

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 5.8%

Weekly Readings will cover: Job 22 - 33

Sunday: Job 22

Monday: Job 23 - 24

Tuesday: Job 25 – 26

Wednesday: Job 27 - 28

Thursday: Job 29 - 30

Friday: Job 31

Saturday: Job 32 - 33

Current # of email addresses in group: 557

I hope you enjoyed your second week of study on the book of Job. It's a very special book that contains great depth on a number of topics. I've enjoyed studying this book alongside you all.

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3 YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 11

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 64 - SUNDAY: January 1st

Job 22

Daily Deep Dive:

This chapter begins the 3rd and final cycle of the book of Job. In this final cycle, running from Job 22 through Job 27, we will only hear from Eliphaz & Bildad (not Zophar).

Here is the UCG reading plan for this chapter: “Eliphaz now responds for the third and last time, giving a renewed rebuke and a call to repentance. He opens by asking of what benefit or pleasure it is to God whether Job is innocent (verses 1-3). The question itself seems absurd. It is true that God does not *need* righteous servants, but He does *desire* them. From other passages, we know that God delights in

the righteous and that He experiences joy when people repent. Eliphaz's questions seem to imply that God doesn't really care one way or the other—and that Job is an arrogant fool for thinking otherwise.

Yet Eliphaz sees this as really a moot point—since he believes Job is *not* innocent. In verse 4, Eliphaz mocks Job: "Is it because of your *fear* of Him that He corrects you...?" Eliphaz sees no evidence of a right fear of God on Job's part. Instead, to him, all the evidence points to sinfulness.

In fact, as Eliphaz sees it, since Job's suffering is great, his sin must be great too (see verse 5). Eliphaz then launches into a list of specific charges of particular sins. Where in the world did he come up with these? Probably from reasoning backwards. First of all, Job's ongoing insistence regarding his own righteousness before God probably made it look like he was actually convinced of his faithfulness to God, which to Eliphaz means Job must have made a pretense of religion while neglecting important areas. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* suggests: "Eliphaz felt Job had deceived himself by trusting in his ritual piety (what he had done for God) while his real sin was what he failed to do for his fellow man" (note on verses 4-11). And since Job's sufferings were the worst ever seen, his sins must have been particularly severe—social oppression and neglect being perceived as very serious in a society that viewed hospitality as one of the chief human responsibilities. It appears that Eliphaz fabricated these particular charges to fit the facts as he saw them.

There was one big problem though—these were not facts at all. They were baseless, made-up lies. Job was not like this at all, as we know from the testimony of God himself at the beginning of the book.

Moreover, Eliphaz accuses Job of thinking that God is so far off as to not be able to see what Job is doing (verses 12-14). Yet while it is true

that Job has lamented God's apparent indifference to the wicked, he has also directly complained of God's overbearing watchfulness over him to pursue him with calamity. Job certainly did not think he could hide anything from God.

Notice verses 17-18. Eliphaz denounces hypocritical wicked people for rejecting God even though God has "filled their houses with good things." Did you catch that? Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have been contending that God only *curses* the wicked—but here we see Eliphaz saying that God has *blessed* them with their possessions. Which is it? Eliphaz could not see the contradiction in his own beliefs.

In verses 21-30, Eliphaz gives a wonderful call to repentance—for a person "to submit; to be at peace with God (v. 21); to hear God's word and hide it in his heart (v. 22); to return to the Almighty and forsake wickedness (v. 23); to find delight in God rather than in gold (vv. 24-26); and to pray, obey (v. 27), and become concerned about sinners (vv. 29-30)" (*Expositor's*, note on verses 21-30). The big problem with this statement is that Eliphaz is making it to the wrong person. Job is innocent of the charges leveled against him. He is in no way the uncaring, wealth-obsessed miser Eliphaz has painted him as. Indeed, this man whom God called upright was just the opposite. Job will in fact repent at the end of the story, but not for any of the false accusations of Job's friends.

In its note on verse 30, *The Nelson Study Bible* states: "Eliphaz's prediction that God would deliver one who is not innocent through the purity of Job's hands would be fulfilled ironically through Job's prayer for the three friends [at the end of the book] (Job 42:8-10)." [END]

Verse 24 – This verse mentions the “gold of Ophir”. According to John Gill’s commentary this gold: “was reckoned the best, probably in Arabia.”

Day 65 - MONDAY: January 2nd

Job 23 & 24

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapter 23:

We will read from the UCG reading plan for this chapter, but I wanted to point out a statement you will read in verse 12 to begin:

Verse 12 – Job states, “I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary *food*.” This is a beautiful statement. The word for “necessary food” here in the Hebrew means “appointed portion” (JFB).

