

15b JOB

Let's resume our study now in the book of Job. We find ourselves at the threshold of chapter 29. I feel bad that we don't have time to dwell on chapter 28 because there is a great exposition there of the value of wisdom.

But this is something that I think we understand. We only need to recognize Job's acknowledgement of this truth at this time, in this place, in the book, because there has been this constant harping by the three friends that what you can really expect from God is retribution on wickedness. That's what God's basically in His heaven for, is to punish wickedness.

And they go on and on and on about that. And Job basically says, look, there are other reasons for bad things to happen. And one of them is, in the darkness is where the treasure can be found.

We saw this quite a long time ago when we were going through Ecclesiastes and we were talking about being in the shadow and how sometimes the place where you least expect to find benefit and where you least expect to find treasure is exactly where you find it. And it is in the shadow of the Almighty, where things are maybe not as bright, but you are near God, that you are going to learn more and find more and have more value come into your life than if you are just out there tending the wheat, bringing in the bread. That's not where the gold and silver are going to come.

You are going to find yourself in the tunnels and in the darkness with the water rising up over your ankles to your knees and above and you are frantically plastering the wall to keep the rivers from drowning you down there so that you can look and find that treasure that is only found in those dark places. This is the explanation for our existence on the earth after salvation. Why does God leave us here? Once we've solved the puzzle and figured out that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing we have life through His name, why don't we rapture? Why are we still here? Why does God leave us in a lost and fallen world in a sinful and evil environment with a corrupt nature? Why don't we go golden when we get saved? Why doesn't our old sin nature drop away from us? Why does God not hedge us about so that Satan can never come near and temptation never touches us and we walk around like golden reflections of God's glory from the point of salvation on? Wouldn't it be very effective if God were to do that? And if His goal were the evangelization of the world, the lost would look and say, Wow, my friend Sam over here was an evil ne'er-do-well and he went to the revival and got saved or he went to the evangelist meeting and got saved or he read that tract and got saved and now look at him.

He glows in the dark. He walks on water. He heals the sick.

He raises the dead. He does all these amazing things. I believe I'll get saved.

If God's objective were to evangelize the world, there are many more effective ways that He could use than our experience shows to be the case. We get saved, but we are still struggling with our sinful nature. Why? God has put us in the minds.

It's up to us to use the light that we're given, the lamp for our feet, the light for our path, not to concentrate on the soot, not to concentrate on the rising water or the danger or the shadow, but to look for that treasure that cannot be found on the surface. The angels, the birds who fly, a lot of times when you see references to the birds, by the way, in the same little Exodus special, this guy believes that he has found a graphic depiction of the Ark of the Covenant with the ramp and the altar of sacrifice behind it, and that this has been misunderstood as being a single object, when in fact it is three objects seen from the perspective of the Holy of Holies. And what's interesting about it is that you do have a box-like thing in the front, and you have two bird-like creatures with wings on each side, sitting on little spiked, sort of pomegranate-looking... What's the thing you all eat all the time? What is that? You just had one.

What do you call it? Artichoke. It looks kind of like artichoke things with these... And there's a bird on each side, and then beyond that you have this deal with four horns and something that looks like a ramp, and they did a little fancy 3D graphic and turned it sideways, and you can see that, well, okay, it's possible. I don't think it's likely, but it's possible that that's what this is.

But what fascinated me about it is that the angels are often represented or alluded to poetically in the Bible as birds. What did Jesus say in the parable of the soil and the seed? It sits on the ground and the birds come and carry it away, and these, of course, are Satan and his minions. So I say all of that to say that when, in poetic form here, Job talks about the surface where the bread is grown, so to speak, the wheat is grown.

It's a metonymy of the adjunct. Bread comes from wheat. Wheat is grown, so you say the bread is grown.

But he talks about the birds who fly and the lions who prowl, and these are the powers of the earth. You don't find it in the deep. These are all poetic allusions to all of the places you don't find this wisdom.

It's those who go down into the darkness carrying the light who are going to find the treasure. If you don't remember anything outside of chapter 28, remember that picture. Those who have the light in their hands, who go down into the darkness, they find the treasure that the lions don't find and the birds don't find and you'll never find in the troubled sea.

God grants that privilege of discovering that wisdom which is permanent, timeless, precious, and valuable. So that's the turning point. This is the axis upon which the whole book pivots at this point.

We're right at that point. We're done with the three dialogue cycles. They're over with.

We're finished. Hallelujah, people say. We're done.

