

22a JOB

This is Friday, the 20th of October, 2006. We continue tonight our study in the book of Job. We will resume ultimately in chapter 35.

Let's take a moment at the outset to exercise the privilege of our individual priesthood. We can represent ourselves before God's throne. We can claim His cleansing grace, recognize the ministry of God's Spirit in teaching us and equipping us for every good work through God's Word.

Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to spend time in fellowship and in the study of your Word. We thank you for the faithfulness of those men who have given their lives in your service in preserving the text and bringing it down to us so that we have the privilege of owning our own copy. We can study without fear of our freedom being infringed, without fear of persecution.

We are especially grateful for this book which comes down to us from most ancient times. We ask your blessing on us as we study it together. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You will remember the forest in which we have been examining trees, which is the book of Job. The first half of the book, up to chapter 32, was introduced with two chapters of narrative, followed by 30 chapters of dialogue between Job and his three friends. The three friends represent three general points of view.

We have Eliphaz, the Temanite, who is the elder statesman, the wise man who represents the accumulated wisdom of experience. His experiences extend to the dark angel that comes in the night and whispers in his ear. And he is the gray-bearded one who speaks first and speaks most.

We had Bildad. I always have to rein myself in from calling him the shortest man in the Bible. One of the first jokes I learned in Baptist Sunday School was, the shortest man in the Bible is Bildad, the shoe height.

But Bildad, it represents what point of view? Tradition. He constantly harks back, go and ask the elders, what is the viewpoint of tradition? What have we always believed? What did father and grandfather and great-grandfather say? And then we have Zophar, the Naamathite. And Zophar is the pragmatist.

Cut to the chase. Don't bother me with all this talk. You see the hill, take the hill.

This is what common sense says ought to be done. Just do this and let's get on with it. And these are viewpoints that prevail in our world today.

Many times when people are looking for assurance, when we look for a frame of reference, we will fall back on what is the wisdom that is commonly accepted. What do those who know have to say? What does our tradition, our family background, our cultural background tell us? What does

our common sense tell us? And from all three of these viewpoints, the conclusion has come that Job is suffering because he has messed up in some way. This is what everyone concludes.

Well, so now in this second section of the book where Elihu begins to speak, he says, I've waited patiently. I'm the young guy. I've listened to Eliphaz with his ancient wisdom.

I've listened to Bildad with his traditional view. I've listened to Zophar with the Marine Corps view. Cut to the chase.

Now I've got to speak because none of you guys have gotten it right. And this is the section in which we find ourselves, chapters 32 through 36 and 37. I was pretty sure it went further than that.

32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37. This is all monologue from Elihu. Now this is, as we have noted, probably one of the most misunderstood sections of the book of Job.

Most Christians have an understanding that Job is about undeserved suffering. Job is not under discipline from God. He didn't mess up and bring judgment upon himself.

And we know that Job comes out right in the end and his patience and his endurance are rewarded. It's the middle part of the book that kind of has never really gained a lot of traction. At least I never did really understand it until we engaged in this study.

But the fascinating thing to me is it's like so many other chiasms that we've seen in scripture where you have this beginning part and you have the ending part and they match, they complement one another and it's the thing in the middle that is most important. What is in the middle of this great chiastic structure in the book of Job? Well, Elihu and God. It takes all of these 30 chapters of the three friends and Job going back and forth to be on one side of the scale, one side of the teeter-totter there and Elihu and God are on the other side.

And these few chapters are the balance and the hinge point is right here in Elihu's statements. So I want to just briefly bring us through and we're just going to hit the wave tops here to get to where we are currently. We started in chapter 32 and Elihu said remarkable things.

He says, My nose is on fire. Literally. When it says the wrath of Elihu was aroused, this is an expression not of anger the way it's translated here, but of passion.

He is riled up. He is really about to burst as he says later on. Why? What is it that has forced him to his feet here in Elul in the proceedings? Well, you find it right there at the beginning of chapter 32.

Because they had found no answer. Because they had found no rejoinder. Because they hadn't solved the puzzle.

