

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



J O B

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In Everything Give Thanks

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: August 23, 1998

Main Scripture Text: Job 1

“And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

JOB 1:21

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Introduction

As you’ve already heard, we’re looking tonight in the Book of Job. And when you’ve found that book, look up here, if you would, and hold it open in your lap. And may I tell you, one of the most perplexing verses in one of the most perplexing commands in the Bible is found in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 18, which says, *“In every thing give thanks”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18)—*“In every thing give thanks.”*

Now it’s easy to give thanks for some things. I’ve had my grandchildren here around the house lately. We’ve had a barrel of fun. And it’s easy to give thanks for that. It’s easy to give thanks for friends and food, for beauty, for love—these wonderful things. And if you can’t thank God for those kinds of things, there’s something twisted and warped in your heart. But the Bible says, *“In every thing give thanks”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). What about evil? What about pain? What about little starving children? What about rape? What about divorce? What about AIDS? What about apostasy—people turning from the truth? What about the death of a child hit by an automobile, or some greedy malady that is eating away at your body and your health, and there seems to be no hope? Can you thank God for these things?

Well, literally, it says, *“In every thing give thanks”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). That is, that, in the midst of these things, there’s still a God to thank. We need to praise Him. It doesn’t mean that these things are good, and, even though Romans 8:28 is there, in the Bible, that says, *“And we know that all things work together for good,”* it would mock us, if we were to say these things themselves are good. And it would be cruel to tell people, “Oh, don’t worry. It will all work out somehow,” when they’re going through anguish, and heartache, and tears, and frustration, and confusion, and perplexity.

Well, the Book of Job has a lot to help us, in this time when things just literally do not make sense. And the Book of Job has helped me to understand that I don’t have to understand. Now we, as human beings, think we can endure almost anything, if we just know the reason why. And so many times, as a pastor, when I’ve gone into homes, when the tragedy has come—and worse than tragedy, sheer horror has come. I’ve been in homes where there have been murders, and suicides, and sudden deaths of beautiful children. And sometimes, even on Christmas Day, or Christmas Eve, I’ve gone into homes where there’s horrendous and violent death—and people look at me, as a pastor, like I am supposed to know the answer to these things, and, they say, “Pastor, why?” And I don’t try to tell them why—first of all, because I don’t know why. Brother Jim Whitmire, some time ago, somebody wrote a song, “When Answers Aren’t Enough, There’s Jesus.” Now people sing that song sometimes, and I wonder if they really understand the wisdom in that song title. But that is a great song title, and a great song.

Now let me give you the background of the Book of Job. It is an encounter, first of all, between Almighty God and Satan himself. Now you know, the word *devil* means “slanderer.” And the word *Satan*, as we find it here, in the Book of Job, means “adversary.” So you have an adversary; and, God has an adversary, and he is a slanderer. As a matter of fact, the first time we see Satan in the Bible—as he crawls his slimy, corroding path on to the pages of history—we find him slandering. He is slandering God to man. Actually, he’s saying to Eve, in the Garden of Eden, “Why, God is holding out on you. He is not a good God. Hath God said that ye shall not eat of the fruit of every tree of the garden? God knows that, in the day that ye eat, then your eyes will be opened; you’ll be like Him. God has a monopoly on this thing of knowledge, and He doesn’t want you to get in on it” (Genesis 3:1). And actually, what he is doing is impugning the motives and the goodness of God. He’s saying, “God is not good to you, Eve. God is some sort of a cosmic killjoy; and, every time you see somebody having a good time, He moves in to break up the party.” He’s a slanderer, and we see him there, in the Garden of Eden, slandering God before man, and saying to man, “God is not good.”

The next time we see him, he’s slandering man before God. He’s saying, “God, You’re too good. The only reason that this man, Job, serves You is because You’ve

been too good to him.” Now notice what he said to Eve: “He hasn’t been good enough to you.” Notice what he says to God the Father: “You’ve been too good to Job.” He is a double-minded liar. Satan is a slanderer.

Well, read, if you will, verses 1 through 3: *“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”* Enough said. He was a good man: *“And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east”* (Job 1:1–3). In other words, he was incredibly wealthy; he was the greatest of the great. And God was proud, if I can use the word *proud* in the sense in which I am using it. God was grateful for His servant Job. As a matter of fact, in an encounter that He has with Satan, God brings up the subject.

Notice God initiated the conversation with Satan, in verse 8: *“And the LORD said unto 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?”* (Job 1:8). Notice that God initiated the conversation. God is boasting about His servant Job. When I read that I thought, “I wonder if God would say that about me? Would God say to the angelic beings, “Have you noticed Adrian? Have you noticed the way he loves me? Have you noticed the way he serves me? Am I living so as to bring pleasure to God, so that God could point me out?” I wonder, could you ask yourself that question? If God wanted to point somebody out that He could boast about, would He want to point you out?

Well, when He—when God—boasted about His servant Job, in verse 8, the devil answered, in verse 9—and this is the key to the whole Book of Job: *“Then Satan answered the LORD, and said”—“Ha!”* Now he didn’t say, “Ha!”; I said that. But he said, “Ha!” I know he said, “Ha!”—*“Doth Job fear God for naught?”* (Job 1:9). You can hear the sneer. You hear the cynicism. Satan says, “God, You think Job loves You? Oh, he doesn’t love You. Come on! You think he fears You for nothing? The reason that he fears You is You have bought him off. You have put a hedge around him. You protected him. Look at him! That fat cat—he’s never known any problems. Sure he loves You! You have got a hedge around him. I’ll tell you what, God: Break down the hedge. I can’t get at him, because of You. Just take down the hedge. You let me get at him. Let me have him for a little while. When I’m finished with him, God, I want tell you something: Your servant Job will curse You to Your face. He doesn’t really love You. You’ve bought him. You’ve bribed him. He has the kind of love that is *because* love.”

And by the way, that is the weakest kind of love—*because* love: “I love you because you are good,” or, “I love you because you’re kind,” or, “I love you because you’re

handsome,” or, “I love you because, because, because...” That’s a threatening kind of love, because, if any of those *because*s change, then the love may go.

Two people were moving into a beautiful house, and this very wealthy woman—she and her husband were moving into the house. And her name was Edna. And she was reminding him that it was her money that had done this. And she said to him, “John, if it hadn’t been for my money, we wouldn’t have this automobile.” He said, “Yes, Edna.” And she said, “John, if it hadn’t a been for my money, we wouldn’t have this big house.” He said, “Yes, Edna.” “John, if it hadn’t been for my money, we wouldn’t be here.” He said, “Edna, if it hadn’t been for your money, I wouldn’t be here.” That’s the kind of love that Satan said that Job had for God.

And so there are three words. I thought about these three words, and I want you to, too. The Book of Job is like a drama in three acts, and there are three words that kind of sum it up to me. And the first word is adversity. The second word is perplexity. The third word is sovereignty. Now keep those three words in mind, and see if they don’t, in some ways, label these three acts in the Book of Job.

I. Adversity

The first is adversity. Satan flings out a challenge to the Almighty. He says, “You let me get at him; I’ll fix him. He’ll curse You to Your face.” Now look, if you will, in chapter 2, verse 3: *“And the LORD said unto 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? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause”* (Job 2:3).

Now what happened is this: Well, let’s go back, if we can. I want to point out that, before we get to what I’m going to say next, is that, everything that happened to Job did not have a cause. I mean, Job had done nothing wrong, in and of itself. Now go back, if you will, to chapter 1. Let me show you what—when God took down the hedge—what the devil did to Job.

A. In the Realm of Finances

First of all, the devil attacked him in the realm of his finances, in the realm of his fortune. Look, if you will, in verses 13 through 17: *“And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I*

only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee” (Job 1:13–17).

Now in moment, Job’s possessions are stripped from him. He went to bed a millionaire, and he woke up a pauper. Now the Book of 1 Thessalonians says, *“In every thing give thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*. If you were Job, could you give thanks for a situation like that? If you couldn’t, it means that money is your source of joy, not Almighty God. He lost his fortune.

B. In the Realm of Family

Now wait a minute. Not only did he lose his fortune; he also lost his family. Begin in verse 18, and look at this, through verse 22: *“While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men,”—now, there was a cyclone, a tornado—“and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (Job 1:18–22).*

Now it made no sense to Job. Job did not know why it happened. There was nothing that he had done wrong, but in it—in the midst of it—when his children, this beloved family, are taken away, he said, *“The Lord has given, and Lord has taken away.”* I’ve been in the homes of so many of our church members immediately after death. I have seen them suffer indescribable pain and sorrow at a family loss; but, I have seen them with this exact same faith that Job had: *“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”* And even through their tears, they praise God, and shut the devil’s mouth.

C. In the Realm of Fitness

The devil came in, and he wiped out his fortune. He’s still praising the Lord. Wiped out his family—he’s still praising the Lord. And so after his wealth, and his family, then the devil goes after his health—not only fortune, and family, but fitness. Look, in chapter 2, and read verses 1 through 8: *“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”* And by the way, he’s still doing that today: *“And the LORD*

said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him...?” And skipping to verse 4: *“And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.”* Satan: *“I got his fortune; I got his family; but now, You let me attack his own personal being.”* *“All that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd”—that’s a broken piece of pottery—“to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.”* Now he’s now in inconceivable pain. He’s covered with boils—festering boils—from the crown of his head to sole of his foot. He can’t lie down; he can’t sit up. The doctors can’t do anything for him. And notice what his wife said, in verse 9: *“Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die”* (Job 2:1–9). That’s exactly what the devil wanted Job to do—was to curse God. And here is Mrs. Job, doing the work of the devil.

Can you—can you—praise God, when your life is ebbing away, when you’re in pain, and the doctors cannot alleviate that pain? Perhaps there is some cancer, or some irreversible disease, so far as modern medicine is concerned. Can you still—can you still—praise God?

D. In the Realm of Favor

You see, the hedge came down; the fortune went. The hedge came down; the family went. The hedge came down, and fitness went. And then, not only that, but he lost his favor with the people. Job was a man highly praised. He was the greatest of the great; but he lost not only fitness, but favor. Look, if you will, in chapter 2, verse 11: *“Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.”* And I want to say, in just a moment, if you had these guys for friends, you wouldn’t need any enemies. *“And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not,”*—that is, he wasn’t even recognizable—*“they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great”* (Job 2:11–13). They sat there for a week and just stared at him; and, after a while, they’re going to criticize him, and they’re going to blame him for sin. They are going say, “Job, if you’d not sinned, you wouldn’t be in this kind of a mess.” And they had the idea that he’d lost his favor with God; and, therefore, he lost his favor with them: “Oh, Brother Job, he must

have done something terrible; he must have some secret sin.”

I want to say here—parenthetically, but emphatically—that you’ll find some of these preachers—these faith preachers—on television, and in other churches, who will tell you that, “If you’re right with God, you can’t be sick; if you’re right with God, you cannot have financial need; if you’re right with God, it’s going to be prosperity, cash, Cadillacs, and comfort all the way.” And it’s the gospel of wealth, and success, and happiness. There’s one thing wrong with that kind of preaching: It ain’t so. It just is not so.

Now God does bless, with wealth and health, and the Bible says, “It’s the Lord thy God that giveth thee prosperity, power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18). And “God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servants” (Psalm 35:27). But there are other times, friend, when it does not work out that way, and it does not mean, necessarily, that you’re not right with God. And so he lost his favor. People began to look down on him, criticize him, and wonder what he had done wrong.

E. **In the Realm of Friends**

And then, not only did he lose his favor; he lost his friends. Look, if you will, in chapter 19. Just fast-forward, now, over to chapter 19. These three friends that we’re talking about... Look in verse 14, and I’m going to have to cut a little bit of Scripture here, in order to get the whole thing that I really want to say to you. Look, if you will, in verse 14—Job says, “*My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me*” (Job 19:14). And then, look over in chapter 19, verse 19: “*All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me*” (Job 19:19). Perhaps this is the cruelest cut of all: When a man loses his fortune; and a man loses his family; and a man loses his fitness; and a man loses his favor, rather than having friends come to his side, these friends just criticize him. Remember, these so-called *friends* sat there and looked at him for seven days.

And I thank God for friends. I thank God for friends who stand by you when you don’t understand, and they don’t understand. But I don’t think there’s a deeper hurt than to have what were called *friends* to turn from you.

David talked about that. In Psalm 41, verse 9, he says, “*Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me*” (Psalm 41:9). And again, David said, in Psalm 55, verses 12 through 14: “*For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company*” (Psalm 55:12–14).

And you know, you’re going to know this in life. Sometimes, you stand up and preach the truth, as a preacher, and you’re going to find people will forsake you.

Sometimes, you stand for God at school—you'll find out that your friends will forsake you. Sometimes, when you need comfort, you're going to get criticism and ostracism, and it's going to hurt real badly.

