, death itself, are nothing in comparison of the terror which my soul feels in the presence of His tremendous holiness and justice." Clarke further observes: "Nothing can humble a godly mind so much as visions of the majesty of God. It is easy to see His goodness, lovingkindness and mercy; and from them we expect the greatest good. But to consider His holiness, and justice, the infinite righteousness of His nature, under the conviction that we have sinned, and broken the laws prescribed by His sovereign Majesty, and to feel ourselves brought into the presence of His judgment seat,—who can bear the thought? How without such a mediator and sacrifice as Jesus Christ is, can any human spirit come into the presence of this Judge? Those who can approach Him without fear, know little of His justice, and nothing of their sin. When we approach Him in prayer, should we not feel more reverence than we generally do?"

LESSON BACKGROUND

Both Zophar and Eliphaz have spoken again to Job previous to Job's expression of faith in our lesson today. Both uttered very good and profitable things, even though they are still missing the mark as far as Job is concerned. There are many good things found in their words which we will not cover in this series of lessons. But Job is still clinging to his confidence that God is going to bring him out. In our lesson today are words that have cheered the bosom of the faithful through the ages. It seems to be the way the Lord leads the earnest soul who is seeking to follow Him. He leads them through dark times when His presence seems to be so far withdrawn. The blessings that they so earnestly desire have vanished. Hanging on by sheer faith and determination, they utter these words from the heart: "He knoweth the way that I take." Oh, how great and powerful and Almighty He is, and how little and insignificant we are! God wants us to sense these things, but will reveal His tenderness, also, as we cleave with purpose of heart to Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Should we be careful about expressing our complaints?
2. Have we sinned if we express our complaints to God?
3. What do we accomplish when we voice our complaints?
4. Could we learn from the lesson of Job that it is best to trust and believe without complaint?
5. Are there times in the Christian life that God seems very far away?
6. Should we examine ourselves very closely in those times?
7. Should we fear and tremble before God?
8. How can we be sure that He will work it all out for our good?
9. Can we expect God to work for us if we do not esteem His Word as we should?
10. What is the thing that God desires to come of all our trials?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"God is one mind, and who can turn Him? Many such things are with Him, for He performeth the thing that His wisdom has appointed for me". God is working in the lives of His children today much like He worked in the life of Job. His mind is to perfect us and have us complete in His perfect will. But we are free moral agents, and He cannot accomplish His pleasure in us without our cooperation and consent. So He works gradually, little by little, slowly and surely, as we are able to handle it. He is patient and persistent. How such a mighty God can work so tenderly with tiny creatures is a wonder. As He worked with Job, He would also work in the life of every soul if they will give Him a chance. If we would exercise ourselves to be submissive to Him regardless of the cost or suffering, it will work so much better. Sometimes we resist His will when we are not aware of what we are doing. But if we will diligently pursue the course of obedience and look to His divine Spirit to assist us with His warmth and comfort and power, we will be successful. We need to love God's dealings with our souls. To think that the Almighty God would have anything to do with me, even if it is severe and hard! That ought to inspire us to warm up to Him and be just as submissive and cooperative as we can be. We can be cheered with the hope of what the outcome of our tests and trials will be. There is victory ahead and deliverance just as sure as God is real for the submissive soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our memory verse has been the abiding strength of most every child of God at one time or another. There are many stories told about it, and many illustrations drawn upon concerning it. Let me just give you a few of the things that have been said about the profit gained in trials.

From the inner parts of a certain tree in tropical Asia, there is taken what is called Aloes-wood. This wood is most fragrant when in the fire. If the inner man has a humble and thankful fellowship with Jesus, when the fires of affliction are kindled there will be a sweet testimony.

To temper metals, they must be subjected to great heat and cooled slowly, otherwise they would become brittle and easily broken. Paul had been well-tempered in the furnace of trial when able to say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. 4:11. Those easily discouraged have not been well-tempered. "It was good for me that I was afflicted." Psa. 119:71.

Beautiful figures and statuettes are made of a fine species of unglazed porcelain called "bisque." It is so called because it has twice passed through the furnace. A double portion of the fiery trial may only be fitting as the more perfectly to bear the image of Him who is the image of the invisible God.