Have you ever... This happens to me quite a lot, especially if certain volatile subjects start being discussed. Theology is one of them. You can be sitting in a class or a seminary or something and all of us think we have certain things figured out and you sit there and you hear something being discussed and you feel like we're missing something here.

There's this big thing and one side is talking and the other side is talking and both sides are missing this great big central thing and you just have to sit on your hands and bite your lip to keep from jumping to your feet and saying, wait a minute, let me say something. And this is Elihu's nose just getting redder and redder and redder until finally he leaps up. What is this issue? There's no answer and yet they have condemned Job.

Elihu is passionate about standing up and expressing what he's about to say because Job has been condemned without cause. Elihu understands what the three friends do not. That Job is not guilty.

Elihu is on Job's side. Then we saw this remarkable section later on where he says, there is spirit in man. The breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

That was down in verse 8. And this corresponds to what he's going to say in 33, 4 and 5. The spirit of God has made me. The breath of the Almighty has given me life. I am going to be your mouth before God.

That's what he goes on to say. These are bold words from the youngest guy in the room. And this has suggested to us that Elihu foreshadows something unique, i.e. the future ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ as mediator.

Look at what Elihu says in 33, 9 and 10. I am pure without transgression. If I went down to Dallas Theological Seminary and there was a room full of doctors and professors and assistant professors discussing some deep point of theological wisdom, I would have to be pretty bold to stand up and say, all you guys, I've listened to you.

You've got it wrong. Sit down and be quiet. I am pure.

I've got the wisdom that's going to set this all straight. You know, that probably wouldn't last too long. They would very politely call security and I would be gone.

He says, I am pure without transgression. I am innocent. No iniquity is in me.

Well, he's describing what Job says. I'm sorry, he's quoting Job there. But up above he says, truly I am as your mouth, literally, your spokesman before God.

I also have been formed out of clay. No fear of me will terrify you, nor will my hand be heavy upon you. I am made of the same stuff as you, and yet I am going to be your mediator.

I'm going to represent you before God. The issue here is undeserved suffering. Most of us knew that coming into the book of Job.

What we didn't know is Elihu's point about undeserved suffering. The general point that all of us get in Job is, well, if you endure unto the end, you'll be delivered. He that endures to the end will be saved, and saved means delivered.

Job has double at the end. Faith in God pays. That's what we get in Sunday school.

But Elihu is making a much deeper and more profound point about undeserved suffering. This is what is raised into his feet. What is his point? He's talking about man's condition.

Job here represents the faithful Old Testament style believer. What do we know about the difference between the age of Israel and the age of the church? What's the difference? We know from the Gospels the Holy Spirit was not yet given, at least not in the sense of the church age ministry that he has, because Jesus Christ was not yet glorified. At the same time, we know there had to be an Old Testament ministry of some sort because the carnal mind is an enemy.

It takes the Spirit to understand things of the Spirit. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. And this wasn't reserved just for prophets and just for kings.

Anybody who got anywhere by faith in the Old Testament had some sort of teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. We can't learn without Him. He is the teacher.

But in terms of indwelling, sealing, filling, gifting, baptizing into the body of Christ, these things are unique and spelled out in the New Testament. So, here's Job. He is the archetype in the real sense.

He's earlier than Moses. He's earlier than the law. He's earlier than Israel in the wilderness, Joshua, the conquest, David, all of that.

He's back somewhere between Abraham and Moses, somewhere between 1800 B.C. and 1400 B.C. In that intermediate time when the Hebrews still seemed to have some ability to travel between Goshen and the land of promise, before they were enslaved and oppressed. We've studied some of that in our Old Testament. That's where he is.

So, this is a great book for probably Moses to bring into the canon of Israel as one of their first Bible books. There hasn't been any written scripture until Moses. Everything is handed down orally.

Fathers teach sons. Inculcate them with this knowledge. We know that there was this kind of knowledge.

Sacrifices. They know what's a clean and an unclean animal. They know how to build an altar.

They know the traditions of their elders. But they don't have a Bible. So, Job is an archetype.

One of the earliest stories. And he's not a descendant of Isaac or Jacob. He's a descendant of Abraham, but not of Isaac or Jacob.

