

Study 1 - Job by Neville Clark

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Study 1 - Job - "The Affliction Of Job" - Neville Clark

I will be giving five studies covering the 42 chapters of the Book of Job. The book of Job would be one of the lesser known books of the OT. We know that it is part of the poetry section of the Bible, from Job to Song of Solomon. It is a book about conversations, where different people try to understand what is behind Job's suffering and perhaps what Job has done to deserve the suffering that has come upon him.

There are controversies that rage about different issues in Job, like who the Satan is in the book of Job, who Yahweh is in the book of Job, and how much of what Job's friends said was actually true, was Elihu inspired or was he just this young person who interrupts and messes things up.

We could gloss over the problems of Job by saying, 'Well, whatever the real answer to all of those things are it has a happy ending, the whole thing is resolved at the very end and Job was more blessed at the end than he was at the beginning.' But of course to say that would be to forget that the person living through the trial doesn't know how the trial is going to end.

Not only that, in Ch 1:6-12, you've got the first discussion here between Yahweh and Satan and this discussion results in the affliction of Job. In reading Job, we find the cause of Job's suffering right at the outset, but Job never heard this conversation, so right up until he died Job never knew this conversation took place. So Job is going through all the problems of the affliction that comes upon him, never privy to what we are privy to as readers of the entire story. He doesn't know what he has done to deserve the suffering, if we can use words like that, he doesn't know what the purpose was of the trial he is going through.

What I am going to do this afternoon in this first study is look at Chapters 1 and 2. We are going to get to the end of Ch 2 where the whole problem is thrown in our laps, where these couple of discussions between Yahweh and Satan take place and the suffering of Job begins. By the end of it you will be forced to confront questions like "What's the point of the truth, if wicked people live and prosper, is there any value in itself in living a righteous life?" These are the kinds of questions that the book begins to raise and therefore to answer.

Well you can see that with 42 chapters, Job is one of the larger books of the Bible. Anyone attempting to cover all 42 chapters in one series can't cover everything, and that is why we've put together these charts to help you follow the complexity of the book of Job, and marshall all the facts together and collect information in a meaningful way. What that means also is that we are going to go pretty fast and I am going to go through the entire argument of the book at a reasonable pace, so try and stay with me.

This is how the book structures itself. It is in the poetry section of the Bible for a reason. There is an immediate and obvious symmetry about the book of Job, so you can see here, we have an introduction at the start and we have a conclusion at the end. In between we have all the discussions that happen between Job and his friends and the Satan and Yahweh and so forth. As soon as you start to look at that big multi-chapter section discussion there, you find that there are a couple of discussions between Yahweh and Satan in Ch 1 and 2. There are a couple of discussions between Yahweh and Job from Ch 38 onwards and in between that, rounds and rounds of discussion between Job and his friends.

When you look at the discussions between Job and his friends you find that Job and his three friends have four rounds of discussions.

There are three rounds of speeches by the friends followed by Job's soliloquies.

He finishes the discussions with the friends with two major sections in which he just speaks himself, that's four rounds of discussions.

Then Elihu comes on the scene in Ch 32 of Job and speaks four times.

We've got an introduction, a conclusion and all the speeches in the middle.

The speeches break into three portions, God speaks to Satan, Yahweh speaks to Job, and then Job and his friends have this dialogue in the middle.

There are two speeches between Yahweh and Satan.

There are two speeches between Yahweh and Job, and when you look at what the friends and Job have to say to each other, there are four rounds of speeches here and there are four speeches by Elihu.

The point is that there is a complete symmetry across the whole book and we could describe it like this.

We have got one section here, two sections here, four sections, four sections, two sections, one section.

This is the entire book of Job you see, so this is why it is in the poetry section of the Bible. That doesn't mean that the entire book is poetic. I don't believe that there is poetic license in that sense being taken in the message of Job, this is an inspired message of a debate that actually happened between real people, but it is constructed in the poetic manner, and that is why it is in the poetic section of the Bible.

When did it happen?

As far as the dating of the book is concerned, as you start to read the book of Job you get these clues.

For example in Ch 31 a mention of the fall of man,

in Job Ch 16 you've got an allusion to Cain killing Abel,

you've got an allusion of a harp and the organ in Ch 21,

you've got a reference to the flood in Ch 22,

you've got an allusion to the destruction of Sodom in Ch 18

and a mention of this man Eliphaz, one of Job's three friends.

Eliphaz we can put up a family tree for and work out who these men were and we find that Eliphaz is the fifth generation from Abraham.

Very, very quickly then we can start to put years on the timing that Job takes place.

We know also, however, that Job must be before the Law of Moses, there is no mention of the nation of Israel, there is no mention of the Law of Moses.

You've got to believe that if the Law of Moses had been in operation then the ecclesia of which Job was a part must have mentioned it. Something would have come up in relation to the Law in all the discussions they had in these 42 chapters, but there is not a mention at all, and so it appears, therefore, that Job was prior to the Law of Moses.

Not only that, but you read of Job where in Job 38, he wears a garment called a Kethonith in the Hebrew, which is a priestly garment, and Job sacrifices lest his children have cursed God in their hearts, so he takes the role of a priest.