Before colors can be fixed in glass, they must be subjected to a most powerful heat. The glass may then be broken into pieces, but the result of the fire can never perish. Some truths need to be burned into us, and for this purpose the furnace of affliction is frequently used. Lessons so learned are sure to abide, therefore glory in tribulation also. —Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 27, 1994

"WHERE SHALL WISDOM BE FOUND?"

Job 28:1 Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for the gold where they fine it.

2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.

3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

7 There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing.

11 He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

12 But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

13 Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

14 The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.

15 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

20 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

22 Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

27 Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

MEMORY VERSE: The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. Job 28:28.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The most valuable, the most important, the most beneficial thing for man to have in his life is wisdom, the fear and reverence for God, and understanding, the heartfelt determination to depart from evil.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 1), "*A vein for the silver*": a mine, or place where it is found and extracted. "*Gold where they fine it*": refine or purify. (V. 3), "*He*

setteth an end to darkness": The Hebrew renders this verse thus: He puts an end to darkness and to every extremity he searches out a stone of darkness and death-shade." He is no doubt still referring to mining and the quest for the minerals that man has found use for extracted from the bowels of the earth. (V. 16), "*Ophir*": a region to the east of Israel where much gold was found. (V. 28), "*Fear of the Lord*": the word fear means reverence. Webster defines reverence as profound respect mingled with love and awe.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Except for one short utterance of Bildad, Job has been speaking since our last lesson. He speaks about the ways of evil man and the greatness of God. He still maintains his decision to seek God's pleasure above everything else. He said in 27:3-6, "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. Til I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." He spoke about the hypocrite and the wicked and their sad end. We will have for our lesson today Job's treatise on wisdom and how we can have it. In all of Job's observations, this is the most basic need that he mentions concerning man. After our lesson he goes on in the next two chapters, speaking of the former days of his prosperity, and the change that has come since the hand of God has been upon him. He maintains his innocence, but states that if he has sinned or failed to please God he will be willing for God to weigh him in an even balance and mete out his just dues.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what reason did God place the valuable minerals in a place where it takes great effort to get them?
2. Are the spiritual treasures found easily and haphazardly?
3. What kind of people find the real path of wisdom?
4. Does man's pursuit of the material wealth in mining

hinder him from getting interested in the spiritual treasures?

5. Do we have to search out wisdom for ourselves?
6. Is wisdom within everyone's reach?
7. Is it the thing that most people seek after?
8. How is the fear of the Lord such an important thing?
9. How old should a person be to start seeking after wisdom and understanding?
10. Will a person find wisdom if they do not seek after it with all their heart?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Job mentions the various minerals and items of wealth that men mine and seek after. Down in the deep places of the earth men dig for ore that will produce the things for our economy. There is coal, petroleum, lead, zinc, copper, gold and other materials that are continually sought after. God put them there as natural resources for the use and betterment of man. But there are mines of much greater wealth that man needs to seek into. Our lesson today makes mention of the mining industry along with the hidden treasures of wisdom and understanding. Proverbs 2:4-5 says, "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Paul, in Colossians 2:3 speaks of the mystery of God and of Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He also in I Corinthians 2:7 spoke of the "...wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." So we see that wisdom as the fear of God is a deep hidden treasure, hidden from the vain and carnal spirit of man. It is the most valuable resource to be sought after, far beyond the precious metals and stones that men lust for and labor for. Thank the Lord, He has offered to us a mine of eternal wealth, in which we can dig and explore with pleasure! Oh, if young people could but get a vision of the realities of the Spirit of God! They would not be tempted so much with this vain carnal world. The fear of the Lord is the greatest wisdom you can ever find. Seek for it with all of your heart, young people, for there is no greater or better quest you can ever seek after. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Job was in such a position that he needed some wisdom to know how to act. He was brought low by the loss of all earthly possessions, and then he had three comforters who seemed set on sapping the last of his mental and spiritual capacities. Job was also in a real quandary as to know how to perceive the workings of God.

Where shall wisdom be found? Job enumerated the many places that man had been; down into the earth and into the depth of the sea. If Job would have been writing today, he could have added the moon. There have been products developed through the research of the space program, but our society certainly hasn't profited much in way of wisdom.