These men are early cousins of the Israelites. It's fascinating because from beginning to end, God winds up teaching his chosen people Israel with another tongue and with other people. Many times he uses the Gentiles.

Jonah is a record of God making an example of the Ninevites. I can go to these godless pagans, tell them their city is going to be destroyed, and they are quicker to repent than my own people who've got ministries and prophets and everything else. They are Yonah, the dove.

They are just easily spooked. They don't stick. And so, what a great story.

What a great beginning book to give the nation of Israel, the book of Job, predates Genesis in terms of when it was put together as an account. Did Moses come across it in the libraries of Egypt? I don't know exactly when, but it's a very ancient account. I've showed you some of the allusions to the book of Job in the Old Testament.

It's evident that the prophets were aware of the text of Job, just as the New Testament authors are. So, again, why Job? Why this story? What is the central message of Elihu? We know it's about undeserved suffering, but what is it? Well, it comes in a series of movements, kind of like a big symphony. The first thing he does is introduce himself.

He says, you guys rolled. I'm young, but I'm going to speak anyway. And I'm going to give you this great wisdom that you have missed.

Job has said, I am pure without transgression. I am innocent. There's no iniquity in me.

Yet, God finds occasion against me. So, there's our theme. Undeserved suffering.

Job says, I don't get this. I don't understand it. So, Elihu says in verse 23 of chapter 33, if there is a messenger for this kind of man, this man who is suffering and his flesh is wasting away and so on, if there's a messenger for him, a mediator, one among a thousand, to show man his uprightness, then he is gracious to him and says, deliver him from going down to the pit.

I have found a ransom. Ransom and redeemer are related terms. We've had two previous speeches by Job that specifically address this.

Job said, where is my mediator in chapter 9? And he said, I know that my redeemer lives in chapter 19. Elihu says, Job has got this right. There is redemption.

There is mediation. Job says, where is it? Elihu says, I'm going to bridge this gap for you.

Basically.

Which is just a stunningly bold thing for him to say in this company. He says that if a man is suffering in this undeserved way, this mediator comes and delivers him from going down to the pit. His flesh is going to be young like a child.

He shall return to the days of his youth. Now, this is a picture of prosperity. It's a picture of renewal.

But what does it ultimately prefigure? What is the ultimate returning to youth? What is the ultimate coming up from the pit? It's resurrection. And this is an allusion. Very old, by the way.

A lot of people try to go to the Old Testament and say they didn't believe in resurrection. They had no idea that there was going to be a return from Sheol or anything. I really think passages like this stack against that view.

He is gracious to him and says, deliver him from going down to the pit. I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be young like a child's.

He shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray to God and he will delight in him. He shall see his face with joy for he restores man to his righteousness.

Now, let me sort of give the punchline here of where we're going in our study tonight. What is Elihu talking about? Elihu, I think, is suggestive of the Lord Jesus Christ. He prefigures the role that Jesus Christ is going to play.

The Lord Jesus is incarnated. He empties himself, takes on the form of a servant, becomes like us, tested in all points like as we are yet without sin. I have not come to the world to condemn the world.

The purpose of the Lord's coming is that through him we might be delivered. He is our mediator. He takes of our same substance, our clay.

Now, who is the ultimate example of undeserved suffering? It's the Lord Jesus. In his humanity, when he looks at taking on the penalty for all of our sins, do you think he could be thinking some of the same thoughts as Job? I have been faithful. I have fully carried out the will of the Father, and yet here is this awful suffering.

In the garden, he says, Father, if it's your will, I would just as soon pass up this cup. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. And I think that the Lord Jesus, in his humanity, living the life that he calls us to live, setting himself as our example, living in the power of God's word and in the power of God's spirit, was comforted in his humanity by thinking through every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, the Old Testament scriptures like these of Job.

Think about Job, who, in the furtherance of God's plan and purpose, suffered and endured a great series of tragedies and had to trust that it was worth it, that relationship with God was still to be pursued and still to be cultivated, even though the short-term benefits and blessings had disappeared, and in its place came great suffering. This is the choice that the adversary offers Jesus in his humanity, isn't it? Here are the benefits of being king of the world. Here are the benefits of being the Son of God.