Turn back to Job chapter 13, verses 4 and 5, here, and see what Job is going through. All of this is under the heading of "Adversity." Job chapter 13, verses 4 and 5—Job has to say, *"But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value."* He's talking to his so-called *friends*: *"O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom"* (Job 13:4–5). And he said, "If you just keep your mouth shut, somebody might make a mistake, and think you're smart." That's what he's saying right here.

So here's Job. Here's Job. Now remember, Job has not read the Book of Job. Job knows nothing of this conversation going on in Heaven. And the Bible tells us clearly, in the second chapter, that Job had done nothing wrong. And he has all of this calamity. So that's Act 1 in this drama of three acts, which we want to call "Adversity."

II. Perplexity

Now it's compounded by the second act in this drama, which we want to call "Perplexity." Job cannot understand it, and he wants to understand it. Look, in chapter 13 and verse 15—Job says, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him"* (Job 13:15). Job says, "God, if You kill me, You kill me. But I still don't understand it. I'm going to maintain my ways toward Him." Now the Book of Job ends with Job never understanding it. God never does give Job an answer. Now he understands it now, because he's in Heaven. But he didn't understand it. We read the end of the book, and we know how it ends. But Job never did know how it ends. He's in perplexity.

Look, if you will, in chapter 19 and verse 8—Job says, *"He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths"* (Job 19:8). "I'm hedged in, and I can't see where I'm going. I just don't understand. I have suffered, and it doesn't make any sense whatsoever." Look, in chapter 23, and read verses 1 through 5: *"Then Job answered and said, Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning."* He said, "I hurt worse than I moan." *"Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"* "Wherever He is: *"I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me"* (Job 23:1–5).

Job said, "I wish I knew where He was. I wish I could go and see Him. I've got so much I want to say to Him." What he's saying is, "I'd like to have a good argument with God. I'd like to explain some things to God. And I want to get some answers." Notice verses 8 and 9 of chapter 23: *"Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold"*

him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him” (Job 23:8–9).

Now folks, it’s bad enough when you have adversity, but, when you compound adversity with perplexity... He says, “I’m in the dark. I’m hemmed in. I can’t find God. He won’t answer me. I talk to Him—He doesn’t answer me back, no matter where He is. What’s going on here?” Again, as a pastor, I’ve found out that, in times of trouble, people want to ask, “Why?” And people think they can bear almost anything, if they just know why. And what Job is saying to God: “God, You owe me some answers. Tell me, God, why? If I just knew why...”

Now if you want to do something—it’s very interesting sometimes—read the biographies of the saints. And almost every great saint of God will go through what now has been called *the deep night of the soul*. People have gone through dark hours, and they have not been able to understand the deepest darkness; and, it seems as though God has turned His back upon them, and they are in that dark night of the soul.

One wise man said, “Life is not a problem to be solved; life is a mystery to be lived.” And sometimes people lose their faith, because they experience suffering, and it seems to be absolute senseless suffering. And they’ll say to me, as a pastor, “Pastor, you tell me why an innocent little child ought to suffer that way,” or, “You tell me why a good man would have thus and such happen to him.” Well friend, sometimes it’s God’s plan that we don’t understand. It was, here, in the Book of Job. Now Job didn’t know that. Job could not understand that he didn’t have to understand. Job could not understand that it was not God’s plan that Job understand. When you don’t understand, it is your opportunity for greatest trust.

I read somewhere where the poet Robert Frost said something. It was very interesting. He was talking about the trials of life. Now I want you to listen to this, because you’ll miss it if you don’t listen carefully. This is what Robert Frost said: “But it was of the essence of the trial that you shouldn’t understand it at the time. It had to be unmeaning to have meaning.” “It was of the essence of the trial that you shouldn’t understand it at the time. It had to seem unmeaning to have meaning.” Now what Robert Frost said: “When you don’t understand why; and it doesn’t make sense; and then you trust God—then, that is real trust. That is trust.”

Another saint of God was Andrew Murray, an old Dutchman. Get some of Andrew Murray’s books, and read them. But here’s what Andrew Murray said—if you’re going through some dark night of the soul, and it doesn’t make sense to you, and you think you need to understand—Andrew Murray said, “In times of trouble, God’s trusting child may say, ‘First, He brought me here. It is His will that I am in this straight place. Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace, in this trial, to behave as His child. Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends for me to learn, and working in the grace He means to bestow. Last, in His good time, He can

bring me out again. How and when, He knows.’ Say, ‘I’m here—one—by God’s appointment; two: in His keeping; three: under His training; four: for His time.’” And then, Andrew Murray said, “God is too good to be unkind, too wise to make a mistake. When we cannot trace His hand, we can always trust His heart.” Isn’t that good?

III. Sovereignty

And so first of all, you see Job in adversity. Then, you see Job in perplexity. But now, we come to Act 3, and we see the word *sovereignty*. God never does give Job an answer. As a matter of fact, God does not answer Job’s question. He doesn’t answer a single question. He just gives Job a revelation of Himself. That’s the reason I like that song that says, “When answers aren’t enough, there’s Jesus.” Job did not find a reason. What Job found was a relationship. Job did not get information. What he learned was a sovereign God. When Job shut up, God showed up.

Now go to chapter 38, and I think it will look a little bit more understandable now. And we’re almost finished. But in chapter 38 of this Book of Job, God’s going to ask Job some questions. Job has been asking God questions. And by the way, I’ve learned that a four-year-old can ask questions that no theologian can answer. So just because there are unanswered questions, that doesn’t mean anything. Look, if you will, in Job chapter 38, beginning in verse 1: *“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?”* He says, “Job, you’re just talking about things you don’t even understand”: *“Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.”* “You’ve been pointing your finger at Me, Job. You’ve been saying, ‘God, You owe me some answers.’” God says, “Why don’t I just ask you a few questions, right now?": *“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;”—*He’s talking, now, about creation—*“when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?”* (Job 38:1–11).

What God is talking about now is, “Job, what holds the ocean in its cradle?” Well, you say, “Gravity.” Oh, sure, you know what gravity is? There’s not a man on Earth who really even knows what gravity is. Men can define it; they still can’t explain it. He’s saying, “Job, where were you, when I made it all? Where were you standing, when I created everything out of nothing? Where were you, Job, when I scooped out the

oceans, and heaped up the mountains, and set the boundaries there?” Notice verse 12: *“Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days;”—that is, “Job, have you ever caused the sun to rise?”—“and caused the dayspring to know his place;”—“Job, do you keep that morning star in place?”—“that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment. And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all”* (Job 38:12–18).

He’s saying to Job, “Job, answer these questions, if you’re so smart. Job, when I made all of this, did I consult you? Did I need any of your advice?” What He’s saying is this: “Job, I am a sovereign God, and I have the right to do whatever I want, whenever I want to do it.”

Now go to chapter 42, for just a moment, and look, if you will, at verses 1 through 6: *“Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”* (Job 42:1–6).

Now what Job is finally saying is this: “God, I see You now. Before, I heard about You. But now, God, I know You in a way that I’ve never known You before. I know You, God, with the deepest faith that a person can have. I don’t love You *because*; I just love You. I don’t have understanding; I have You. And I trust You, God, because You’re a sovereign God.” And let me tell you what happened at this moment. Job found out what all of us, one day, must have to find out: When everything else is gone, and when there’s darkness in front of us, when answers aren’t enough, there’s Jesus. That’s it.

Conclusion

Now you know, all of us know that God is necessary. We all know that. But you see, you haven’t come to a real faith until you find out that not only is God necessary, but God is enough. God is enough. The devil said, “Look—he doesn’t love You; he just loves what You’ve done.” And God says, “Oh, no. He loves me. You take away all these other things, and I will be enough for him.”

Now let me ask you a question: Where are you getting your joy? You say, “Pastor Rogers, I’m getting my joy from God.” Well, how do you know? How do you know that you’re not getting your joy from your job? Well, one way we can find out: Take away

your job, and see if you still have your joy. Where are you getting your joy? You say, “Well, I’m getting my joy from God.” Well, how do you know you’re not getting your joy from your family? Nothing wrong with getting your joy from your family; but, how do you know you’re getting your ultimate joy from your family? One way we can find out is, take away your family, and see if you still have your joy. Where are you getting your joy? You say, “Well, I’m getting my joy from the Lord.” How do you know you’re not getting your joy from your health? Take away your health, and see if you still have your joy.

Now friend, if you can be like Job, and have your fortune taken, have your family taken, have your friends taken, have your favor taken, have your fitness taken, and say to God, “God, not only are You necessary—You are enough,” then you have the kind of faith that Job had here, in this book—this wonderful book. Job, in times of adversity, and perplexity, met up with Sovereignty.

Let me just share this with you, and I’ll be finished: St. Augustine wrote a sermon called “The Pure Love of God”—“The Pure Love of God.” He imagines God coming up with this question: Augustine supposes that “God proposed to you a deal, and said, ‘Here’s the deal: I will give you anything you want. You can possess the whole world. Nothing will be impossible for you. You will have infinite power. Nothing will be a sin—nothing forbidden. You will never die, never have pain, never have anything you do not want, and always have anything you do want, except for just one thing: You will never see my face. You can have it all.’ If God were to say this: ‘You can have it all—every desire fulfilled, every joy; never die—except for one thing: You will never see my face, then,’” Augustine asked, “would you take that deal?” If you would say, ‘No, I will not take that deal,’” Augustine says, “then you have the pure love of God, for look what you just did. You gave up all the world and more—all possible worlds, all imagined worlds, all desired worlds—just for God.” And then, Augustine asked this question: “Did a chill arise in your heart, when you heard the words, ‘You will never see my face?’ That chill is the most precious thing in you. That is the pure love of God.”

Now folks, I’m not there yet, but I need to be, and so do you. You know how I want to live? I want to live in such a way as to shut the devil’s mouth. And I want to say, in times of adversity, in times of perplexity, there’s a sovereign God who can do as He will. I don’t love Him for what He’s done, though I am grateful. I love Him for who He is. And therefore, I will say, with Job, “*The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*” (Job 1:21). That’s the way to live, when it doesn’t make sense.

Father, seal the message in our hearts, tonight. In Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

Is God Enough?

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: August 28, 1983

Main Scripture Text: Job 1:1–3, 6–12

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”

JOB 1:1

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Introduction

And today, as we’ve already told you, the title of our message is this: “Is God Enough?”—“Is God Enough?” Job chapter 1 and verse 1: *“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east”* (Job 1:1–3).

Now I want us to skip, if we will, to verse 6 of this same chapter: *“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto 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? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, [ha], Doth Job fear God for nought?”* Of course, you recognize the *ha* is mine. “Ha, Doth Job fear God...?” I just know how he said it: “ha.” *“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the*

work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” And now notice the challenge that Satan puts forth to the Lord: “But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD” (Job 1:6–12).

Now the key verse is the challenge that the devil throws out to the Lord: “Doth Job fear God for nought?” Verse 9: “Doth Job fear God for nought?” (Job 1:9).

Now here’s what’s happening: The Lord is speaking with Satan, and the Lord initiates the subject of Job. And the Lord just takes joy in His servant. The Lord is blessed by the life of Job. If we could use human language, the Lord is proud of Job. Now the Lord initiates this conversation, and He says, “Have you considered my servant Job?” (Job 1:8). Wouldn’t you like to be the kind of a person that the Lord could talk about that way? Have you considered my servant Tommy Lane? Have you considered my servant Bob Sorrell? Wouldn’t you like for the Lord just to be able to talk about you that way, and just use you to bring discomfort to the devil and glory to Himself?

Well, the devil, however, was not impressed with Job—at least he seemed not to be impressed with Job. And the devil said, “Well, now, wait a minute, God. Before You go bragging too much on Your servant Job, let me tell you about Your servant Job: He’s a hireling. He doesn’t really love You for who You are. All he does is he just loves You for what You do for him. You’ve been so good to him. Why, You built a hedge around him” (Job 1:10). The devil ought to know, because he’d been trying to break through it, and God wouldn’t let him. God was just protecting His servant, Job. He says, “Why, You’ve built a hedge around him. The reason he serves You is he’s got health, he’s got wealth, he’s got happiness, he’s got a big family—he has it all. What a fat paycheck! Let me tell you something, God: You take all of that away from him, and don’t let him have anything but just You, and he will curse You to Your face” (Job 1:11).

The Lord says, “You don’t know my servant, Job. All right, Satan, you have the privilege. You can strip him of all of this, and we’ll see whether he really loves me for who I am. We’ll see if God is enough” (Job 1:12). Now that’s the question I want to put to you today: Do you love God for what God has done for you, or do you just love God? I mean, if your blessing were taken away, right now, would you still just love God? Is God enough?

Now so many times, we say, “Oh, I love the Lord because...because of this, and because of that, and because of this, and because of that.” Well, you know, a *because* kind of love, sometimes, can be threatening.

