

11a JOB

This is Friday the 7th of July 2006. We continue tonight our study in the book of Job. Let's take a moment as we begin to exercise our priesthood and ensure that God the Holy Spirit will be able to minister the truth of God's words to our hearts.

Shall we pray? Father, we know that the things that are accomplished in this life that last and that have eternal value are not accomplished in human might or by human strength but by your Spirit. We are grateful for the gift of your Spirit. We are grateful that He leads us into all truth, that He has sealed us unto the day of redemption, that He has regenerated us, that He has gifted us, that He has baptized us into the body of Christ.

We thank you that that confidence that comes from knowing that we are eternally yours and that we have potential gives us hope. And we pray that as we study your word this evening in the book of Job that we will find in it the truth that will strengthen us and guide us and equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. The book of Job has a very definite structure. It is much like other poems that you can think of.

The threefold dialogue cycle has been reviewed time and again and we've seen that within each of those cycles there are three exchanges. A little bit of an aberration at the end of the third because we're not going to hear from Zophar the last time. But we are right between the conclusion of the first dialogue cycle and the beginning of the second.

And Job is speaking. This is Job chapters 12 through 14. Each of the three friends has spoken once.

Eliphaz spoke. Bildad spoke. Zophar spoke.

Each of them had a particular perspective. And if you think about this, it reminds me of the original... Don't laugh. Keep a straight face.

It reminds me of the original Star Trek. In that, when Gene Roddenberry conceived that television show, he basically wanted to explore the human psyche. And so the characters, believe it or not, in the original Star Trek, you have Dr. Spock, who is the Vulcan logical guy.

You have Dr. McCoy who is the emotional doctor. Well, these were conceived as parts of sort of the human inner dialogue. We have a rational part of our soul.

We have an emotional part of our soul. We have a decision-making part of our soul. And so Gene Roddenberry had the idea, wouldn't it be great to split those out into characters and let them have dialogue in the show? And so logic has its limitations.

Kirk is off fighting a Zorkon somewhere. And so Spock has to be the captain. But his logic fails.

He doesn't have the inspiration. He doesn't have the instinct. He doesn't have the intuition.

And here's Dr. McCoy. And he's the sensitive and the caring and the compassionate part. But compassionate all by itself, I mean, he goes astray.

And you have Captain Kirk who makes the decisions. And he takes responsibility. And he draws upon all of these different things.

And he gets logic from Spock. He gets the compassion and intuition and sensitivity from McCoy. And to a lesser extent, the other characters who are on the bridge there sort of represent different parts of the human soul.

And it was a brilliantly conceived idea. And it's one of the reasons that that program and all of its aftermath has endured. It was a great formula because you can explore the way the human soul does its thing.

Well, this is not unlike what's going on in the book of Job. Because if you think about Job as an individual who encounters something that's not immediately understandable. He can't figure out why life has happened the way it has happened.

And he doesn't just have a bumper sticker on the back of one of his ox carts that just says, Well, you know, things in life happen. He's trying to figure it out. It's not predictable.

It doesn't conform to expectation. And he's understandably confused. Well, the friends who come and sit for seven days, many times when an unexpected event or circumstance arises in our life, we're sort of in a state of shock.

We're numb. We can't process it. We can't digest it.

And the silence of those friends initially sort of reflects that. And then after a week, Job speaks and he says, Why am I still here? Why did God allow me to be born in the first place? I don't see what the point is if this is how life is going to turn out. And then each of these friends speaks.

You begin with Eliphaz. He's the eldest. He's the one with the experience.

And he starts out saying, Well, you know, it's understandable that you're confused. But here's the wisdom. Remember, he's from Teman.

Teman in Edom is famous for its wisdom. This is kind of the first place we look. We try to draw on our experience and what people have said and what we know.

We read a book. We watch a program. Have you ever been trying to work through some kind of a problem and then suddenly somebody will mention it on a program or you'll see some article in a

magazine or on the web? You go to the barbershop.

I've gone to the barbershop or gone to the doctor's office. There'll be magazines out there and you'll be flipping through and they'll say, Oh, here's this, that, and the other. And you say, Wait a minute.

I've got a situation like that. And you read avidly trying to see if somebody's got some insight, if somebody has some solution, something that will bear on the problem. Well, this is Eliphaz.

So I'm sure Job listened very attentively when Eliphaz from Teman, who's got the wisdom of the ages, he's the old gray beard, he's going to speak. And Job listens eagerly. And he's on the edge of the ash heap.