Where shall wisdom be found? Job's three comforters thought wisdom was to be found with them, but in studying the conversation of the comforters and Job, one finds that many of the things that they said were prompted by what Job said, and they gave it in a retaliatory way. God reproached them for their folly. (Job 42:8.) Job, didn't profess to have wisdom. He only desired it, and came to the understanding that God is the only source of wisdom, and concludes that in order for man to acquire wisdom he must fear God. God speaks through nature, Scripture, conscience and His Holy Spirit; and in each He shows the divinity and authority of God. By humbling ourselves to this revelation, we can learn how to conduct our lives in a wise way.

Where is the place of understanding? It is at Mount Calvary. It is wondrous the change that takes place in a person's outlook and attitude when he catches a glimpse of Christ on the cross. Indeed, it is a heavenly illumination. An understanding of eternal values is acquired, and the old life of sin is deserted.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 6, 1994

I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM

Job 33:13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:

20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:

24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth.

26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: and he will render unto man his righteousness.

27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not;

28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

MEMORY VERSE: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God was not willing to let man go his downward way to the pit of eternal destruction, so He has dealt with man to turn him from his wicked way, and has provided a ransom to atone for his sin in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 16), "*Sealeth their instruction*": So vividly does God deal in His power of conviction upon a soul that it is sealed upon the heart that man cannot escape from it. (V. 23), "*Interpreter*": The Hebrew means "mediator." (V. 24), "*Ransom*": the price to be paid to redeem or restore to liberty. The sin of mankind called for recompence and justice. This could only be provided savingly for man by means of an innocent victim who would bear man's punishment for his sins. This is what our blessed Saviour Jesus did for us in offering Himself on Calvary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After Job had finished his plea, the first three friends were at a loss to know what more to say. Then a young man by the name of Elihu stepped forward. He had not felt free to speak as the others were all older men. But when they were silent, and Job had finished his testimony, Elihu spoke. He was displeased with Job because he felt that Job had justified himself rather than God. He was displeased with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar because they had found no answer, yet they had condemned Job. Elihu was burning with desire to speak for he believed that the Spirit of God had inspired him. And he did speak many wonderful things, but it is very evident that in his wrath and zeal he failed to properly judge Job even as the others had failed. We are not going into an extensive

study of the speech of Elihu, but one part of his speech contains a treatise on God's dealings with fallen man in rescuing him from the pit of corruption by means of His severe chastisements and the provision of a ransom. This is our lesson for today. This precious thought is beautiful and very well expressed here. Let us consider it in study today, and let us rejoice in Christ as never before as we see what it meant for Him to offer Himself as a ransom to save us from eternal ruin.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible that the Almighty God is speaking to people today?
2. Why does man perceive it not?
3. Does God speak to people in dreams upon the bed at night?
4. What is God wanting to keep back and save man from?
5. Why does God want to withdraw man from his purpose?
6. What did God need as a means to rescue man from going down to the pit?
7. Has there been a ransom found to keep man from going down to the pit?
8. What is that ransom?
9. What should man say in his heart if he would want to partake of redemption?
10. What are the things that man can receive and enjoy in Christ's redemption?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a wonderful vision is presented in our lesson today of God reaching out to save the soul of man from going down into the pit of eternal destruction! God is calling, and God is speaking to souls even today. Though so many do not perceive the call of God and do not hear His voice, yet still He is calling. He seeks to awaken man out of his sleep of sin. He sends dreams. He lets calamities happen. He sends affliction and sickness. He works in many ways to withdraw man from his

erring purposes. He seeks to offset the tendency in man to pride. He causes his beauty to fade away, and his abilities to be frustrated. Man is so ignorant of God's designs and intentions. He seeks to drown the voice of conviction, not realizing what he could be enjoying if he would yield. Medicine and drugs today assuage the pains and troubles of affliction, and darkens man's heart all the more to the workings of God's Spirit. In the meantime God has provided a ransom. No one else could do it. They searched heaven, earth, and under the earth. No one was found worthy to be a redemptive price for the salvation of man. But a ransom was found. Jesus, the Son of God, came from heaven and took upon Him human form to take upon Himself our sins and sorrows, to bear them as a ransom so that we could be set free! Thank God, we do not have to go down to the pit of destruction! We can be saved from the eternal burnings of hell and separation from God. We can be born again, made a new creature in Christ Jesus. We can have fellowship with God in prayer and a holy life. We can be made aware that sin is an unprofitable thing; and we can turn to the Lord with all of our hearts, and be saved. We can be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and be enlightened with the light of the living.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Cyrus, King of Persia, after a famous victory, took prisoner a noble prince, with his wife and children. When they were brought into the tent of the victors, Cyrus said to the prince, "What will you give me to set you at liberty?" The prince replied, "I will give you half that I possess." Cyrus exclaimed, "And what will you give me if I release your children?" The prince answered, "I will give you all that I possess." Cyrus questioned him still further, saying, "But what will you give me if I set your wife at liberty?" Looking upon his wife he replied, "If you will restore my wife to liberty I will lay down my life." Cyrus, won by the true nobility of the sacrifice offered by that devoted man, immediately set them at liberty without any recompense whatsoever. That evening, when the prince and his wife were rejoicing together over their freedom, he said, "Did you not