Sometimes, a man might say to his wife, “Honey, I love you because you’re such a good cook. Honey, I love you because you’re so beautiful.” Or, she might say to him, “Oh, darling, because you’re so strong, because you’re so handsome, or because

you're so rich..." Well, what if those things were taken away? That can be a threat. Well, suppose he says to her, "Honey, I love you because you're so beautiful; you have such a lovely figure." And then, what if her other parents, Mother Nature and Father Time, go to work on her, and she develops what I call a supreme court figure—no appeal? And then, she says, "Well, he doesn't love me anymore." You see, that was the reason he loved me. He had a because type of love.

Now there are a lot of people that love God with that same kind of love. They love God, as long as God is blessing them—because of the goodness of God, because God has given me wealth, because God has given me friends, because God has given me family, because God has done all of these things. "Oh, how I love the Lord!" But I want to ask you: If those things were taken away, would you still love God? The question today is this: Is God enough?

I. Is God Enough When You Are Submerged in Suffering?

Now I want to ask it in three ways. First of all, is God enough when you are submerged in suffering?

Now do you know what the devil did, when the Lord took down the hedge? Do you know what the devil did? First of all, he took away Job's family—just like that. Job's three daughters and seven sons were killed in a calamity. And then, on top of that, the devil came, and he stripped Job of all of his wealth. Job's vast financial empire came tumbling down like a house of cards, and it was gone; and, overnight, he became a poor man. But the devil wasn't finished yet. Job's body was stricken with a vile and a loathsome disease; and, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, Job was covered with painful, putrefying, ulcerated boils that just covered him completely. Few people have known the suffering that this man, Job, knew. And the devil had this theory that the only reason that Job was serving God was because of these things. So Job—the devil just knew, "If I take Job's family from him, if I take Job's wealth from him, if I take Job's health from him, oh Job will curse God."

Ah, but wait a minute. Not only was Job touched in the place of possessions, and not only personally, but he was touched in the place of his position in the community, because Job was a man who was known to have been a godly man. Everybody knew Job—that he was perfect and upright, that he loved what was right, and hated what was wrong. But when ole' Job lost it all—when Job lost his family, lost his health, lost his wealth—you know what people started to say, in that day? I'll tell you what they started to say: "I wonder what's wrong with ole' Brother Job. I wonder what sin old Job must be committing. Look how God is judging Job. I wonder what Job did that was so bad," because the philosophy in that day was this: that if you were healthy, if you were wealthy, if you were rich, if you had just been surrounded by blessings, it was a sign

that you were right with God. But if all of these things were taken from you, then that was a sign you didn't have enough faith, and you weren't right with God.

Now I want to tell you, that's an old philosophy, but it's still with us today. Did you know that? And if you don't believe it, then you just tune in to some of these religious radio stations, or television stations, and see the trash—they're not all trash, but I'm telling you, there's some first-class trash on some of those programs. Some of these fellows, I call them the *joy boys*, the *happiness cult*. They'll tell you, "Now look—God just wants to bless you, and God just wants you to be healthy, and God wants you to be healthy, and God wants you to always be happy. And so all you have to do is follow these neat little formulas; and, if you follow these neat little formulas, it's just going to be glory all the way. It's going to be all honey and no bees. You're going to have health, wealth, and success, and prosperity all the way. Just name it and claim it." Friend, there's just one thing wrong with that philosophy: It ain't so. It ain't so. And if you don't learn that it ain't so, the devil is going to pull the rug out from underneath you.

I want you to just put a bookmark there, in the Book of Job, and turn to Hebrews, the eleventh chapter. I want to show you something there, in Hebrews chapter 11. Those of you at home: Get your Bibles, lick your fingers, and turn to Hebrews chapter 11. Now let's begin in verse 32. Paul has written a marvelous sermon on faith; the entire chapter is on faith. And it gets down to the end of the sermon, and like somebody else I know, he runs out of time. And so since he's run out of time, he starts to try to sum things up. And beginning in verse 32 of Hebrews chapter 11, you're going to find, as he starts to sum things up, he says, "*And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*"—now, notice what all of these people did, and see if you couldn't shout through these things—"*who through faith subdued kingdoms,*"—well, hallelujah!—"*wrought righteousness,*"—praise the Lord!—"*obtained promises,*"—amen!—"*stopped the mouths of lions.*" Glory! "*Quenched the violence of fire,*"—marvelous!—"*escaped the edge of the sword,*"—beautiful!—"*out of weakness were made strong,*"—fine!—"*waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*" Amen and amen! Boy! That's shouting ground—all of it—isn't it?

And how did they do it? By faith. It even gets better—look in verse 35: "*Women received their dead raised to life again:*"—oh, it sounds like glory all the way. Who wouldn't want to live in that kind of an atmosphere? You say, "Oh, faith, mighty faith! Wonderful!" But let's continue to read, friend—"*and others...*"—now, just underline that, and put a star by it—"*and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in*

sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report”—now, watch it—“through faith, received not the promise” (Hebrews 11:32–40). These were people of faith, too. Just like those other people, they had faith, also. Now friend, some had faith to escape, but others had faith to endure. Some had faith to be healed, but others had faith to die.

Now I want to ask you a question: Are you ready for it? You're suffering today, some of you. Some of you are sick, and God may want to heal you; and, by faith, God may heal you. He may do it by miracle, or He may do it by medicine; but God may heal you. But the great question that I am asking this morning is not, “Do you have enough faith to be healed?” The question I want to ask you this morning is, “Do you have enough faith not to be healed, if it would bring greater glory to God?” Hmm? Do you have enough faith to be in that “and others” crowd?

Now you talk about faith—that's where faith comes in. And these people did that... These people did that by faith. By faith, they endured these things; by faith, they bore these things. And it wasn't a lack of faith. Well, somebody says, “Oh, if you'll just have faith, God will heal you.” No, dear friend, they endured those things. By faith, they were put to death. By faith, they wandered around, and they lived that life, by faith. Now if it's God's will for you, that may be the kind of faith that God wants you to have.

You remember those three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were put in that fiery furnace because they wouldn't worship the king's image, and the king says, “Well, fellas, are you going to bow down to my image?” (Daniel 3:14). They said, “King, we don't even have to think about it. Our mind is already made up. We're not going to worship your image, and I'll tell you why: Our God is able to deliver us from your fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:17). But now, notice what else they said: they said, “But if not, we're still not going to worship your image” (Daniel 3:18). Now they didn't mean, “If He's not able”—they knew He was able—but, “if He didn't do it”—“He's able to do it; but, if He doesn't do it, we're still not going to bow down to your ol' image” (Daniel 3:18).

Now you see, God does deliver His children, many times, from the fiery furnace. But suppose God says, “In this particular instance, you're going to turn into bacon, for my glory.” Hmm? I mean, dear friend, what if the Lord just decided for you to go into that fiery furnace? I want to tell you, around this world, millions have died for Christ. Did you know—listen to me—more people have died in the name of Jesus and for Christ since I've been alive than died, since the time of Christ up until that time? Did you know that? Don't you just think that the martyrs were in yesterday. Dear friend, I'm telling you, around this world, under the regime of Hitler, and Stalin, and Idi Amin, and others, in foreign countries, they have died for the cause of Christ.

And how did they die? By faith! By faith! And they loved God! They found out that God was enough. God was enough. And they could say, with ole' Job: *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"* (Job 13:15). You see, if you get the idea that, when you become a Christian, you've just got a ticket to Glory, without any trouble, the devil has set you up for a fall.

You can read the 73rd Psalm—and it's a Psalm of Asaph—and Asaph said, "You know, I'm almost backslid". He says, in Psalm 73:2: *"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped"* (Psalm 73:2). He said, "I almost tripped up and fell." You know what it was? He got the idea that, when he got right with God, he wouldn't have any more troubles. You say, "Can you be sure about that?" Yes. Psalm 73, verses 13 and 14—here's what he said: He said, *"Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning"* (Psalm 73:13–14). What he says is, "It is not working—it's not working. Well, man, I got right with God, and I still have problems."

Some of you, when I give an invitation, will come forward, and get baptized, and begin to study your Bible, and pray; and, you say, "Oh boy, now my troubles are all over." And then, when you still have some troubles, you say, "Uh oh, it's not working." Well, you see, what has happened is this: that you have been given some false expectations that the Bible doesn't necessarily give. You see, you're not always due preferential treatment.

That's what Elijah thought. Elijah was running from Jezebel. You remember, Jezebel said she was going to make him a foot shorter at the top, she was going to take off his head; and Elijah is running from Jezebel. And he sits down under a juniper tree, and requests for himself that he might die. And here's how he does it: He says, "Oh, take away my life from me, Lord, for it is better for me to die than to live, *"for I am not better than my fathers"* (1 Kings 19:4). I wonder who told him he was better than his father—must have been his mother. Somebody told him that he was supposed to have preferential treatment, and he didn't get preferential treatment. And so he sat under a juniper tree, and had a pity party, requesting for himself that he might die.

Now I want to make something clear and plain: God did bless Job. God did give Job wealth. And there's nothing wrong with having wealth. The Bible says God takes *"pleasure in the prosperity of his servant"* (Psalm 35:27). And the Bible says, *"It is [the Lord thy God] that giveth thee power to get wealth"* (Deuteronomy 8:18). And don't you think a man is not right with God if he has it, anymore than you might think that a man is wrong with God if he loses it. But what I'm trying to say is that, while God may give health, and while God may give wealth, and friends, and family, there is the "and others" crowd. It happened to Job, and it might happen to you.

But the question is—are you ready for the question? If it happens to you—and, I'm

talking to some who are there, listening to me right now on a hospital bed, a bed of affliction, where some greedy malady is gnawing away at your body, and your body is wracked with pain—I want to ask, “Is God enough?”

Some of you who have lost your fortune and lost your job, some of you who’ve lost your family: Is God enough? If, in the midst of this, you can say, “God is enough,” I’ll tell you one thing you’ve done: You’ve shut the devil’s mouth. You have shut the devil’s mouth! The devil says, “Well, she serves You because of this; he serves You because of that. You’ve bought him; You’ve bribed him; You’ve coerced him—what a fat paycheck!” God says, “No, he just loves me for who I am—not because of the blessings that I have given him.”

II. Is God Enough When You Are Forsaken by Friends?

Now I want to ask you another question. Not only is God enough when you are submerged in suffering, but is God enough when you are forsaken by friends?

Now Job—if you know the Book of Job—had three friends to come see him—if that’s what you want to call them—Job’s comforters. Miserable comforters they were! First thing they did: They just sat down and looked at him without saying a word—didn’t say a word, just watched him. Here’s a man just suffering; they’re sitting there. Kind of reminds me of vultures, just perched on the foot of his bed, just looking at him. And then, he comes. He needs comfort, and rather than comfort, you know what he gets from them? Criticism. They didn’t seem to understand; and, really, when you strip away all of the pious talk, they didn’t even seem to care. Their basic premise was, “Well, he surely must have done something wrong. Job, let’s find out what it is. Get rid of what you’ve done wrong; and then, maybe you can get healed again. And let’s find out where your sin is, Job.” So they became a sin-seeking committee to do a little investigation on Brother Job.

Now I want to show you. Let’s turn to chapter 19 and verse 14, and find out how Job felt about his friends. He says, in Job chapter 19, verse 14: *“My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me”* (Job 19:14). Look, if you will, also, in this same chapter, as Job is thinking about his friends; in verse 19, he says, *“All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me”* (Job 19:19).

Now friend, it’s great to have a friend. When I was a youngster, I used to hear people say, “Oh, you’re blessed if you can count your friends on one hand.” I used to say, “Ha, phooey. Man, I’ve got hundreds of friends: boys I played ball with, and guys I run around with, and pals I know. I’ve just got friends everywhere.” As I get older, I understand what they talked about: a friend, friend—a real friend. Is there anything sweeter, other than the members of our own family, on a human plane, than to have a friend—sometimes, a friend that means more to us than our own flesh and blood? “A

friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). Thank God for friends; thank God for God-given friends. And may Jesus bless you with friends. But I want to ask you a question: When those friends fail you—and, sooner than later, they may—is God enough?

Some of you who are listening to me right now feel betrayed by friends. Judas betrayed Jesus: *"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me"* (Psalm 41:9). What a wound in the heart of Jesus! There's a Psalm that always I stop and read these verses again, after I read them, in Psalm 55, verses 12 through 14—listen to it: *"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company"* (Psalm 55:12–14).

I mean, what if Bob Sorrell fails me? Bob Sorrell, when we were shaking hands, told me, just a few moments ago, "Pastor, I love you. I really love you. Thank you for being my friend." And I love him. And I love these other men. And I love you. But what if he forsakes me? What if your wife forsakes you? Job said, *"My kinsfolk"* (Job 19:14). Job's own wife turned against him, and his friends forsook him. You see, the psalmist said, *"We took sweet counsel together,"* in the house of the Lord (Psalm 44:14). Well, you sit here, in church, surrounded by all these friends who are loving you, and encouraging you, and exhorting you; you're serving God, but suppose we took you out of this place, and suppose we put you over in Siberia, and there's not a Christian around for 50 miles, and the ones that used to know you don't even write, and you wonder if they pray or care. Are you still going to serve God? I mean, is God enough?

