

## 21b JOB

Let's pick up our study now in Job chapter 36. We have seen the argument progress. And Patty asked a really good question right at the break, which is sort of where is this all leading? Because we have a pretty good idea of the failure of the aged wise in the form of Eliphaz the Temanite, of Bildad the Shuhite in his appeals to tradition, and in Zophar the Naamathite as he called for pragmatism and the practical approach, and all of them were convinced that if something bad is happening, it is simply a matter of sin and rectifying the sin problem through acknowledgement and confession, so that you are restored to God's good graces.

And this is a true principle, but it is very limited. This reminds me of the lack of progress that you end up making as a believer if you get your theology out of kilter or off track. The example that always leaps to my mind is Reformed theology or Calvinism, where by an overemphasis on God's sovereignty, you wind up viewing everything in terms of God's decrees and predestination and foreordination and so on, and there is no room to learn and grow as far as understanding the importance of free will, understanding the importance of making decisions, understanding some of the very things that are in this passage, in terms of what are you going to choose to do in a time of pressure.

Joshua stood out there and said, Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Choice is an essential in this life. It is one of the reasons God went to such elaborate lengths to construct this environment, and to leave us without tangible evidence.

Jesus told the disciples after his resurrection, when Thomas stuck his finger in the holes and he said, You believe because you have seen. Blessed are those who, not having seen, believe. We're not in the realm of the tangible.

Christian faith is not a matter of science. It is a matter of thought. It is a matter of recognizing intangible things that are the utterances of God, that are the witness of God through his spirit and through his word.

Science is crippled and maimed and blind and deaf when it comes to the things of God. Science can't attain to it. Science can't approach it.

Science thinks that it is superior, that it is going to eventually find all of the answers, when in fact it is a poor substitute for the responsibility to perceive and to respond that we have before the living God. I'm not going to believe, I'm not going to pay any attention to anything that I can't weigh, that I can't measure, that I can't quantify and classify and categorize and apply the laws of physics and chemistry and so on to discover the nature of a thing. So your God doesn't fit into my scale.

Your God doesn't show up in my microscope or my telescope, therefore he doesn't exist and you're weird for believing in him. Well, it's really just the opposite. You might as well be canis

canis.

You might as well be some lower order animal, if you're going to limit yourself only to the tools and the perceptions of the birds and the beasts. That's exactly what Elihu says people do, when pressure forces them to look around and ask the deeper questions of life. And it's an opportunity to acknowledge the witness of the Spirit.

It's an opportunity to recognize that there is more to life than what can be seen and heard and felt. That there are people who do not look for their Maker, who do not look for their Creator and don't look for those songs. So, this is the argument.

Now, let's just step back and see if we can kind of figure out where Elihu is headed. Book of Job starts out, God, Satan. What is the nature of Job's faith? Why does Job trust God? Satan says it's for what he gets out of it.

Take away what he's getting out of it, his faith will go away. He puts in a coin, he gets out blessing. He puts in sacrifice and faithfulness, he gets back prosperity and blessing.

Take away the prosperity and blessing, he'll stop paying attention to you. And this goes on for a couple of cycles. So, that doesn't pan out in Satan's favor when Job still does not curse God and die.

His wife can't get him to do it, Satan can't get him to do it. So now the friends go to work on him. And they say, look at this situation.

You're suffering and you're too pig-headed to come around and admit that you goofed and put the coin in so that God can give you the blessing and the prosperity again. So, all of these things conspire. And yet, through it all, despite his questions and despite his grief and despite his downcast heart, Job constantly seeks for his Maker.

He constantly looks for God. This is his refrain throughout. Where is the mediator? Where is the answer? How can I talk to him? How can I get an answer back? Why has he forsaken me? So, the friends keep coming back with the same old song.

Here's the wisdom of the elders. Here's tradition. Here's pragmatism.

And it doesn't answer. It doesn't satisfy Job's questions and his longing. And Job gets no answer to his questions.

So, Elihu says, I'm about to explode. My nose is on fire. I've got to speak.

Here I go. Pay attention. And he begins his speeches.

And in those speeches, what does he say? He says, I have held back to let the older and wiser

speak first. And this is one of the first points of comparison with the Lord Jesus Christ. In many parts and in many ways, God spoke in times past to our fathers.