He's not on the edge of his seat. He's sitting in the ash heap. And he listens attentively.

And Eliphaz rambles on for a couple of chapters there. And Job says, Wait a minute. Nothing you said helps me.

So he responds. And he says, That wasn't much help. Well, then here comes Bildad.

And Bildad says, Look, here's tradition. Here's what we've always gone by. This is the way we've always done it.

How many times have you ever gone to a new job or gone into a new situation and you say, Why are we doing this? And somebody says, We've always done it that way. But look, this is how it works. Why question the status quo? This is the way it is.

Just do it this way. This is the tradition of the fathers. Ask the old gray heads.

They'll tell you. This is what works. And a lot of times people won't really brook any argument.

And so sometimes when we get thrown for a loop or we get challenged by something, we think, Well, what have I done in the past? What have other people done? You ask your parents if they're still around. You look around and say, What do people typically do in this situation? If I've got a spreading wet spot in my ceiling, what do I do? Where do I look? Should I shut the water off? Should I go up in the attic? Should I call a plumber? Should I call a ceiling man? What should I do? And we ask around. Has somebody had this experience? Well, that's sort of the Bill Dadd approach.

And Zofar is the guy that has the snap, knee-jerk response. See the hill, take the hill. See the problem, fix the problem.

Look, just do this. Common sense. Just use your common sense.

Well, all of these are good ideas in a lot of standard situations. There are a lot of places where

that's how we get by. We draw on wisdom.

We draw on experience. We draw on tradition and the knowledge of others. We draw on our God-given common sense.

But there are times when God puts us in a situation where none of those things is sufficient. Now, let me ask you. We are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know that life has a meaning and purpose beyond the material, beyond what you see around you. We know this. We know that we are a spiritual creation.

We know that there are spiritual issues. Just think for a minute. Should life be negotiable? Should we be able to navigate and negotiate the obstacles purely on wisdom, tradition, and common sense? When would we ever look beyond the mundane? When would we ever look beyond the immediate? When would we ever raise our gaze above cause and effect in this life? Hey, I want a happy life.

I want great kids. I want a good job. I want a nice house.

I want a decent car. I want stuff that works and doesn't break. I want to kind of get through the day and have a good time.

This is pretty much the mundane expectation. You've seen this thing, he who dies with the most toys wins. Well, that's *reductio ad absurdum*.

That's pushing it to an extreme absurd limit of this idea. You just want to succeed in life. Everybody wants to be happy.

Remember the guy that does all the sounds with his voice? Don't worry, be happy. That's all he does. It's just don't worry, be happy.

That's pretty much what everybody wants. Well, if God never threw anything in our path beyond what you can negotiate with wisdom, with experience, and with common sense, we would be living in the little rat maze just figuring out, well, now is it a left turn or a right turn to get to the cheese? Which way do I go? And we would never look up and realize that there's a scientist and there's a laboratory and there are bigger issues than how do I get to the cheese? Well, this is, in a nutshell, what's going on in Job. And the dialogue between Job, who is the Captain Kirk, he's the decision maker, he's the guy that's got to figure things out, what is really going on? And then you have wisdom and you have experience and you have common sense speaking, speaking their peace.

And each time they speak their peace, Job says, this falls short, this is not enough. Now, I know that we have reviewed the first dialogue cycle several times, but this is like the book of Genesis. The first time through when each of these men speaks, when you figure out what they are saying,

the rest of the book of Job falls into place like a well-ironed shirt into a suitcase.

It just falls right down and lays flat. So I want to just briefly, and this is going to be brief, so pay attention. We're going to briefly revisit because I want to point out one key feature that we've not really talked about in those remarks.

And when we move tonight into the second dialogue cycle, we're going to see the confirmation. So bear with me. I know I've gone back like two or three times already.

But everything, the key to the book of Job, after you understand chapters one and two, the key to what's going on in Job's soul is in this first dialogue cycle. The next eight chapters, nine chapters, say it all. So Job basically, after the Satan dialogue, after the bad things happen, Job says, why did God let me live? What is the point of life? Because what I was expecting and what I had sort of got, I got into kind of a comfortable rut here.

Everything was working. I was a big man on campus. I had the stuff.

People were coming to me. I was helping them. I had sons.

I had it made. I had everything nailed. And hopefully you've had times in your life, as I have, where you think, boy, you know, I finally got my wheels on the track.