Some of you kids at school: You've got your Christian buddies there; and you've got your Bible club at school; and you have people that you pray with at lunchtime. Suppose there's an issue that comes up at school, about some school dance that you decide, as a Christian, you're not going to go to for your testimony; or, there's something they want you to do, something they want you to read, something they want you to smoke, something they want you to drink, something they want you to participate in, and you say, "I can't do it." You say, "Me and my friend—I and my friend—we're not going to do it." And your friend says, "No, I believe I'm going with the crowd." Young person, in high school, college: You find yourself standing all alone. Is God enough? Hmm? Is God enough, when the dearest on Earth forsake you and fail you? Is God enough? Is He enough of a friend that you can stand with Him and Him alone?

You see, when we suffer, that's one thing, but if we have a friend to suffer with us, a friend to hold our hand, a friend to pray—thank God for our friends! But suppose we go to that friend for comfort, and there's nothing but criticism. We go to that friend for

understanding; and, he can't understand, and he doesn't understand. Is God enough? Just God? If He is, you will shut the devil's mouth, and you'll prove that you're not serving God because of the paycheck. You're not serving God because He's bought you, bribed you; but, you're serving God for who He is, in and of Himself.

III. Is God Enough When You Are Draped in Darkness?

I want to ask you a third thing: Is God enough when you are draped in darkness, when you can't understand?

You see, when you suffer, that's bad; but if you have a friend, it helps some. But when you suffer and your friends leave you, that's worse. But at least, if you can understand why you're suffering, it still helps. Hmm? If you just know why. Did you know you can almost endure anything if you just know why? Why? You can't be a pastor the years that I've been a pastor, without having that question asked you, so heartbreakingly, many times: "Pastor, why? Why did this happen?" "Why did my baby die?" "Why did I lose my business?" "Why am I so sick?" "Why is my career interrupted?" "Why? Why?" If we just knew why.

Now I'm going to tell you something, friend: You don't always know why. I want you to see ole' Job, and what happened to Job. I want you to turn, if you will, to Job chapter 23: *"Then Job answered and said, Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning."* That is, "I'm hurting worse than you can even tell from what I say." *"Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"* That is, "His throne; where He is." *"I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me"* (Job 23:1–5).

You know what Job is saying? "If I could just find God. I mean, if, if, if He would just answer me. I've got some questions; I've got some arguments. God, You deserve to answer me. I deserve to know, God. Now tell me what this is all about. What's happening, Lord? I mean, Lord, life is caving in all around me. The bottom's fallen out. The walls have gone down. And God, You don't even answer me." You ever felt that way? Plunged into darkness?

Now friend, I want to tell you, again, you can—you can—endure almost anything, if you know why. But you don't always know why. Now when you get into this kind of trouble, sometimes, you've got little friends who'll come around. They'll give you some slogans. They'll give you a motto to hang on your wall, a slap for your back, a handshake; and, they'll give a few little verses, and utter a simplistic prayer, and they'll tell you why everything's happening. But none of it fits your heart. Now don't ever get the idea that, if you're right with God, that you're always going to know the answers.

Isaiah chapter 50, verses 10 and 11, are verses that you ought to jot down. They ask

a question, and give a statement. Here's the question: "*Who is among you that feareth the LORD...*"—now, to fear the Lord is a very wonderful thing. The fear of the Lord is a reverential awe of Almighty God. It is love on its knees—"*Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant,*"—now, here's a person, not only who fears the Lord, but who obeys the Word of God. Sounds just like a wonderful person; sounds just like Job, doesn't it? But now, listen—"*that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?*"—you can fear God; you can obey God, and there are times that you can be in darkness. If you find yourself that way, the Bible says—"*let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God*" (Isaiah 50:10). The word *stay* means "lean" upon your God.

Even when you don't understand, dear friend, *never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light*. And if God just withdraws His light... And by the way, the only way the light can be taken away is for God to withdraw it. You see, the darkness can't chase it away. You can't go into a room and turn on the dark, can you? You can turn on the light, but you can't turn on the dark. You see, the light can chase the dark away, but the dark can never chase the light away. The only reason the dark can be there is because the light has been taken away. You understand what I'm saying? So if God sovereignly allowed the light to be taken away, and God drapes you in darkness, and plunges you into misunderstanding, and you don't understand—not *misunderstanding*, but *no understanding*—then, is God enough? That's the ultimate test: when I don't understand.

Now you're going to find out, dear friend, that you can not understand and be in good company. Paul said, "*We are perplexed, but not in despair*" (2 Corinthians 4:8). Ole' Habakkuk, the prophet in the Old Testament, said, "I just couldn't understand what God was doing, what He was up to" (Habakkuk 1:2–3). Ole' John the Baptist got down in prison; John said, "I can't understand it. If He has the power to heal the sick, why can't He get me out of jail?" Dear friends, so many times, we demand to understand, and God is not going to give us understanding. It doesn't mean that, because it doesn't make sense to us, it doesn't make sense. God has a plan. It may not be now, but in the coming years. It may be in the better land that we will know the meaning of our tears. And there, someday, we'll understand. But I'm asking you, when you are submerged in suffering, and when you are forsaken by friends, and, to compound that, you are draped in darkness, is God enough? Is God enough? Just God? I want to show you what Job learned about God, and I'll be finished with my message—three things.

A. **God Shows His Sovereignty**

First of all, the Lord showed Job something about His sovereignty. Turn to Job chapter 38. I want you to see something here—it's almost a little humorous. You remember, ole'

Job is saying, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! I sure would like to have a consultation, an argument, with Him. And I have some questions I want to ask Him” (Job 23:1–5). And so finally, the Lord starts to speak; but He doesn’t answer a single question. He starts asking questions.

Look, if you will, in chapter 38, verse 1: *“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?”* You know what that verse means? “Job, you’re fogging up the whole place. Your mouth is working, but your brain is not in gear.” That’s what it means: *“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.”* “Now you want me to answer you, Job. Why don’t you answer me?” *“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof...?”* (Job 38:1–6). “Now Job, when I got ready to build this universe; when I swung this world into space; when I scooped out the seas, heaped up the mountains, flung out the sun, the moon, and the stars, did I ask you how to do it? Job, did I sit down and get some information with you? Did I consult with you? Did I get your permission? Did I get your wisdom; or, Job, did I do it all by myself? Job, I’m the sovereign God.”

Notice He asked Job, in verse 12: *“Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days;”—*that is, “Job, did you cause the sun to come up?—*“and caused the dayspring to know his place...?”* (Job 38:12). “Are you the one who makes the moon, the sun, rise and set, Job? Verse 16: *“Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all”* (Job 38:16–18).

What’s He saying? He’s saying, “Job, let me be God! Don’t play God. There are some things, Job, you just don’t know. *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:9).

B. God Shows His Sympathy

I want to show you something else He did: Not only did He reveal His sovereignty, but He revealed His sympathy. Look in the last chapter, if you will, of this wonderful book, and verse 10: *“And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before”* (Job 42:10).

My dear friend, God’s not going to be a debtor to any man; and anything you suffer for the cause of Christ, you’re going to gain double for the cause of Christ. And *“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory*

which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). It pays to serve Jesus, friend. And I want to tell you, He will turn every hurt into a hallelujah; He’ll turn every tear into a pearl; He’ll turn every Calvary into an Easter, and every sunset into a sunrise—that’s what God will do.

C. **God Shows His Sufficiency**

Not only did Job learn something of the sovereignty of God, and the sympathy of God; he learned the sufficiency of God. He learned that God is enough. I want to ask you a question: Where are you getting your joy, right now?

“Oh,” you say, “my joy’s in the Lord.” Well, how do you know it’s not in your family? One way we can tell: Let’s take away your family, and see if you still have that joy. Hmm? How do you know it’s not in your health? One way we can find out would be for God to take away your health, and see if you still praise the Lord. How do you know it’s not in your wealth? One way we could find out is, if you lose your job and still serve the Lord.

Did you know there are folks who, when they lost their job in the last recession, stopped going to church? Hmm? You know that? Uh huh. They stopped going. They say, “Well, it’s not worth it.” You know, where were they getting their joy? In their job, and not in God. Friend, the Bible says, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He’ll give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4). That doesn’t mean you’ll have a swimming pool and a pink Cadillac. That means, when you delight in the Lord, the desires of your heart are met, which are God. God is the desire of your heart. And when you delight yourself in Him, then the desires of your heart will be met, and you will find out, with Job—are you listening?—not only is Jesus necessary; Jesus is enough. And God is not finished with you, until you can say, “Not only is God necessary; God is enough.”

Conclusion

Let me say a word to those who are watching by television. If you would like to be saved today, would you call the number on the television screen? A friend is standing by to pray with you, to lead you to Jesus; and, you can be saved today.

I want every head bowed, and every eye closed. Father, thank You so much for Your Word. Thank You, Lord. Though the lesson today has, oh Lord, it’s been so deep, such a challenge, Lord, we’re grateful. We’re really grateful that You are enough—enough; that You are our portion; that, when we delight in You, the desires of our heart are met; that what the heart yearns for, what the heart really needs, is God Himself. Thank You, Lord. Oh, teach us that You are enough. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Look here; look right here. No one move; no one leave. Everyone, look at me. I don’t know where you’re getting your joy, today; but whatever it is, you’re going to lose it, if its

anything but Jesus. You get your joy out of health—you're going to lose it. You get your joy out of wealth—you're going to lose it. You get your joy out of your kids—one day, you're going to kiss them goodbye; they're going to move off, or their going to die. You get your joy out of life—you're going to die. You understand what I'm saying? Friend, the only way that you will have the desires of your heart met is to be able to learn the lesson that Jesus is necessary, and Jesus is enough.

How to Stand When You Don't Understand

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: July 11, 1993

Main Scripture Text: Job 1:6–22; 2:7–11; 13:15; 19:13–19

*“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:
but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”*
JOB 13:15

Outline

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Conclusion

Introduction

Would you take God's Word and turn to the Book of Job? It comes just before Psalms in the Bible—the Book of Job. And turn to chapter 1. And when you've found it, look up here. You're going to find out that, as you go through life, there are many, many things that will not make sense to you. And some of them really won't matter. But there will be other times when you are broken, and crushed, and confused, and nothing makes sense, and you turn to God, and you ask God, “Why?” and Heaven is absolutely silent.

I want to talk to you, today, on this subject: “How to Stand When You Don't Understand”—“How to Stand When You Don't Understand.” The Book of Job chapter 1, verse 6: *“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and*

fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto 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?” That is, he hates what is wrong. *“Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?”* (Job 1:6–9). “Do You think he loves You, God? He only loves You because You bribed him. He only loves You because You bought him off.”

And we begin here a drama, a drama in three acts, that’s going to help us to understand how to stand, when we don’t understand. Now you know, one of the most perplexing commands in the Bible is this—It’s found in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 18, and it says this: *“In every thing give thanks”*—in everything gives thanks—*“for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Now it’s easy to give thanks for some things. It’s easy to give thanks for food, for health, for family, for a new grandbaby, when your favorite ballclub wins, when you get a new job. There are so many things it’s easy to give thanks for, right? There’s no difficulty in that. But that isn’t what this scripture says. This scripture says, “Not just for the good things, but, *“In every thing give thanks.”*”

What about evil? What about pain? What about when your husband walks out on you? What about starving children? What about rape? What about divorce? What about AIDS? What about apostasy? What about the fact that you go to the doctor, and he tells you there is some greedy malady that’s gnawing away at your life? What about these things? This scripture almost seems to mock us, when it says, *“In every thing give thanks.”* Well, of course, the key is it doesn’t say *“for everything”*; it says *“in every thing,”* because, take that verse, and marry it with Romans 8:28: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* That helps some. But how, how, how, how can I say, “Can we give thanks for some things, even in some things?” The Book of Job will help us. “How to Stand When You Don’t Understand.”

Well, let’s get the background; and then, we’re going to look at this tragedy in three acts. It’s not a tragedy, really; it’s really a victory. But it begins as a tragedy. It’s a drama in three acts. Now first of all, I want you to understand what has happened. There’s a scene in Heaven, and Satan is allowed access to Heaven. And the name *Satan* means “slanderer.” The devil is one who is a slanderer, and *Satan* means “accuser.” So Satan wants to slander. And if you ever slander, you’re doing the work of the devil. If you have an accusatory nature about you, you’re very much like the devil. And so the devil is there, and God the Father says to him, “Where have you been?” He said, “I’ve been walking up and down in the earth” (Job 1:7). Evidently, he is looking for somebody that he can criticize. And God says, “Have you considered my servant Job?” Look in verse 8: *“There is none like him”*—He says—*“in the earth, a perfect and an upright man”* (Job

1:8).