Num 3 is one of these quotations that talk about the fact that the tribe of Levi was taken by God to be a priest for the nation instead of the first-born of the family. So the point is that when the Law of Moses was introduced the Levites became the priests. Prior to the Law of Moses, the first-born of the family was the priest, and Job is acting as a priest, and that is corroborating evidence of the fact that we are suggesting that Job takes place before the Law of Moses.

I am saying that the likely dating then of the book of Job is probably some time between Joseph and Moses while the nation of Israel was in Egypt. This is corroborated by the fact that there are faithful people who exist.

Remember when Joseph fled from Egypt he went to Midian and Jethro the High Priest was a priest in Midian.

A priest implies an ecclesia. Moses was in fellowship with Jethro when he went to Midian.

The point is, the Jews weren't the only ones who had the Truth, and it appears, whilst the nation of Israel was in relative apostasy in Egypt serving the idols of Egypt, there were believers outside of the land of Egypt who were very much firmer on their foundations than the nation was itself. Job was likely one of those. So these were in the land of Uz, while the nation of Israel was in the land of Egypt.

Now you can put together the family tree there. I have taken some of my guidance from the Septuagint version which has made comments on who some of these people are in the book of Job.

Elihu for example is a Buzite. Now Buz was a son of Nahor the brother of Abraham. So you can put Elihu in the family tree.

Eliphaz is a Temenite. Esau had a son called Eliphaz who had a son called Teman who had a son called Eliphaz, so this Eliphaz here we are saying is the great-grandson of Esau.

Bildad was a Shuhite. Shua was one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. Remember that Keturah in Gen 25 was sent out east. Shua obviously took the Truth with him and so his subsequent descendants had the Truth.

It only remains then, to identify Job and Zophar and we have in Ch. 36 different descendants of Esau, one Zepher and one Jobab which the Septuagint makes them the Zophar and the Job of the book of Job, very possible. Job is therefore a descendant of Esau which is interesting because Esau is the father of the Edomites and everything else you read of them in scripture is bad. The Edomite had an inveterate hatred of the children of Israel, but not here it appears, in the case of Job he was the exceptional Edomite, much like you could say Ruth was the exceptional Moabite or Rahab was the exceptional Canaanite, here we have one here in Job.

This identification of Job as being an Edomite is fairly substantiated by the location of where the events took place, the land of Uz. You can place the land of Uz using scripture. Lam 4:21 says "Rejoice and be glad O daughter of Edom and dwellers in the land of Uz. So Uz that you read of in Job 1:1 where Job lived was in the land of Edom and this corroborates that Job himself was an Edomite.

We know that as we read in the first chapter of Job, the Sabeans from Sheba came and attacked some of Job's livestock and the Chaldeans from Babylon came and so we have the Sabeans coming from north and south, we have Job's friends coming from all different directions, and the land of Uz seems to be pretty much in the centre and all these various influences of Ch 1 came upon the land of Uz.

What about Job himself? What do we know about this man Job? Well the name Job means "hated" or "persecuted" says Strongs.

We know he was a real person. Ezekiel Ch 14:14 describes him, in fact aligns him with Daniel and Noah as one of the great men in their generation so there is no question from the OT and from James 5 which cites Job as an example of patience and suffering, so there is no question, that in both OT and NT that Job was a real person, so the point is, that whilst we are in the poetry section of the Bible, the book of Job isn't just a poem, it is not a parable, it is a real event, and what you have got recorded here is the record of real discussion that took place.

No genealogy is given, but as we are saying, it is possible that Job was the great-grandson of Esau. The Septuagint goes further and makes him one of the Kings of Edom. The interesting thing about that of course is that there were Kings in Edom long before there were Kings in Israel. You remember in Gen 36 you read of the Dukes of the land of Edom. It may well have been that Job was one of those. He is called "the greatest of the men of the east" in Ch 1:3.

He was obviously wealthy, and probably wealthy from trading. We've got a reference here to camels in Ch 1:3 and camels aren't used for milk or for meat, they are used as carriers and it is likely that this was Job's source of income, from trading in the east where he lived. In Ch 29 he obviously had crops and he had a lot of livestock, and so here's Job maybe living in a populated area, but has a Raj, has major land holding and is cropping and harvesting livestock elsewhere, so extremely wealthy is Job. But, he shared the money that he had and the ecclesia loved him. He was a respected benefactor of the ecclesia. Anyone who had any kind of trouble could go to Job, and he was righteous before God as Ch 1 describes, and not only in ch 1, but at the beginning and at the end of the book, he is called "my servant." You will see three times, Ch 42:8 "my servant Job," so no matter what you think about Job, throughout all of these trials, no matter what Job says, the conclusion is the same as the beginning. God says, he is "my servant Job." You can put together quite a bit on the actual character of Job himself.

Look at Ch 1: 1 "There was a man," it says, "in the land of Uz whose name was Job and that man was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil." It says he was "perfect" here and that word "perfect" simply means 'complete' in a moral sense. He wasn't sinless but he was 'true,' he was 'sound' he was 'blameless,' that's what the word means. He was upright, and 'upright' means 'straight.' He was unwavering, and that means Job was a man of consistency.

He feared God. He was a man of unqualified reverence for the Lord and he "eschewed evil." That means 'to flee from evil,' Job hated iniquity, he ran from any form of evil. V 8, Yahweh says to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil," so the point is, v 1, we've got the character description of Job from the mouth of the narrator. V8 you've got it from the mouth of God himself. We've got a repetition in v8 of what we see in v 1 with one addition, in v 8 Job is called "my servant Job," and this is how we are introduced to this remarkable character, "My servant Job," of the book of Job.

