

## 13b JOB

Let's resume our study now in Job chapter 24. I actually announced 24 in our first lesson and actually spent all my time in 23, but we are really in 24 now. Job having made this big point, and remember, don't forget, what did I ask you to try to do at the beginning of the last session? If there's one point you remember, what is it? Job may not know where God is or what God is up to, but God knows what Job is up to, and Job has confidence that he'll come out like gold.

That's our goal. We don't have to figure out what God is up to. People say, why, God? The whole thing, the little plaque, whenever I start thinking about this, the little footsteps plaque comes in, you know, little footsteps on the beach, and oh, Lord, I see two sets of footsteps, and now here I only see one.

You left me all alone, and God says, no, that's when I carried you. You know, the inspirational thing. And then people say, oh, I see, now I understand something.

We don't have to understand everything. We make a reasonable effort. Job looked in all four directions, but when he couldn't figure it out, he said, okay, fine, God knows where I am.

And you go with what you know. This is the classic problem-solving technique. If you're in school, if you're in business, if you're troubleshooting, whatever you're trying to do, your decisions and your course of action are always better as you assemble facts, as you gather information, and then you draw your conclusions.

If you're having trouble making a decision, chances are you don't have enough facts. Sometimes it just takes the patience to wait until you have sufficient information for the thing to come clear, or to take some kind of step so that you get the information. This is what Job has done.

What's the first direction he looked? Straight ahead of him, toward the east, he's oriented to the rising sun, the direction where hope comes from, and he doesn't see God there. So he turns around and looks and says, well, did I miss him? Did he go by and I miss him? He looks behind him, he looks to the west. That's the track of the sun from east to west.

And so Job makes the first two logical choices of where to look for what God is doing and where God is. He doesn't see God in either place. He looks to the north, he looks to the left, and he looks to the south, and he still doesn't see God.

And he says, okay, that's all the information I can gather by looking around, and I still don't know what's up. So what do I know? I guarantee you any problem that you face where you need to try to figure something out, assemble your facts, or figure out how you can get more facts, or determine how long you might need to wait to get facts, and then have the patience to wait for them. Good decisions, good analysis is always aided and enhanced and made of better quality by gathering the information.

So many people get three facts and say, okay, fine. I was trying to solve a problem that I won't go into all the gory details, but it appeared that somebody was using an alias, being another version of himself under a different name in a computer environment. And typically you can trace people back by their IP address.

Your computer has its own little unique address, and that's how it gets its mail and sends its stuff out, and then stuff comes back in your browser IP address. Well, if you're on the receiving end of somebody's traffic and you say, well, here's guy A and here's guy B, and look, their IP address is identical. And isn't it interesting that they're two different names and they do two completely different things, and this is a pretty clear case.

Now, those are a set of facts. I know how IP works. I know that people need a unique address.

And here's somebody who's coming in, and look at this. They're a duplicate, and duplicates are not allowed. They're not supposed to be using two names.

Okay, we're going to take some action. Well, this is what some other people wanted to do. And I said, wait, let me gather some more information.

And so I went to the Internet Service Provider that was indicated by this block of IP addresses and found out that it's in Britain, and it's MTL, and they do some funny things over in Britain. And as I continued to track it down, I found out that this one IP address wasn't actually an individual machine address. It was a router address.

And these two guys who are both in the UK, about 400 kilometers apart as it turns out, but their traffic on this provider who uses like set-top TV boxes and they have some ADSL and they have some cable modem stuff, come to find out they route this stuff, and they do kind of a double-hop magic whammy deal where in some cases that looks like their address when it's really just a routing point through which this traffic comes. And so upon further investigation, gathering additional facts, we avoided making a very unfortunate decision. We could have had some backlash, but everybody was in agreement.

Everything seemed fine. Well, look at my three facts. I've got it lined up.

Here we go. And yet this is the problem with press reports now. You've got Reuters saying, oh, look at this poor woman.

Look at these children in the rubble. And then a day or two later, oh, look, here's another picture with the same woman in a town 20 kilometers down the road. And now she's standing in front of her apartment where yesterday she was standing in front of her house, and a couple of days later she's standing in a third town.