We understand that physical food we need for survival is compared to the spiritual food we need for our spiritual life. Both are critical to life and Job understands that well. In the model prayer, we are told to look to God to take care of our daily needs (“**Give us this day our daily bread.**” (Matt 6:11)). Additionally, in Proverbs 30:8, uses this same Hebrew word for “appointed portion” it states: “Give me neither poverty nor riches— Feed me with the food allotted to me;”. Job understood that his physical needs were taken care of by God, but that God also feeds him daily with his spiritual food. Job shows that he places the priority on that spiritual food (as we all should) over the physical that he gives us. Each of you apart of this plan are showing God daily that you treasure the words of His mouth (the spiritual food that He provides)! May we work each day to value you it over even the precious physical food we eat each day.

The UCG reading plan states: “Job does not answer Eliphaz's outrageous charges. Instead, he groans and wishes he could go to God and present his case before *Him*. In verse 5, the phrase "I would know the words which He would answer me" means "I would *like* to know His answer.”

In contrast to Eliphaz's apparent contention that God did not really care whether Job was innocent (see Job 22:1-3), Job is convinced that God

did care and that if he could reason with God, then he would at last be delivered.

While Job cannot travel about to find God, he realizes that God, in contrast, knows exactly where to find him because God is putting him through his current trial (verses 8-10). Job's point in verse 10 about emerging from God's test as gold compares to similar imagery in later passages where the purification of gold and silver are used to typify trials refining God's people (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:20; Psalms 66:10; Isaiah 48:10; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 4:12; Revelation 3:18). However, in Job 23:10 it is not clear if Job is saying that his current trial will burn away his impurities leaving only gold, or pure character, remaining—or if he means that the test will reveal him as having had pure character all along. The latter seems more likely since, in the next two verses, he states that he has not departed from God's commandments (indirectly refuting Eliphaz's charges)." [END]

Chapter 24:

Verse 2 – When it says, “Some remove landmarks”, this refers to boundaries that are set between different pastures (JFB). (Compare Deut 19:14, 27:17 & Prov 22:28). Adam Clarke’s commentary adds “Stones or posts were originally set up to ascertain the bounds of particular estates: and this was necessary in open countries, before hedges and fences were formed. Wicked and covetous men often removed the landmarks or termini, and set them in on their neighbors’ ground, that, by contracting their boundaries, they might enlarge their own.”

The UCG reading plan for this chapter states: “The precise meaning of Job 24:1 is debated. The phrase "Since times are not hidden from the Almighty" could also be rendered "Why are times not stored up [or reserved] by the Almighty?" The point of the entire verse might be:

"Why does God not reserve particular times or days and make His servants aware of them?" These times could refer to God setting days for holding court or to meet with His servants in need (in conjunction with Job's desire in chapter 23 to appear before God). Alternatively, the times could refer to set periods of judgment (to deal with the sinners Job describes in 24:2-17).

It seems that Job's concern for his own unjust suffering has sparked the thought about the broader issue that many innocent people in the world are made to suffer at the hands of sinners who themselves do not have to pay for their crimes. How is that fair?

Verses 18-25 are disputed. Note how the New King James Version has added the italicized word "*should*" a number of times in verses 18 and 20. Without this, the verses are statements of fact concerning the fate of the wicked, as other versions render them. Many, including the NKJV editors, do not think Job would be saying that the wicked will get theirs, as this seems not to fit in context and agrees too much with his friends' argument. However, Job could well be noting that the wicked will eventually receive punishment in the end—and is just upset that they seem to get off scot-free until then. Others see him as pronouncing a curse on the wicked here (because God doesn't seem willing to) or stating what God *should* do as in the NKJV. Verses 22-24 may refer to not just the wicked but *all* men ultimately being brought low, seeming to show that God uses His power arbitrarily.

There is so much wickedness—so much of man hurting his fellow man. Why does God let it go on? Why doesn't He bring immediate judgment? Why do the innocent have to suffer at the hands of cruel and wicked men? Why does God Himself bring terrible suffering on Job, who is innocent? This is the essence of what Job wants to understand in this passage—the case he would bring before God." [END]

As Christians, we understand why God is temporarily allowing all of this suffering and injustice to take place. Satan and mankind have rebelled against God and His perfect way. They have instead chosen to go their own way and to choose for themselves what is right and wrong. Injustice has been man's way from the beginning and will continue until the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ who will overthrow the governments and ways of man! We long for this day! As for Job, God works with His chosen people in the midst of this perverse world and continues to refine and prepare His true people to rule along side His son Jesus Christ for all eternity. Job's suffering is unimaginable to us, but so is his reward (see 1 Cor 2:9).