Job is no ordinary man. In Ezek 14:14, I made the point a moment ago to prove that Job was a real person because he is described as such in Ezek 14 and in Jas 5. But in Ezek 14:14 when he is speaking of the iniquity of Jerusalem, Ezekiel says that "if Daniel, Job or Noah had been here, they could only have delivered themselves by their righteousness." Such was the wickedness of the city of Jerusalem that even Daniel, Job and Noah couldn't change them. My point is here, that Daniel, Job and Noah were obviously men who led their generations, they were preeminent examples in the world at the time. These were men who were ordinarily able to deliver other people by their righteousness. Jerusalem was the exception when Ezekiel writes, but ordinarily Daniel, Job and Noah could save other people. What that means is that Job was the most faithful person standing on the earth at the time that the book of Job is written. As a consequence of Job's character it seemed to follow very naturally that he was most richly blessed in everything he did and so you read in v 2, that there were born unto Job seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was 7000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she-asses and a great household, so this man was the greatest of all the men in the east. Everything you read in those couple of verses speaks of completeness. He's got ten children as you can see in v 2, he's got 10 hundred oxen and asses, he's got 10 thousand sheep and cattle. This is almost an idyllic prosperity that Job finds himself in, he is fabulously wealthy, he is enormously wealthy. When he comments on his own lifestyle - once he is afflicted he reflects back on how things were before the time the afflictions came and he says in Job 29:6 "I washed my steps with butter," "the rock poured out for me rivers of oil." He could not have wanted for more, he had everything you could imagine, so in reputation and in substance, he was unquestionably "the greatest of the men of the east."

It seems as though Job's family also enjoyed the benefits of his greatness and of his prosperity. Look at v 4, His sons went and they feasted in their houses every one in his day. And they allied their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. It appears that all of Job's sons had their own houses and they were affluent men in their own right. Most likely, Dad's helped them out with a cash injection. And it seems that every one of them on his day had the family around and this seems to suggest that each of those sons entertained the family on his day. There were seven sons and so it is likely that these were the seven days of the week. Every year perhaps there was a one week feast and on each of the days of the week the next son down the line would have the whole family over and do all the cooking for the days and provide everything and the three girls would go from house to house across this week during as I suggest this one week's feast. There is nothing to suggest here by the way that these gatherings occurred with anything but the highest integrity. This appeared to be a model family in the Truth. That is questioned, by the way, it is suggested that perhaps that because in Ch 29 v 5 Job is offering offerings for his family that perhaps they were going to some excess. I'd offer you Job 29:5 that you could put in your margin beside v 5 of Ch 1. Ch 29:5, when he comments upon this when Job reflects back on this time he talks about it as the time when the "Almighty was with me when my children were about me" he says. There doesn't appear to be anything untoward about what the family is doing.

And so v 5, "It was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about," that is, I am saying, that after a week "that Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." So at the end of the week, Job ministers to his family as the priest as we have just described. He sanctified them, that means probably by washings and by changes of garments and he offered sacrifices for them, in case, he says, in case they've cursed God. To curse God simply means 'to abandon God, to take leave of God,' it is a deliberate sin, and the point is, you see, there was always a risk that this could happen, particularly with great prosperity. Money is a drug and it brings its own problems and it is always a risk that the affluence that Job has now shared with his family could corrupt the value of the Truth in the lives of his children, and he was keenly aware of it in the family. Job's influence here wasn't just restricted to his own family, come up here to Ch. 29. Now I have quoted Ch 29 a couple of times, and Ch 29 is a very interesting chapter of Job because, as I say, it is one of these chapters in which Job reflects back on what life was like before his sufferings began and you have in these chapters a measure of the real greatness of Job and I am saying that he was the most spiritual man on the earth at this time. Brothers and sisters, there is nobody like this today, you look at what the record says about him. Ch 29:7, "When I went out to the gate through the city," he says, "when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me and hid themselves, the aged arose and stood up." "The young men" he says, these are the men who are more likely to be brash or to be impulsive. They stepped aside for Job. "The old men," these are the men that people stood up for. People stood up for the old men. Here, the old men stood up for Job. V 9, "The princes refrained talking, they laid their hand on their mouth, the nobles held their peace and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth." These are the princes, the nobles, the people known for their patronising conversation, for their aloofness, for their superiority. When Job walked by nobody spoke. Nobody said anything. Now why was that. Look at the impression Job has made on his countrymen, why was that, was it because he was rich? I don't think so, not especially, because v 12 says, "he delivers the poor and the fatherless." V 13 says, "he cared for the widows and for those dying. V 15 says "he looked after the blind and the lame." V 16 "the poor and the stranger." Anybody in trouble could appeal to Job. Everybody in trouble could appeal to Job. They'd get compassion, they would get a fair hearing they would get material assistance if they came to Job.

