

29a JOB

This is Friday, December 15, 2006. We only have two weeks left in this year and it will have gone totally under the bridge. We continue tonight our study in the book of Job, resuming at chapter 39.

Actually chapter 40. And this soon will also be a study which is under the bridge. We only have a few lessons left in the book of Job.

It's been a, for me at least, a very fascinating trip in the greatest detail I have ever endeavored to cover in this book. Let's take a moment as we continue our studies in it to go before the Lord in prayer. It gives us the chance to make sure that the benefits of our study will transcend our human efforts and will be something that God can accomplish and can use in our lives.

Shall we pray? Father, we have gathered once again as a fellowship to spend time together in the study of your word, contemplating the truth that it contains, and in this particular passage looking directly at words that you yourself spoke well over 3,000 years ago. We thank you for the opportunity to partake of these things, for the preservation of your word down through the centuries, so that it is still carrying its power and its meaning and its applicability for each one of us, just as it did from earliest times. We thank you that we live in a country where we have the freedom to assemble and the freedom to spend this time together.

We know that there are many places in the world that are turning ever darker as the light of the gospel wanes and as other religions and as oppressive powers overshadow them. We ask your blessing on those believers who do continue to seek to live their lives in the light of your word in those places. We ask for your protection and your blessing on them, and we ask your blessing on our study this evening.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We have come to chapter 40.

God Himself is speaking to sum up and wrap up and conclude this study, this look at human life as it is reflected in the man Job. If you think about Job, you have a lot of things that pertain to earthly existence. He has had a lot of the best things of life.

He has had a lot of the worst things of life. His experience in just a short time in chapter 1 reflects both the best and the worst that one could imagine experiencing. So in terms of breadth or in terms of the horizontal plane, you have Job with enemies who slay and kill.

You have natural disasters, and you have good friends who are willing to sit there for a week without saying a word, grieving with him, sorrowing with him, and waiting for an opportunity to speak with a view toward comfort and encouragement, at least initially. And so just in a real brief time, we have an extraordinary look at the extremes of human life. Also, we have the vertical component where Job and his tribulations are down on earth, but we get a glimpse, a rare

glimpse, by the way, into the heavenly realms, into the angelic conclaves, the angelic meetings that take place, the sons of God gathering before God, and the conversation that takes place between the Lord God and Satan himself.

And so just in the first chapter, we have a very comprehensive picture of human life summed up and represented in Job. From that time, we saw the dialogues take place, Eliphaz, the Temanite, Bildad, the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Amethyte. And in those, we saw different approaches trying to make sense of the calamities in particular that have taken place and the swings of the needle in Job's life.

They talk about how Job used to be prosperous. Job himself talks about how he was honored in the gate, was a beneficiary to so many people, and was transferred from that positive end all the way to the negative end of the spectrum. And so his friends comment on this and try to grapple with it in the light of the word of God that they know, the viewpoint that they have in their status as believers.

And it's very informative. It's been informative, I think, for us to go through their arguments in some detail and in some depth to see the way they try to understand what it is that has happened to Job because it doesn't seem to fit. And so what do they do? They try to shoehorn it into their understanding.

If he has suffered calamity, he must have done something wrong. And they justify this in different ways. We've studied all that in great detail.

Then we came to the early chapters in the 30s, 32 and 33, and you have Elihu stepping forward, the fourth man. Kind of reminds you of Daniel's three friends, and then there's a fourth man in the fire. And you have Job's three friends, and then you have the fourth man standing there.

And Elihu speaks and gives us this great bridge, transition, and introduction to the words of God himself spoken from the whirlwind. And Elihu gives us this perspective. He, after so many chapters of looking at the horizontal and finding it insufficient to explain what's going on, Elihu lifts everyone's gaze upward, ultimately seeing the storm and the cloud blowing in, which is going to be a harbinger and a mark and sign of the presence of God himself.

And we've seen how closely Elihu reflects and anticipates the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, who introduces and reveals the Father, who is the way to the Father. Then God himself speaks. And this is where we are now in the book of Job.

We find ourselves in chapter 40. God began speaking in chapter 38 and talked about creation, the environment in which we live. He's gone back really to basics.

He goes back essentially to Genesis. Where were you when this whole thing was put together? He moves from that, and we saw that his first speech is sort of like the two tables of the law.

There are ten sections.

Five that deal with the vertical, the large grandeur of the universe and God's power in it. And then the second one's dealing with the earth. And in the earth, the animals representing different kinds of people.