It pleases me to know that Job brought pleasure to God. You know, I would like for God to look down at me, or look down at you, and say, “I take great delight in that man.” You see, God was watching Job, and Job brought pleasure to God. And so God says to Satan, “Satan, have you noticed my servant Job?” (Job 1:8). And of course, then, Satan begins to criticize Job, and says, “Well, God, You are deceived. You think Job is so hot. You think job is so great. You think Job is such a special person. Let me tell You about Your servant Job. The only reason that Job serves You is because You have bought him off. You’ve bribed him. He has a commercial faith. The only reason he serves You is for what he can get out of it. Why, You’ve built a hedge around him” (Job 1:9–10).

Now that makes me wonder: How did Satan know that God had built a hedge around Job? Of course, Satan knew, because he had been trying to break through that hedge. And Satan is trying to get at you, right now. And he is trying to get at me. And thank God for the hedge that God does put around us. But then, Satan throws down the gauntlet, and offers God a challenge. He says, “I’ll tell you what. You think Job is such a wonderful man? You take down the hedge a little bit; You let me get at him; let me take away the blessings You’ve given him—and I’ll tell you what he’ll do for You, God: He will curse You to Your face.” Look, in verse 10: *“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face”* (Job 1:10–11). That is, “God, he only loves You because of *because love*.”

Do you know what *because love* is? That’s the weakest kind of love: “I love you because...” And some of us don’t have good strong families, because the only kind of love that we have for our wives or husbands is *because love*. “I love you because you’re beautiful. I love you because you’re rich. I love you because you’re smart. I love you because you’re strong.” You see, all of these things... If you love with a *because* clause, then, when the *because* is taken away, then, the love goes.

I heard about a man and his wife, who were moving into a beautiful, scrumptious new home, and she was the wealthy one; she had inherited the money. And she said, “Harold, I want you to know that, if it weren’t for my money, we wouldn’t be in this apartment.” And then, they looked out there, and there was that beautiful car out in the driveway. And she said, “Harold, I want you to know that, if it weren’t for my money, that car wouldn’t be there.” They moved a stereo into the den, and she said, “If it weren’t for my money, that stereo wouldn’t be there.” He had had enough. He said, “Edna, if it weren’t for your money, I wouldn’t be here.” That’s *because love*. That is, people stay together because of what they feel they can get out of it.

That’s the kind of love that Satan accuses Job of having. He says, “No wonder Job

serves You. You bought him off. You've bribed him. You've been so good to him" (Job 1:9–10). And God says, "No, that's not so. And I will prove it" (Job 1:12). And so the battle begins.

Look, in verse 12: *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD"* (Job 1:12). Now that tells us that Satan has the power to afflict, but it also tells us that Satan's power is limited. He is powerful, but he is not all-powerful. And then, we begin a drama in three acts. And I want to tell you, as we look into this story, how to stand when you can't understand.

I. Act One: Unexpected Tragedy—We Praise

Act One is unexpected tragedy—unexpected tragedy. Life just caves in on Job. And he has no reason, no way, to understand why life has caved in on him. It is nothing that he has done. He has not done anything wrong at all.

Go to chapter 2 and verse 3, and I want to show you this: *"And the LORD said unto 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? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him"*—now, watch these last two words—*"without cause"* (Job 2:3). There's nothing that Job has done that deserves what he gets—nothing. One of the things that will happen to you when trouble comes—when your child gets hit by a car, when you get cancer, when you lose your job—one of the first things you might say is, "What did I do wrong?" Well, maybe you did do something wrong; but, it is very possible that you have done absolutely nothing wrong.

A. Job Loses His Fortune

I want you to see the tragedy that came to Job, when he had done nothing wrong. Look, beginning in chapter 1 and verse 13: *"And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped to tell thee"* (Job 1:13–17). Just like that, Job, who was one of the wealthiest men of his day, lost it all. His possessions are stripped from him. Job went to bed a millionaire, and

he woke up a pauper.

I was reading in the paper today about a man named Leslie Robbins. He won the sweepstakes—111 million dollars, I believe. Well, this is that man in reverse. He lost his 111 million dollars. Just like that, it's gone. His wealth is stripped from him.

B. Job Loses His Family

Not only did he lose his wealth; he lost his family. Look in verse 18—chapter 1, verse 18: *“While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee”* (Job 1:18–19). His fortune is wiped out, just like that; and now, not only his fortune, but his family. All of his children are gone. There’s a tornado, and the house falls in upon his children. They’re all in that house, and they die.

C. Job Loses His Fitness

Well, it gets worse. Chapter 2—look, if you will, in verses 7 and 8: *“So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd”*—that’s a piece of broken pottery—*“to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes”* (Job 2:7–8). Here’s this man, now. His wealth is gone. He’s bereaving for his children. He has a broken heart. They have died, and there seems to be no reason whatever that his children died. Now he has this corruption: these oozing, vile sores from the crown of his head unto the sole of his foot. He cannot get comfortable. He cannot lie down. He cannot sit up. The doctors can’t do anything for him. It gets so bad his wife says, “Why don’t you just curse God and die?” (Job 2:9). And at that moment, she became the voice of the devil, because that’s exactly what the devil said Job would do. He said, “God, he’ll curse You, if You allow me to do certain things to him.”

D. Job Loses His Face

But then, not only has he lost his fortune, and lost his family, and lost his fitness; but he’s also lost his face—that is, his reputation. Look, in chapter 2, now, and begin to look, in verse 11: *“Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him”* (Job 2:11). Hence we get the phrase “Job’s three comforters.” And these three guys have come; and, they come in, and just sit down, and look at Job, and they begin to philosophize.

And their philosophy, if we had time to show you, is simply this: “Job, you’ve sinned, son. Job, you’ve done something wrong, because we know that no man could suffer the

calamity that you've suffered, Job, unless he'd done something very, very, very bad. Now Job, why don't you quit being a hypocrite? Job, why don't you quit protesting your innocence? Why don't you 'fess up, Job? Why don't you just let us know the terrible, horrible things that you have done? Because, if you're right with God, you can't be sick. If you're right with God, you can't lose your job. If you're right with God, you won't know sickness and sorrow."

Have you ever heard that lie? Folks, there are a lot of people telling that lie on television—these joy boys, today, on television. And they'll get on there, and tell you that, if you just get right with God, you'll have the key to Fort Knox. You'd just be wealthy and healthy, and you'll never know any more pain, and no trouble. There's just one thing wrong with that: It's a lie. And there is a Greek word for it, and it's called *baloney*. Now folks, it is not so. And here's Job; he has not done anything wrong, and he is suffering. And he's lost his reputation, because, now, everybody says, "I wonder what ole' Job did? I wonder what he's done that is so terrible?" He's lost face, before these.

E. Job Loses His Friends

And then, on top of that, he lost his friends. Go to chapter 19, and look with me, if you will, for a moment. Just fast-forward to chapter 19. You know, it wouldn't be so bad if someone were to just come and put their arm around old Job, and hug him, and say, "Job, I love you, fellow. I don't know what's happened. But I know, Job, that you're a good man. And I know that God loves you, and I want to love you, too." But look, in Job 19, verse 13. He says, "*He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me*" (Job 19:13–14). I mean, a friend is somebody when trouble comes in; they come in with that trouble to stand by you, and help you. But they just forsook old Job. Even his relatives, his kinsfolk—they're gone from him. Look, if you will, in chapter 19, verse 19: "*All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me*" (Job 19:19).

I tell you, that's a hard thing to take—when you need help, and you need love, and you need somebody to understand, and put their arm around you; and, they walk out on you, and it seems like there is not another soul on Earth who understands or even cares. What do you do, when tragedy comes?

I want to tell you what you do. Now folks, it's very, very important that you understand what you do, when this comes. Go back to chapter 1, if you will, and look, if you will, in verse 21—or, let's start in verse 20: "*Then Job arose, and rent his mantle,*"—that is, he tore the hood that was over his head—"*and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away;*

blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:20–21). If that’s not underscored in your Bible, underscore it, because you’re going to need it: *“The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all of this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly”* (Job 1:21–22).

Now what do you do when unexpected tragedy comes? You praise. You praise. Just praise God by faith. You don’t have to know why. You don’t have to understand. You just simply say, “God, I praise You.” You say, “I’d be a hypocrite.” No, you’d be a saint. You say, “Well, I don’t feel like praising.” Of course, you wouldn’t. You say, “I don’t understand.” Of course, you don’t. But in everything give thanks. Just simply say, “God, I worship You. God, I praise You. I praise You.”

II. Act Two: Unexplained Mystery—We Trust

Now that brings us to the second thing. First of all, in unexpected tragedy, give praise. Secondly, in unexplained mystery, give trust. Look, if you will now, in chapter 13. Now folks, pay attention, because you’re going to need this; we’re all going to need it.

Chapter 13—look in verse 15—Job said this: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust him”* (Job 13:15). Do you see it? If that is not underscored, you’d better underscore it. Job 13, verse 15: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.”* Now let me tell you something: You and I have the Book of Job in our hands. We have the Bible, and we can read the Book of Job from beginning to end. And we were back there, behind the stage, when God and Satan were talking. We read all this. Job has not read all of this, at this time. He doesn’t know all of this. The book ends without Job ever knowing what went on. God didn’t say to Job, “Now Job, what’s happening here is we’re having a contest, and the devil says, if I take everything away from you, you’ll curse me. And I’m going to prove the devil is wrong, and I’m going to shut the devil’s mouth. And you’re going to help me to shut the devil’s mouth.” God never tells Job that. Job doesn’t know that. We know it. Yeah, sure, we know it, because we’re reading it. But Job didn’t have the Book of Job to read. I want you to understand that.

Now let me just show you what kind of darkness Job is in, what kind of mystery Job is in. See, tragedy goes to mystery. Go, if you will, to chapter 23, and look in verses 1 through 5, and, see if you’ve ever been here. If you haven’t, maybe you’ll be there soon. *“Then Job answered and said, Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.”* He said, “The way I suffer, I cannot even express what really is within my heart. My groaning will not even express it”: *“Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!”* To His throne—God. He’s saying, “God, where are You?” He said: *“I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me”* (Job 23:1–5). “God, You owe me some answers. Oh, if I only

knew how I could find God.” Go down to verse 8: *“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand”* (Job 23:8–9). “Where is God?” Have you ever been there? See, Job—not only does he have misery; he has mystery. It just does not make sense to him.

You know, we can bear almost anything, we think, if we just know why. As a pastor, I’ve gone to so many funerals, so many hospitals, so many children’s wards. I’ve had good strong dads come up to me, with tears brimming in their eyes, and their chin quivering; and, they take me by the lapel, and say, “Pastor, why is this happening to my child? Why? Why?” We want to know why. Where is God? Learn this about life: *Life is not a problem to be solved; it is a mystery to be lived.* That is what the Book of Job is telling us. We do not live by explanations; we live by promises. And God never did explain anything to Job.

Sometimes, it is God’s plan that we don’t understand, because, when we don’t understand and trust Him, that, my friend, is a greater, greater faith than understanding and trusting Him. Robert Frost said it this way—and I think he said it perfectly: “But it was of the essence of the trial that you shouldn’t understand it at the time. It had to seem unmeaning to have meaning.”

In times of tragedy, praise. In times of mystery, trust. The great Andrew Murray put it this way—he was a saint of the past, and this is what he wrote: “In times of trouble, God’s trusting child may say, first, ‘He brought me here. It is His will that I am in this straight place’; next, ‘He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child’; then, ‘He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends for me to learn, and working in the grace He means to bestow’; and, last, ‘In His good time, He can bring me out again, how and when He knows.’” Say: (1) “I am here by God’s appointment”; (2) “in His keeping”; (3) “under His training”; (4) “for His time.”

Someone else has written: “God is too good to be unkind. He is too wise to make a mistake. And when we cannot trace His hand, we can trust His heart.” Now in a time of tragedy, praise: *“The LORD gave...the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD”* (Job 1:21). In time of mystery, trust: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust him”* (Job 13:15). Act One: tragedy. Act Two: mystery.

III. Act Three: Unexcelled Victory—We Stand

Act Three: victory—victory. Let’s move on to the third act, here, and find out what Job did. Now in unexpected tragedy, we praise. In unexplained mystery, we trust. But in unexcelled victory, we stand. Now Job finally gets an answer from God. But God never answers one of Job’s questions; all He does is answer Job. He answers the questioner.

He never does give Job any answers. He never does say, “Now Job, this is why all this is happening.” He just shows Himself to Job. And we’re going to see that, in a moment.