Day 66 - TUESDAY: January 3rd

Job 25 & 26

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan says this about Bildad's final speech to Job: "In chapter 25, Bildad speaks for the third and last time. He still cannot accept Job's declaration of himself as righteous. Furthermore, as *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on verses 5-6, "Bildad's view of God's dominion and majesty in the heavens causes him to devalue mortal man as a maggot. He responds insensitively to Job by suggesting that Job does not need to wait until he dies to be grouped with maggots (the same Hebrew word that Job used in Job 17:14). This was caustic sarcasm, for Job was in fact covered with worms (see Job 7:5)."

While Bildad is right in making the point that human beings of themselves, corrupt and impure, are morally unworthy to have anything to do with God, he is wrong in making it seem that mankind is essentially worthless in God's eyes. God would later show just how much He values mankind through Jesus Christ actually becoming a human being and suffering for them—and that to rescue even the worst of sinners.

Bildad's brief speech here is the last we hear from Job's three friends in the book. Zophar has no third speech." [END]

Verse 5 – How are the “stars not pure in His sight”? John Gill states: “as there are spots in the sun and in the moon, seen by the eye of man, aided and assisted, so such may be seen by God in the stars also, and in these, both in a natural and in a mystical sense; as by them may be meant the angels of heaven, even those are not pure in the sight of God, and in comparison of him, the most perfectly pure and holy Being; see Job 4:18.”

Chapter 26:

The UCG reading plan states: “Job evaluates the counsel of Bildad as worthless (the "you" here being singular in the original Hebrew). While the New King James Version presents the opening verses of the chapter as questions, they could also be translated as sarcastic statements, as in the New International Version and New Living Translation. The Good News Bible renders verses 1-4 this way: "What a big help you are to me—poor, weak man that I am! You give such good advice and share your knowledge with a fool like me! Who do you think will hear all your words? Who inspired you to speak like this?"

In the remainder of the chapter, Job makes several statements about God's great power and majesty (verses 5-14). This response may have been sparked by Bildad's cosmic references, where he said the moon and stars pale before God (compare Job 25:5). Most likely, Job was criticizing Bildad and his other two friends for thinking they knew all about what the Almighty Creator was doing. Job points out some of the great mysteries of the creation and then asserts that these things don't even scratch the surface of God's wonders and ways (compare verse 14).

Job demonstrates surprisingly accurate scientific understanding in this ancient context. Notice verse 7, where he states that God "stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing." Author Grant Jeffrey remarks on this verse in his book *The Signature of God*: "This [verse] was an astonishingly advanced and accurate scientific statement. The ancient pagans, who were contemporary with Job, believed that the earth was balanced on the back of an elephant that rested on the back of a turtle. Other pagans believed that the mythological hero Atlas carried the earth on his shoulders. However, [nearly] four thousand years ago, Job was inspired by God to correctly declare that God 'hangs the earth on nothing.' Only a century ago scientists believed that the earth and stars were supported by some kind of ether. Yet Job accurately stated that our planet moves in its orbit through empty outer space. [Moreover] an astonishing discovery by astronomers recently revealed that the area to the north of the axis of our earth toward the polar star is almost empty of stars in contrast to the other directions. There are far more distant stars in every other direction from our earth than in the area to the far north of our planet. As Job reported, 'He stretches out the north over empty space' (Job 26:7). Mitchell Wardrop wrote the following statement in an article in *Science* magazine. 'The recently announced 'hole in space,' a 300 million-light-year gap in the distribution of galaxies, has taken cosmologists by surprise.... samples in the Northern Hemisphere, lying in the general direction of the constellation Bootes, showed striking gaps ...' (Mitchell Wardrop, 'Delving the Hole in Space,' *Science* magazine, Nov. 27, 1981). This relative emptiness in the direction to the North of our solar system is not visible by the naked eye. It is only as the result of very careful observation by [modern] telescopes that scientists have recently proven that Job was correct" (1996, pp. 114-115).

The "serpent" God pierced in Job 26:13 is probably related to God stirring up the ocean in verse 12, as the original Hebrew in verse 12 has

"the ocean...*Rahab*"—a word meaning "fierce" that other passages define as a serpent cut apart by God (see Psalms 89:10; Isaiah 51:9). Isaiah 30:7 analogizes Egypt as Rahab. And as explained in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on this reference, Rahab seems to be equated on one level with the Egyptian crocodile god Sobek, whose name means "rager." Yet the real power behind the throne of human empires and the one behind the mask of pagan deities is Satan the devil. The serpent of old who was in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3; Revelation 12:9), Satan is the ultimate serpent Rahab. This name actually occurs earlier in the book of Job. In Job 9:13, "allies of the proud" is literally "allies of Rahab"—who will lie prostrate beneath God. As we will later see, Rahab seems also to be equated with the sea monster Leviathan, which is another likely picture of Satan. (Note that this Hebrew word is not a reference to the the woman Rahab who hid the Israelite spies in Joshua 2.)