And if you go back and read with this in mind, initially you might think, well, it just seems like he's talking about wild goats and he's talking about ostriches, and I'm not really sure I see people involved in this. But as we continue our study tonight, I think we will gain an even better sense of context and why it's so important to discern that that's exactly what's going on in that section. God creates the environment of the universe, and into it he puts living creatures.

And these animals represent different kinds of people. And you remember our old friend, the chiasm? We haven't talked about a good old-fashioned chiasm lately, but this is what we have. We have a chiasm.

Now, think about the book of Job. Just stop everything for a minute and think about the book. When we started out, we had Job and his situation.

And you know, everybody knows how the book of Job ends. We're going to end up talking about Job and his situation. Right now, we're in the part just before that, and what's happening? We have God talking.

And what did we have just inside that bracket at the beginning? God talking. And Satan being addressed. And Satan's arguments.

And Satan's points. And Satan's court case in heaven being addressed. This is what we are coming to in this second speech of God, beginning here in chapter 40.

It's going to have three parts. God is going to talk to Job himself and ask him a few questions. And then we're going to have Behemoth and Leviathan.

And don't kid yourself, I don't care how many commentators say how many things and how many ways Behemoth and Leviathan are pictures of Satan. Just get used to it. That's what it is.

Look at the structure of the book. That's what's going on. And what God is going to talk about is his control and his management of Behemoth and Leviathan.

And that's exactly what we had going on in chapter 1 and 2. God allowing a certain measure of freedom to Satan. And that's what you have here. And man has a relationship to Behemoth and to Leviathan just as man has a relationship to Satan and the fallen angels, which is detailed in this book.

Within that, what did we have? All of those speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Man

grappling with the vicissitudes of life as reflected in Job's experience. Remember? Different approaches.

Mystical approach, pragmatic approach, traditional approach. And what did we just see in God's first speech? Within the maze, within the laboratory experiment, within the constructed environment that God has created, you have people represented by these different kinds of animals and their approach. You've got the hard-charging armored cavalry horse, who you can blow the trumpet and say, stop, stop, stop, the sound retreat, sound backup, sound halt, and he won't quit.

He loves the javelin and the rattle of sabers, and he just goes in literally where angels fear to tread. You've got the ostrich that's just the opposite. Sticks its head up, first sign of danger, off it goes, leaving its egg behind.

You have the lions and the ravens, predators looking for the weak, looking for the straggler, opportunists, looking for that which is going to be the easier prey, and they're sort of unassailable. You have the eagle up in the rocks, watching, seeing from afar, another kind of opportunism, another kind of inaccessibility, inaccessibility of a different sort. And we talked last time about how the birds start harking back to demonic influence and demonic oppression, powers of the air, and there are people who are, I wouldn't say in league with Satan per se, but they are heavily influenced by satanic doctrine and doctrine of demons.

They are caught up in the way of this world, the ruler of this world who stands condemned, and they have fully bought into his whole operation. So there is a structure, there is a symmetry, and there is a consistency in this book, and recognizing that structure helps us in the task of interpretation, making sure that we observe, interpret, and apply correctly. Well, God has finished the human being analysis section in chapter 39, actually chapter 38 and 39.

He started talking about the heavenly realms and things that are beyond man's experience and control, and then he came into the earth, and now in chapter 40, he addresses Job once again, and he says, can you... He challenges him. He says, gird up your loins, literally, and I will question you, and you will answer me. That's what he says here in chapter 40, verse 7. But he began a little bit earlier saying, shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Shall the one who has a case, a wreath... This is the same thing that God says about His own people much later on, the nation of Israel.

I have a case against you, O Israel. It's a prosecution. It's an issue.

In the colloquial in Oklahoma, they say, I've got a bone to pick with you. I've got something stuck in my craw. I've got a burn under my saddle.

I've got a thing that needs to get ironed out here. So, if you've got an issue with the Almighty, are you going to slap some wisdom on me here? I've just explained how I put the universe together

and how I've got all this stuff managed and worked out the balances in nature and by extension in the human race. If you think about it, one of the reasons people think there is no God, if you ever get around unbelievers, and they say, there can't be a God because look at all of the injustice and suffering in the world.

Look at the starving children, hither and yon. Look at the horrible cases of abuse and just awful, awful things that people do to one another. They say, if there was a God, how could He allow that to go on? He's either too weak to do anything about it or He's too uncaring to do anything about it.