I was going through some deep heartache—I mean, some of the deepest sorrow I’ve ever known in my life. And I was sitting in the old building, and some girl, Brother Jim, stood to sing. I don’t know her name—one of our little teenyboppers around here, a precious little girl. She may be out here, today. I’m not saying this against her. She had the freshest, prettiest little face. And she sang a song; I’d never heard it before. She sang, “When answers aren’t enough, there is Jesus. When answers are not enough, there is Jesus.” And she sang it beautifully. But I thought, “Oh, little lady, if you only knew what you’re singing—if you only knew what you’re singing.” How that song touched my heart! And how that song is exactly what Job is all about! God never gave Job an answer. He just gave Job Himself. We’re going to see this: He gave Job a revelation of Himself. He did not say why; He just revealed Who. He didn’t give a reason; He gave a relationship. And when Job shut up, God showed up.

I want you to see this: Job learned several things about God, and I hope you’ll learn them today, because, if you don’t learn these things about God, you’ll never be able to stand when you don’t understand. Because, there are some things you will never understand till you get to Heaven—if you ever get to Heaven. And when you do get to Heaven, you won’t need to understand, ’cause you’ll have one look in the face of Jesus, and you’ll say, “What question?” But I want to tell you the things that Job learned about God, and I want you to learn them.

A. **Job Learned the Sovereignty of God**

First of all, he learned the sovereignty of God. Turn, if you will, to chapter 38—chapter 38—Job chapter 38, and, look, if you will, in verses 1 thru 4: “*Then the LORD answered Job...*”—now, “Oh,” Job cries, “He’s coming. He’s going to tell me the answer”—“*the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,*”—He answers him with a question. Look at this—“*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now they loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding*” (Job 38:1–4). Then, the rest of this chapter is full of questions like that. He asked Job some of the hardest questions on Earth. Of course, Job hasn’t got the foggiest. God says, “Now Job, you’ve been asking me questions. Job, you don’t even begin to be able to understand my ways and your ways. ‘As the heavens are high above the Earth are my ways above your ways’” (Isaiah 55:9), and so forth.

And so God never really answers Job’s questions. He just asked Job some questions to say to Job, “Job, listen. Did I consult you when I did all this? Where were you when I flung this world out into space? Where were you when I spread out the skies? And where were you when I scooped out the seas and heaped up the

mountains? Where were you, Job?” Job just had to sit there and look dumb. “Job, there are some things you don’t know. You don’t understand. I am the Creator. I am the sovereign God. I can do whatever I want” (Job 38–39). The first thing Job learned about God is the sovereignty of God.

B. Job Learned the Sufficiency of God

And then, he learned the sufficiency of God. And now we are really closing in. Go to chapter 42—chapter 42. He learns the sovereignty of God. He learns that God is God, and He can do whatever He wants. And then, he learns the sufficiency of God. Look in verse 1: *“Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing,”*—that, friend, is the sovereignty of God—*“and that no thought can be withholden from thee”* (Job 42:1–2). And then, he goes on to say, in verse 5: *“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee”* (Job 42:5). Job finally sees God. Job’s three friends are talking about God, but Job is now talking to God. Job says, “Lord, thank You. Thank You. I’ve seen You. And because I have seen You, that is enough.”

Now listen, precious friend. All of us here today know that God is necessary; we all know that. But I wonder how many of us know God is enough. God is enough. Let me say it again: God is enough. You see, you may not know God is enough, until God is all you have. Where are you getting your joy? You say, “Well, from the Lord.” How do you know you aren’t getting it from you children? Well, take away your children, and see if you still have your joy. Where are you getting your joy? From your health—are you? Or, “from God,” you say. How do you know you’re not getting it from your health? Take away your health, and see if you still have your joy. See, God reduced Job down to this: that Job had nothing and nobody but God; and, he learned that God is sufficient.

St. Augustine wrote a sermon on the pure love of God, and in that sermon, Augustine asked this question—He supposes that God came to you, and offered you a deal, and here is what God says to you—I want you to listen to it—God says, “I will give you anything you want.” Here’s the deal God is making: “You can possess the whole world. Nothing will be impossible for you. You will have infinite power. Nothing will be a sin—nothing forbidden. You will never die, never have pain, never have anything you do not want, and always have everything you do want, except for just this one thing: You will never see my face.” Then, Augustine asked this question: “Would you take that deal?” He said, “If not, you have the pure love of God.” Augustine asked this question: “Did a chill arise in your heart when you heard the words, ‘You will never see my face?’ That chill is the most precious thing in you. That is the pure love of God.”

What’s he saying? Folks, we’re in deep water, now; we’re in deep water. God showed up, when Job shut up. And God said, “Job, I am sovereign. And Job, I am sufficient.” That’s what the psalmist meant, in Psalm 37 and verse 4: “Delight yourself in

the LORD: and He'll give you the desire of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). He doesn't mean He'll give you things, and health, and a job, or anything else. He will give you Himself.

And friend, when He does, that's how to stand, when you don't understand. You don't have to know why. You may never know why. All you must know is Him. He is sovereign, and He is sufficient. We're in deep water, this morning; but folks, you can go from tragedy to mystery to victory, just like old Job did, so long ago. We ought to be grateful for Job—that he suffered all this, that we might look here, today, and learn this lesson.

Conclusion

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. I know there are some of you here today who are hurting. What you really need is not relief from your pain, as much as you need God. You just need the Lord. If you don't know the Lord Jesus, I want to help you know Him, today. So bow your heads in prayer, and let me help you to pray to invite Him into your heart.

Why don't you pray like this? "Dear God, I know that You love me, and I know that there's nothing that can separate me from Your love. There's no sorrow; there's no pain; there's no difficulty; there's no loss that can separate me from Your mighty love. You're sovereign, and You are sufficient. Now dear Lord, I need You. I open my heart, and I receive You. I thank You, Lord, that You sent Your Son Jesus to die for me. I believe He paid my sin debt on the cross. And now like a little child, I open my heart, and I receive Your love, and I receive Your Son. I receive Your forgiveness. I receive Your salvation. I trust You, and You only and always, to save me. And Lord, I know that not only are You necessary, You are the only One who is enough for me."

Father, I just pray that many will be praying a prayer like that, today. In Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.

Ghosts That Haunt Us

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: September 22, 1996

Main Scripture Text: Job 8:8–10

*“For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and
prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.”*

JOB 8:8

Outline

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Conclusion

Introduction

Praise the name of Jesus! How beautiful that was! And, thank you so much, Laurie. Would you be finding the Book of Job, chapter 8? We're talking, tonight, on a Christian worldview, and the title of the message: "Ghosts of the Past that Haunt Us," or "Ghosts that Haunt Us," I guess we'll call the message tonight, because in this century, we're being haunted by some philosophical ghosts that came into being in the last century. We're gonna talk to you about that, because the need for the hour is for Christians to have a Christian worldview that is based on truth.

Now, there is a difference between knowledge and truth. For example, knowledge will double and triple, but genuine truth does not. And, when young people go to school, they study facts, but there's a difference between facts and truth. *Facts are like a recipe; truth is like the meal: digest a truth, and it will change your life.* God wants us to have truth. Why did God give us the Bible? We learned it this morning. Jesus said in John chapter 17: *"thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). Why did God send us the Holy Spirit? He's called, in the Bible, "the Spirit of truth." Why did the Messiah come—the Lord

Jesus? He said, *“I am the . . . truth”* (John 14:6). Why do we have churches? Churches are the pillar and the ground of the truth. What is the greatest desire for every Christian parent? They echo the words of the Apostle John: *“I have no greater joy than to [know] that my children walk in [the] truth”* (3 John 1:4). It’s truth that we need today. *Truth is to your spirit what food is to your body, what light is to your eyes, and what sound is to your ears.* You only have one short life to live, and, in this life, you ought to make it your desire, your aim, your burning ambition, to discover, to know, and to practice truth. To know truth is to know God, and to know God is to know truth.

Now, secular education is not enough. Our young people have to have a Christian worldview. And, when you have a Christian worldview, you’re going to find out that all of these facts intersect in truth, and that it’s all related. You don’t just niche out your church life, and put it over here, and think none of the rest of these things matter. And, the mark of a good education is that it is so interwoven inextricably with truth that all things begin to intersect and cohere together. And, there is a famine in the world for truth. We need truth. We need devotional truth to feed our hearts. Now, you don’t eat the cookbook. Thank God for the facts. But, you eat the meal. That is, we need to feed on devotional truth. We need doctrinal truth to feed our minds. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. We need practical truth to send us out, to build churches, to go to mission fields, to build Christian homes and families. And, we need truth that will move us—not just truth that warms our hearts. I’m glad for love and all that, but it needs to go beyond sloppy agape. We need to have a truth that has concrete and steel in it, that causes us to stand. We need a Christian worldview.

Now, Job was in perplexity. He was sick. He was in difficulty. And, he had some visitors to come see him. They were called “comforters,” but they were more tormentors than comforters. And, one of them was a man named Bildad, and this was the advice that Bildad gave to Job—it’s found in Job chapter 8, verse 8: *“For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?”* (Job 8:8–10). Now, what Bildad said to ole’ Job was this: “Job, you need some answers, and what you need to do, Job, is to go to the library, and blow the dust off of some of those ancient volumes, and begin to study. Study the ancients. Study the philosophers, and study their fathers, and they will tell you what the answer is.” Now, this was not an appeal to divine revelation; it was not an appeal to the Word of God, but it was an appeal to the human mind to substitute “thus saith the mind of man” for “thus saith the Word of God.” This is an ancient appeal to humanism. Humanism, like New Ageism, is not new; it’s one of the dustiest, mustiest things around. And so, we have come to a very serious matter in America, and let me just describe that, for a moment. And then, I’ll tell you how

we got there.

Many of you have heard the famous prayer, now, that a pastor prayed in the Kansas House of Representatives. He was called on to pray, and, you know, they were expecting the normal platitudes and pious phrases that, so many times, the clergy pour out when they're called on—honored, they think—to pray in one of these enclaves. But, this man's name was Reverend Joe Wright, and here was the prayer he prayed. I want you to listen to it, because you talk about a prayer that sounded like a rock, that acted, that had the result of a rock thrown into a hornets' nest. Here was the prayer: he said, "Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and to seek Your direction and guidance. We know that Your Word says, '*Woe unto [those] that call evil good*' (Isaiah 5:20), but that's exactly what we've done: we have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it 'moral pluralism.' We have worshiped other gods and called it 'multiculturalism.' We have endorsed perversion and called it an 'alternative lifestyle.' We have exploited the poor and called it the 'lottery.' We have neglected the needy and called it 'self-preservation.' We have rewarded laziness and called it 'welfare.' We have killed our unborn and called it 'choice.' We have shot abortionists and called it 'justifiable.' We have neglected to discipline our children and called it 'building esteem.' We have abused power and called it 'political savvy.' We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it 'ambition.' We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it 'freedom of expression.' We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it 'enlightenment.' Search us, O God, and know our hearts today, and try us, and see if there be some wicked way in us. Cleanse us from every sin, and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas and who have been ordained by You to govern this great state. Grant them Your wisdom to rule, and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the living Savior Jesus Christ. Amen."

I'd say that's a good prayer, wouldn't you? Well, they didn't think it was a good prayer. I want you to know, folks, that it upset them so much, one just sat down in the middle of the prayer, refused to stand any more. Another one turned and walked out. And, they began to buzz and to talk, and one man said, "I've never heard in ten years as divisive, sanctimonious, self-serving, overbearing prayer as I heard this morning." That was a representative. Well, I'm glad he prayed that kind of a prayer. But, what happens, that we have done all of those things that Pastor Joe talked about! What is wrong in America?

Did you know, folks, that we are in a crisis? No longer in America do we believe in absolute truth. And, if you'll go back to a period that began in 1962 through 1982, you

will find out that the courts, in 20 years, reversed the principle of “one nation under God” that had been the principle of American history. In 1962, in a court case, *Engle v. Vitale*, the Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black ruled that voluntary prayer in public schools was unconstitutional. That’s 1962. Right hard upon that, in 1963—the Schempp decision. And, Justice Thomas Clark set in motion the dismantling of classroom Bible-reading. Then came 1980, and the posting of the Ten Commandments was declared unconstitutional. Then came 1982, and the courts prohibited the teaching of creationism—that men, boys, and girls were created by Almighty God. Twenty years it took them to expel God from the public schools and tell Him not to come back.

Now, what has been the result of that? Well, presently, children need parental permission to have any medication given to them—even an aspirin, in many schools; but aided by high school counselors, they may have an abortion without parental notification. A high school student can be aided by high school teachers to have an abortion and to kill a baby. We’re into serious problems in America, and in serious times. God has been so systematically excluded from so many of our public schools.