Don't have to listen to Eliphaz. Don't have to listen to Bildad and Zophar anymore. We've turned

the corner here on this very important statement of the value of wisdom.

By the way, it's really interesting because when people who are trying to date the book of Job come to passages such as this, chapter 28, they find that there are apparently allusions in, for example, Proverbs, in Psalms, and so on, to language that is used in passages like this. Now, the purpose of this book, if you wanted to distill it down, is to isolate, to clarify, to delineate the basis and the nature of relationship with God for mankind. It's not suffering.

So there's going to be some themes that run through the book, and one of them is this whole idea of God's punishment of the wicked. That has been broached and refuted. And I think we've documented that fairly well.

The second motif or theme that runs through the book in the service of this theme is creation. Now, we know this from Romans. We know it from Romans chapter 1. What may be known of God is manifest where? In creation.

Those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness are without excuse because God's deity and power are manifest in creation. There are two great manifestations of the Creator. I was just making an argument to an atheistic antagonist earlier this week about the idea that, look, just start from scratch.

Throw out all your presuppositions. You look around at creation. We see things that are not explainable by natural processes.

There's very sophisticated programming in DNA. There are things that Darwin's natural selection and mutation don't explain, can't explain. Science with the biggest and brightest minds has no earthly explanation for things like sexual reproduction.

How does that evolve? Somebody give me a scenario where you've got little organisms reproducing by cell division or something and suddenly this one says, I'm a girl, and this one says, well, I'm a boy, and he says, would you like to go out? She says, sure, and they go off and make babies. How does that evolve? Ask an evolutionist that sometime because they have not the first ghost of the faintest wisp of a fantasy of an idea of a clue. Nothing.

Nothing. It is stunningly absent. The weak need attempts to try to, well, you know, just ask sexual reproduction and then, you know, they all started out being sort of homosexuals and then it is so lame.

But here's the point. If you hear the arguments against what they call intelligent design, and by the way, I don't argue for intelligent design. I'm not an intelligent design proponent.

I am a card-carrying, Bible-thumping creationist. I believe in creation. I believe God did it.

I don't have to say intelligent agent. I say God. And I don't try to argue that they ought to teach it

in schools.

If they want to teach science in school and science says evolution, fine. Say, this is science. Don't say it's truth.

Say it's science. Science is our materialist philosophy that we teach in school and according to our materialist philosophy, this is how things came about. And we call this science.

Great. Just don't try to pass off science as truth and say this is what happened. Nothing else could have happened.

No, fine. You know, you might send your kids to a Catholic school and you're not a Catholic. You might send your kids to a Buddhist school or a Hindu school and you're not a Buddhist or a Hindu.

And you say, okay, well, this is what Buddhism teaches. This is what Hindus teach. This is what science teaches.

Fine. Call it a science class. Teach science.

Just don't say this is truth. And I won't drag your little atheist, secular kids into church and teach them the Bible and teach them that that's the truth either. We'll agree to disagree.

Anyway, I digress. The idea in intelligent design is, the reason it is pooh-pooed by science, is they say, well, intelligent design is not a valid scientific theory because nobody can make predictions from it. Yes, you can.

You can make all kinds of predictions from intelligent design that are borne out by the facts. They say, oh, look, evolution happened because chimpanzees share 90-something percent of the DNA of humans. So we have a common ancestor.

Intelligent design, were I a proponent, were I to argue for it as a scientific theory, I would say, well, my prediction is that if an intelligent agent perpetrated biological design, he would probably use a template and you're going to find similarities in the same way that when Ford makes cars, you find similarities among the various models. When you find paintings by Van Gogh, you're going to find similarities because he uses a common set of tools, a common template. And so design by a designer would suggest that there will be commonalities that are peculiar to that designer.

That's a prediction I would make. And ta-da, here are the similarities. Look at this quadruped design that gets used over and over again.

Look at this ocular sensitivity to the visible wavelengths of light that gets used over and over again. Look at this covering of hair for insulation that gets used over and over again. Look at the

hollow bones and feathers for things that fly in a wide variety of different creatures.

Well, you know, you find a good design, you just vary it. You use some different colors here, some different sizes here, some different proportions here and there. This is what people do when they're working off of a template.

I look at the model of car that I drive. You get a Ford or a Chevy and you look at the year models going back and you say, well, look, that's kind of like my car, but that one's got fins and mine doesn't. Or that one's got, you know, it's the same designer, same manufacturer.