But in these latter days, this is the first chapter of Hebrews. He has spoken to us by a son. Jesus Christ comes at the fullness of times.

God has spoken in many different ways. Prophets, angels, visions, dreams, symbols, figures, types. And at the right time, the Lord Jesus comes and reveals the Father.

That's what Elihu is doing. Well, we come all the way up now, and he has basically led into this contrast. He defines two kinds of people.

And he says, yes, just like you all have been talking about, there are righteous people and there are wicked people. But what is the nature? Here's the point. Here's the key.

All the way through Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar, what was the definition of righteous and what was the definition of wicked? It was in their treatment of others, right? The wicked maltreats the poor and perverts justice and doesn't do honorable things in the gate and steals and oppresses and is unkind. It's all of these outward actions. Sinful actions define the wicked.

What has Eliphaz been telling us in these last few chapters? Righteousness is imputed by God. Righteousness is declared by God. And he doesn't declare it on the basis of how an individual is treating the poor or how honest he is in business.

That's not the definition. Now, certainly it's going to be expressed in those things, but what is Elihu's view? It's God's view. What does God look for? You remember Psalm 8? Turn just for a moment to the Psalms.

Psalm 8, one of a couple that we're going to look at. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth who have set Your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger, those who seem least strong, least capable.

That's where, ironically, God is winning the victory. God has ordained strength in those who are weakest and least likely from a human point of view. Wisdom of men is as foolishness with God.

God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. So there is this ironic reversal. It's a constant theme through the Bible.

The elder shall serve the younger. The last shall be first. And here, in Elihu's speeches, he says, when it seems like your prospects are darkest and you're suffering and you're in the night, that's your opportunity.

That's when you're going to learn the most. That's when God is going to be able to teach you

things that you can never come to. The beasts and the birds are never going to figure this out.

They're never going to understand their Maker. They're never going to have a song in the night like these. And you wouldn't think that your greatest blessing and your greatest insight and your greatest apprehension of new information from God, about God, the utterances of God coming to your soul would be taking place in this time of deep, dark, depressing suffering and deprivation.

It's counterintuitive. But so much of God's plan and purpose is to the unschooled, unspiritual human mind, counterintuitive. Why did the Jews miss Jesus when He came? Counterintuitive.

They were looking for the conquering king, riding in to drive out the Romans. Instead, here's a humble man without assets, without anything to impress them. Comes from a backwoods area of the country.

Probably had an accent from up there in Galilee that didn't impress people. He didn't sound erudite. He didn't sound educated until they started paying attention to the content of His speech.

And they found themselves refuted. They found themselves stumped. They found themselves without an answer because of the power of the content of His teaching.

He didn't teach like the scribes and Pharisees. He left the crowds amazed and astonished. Who would have thought? He just doesn't seem like the Messiah type.

I feel certain that if we could magically whisk a digital camera back to 30 A.D. and snap some photos of the Lord Jesus and His disciples, nobody would be using those as models for religious paintings and say, well, here's Jesus. Here's what He looked like. I mean, suppose just for a moment that the image on the Shroud of Turin was the Lord Jesus.

Have you looked at that face? Is that the kind of face that's going to motivate and reflect charisma and attract a huge following? It's just like it says in Isaiah. He has no form or comeliness that we should desire Him. Unimpressive.

God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise because spiritual things are not attained by conventional human means. This is the failure of science. This is the failure of empiricism.

Oh, I should be able to build my little scientific tower of Babel and reach up to heaven and find God. And if I can't, it's God's fault. What kind of a God have you got that I can't build a tower to reach Him? What kind of a God have you got that I can't discern and detect and measure and define and classify Him with my little scientific tools and procedures and measurements? There's something wrong with God.

I can't detect Him on my God meter. He's not giving off any radiation. He has no mass and no density and there's nothing on my spectrometer.

Something wrong with God. Not at all. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

If there is a single theme running through the speeches of Elihu, it is expect the unexpected. Spiritual expectation is unexpected to the carnal mind. It is amusing in a way to read the peregrinations and the mental machinations of atheists and secular humanists when they look at Christians and they can't figure out.

They think, you know, you seem like reasonably intelligent people. What is the matter with you that you believe the Bible and you believe in this Jesus and you have this faith in God and resurrection and eternal life and these wild stories from these ancient Hebrew texts and these old worked over third and fourth hand stories in the New Testament that were late and cobbled together after the fact. How can you believe this? What's the matter with you? And it really frustrates them.