Ironically, Job did not realize that all that he himself was going through would yet demonstrate God's power over Satan." [END]

Day 67 - WEDNESDAY: January 4th

Job 27 & 28

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapter 27: We come to the final chapter of the third cycle. How will Job conclude all these comments from his "friends"?

The UCG reading plan states this: "Job continues with his response, now addressing not just Bildad but all three of his friends (as the "you" in verse 5 is plural).

In verses 2-6, though Job accuses God of denying him justice and dealing him a bitter experience, he takes an oath in God's name to be completely honest and hold fast to his integrity and innocence. In whatever he himself says, he will not stoop to the level of his friends in their dishonest approach.

In verse 7, Job asks that anyone who would be his enemy (the Hebrew here means "hater") would be reckoned among the wicked. And there is no way Job is going to act like such a person because, despite Job's previous statements that things often seem to go well for the wicked, Job knows that there is no guarantee that this will be so—and if things do take a downturn, the wicked cannot expect God to help them (verses 8-10). This shows that Job considered that he himself had a reasonable expectation that God *would* hear *him*.

Job's point here and in the remainder of the chapter is to warn his friends that by treating him as they have been, they are actually joining the ranks of the wicked and can expect the punishment of the wicked—the very thing they have been warning *him* about. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* notes on verses 11-12: "Job was saying, 'Must I teach you about God's power to punish? Indeed, I could never conceal from you a subject on which you have expounded at length.'" Yet he proceeds, in verses 13-23, to remind them of just what lies in store for the wicked—using their own approach against them." [END]

Chapter 28:

In the book, "A survey of the Old Testament" (Hill/Watson), it describes chapter 28 as an "Interlude: Hymn to Wisdom". It's a remarkable chapter as we begin a shift in the book of Job from the cycle of remarks of Job and his friends, to three discourses (Job, Elihu and God) over the remaining chapters.

The UCG reading plan discusses chapter 28 by stating the following: "In the next chapter, Job makes the point that while man is special, distinct from animals, in being able to employ technology to explore the hidden depths of the earth and mining its ores and gems, he can't find wisdom this way. True wisdom cannot be found through natural exploration (Job 28:1-14). Nor can it be bought (verses 15-19). True wisdom, Job explains, comes only from God (verses 20-23).

God is the only one who knows everything that can be known (compare verse 24). Once again, Job displays some remarkable scientific knowledge—understanding that itself seems to have come from God. Note verses 24-26: "For he looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heavens, to establish a weight for the wind, and apportion the waters by measure. When he made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt." *The Signature of God* by author Grant Jeffrey states: "In this intriguing statement the Bible reveals that the winds are governed by their weight, a fact that scientists have only determined in the last century. How could Job have known that the air and the wind patterns are governed by their actual weight? Meteorologists have found that the relative weights of the wind and water greatly determine the weather patterns. The passage also reveals a profound appreciation of the fact that there is a scientific connection between lightning, thunder and the triggering of rainfall. Apparently, a slight change in the electrical charge within a cloud is one of the key factors that causes microscopic water droplets in the clouds to join with other droplets until they are heavy enough to fall to earth. In addition, we now know that a powerful electric charge as high as 300 million volts in a cloud sends a leader stroke down through the air to the ground. Instantaneously, only one-fiftieth of a second later, a second more powerful return stroke travels back up to the cloud following the path through the air opened by the leader stroke. The thunder occurs because the air within this channel or path has been vaporized by superheating it to fifty thousand degrees by the lightning. The superheated air expands outward at supersonic speed creating the noise of thunder. Job's description, 'He made a law for the rain and a path for the thunderbolt' (Job 28:26) is startling in its accuracy. No human could have known this in ancient times without the divine revelation of God" (pp. 118-119).

Verse 27 notes that God established His wisdom from creation. And the only way for a person to really come to understand it, as the next verse

explains, is to have a proper fear of God and depart from evil (compare Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10). It is interesting to consider how God described Job at the beginning of the book: "a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8). And through Job's relationship with God, he will ultimately gain the understanding he seeks." [END]

Day 68 - THURSDAY: January 5th

Job 29 & 30

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapters 29, 30 and 31 begin Job's final and concluding comments.

Chapter 29:

This is an important chapter in that it gives us insight into who Job was and his role before this terrible trial came upon him. Notice the way he treated the less fortunate. This stands in strong contrast to the accusation of Eliphaz in Job 22 (this past Sunday's reading). This chapter adds to the character of Job and demonstrates his justice and compassion toward others. Consider Job's perspective: When he had tried with his whole life to be just and fair, how much harder would it make it to feel God isn't being just and fair with him when clearly he regards God as so much greater than he is?

The UCG reading plan states: "Job continues his speech in chapter 29, longing for the "good old days" when it was clear that God was with him—when things were going well and people highly respected him. In verse 2 we see again that Job has been suffering his present condition for a number of months (compare Job 7:3).