That's a prediction. So when people say, oh, you know, if you're a creationist or intelligent design, you have no theory because it doesn't make predictions. That's just nonsense.

I can predict all kinds of things. I can predict that if there is an intelligent agent behind biological life, there may be other evidence of said intelligent agent that will be available. I.e., written information, revelation of its identity and purpose and overall plan.

Of course, you know, that's never going to fly with your secular materialist. But here's the point. That's exactly what God has done.

This is the truth. There is an intelligent agent, I.e., God, capital I, capital A, who has, in fact, predictably manifested himself in more than one way, through creation, through written revelation, originally to the prophets and so on, and in these latter days, through a son, as we've seen in Hebrews. So that is a prediction I can confidently make, that if there's an intelligent agent at work, it is likely that that intelligence will be expressed in more than one way.

Many other predictions, by the way. Here's one I'll make that you can watch and see if it comes true. I predict that where evolution says there's a lot of garbage in the DNA molecule, a lot of useless coding that does nothing, an intelligent agent would not leave a bunch of garbage.

It's like when you write a computer program. If you're intelligent, if you're smart, you clean it up. You don't leave a lot of useless subroutines and junk around that doesn't do anything.

If you're intelligent, you're efficient. If you're efficient, you clean up your code, you document it, and what you do have in your program is there for a purpose. Now, there might be some slight corruption due to sin and degradation over time, but giant miles of the DNA sequence being meaningless, I don't buy it.

And my theory, scientifically, predicts that this is the work of an intelligent agent, and science will one of these days discover that what they are dismissing as garbage, the detritus of evolutionary blind mistakes and so on, is going to be the programming. What makes you yawn? What makes you laugh? What makes you cry? What makes you hiccup? According to the materialist scientist, it's all in the DNA. Well, if it is, where is it? Have they found the gene for yawning? Have they found the sequence that programs a lot of our behavioral responses, a lot of our instincts? You

know, there are people that if they walk into a bright room in the morning, they'll sneeze.

If they've been in sort of semi-darkness, and they're suddenly hit in the face with bright light, they'll sneeze, usually twice. Very common syndrome. Just like if one person yawns, it makes everybody want to yawn.

I think there's another one that's not documented. If one person whistles, you try this sometime. Walk into a room and whistle a little tune under your breath, I promise you at least one other person will start whistling.

It's just like yawning. People can't help themselves. If I started whistling right now, some of you would just be suppressing a whistle.

Well, this is my little offhand prediction, but I think that they're going to discover that God has put a lot of these intangibles in what they're calling garbage, because they don't know what they're talking about. Of course, you would collect garbage as blind evolution feels its way and useless code gets shuffled off into useless places. You start chopping some of that garbage out, and you're going to find people who can't yawn, or babies who don't blink when you say boo in their face.

A lot of the little instinctive, quirky pieces of programming that make human beings human, and this is a prediction of the scientific hypothesis that God wrote the program. Well, I say all that to say this. There is a theme in Job related to creation, and it's there for a reason.

Creation speaks of God. And these men, without a Bible, without a Torah, without the Ketuvim, without the Nevi'im, where are they going to get their knowledge of God? Well, a lot of it is going to come from observation of creation. You see them talking about the Pleiades in Orion.

You see them talking about nature. What happens with animals? What happens with other people? What happens in caves and holes in the ground? What happens in the sky? What happens in the deep? What does Leviathan do? What does Behemoth do? They look around at creation because these are analogs. These are teaching tools.

Much as ritual will be for the Levitical system of worship, much as water baptism will be for the early church, visual aids, teaching tools. That's what creation does, and God manifests His eternal deity and Godhead in creation. So this is something that we're going to see.

We have this creation motif. Job starts this off in chapter 3 when he's cursing the day of his birth. What does he invoke? He talks about perishing when he came from the womb.

Why was he nourished as a child? He would have been asleep with the kings and counselors and the princes who had gold and filled their houses with silver. Why was I not hidden like infants who never saw light? There the wicked cease from troubling. There's a little gospel song about that.

And there the weary are at rest. The prisoners rest together. The small and great are there.

The servant is free from his master. And this is the chaos of the pre-creation earth. Why did I come into the ordered universe? Let me go back to the darkness.

Why did I ever see the light? God said, let there be light. Well, in my life, I wish there had been no light. He talks about the cursing of the day.

Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan. May the stars of the morning be dark. May I look for light in heaven and not see the dawning of the day because the doors of my mother's womb were not shut.