think Cyrus a very handsome man?" His wife replied, "I did not notice him sufficiently well to tell." The prince exclaimed, "Why, where were your eyes?" She answered, "I had eyes only for him who said he would lay down his life for me."

Christ did lay down His life, but how sad it is that many people have their eyes on other things. As our lesson describes, God does many things to get people to behold the crucified and resurrected Saviour. The relationship of Christ and those who have believed upon Him is one of rejoicing, for their soul is saved from going down into the pit.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 13, 1994

GOD ANSWERS JOB OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND

Job 38:1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know its place?

16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

39:1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust,

15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear;

17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

MEMORY VERSE: O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Romans 11:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There are so many examples of God's majesty and wisdom in the realm of nature, and these things were set in motion and are sustained by no wisdom, art,

or strength of our own,—only by the wise and mighty jurisdiction of God do they have their function and order. Surely before such a great and wonderful God who orders and upholds these things we ought to be quiet, reverent, and submissive.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 3), *"I will demand of thee, and answer thou me"*: The Hebrew expression is: "I will question you, and you teach me." God wanted to silence Job's complaints and arguments. He wanted him to survey the wonders of the operation of the forces of weather and nature, and cause Job to be aware of how much goes on under the ordinance of God that he has no control or jurisdiction over whatsoever. (V. 7), *"The morning stars and sons of God"*: Looking back into the realms of eternity before the dawn of creation, before mortal man existed, God wants us to be aware of His eternity and riches of His dominion. (V. 8), *"Shut up the sea with doors"*: put a boundary on the ocean tides and raging waves, keeping it within its prescribed limits that it not overflow the land. (V. 16), *"Springs of the sea"*: the ocean depths that man can explore but dangerously. (V. 9), *"Unicorn"*: The Hebrew says a wild bull or ox. Adam Clarke believes it is the rhinoceros.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After Job and his three friends and Elihu had finished speaking, God spoke to Job. We are including in our lesson today snatches and the topics of God's address. I would refer the Bible student to the Commentary of Adam Clarke who has quite a lot of research and information concerning each one of these forces of nature. When we consider all the functions and activities that go on in nature alone, and being convinced that they are ordered, controlled and under the direct care and provision of God, it helps us to realize more of His greatness. Mortal man is not able to do the least of these things. Oh, how humble and defenseless we should be! —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the great wonders of God's creation have to do with Job's trouble?

2. Is it good for us today to keep in mind these things that God reminded Job about?
3. What did God say that makes you feel like you are looking into the eternal world before time?
4. Is it easy to take these things for granted that God mentioned, and be unaware of their value?
5. Does God maintain constant care and oversight of all these forces of nature mentioned here?
6. Can you think of anything Jesus said that shows the heavenly Father's care for His creation?
7. Why did God especially point out the ostrich and her faults?
8. Does all the various parts of God's handiwork in creation have lessons for us today?
9. What do you think God had in mind for Job in reminding him of these things?
10. Is it a marvel that a God of such greatness of works would want to take thought for us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