You look at v 24, Ch 29:24. You see you can build a picture of what this man was like, it is unprecedented what this man was like, Ch 29:24, "If I laughed on them they believed it not, and the light of mine countenance they cast not down." Here is the NIV version, "When I smiled on them they scarcely believed it, the light of my face was precious to them." V 25 goes on, "I chose the way for them and sat as their chief, I dwelt as a king among his troops I was like the one who comforts mourners." People came to Job to ask questions on direction in life. Here was a man who was advising families on the best course of child-rearing, on careers for their children, he is involved in everybody's life, they loved him. Everybody loved Job. The ecclesia loved Job. Everyone loved him it appears, except one person, and you find him back in Ch 1, somebody's got a problem with Job. Somebody's got a big problems with Job.

It tells us in Ch 1:6 "That there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh and Satan came also among them. Now of course, here is the next problem to solve. Who is this, what's happening here? You'll know from a doctrinal point of view is a "wrested verse" because the Churches take this and try to prove the identity of the Devil from it. Well, that is not a big concern to us, but other things are, who is the Satan of Job 1:6? Well, there are a number of possibilities. For example, it is suggested that he could be an allegorical adversary, that Satan isn't a person or a creature or anything of the kind, it is simply a spirit of jealousy This is just, if you like, an ecclesial uprising against Job. Well, you know, it is difficult to put much weight on that suggestion because the record clearly presents a real person who not only presents himself in v 6 of this chapter, but he converses in v7, he appears to understand the conversation that comes back from God in v 8 and he is given the power to afflict Job. So I don't think it is and allegorical identity that is Satan, it is a person of some kind or another.

Well, is it a human person? The first option that has been suggested here is that it was one of the three friends or perhaps Elihu himself. Perhaps Satan was one of the three friends or Elihu. The problem with that suggestion brothers and sisters is that this whole dialogue progresses on the basis that none of the friends knows the real cause for Job's suffering. Bear in mind that if Eliphaz, for example was the Satan of Job 1, Eliphaz wouldn't have to try and elicit a confession from Job or to try to find out what Job has done

to bring all this suffering upon him, which he does do, because Eliphaz would know why the suffering was happening. It is happening because he has done it himself. God has given him the power to afflict Job. But the point is that the entire conversation of the book proceeds on the basis that none of the friends knows what is the real purpose of Job's sufferings, and they are all trying to find it out. So it can't be one of the three friends, or Elihu for that matter.

Well, could it be just some other brother in the ecclesia? Yes, of course, it could be. We'll come back to that, just put that on the board, as possible. The other suggestion of course is that Satan could be an angel and an angel does have the power to afflict people and to bring various privations and trials upon them and this angel was doing it in Job's best interest. You could follow the churches and say it is a fallen angel, well I've got a few quotes here, but I'm not going to spend time on that, but it could have been an angel of God, a ministering spirit acting for Job's best interest. Well, possibly.

Let's now take two possibilities forward, it is an anonymous brother, or it is an angel of God, what can we make of that? Well, let's talk about this angel. There is no question that from the story of Balaam, angels can be adversaries. The Hebrew Satan is used as the English word 'adversary' in Num 22 to describe the angel that came before Balaam. Secondly the "sons of God" is here as it appears in v 6, and that phrase "sons of God" is used in Job 38:7 to speak of the angels. "The sons of God did rejoice at creation," so "sons of God" is a title used of the angels. To present yourself before Yahweh could refer to a meeting in heaven, quoting 1 Kgs 22, remember the story of Micaiah's prophecy? Yahweh is on his throne with all the spirits around him and he says "Who shall make Ahab go and fall at Ramoth Gilead and one spirit spake after this manner and one spirit spake after that manner. I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets," well that could be a meeting like this. "Going to and fro in the earth" is a phrase that the prophet Zechariah particularly uses for the work of the angels and Satan says when he is asked "Where have you been Satan?" Oh, "going to and fro in the earth," and that is exactly what Satan says, the book of Job says in v 1, so it is suggested that is very good evidence, suggesting that Satan is acting in Job's best interest, for Job's benefit. Heb 1:14 "are they not ministering spirits sent to minister on behalf of the heirs of salvation." Heb 1 does say that the angels minister for our benefit, and what's more, Satan isn't there at the end of the book, now this is thought to be a very strong argument from silence, that because God never ever addresses or redresses this situation with Satan at the end, that therefore there is no problem with Satan and that what Satan does here is a good thing in fact, as far as the development of Job's character is concerned, and therefore Satan must be a "good guy," he must be an angel for example.

Well, that is all possible, I suppose, the big reservation I have here is that, well you watch as the story unfolds, it really doesn't appear to me as though Satan is acting in Job's best interest at all. It appears to me, moreover, that Satan disagrees with God's assessment of Job's character, and, I am going to suggest, he's got various reasons for doing that. I think a more likely possibility is that Satan is another brother in the ecclesia. Men, of course, can be adversaries, there is no difficulty with men being adversaries either. And "the sons of God" is a phrase used of men, "the sons of God" as opposed to the "daughters of men in Gen 6, so even before the book of Job was written, "sons of God" was a phrase used of people, not just angels. It says here in v 6, "the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh," well this doesn't have to be a meeting in heaven, this could be a meeting on earth. Simply to appear before Yahweh in other scriptures, Jer 19, 2 Chr 19, "to appear before the Priest is "to appear before Yahweh." You look at those quotes, there is no difficulty there. You can appear before Yahweh if you appear before Yahweh's representative, that's how scripture uses the term.