Angels will bear you up. You can have all of these kingdoms of the earth. You can feed yourself.

Why suffer with hunger? Why delay taking the throne of Israel and ruling the kingdoms of the earth? Why not publicly manifest yourself by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple? Why are you out in the wilderness? Why are you preaching to these crowds by the sea and up in the mountains instead of going to Jerusalem, jumping off the temple, making a big splash and calling all Israel to put you on the throne? There is a delay. There is a need for faith that God's plan, which calls for the cross before the crown, is meaningful and purposeful. Well, when Elihu introduces this concept, and we've gone through a lot of the details, and we get to the end of chapter 33, he stops and he says, Job, give ear and listen to me, in verse 31.

Hold your peace and I will speak. If you have anything to say, answer me. Speak, for I desire to vindicate you.

I desire to justify you. I desire to demonstrate that you have done no wrong. But if you're not going to speak up, then I've got some more to say, so listen to me.

And it's very interesting to me that after this initial introduction of the subject, introduction of himself and introduction of the subject, Elihu says, Job, do you have anything to say? And Job is silent. Job basically, by his silence, as much as says, well, carry on. I'm interested.

You have my attention. Keep going. So in chapter 34, Elihu continues.

And he quotes Job again. He quoted him once before in chapter 33 and said, Job says, I'm pure. I'm without transgression.

And yet God has this case against me. I've got this undeserved suffering. I don't understand it.

So he quotes him again in verses 5 and 6. Job has said, I am righteous, but God has taken away my justice. Because I am righteous, it's kind of like Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar have said, I would expect that my blessing would continue and that that hedge that God has placed about me would continue to exist and that I would continue to see these benefits. These benefits have been taken away, and this seems unjust.

It seems puzzling, to say the least, that as a man who is faithful to God, this tragic set of circumstances has befallen me. Elihu brought it up once. Now he's bringing it up again.

Now he's going to advance the argument. He gave Job a chance to say something. Job didn't.

He says, alright, let me continue. Here's my point. God ultimately repays men according to their work.

That's verse 12. God is not unjust. He's not going to reward the wicked and he's not going to punish the righteous.

Everything's going to come out alright in the end. As far as that truth has been expressed, it's good. But it's not applicable here.

And this is why my nose is on fire. This is why I'm like a wineskin about to burst. Because you stopped short.

What you said about God is true. He does reward the righteous. He does punish the wicked.

But, he amplifies this in verse 19. God is not partial to princes. He doesn't regard the rich more than the poor.

They're all the work of his hands. Verse 25. He knows their works.

And those who reject him are going to be overthrown. Verse 27. If they turn back from him, they don't consider any of his ways.

They cause the cry of the poor to come to him. He hears the cries of the afflicted. Justice is going to prevail, ultimately.

But, here is this interim period of time where something unjust seems to be taking place. Here is Jesus presenting the kingdom to the nation of Israel. And they're rejecting him.

Here is the Lord Jesus who is perfect in every way. And he's being ridiculed and reviled and mocked and rejected by his own people. We've seen this in the Gospel of John.

He came into his own and his own received none. It's upside down. John the Baptist said, this is the Lamb of God.

He's here to take away your sin. Jesus says, I haven't come to condemn. I've come to deliver.

And everything is upside down. You would think he would be embraced and feasted and accepted and held up on high. And it's just the opposite.

It doesn't make any sense. If you have had experiences like this, and I know you have, and I have, sometimes you know academically, you know intellectually, that things ought to be a certain way. You have to go in and get some criticism, some constructive criticism.

You've gone out and maybe you try out for something. I remember once I tried out for choir when

I was at Navy. They told the plebes, they said, especially if you're on the other side of the Mississippi and you don't have places to go for these weekends and things, as a plebe you want to try to get some extracurricular activities.

So I thought, well, I'll go see if I can join the choir. So I went and tried out. And the guy was there and he said, okay.

And he handed me a piece of sheet music with some notes and some words. He said, sing this. Well, I can't sight read.