After all was said and expressed by Job and his associates, God spoke. It is surely a wise thing for us to seek counsel from the Lord's mouth today. Many people seem to try to talk their way through life. They have a lot to say about everything and everybody, and they are very free to let it out, and that is their privilege. But wise is the man who is not so quick or free to talk, but rather to wait on the Lord and hold his thoughts until afterward. As we shall see in our next lesson, God's words had a great effect in humbling Job, and causing him to feel that, even if he had not sinned, he still needed to repent. God points out things to Job, some of which are so common and everyday happenings, but are truly in the hand of God for their success and well being. Just think about the morning and the dayspring. The cycle and change from dark to daylight, from daylight to dark is something that we are all familiar with. But what if the hour arrived for daylight and daylight would not come? We would get very concerned about it, would we not? Think about the snow, the hail, the ice and the cold. We take it for granted. Aren't you glad that you do not have to harness a rhinoceros

or elephant? And what about that ostrich? God made special mention of this bird. He said he had deprived her of wisdom and understanding. God has special designs and care for each creature. He takes note of the sparrow's fall. How much more is He concerned about us! Let us be thankful for all that God has wrought, and not murmur or complain for any trouble that we have to endure for His sake. His ways are right, and let us cling to Him despite everything. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Man's extremity is God's opportunity.” It was when the words of Job and his friends were ended that the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. God's answer is always final. There is no appeal. The book of Job, like the books of the Old Testament, closes with the Theophany—the *appearance* of God. Here, as when He sent His Son, God's last plea was the manifestation of His own character. Although God answered Job *out of* the whirlwind, we need not infer that the *voice* was like a roaring, uprooting tempest, but that the arguments used had a whirlwind effect upon the spirit of Job, completely lifting him out of his present condition of mind into a better way of thinking.

“God's answer comes in the form of an avalanche of questions. There are fifty-seven in chapters 38 and 39 alone. Every question seems to bring with it a flash of self-blinding light. Each interrogation is in itself a revelation and an education to the wavering patriarch. All His ‘hast thous’ and ‘canst thous’ are evidences of what He *has done* and *can do*.”

—Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*



MARCH 20, 1994

MORE OF GOD'S ANSWER TO JOB

Job 40:1 Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said,

2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

3 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

5 Once I have spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

6 Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

12 Look on everyone that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

13 Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

41:1 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

3 Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?

9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

MEMORY VERSE: For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? Romans 11:34-35.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Since we are not able to fill God's position and do the things that He is doing every day, how can we feel that we can question Him, contend with Him, tell Him what to do, or have any reason to murmur? It is best for us to humble ourselves and count our blessings and be thankful that God is as good to us as He is.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 4), "*I am vile*": The Hebrew word means light, small, trifling. (V. 15), "*Behemoth*": No one is definite as to what particular animal this behemoth is. The Hebrew word seems to indicate cattle in general that are not flesh eating. Strong's Hebrew Dictionary believes the word is Egyptian and means a water-ox or hippopotamus. Clarke is of the strong opinion that it is the mammoth, the giant wooly elephant-like monster that is now extinct. Whatever it was, it was, according to the description a very large and powerful animal. Some skeletal remains of the mammoth have been 26 feet tall and 60 feet long! (V. 1), "*Leviathan*": As with the behemoth, there is no clear knowledge as to what particular creature the leviathan is. The Hebrew word means a wreathed animal. The opinions are varied, such as, dragon, sea-serpent, crocodile, and whale. But to find a creature that comes up to the description given here in Job is baffling. Clarke suggests that it might be some extinct sea-monster. But for us if we will use the application of this matter in our lesson, we can see that God is using this to show the helplessness of man to even begin to perform the things that God is doing constantly. Thus it dictates to us the impossibility of us counselling God and ordering Him around. It is much wiser for us to submit to Him and trust Him fully to work out His purpose which is ultimately for our good.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we conclude what God was saying to Job from the whirlwind. We find Job humbling down, confessing his vileness and laying his hand upon his mouth. God continues to bring to mind things of His works that Job knows (and we should know) can only be done by the power and wisdom of God Himself. He describes the two glant creatures that man does not trifle with, one a land animal and the other in the ocean. It is just further proof that we had better let God be God as He really is, and be humble and submissive to Him without reserve.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How is contending with the Almighty like trying to instruct Him?
2. Is there an inclination in man that would cause him to want to run God's business?
3. What did Job decide that he had best do?
4. When we refuse to submit to God and His word, what are we saying?
5. If man were given the power to do God's works, how well would he fare in so doing?
6. Instead of complaining and feeling that God is against us, how should we do?
7. There is one Man that God has given power of judgment to. Who is that?
8. There was one man to whom God gave great power and strength. How did he fare?
9. What is more important than power?
10. What does all of our human strength amount to before the great Almighty God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is something in human nature that is hard to bring under and yield to God. Even in righteous and godly people there can be a problem concerning this. We are free moral agents. Our will must continually be brought into subjection.