The Satan, what's more, disagrees with God's perception of Job's character in Job 1, and that is very contrary with what the angels would do with God. You wouldn't find the angels disagreeing with God. In Psa 103 they do the work of God, they are the fingers of God's hand. They are employed by God to do his work not to disagree with him or challenge him on his assessment of people's characters, and what's more, the angels minister for the benefit of the saints. As you read this record I believe Satan's whole attitude is critical and cynical, it is resentful, it is antagonistic and there doesn't appear to be anything Satan could say about Job which is helpful, and I am going to show you that shortly, but that is certainly how the face

reading of the record presents Satan as an adversary to Job and an adversary to God, nothing at all to assist.

And then if that is true, that Satan causes this whole problem, then why doesn't the book conclude with a final redress of God to Satan? And do you know what I think? I think there is no point, Satan probably leaves the Truth at this point. I will come back to this issue about why Satan isn't spoken to by God at the end of the book, but you just watch as the story unfolds and I think you will see it from ecclesial life itself, it is a remarkable thing.

I suppose the big question is, however, you could make a reasonable case of Satan being an angel, you could make an equally reasonable case for Satan being a brother, but how do you decide? Where is the balance of the evidence, which way does the needle go as far as the weight of these arguments is concerned? What you therefore need is a third piece of evidence, you need a precedent, you need some good reason to believe me that it is an anonymous brother, for example, rather than being an angel. And I will offer you this. The things that happened in Job Ch 1 are remarkably parallel to the events that happened in another event, in Gen 4. You see in Gen 4:3 it says, "in the process of time, Cain and Abel came and offered sacrifices." In Job 1 it says, "there was a day." So the point is, there was a routine time when things would occur, be it the sacrifice of Gen 4 or the meeting in Job 1. And the sons of God attend, well of course, Abel was a son of God, that is how the sons of God are described in Gen 6. Cain was a "son of man," and they come to present themselves before Yahweh. You know that in Gen 4:3? Cain and Abel present themselves before the angel of God. Abel had his sacrifice accepted, just as it appears that Yahweh accepts Job here because in v 8 of Job 1, Yahweh commends the character of Job to Satan. But Cain's offering wasn't accepted by God, in fact it appears that Satan was not accepted by God here, either. Cain is very jealous of Abel. I am going to suggest that Satan is very jealous of Job. Cain in fact kills Abel in Gen. 4. Satan is given power to punish Job but not to touch him physically. So that is how it begins. Cain then became a fugitive to wander up and down. Satan says he has been going "to and fro on the earth," and at the end of it all Cain and Satan both leave the presence of God. So my point is, we have a remarkably parallel discussion, in Gen 4 with what you have here in Job Ch 1. If you put all that together then, the characters of the story must be like this, that the "sons of God" are simply members of the ecclesia, and that Satan is an anonymous pseudo-Christadelphian brother who is jealous of Job. There is no question that Satan knows his way around his Bible. There is no question he is familiar with ecclesial surroundings, because of the way he talks here. That would mean, Yahweh, by the way, in Job 1:6 is not Yahweh himself, and not a priest, but an angel, and I would add to that the fact that when Yahweh speaks to Job or appears to Job out of a whirlwind, it is clearly not a High Priest that is speaking to Job out of a whirlwind in Ch 38, it is an angel of God. It is an angel of God here as well, and here you have the sons of God standing before an angel of God, discussing the character of one of them.

Well, let's look at the story, v 7. Yahweh says to Satan, "whence cometh thou?" And then Satan answers and says "Oh.. from going to and fro in the earth, from walking up and down in it." All right, what is this? Yahweh says to him "where have you come from," as if it wasn't common for Satan to be at meetings like this or at a ceremony like this. This is the same question that Elisha asked Gehazi after Gehazi returned from Namaan, "Where have you been?" It is the same question that the sailors asked Jonah in the boat in the storm in Jonah Ch 1. It is a question of intensity, that's the point, and the answer comes back, 'Oh, you know, back and forth, up and down, you know me, always moving.' It is a flippant answer, that's the point, in v 7 here. This is Satan's excuse for not being at the memorial meeting. It is a biblical answer, he uses biblical language, there's no doubt about that. The words that he uses here are words that are used of the angels on behalf of God who "run to and fro through the earth." So here is someone who knows how to handle himself in ecclesial situations. He knows his Bible, but even though he doesn't really answer the question, what he does do, tells you a lot about him. What does he do for a job? Well, he is travelling. That means he is most probably a trader, well, what does Job do for a job? Well the camels in v 3 would suggest very strongly that Job is also a trader, that's what those 3,000 camels are for. This is like a fleet of trucks that Job has got in v 3, 3,000 trucks, that's what Job is doing you see. Already we have probably got a clue to the problem that there is here in this ecclesia. Here was somebody who envied Job because of his success, he wanted to be rich like Job was, but he just couldn't make it happen. This is the very same envy that Cain had for Abel. What was the envy that Cain had for Abel? That his brother's deeds were righteous and his were not. He had this fratricidal tendency, he wanted to kill his

brother because his brother was righteous and he wasn't. We've got the same problem here, you see. As far as Satan is concerned, he's got a problem that God has blessed Job and he hasn't blessed him, and he's got a reason for that. Satan thinks that Job is just a businessman. He thinks Job is cunning. He thinks Job's smart. He thinks Job is only in the ecclesia because it works financially, and all Job does, is he writes his business plan each year. Things I must do this year, give to this charity, to that charity, look after his brother, look after this sister, keep praying because that's what affects the bottom line, it is all about the money. That is how Satan viewed Job's character. If God cut the money off, Job would leave the Truth, he'd curse God and leave the Truth, that's how Satan viewed Job. So Yahweh says to Satan, "Well, Satan, you are a man of the world, you've been up and down, you've seen lots of things, v 8, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is no one like him in all of the earth," I mean, you ought to know, you go to and fro in the earth, it says in v 7. Have you ever seen anything like this in all the earth? A perfect and upright man, one that fears God and eschews evil, you are a man of experience, Brother Satan, what do you think? Have you ever met anyone to match my servant Job?