And I can't sing either. But I thought, you know, all they can do is say no. So I took a stab at it.

I thought, well, when the notes go up, my voice should go up. When the notes go down, my voice should go down. I know the difference between a quarter note and a whole note.

I had one year of piano lessons, so, you know. And I just absolutely slaughtered it. And I could see him, the color draining from his face, you know.

And he was just trying not to wince and trying to be polite. And so then he said, come over here. And he went over to the piano and he played the tune.

Well, I have a decent ear. And so once I heard the tune, well, then I could follow that reasonably well. And he said, well, you know, we have two choirs.

We have the one up in the front and we have the one up in the back. You can be in the one in the back. But he said, here's what you need to work on before you even come to practice.

And he said this, that, and the other. And it's really hard to hear negative things. And intellectually, you say, I know that this is helpful.

I know I need to hear this and all that. But there is an emotional, sensitive part of us that always just wants to go wank, wank. You're hurting my feelings and our lip wants to shoot out.

And we feel bad. No one enjoys being rejected. Even by people that we know their opinion means nothing.

You know, you can see a bunch of people hanging out at the mall and you think those people don't know anything. But if they make a comment about the way you look or your clothes or they whisper to one another and start laughing, well, you start feeling bad. And you say, wait a minute.

Why am I feeling bad? Who cares? But you feel bad anyway. It's irrational. You get my point.

It's irrational. Well, the Lord Jesus partook of our humanity. And this is a part of our humanity.

And this is one of the areas of temptation. This is one of the areas where the flesh can get at us

is our emotions don't really have the ability to reason. And our reason can't always control our emotion.

And there are times when we shouldn't feel bad. If we could just stay on a nice, cold, reasonable academic plane, we could sail in a steady fashion right through a circumstance. But it's our emotions.

And they keep coming up when we get defensive. And we want to respond. And we want to defend.

And we want to right the scales. And wait a minute. This is wrong.

And you don't understand. I'm not as bad as you make me out to be. And here's the reason that this looks like it does.

And it's a really difficult thing. Well, I think this is part of the Job test. And it's part of what the Lord Jesus went through on our behalf.

It is hard to be rejected. Especially when your motives are pure. Your cause is just.

You're doing everything right. You have done everything right. You are not at fault.

You're adhering to the plan. The Lord Jesus did this perfectly. And look at the thanks he got.

And it wears on you. Our human flame pulls at us. And it rips and snags and tears at our soul.

Jesus stood up above Jerusalem. And he didn't have a cold clinical analysis and say, Well, you know, I can tap my omniscience here and realize that there are 127,319 people in Jerusalem. Of them, there are 212 that really get it.

And the rest of them are going to reject me. He wept. He cried over Jerusalem.

He said, How often I would have gathered you under my wings like a hen gathers her chicks. And you would have none. And he wept.

It's a hard thing to be in the right and be considered wrong. It's one of the hardest things there is. This is a big part of the Job test.

And Job has been saying this in every one of his responses. He says, Wait a minute, Eliphaz. Wait a minute, Bildad.

Wait a minute, Zophar. You've got this wrong. And now Elihu says, Look, Job, I'll be your mouth.

Because Job has not given a reason. Three guys say he's guilty. He says he's innocent.

But none of them has said, Why would God be doing this? This is Elihu's response. That's where

we are right here in chapter 34 and 35. God is not partial.

God's justice is perfect. But God will delay justice. God will delay the ultimate reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked for a reason.

What is this reason? Verse 25 of chapter 34. He knows their works. He will overthrow them in the night because they turned their back from him and so on.

But here's the question. And this is right in the middle of Elihu's monologue. Right in the middle of our big fiasco structure.

If we get this, we've got the key to the book of Job. Look at verse 31 of chapter 34. Has anyone said to God, I am bearing this.

I'm not going to offer resistance here. Teach me what I do not see. Teach me what I do not see.

This is God's purpose. One of the most difficult New Testament passages is the one that says, Jesus learned obedience. How? Through suffering.