This is an appeal to creation, to the primordial status when God first brought the ordered creation into existence. Why does Job call for this? Because in his mind, if his relationship with God is not going to function, if it's not intact, if he doesn't have communion and fellowship with God, life is not worth living. And he might as well not be here.

He goes on to talk about God's work in nature in chapter 9. And we saw it again in chapter 26, verse 14. Remember he talked about the mere edges of God's ways and how small the whisper we hear of Him, but the thunder of His power, who can understand? Well, the reason this is important, the reason I'm kind of belaboring a little bit, is you have this view of God as transcendent above earth, as transcendent above human beings, up there with the angels, Satan, the dialogue. You have Job who suffers this set of events and then wishes that he wasn't in creation, that he wasn't a part of the natural order of things.

He's going to talk about it again here in this central section. And if you have ever read the book of Job, and if you remember what God is going to say in His section, it's all about creation. Where were you when I... So, I'm plowing the ground a little bit for that section where God speaks.

Why does God spend so much time talking about what He did in creation? Well, it's an observable fact that this is one of the themes in the book, that God does speak in creation, and the answers that Job is looking for can be found in creation. If God's finally speaking and giving the big answer, and all He does is talk about creation, what does that say? The answer is observable. Romans 1, man is without excuse, because what may be known of God is manifest in creation.

So my question is, like what? How is the big problem of relationship with God that is broached and addressed in this book solved by viewing creation? Well, we've got some more to go, but we want to watch for that in this central section. Chapter 28 has a great little chiastic structure that I want to point out right quick. It's centered on the attaining of wisdom, the gold and silver and so on.

If you start at the beginning and He says, iron is taken from the earth, copper is smelted from ore,

man puts an end to darkness and searches every recess for ore in the darkness and the shadow of death. So you have the idea that the treasure is underground, the treasure is in the darkness. That's your first statement, your first big line.

That's like letter A. Now the second element that's going to be introduced here is that it's away from people. It's not observable. That's what you have in verse 4. To get to it, you open a shaft, you dig a hole away from people.

It's in places forgotten by feet. Some of these turquoise mines are way off the beaten track, off the caravan trails and so on. Far away from men, in places where people are not ordinarily found.

So that's the second element. You dig in the ground and it's not observable by people. It's not where they're usually found.

Now you go back to under the earth. This is like part A again. Underneath it's turned up as by fire.

Its stones are the sources of sapphires and it contains gold dust. Now we're going to go back to the B element that is not observable. First it wasn't observable by men, it's off the beaten track now.

It's a path that birds don't know and the falcon's eye has not seen it and the proud lions haven't trodden it and the fierce lions have passed over it. So we have A, B, A, B. Now in verse 9, he puts his hand on the flint, he overturns the mountains at the roots, he cuts out these channels in the rock and looks for these precious things. He dams up the streams from trickling.

What is hidden he brings forth to light. And you're back underground again. So this is our third A element.

So you have three A's separated by two B's. And what do those three A's tell us? It's not easy to find. It isn't where anybody can just pick it up on the surface.

It's going to be hidden. This is a theme throughout the Scripture. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

And it's emphasized here in this three-fold structure in the first half of chapter 28. And he's going to go on to do the same thing in the second half of the chapter. Where can it be found and so on.

Well, I wish I had more time to... I just want to give you a sense of the beauty of the structure of these chapters. So much of this is this way and we will never finish if we take the time to look at all of it. But there's great emphasis at the end of this section.

One of the reasons this is marked off as a chapter is because in Hebrew it hangs together with this chiasmic double structure. And it concludes, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. To depart from evil, that is understanding.

And it's an odd thing that you go into the darkness to discover that that's the key. You have to go into the darkness to discover that getting out of the darkness is the answer. People who are constantly, you know, that thing, you never know what you've got until it's gone.

Joni Mitchell wrote a song about that. You know, Pave in the Parking Lot and all that. But it's a truism.

People don't appreciate what they have until it's gone. You take things for granted. And people who live all the time in sort of a commonplace, bread-winning, light existence on the surface are not going to appreciate that treasure.

It's when you go into the darkness and find the treasure and bring it back out into the light that you have that appreciation. And this is why God leads us here. This is why our lives are not easy.

Jesus said, in this world you shall have tribulation. Well, that's the big emphasis of this turning point in chapter 28. Now, chapter 29 is where Job is going to make his great apologia.