Chapter 29 shows that Job was a ruler. We earlier saw that he wore a crown (Job 19:9). Now we learn more about his role. He sat as judge (Job 29:7-17), "as chief" and "as a king in the army" (verse 25). The public square adjoining the city gate (verse 7) was the center of town

government and commerce. When Job took his seat here, everyone demonstrated great respect for his position. Young men scattered—as it was inappropriate for them to be prominent before him—and the city elders all stood up (verse 8). Princes and nobles demonstrated their respect for him by remaining silent (verses 9-10)—presumably until invited to speak.

Job says the people appreciated his rule (verse 11) because he was a righteous and just ruler who stood up for the little guy—who rescued the vulnerable and helpless from those who sought to take advantage of them or cause them harm (verses 12-17). The citizens valued his counsel (verses 21-23). Some have translated verse 24 as saying, "I laughed at them when they had no confidence [in a kindly, encouraging way perhaps], and the light of my countenance they did not cast down" (see *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, footnote on verse 24). Others see the word translated here as laughed or mocked as meaning smiled (see the NIV for example). Yet the same word occurs just two verses later in Job 30:1, where it clearly means laugh or mock.

Regarding verse 25, *Expositor's* states: "The last line of this verse ['as one who comforts mourners'] is awkward [in context] as currently translated, but there is no need to drop the line as NEB [the New English Bible] does nor to emend the text. Not a single consonant or word needs to be changed. Only a change in the vowels of the last two words creates the line...'as I conducted them they were led'" (footnote on verse 25). Recall that in the original Hebrew, there were no vowels, only consonants." [END]

Chapter 30:

I encourage you to read this chapter through an easier to read translation such as the New Living Translation (NLT) – free on eSword.

Notice in this chapter how much has changed for Job. Not only is he dealing with intense severe trials, he has lost all the respect he once had in this area.

Verse 1 – The children of men that Job would not have seen fit to be in charge of his dogs, now mock Job.

Verses 2 through 8 – These fathers of verse 1 are now described how useless these men were in the land and how they were unemployable and the people drove them out of the city. Yet, it's the children of these type of men who now mock Job.

Notice the way Job is being treated by these people.

Verse 10 – The NLT states this more clearly as: “They despise me and won't come near me, except to spit in my face.”

Verse 12 – This verse doesn't read clearly. Here are a few other translations:

NLT – “These outcasts oppose me to my face. They send me sprawling and lay traps in my path.”

ERV – “They attack me on my right side. They knock my feet out from under me. They build ramps to attack and destroy me like a city.”

Verse 15 – NLT reads “live in terror now. My honor has blown away in the wind, and my prosperity has vanished like a cloud.”

The UCG reading plan states the following about this chapter: “Chapter 30 snaps back to the grim hear and now. Rather than respect, Job now receives contempt even from those viewed as the lowlife of that society, the sons of outcast ruffians (verses 1-11). "To demonstrate the

unfairness of God Job takes each of the themes he introduced in chap. 29 and contrasts his past and present state. Now [in chapter 30] Job is mocked by young and old (vv. 1-8) and verbally attacked (vv. 9-15). Now there is no blessing from God, but only suffering (vv. 16-17) and affliction (vv. 18-19), however urgently Job pleads (vv. 20-23). Perhaps worst of all, there is no compassion for one who constantly showed his compassion for others (vv. 24-31). No matter how great Job's suffering, there is no relief" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on chap. 30).

Job's statements in chapters 29-30 regarding his help and compassion for others in need rebuts Eliphaz's contrived charges against him in Job 22:5-9. We have no reason to doubt Job's description of himself, as it is well in keeping with God's description of him as blameless and upright. Job will have more to say on the issue of his treatment of others when he concludes this summary discourse in the next chapter." [END]

Day 69 - FRIDAY: January 6th

Job 31

Daily Deep Dive:

This chapter again gives us deep insight into the character of Job, from how he guards against lust and temptations in his life, to how he treated the servants that he ruled over and those who are needy around him. We further see that he didn't make money an idol, didn't get corrupted into false worship and treated enemies in a way that is remarkable. No wonder God remarked at the beginning of Job of how remarkable he was.

Notice the depth that the UCG reading plan brings out to chapter 31: "Job brings his discourse to a close. He basically places himself under an oath of innocence, inviting God to impose curses on him if he can be proven guilty. Where the New King James Version in verse 35 has the words, "Here is my mark," the NIV has "I sign now my defense." In

other words, with this chapter, Job is resting his case—waiting, as the same verse explains, for God to answer him. It is clear from the chapter that Job must be extremely confident of acquittal.