I've gotten some momentum. Everything is going like it should. Things are kind of all wired together, and it's rolling along great.

But as you know, entropy, second law of thermodynamics, just about the time you think everything's, why then you get to an unfinished section of track where somebody has come and absconded with the rails, and all of a sudden it's all flying ties and gravel, and your stuff is in the ditch, and your cargo has been overturned, and you say, I did not see that coming. And you question, and you say, well, if I can't have a smooth course, if this is going to happen, when I didn't ask for it, I didn't do anything to deserve it, then what is the point of life? Why am I here? Well, that was Job's initial question. Eliphaz responds in chapters 4 and 5, and what does he say? Well, you're off the rails, Job.

You used to be the freight car delivering the stuff to all the people, but now you're off. But when you just scan over chapters 4 and 5, when Eliphaz is talking, specifically what we want to look at tonight in this quick review is, what is Eliphaz's view of God? We know what his view of Job is. We've gone over that a couple of times.

Job, you screwed up. You've helped others. Well, now it's your turn.

What goes around comes around. You've been on top, now you're on the bottom. But what we want to look at tonight in each of the three French responses, what is the view of God? This is absolutely the key, and we're going to be able to ride a smooth train through the rest of the book

when we see this in these dialogues.

So look at chapter 4. He goes through and he's talking about Job in the first eight verses there. It's all about Job. You've done this.

You've done that. The integrity of your ways is your hope. Whoever perished being innocent, wherever the upright ever cut off.

Verse 8, Even as I have seen those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same, by the blast of God they perish, by the breath of his anger they are consumed. This is the first time Eliphaz mentions God specifically. What does he say? People that screw up get hammered.

God is justice. You do wrong, you get hammered. The lions have their teeth broken.

Cubs are scattered. Spirit comes and speaks to me. When God looks, he always finds the flaw.

That's what the Spirit whispers in his ear. God is pure and just, and when he looks at people, he's going to see the flaw, and he's going to hammer them for it. That's Eliphaz in chapter 4, right? They die, they perish.

In chapter 5, Who are you going to turn to? I've seen the foolish take root, but sooner or later they get their comeuppance. So in verse 8 he says, As for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause. He does these great and unsearchable things, marvelous things without number.

He gives rain, he sends water, he sets on high those who are lowly, those who mourn are lifted to safety. The only way you're going to coexist with God is to recognize his justice, go to him, confess your sin, because God is the force that hammers sin. That's pretty much everything Eliphaz says in his dialogue.

Happy is the man whom God corrects. God is the corrector. He is the just one.

And that's Eliphaz's view. What was Job's response to that in chapter 6 and chapter 7? He says, You are the empty caravan. You're not bringing me what I need.

Now think about your human soul. You hit a problem, you hit an issue. And a lot of times this is not just an immediate thing like, oh, my hot water tank rusted out and I've got water on my floor.

This is more like, I've got an ongoing problem. Usually this is people testing, sometimes it's financial testing, sometimes it's job testing. But we have a situation that endures and goes on for a period of time.

And the first thing we do is we try to apply wisdom to it. Wisdom says, do a bad thing, bad things happen. And so we look and we say, well, what did I do to deserve this? And we rack our brain and we say, well, that doesn't make any sense.

I don't really think I've done anything to deserve this. And I remember, and this is Job's response. Job, you could imagine if this was all an internal dialogue, it would be pretty tough to write the book, wouldn't it? But with Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar speaking these things as points of view, it's like Star Trek.

It's like the conversations on the bridge. So Job comes back and he says, the arrows have sunk into my chest, the poison, I've got this problem, but I haven't done anything wrong. Your answer doesn't fit my situation.

I have not brought this on my own head. I didn't screw up and fail to claim God's grace. And you ought to be sympathetic and not picking on me.

Right words are forceful, but your arguing isn't doing anything. Remember verse 25 of Job chapter 6? Right words are forceful, but what does your arguing prove? Are you going to rebuke me? You're overwhelming the fatherless and you're undermining your friend. Verse 29, my righteousness still stands.

Your answer doesn't fit. So the wisdom from T-man doesn't help Job out. He goes on in chapter 7 and he says, basically, in a nutshell, life is short, mine has become very miserable, I have no comfort.

And in verses 20 and 21, the summation of chapter 7 in Job is, he's talking to God and he says, if I have sinned, then why didn't you pardon my iniquity and take away my transgression? Pardon me, you know, the old, I know how to fix that. I know how to say, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be white.