Then Satan answers Yahweh and says, "Does Job serve Yahweh for nought?" Do you think he serves you for free? Do you think he is in the meeting for nothing? Do you think Job's motives are entirely pure? V 10, Have you not made a hedge around him on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands and his substance has increased in the land. But now, you put forth your hand and touch all that he has and he will curse thee to thy face. You take away the money, you turn off the cash, and Job will leave the Truth.

Now, here's the question, have you ever said that about a brother or a sister? 'Oh, it's all right for them, they can afford it, we can't ' It's all right for them, they don't have kids like our kids.' It's all right for them, they've never had the trials that we've had, what about their upbringing?' Have you ever thought like that, how you ever said that? What could your motive be? Ask yourself if your real motive is not envy when we start talking like that about each other.

You know what, the real question to ask here is 'If Satan had all the blessings that Job had, what kind of a brother would he be? Would he be the kind of brother who would care for the poor and the fatherless? Would he be the benefactor of the ecclesia? Don't think so. You see, there is a bigger problem here isn't there. Look at v 11. He says to the angel, "Put forth thy hand and touched all that Job has and he will curse thee to thy face. What do you think it means "touch all that he hath?" That is a deliberate understatement isn't it. What does he really mean? Hit him hard! Punish him, hammer him really hard and see what he is made of. Do you think this is the kind of thing that an angel of God would say? I don't think so.

V 12, Yahweh says to Satan, All right, "behold, all that he has is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thy hand" and Satan went forth from the presence of Yahweh. All right, he says, Brother, you take whatever you want from Job, you can't touch him physically, but you can take whatever you want and now from v 14 you are going to see the trials really begin on Job, and you might ask, How did this actually happen, how does God give a brother the power to do this to another brother? How could Satan decide what he wanted to do and then simply go and do it? Well, I will offer you Psalm 36:1-4, this is what it says, speaking of the wicked, "There is no fear of God before his eyes, he flattereth himself in his own eyes until his iniquity be found hateful, the words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit and he deviseth mischief upon his bed," and I think that is probably what happened. Satan went home that night, lay in bed dreamed about what he could do to Job whilst complying with the rules that God has put upon him, dreamed about what he wanted to do, made it a matter of prayer, and it happened.

Well, V 13, "there was a day, when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house and there came a messenger unto Job and said The oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away, yea and they have slain the servants by the edge of the sword and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." So here we are, back at the eldest brother's house, the next round of feasting is beginning, and the Sabeans have come down in v 15,

this is from Sheba in the South of Arabia, they've taken away all the animals and they have killed the servants, and one messenger alone has survived and runs to Job.

Now here's Job, sitting at his big oak desk. He's got his crimson velvet curtains along the back, he's got a tray over here with a cup of tea on it that one of the office girls has brought in, and he's going through the books of this enormous business that he's got, where he's going to trade next, what reports his staff are bringing back, where is the market growth, profits, etc. etc., and in comes this servant, bangs on the door, highly agitated. 'Sit down, sit down, tell me, start right from the start, here's a cup of tea, tell me the whole story and it will be ok. Tell me from the start.' The servant starts telling Job the whole story and it says, "and while he was speaking," in v 16, there came another servant and says, "The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I only am escaped alone to tell you." So as the first servant is explaining the calamity that has come upon Job, the next servant comes in, bangs on the door and sits beside the first servant. "Calm down, calm down, have a cuppa and tell me what has happened, right front he start, just tell me slowly what has happened. "And as he was speaking," it says, "there came another" in v 17 and said "The Chaldeans fell upon the camels and they have carried them away and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee." So here is 3,000 trucks just gone up in flames and you think about the money that Job has just lost in this transaction. Here is Job lining up these servants, these are the managers of different parts of Job's business and they have come in, and there's no money left, and no lives left. You need to understand that there are probably brethren dying here, I mean, the servants are killed here, there are families without fathers, as a result of these problems. And while he was speaking in v 18 there came also another and said "thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brothers house, and behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, smote the four corners of the house and it fell on the young men and I only am escaped to tell thee." Now there are definitely brethren dead there, and it wasn't until this last messenger comes in, brothers and sisters, that Job responds. He could lose everything, you know, he could lose every dollar he had, but when he lost his children in v 19, he stands up in v 20, he rent his mantle, an expression of grief and heart-broken astonishment. He shaved his head, a symbol of mourning, he fell upon the ground, it says, and surrendered to God. There is no question in Job's mind at this point, this had obviously come from God. I mean, there is too much coincidence, even if the Sabeans and the Chaldeans had dreamed up these invasions themselves, and by a freak had come upon him one day and he had lost half of his business to them, the lightning that goes along the ground in v16, the great wind that comes upon the house in v 19, these are natural disasters, these are Divinely manipulated natural disasters, how could all these things occur in one day. He knows, this has come from God.