You can see them just sort of figured to be pulling their hair out. They think, how can reasonable... Why does this persist? Why does this go on? Why didn't this die out long ago? It's ridiculous. It's counterintuitive.

It makes no sense. And it is by design. I think sometimes Christians feel a little bit cowed and a little bit embarrassed and kind of reluctant to say anything about faith because it is so thoroughly abused and denigrated in the modern empirical scientific world.

Oh, you poor, benighted, ignorant, backward, stuck in the dark ages fool. When are you going to wake up and get a subscription to National Geographic and Scientific American and come into the 21st century with the rest of us? Not at all. Listen to what Elihu is saying.

These people are not looking for their maker. They're looking everywhere but their maker. Science will never give you a song in the night.

Science can't even comprehend songs. Science can't comprehend intangibles. Science cannot attain to the utterances of God.

Can't. It's impossible. You might as well see if you can pick up the conversations of astronauts in the space station with a paper cup and a piece of string.

Well, if I just had a long enough string and a nice enough paper cup, maybe I could hear them talking up there. You can't. It's completely and utterly inadequate to traverse that distance and to accomplish that task.

Such are the tools of human wisdom. Science is nothing more than man making man his God. I believe that I can build the tower to ultimate wisdom, to ultimate happiness, to ultimate knowledge with my own two hands.

That's the abuse of science when it becomes more than just a tool to accomplish some good things. I love technology. I love modern conveniences, but my faith is not in them.

My happiness does not depend on them. This doesn't answer the ultimate deeper questions of life for me. Well, Elihu is making this point.

Now, he's sending this out to Job and to the three friends. Why? It's a two-pronged attack. What does it say to the three friends? All you can think about is Job is in line for chastisement from God because he has sinned.

Yes, there is chastisement for sin and God does punish the wicked, but you're singing a little one-note song here. There's a lot more going on. By talking about what can be learned in the darkness of night, what can be apprehended about the Maker, and that this is something God reserves for the mature, for the righteous, for those who are prepared to take it in.

You can't teach the calculus to elementary school students. You can't teach astrophysics to fourth graders. You have to have a frame of reference.

You have to have arrived at a place where you are ready to receive these things. There is a set of teaching tools that God uses with the mature that He cannot use with the babies. Hebrews chapter 5 At such a time as you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

You need milk and not solid food because solid food is for those who by reason of exercise have their senses developed to discern good and evil. Good and evil. Now, have you ever thought about that? Senses exercised to discern good and evil? Job is having to really exercise himself because what has happened to him appears to be evil.

Does God mean it to be evil? Or does God mean it for good? It's counterintuitive, isn't it? You lose all your children. You have a business disaster. You have physical illness.

You feel like you are at the point of death. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. Counterintuitive.

Can you discern that this is actually good and not evil? It takes maturity, doesn't it? This is Elihu's point. This is where Elihu is going. So, that's just a little bit of context, a little bit of orientation, a little bit of forest rather than the trees as we look here at Job 36.

Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants is just one of many references. It is at the point that we are seemingly weakest that God can manifest His strength. Something the Apostle Paul had to learn.

He was a very erudite man. He had a lot of gifts. He had a lot of attainments.

He had a lot of knowledge. And yet, God had to give him an affliction, a thorn in the flesh. And he asked three times to have it taken away.

And God said, No, I'm not going to take it away. It's there to buffet you because you will learn things and you will know things and you will be able to do things with that thorn in the flesh that you could never do if it was absent. So, in your weakness, God says, My strength is made manifest.

So, Paul said, I've learned to glory in my infirmities. I've learned to be happy about the bad things in my existence because that's where I learned things I could not learn in any other way. This is in general why the human race is trapped in a fallen nature, in a fallen world with a fallen enemy.

The world, the flesh, and the devil all around us until the Lord Jesus comes back. There are things we can learn here we'll never learn in the eternal perfect future. Well, back to Job 36.

So, Elihu is pressing this point. He's talked about, Who are the righteous? Who are the wicked? It's not simply a matter of their deeds. That's a simplistic view.

It's not necessarily inaccurate, but it's simplistic. God is the one who decides who is righteous. God casts His eyes down on the children of men to see if there are any who seek Him.