A study by the United States Department of Education—now, the United States Department of Education, headed by Dr. Paul C. Vitz, a professor of psychology at New York University—was released to the American public. And, this study by Dr. Vitz was a study centered on elementary textbooks used by millions of boys and girls across America in the elementary schools. Dr. Vitz and his colleagues, after the study, concluded this—and I’m going to read a portion of their report—after studying these textbooks, he says this: “Those responsible for these books appear to have a deep-seated fear of any form of active, contemporary Christianity, especially serious, committed Protestantism. This fear has led the authors to deny and repress the importance of this kind of religion in American life. The nature of the bias is clear: religion; traditional family values; and conservative, political, and economic positions have been reliably excluded from children’s textbooks. The exclusion is particularly disturbing because it is found in a system paid for by taxpayers and one that claims, moreover, to be committed to impartial knowledge and accuracy. Textbooks are so written as to present a systematic denial of the history, heritage, beliefs, and values of a very large segment of the American people.” Now, that’s not a Baptist preacher saying that; that is a report by a professor of psychology at New York University and a study funded by the United States Department of Education.

What they’re saying is there has been a systematic move to exclude those things that you and I hold dear and that we believe are the foundation of this nation. And, as a result, we see values clarification being put in schools; we see value-neutral sex education put into schools; we see the dispensing of birth control devices and condoms in public schools; we see abortion counseling without parental notification or approval;

we see homosexuality being introduced in textbooks as an acceptable lifestyle. How did all of this happen? What has happened to America? How have we lost the Christian worldview that we once had?

I. The Ghosts of the Nineteenth Century

Well, there's a man named Roger Friend. Roger Friend is quite a scholar, and he has given us an overview. And, I'm going to try to encapsulate it, and squeeze it down to a little bit, and tell you about some people in the last century who now haunt us in this century. Remember what Job was told by Bildad? He says, "*I pray thee, [enquire] of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers*" (Job 8:8). It was to get Job to appeal to the philosophers of yesterday. Who are some of the philosophers of yesterday that have so skewed the American thinking today? It's an amazing thing—if you'll find out what happened in the 1800s, in the Nineteenth Century, you're going to find out that there are five men who have basically shaped and molded what is going on in America today. Now, don't check me out, even though these names sound strange. You need to know this, and your children need to know it; and if your children are grown, your grandchildren need to know it.

A. Hegel

The first was a man named George Frederic Hegel. He lived in the 1820s, and he was a philosopher. Now, for 1,500 years in history, people had accepted without question the fact of moral absolutes—that right was right and wrong was wrong universally. Everywhere, murder was thought to be wrong. Everywhere, adultery was thought to be wrong. And, if it were not thought to be wrong, it was only an aberration. The consensus was there is a fixed standard of right and wrong. But, Hegel came along, and he rejected moral absolutes. He had what he called a "dialectic theory." And, dialecticism is just simply an argument. He had a reasoned argument, a dialectic theory. And, what was his dialectic theory? You've heard it, I suppose, if you have studied philosophy, and I'm going to give it to you in shorthand. But, he said, "All history's made up of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Thesis is an idea, a proposition, that people believe to be true. And, they hold that idea until somebody comes along with an opposing idea, an anti-thesis or an antithesis. And so, these get into a battle—a thesis and antithesis—and they begin to battle back and forth until both of them give a little, and they meet somewhere in the middle; or, one or the other wins, and you come to a synthesis, which is a thesis and antithesis coming together. And, that synthesis becomes the new thesis; that becomes the new accepted model for truth." And, Hegel said, "Therefore, there are no moral absolutes." Now, he's not talking about biological evolution; he's talking about philosophical and social evolution—that society is always in a flux; it's always moving,

and there is no fixed standard of right and wrong.

Now folks, if you were to ask, in our high schools today, “How many of you students believe that there is a fixed standard of right and wrong?” you would be shocked. If you were to ask in our colleges, “How many believe that?” you would be shocked. Do you know what people say in America today? “Well, what is right for you may not be right for me.” You will hear that over and over again. And so, what Hegel said was, “Ideas come under the heading of ‘The Survival of the Strongest.’ The strongest idea wins; and, therefore, history is evolutionary, and there can be no absolutes.” One professor was teaching this. He said, “There’s nothing that you can say is absolute.” A student lifted his hand and said, “Professor, are you sure about that?” He said, “Absolutely.”

B. **Feuerbach**

Now, after Hegel, in the 1820s, there came along another man in the 1830s. This man’s name was Ludwig Feuerbach. He was another German philosopher. And, you see, one of these things begins to build upon another. Feuerbach said, “If there are no absolutes, if Hegel is right”—and he accepted that Hegel was right—“then there can be no God, because if there is a God, then that God would have absolute truth. And so,” he said, “there can be no God.” And, he said man creates the idea of God; that man is not made in the image of God, but God is in the imagination of man; that all of this moral flux. This “no absolutes” causes a deep insecurity in the heart and mind of man. So, Feuerbach said that God is created in the imagination of man, that man just simply invents God. I want to quote from him, and I want you to hear what he pompously stated. He said, “Christianity has, in fact, long vanished—not only from reason, but from the life of mankind. It is nothing more than a fixed idea.”

Now, are we haunted by that ghost today? Absolutely. That’s called humanism. Now, humanism sounds so much like humanitarianism, but there is a vast difference between humanism and humanitarianism. Humanitarianism means we love one another, we care for one another, and we love the human species that God has made: man. But, humanism makes man the center and the circumference, the sum total of everything; it has no room for God. It is a fine-sounding name, but it is atheism just simply wearing another coat. If you don’t understand that, we’ll deal with it later, when we come on these studies on Sunday nights to deal with humanism in a fuller way.

But, first of all, you have Hegel and his Hegelian hogwash. And then, right after that, you have Feuerbach, who builds on that. And you’re going to see how these philosophers will build one upon another.

C. **Marx**

And so, thirdly, the third person that we’re being haunted today by is Karl Marx. Now, Karl Marx built on the work of Hegel, and he built on the work of Feuerbach. And, he

said, “Now, if this is true—if there are no absolutes, and, therefore, there is no God—then what is the future and the purpose of mankind? Where are we going?” As a result of that, Karl Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. And, he took Hegel’s dialectic argument, and he called it “dialectical materialism”—another word for “communism”. And so, what he believed was that capitalism, the right to own property and the right to be productive for yourself, was wrong. “That,” he said, “is the thesis. The antithesis is the desire for equity and fairness in the hearts and minds of the working people. And,” he said, “if you take that thesis and that antithesis, you will come to a synthesis, which will be socialism or communism.” That’s Marxism; that’s Hegelian philosophy and the ideas of Feuerbach put together, because communism is godless. It’s not just another form of economy. It is unspeakably immoral, because it does not recognize the worth, the dignity, of the individual. The individual is nothing.

And so, Marx said that “the way to sell all of this about is a revolution, and,” he said, “it doesn’t matter if there’s suffering.” He believed that there must be violent change. He said that “we must be like a foreign body within the existing system that will accelerate its death.” And so, millions and millions and millions were put to death under godless communism—forty to fifty million were executed. Why? Because “there’s no God. If there’s no God, there’s no fixed standard of right and wrong. And, therefore, we, as human beings—all we have is materialism, and what we’ve got to do is to somehow bring in a humanist, godless utopia. And, revolution was necessary.” And, here’s what Marx said: “The suffering and sacrifice of violent change constitutes the price that mankind has to pay to have any essential progress at all.” So, he said, “We want change, and we want it violently.”

D. **Darwin**

But now, here’s another man. Here’s the fourth of these man who haunt us today. So, Karl Marx brought in this system of communism, socialism. And, don’t think communism is dead. It’s not dead in Cuba. It’s dying there, but it’s not dead there. It’s not dead in Red China. But, do you know where it has the most life? Come up close, and I’ll tell you: in the universities of America today. We’ll talk to you more about that later on. And, if the Russians want to get rid of their old textbooks, we have plenty of universities over here, I believe, that would buy them. That is Marxism, Leninism, that is infecting and affecting American life today.

Now, here’s the fourth of these men that has skewed the worldview and put us in this situation that we’re in tonight, in America, and his name is Charles Darwin—Charles Darwin—who wrote *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man* in 1871. And, he’s just continuing to think along these same lines. He came to the conclusion after his study—and we’re going to talk about evolution in detail one Sunday night—but

he came to the conclusion that “man is the product of evolution. If there is no God, there can be no fixed standard of right and wrong. And, if there is no God, then how do we get here? How do we explain our existence?” Well, evolution is not a science; it is a philosophy. It is the next best guess of the mind that cannot accept divine creation. And so, what he did, though—he went on to write in *The Origin of Species* and *The Destiny of Mankind* that “we ourselves”—“we ourselves”—“are the product of mere chance, that we, as human beings, cannot escape the evolutionary web.” And so, another philosopher, a little later on, described what Darwin taught us—quote: “With this single argument, the mystery of the universe is explained; the deity is annulled; and a new era of infinite knowledge is ushered in.” And, from that time on, man has been endeavoring to make a monkey of himself thanks to Charles Darwin and those who believe him.

E. **Freud**

Now, the fifth of these five men that haunt us today is a man named Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud lived from 1856 to this century, 1939. He was the one who put the final bow on the whole thing. And, he was the one who kind of put the final touches to the evolutionary model. Now, Feuerbach said that “we created the idea of God because of the insecurities that Hegel brought about by saying, ‘There are no absolutes.’” But, Freud said, “Where do we get the idea of God? What kind of a God do we conjure up?” He said, “Our idea of God comes to us from our childhood father, and we conceive of God like we would conceive of our childhood father when we were children.”

Now, without going into detail—and we’ll do this later on in these studies—but he was the father of psychoanalysis. And, concomitant to this degree, to this belief, he taught that mankind is motivated chiefly by pleasure—specifically by sexual pleasure, eroticism. To Freud, almost everything begins and ends with sex. And so, he felt that if mankind is repressed by society in his erotic or her erotic urges, or their erotic urges, if people fail to be allowed to fulfill their sexual and erotic desires, they may get a neurosis. And the perversion, the filth, the debauchery that we see in society today roots back to the extreme permissiveness that came out of Freudian psychology. And, you see it in raising children. We’re told, today, not to repress children: “I mean, after all, you don’t wanna warp the little thing.” Well, my dad warped me! “You don’t wanna warp him! And, if Throckmorton wants to cut the leg off the dining room table, you keep the saw sharp so it won’t frustrate the little dear.” And, that is the idea that we have today in Freudian psychology.

Now folks, I want to tell you, if you will take these things and put them together, you will understand why we are in the mess that we’re in today, because, aided by John Dewey, who is the father of progressive education and one of the original signers of *The Humanist Manifesto*, all of these things have been put together and bought by some of

our educators. Now, I take my hat off and I had my prayers on to godly schoolteachers who are in the public system. And, the public system is not all bad, and there are many wonderful people in the public system. But, I'm going to tell you, there is a systematic thing at work in the public system to systematically seduce our children.

II. The Ghosts of the Twentieth Century

Now, what happened when these five men brought these philosophies in the last century? It took less than 100 years for them to come in fruition in this century.

A. Eugenics

In 1924, a man who was a student of Hegel, Feuerbach—a man who was a student of Karl Marx—had a name: Adolf Hitler. He thought that he had a better idea, however, than Marx. His idea was Nazism; and so, he wrote *Mein Kampf*. Let me quote what Adolf Hitler had to say: “No more than nature desires the mating of weaker with stronger individuals”—there you see “the survival of the fittest”; we’re talking about Darwin there—“No more than nature desires the mating of the weaker with stronger individuals, even less does she desire the blending of a higher and a lower race”—Hitler was the original racist; you need to know that—“since, if she did, her whole work of higher breeding over perhaps hundreds of thousands of years might be ruined with one blow. All great cultures of the past perished only because the originally created race died from blood poisoning”—that is, intermarrying—“The man who creates the culture must be preserved! Preservation is bound up with the rigid law of necessity and the right to victory of the best and the strongest in this world.” That’s just another way of saying “the survival of the fittest.” Then, Hitler said, “Those who want to live, let them fight. And, those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live. Even if this is hard, this is how it is.” And, that led to the gas ovens.

B. Abortion

Now, you say, “Well, the gas ovens were terrible.” What about the abortion business in America today? What about the grizzly business today of taking little babies, who are the weakest of all creatures? And, because they’re weak, because they cannot defend themselves, they can be liquidated? Do you know what Hitler’s argument for the extermination of Jews was? He reclassified them as “non-persons.” Do you know what we’re doing to the little babies today? We are reclassifying them as “non-persons”! Can you imagine a Nazi saying, “Well”—or somebody saying about the Nazis, “Well, I personally am against the cremation of human beings, but what one does in his own personal gas chamber is his business. I’m for choice”?

C. Euthanasia

Now, this is the idea of the survival of the strongest. How can Dr. Death, Dr. Kevorkian, do what he does, over and over and over again? Because, these people weep; they're suffering. And, many people say, "Get them out of the way. They want to die. Help them to die!" But, it's only a little step, now, to the doctors, I believe—a new generation of doctors—who will put little babies to death in the womb will—and be paid for it—will, with a needle and a syringe, help some of us to get out of the way in this crowded world, because there's just what we call "the survival of the fittest."