And in either case, He's not worth being worshipped as a God because it's just unconscionable, unconscionable that God would let evil take its course in the world. What has this last chapter just told us? God has set the limits and the bounds and they may not be where we would set it, but that's where He has set it and He's smarter than we are. Parents typically don't set the bounds where their children would like them to either.

In the other direction, children say, my parents are too strict. I don't get to do what I want to do. I can't eat what I want to eat and go where I want to go and watch what I want to watch and play with what I want to play and so forth.

But in this case, people say, God has set the bounds too loose. There's too much sin and evil and suffering in the world. Why does God allow that? This is the easiest argument in the world to answer.

Any time you're in a conversation, if you go mingle with people during the holidays and they say, oh yeah, you're still a Christian, you're still Bible studying, I don't understand that. What kind of a God do you worship? Look at these other religions and how abusive and extremist they are. You're just another religion.

You're just like them. They're all alike. Religion is a curse and a bane and an evil in society.

And you'll get tarred with the brush of every... Ever notice how they call all of the terrorists right-wing extremists? Right-wing? Ultra-conservative? The Imams and the Mullahs are conservatives? Gee, thanks. Well, the point here is when someone starts bringing things up and saying there can't be a God because of the evil in the world, why do you think God allows that? That's one of the points of the book of Job. Why does God allow these things? That sin and evil can play out.

It's the same reason you let your child do a reckless thing knowing that they're going to hurt themselves. I've told you three times, don't touch that hot skillet and I'm not going to tell you again. They reach out time number four and touch the hot skillet and get a big old blister.

You say, I told you. I told you you shouldn't touch that thing. I told you to be careful riding your bike.

I told you it's too soon to take off the training wheels. You bent them up and tried to ride without your training wheels and now look at you. Your leg's all skinned up.

I told you a million times, don't do this, don't do that, and do the other. And now look at you. You're injured.

You're banged up and you've suffered. You've lost something. You broke a thing.

I told you to be careful and you weren't. Now look. And parents consciously let consequences happen because words do not compel and words do not convince.

Sometimes for the hard to convince, the only thing that convinces is the hard, cold reality of experience. God told the angels in eternity past, don't be rebelling. Don't be going off on your own.

Don't try to disconnect yourself from me. Bad things will happen. And a third of them didn't believe him and went away anyhow.

And God says, well, see this big burning lake I just created over here? That's where you're going. And they said, I don't understand. And God said, alright.

I'll take a more limited creature that doesn't have the powers that you've got. Can you imagine what would happen if God allowed an angelic civilization to run free the way He allows human civilization? We have a short lifespan. Why do you think there's death? Angels don't die.

Why do humans die? Why are humans stuck on the ground? And why are humans so limited in their power and in their travel and in their scope? Because God can let evil run loose here and it's got limits and bounds. It's got bars and gates. Can you imagine if you turn the angels loose with their power in a corrupt civilization? God has restricted them down here and given them very little that they can do.

Did you ever wonder why those demons wanted to get into the swine? They can't go and do except in a very limited set of parameters. God has put bars and gates around them. But God says, you know what? We'll let this... I'll show you in just these little limited creatures.

It's kind of like I've got this test tube with this plague virus in it. Now, I could turn this plague virus loose in the human race or I could turn it loose in this little cage of rats. Which do you want to see? I believe I'll just turn it loose in the little cage of rats.

You watch the rats and watch them swell up and get these sores and all of the horrible effects of plague and you'll know why I don't let this out amongst human civilization. Well, in a very crude analogy kind of way, that's what God has done with the human race. He put the tree in the garden, let Adam and Eve fall, and He said, now, angels, sitting in the stadium here, watch this.

We'll let people have free will. We'll let them reject relationship with God. And let's watch what happens.

Let's see how well they do apart from relationship with God. And human history is nothing but a litany of failures and tragedies and humanity to man with all of the corruption and violence that proceeds. The further people get from God, the worse it is.

So, what's going on in the book of Job? What is Satan's original contention? Job hasn't experienced evil. Let him experience some evil and he'll decide that you're not worth worshiping. Isn't that what happens in the world today? Isn't that Satan's argument today? Look at all the evil in the world.

You shouldn't worship God. And it's the best argument for worshiping God. But God has to let sin become sin indeed.

He has to let evil become evil indeed because this is the one demonstration. Once God finishes with this demonstration, we don't have to do it again. In the eternal future, there's not going to be any more people running around with a sinful nature and a fallen world and a corrupt environment under the curse.

We can refer back. We've already been there and done that. And we don't have to take God's word for it.