He's going to make his great court case self-defense. This is going to be chapter 29-31. Three chapters Job is going to make his plea and state his case.

This is really the first time, starting in chapter 28, that Job has been speaking not in response to his circumstances directly, as he did in chapter 3, and not in response to the friends. He is going to address the theme of the book. What is the nature of relationship with God? What is His expectation? Look at chapter 29.

Job continued his discourse and said, Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me, when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness, just as I was in the days of my prime, when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent, when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were around me, when my steps were bathed with cream, and the rocks poured out rivers of oil for me. When I went out to the gate by the city, when I took my seat in the open square, the young men saw me and hid, and the agent arose and stood. Sign of honor.

The princes refrained from talking. The voice of nobles was hushed, and the tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth. When their ear heard, it blessed me.

When the eye saw, it approved me, because I delivered the poor who cried out, the fatherless and the one who had no helper. The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me.

My justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, and I was feet to the lame. I was a father to the poor.

I searched out the case that I did not know. I broke the fangs of the wicked and plucked the victim

from his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest and multiply my days as the sand.

My root is spread out to the waters. The dew lies all night on my branch. My glory is fresh within me, and my bow is renewed in my hand.

Men listened to me and waited and kept silence for my counsel. After my words, they did not speak again, and my speech settled on them as dew. They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouth wide as for the spring rain.

If I mocked at them, they did not believe it. In the light of my countenance, they did not cast down. I chose the way for them and sat as chief.

So I dwelt as a king in the army, as one who comforts mourners. I was on top of the world. God smiled upon me.

His light shone upon me. Everything was great. Look at what a blessing I was to people.

You could sum up chapter 29 by saying, God blessed me, and I was a blessing to others. Isn't that pretty much the summary? I enjoyed the blessing of God, and I was a great blessing to others. This is, generally speaking, the belief and the view of modern Christianity today.

We exist as a church, as the body of Christ on earth, to be blessed by God, and to be a blessing to others. That's why we're here. Some people interpret that blessing as being evangelism, or as benevolent work for the poor, and so on.

But basically, isn't this what people understand the Christian life to be today, generally? We want to be blessed by God. We want to be in His favor. We want His light shining on our path.

We want dew in the evening, and sunshine in the morning, and all these things. And we want to spread the joy, spread the blessing around. We have a great life.

Everybody we come in contact with is the better for having been around us. I am never so happy as when I see Sam coming, because he is just the sunshine in the day. Nobles stop talking.

Everybody waits for the wisdom that drips from my lips, because I am Mr. Blessing. I am Mr. Sunshine. Everybody gets a warm glow when I am around.

That's basically Job's view. Now, it would appear from the book of Job, and what we have seen thus far, that this is not God's ultimate purpose for Job's life. If the purpose of Job's life was to be a wonderful blessing to all the people around him, he would have just continued on in this vein until he died, and we would have a different book of Job in the Old Testament.

We would have a book that talked about Job being upright in his ways, and sacrificing for his kids, and being feed to the lame, and ice to the blind, etc. That's not the book we have. And guess what? The standard view of what the Christian life is supposed to be, and its ultimate

goals, is equally wrong.

That's not why we are here. This is not the millennium. God's purpose is not a chicken in every pot, every man with his own vine and his own fig tree, a sun that never sets, drought that never comes, famine that never arrives.

Is this within God's power to make all these things happen? Could God create utopia? Could He put us back in the Garden of Eden? Of course. There are no silver mines in the Garden of Eden. There is no gold ore.

There is no treasure to be had in utopia. When you get to the New Jerusalem, you're going to be walking on the gold. It's not going to be something you have to seek and search for, as for hidden treasure.

It's going to be asphalt. It's going to be pavement. It's going to be cheaper than dirt, cheaper than concrete.

Because we will be looking for a new kind of wisdom, a new kind of knowledge, a new kind of revelation from God that transcends anything related to this earth. We'll be walking on the stuff that we learned on this earth, is the idea. Well, I point that out because there are so many people and we can fall into this trap of thinking that success in this life and achieving the goal in this life is measured by am I being blessed and am I a blessing to others? Job has spent 20 something chapters refuting the idea that God is a coin machine.

Put in your faithfulness and out comes the blessing. Put in the evil and out comes retribution and punishment. He has said that's not the way it works.

God doesn't always do that. There is gold and silver to be had from the darkness. Job understands this.

So now what's he saying in chapter 29? He says, I long for the days when it was simple. I was blessed and I was a blessing. Oh that I were as in months past, in the days when God watched over me.