We must continually yield and submit to God. God never takes away from man this power of choice. God wants man to serve Him freely and willingly. He wants man to be happy with what He is doing. If man does God's will from a means of force and constraint while his heart is not in it, this is not satisfying to God. He wants willing service, free-will offerings. God can put the pressure on man up to a certain point. Beyond that point man has to decide and God will respect his decisions. As with Job, it is the challenge to everyone of us, to lay our hand upon our mouth and bow in meek contrition before God. We should be aware of our own wretched vileness, and fall helplessly at His feet and give all to Him. Life will be sweeter after submitting and yielding to His will. Sad to say, many people never come to that place of utter abandonment to the will of God. They hang on to their own ways and desires. They follow their own selfish and fleshly inclinations. Their hearts and lives show it, for there is not the joy and sweet soul rest that is found in the heart of the consecrated and yielded soul. This is something that everyman has to work out in his own life between him and God. We have the example of Job, and we have the great pattern set down to us by the Son of God Himself. Let us be wise and see to it that we fully submit to the will of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Job, while in the clutches of despair, had fallen victim to pity and misjudging of God's divine workings, and it was only after much time and discussion had taken place that God gave formal notice that He was aware of it. Patiently He had allowed Job and his three comforters to go on and on in their miscalculations of His workings and character. This is divine patience in the face of human provocation born out of ignorance. When after all Job's ideas had been expressed, it would not have been surprising if God had descended in a flame of fire and meted out severe punishment upon him. Instead of that, the Almighty dealt with him in way of reasoning and education.

What God gave to Job, He has given to the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ was a manifestation of God, not

for the purpose of condemnation, but to show man how small he is in comparison to God, and to expose the erroneous ideas that had been propagated concerning God and His salvation.

"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Job was certainly getting in a condition that God could remove the power of Satan in the situation and bring Job out. So it is also in the case of sinners. They must see the greatness of God in order to see their own low estate. This will take the starch out of them. It will cause them to be quiet before God, and then God can effect salvation. He can break the power of Satan and bring them out into a wealthy place. Humility and quietness are the continuing character of the Christian. It will keep the Christian from the presumptuous sin of professing to know the mind of God in all situations, and the overbearing mannerism of telling God how to operate.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 27, 1994

JOB'S REPENTANCE AND REWARD

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

2 I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

7 And it was so, after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.

10 And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.

15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

MEMORY VERSE: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Just as God brought Job out of his sorrows and afflictions, we can be assured that God will bring us through any trouble that may come if we will humble ourselves and submit fully to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 3). "*Hideeth counsel without knowledge*": conceals and covers up righteous counsel being ignorant of true knowledge and understanding. God asked this question at the start of his words out of the whirlwind. Man does this many times. He veils the counsel of the Lord by his own foolish words of pride and error. Job confesses here that he had done this. What human being has not done it? We have all been guilty of doing this. (V. 4), "*Hear, I beseech thee*": The Hebrew expression has a more humble and subdued sound: "Listen, I pray, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You will cause me to know." (V. 6), "*I abhor myself, and repent*": I despise myself, and whether I have done anything wrong or not, I still repent and humble myself before God. (V. 11), "*Earring of gold*": The Hebrew says simply, "a ring of gold". The Septuagint says four measures of uncoined gold. (V. 14), "*Jemina*": This name means warm and affectionate. "*Kezia*": the name means cassia, which is a herb, the bark of which is similar to cinnamon. "*Keren-happuch*": horn of color (beauty, or plenty). This word is similar to the word, Cornacopia, or horn of plenty.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we see Job humbling himself in repentance and the dust of self abasement. We see the displeasure of God against his three friends and their repentance. We see Job delivered of his sorrows and losses and given of God twice as much as he had before. We see the reward of humility and submission to God. We see God exalted as God and man humbled as man and blessed as faithful man. God works thus oftentimes with man. His purpose is to bring man to a wealthy place in Him. How happy and sweet were Job's years after that. God gave him back everything double, and blessed him with seven sons and three lovely daughters again. He lived a good many years and came to his grave as Eliphaz said he would in 5:26, in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." I remember going with Brother Fred Pruitt and others to help sing at a funeral in Missouri back in the early spring of 1957. Brother Pruitt read this scripture at the graveside service of the departed brother, S. W. Middleton,