It has been observed. It's been seen. There are going to be millions upon millions of eternal creatures who say, listen, I was there.

I lived in corruption. And no way are any of us going to be deciding that we're going to raise ourselves above the stars of God and be like the Most High and go off on our own way and do our own thing. It's been tried.

And you see that smoke ascending from the lake of fire over there? There's a good reason for that. It's going to be like the eternal flame. It's going to be like the thing on JFK's grave.

Keep on as a memorial and as a reminder. The smoke ascends forever and ever. The worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

Why? Is God big on memorials and reminders in the Old Testament with Israel? This shall be a statute for you throughout your generations. This will be a memorial. Pick the rocks up out of the middle of the Jordan and stack them up as a memorial.

Explain them to your children when you walk by. You know why that pile of rocks is there? You know where those rocks came from? Let me tell you. That's what's going on here.

So, in chapter 38 and 39, these different kinds of animals, these are different kinds of people who

still don't get it. God gives them leeway, gives them freedom, and this is what they do with it. So now, God says, Now, are you going to find fault with me? Do you think there's something wrong with this plan where I have constructed nature to make these pictures and to establish these examples and to demonstrate these principles? Look what happens to the egg when the ostrich runs away.

Look at what happens to the not-so-strong and not-so-smart when there are these voracious predators around. Look what happens when there's a lack of self-control, when the horse goes charging in and just has the taste for battle and won't quit. Look what happens when there is not domestication, where there is not the structure and the relationship with God that is required for there to be good, for there to be tov.

So, in chapter 40 now, God asks Job, Are you going to tell me something here? Have you got a beef with the way I've got it set up? And Job, interestingly, if you remember, when Job was talking earlier, he said, do you remember back in chapter 9? If I tried to confront God, my mouth would prove me perverse and so on. Well, he has said a lot of things. He has said, well, if I was talking with God, this is what I would say.

I would justify myself and I would make my case. He said back in chapter 10, verse 2, if God were here and I could talk to Him, I will say to God, God is saying, Job, what have you got to say here? Back in chapter 10, verse 2, Job said, I will say to God, do not condemn me. Show me why you contend with me.

So now God uses the very same word. Is the one contending with God got something to say? In chapter 13, verse 22, Job said to God, O Lord, call and I will answer. Or let me speak and you respond to me.

Either way. You can talk first or I'll talk first. I just want to get this dialogue going.

But now that he's on the spot and the Lord God is speaking out of the whirlwind, Job has made some progress. He has learned something over the course of these chapters. And he's not saying, oh, just call, I'll answer.

Now what does he say? I spoke once, but now my hand is over my mouth. I spoke twice, but I'm not adding. Joseph.

Remember that? I will not add. And it's the same word that Joseph comes from. That's why Rachel named her son that.

Because she said, I'm going to have another son. Ultimately, Benjamin. God will add.

Joseph. And that's the word right here. He says, I spoke once, but not again.

I spoke twice, but I will not add. No more. Remember chapter 14, verse 15? You shall call, Job

says, and I will answer you.

You shall desire the work of your hands. You'll want me to speak up. You'll come and ask me.

And Job felt that he had a case, but it's a lot easier when you're kind of working through some subjectivity and saying, boy, if I had a chance to talk to God, I'd sure get this thing straightened out. And it's a little different. I have heard people say, they'll get mad at someone who's not present.

I can't believe they did this, that, and the other. I am going to chew. I am going to ream.

I am going to flame. Well, the next time I see so-and-so, this is it. They are going to get the right act from me.

Well, then so-and-so comes, and it's a little different. It's a little different. I told you about one of these makeover programs where this girl said, oh, there was a mean bully that used to pick on me and say I was fat and ugly and had bad hair, and this, that, and the other.

And so they did a makeover on the gal and spent like three months and shaped her up into a goddess, with flowing tresses and a facelift and caps and everything else. She looked like a magazine cover. And they said, all right, now guess what? We went and found old Ralphie that used to give you a hard time in school, and you can prance up to him and give him what for.

And she had been saying at the beginning, oh, if I ever saw Ralphie, I would read him the right act. All I want to do is stand in front of him and just make him sick with how beautiful I look. Well, they got old Ralphie, and they set him on a park bench, and they brought this gal by, and when she confronted him, she was kind of embarrassed.

She didn't have that in-your-face attitude, because when you're right in front of somebody, there's a different kind of a dynamic. You tend to be different than in your imagination. Now, there are other times when you get upset with somebody, and when you see them, it just goes from bad to worse.