I wouldn't think that you could teach the Lord Jesus anything. How can you teach the Son of God, the incarnate Word that's pre-existent, eternal, the Alpha and the Omega? In his humanity, Jesus came to know things, specifically through suffering, that you just can't find out any other way. Now, Job says, I am not guilty.

I haven't transgressed. I've been faithful to God. I love God.

The biggest tragedy in this whole deal is God seems far away and I'm looking for my maker. Where is my God? I miss that sense of fellowship. You can almost hear Job saying, my God, why have you forsaken me? Where are you? I don't feel like I can approach.

I don't feel like my words could be heard. And if I stood before you, I'd need a mediator. I'd need somebody to heal this rift.

I don't know why it's there because I'm not guilty of anything. But just hide me in a cleft somewhere until your wrath has passed. And then bring me back out so that we can get back to like it was before.

Elihu's whole point here is, God can teach the receptive believer things in suffering that he can learn in no other way and in no other place. Why does God leave us here after salvation? Wouldn't it be great if we heard the gospel, we accepted Christ as our Savior, and we disappeared off the face of the earth and went straight to glory? Why stay here? Why am I? How come we're not? Remember, is it the Armstrongism? There's some. No.

That's a different thing. There's some people who think you are perfect at the point that you're saved. You.

I don't know how you can make that work. I personally know myself that I probably sinned like two and a half minutes after I got saved. And we sin repeatedly.

But why? Why is our salvation gradual? Why isn't it immediate? Jesus healed immediately in almost every case. I can hardly wait to get to some of the miracles in the gospel of John. But why are we not perfected at the point that we trust Christ? God is at work in us to will and to do His good purpose.

But He doesn't just hit us with lightning. Why? We learn through the things that we suffer. And this is Elihu's point.

And we've talked about the difficulty of the Hebrew. We've talked about how old this is and how difficult it is. This is poetic.

It's high. It's a hard thing to reach up to. But look at the main things.

Elihu returns in verses 35-37 to quoting. Instead of quoting Job now, he's quoting the three friends. Men of understanding say to me, wise men who listen to me, Elihu, listen, Job is speaking without knowledge.

He says he's innocent, but he's just not fessing up. His words are without wisdom. And in the New King James, they end the quote there.

But we've seen that this continues. This is still the friends speaking. Job needs to be tried to the uttermost.

God just hasn't really put enough discipline on him to get him to confess his sin. Oh, that Job were tried to the uttermost. Put some more pressure on him.

And then he... Who said this in the beginning of the book? Whose argument is this? What kind of friends are these that are basically speaking the satanic argument? God just needs to put a little more pressure on Job, and then he'll buckle. That's what this is. Oh, that Job were tried to the uttermost.

His answers are like those of wicked men. He's deceitful. He's unrepentant.

He's like a wicked man. He's adding rebellion to his sin. Now, not only has he sinned, but now he's rebelling against God and not acknowledging it and receiving God's forgiving grace.

God's punishing him, and he's unrepentant, unresponsive. This is the accusation. And he's just multiplying his words against God.

It's what will be, in the Mosaic law, the sin of the high hand. The sin of rebellion. So, Elihu now, in chapter 35, turns to Job.

Remember, all the you's in 34 were plural. Now, in chapter 35, they change to singular. We can't see it in English too well.

But he says, do you, singular Job, do you think this is right? Are these guys correct? Do you say, I'm more righteous than God? I know God thinks I'm guilty, but I know better. Is that your argument? Because you have said, where is the advantage to me? What is my profit? And this is a legitimate quote of Job. He says, what good does my faithfulness do when I'm suffering just like a disobedient man? What's the point? Do you see how this is being presented by Elihu? Elihu is answering this observation by Job.

Everybody says, Job's getting treated pretty much just like a wicked man. So much so that we think he probably is a wicked man. Elihu says, look, you've asked the question, Job.

What advantage is it to me to remain faithful to God? God seems to have removed himself from me. All my blessings and so on are gone. He says, I will answer you and your companions.

I'm going to answer your companion's accusation that you're really a wicked man. And I'm going to answer you that you don't see what the point is of continuing. Look to the heavens.

Look to the clouds. What you do is inconsequential. You remember this part of the chapter.