The Nelson Study Bible states that Job's oath "bears a general similarity to the oath of clearance, widely used in ancient Mesopotamia. In this oath, an accused person would swear his innocence at a trial. However, the ethical content of Job's confession, with its emphasis on inward motivation (see vv. 1, 2, 24, 25, 33, 34) and attitude (see vv. 1, 7, 9, 26, 27, 29, 30), is unique and unparalleled until Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5-7)" (note on Job 31:1-40).

Indeed, Job in the first verse mentions having made a covenant with his eyes not to look on a young woman. The typical Hebrew word for "look" is not used here. Rather, the word here, translated "think" in the old KJV, is *biyn*, which conveys a sense of setting apart mentally (Strong, No. 995)—really focusing. The obvious implication is that this looking is with lustful intent. Job knew it was wrong to sexually desire a woman other than his wife, as Christ would later make clear (see Matthew 5:27). In an Old Testament setting, this seems rather remarkable and demonstrates that Job well understood the spirit of God's law. He also realized that violation of even the spirit of the law would ultimately bring punishment from God (Job 31:2-3). Of course, it is not wrong to merely look at a beautiful woman. Nor is it wrong to appreciate beauty. Most likely, Job's determination was that if the sight of a woman began to entice him to lust, then he would look away and think about other things. This is the approach all of us should take.

No doubt Job, in trying to understand what was happening to him, had for months been taking a sweeping personal inventory of his life—including his inward thoughts and motivations. And here we see his concluding declaration on the various aspects of his life.

Besides avoiding sexual lust, we see that Job was not a person of falsehood and deceit (verse 5). In verse 7 he says that his heart has not walked after his eyes, probably meaning here that he has not been motivated by "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) in coveting things he sees. Job then remarks further on his commitment to not even entertain adulterous thoughts, much less act on them or to even allow himself to be in a compromising or tempting situation (Job 31:9).

In verses 13-15 Job addresses his treatment of his servants. Though a great ruler, Job's approach and reasoning here is again remarkable. He realized that it was important to properly esteem them or he would face divine retribution. Moreover, he saw that this esteem was utterly legitimate. Unlike other rulers of his day, Job would well agree with the words in the U.S. Declaration of Independence defying Old World aristocracy: "All men are created equal." Since God made all people, all people must be respected for that very fact—and they must all be treated according to the standards God has given for dealing with all other human beings.

In verses 16-23, Job comments on his treatment of the needy—the poor, widows and orphans. Again, as in the previous chapter, he rebuts Eliphaz's specific accusations against him in 22:5-9. In verses 24-25, Job rejects his friends' earlier implied accusations that he was motivated by greed and wealth or made proud by it (see Job 20:18-22; Job 22:23-26).

In verses 26-28 of chapter 31, Job maintains that he has not observed the sun and moon and been motivated to kiss his hand, referring to "the apparent ancient custom of kissing the hand as a prelude to the superstitious and idolatrous act of throwing a kiss to the heavenly bodies" (*Nelson*, note on verse 27).

In verse 29-30, we may again be surprised at Job's "New Testament approach" to dealing with enemies—not cursing them or gloating over

their misfortunes. Yet we should realize that this approach is mentioned in the Old Testament as well as the New (compare Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 24:17-18; Matthew 5:43-47; Romans 12:17-21). Interestingly, Job understood these principles before Exodus and Proverbs were written. It is not improbable that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were familiar with these concepts.

In verses 31-32 we see that Job freely shared his food and home with his servants and all who came his way.

The translation of verse 33 is disputed since the word *adam* can mean the first man Adam or man in general. So Job could be saying either "If I have covered my transgressions as Adam did..." (compare NKJV) or "If I have covered my transgressions as men do..." (compare NIV). The latter seems more likely since the first man Adam was not motivated by fear of contempt from groups of people (compare verse 34). In any case, Job's point here is that he has not been hiding secret sins.

In verse 35, as already noted, Job essentially declares that he rests his case. Note again the NIV rendering, along with the end of the verse: "I sign now my defense—let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing." Job says he would then carry the list of accusations to God and answer every one, approaching God boldly as a prince would (verses 36-37).

Finally, Job remembers one more area in which he might be accused—his stewardship over the land God had entrusted to his care. Here, too, Job is confident of his innocence (verses 38-40). And with this statement, Job ends his words.

His three friends have no more to say either. They are convinced that Job is a hopeless cause because he remains righteous or innocent in his own eyes (Job 32:1). Their mistake of course is that Job has accurately

detailed the course of his life—he has not committed some great sin to bring his suffering as they believe. There is a problem with Job's self-proclaimed innocence, though they are far from comprehending it, as we will see.

With all fallen silent, what will happen next? How will God answer?”
[END]

As this chapter and section is over, I stand in awe from a human standpoint on what a remarkable man Job was. We learn so much from Job about how God works with his people but in these last few chapters, especially this one, I've learned so much from Job's example of being a blameless and upright man. May God through His Holy Spirit give each of us the strength, determination and wisdom to imitate Job as he imitated the God Family.