I gave you those passages last time about those who seek. Now, look at chapter 36. We pick up here in verse 6. He doesn't enliven or give life.

This is the intensive form of Chai. The idea here is that God does not give life or enliven the wicked. And these are the wicked in His eyes, from His point of view.

And this is singular because it is God who is the subject here. He does not enliven the wicked man. Single subject.

Singular object. God does not grant life in its fullness. He doesn't bless.

He doesn't make life worthwhile for the wicked. That's a singular. But justice to the poor, and this is plural, He gives.

Now, the word translated poor here is an adjective, ani. But unlike ani, that's the pronoun for me, this is spelled with the evil i-n instead of the aleph. So it's a-n-i, but it's an i-n-a.

And it means to be afflicted, to be humble, to be poor. It's used in Deuteronomy 24.12. Someone who gives you a pledge because he's in a bad way, he's distressed. He's an Israelite.

He's a citizen. He's your neighbor, but he's got a temporary problem, and so he needs a loan, and he's giving you a pledge. And it says, if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight.

If he's deprived, if he's got a sort of a temporary embarrassment going on, don't deprive him of his

pledge. If he's pledged his coat to you, say, well, fine. If for some reason you can't pay the loan back, we'll talk about you giving me your coat.

But for tonight, when it gets cold, you keep your coat. Even though it's a pledge, I don't need to hold it. I trust you.

You keep your pledge. This would be like when you go and take out a rental or something, and they say, well, we need a deposit, or leave your driver's license here while you go do this thing. And they say, no, no.

You keep that. You might need that. That's the poor.

Ani. Someone who is in need. Someone who is disadvantaged in some way.

Justice to the disadvantaged he gives. Now, verse 7. He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous. He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous.

The verb here, gara, means to reduce, to disappear, to cut off. And this is really from the perspective of the righteous man, the poor man. God's eyes don't dwindle away.

God's eyes don't recede. They don't reduce away. They are not withdrawn.

God does not... The word order here is not withdrawn from the righteous are his eyes. God's eyes never leave the righteous man. Watches him constantly.

Sort of his eyes on the sparrow and I know he watches me kind of a thing. Assuming you're righteous. Then it says, in your New King James, but they are on the throne with kings, for he has seated them forever.

Well, it sounds like his eyes are on the throne with kings, doesn't it? In English. And this is just the awkwardness of trying to get from the Hebrew to the English in a happy fashion. They, in the second line there, as you see is in italics.

He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but the righteous are enthroned like kings. He seats and exalts them forever. Or he will seat and exalt them forever.

God is the ruler with ruling authority. He does not abuse that authority, but he knows the difference between the wicked and the righteous. He knows the difference between the oppressed.

And now he's going to talk for a while about these righteous poor. He doesn't withdraw his eyes from them, but he seats them on the throne with kings forever and they are exalted. Any way you want to construe these ideas, it's poetic.

It doesn't hang together real well in a literal translation from Hebrew, but that's the idea. They, the

poor, are seated with kings on thrones and exalted forever. How many promises of this nature have we seen in Scripture? You think about the letters to the seven churches.

To him that overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, the Lord Jesus says. The 24 elders who sit on thrones and so on. Verse 8 says, if they are bound in fetters held in the cords of affliction, he tells them their work and their transgressions that they have acted proudly or defiantly.

And he reveals this for correction. He opens their ear, in other words, to instruction and commands that they turn from evil. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure or pleasantness.

If they do not obey, they shall perish by the sword and they shall die without knowledge. So, what is Elihu saying here? God's eyes are on the righteous. And yes, there is a time when if they screw up, he will discipline them.

He's acknowledging the truth of what the friends and what Job himself have said in earlier chapters. Of course, there is a time. This is a balancing statement.

There are many examples in the modern day. Let's talk about global warming. Just as a fairly innocuous example.

Now, if you do research about global temperatures over the last thousand years or so, you find out that our global temperature was warm in 1000 AD, 1100 AD and so on. And then, the earth began to cool. And you get to 1250 and 1300 and it began to really cool.

And you get into 1350 and 1400 and it cooled even more. The average global temperature went down by a couple of degrees, which doesn't sound like much, but this has a tremendous impact. And it's what they call the Little Ice Age.