The same woman with the same mole and the same scarf on. And it turns out that she appears to

be some woman who travels around with a Reuters photographer, stands in front of rubble, throws up her hands and says, oh, what's happened to my house? And it makes great press coverage. And unless people are watching and gathering facts, you have to gather more information.

Go to other credible sources. Well, back to our study. Job says, I make a reasonable effort to figure out what God is up to, but that's not all there is.

My main objective is to be sure I know what I'm up to, and that what I'm up to is in God's path and in God's steps. This is our priority. If you don't remember anything else out of these two lessons tonight, that is the most important thing.

Why is Job the man that he is? Why is he going to come forth like gold? My foot has held his steps. His way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.

Job is doubtful about exactly what God is up to and where he is, but there is no doubt about his location and where he is and what he's doing, and that he is not in line for discipline. He has fended off the onslaught for twenty-odd chapters now of people trying to tell him that he's doing something wrong. He's in the middle of the third dialogue cycle now, and he is still unconvinced that he's done anything wrong.

Now, where do you get that kind of confidence? Have you ever kind of been worn down when somebody just keeps arguing and arguing? You say, well, gee, maybe it is one of these cases where I'm trying to say, well, they're all out of step but me. My dad has used that expression ever since I was small. It's kind of like, oh, yeah, you know, they're all out of step but you.

You get the view of like a marching band on the field and everybody's left foot's coming down together and your right's coming down. You say, well, I've got the right beat. What's the matter with all these people? And it wears you down.

And over time when you're immersed in a secular culture and you're immersed in a shallow spirituality in Christian circles, you begin to think, well, maybe I am weird for meeting in the living room instead of meeting in a sanctuary. Maybe I ought to be evangelizing all the time or some such thing because it just wears you down. Where does Job's confidence come from? He knows God's way.

He knows God's Word. Well, this is the lead up now to chapter 24. In the New King James, the first verse here says, Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know Him see not His days? Okay, everybody open your blue book now and write a paragraph on what that means.

Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know Him see not His days?

What's up with that? Something about time, something about days, something about knowing something not being hidden. Okay, pencils down. It does help, as is often the case, to take a look at this in the original.

The first word here is why. Job says, I know where I'm at. Not real sure where God's at.

Why? What's the rest of it say? Why from the Almighty? This is once again Shaddai. Have you ever heard that song? There's a song on the radio. It's actually a pretty nice tune.

Sounds sort of Jewish in tone. It says, El Shaddai, El Shaddai, something or other, Adonai. You've probably heard it.

Well, this is the standard translation. It's the Almighty. Literally, it is often thought to mean the many-breasted one, because Shadd, S-H-A-D, is the Hebrew word for the breast.

So they try to put it in terms of provision and of nurturing and this sort of thing. You can see statues of Canaanite deities, little goddesses, where they've just got rows and rows of breasts going around and around and around. Well, that's not what Shaddai is.

There's a better etymology, and it means the Almighty, the one who is all-powerful, not all-provider. It's God in His omnipotence. That's what we have here.

So it says, why from the Almighty? We have main, the letter M, which means of or from. Why from Shaddai? And this is from Safan, T-S-A-P-H-A-N. And Safan has the idea of laying something up, storing something, treasuring it, keeping it, guarding it, hoarding it even, collecting something and keeping it together.

So we have this sort of poetic word for why. Why from the Almighty, and sometimes it can mean by the Almighty, is something not stored up or kept or guarded? And then the last word in that clause is the times. Et, E-T, is the season type of thing, or the time, and it's in the plural.

So why from the Almighty are the times not stored? Or why by the Almighty are the times not stored? Then the second line says, and the ones knowing Him do not see His day. So these are in parallel, and it's a little tricky figuring out the first one, but it helps us look and get the second one. Why are the times not stored up by the Almighty? Why do those who know Him not see His day? Well, the times and the day are sort of in parallel.

So what is it talking about here? Well, to store or guard up, it has the idea of setting something in place. I'm going to get this stuff, and I'm going to set it all right here. I'm going to put it on shelves.

I'm going to put it in the barn. I'm going to put it under lock and key, and here it is. So the meaning comes to imply or connote appointing.

Appointing a time. Ecclesiastes chapter 3, there is a time for every purpose under heaven. Well,

why is there not a time appointed by the Almighty? This is what Job is saying.