So v 21, Job says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, naked shall I return thither. Yahweh gave, Yahweh hath taken away. Blessed be the name of Yahweh," he says. He just lost everything he ever owned, everything he'd worked for, for years and years that he had spent building this business, and with the death of his sons his name is going to be put out forever. 1 Tim 6:7 says, "We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out." So v 22, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." And Satan's wrong you see. Satan made a prediction in v 11, that when the money dried up Job would curse God and leave the Truth. It didn't happen. Job didn't curse anyone. He didn't curse God, he didn't curse the Sabeans, he didn't curse the Chaldeans, he didn't curse the servants, instead, it says, he blessed the Name of Yahweh. What kind of a man is this, brothers and sisters? He blessed the name of Yahweh and he'd just lost everything in his life.

Well, the question is, what is Satan going to say to this? And that begins Ch 2, and with Ch 2, round 2. You see this is how this first section breaks up. We have this introduction about who Job is then we have the first interview between Yahweh and Satan, then the second interview between Yahweh and Satan which starts in Ch 2, and then the great lamentation of Job before the friends start speaking in Ch 4. Well here it is, here's the second interview.

Ch 2:1, look at it. "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present them before Yahweh," well perhaps the first question is how long would you say the intervening period is between Ch 1 and Ch

2? Ch 1 and verse 6, we have the sons of God presenting themselves before Yahweh, Ch 2:1, they come again. Well we don't know how long, but long enough, however, for Satan to punish Job, for Satan to go back to and fro in the earth, maybe three months, maybe six months, not an appreciable period of time, but some time. Well this day the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, Satan came also among them to present himself before Yahweh. Yahweh says to Satan, 'So are you back?' Satan answered Yahweh and said, 'Oh you know me, to and fro, up and down.' Yahweh says to Satan in v 3, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, none like him in all the earth, perfect, upright, one that fears God and eschews evil" and look at this, "And still he holds fast his integrity though thou moved me against him to destroy him without cause," despite what you have done to him, he hasn't changed, have you seen anything like that in all your travels brother Satan, he says. Satan answers Yahweh, "Skin for skin, yea whatever a man hath, he will give for his life, but Ah, you put forth your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh and then he will curse thee to thy face." These aren't the words of an angel, this was an envious, hateful brother. And after all that this brother has done to Job, he's still not satisfied. You know what Satan says, do you know what Satan's bottom line for this answer is? What does Satan say, 'You haven't proven anything, you haven't proven anything, Job doesn't care for anyone, he's so hard he doesn't even care if his kids die,' that's all we've learned for that. "Skin for skin," he says in v 4. This is a difficult phrase, it appears to mean 'life for life.' All a man's has he will give for his life. Job's prepared to trade everything, including the lives of his children, including the skins of his children so long as he keeps his own life, that's what Satan says, that is his interpretation of Job. Well, brothers and sisters, you tell me, what was Job supposed to do? If he blesses God, Satan says, 'that's how hard he is, he is a hypocrite.' If he curses God, Satan says, 'See, I told you. He's a hypocrite. Well what do you do with that? What was Job supposed to do?

Here is a better question, what do you think God should have done to Satan for that answer? What would you do to him? What would you do if one of your children said that to you about another one of your children who came across great hardship and didn't leave the Truth and one of your children said 'See, all that proves is that as long as they are alive they don't care who else dies.' Well, what would you do if one of your children said that against another one? If it was one of us, brothers and sisters, he'd probably just kill him on the spot. But I am very glad God didn't kill him on the spot, because this is exactly the kind of thing we do ourselves. So Yahweh is patient with him, just like he is with us, because as horrible as this creature is, God wants to try and convert him.

Well can you believe it, well think about yourself v 6, Yahweh says to Satan, 'All right then, behold he is in thine hand, but save his life. ' And so Satan goes from the presence of Yahweh and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to his crown and Job took a potsherd to scrape himself and he sat down among the ashes. Well, you know if losing your possessions and your family is tough, losing your health as well would be devastating. And Job would have spent many, many tearful hours thinking about this in prayer after the calamities of Ch 1. He would have wondered what had happened to his relationship with God. I mean you've got to believe after the events of Ch 1 that Job would go to God in prayer and beg for understanding why this had to happen and it appears that the answer to his prayer is these sore boils, this shocking ravage of his health that comes upon him in Ch 2. He would wonder what on earth he has done in the truth to bring all this upon him. He would wonder what has happened to his relationship with God. Satan's gone, maybe going to and fro in the earth and maybe now the lion's share of the trading in the east might be falling into this brother's hands because Job's not in the game any more. He's lost everything. But now, almost as if Job's prayer was rejected in Ch 1, he is so blighted by disease that it appears he is going to die.