This isn't it. So, the Eliphaz view, the wisdom view is, well, God is a God of justice. Job says, that doesn't fit.

Then you get to Bildad in chapter 8. What is Bildad's argument? What's his view? Tradition, the traditional view of God is, wait a minute, God's not unfair. God doesn't do the unfair thing. You say what he's done is unfair? Your life's a misery and you can't figure out why? Tradition says, that's not the God that we know.

God doesn't subvert judgment. Those who forget God are the ones that wither and perish. God will not cast away the blameless.

God will not uphold evildoers. That's handed down from the fathers. Ask them and they will tell you.

Job says, well, look, experience, tradition, that's not helping me either. And so he responds to Bildad in chapters 9 and 10. But just compare Eliphaz and Bildad now in their view of God.

It's really a unidimensional, impersonal, pachinko machine kind of a God. Put in the quarter and you'll get the coke. Do what you're supposed to do and you'll get the right response.

It's impersonal. Job speaks to God. He says, Lord, I don't understand.

Lord, I wish you could give me an answer. To Job, God is personal and individual and is a thinking, sentient being. And Job tries to reason with God and to argue with God and to appeal to God.

So, Eliphaz, do right, you get right. Bildad, do right, you get right. And Job comes back.

Look at chapter 9 and 10. He says, look, you're right. In chapter 9 he says, God is indeed mighty.

And the first thing he says is, if you tried to have a dialogue with God, you couldn't answer him one time in a thousand. But immediately, this is talking about a person. To Eliphaz and to Bildad, God is more of a force for Job.

More of a righteousness wall that you bounce a tennis ball. You hit the tennis ball the right way and it's going to bounce back the right way. To Job, he says, God is someone you reason with.

And granted, if you tried to talk to him, you couldn't answer him one time in a thousand. He's wise in heart and mighty in strength. Impersonal forces are not wise and mighty.

He removes the mountains and they do not know when he overturns them in his anger. And when Job starts talking about God, you get this bigger and bigger view of God. He's huge.

He's bigger than just righteousness. He's bigger than just, oh, look at what usually happens under his watch care. The more you read this and the more you meditate on it, you see that to Job, God is a person.

To Eliphaz and to Bildad, and we're going to see to Zophar, God is more of something to duck under and make sure you don't bump your head on him. He commands the sun and it does not rise. Look at the immensity of God in Job's mind.

Job starts talking about the sun and the stars and the sea and these huge things that are under God's control. Not just, here's how man can get by without having bad results. He does great things in verse 10.

Past finding out, wonders without number. If he goes by me, I do not see him. If he moves past, I do not perceive him.

If he takes away, who can hinder him? Who can say to him, what are you doing? Job is always talking about this idea of speaking with God, conversing with God. A man can talk to God. To Eliphaz and to Bildad, well, the only talking you do to God is to say, I've sinned, please stop

hammering me and bless me again.

That's the only dialogue there is. Job is constantly saying, how can I answer him? Verse 14, how can I choose my words to reason with him? Though I were righteous, I could not answer him. I would beg mercy of my judge if I called and he answered me.

And Job's real suffering in the book of Job is, notice he's not talking about, where did my children go? Where did my stuff go? He's saying, where did my relationship go? Where is the personal interaction, the personal fellowship, the personal converse that I used to have with God? He will not allow me to catch my breath. He fills me with bitterness and so on. I am blameless, verse 21, yet I do not know myself.

I despise my life. It seems to me that he destroys the blameless and the wicked. The earth is given into the hands of the wicked.

He covers the face of the judges. If it is not he, who else can it be? My life is short. He goes back to this idea.

You gave me life and favor. You preserved my spirit. In verses 8-12 of chapter 10, if I sin, woe to me, but even if I am righteous, I am full of disgrace and misery, so why am I still alive? And so Job is confused.

It's like a curtain has fallen between him and God. Does the scripture talk about this? What's our memory verse? The Lord's arm is not shortened that he cannot save. Neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear.

Your iniquities have separated you from your God. Your sins have hit his face. And this is the traditional understanding.

But Job says, I don't have any iniquity. Of course, I know that even on my best day, I couldn't stand before God, but I don't understand why this curtain has fallen between me and God, and he's not speaking. I don't hear from him anymore.