He's talked about the fact that there ought to be justice. All of these other friends have said, oh, God punishes the wicked. His seed will not prosper.

His tent is going to collapse, etc. And Job says, well, I don't see that happening. Talk to the people in the caravans.

They don't see it happening either. Now he's picking up the thread of that argument. He says, I don't know why God is letting this happen.

I know where I am, and I know where I'm going, but this has got me buffaloed. And he's back on that theme now. Why does God not appoint the times? I.e., the times of justice, the times of judgment.

Why do those who know Him not see His days? Now this is sort of an antithetical distich. There's a two-line saying. Sometimes they are synonymous or complementary.

In a complementary one, you say a thing, and then you kind of finish it in the second one. The second line complements the first. You have a synonymous distich where you state a thing, and then the second line restates it.

When you're reading through Proverbs, watch for these. You'll see these little two-line sayings all the way through Proverbs. Some of them are synonymous.

The second one restates the first. Some of them are complementary. You get half an idea here, and the second half here.

Sometimes they are opposites. A wise son is the glory of his mother, but a foolish son is like a bad toothache. You know, this kind of a thing.

Here's the positive, and here's the negative. Here's the heads, and here's the tails of an idea. This is what we have here.

This is an antithetical. You have the antithesis in the second line, sort of. This is very sophisticated poetry, but why does God not appoint the times? There is a time where with no doubt about the time, Job knows that God is just.

Why doesn't God get the times going? Where is the time of justice? He's almighty. Why does the term almighty show up here? God is all powerful, so why is he not doing the justice? Remember I brought this up. You hear this argument in secular circles.

There can't be a God, or if there is a God, he's not worth worshiping because... Remember this hackneyed argument. There's all this suffering in the world, so either God is able, but he's not willing, in which case he's an evil God and we shouldn't worship him. Or he's willing, but he's not

able, in which case he's weak and we shouldn't worship him.

And they set up this false logic. Well, Job brings up this kind of argument where he says, well, here's the omnipotent God, Shaddai. Why doesn't he judge these wicked people? And why do those who know him, and this Yadah reference here, those who know him, is talking about knowledge by experience.

This isn't academic knowledge. This is not those who read the letters and study the statutes. This is those who have seen him face to face, those who are listening to the words that fall from his lips.

Yadah is the same word that is used when it says, and Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore a son. Yadah, when it is being used of relationship in Hebrew, this argument has been abused in the New Testament. Some of you know what I'm talking about.

We're talking about whom he foreknew, then he predestined. It's Greek. It's a whole different thing.

But Yadah in the Hebrew does have an implication, a connotation of intimacy, intimate knowledge, knowledge based on experience, knowledge based on relationship. So why do those who know God, i.e. those of us who are following his steps and keeping track of his words, why do we not see his days? Now, this is fascinating. This is really fascinating to me.

We were speculating earlier. How did Job know what comes from God's mouth and what comes off his lips? Well, we may not know how he got this information, but here is some of what that information actually is. Job knows that there are days of the Lord that are scheduled.

There are days of the Lord that are supposed to come. Not the current days. Job has had plenty of blessings.

He doesn't say, well, the days of the Lord have come and gone. I had my blessings. I had my good run.

Now everything has augured into the ground and it's all over. But hey, the days of the Lord were here and I enjoyed them. We'll sing in the sunshine.

It was great, but now it's over. No, he says, there are future days of the Lord that have been decreed, that have been ordained, that are predicted, that are prophesied. Job knows something of the predicted kingdom.

This is before the land promises that are part of the Mosaic covenant. This is before the monarchy seed of David promises. All Job could possibly know, in terms of what we have in the Old Testament, is the Abrahamic covenant.

But it just lifts the corner of the veil a little bit to get an idea of some of the content that God expressed to those who loved Him in the Old Testament before the Bible was written. Job knows that there is a day of the Lord. Days of the Lord.

And this is the kingdom. God is going to rule on earth. There's going to be the days of the Lord, the Almighty.

And Job says, look, a lot of us are being faithful. Some of us have been very faithful. We know God.

We gaze at His face. We listen to His Word. How come we don't see those days? Remember over in the New Testament where it says, many in the latter days are going to say, where is the promise of His coming? All things continue as they have been.