His friends come, you know, in v 12 of Ch 2, his three friends come and they stand at a distance because they can't recognise him. He is so disfigured by this disease that they can't recognise him. They sit down with him in v 13 of Ch 2, it says, "for seven days and seven nights." That was the customary period for mourning the dead. Well let me tell you, I don't think they were mourning for the death of Job's children, they are mourning in prospect for the death of Job himself, there just doesn't seem to be an end to this. And honestly you know, you'd have to see it to believe it, you would think, well, we don't know exactly what the disease was, but the word "boils" is the word shekin, it is the same word that is used for the botch of Egypt or for leprosy. Hezekiah's boil was the same word, and so it is a very general word. He are the symptoms, it is a skin disease that covers his whole body. His skin has gone black and it is breaking apart.

He is covered in ulcers and he has an intolerable itching, he's got deep internal pain and the sores that are on his body are breeding worms, the word is maggots, so he is infested, he's fly-blown isn't he. The disfigurement that he has now got has made him unrecognisable, his breath is pungent, and drives people away. He can't sleep and when he does sleep he has nightmares. He has a fever, he is emaciated because he can't keep anything down, his eye-sight is failing so he appears to be doing permanent damage to his eyesight by this disease, he's got fits of depression, he uncontrollably weeps, he is mocked by children. I mean, once upon a time old men would stand up for him, now, children laugh at him. He takes refuge outside of the city in ashes and all he wants to do is die. Unbelievable!

Well in v 9, Job's wife has had enough. Then said his wife unto him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity, Job? "she says, "Curse God and die," 'what's the point Job? Continue to bless God? Why prolong your life, why don't you just curse him and bring down the final stroke.' Alarming for his wife to say this! If any brother or sister was to say this, this is a desperate suggestion in a time of great extremity. Yahweh never ever holds this woman liable for what she has said here, this is never ever mentioned again. She is never made accountable for it, but what she suggests is exactly what Satan says Job would do. It is exactly what Satan said Job would do. And now, even his wife is recommending that he takes the course of action that Satan said would happen.

But look, this is Job, he has spent his whole life, v 5 of Ch 1 told us, he 's spent his whole life offering sacrifices for his children in case they cursed God. He can't do it, he won't do it. Not that Job is immune to suffering, the fact is, well look at Ch 3:1, "After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day," there is no question, Job would rather be dead, he just wants to die. But to his wife, well v 10, look what he says, he said to her, "Wife," he says, "you speak as one of the foolish women speaketh. Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" Would you say that, brother and sister? Would any of us say that? Life's pretty nice here in Houston, we are all living happily, there is no problem. So you lose your job, you lose every cent that you have earned. You lose your house, you lose your family, you lose your health, you know, we can't really expect any more from God. "And in all this did not Job sin with his lips." You've got to read this to believe it don't you?

But he doesn't call his wife a fool. This is what he says, "Thou speaketh as one of the foolish women speaketh." He doesn't call her a fool. Why not? Because this is out of character for her. That's why God never takes her up on it. It was out of character for her, and Satan's wrong again, you see. Satan is wrong again. And there's the type brothers and sisters, you think of it, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God and not evil?" That's what Job says, that is "not my will but thine be done." And if Job is a type of Christ, his wife is a type of the bride of Christ who fails him, who couldn't match him under trial, who couldn't drink of the cup which he drank of, who couldn't watch with him one more hour, isn't she? Who when he was taken, wanted to forsake him and flee, and Satan? Well there's the type of human nature, cynical, self-seeking, materialistic, ungoverned by the principles of the truth, that's what he is.

But the trial that Job's wife presents raises one of the age-old questions of the Truth, what's the value of righteousness? This commodity of righteousness, this characteristic that we strive for, what is the real value of it? Is there any value in righteousness itself, apart from the benefits that it might give us now? If living the Truth means a life like this, would you still want to remain righteous? Job says 'Yes,' and Satan says 'No!' You see, it is as simple as that. Satan says that Job's righteousness is really just a refined form of selfishness, that it is a business proposition, that is why Job is religiously righteous, and Job's just a hypocrite, Job says, "No," righteousness is a manifestation of the Divine character, Job says 'I am righteous because I love God and I revere God; an upright man reveres God and eschews evil, that is why Job is living the Truth, not for what Satan says.

But if Satan is a brother, how does God convince him and how does God convince people like him? There is only one way, you've got to take a righteous man, and you've got to subject him to trial that will strip him

of every single thing in this world apart from his character and see then if he is still righteous. That's what it is going to take to prove the point, you see. In short, the just would have to suffer for the unjust, that's the point, that's why this has to occur. This is going to be the purpose of Job, you see, he is an unwilling personal Messiah. He is going to save his friends here, but he is an unwilling Messiah, that is what Job is. And it is going to chase him, and it is going to try him and it is going to prove him to the limit, but when God has finished with him he is going to become a greater man than he ever was before. He is going to lose everything and he's going to be made of "no reputation," but at the end of the book God is going to "highly exalt him" and he is going to have a name greater even than the name he had before. The type is very obvious. In Ch 3, all Job wanted to do was die, he wishes he was never conceived as you read Ch 3, or if he was conceived, if he was to be still-born, failing that, if he was to be born alive now he wants to die in any he can, he just wants to end this whole ordeal, but in the midst of all this there is this one verse, Ch 3:25. Look what Job says. "So the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." I always knew something like this was going to happen. I always knew something like this could happen and now the thinking has begun, brothers and sisters, Job would never be the same again, and not only has his thinking begun, but now the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

Ch31:23 destruction from God was a terror to me.?