But not in this case. Job is kind of like that girl. And when he actually gets in front of the Lord God, it's a whole different experience than what he had imagined.

Listen, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and comes for His own, and the bride and the body are gathered, and we face the Lord Jesus Christ, a lot of people who are prancing around on stages and on television and on the radio talking about everything that God revealed to them, and strutting and prancing and saying all of these high-sounding words to huge auditoriums full of believers are going to say something quite different when they actually stand in front of the Lord Jesus Christ and find out that they have made a big mistake in making an issue of themselves instead of an issue of God's Word. Instead of feeding the sheep, they have been fleecing the sheep. If by no other means than by feeding them pabulum instead of meat, and leaving them

unprepared, preaching the prosperity gospel, preaching the feel-good gospel, the emotional Kool-Aid that has no nutritional value to the soul.

And it's just a fact. All of us, each of us, has a responsibility as a believer to feed ourselves, to start with the sincere milk of the Word, and to graduate to meat. And Paul, when he's writing in Hebrews, he says, at such a time as you ought to be teachers.

And he's talking to a bunch of people. He says, you all ought to be teachers. Every believer ought to be ready to be a teacher, ready to speak the truth in love, ready to share the good news of Jesus Christ, ready to share the good news of life in Christ as a believer, walking by faith and not by sight, righteousness by faith, blessing and reward in the future, the opportunity to lay a treasure in heaven, the opportunity to be close to the Lord Jesus Christ and share in the overcomer blessings.

You, just as much as I, you don't get off the hook just because you haven't been to seminary. All of us ought to be able to teach. That's what the Word of God says.

At such time as you ought to be teachers. And then comes the chastisement. You have need that one teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

I don't think we're going to have that problem. We will at least not be bringing up the rear in that regard because we get together for no other purpose than to spend time trying to figure out what the Word of God says. That's what we're doing here in the book of Job.

And so when God continues, and Job says, I am ready to listen and learn. This is the attitude we need. It is not the strutting.

It is not the hand waving, fist shaking, song singing kind of Christianity that is so popular and so identified with the very name Christianity now. Did you see the list of ten people that Barbara Walters had on her annual special this year? One of them was chosen because she said, this man epitomizes Evangelical Christianity in the United States today. If you want to know what Evangelical Christianity is, this guy is it.

And the guy is a pastor in Houston, Texas. And you can look it up. You can go to the website.

And you can tell me if you think that that is biblical Christianity or not. There is a reason why God is saying these things. People gloss over this part and say, well, God is just impressing Job.

All God had to do to impress Job is show up. The whirlwind, I think, is sufficient. Every prophet that ever got anywhere near God was down on his face in the dirt hoping he didn't die.

So Job is already impressed. Why is God speaking these words? Why were they set down? God made sure there was a venue when he spoke where there were five or six scribes who could compare notes later and make sure they got the text correct. Eliphaz has got a secretary.

Bildad's got a secretary. Zophar's got a secretary. Elihu's got a secretary.

Job's got a secretary. There are literate guys with soft clay tablets and styli rapidly doing shorthand on everything that is spoken. That's why this book is what it is.

That's why we have it. It's not made up. It's not a fabrication.

It is a transcript. It is a transcript. And this is a transcript of what God said.

It just almost makes a hair stand up on the back of my neck when I look at this. This is just like what God is going to do with Moses at Sinai. It's the first extended speech by God chronologically in the Bible.

He says a few things in Genesis. He talks with Adam. He talks with Abraham.

But look at the length of this. In fact, as we've seen, this is the longest extended speech by God anywhere in the Bible. And isn't it interesting? It's first.

Chronologically, it's first. It's before Israel. It's before Sinai.

It's before the law. It predates the nation of Israel. So Job wisely decides to abandon his earlier words.

31-37. He seems to get bolder and bolder from 10-2 to 13-22 and then 14-15. And then in 31-37, he said, if God was here and I was talking to Him, I would declare to Him the number of my steps.

I would approach Him like a prince. Job is not approaching anybody like a prince at this point. He is clapping his hand over his mouth and saying, I've already said too much.

In the vernacular, that's what he's saying. I spoke twice and that was one time too many. I should have just said what I said to my wife and then just shut up the rest of the time.

We receive the good things from God. Should we also not receive that which is evil? And then just grabbed another pot shirt and done some scraping and just kept my other hand over my mouth. Well, then God continues.

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, now prepare yourself like a man. Prepare yourself. This is gird up your loins, literally.