He says, your actions, good or bad, are going to affect a little narrow periphery of people right around you. But you're not impacting God. God isn't upset as though you've hurt God with your sin or that you've helped God with your righteousness.

God's impartiality rises way above that. And here's the point. And this is the main point from our review of these chapters up to this point.

The issue, this is Elihu's summary. The issue when God looks at man is not what you do. And we're talking about believers here.

His people. God is not so interested in what we do. God is interested in what we learn.

God is interested in what we learn. Why are we here? What is the purpose of our time on earth between salvation and death or the rapture? Reunion with the Lord Jesus. What's the point? Grow in grace and in knowledge.

The word of God is alive and powerful. Profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. So that we can become complete and be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

When bad times come, there are two kinds of people. And Elihu describes these who are under discipline from God. And you look at verse 10.

These who suffer and don't cry out, where is God my maker? Where is the one that gives me songs in the night? That gives me that view beyond the immediate moment. A lot of people in the night are basically afraid of the dark. And you're in the night and all you do is look around and say, it's dark.

Get me a light. Get me out of here. Dark, dark, dark, dark, dark.

That's all you can think about is the dark. The learner, the teachable believer says, well, I know it's dark, but where is my maker? Where is the one that can give me a song, a celebration, even though it's dark? I can sing a song in the night. Where is he? Where is the one that will teach us more than the beasts of the earth and make us wiser than the birds of the heavens? And, of course, this is an easy application to those who say, you can't learn anything except by empiricism.

Let's observe nature. Let's observe through science. And we'll learn about ourselves by studying the DNA of rats and so on.

We'll study the beasts, we'll study the birds, and this is how we'll arrive at knowledge. Where is the maker? Elihu says, these cry out. There are people who cry out in oppression and they want the pain to stop.

They want the darkness to go away. They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty. But no one is saying, where is my maker? The purpose of this oppression is to turn our attention toward God.

So when you get to the exhortation, verse 14, Elihu, talking to Job, says, Although you say you do not see Him, you're looking for God. You say, He seems far away. I don't know what the problem is here, how the rift formed.

You say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him. Remember that He is just. Remember that He is fair.

If you're not guilty, He is not punishing you. So you must wait for Him. And you can put a big circle around verse 14.

He's just. Wait for Him. Wait for His justice.

In this world you shall have tribulation, Jesus said. But cheer up. I've overcome the world.

You say, well, you didn't overcome it today. Today, I look around in the world and I see North Korea, and I see Iraq and Iran, and I see all these naysayers and ne'er-do-wells and all the problems and trouble and famine and slaughter of people all over the place. Jesus says, well, there's tribulation that is for a set time.

Remember the church at Smyrna? What does the Lord Jesus promise them? You will have tribulation, and there's a set period of time, ten days. You will have tribulation ten days. He doesn't say, well, I saw that tribulation coming, and so I diverted it.

Now it's not coming at all, because you've been faithful. Endure unto death, and you get the crown of life. It's a topsy-turvy thing.

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. It's at the point that you are willing to not pursue life anymore that you're going to get the crown of life. God wants to teach the teachable.

The teachable are those who, when the oppression comes, when the darkness comes, when the night comes, they say, where is my maker in this? Where is the song in the night that God wants to teach me? This is the jewel at the center of the setting in the whole book of Job. This is what the undeserved suffering theme centers on. Not just that enduring it is worthwhile because there is reward at the end, but there is something that God can teach, teachable believers, that is only teachable in this context.

And it's only going to be learned by those who have the faith to walk through that valley of the shadow. So, how badly do you want to know the maker? How badly do you want to understand the things of God? Is it worth it? Do you think Job, at the end, when he had double of everything and a whole new family, and God himself came down and spoke to Job and said, here is my servant that has spoken rightly of me. You better get him to offer some sacrifices on your behalf.

Do you think that would be something to hold precious in your soul forever after? That God had vindicated you and God had blessed you and that God's justice had come through? Job would have never had that without this intermediate section. Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, we'll pick up in verse 1 of chapter 36 and we'll move up to where we are getting to some new verses, new material.