I miss those days. Well, in the context that's understandable. Many people, this is the whole inner child movement.

You know, you got to go find your inner child. People have this sentimental reminiscence of childhood. Oh for the days when I could just run and play.

I had no responsibilities. I had no cares. Didn't have to be anywhere.

Didn't punch a clock. Didn't have responsibilities. I was just carefree.

Oh to be a child again. Well, people may express that wish but nobody would really want to be a child again. Not if they're in their right mind.

Because you might as well give yourself a lobotomy or be retarded in some way. Well, there are people who grow to adulthood and they really stay in childhood because they are physically unable to progress. And we look at that as a tragedy.

They're always going to be a child. And it's tragic. Nobody seriously wants to just be a child.

And Job understands. He has preceded chapter 29 with chapter 28. He said, I know that there's treasure in the darkness.

But it would sure be nice to go back to the good old days when I was tripping along in the light fantastic and I was blessed and everybody was blessed and I was on top of the world. That was a really great time. There's nothing wrong with that.

There's nothing wrong with longing for happy days. You just can't seriously undertake to do that. It's a reflection.

There is a contrast. We have hills, we have valleys. We have sunshine, we have darkness.

We have light, we have darkness that alternates on a regular basis. God made life that way. There's nothing wrong with sitting in the night.

What does the prophecy say that heralds the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Those who sit in darkness have seen a great light. Nothing wrong with longing for the light. Nothing wrong with reminiscing about times of great blessing.

But are we going to see Job progress out of this or is he just going to throw up his hands in despair and say, well, those days are gone. That will never happen again. That's over.

Cursed the day I was born and then he's all done. Is that what he's going to do? Well, how does chapter 30 start? What's happening now? We're going to get a past, we're going to get a present, and we're going to get a question about the future. Job says, this is how it used to be.

Chapter 30, this is how it is now. Now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I disdain to put with the dogs of my flock. Wow, Job, what do you really think? Indeed, what profit is the strength of their hands to me? Their vigor has perished.

They are gaunt from want and famine, fleeing late to the wilderness, desolate and waste, who plucked mallow by the bushes and broom-tree roots for their food. They were driven out from among men. They shouted to them as a thief.

They had to live in the clefts of the valleys, in caves, earths, and rocks. Bushes they brayed,

under the nettles they nestled. They were sons of fools, sons of vile men.

They've scourged from the land. Now these ne'er-do-wells are taunting me. They were the scum of the earth and now they are mocking.

I am their by-word. They abhor me. They keep far from me.

They do not hesitate to spit in my face. I am lower than the lowest delinquents. Why? Verse 11, Because He has loosed my bowstring and afflicted me.

They have cast off restraint before me. The ravel rises at my right hand. They push away my feet.

They raise against me their ways of destruction. They break up my path. They promote my calamity.

They have no helper. People are starting to swoop in and take advantage of the vacuum left by the breaking of Job's power and influence. He is no longer the big man in the gate.

So now the nefarious criminal elements are already creeping in and trying to take advantage. It reminds you of the woe songs we saw in Ezekiel where the surrounding nations came in when the power of Israel was broken. They come as broad breakers under the ruinous storm.

They roll along. Terrors are turned upon me. They pursue my honor as the wind.

My prosperity is passed like a cloud. Now my soul, verse 16, is poured out because of my plight. The days of affliction take hold of me.

My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest. By great force my garment is disfigured. It binds me about as the collar of my coat.

It has cast me into the mire. I have become like dust and ashes. I cry out to you, but you do not answer me.

I stand up and you regard me, but you have become cruel to me. With the strength of your hand you oppose me. You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride on it.

You spoil my success." What a contrast. And Job is bringing up this change. How does this fit into the theme of the book? What is the theme of the book? The nature of relationship with God.

Job says, I know it's not quid pro quo. I've already denounced my friends for trying to make that point. And I know that there's treasure to be had in the darkness.

So where am I now? Well, I used to be blessed. Now I am debased. And that's where we're going to have to leave Job until next week.

But what is it that has sustained him to this point? He has never lost his faith that God has a

reason and a purpose. That there is treasure in the darkness. And we should try to maintain that same confidence.

Because it is justified and it will be vindicated for Job and for us. Well, we'll pick up here in the middle of chapter 30 next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and the very graphic way these truths are being presented to us in this book.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will give us insight and understanding as we meditate upon it. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.