And it began in the 13th to 14th century and it lasted for 300 or 400 years. It didn't really end until the early 1800s. And it's a fascinating study.

You can go back. People have said, you know, that painting of Washington crossing the Delaware was sort of a fanciful, imaginary thing because look at all those chunks of ice in the river. Not at all.

They say, you know, that Delaware, that thing hardly ever freezes. We haven't seen ice in the Delaware in decades. Well, we're not in the Little Ice Age anymore.

Concomitant with that, this is my illustration. I won't dwell on it for too long. But along with that, over the last many hundreds of years, solar activity was very low.

Sunspots and solar flares were at a low ebb. There weren't very many of them. And these

sunspots and solar flares, of course, generate great bursts of radiation, which stream out toward the earth.

And science is currently unwilling to say, they say, well, we don't really have any hard evidence to prove that solar radiation, sunspots and solar flares that produce these huge bursts of energy that can knock out satellites and take out cell phones and everything else as has happened in recent decades. Well, the fact that there was very little solar activity during the Little Ice Age doesn't really say anything about cooler temperatures on the earth. The sun in the last 70 years, from 1930 to the present, has had a higher level of activity in sunspots and solar flares than it has had in the last 8,000 years.

They have a variety of ways of determining this based on, I won't go into all the details, but they can tell the interaction of the sun with the outer atmosphere by air bubbles that are trapped in ice, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. There are lots of ways of figuring this out. They can figure out relative levels of solar radiation by going into the rocks and so forth, trapped in lava and all kinds of things.

In 8,000 years, we have not had the level of solar activity we've had in the last seven decades. So what's the cause of global warming? Oh, it's greenhouse gases, it's fluorocarbons, it's man's industrial stuff. Well, maybe it is, and maybe it isn't.

There is a correlation between the growth of man's industrial pollution into the air and fluorocarbons and halogens and all the other stuff that we produce and what happens to the ozone, and there's also a correlation with the sun. Which is it? Well, stay with me now. I'm like Elihu.

I'm saying, wait for it. It's coming. The point is coming.

A discussion of global warming would not be balanced if you didn't talk about both of those areas, right? If we want to be balanced, we need to talk about everything that relates to the subject. When we study the Word of God, we say we study it isagogically, which means in the culture and time period of the original recipients. Categorically, when we come to a subject, we try to find all of the other passages or at least representative other passages that deal with that same subject.

And exegetically, make sure that we're doing justice to the text in its context. Why? Balance. When you look at a subject, it needs balance.

Imbalance is when you have an idea and you go to the Bible and you find one verse and you say, look, you committed a sin. You should chop your hand off. You committed a sin.

You looked at a bad picture. You should pull your eyes out. Because that's what the Bible says.

What is the context? What is the rest of the witness of Scripture about self-mutilation? What is Jesus really talking about when he says if your eye offends, you pluck it out? Balance. You need

a comprehensive coverage of a subject to do it justice, right? That's what Elihu is doing here. He is revisiting what has been said in the previous 30-odd chapters by the four disputants about God's discipline.

Does God chasten? What does it say in the New Testament? Whom the Lord loves, He chastens. And He scourges every son whom He receives. Elihu is putting these arguments that were out of balance, out of context, misapplied to Job, in their proper context.

He told us back in chapter 32, I'm going to put right the things that you three friends have said. And I'm going to answer the questions that Job is asking. Well, now he's doing that.

So he's talking about the righteous. He's talking about the afflicted. He's talking about those who do seek their Maker, who are willing to learn and to say, teach me these pieces of knowledge that I don't have.

He does not withdraw His eye from the righteous. They will be seated on the throne with kings and exalted forever, eventually. In the meantime, they may be bound in fetters.

They may be held with cords of affliction. Now think about it. He just got through saying that these poor righteous people are going to be exalted and sitting on thrones with kings.

You don't take kings and bind them in fetters and afflict them, do you? There's a difference in time here. Ultimate destination, ultimate fate. What did Jesus say? If you want to end up where I'm going to end up, which is exalted, glorified, take up your cross and follow Me in that intermediate place of affliction.

These poor, if they are bound in fetters, if they're held in the cords of affliction, then He tells them their work and their transgressions. He reveals what they have done, in other words. This is the verb nagad.

It means to declare or tell a thing. It means to explain, to make a thing known, to reveal it. Now think about this.