of El Dorado Springs, Mo. He died at the ripe old age of 84. He had been saved for many years and was very zealous in obeying the commandments of God. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Job feel in his heart to repent in dust and ashes?
2. In what way did he see God with his eye?
3. Why was God's wrath kindled against Job's three friends?
4. Were they willing to obey the Lord?
5. Was Job willing to pray for his friends?
6. What did God do for Job after he had prayed for his friends?
7. Who came to see him, and what did they do?
8. What does the story of Job prove to you?
9. What is the most impressive lesson that you have observed in this study of Job?
10. What are some of the most impressive sayings found in this study of Job?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We now come to the final chapter in our study of the book of Job. One thing I have observed in this study is that God is so great and powerful that we need to humble ourselves before Him in submission, confidence, worship and devotion, for He is worthy of all we can give to Him. Our ideas and feelings are vanity, and we need to yield all to Him alone. Even in the hard and bitter sufferings that we meet on life's road, we need to praise Him and trust His faithfulness to bring us through with joys to spare. He is a faithful God. I was overwhelmed at all the things that He innumeraed to Job of what He was doing in the realm of creation. These are things far beyond our reach and power. But God performs them every day with graceful ease. Oh, what a mighty God we serve! I am encouraged to live for Him and trust Him with my life and everything! Let us remember again what James said about Him in James 5:11, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard

of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Oh, how blessed to live for God! It surely pays to be humble and submissive to Him, to never murmur or doubt His providence. He wants to better our lives and if He lets some adverse sorrow or affliction to prey upon us for awhile, He has a reason or He would not have permitted it. Instead of being under a strain and trying to pray the thing away, it would be best to humble ourselves in true submission to Him, trust Him all the way, and let Him work out His sovereign will in our lives. There will be times when you will call to remembrance the lessons of Job and it will be a fruitful tree for you to partake of. And as we are faithful to God in our trials and battles, we can be a fruitful tree for others, also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many times it is the knowledge that "all things work together for good to them that love God..." which gives us hope to continue on. Sometimes it seems that life isn't worth the problems. There are times that being "killed all the day long" or "being accounted as sheep for the slaughter" or being tried of Satan has absolutely no glamor in it.

There is a saying that "Life is what you make it," which at times we cling to. There is some validity to this, but there is a stopping point of mind over matter. It doesn't matter how much people wish it differently, they are at times, like Job, brought face to face with the reality of trials. Sometimes, all our efforts to make life pleasant are futile.

The conclusion that this leads us to is that we must go through trials, hold our integrity with God, and find contentment in the presence of God. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psa. 16:11. There are no stipulations on this verse. There are no qualifications of what our earthly circumstances must be. There may be times that Satan's power is so strong in a situation that we can not feel God's presence, but God will not forsake His children, and His presence and blessings will not be long withheld.

—Wayne Murphey

Victory

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." (II Cor. 2:14.)

When you are forgotten or neglected or purposely set at naught, and you smile inwardly, glorying in the insult or oversight—that is victory.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your taste offended, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you take it all in patient loving silence—that is victory.

When you are content with any food, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption by the will of God—that is victory.

When you can lovingly and patiently deal with any disorder, any irregularity, any unpunctuality or any annoyance—that is victory.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation or to record your own good works or to itch after commendation; when you can truly love to be unknown—that is victory.

When you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it as Jesus endured it—that is victory.

When like Paul, you can throw all your suffering on Jesus, thus converting it into a means of knowing His overcoming grace, and can say with a surrendered heart, "Most gladly therefore do I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake"—that is victory. (See II Cor. 12:7-10.)

When death and life are both alike to you through Christ, and to do His perfect will, you delight no more in one than the other—that is victory; for through Him you may be able to say, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." (Phil. 1:20.)

The perfect victory is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" and thus to triumph over self. (Rom. 13:14.) "In all these

things we are more than conquerors through him that
loved us." Rom. 8:37.

—Selected

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