Everybody says He's going to come. I haven't seen Him coming. When is He going to come? Well, 3,500 years ago, Job says, hey, those of us who have been waiting in hope for the days of God, when are they coming? Why do we not see those days? Instead, what do we see? What do we see instead of the days of God? What makes you and me hope for the future? What makes you and I long for the kingdom? Well, all I have to do is look at a little bit of news.

About seven and a half minutes of national and international news, and I am ready for Jesus to come back. Fix the Middle East. Fix our justice system.

Get our culture purged and cleansed. Eliminate 90% of what goes out over the airwaves. And bring in the King of Righteousness.

Bring in the Day of Justice. Bring in the elimination of all of this sewage in which we have to wait just to get through a day. Well, this has never been the case.

Job says, those of us who know God intimately, when are we going to see His days? When is He going to appoint the Day of Judgment and purge this stuff out? What kind of stuff? Now He is going to talk about it in verse 2. Some remove landmarks. You think about violation of privacy. Anybody who has ever had a break-in, has ever been the victim of theft or worse, their ladies have been through a lot worse than that.

Personal violation. But I had no idea. I knew about death.

I knew about break-ins and all that. But when it happened to me, the sense of outrage and helplessness and the sense of, what can you do? The person has disappeared. And mine was very minor.

But the equivalent of this in the Old Testament day was you're trying to go through the trackless wilderness here and make it to the oasis. You're trying to lead your flocks. You've got a new shepherd here and you say, well look, go to the third hill on the right and turn south and you're

going to find a brook there and you can water the goats.

So he goes 17 miles down to the third hill and turns and there's nothing there. Some landmark that he was looking for has been moved. Somebody has taken away the marker for the well and you can't find it.

You can die from this. Landmarks that... I mean, think about it. You don't have highways.

You don't have any of the technology or any of the stuff that we have today to show us where we are. You get out there in the trackless waste and you're just lost. Where's the landmark? It's like being in a blizzard and dying 30 feet from the house.

Some remove landmarks. This was serious. This was deadly in the ancient world to move a boundary stone or a marker that would guide people to life-giving water and so on.

They seize flocks violently and eat them. They drive away the donkey of the fatherless. Here's a family that's lost a breadwinner.

They're down to their last animal. It's the donkey. That's like their car.

It would be like having a car today. Boy, you haven't lived until you've seen a family trying to get along with no car and no husband slash father. We've had up-close experience with that recently.

You just can really not operate anymore with no transportation. That's what a donkey was. That's how you haul your groceries.

That's how you get from point A to point B. How did Mary get from Galilee down to Judea? With Joseph so that the Christ child could be born. Rode down there on a donkey. You take the donkey away, you have pretty well killed that family.

They can't do anything. They can't get anywhere. They take the widow's ox as a pledge.

You may recall this was prohibited in the later law of Moses. For example, in Deuteronomy 24, if you lend your brother something, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. You know how sometimes you get something and you're going to use it.

They say, well, leave your driver's license here or leave something here as a pledge so that you don't run off with it. It wasn't supposed to happen in Israel. There was supposed to be implicit trust and a presumption of innocence and goodwill in Israel.

You don't actually go in. Maybe a guy would offer and say, well, you can keep this. You say, no, no, I don't need that.

I'll take your word. When you lend your brother, don't go into his house. That brother is a fellow Israelite.

Don't go in to get his pledge. You shall send outside. The man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you.

You respect him. You respect his privacy. Just because he's in a bad way, it doesn't demean him.

It doesn't diminish him. You give him the dignity. If he's going to give you something as a pledge, you let him bring it out.

You don't go in there and seize it and humiliate him. In verse 6 of that same chapter, Deuteronomy 24, 6, no man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge. What does this mean? We're totally out of food.

I can't pay you right now, but I'll pay you when I can. Let me give you some kind of I.O.U. so that I can take this ox home and butcher it and feed my family. The guy says, okay, fine, but I need something to make it good.

I need some collateral for this loan. The guy says, well, I haven't got anything. He says, well, you've got your millstone there.

Remember that? You've got the lower millstone that's horizontal. You've got the upper millstone that rolls around on it. And so you take one or the other.