Think about child training. Think about training a dog. We're in the middle of trying to train a dog.

Not that children and dogs are equivalent, but the principle is the same. When you're going to do discipline, if you want to do constructive discipline, the disciplinee has to understand why the negative consequence is coming about. It has to be clear or the discipline is no good.

If you wait too long, if a dog makes a mess in the house, but later on you come back and you find it, and it's a half hour or two hours later, you return and you find a mess, so you grab the dog by the scruff of the neck and drag him over and stick his nose in it, say, bad dog, bad dog, and throw him outside. The dog doesn't associate the mess on the carpet with your displeasure. He says, boy, the lead dog in the pack here, my master, is upset with me, and look at the punishment.

He's sticking my nose in bad stuff and throwing me out of doors. I wonder, what's the matter with him? They don't have a sense of moral right and wrong. Children, properly disciplined, have to understand.

You make the standard clear. You tell them ahead of time if you transgress this standard, if you fail to meet the standard, here is the consequence. When they do transgress or fail, you say, remember that talk we had about that standard? Have you transgressed it? Did you fail to meet it? What is the consequence? And we explain and make sure they understand.

Discipline is meaningless. Discipline is pointless if you do not know your transgression. In totalitarian regimes and dictatorships, secret police can come in the middle of the night, grab you and throw you in prison, and you're in there saying, what did I do? And some of those people never found out before they were executed.

Did somebody give their name up? Was it a mistake? Was it a confusion of identities? There's no explanation. God, when He disciplines the righteous... Now, this is an illumination. This is an explanation for the three friends and for Job.

Job has said for 30 chapters, I know nothing against myself. I have committed no wrong. Now, if God was causing Job to suffer for discipline, God would reveal to Job the reason.

God would make it clear. This is Elihu's point. If they are bound in fetters and held in the cords of affliction, He tells them their work.

He tells them their transgression. He tells them what they have done wrong. Point of application.

If we, as growing believers, try to live to please God, if we are suffering for discipline, if we are suffering as a means of God's correction, we will know where we have erred. It is God's desire to make that known. It is God's intent to be sure we understand.

It is not in God's interest. It doesn't conform to God's plan to confuse us and to say, well, I am going to rain all kinds of bad consequences on you, but you won't know why. I am just going to afflict you because you have been disobedient.

God is a lot smarter than that. God has a purpose and a plan. So, write it down.

If you are suffering for discipline, you will know why. There won't be any doubt in your military mind. I see.

This is a consequence of my behavior. Look at Israel in the wilderness. Did God not explain and say, because you have done this, here is the consequence.

What did God say to David? Because of the Bathsheba deal, here are the consequences. Was there any doubt in David's mind why his son died? Was there any doubt why there was

bloodshed in his own household? Was there any question in David's mind why the angel went forth and slew Israelites in the land and stopped over the threshing floor? Did David have any doubt why God did this? Did the Israelites have any question why serpents afflicted them in the wilderness until Moses raised up the bronze one? God always communicates the reason for discipline. That is Elihu's point.

He tells them their work and their transgressions. He tells them that they have behaved proudly in pride. Pride is the original sin.

Pride is the motivation for many of our sins. It is overweening esteem for self. Assigning too much importance to self.

That's what pride is. He also opens their ear to instruction and commands that they turn from iniquity. He opens their ear.

He doesn't wait for them to open their ear. He opens their ear. Why? Because they are the righteous.

They are the teachable. They are his servants and his children. This is beneficial.

It produces a change. It produces a benefit. This is the nature of suffering for discipline.

Elihu explains this in 30 chapters. We didn't get this from the three friends. But we get it from Elihu.

It puts it in context. It puts it in balance. Then they turn.

They obey and serve him. And they will spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure. If they do not obey, they will perish by the sword and die without knowledge.

Even the righteous, even the child of God can spiral out. Can mess up. You see this, I think, for example, in the situation of Balaam.

In the Old Testament. There are others you can think of. King Saul.

He did well for a while and then he peeled off. Well, this leaves us at the threshold of verse 13. The second half of chapter 36.

And this is where we will pick up next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for your grace and your faithfulness toward us.

Your loving kindness as you teach us, your children, in a variety of ways. We can learn from your word. We can learn through discipline.

We can learn by example. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our

hearts. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.