And this is what people did when they were ready to do some work in modern days. Roll up your sleeves. Put on your work clothes because you've got your work cut out for you here.

I will question you and you shall answer me. Now, these answers are going to be more or less silent. Job really quit talking when Elihu started speaking.

Remember Elihu kind of paused for breath and said, Job, you got anything to say? Job was like... You're on a roll. You just keep going. And God has pretty much stopped and said, say something.

And Job said, I've already talked too much. I'm done. And so now God continues.

I will question you and you shall answer me. But in fact, Job's answers are mental. Job's answers are to these rhetorical questions.

Would you, verse 8, indeed annul my judgment? Would you indeed annul my judgment? This word, although it can mean annul, it really means, its primary meaning is to break. This is from Parar. It's kind of a soft P. It's almost Farar, but not quite.

But Parar means to break a thing. It comes to mean to frustrate, to destroy or shatter, to fracture, to make, to come apart, to cause the wheels to fall off, so to speak. Are you going to frustrate? Are you going to fragment? Are you going to render useless? Probably render useless would be a good translation of this word.

Nobody is going to annul what God says, of course. In Isaiah 14, verse 27, it says, the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? If God establishes a purpose, nobody is going to get in the way of that thing. His hand is stretched out.

Who will turn it back? Isaiah 28, verse 18, Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand. When the overflowing scourge passes through, you will be trampled down by it. It will be made of no effect.

It will be rendered useless. So that's the idea of this term. And so when God says here, are you going to render useless my judgment? What He's really talking about here is Mishpat.

Shafat is the word that means to judge. It's one of two words. You have Shafat.

You also have Din, from which we get Dan. And Dan means judge. Din means to judge.

But we also have Shafat. And this is Mishpati, which is my judgment. Remember, you put an M in front of a Hebrew verb, and it will turn it into a noun a lot of times.

So instead of Shafat, you have Mishpat. And this is judgment, but it's a particular kind of judgment where Shafat has the idea of judgment in the context of governing. You render decisions.

You establish policies. And you make decisions in your ruling capacity. This is not so much a judicial capacity, but this is the judgment of the king.

This is the judgment of the governor. In my judgment, this is what we should do, and this is what we won't do, and this is where you're going to be, and this is where you're going to be. And these

are decisions made by one in authority.

So God has just illustrated His authority over creation and over created living things, which represent humanity. And He says, are you going to make all of this useless? I have put this together for a reason and a purpose. Is it going to be no good for you? Are you going to miss it? Are you going to miss the point? Nobody would seriously suggest that you could stop God's judgments per se.

And that's why Anul, I don't think it's the best translation here. The idea is, is this all going to be for naught, where you're concerned? I've put all of this together, built the universe, put all of these pictures in place. Do you not get it? Is it wasted on you? That's the idea.

Would you condemn me so that you may be justified? Now, this is key. And we're going to make this point and then go to the break. Are all of my authority decisions wasted on you? Are you going to condemn me that you may be righteous? Tzaddik.

Tzaddik is the word for righteousness. Are you going to condemn, and this word has the idea of condemnation for wrongdoing. And look at the cause and effect here.

Self-vindication renders in a human heart and in a human mind all of God's work in creation and in His authority decisions useless for that person. Everything God is trying to say and everything God is trying to communicate and demonstrate is lost. It comes apart and makes no sense to a person if they're engaged in self-vindication.

I don't know how to say it any more clearly than that. We have an instinct. We have a reflex for self-vindication.

We want to be justified. We want to be shown to be right. And any time we indulge that reflex and that instinct, everything God has done, everything God has put out there, this big mosaic, this big beautiful picture that communicates what's really going on, just falls apart.

It's like a beautiful jigsaw that somebody just knocks into pieces. You can't see it. You can't make sense of it.

You can't put it together because of that subjective perspective, point of view. So, one of the keys to learning, becoming mature, being ready for meat and not milk, is to wean ourselves away from the need and the habit of self-justification. Quit trying to convince people that it's not you, it's something else.

It's not my fault. It's not my problem. It's not my weakness.

It's not my failure. It's that thing. It's that guy.

It's that factor. It's this cause. It's this effect.

All of us do this. We are built this way. It's a part of our nature.

But a part of our new nature is to put off that old man and cut it out. You can't see what God is trying to say if you wrap yourself in the cloak of self-vindication. You just pull a bag right over your head.

You break apart this beautiful picture that God has put in creation. It's just that simple. And that's what God leads off with in this second speech.

We'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up in verse 9.