Day 70 - SATURDAY: January 7th

Job 32 & 33

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapter 32:

Hebrew “opinion”: 5 times in the bible a word is used that is most often translated “opinion”. This word is only ever used by Elihu in the Bible and never anywhere else or by anyone else (Job 32:6, 10, 17, Job 36:3, 37:16).

The UCG reading plan introduces to Elihu and his opening statement in chapter 32 in this way: “We are now introduced to a new character in the narrative—Elihu. His words occupy six chapters and thus constitute one of the major addresses in the book. Some today accuse him of simply rehashing the arguments of Job's three friends. Yet we should note up front that when God later rebukes Job's three friends for their words, He has nothing to say about Elihu (Job 42:7-9). This would seem to imply that Elihu's assessment was for the most part correct, as it

does not seem likely that God would single out the three friends and ignore, if it were likewise wrong, the longest speech given just prior to His own address. It may even be that God, as Elihu believed, gave him his valuable insight to inject into the discussion before God arrived on the scene Himself.

This would not necessarily mean that everything Elihu said was correct or that he exemplified a perfect approach and attitude—his own affirmations notwithstanding. For consider that at the end of the book, God commends Job for speaking of Him what is right—and yet we know that Job made some mistakes in his remarks about God and that his attitude was not always the best (as understandable as that may be given his circumstances). Consider also that we sometimes regard sermons in the Church of God today as inspired without believing every word in them to be inspired. In any event, it does appear that God wanted Job to hear what Elihu had to say as part of God's answer to Job.

Elihu is introduced with details of his family background (Job 32:2). Recall that Job and his three friends were identified by only their respective lands. It is likely that they were all well-known figures. Conversely, it appears that Elihu needs more to identify him because he is, comparatively, a young nobody. The fact that he has listened to the entire conversation thus far illustrates that there were probably a number of bystanders during the exchanges between Job and his friends—though this is the first real indication of it in the book.

Given what he has heard, Elihu is angry with Job's three friends for baselessly condemning Job (verse 3). He is also angry with *Job* because he has been justifying himself rather than God (verse 2)—that is, Job's primary concern has become one of defending his innocence to the point of impugning God's justice. God Himself will later affirm Elihu's assessment in this regard (see Job 40:8). While Job's suffering certainly

makes his remarks understandable, there is no doubt that he has gone too far in what he has said—though he probably didn't fully mean all of it.

Elihu is so moved that he is about to burst at the seams with what he has to say (verses 18-20). He is insistent about being heard (verse 10; Job 33:1, 31, 33). Many in modern times have criticized Elihu for being insufferably verbose and pompous. For instance, he takes 24 verses to say he is going to speak (see Job 32:6-33:7). Yet loquaciousness was a prized attribute in the ancient world. Moreover, Elihu was, as mentioned, a virtual nobody compared to Job and his three friends—so he deems it important to establish why they should listen to him. He does seem somewhat overconfident in his ability to help Job "see the light," perhaps because of his belief that God has blessed his perception of matters. That combined with youthful brashness and zeal probably accounts for his coming on a bit strong in places.

Elihu begins by explaining why he has waited to speak—he is younger and he wanted to hear what older, wiser people had to say (verses 6-7). This should illustrate that he is perhaps not so arrogant as some believe him to be. Elihu's mention of the human spirit and breath of the Almighty in verse 8 in context would seem to imply not just God giving intellectual ability to mankind generally through the imparting of the human spirit (which He has certainly done)—but, in contrast to wisdom coming with age, that God can impart wisdom directly to a man's spirit through His own divine Spirit. So Elihu, it appears, believes God has inspired him. And this may well be the case. Yet, as already mentioned, this would not necessarily mean that everything Elihu said was from God. He makes no claim to being a prophet.

The exact meaning of verse 13 is disputed. The NKJV has Elihu quoting the sentiment of the friends in the first part of the verse and giving his

own opinion in the second part. The Good News Bible paraphrases this as: "How can you claim you have discovered wisdom? God must answer Job, for you have failed." Other versions have Elihu quoting the sentiment of the friends in both parts of the verse. For example the New International Version has: "Do not say, 'We have found wisdom; let God refute him, not man.'" That is, the friends are portrayed as saying that they have done all that can humanly be done and Elihu is here contradicting that.

Elihu then addresses Job. He is much more personal and direct than the three friends. Unlike them, Elihu repeatedly addresses Job by name. For a young man to address his elders so casually—especially someone like Job who, though presently removed from his position due to his condition, had served as a ruler over the people—would surely have seemed impertinent in the society of that day. However, this was evidently part of Elihu's commitment to show no partiality or flattery (verses 21-22). It is interesting to note that the Hebrew verb translated "flatter," *kanah*, means "to call someone by his honorific title" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, footnote on verses 21-22)."