What's the matter? Well, this is the point at which Job says in chapter 10, and this is such an important section, and we have not talked about this before, so pay attention. I skipped this on purpose. But chapter 10, verse 4, Job says to God, he's saying, I will say to God, do not condemn me.

Show me why you contend with me. Does it seem good to you that you should oppress, that you should despise the work of your hands and smile on the counsel of the wicked? Look at verse 4. Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a man sees the personhood, the personality of God? We talked about this in John chapter 1 on Sunday morning. It is important.

We talked about this on Tuesday night, denying the personhood of Christ, that He is

undiminished deity and true humanity, because this is the essential of Jesus Christ, is that God became flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. In Job's day, this hasn't happened.

And Job says, do you have eyes of flesh that you can see like a man? Do you understand what it's like to be a man? Are your days like the days of a mortal man? Are your years like the days of a mighty man that you should seek for my iniquity and search out my sin? Do you know what it's like to be a man? Men would do this to me. A man would bear a grudge. A man might be jealous of me for no cause and come after me and seek my harm.

Someone who wanted the business that I got, who wanted the goods from a caravan that I purchased. I was more prosperous. I was willing to pay more.

I got those things. And this man is jealous. He's angry.

He's envious. He looks with the eyes of a man. He thinks with the heart of a man.

He would do something that I didn't deserve. But I don't understand why you're doing this, O God. But in prospect, when you think about the Lord Jesus Christ coming, He was tested in all points like as we are.

He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant. He has experienced our pain. He has experienced our fatigue.

Now that the Lord Jesus had come. But this is all in prospect. Job is thinking about the personhood of God.

What kind of person does this? What has happened to the relationship I had with the person of God? Eliphaz does not address the relationship of Job to God. It's do right and you get right. Same thing with Bildad.

And so Job speaks this. He says, Your hands made me and fashioned me, yet you would destroy me. Verse 9, Remember, I pray, that you have made me.

Will you turn me into dust again? You made me out of clay. Is this what you're doing? I don't understand why you're treating me this way. Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? Great graphic picture of the formation of the human body in the womb.

Liquids and things come in and the human body just forms into the ancient mind. Mom's eating and drinking and here this body forms inside her and is born. He says, You poured me like milk and stirred everything together and I just sort of formed like cheese does.

Hard things came out of soft things and here I am. You clothed me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews. Notice in verse 11, just in passing, that in Job's view, man is not his body.

Man is clothed with his body. Even in ancient times, before Moses ever wrote Genesis, Job understood that man is something ineffable and invisible and essential. A soul and a spirit that is clothed with skin and flesh, bones and sinews.

He says, You clothed me. Me, myself and I exist inside this body of flesh. What is the message of modern secularism and humanism and modern science and biology? You are the product of your DNA and your experiences since you were born.

You are your flesh. There's nothing beyond. You're just a very complex machine.

And Job, thousands of years before modern science, said, No, I am something that exists in the invisible world that is clothed with the physical, clothed with the material. I, myself, am an invisible, ineffable, spiritual creature. You have granted me life and favor and your care has preserved my spirit.

Job's words are all about who God is as a person, as a heavenly creator, as a heavenly father, if you will. These things you have in your heart. Did Eliphaz or Bildad say anything about the heart of God? Or the care of God? It's the justice of God.

It's the blessing of God or the cursing of God. There's just this one facet that presents toward man. And you've got to please God and then everything's fine.

He says again, If I sin, you mark me and you will not acquit me of my iniquity. In verse 14, If I am wicked, woe to me. Even if I am righteous, I can't lift up my head.

I'm full of disgrace. Job understands what we call original sin. I am conceited in iniquity, born in sin on my best day.

I'm not worthy to stand before God. I understand that, Job says. But this has never stood in the way before.

This didn't keep me from having a relationship and fellowship and a blessed time of devotion and meditation and worship with God. This has never been an obstacle before. You renew your witnesses now against me.

You increase your indignation toward me. Changes in war are ever with me. Why then am I here? Job says, If I can't have that personal relationship with God, then there's no point to my life.

Why does God sustain my life if He's not going to talk to me? If He's not going to shine His presence on me? If He's not going to reveal His heart to me, then why am I here? It would be better if I'd perish and know I had seen me. My days are few. Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort before I go to the land of darkness and the shadow of death.

Well, Zophar's response in chapter 11 was, you're blowing a bunch of smoke. What is this stuff

about God and His heart? You've said my doctrine is pure and I'm clean. God needs to speak and open His lips and show you the secrets of wisdom.