Well, that renders the whole thing worthless. He's got no way to get his flower now. You've robbed him of his livelihood, of his essentials.

No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge. In 1 Samuel 12, verse 3, when Samuel is saying his farewell to Israel, here I am, witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my eyes? Not abusing someone who is in a helpless way.

But these people do it all the time. They take the widow's ox as a pledge. They push the needy off the road.

The poor of the land are forced to hide. Indeed, like wild donkeys in the desert, they go out to their work searching for food. The wilderness yields food for them and for their children.

I went through a long period of study on this and I could give you a very detailed Hebrew exegesis. But what this is basically talking about is you've got donkeys that are domestic and they belong to a little orphaned family here. And these abusive people come in and take them away and that causes the family to starve.

And it essentially makes the people like a wild donkey that doesn't have a home. And it's out there in the wilderness. Nobody is feeding it.

Nobody is caring for it. It's wild. It's like a feral cat or a stray dog that just has to find what it can.

So these donkeys, which are really domestic animals, people will say, Oh look, on the hillside, there's a herd of donkeys. Donkeys don't do like horses. They don't herd.

They don't have a community. It's not like Wildfire or My Friend Flicka or something or Black Stallion where you've got this wonderful majestic lead donkey who's looking out for the herd. It's all romantic.

It doesn't happen. Donkeys scatter. They're just ding dong animals and they're out there on their own.

And they're wandering around and bumping into stuff trying to stay alive. They're kind of like a domesticated dog who would suddenly find itself stranded out in the middle of nowhere and trying to figure out how to survive. Or a lion cub that's brought up in captivity can't survive in the jungle anyway.

It has no skills. Well, these wild donkeys are ones that have gotten away from their owners and now they're out there helpless. And they just have to forage and find what they can.

And they're emaciated and they're gaunt and they're full of sores and they're mangy and decrepit and they die out there in the wilderness. So they're wild donkeys in the desert. They go out.

It says they go out to their work but they're laboring all day long. Instead of doing the work that's part of domestic ownership and being part of a household, their work is all day long trying to find something to eat. And the only food they ever find is just happenstance in the wilderness.

There's nobody caring for them. They are disregarded. They're out there totally on their own.

Them and their children. And so there's a blurring and a uniting of this idea. Like the wild donkeys in the desert, the poor, their work, it's a vicious cycle.

They can't go get a job and work for somebody because their work is trying to just get enough to eat and stay alive and they can't do anything else. They gather their fodder in the field and glean in the vineyard of the wicked. They spend the night naked without clothing and have no covering in the cold.

They are wet with the shower of the mountains and huddle around the rock for want of shelter. So this is the result. The rich are aggrandizing themselves off the poor.

The powerful are taking advantage of the weak. The advantaged are pressing their advantage at the expense of the disadvantaged. So what you basically have here is in this section the overt, visible sinning and evil of the wicked.

They're getting over. And where is God's judgment? Where is the justice? Where are the times of God where this stuff doesn't happen? That's what you have in these first eight verses. Now in the next section, we have a new category of violence, if you will.

Beginning in verse 9 and going through verse 12, we're going to have hidden vice, hidden sin, hidden evil. Some snatch the fatherless from the breast and take a pledge from the poor. They cause the poor to go naked without clothing and they take away the sheaves from the hungry.

Well, no, this is all still visible. I'm sorry. The secret sin is going to start in verse 13.

This is a continuation of that first section. They cause the poor to go naked. They take away the sheaves.

They press out oil within their walls and tread wine presses, yet suffer thirst. This is talking about their labor in which they take no part. They tread out the grapes.

They press the olive oil and yet they don't get any benefit from it. They're just slaves on behalf of the rich. The dying groan in the city.

The souls of the wounded cry out. Yet God does not charge any wrong. He doesn't assign blame.

He doesn't call to account those who are responsible for everything in these first 12 verses. Now in verse 13, we have this hidden sin section. Those who rebel against the light, they do not know its ways, nor abide in its paths.

The murderer rises with the light. He kills the poor and needy, and in the night he is like a thief. The eye of the adulterer waits for twilight, saying, No eye will see me, and he disguises his face.

In the dark they break into houses which they mark for themselves in the daytime. They do not know the light, for the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death. If someone recognizes them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

So you have this over-visible...