Chapter 33:

The UCG reading comments on verse 33 this way: "Elihu's words to Job at the beginning of 33:6 are variously translated. The King James Version has: "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead." The New King James Version gives just the opposite: "Truly I am as your spokesman [or mouth, according to the margin] before God." Yet neither of these translations seems to fit with the latter part of the verse, "I also have been formed out of clay." J.P. Green's Literal Translation renders the first part of the verse, "Behold, I am toward God as you." This seems more likely. Notice the NIV rendering of verses 6-7: "I am just like you before God; I too have been taken from clay. No fear of me should alarm you, nor should my hand be heavy upon you."

Accepting this translation, *The Bible Reader's Companion* notes on verse 6: "How refreshing! At last Job hears from someone who does not think of himself as morally superior. Anyone engaged in a ministry of comfort must come with Elihu's attitude. We are all clay. We struggle together. Only the harmless person, who rejects the temptation to condemn or hold others in contempt, can be God's agent of healing." Indeed, Elihu appears to be taking a gentler approach with Job here than the three friends have.

Then, surprisingly, despite all his prior verbosity, Elihu cuts straight to the heart of Job's problem: Job is not right in his accusations against God's justice and in treating God as some sort of equal with whom he can contend in court (verses 8-13). Because of this and other statements to follow, some think that Elihu was accusatory in the same way Job's friends were. Yet it should be recognized that Elihu limits his direct criticism of Job to only the statements Job has made in the dialogue with his friends. He does not, as the friends, accuse Job of having lived an evil, hypocritical life to deserve the suffering he has been experiencing.

Elihu further addresses Job's frequent plea for a hearing with God by saying that God communicates with people in various ways that they do not always recognize (verse 14). Job had complained of nightmares (Job 7:14), and Elihu suggests that God may have been trying to tell him something this way (Job 33:15). Moreover, Elihu says that God's objective in this would be to get a person's attention or teach him something to keep him from perishing: "He causes them to change their minds; he keeps them from pride. He keeps them from the grave" (verses 17-18, New Living Translation). Elihu further suggests that illness is another measure God might use for the same disciplinary and ultimately redemptive purpose (verses 19-22).

Elihu is offering possibilities. He is not, like Job's friends, bound to the notion that all suffering is punitive and that the measure of suffering corresponds to the degree of a person's wickedness. He agrees that suffering *may* be punitive but also sees that its objective may be preventative. Perhaps he thinks that Job could be right in the description of his character but that he was headed for a prideful fall—and that God was intervening to keep that from happening. This may even be true. However, it would be surprising if Elihu simply assumed that Job had absolutely no aspects of his life prior to the trial of which to repent. We have no evidence that Elihu knew anything about the discussion between God and Satan at the outset of the book and, thus, of God's description of Job. It could be that while Elihu did not think Job some great sinner and hypocrite as the friends did, he may have felt that Job had some relatively minor sins that his generally righteous life was leaving him blind to—and that God could have been using suffering as a means to bring Job to more thoroughly examine himself. Even if such an assumption were wrong, it would not have been unreasonable. And again, Elihu makes no dogmatic pronouncements on why Job has been afflicted.

In verse 23 Elihu presents the idea that God may send a messenger or mediator to the afflicted person. It seems likely that he views himself here as God's messenger commissioned with showing Job God's righteousness and justice—with the implication that a person reached in this way would then trust in God's righteousness rather than his own, thus leading to deliverance. In verse 24, Elihu says God commands the deliverance on the basis of having found a ransom—a *kopher*, a covering or atonement. Perhaps what is meant here is simply that God has instituted sacrifices for the purpose of redemption. After all, the offering of sacrifices for atonement is mentioned at the beginning and end of the book (Job 1:5; Job 42:8). Yet there may be a more specific foreshadowing here of what such sacrifices prefigured—the role of

Jesus Christ as the ultimate ransom and atoning sacrifice for the sins of all humanity.

Elihu, we should observe, looks on God's goal in chastening in an entirely different light than Job's friends. They only saw God harshly meting out judgment until people died or straightened up—and that He was practically ambivalent about the outcome. Elihu sees God disciplining repeatedly just as a loving parent would with the intent of saving people from destruction (see verses 29-30). Elihu appears to have this same concern for Job. Despite seeming somewhat overbearing, Elihu says that his desire in speaking to Job is for Job to be justified (Job 33:32)—"cleared" (NIV)—again demonstrating a rather different attitude than Job's three friends. As we will see, Elihu will get more severe in his criticism of Job—yet not because he thinks, as the friends do, that Job is a hopeless hypocrite but because he thinks that Job is jeopardizing his relationship with God and spiritual future through now lashing out at God in outrageous accusations." [END]

That's where we end another week of reading. Next week we will finish the book of Job!