Then you would have your prudence doubled in verse 6. And Zophar says the very same thing in a different way that Eliphaz and Bildad have said. He says, look, God does not exact from you as much as your iniquity deserves. And right away, it's Job before God in the light of his iniquity.

When you have iniquity, God's going to come down on you. Can you search out the deep things of God? Why are you trying to plumb the depths of God? What is the practical common sense thing? If you're getting cursed, you've done something wrong, it's all about the justice of God. Just get the justice thing fixed and be on your merry way.

Who are you to try to understand the deep things of God? Now, I have heard this spoken to me by innumerable individuals, particularly from the Reformed tradition. You take too much on yourself, oh man. Don't you know the Scripture says God is inscrutable in His ways or past finding out? Why are you trying to understand God's decrees? Why are you trying to figure out? You shouldn't be asking why if from our theological and traditional point of view, God decreed certain ones to be saved.

Certain ones are vessels of honor and others are vessels of wrath. And you say, well, why would God do that? That doesn't seem like the kind of person that God is revealed in Scripture. Who are you to answer back to God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why have you made me thus? Don't ask why didn't God save everyone or why does God only decree some for salvation? You should be asking, if you're going to ask any question, why did God save anyone? Just be thankful that you're one of the elect and shut up and stop inquiring into the character and the person of God.

You're arrogant. It says God is higher and greater. Just content yourself with understanding the mechanics of getting through this life and don't inquire into the person and the character of God.

This is essentially what Reformed theology, what Calvinism will tell the believer. And this is Zophar to a T. If he passes by in prisons and gathers to judgment, who can hinder him? It's all about justice. It's all about retribution.

Empty-headed man, if you prepared your heart, stretched out your hand and confessed your iniquity, you could lift up your face without spot. You could be steadfast. It's black and white.

It's the man who confesses, God smiles. That's all there is. The eyes of the wicked will fail.

They will not escape. Their hope is going to result in loss of life. So this is mechanical, limited, unifaceted, sort of a dumbed down, don't inquire into God, just figure out a way to get by.

That's the first dialogue cycle. And Job in his heart is saying, I want to understand. I want God to speak to me.

I want to speak to God. I want to make a case. He's a person and I want to understand Him.

This is how we ought to be. So many believers today, so much of Christianity today is mechanical. Give me the wisdom.

Give me the fruit of experience. Give me the seminar. Give me the practical steps to make this life work out under the sun.

If I do the right thing, my life will turn out fine. Job's conception of God is bigger and grander. He doesn't understand what's going on, but he says, I know that God is bigger than this.

I know that there's more going on than just what you're telling me. Your caravan is coming by and it's empty. Well, so when Job answers after Zophar speaks, this is where we pick out where we are now.

We pick up where we are now in chapter 12. And we've already covered chapter 12 in detail. And once again, Job talks about the person of God.

God is bigger than what you're telling me. With Him, verse 16, are strength and prudence. The deceived and the deceiver are His.

He makes fools of the judges. He loosens the bonds of kings. He binds their waist with a belt.

He leads princes away. Look at all of the personal subjects. Don't even look at... If you've got a Bible that's laid out in poetry like mine, and you look at chapter 12, start at verse 13.

Him. He. He.

He. And look all the way down that left-hand column. Look at the personal pronouns referring to God.

All the way down. God is a person to Job, not a force. You cannot find a verse in the entire rest of that chapter where he's not talking about God with personal pronouns.

Then in chapter 13, he says, I know everything that you're talking about, your wisdom, your experience, your common sense, but I, verse 3, would speak to the Almighty. I want to talk to the person that is God. He is real.

He is immediate. He is engaged. He is a thinking, sentient, conversing God.

Not just a backboard that my basketball bounces off of if I throw it at the right angle. I desire to reason with God. And we saw him speak to God, beginning in verse 13.

And verse 20, I will not hide myself from you. Withdraw your hand far from me. Let not the dread

of you make me afraid.

And he goes on in chapter 14 to talk about the brevity of life. Every time Job has come back to the brevity of life, every time Job has spoken, he says, you know, life is short. And I don't see the point of mine.

I'm only here for a brief time. And if my relationship with you, O God, is over, if you're not going to smile on me anymore, if you're not going to communicate with me anymore, if we're not going to have fellowship anymore, there is no point to my life. And this is the root of Job's misery.

More so than his losses. More so than his physical pain. It is the loss of his spiritual conduit.

His spiritual understanding. His spiritual fellowship and relationship with God. That's what he's mourning.

That's the root of his misery. And that's what he has talked about in 12 through 14. And so he says in verse 13 of chapter 14, Hide me in the grave.

Conceal me until your wrath has passed. I wish you weren't angry with me anymore. Have you ever had this in a personal relationship with someone you love? And you screw up, and there is a rift, and there is a distance.

And you say, Boy, I wish we were back to that communion. I wish we were back to that closeness. I wish I hadn't done what I've done to mess this up.

I wish I could take back words. I wish I could unring the bell. I wish I could do something differently than I've done because I miss that confidence and trust and communion.

And this is what Job says. He says, I don't know what happened to drop this curtain between me and you, O Lord, but I wish you would just send me to the grave until my change comes, when I know I will be qualified to stand in your presence. All the days of my hard service, verse 14, I will wait until my change comes, and you call and I will answer you, and you will once again desire the work of your hands.

You'll take me back into that place of light and understanding. And Job says, Life is not worth living until I get to that place. Well, that's the end of the first dialogue cycle in the introduction to the second.

So now, with this in mind, does Eliphaz advance? Does he catch what Job is saying? Is he going to conceive of God the way Job does? Watch for it now in chapter 15. Eliphaz the Temanite. Why does it introduce him as Eliphaz the Temanite? This is once again the wisdom.

This is the gray beard man from the mountain. This is the old man who knows it all. Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge and fill himself with the east wind? Should he reason

with unprofitable talk, speeches by which he can do no good? You cast off fear and restrain prayer before God, for your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty.

Your own mouth condemns you and not I. Your own lips testify against you. You haven't figured out that the problem is you. You're just not doing the thing.

You're putting slugs in the machine and you're surprised that you're not getting cokes out. Come on, Job. It's all you.

You've screwed up. You won't admit it. It's your pride.

Are you the first man who was born? Were you made before the hills? Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? All of these guys sort of accuse each other. Job has said earlier, well, I guess all wisdom is going to die when you die. You've got all the wisdom sealed up.

Well, now Eliphaz is turning that back around. And it kind of stung him. Because, you know, he's the old gray beard.

He's renowned for his wisdom. And Job has said, you don't know what you're talking about here, Eliphaz. You're not helping me.

You're the empty caravan. Well, Eliphaz's pride is stung. And he says, oh, I guess you're wiser than me now.

You've got it all figured out. You understand God and I don't. So things are getting a little ugly here.

Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not in us? Both the gray haired and the aged are among us, verse 10, much older than your father. You get the idea that Job is sort of middle-aged here from these men's point of view. And Eliphaz is the old gray beard.

He says, look, I'm older than your daddy, boy. What are you trying to tell me? Are the consolations of God too small for you and the words spoken gently with you? Remember, Eliphaz says, you know, I was the tactful one. I started out nice.

And you insulted me. Why does your heart carry you away? What do your eyes wink at that you turn your spirit against God and let such words go out of your mouth? That you won't just fess up that I hit the nail on the head. I was right.

And you're not admitting it. What is man that he could be pure? He who is born of a woman that he could be righteous? If God puts no trust in His and cross out saints, this is holy ones. He's talking about the angels.

And the heavens are not pure in His sight. Once again, angels. These are dystics here.

How much less man who is abominable and filthy who drinks iniquity like water. What do you think, Job? You're better than the rest of us? Look, you screwed up. This is what wisdom teaches you.

I will tell you, hear me, what I have seen I will declare, what wise men have told, not hiding anything received from the fathers. To whom alone the land was given and no one even passed among them. The wicked man writhes with pain all his days.

Same old song, second verse. A little bit louder and a little bit worse. That's what Eliphaz is giving him here.

He's repeating what he said the first time, stronger and with less icing. Less of a sugar coating on the bitter pill. Job, look, you screwed up.

Get over it. Swallow your pride. Wisdom says, if you're not being blessed and you're experiencing cursing, you have sinned.

Everybody sins. It happens to everybody. You think you're different? You think you're better? You think we don't know? You think the wise people don't know better? Come on, Job.

Give it up. This is Eliphaz's second verse. Well, we need to pause here and take our break.

We're going to come back and see Job's response in chapters 16 and 17 to this second iteration of essentially the same message. God is just the force. We'll be right back.