These ideas, folks, have been around for a long time. Now actually, they were born in the pit of Hell, but there was a resurgence of these kinds of ideas in the last century. And now, we've sown the wind, and we are reaping the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7). That's the reason I have been talking to you on Sunday mornings about *Kingdom Authority*.

Conclusion

You say, "Pastor Rogers, that's been kind of a downer tonight. I've not wanted to hear all of that." Well, I didn't want to tell it to you, but we needed to hear it. We need to have our eyes opened, because we can sit in a place like this, and sing these wonderful songs, and fellowship with one another, and not realize what is going on out there.

Now folks, am I discouraged? No, and I'll tell you why: the Bible says, "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*" (2 Corinthians 10:4). And, God has given us Kingdom Authority. Jesus said, "*Behold, I give...you...[authority] over all the power of the enemy*" (Luke 10:19). Do you know the one thing that they do not have is truth? You want me tell you the other thing they don't have? They don't have the Holy Spirit. And so, what we need to do is to take the Word of truth and the Spirit of truth, and hold up the Christ of truth, and we need to get out of the boat with both feet. The days are short. We need to know who we are, what we believe, and why we believe it.

And, I tell you, friend, that we don't have to be ashamed of what we believe. There are good answers to these things. And, the Bible says, as we preached last Sunday night, we are to be ready always to give an answer to those who ask us of these things (1 Peter 3:15). And, that's why the message this morning was so important—that we see the Bible as the Word of God, the incontestable Word of God, the incorruptible Word of God. We need to see it as the indestructible Word of God. We need to see it as the indispensable Word of God. And, I am convinced there's not a lot wrong in America that could not be changed radically and quickly if we had a generation of preachers across this land who would stand in the pulpits of God, anointed with the Holy Spirit, and a heart full of love from a pure life, who would preach and teach "thus saith the Lord." And, let it start in my heart. Let it start in your heart. Let it start in this church. Let

us give these young people who are in the choir and others in our junior high school department and our college departments a Christian worldview. And, let's stand up and speak up while God gives us a voice. Amen?

Let's pray. Father, I pray now that You will help us, Lord, not to be discouraged, not to be alarmed, but, on the other hand, dear Lord, to be sensitized and awakened and, Lord, energized. And, help us, Lord, not to go just off half-cocked, but help us to know what we believe and why we believe it, and then to teach it in the anointing and the power of the Holy Ghost. And Lord, we pray for America and these election days. Lord, we don't look to Washington, and we don't look to elections to save us. We look to You. Our eyes are upon You to make a way for us and for our little ones. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Now, we're going to close the service tonight by giving a gospel invitation. I realize this was not a gospel message, so let me give you the gospel right now. The Bible teaches that you and I, when we come into this world, come into this world with a sinful nature. We're sinners by nature and, therefore, sinners by practice, sinners by choice. And, we deserve—our sins deserve—judgment. But God, in mercy, was moved by the pitiful plight of people like us, and He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to come to this Earth as perfect man to take our sins upon Himself, to die as our substitute upon that cross, and to pay the sin debt that our sins have incurred. And then, the Bible teaches that He was shown to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4). By many infallible proofs, He was shown to be raised from the dead. We believe that; our faith is built upon that. And then, the Bible teaches that if we will repent of our sin—that means be sorry for our sin, be sick of our sin, to turn from our sin and to trust Christ—if we'll do that, He'll save us.

You say, "Well, Pastor Rogers, I don't have the strength to turn from my sin." No, but you have the ability to say, "I choose Jesus. I am sick of my sin." And, He will give you the strength and the power when you receive Him into your heart and into your life. And, the One who saves you is the One who empowers You, and He's the One who will keep you. He's the One who's kept me since I was a teenage boy, and He's more real and more sweet to my heart tonight than ever before. And, when Laurie was singing that song tonight about Jesus, my heart was so full, because I love Him. And, the same Jesus that has saved me and kept me is the Jesus who'll save you tonight, if you'll trust Him. If you're not absolutely certain that you're saved and you want to be saved, when we stand and sing, I want you to leave your seat and come forward. Your coming forward will be your way of saying, "I'm not ashamed of Jesus. Tonight I'm trusting Him to save me."

The God-Man, Our Mediator

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: December 22, 1996

Main Scripture Text: Job 9

*“Then Job answered and said, I know it is
so of a truth, but how should man be just with God?”*

JOB 9:1–2

Outline

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- II. Job Didn't Need the Humanism of Bildad
- III. Job Didn't Need the Ritualism of Zophar
- IV. Job Needed a Mediator—the God-Man, Jesus

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Introduction

Would you find in God's Word the book of Job chapter 9. For our Christmas message this morning, we're thinking on this subject, The God-Man, Our Mediator. The God-Man, our Mediator. Job chapter 9.

Now if you're familiar with the book of Job, you know that the book of Job is the story of a good man who suffered. And people study the book of Job and they get help and, uh, wisdom from the book of Job because the book of Job helps to answer this question: Why do bad things happen to good people? But that's only one of the questions that the book of Job answers. The book of Job answers another question and there's another real theme in the book of Job. Not only why do bad things happen to good people, but listen carefully, how can good things happen to bad people? That also is a theme in the book of Job. How sinners like we can be forgiven and go to heaven. How can good things happen to bad people?

Look if you will not in Job chapter 9 verses 1 and 2: “Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth, but how should man be just with God?” That is a big question, is it not? How can sinners such as we be just and righteous and holy with God? You see, the problem is this, that God is so holy and we are so sinful.

You might just fast forward to, uh, Job chapter 15, for example, and see what Eliphaz had to say about your sinfulness and my sinfulness. Beginning in verse 14, he says, uh, “What is man that he should be clean and he which is born of a woman that

he should be righteous? Behold he,” that is God, “putteth no trust in his saints, yea the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man which drinketh iniquity like water.” Haha, abominable, filthy, man drinks iniquity like he drinks water. Is that not true?

Take today’s newspaper, or any newspaper, and look at the entertainment section and the way they want you to see the entertainment is as sexy, lusty, filthy, shocking, exotic, sinful, that’s the way they titillate the crowd. They say, Here is something, come and have a drink of this. We have an insatiable appetite for sin and we drink it like water.

And so man is a sinner. He’s a sinner by birth, therefore he’s a sinner by nature, therefore he’s a sinner by choice, therefore he’s a sinner by practice, he’s a sinner habitually, he is a sinner. There’s not a man, not a woman, not a boy, not a girl who is honest who would stand and say I have not and I do not sin. We are sinners.

And, uh, we have the behavioral psychologists today who try to explain away sin and they say that man is ill not evil, man is sick not sinful, man is weak not wicked. But that’s not what the Bible says. The Bible says, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We try to explain it away by environment or glands but the Bible calls it sin, and it has well been said that most of the people in America are egomaniacs strutting their way to hell thinking they’re too good to be damned. But the problem is, how can man be just with God, because man is so sinful.

But not only is man so sinful, God is so holy. Look, go back to the verse that we began with in, in chapter 9, Job chapter 9, and look in verse 30. Job says, “If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me.” That is, God, if I do the very best I can in self-reformation, if I get the purest water and scrub myself from head to toe, yet, dear God, you see me wallowing in the gutter! You see me as I really am.

Man is so sinful and God is so holy. If you had to give one word to describe God, and thank God no word could describe God, and all words cannot describe God, but if you have to say what word more than any other epitomizes the nature of God, the character of God, contrary to popular opinion, it would not be love.

Now God is love, infinite, matchless, measureless, glorious love. I do not diminish the love of God. But if you had to give one word that would characterize God, it would be holy. God is holy. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts. Now think about it. Man is so sinful and God is so holy!

How can you get a holy God and sinful man together? That’s what the book of Job is about, not only why do bad things happen to good people, but how can good things happen to bad people? How can man be just with God? How can we get right with God? God is holy and man is sinful and man cannot lift himself to God because he’s

sinful and God will not lower himself to man because God is holy. Now that's a problem. That is the problem. The book of Habakkuk says that God is of pure eyes than to behold iniquity. So you have the problem.

Now in the book of Job, Job had three friends and these three friends try to answer Job's question, how can man be just with God. And the question is a good question, but they give the wrong answer to the right question. And what you're going to find is, three Satanically-inspired answers to this question and they're answering the right question the wrong way. Isn't that clever of the devil?

You see, the devil is not against religion. As a matter of fact, the devil uses religion to damn and to doom souls. And the first temptation in the garden of Eden, was not to be ungodly but to be godly. He said, Do this and you'll be like God. That's what Satan said to Eve. It wasn't a temptation to fall down away from God, it was a temptation to step up toward God, only do it the devil's way. It's very interesting, isn't it? Do you see how clever the devil is?

You see, listen, friend, the devil is the master liar and the best lies sound the most like the truth, and every good lie has some truth in it. A clock that doesn't even run is right twice a day. I want to ask you a question, talking about clocks.

What is more dangerous? A clock five minutes wrong or a clock five hours wrong? Now you say, well, obviously, a clock five hours wrong, but not so. When you look at a clock that's five hours wrong, you say, Hey, that is wrong. Somebody tell me what time it is. But you look at a clock five minutes wrong, you miss your plane.

You see, the devil is a very clever liar, so he gets these lies that are very close to the truth but yet so far away from the truth. And what happened is this: Job says, How can man be just with God? God is so holy, I am so sinful. How? I can't come up to him and he won't come down to me. So you have three of Job's friends who were false prophets who tried to answer that question and I want to show you how they tried to answer that question.

I. Job Didn't Need the Demonism of Eliphaz

The first was a man named Eliphaz and you find his answer in Job chapter 4. Go back to Job chapter 4 and look if you will, please, beginning in verse 12. Here's what Eliphaz had to say about this this question. Now he says in verse 12, Now a thing was secretly brought to me and mine ear received a little thereof in thoughts from the visions from the night, when deed sleep falleth on men. Fear came upon me and trembling, which made my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up. It," that is the spirit, "stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof. An image was before mine eyes. There was silence and I heard a voice saying," and I'm going to leave off what the voice said because that's not a part of my purpose at this

point.

Eliphaz said, Job, let me tell you what happened to me. Let me give you my experience. Maybe it will help you, Job. He says, The other night when I was in my bedroom, he said, I was aware of a presence in the room. He said, I, I was moved with fear. I was in the middle of my sleep. I woke up and someone or something was in that room with me. There was a spirit in that room. I opened my eyes, I, I looked at this thing as it materialized. I could not quite make the form out of it, and this being, this thing that came into the room, it spoke to me, it revealed some things to me. It gave to me some inside information. And Job, I'm going to pass that on to you. Maybe that'll help answer the question, How can you be just with God?

Now, I don't know about you, but folks I don't want to wake up in the middle of the night and find somebody or something like that in my bedroom. I'm like that man, said he was walking through the cemetery and he thought he saw a ghost. And he said he put out his hand to see if the ghost was there and the ghost wasn't there. Then he said the ghost put out his hand to see if he was there. He said, I wasn't there either.

That's the way I would be, to be in this kind of a situation. Some weird, eerie, spooky thing was in the bedroom with Eliphaz. But what does he do? He takes what this thing, this spirit says, and he passes it on to Job as bona fide religious information. Now folks, that's the way of demonism. What was in this bedroom was a demon spirit. Now I, I, you say, Pastor, are you sure it wasn't God? Yes, because later on in the book, uh, God said, "These men have not spoken that which was of me." It wasn't of God.

Listen to what the Bible says in 1 John chapter 4 verse 1: "Beloved, believe not a free spirit, but try," or test," the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." And you know you and I believe that we're living in the latter days, and 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 1 says, "Now the spirit," that is the Holy Spirit, "speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." That's what happened here. Eliphaz meets a seducing spirit who gives out doctrines of devils.

Now what is happening today is this. We're seeing a fulfillment of that passage that says, "In the latter days some shall depart from the faith." The nineties are a decade of demons. Hell is having a holiday, and as we are getting closer to the end of a millennium, the end of an age.

I believe, Satan is like a caged animal, he's in a corner, and he's letting loose with all of the artillery of hell and we are seeing more New Age demonism than we've ever had before. We are seeing cults, as Dr. Lee the former pastor of this church said, *isms* that oughta be *wasms*. Cults that, that are coming on and, and are spreading like wildfire.

I was in the airport down in Tampa. I saw one of these cultists, one of these demon-inspired, uh, girls there, she was, I watched her combination of sex and false

doctrine seducing these sailor boys out there. It infuriated me. I got up from my seat, I just kinda hoped that she would come to me, to talk to me, but she wouldn't come to talk to me, she was talking to these young boys who were 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. I was too old and ugly. I tried to get her to come to me. Finally I just went to her.

I said, May I say something to you? She said, What? I fastened my eyes on her and I said, Jesus Christ is Lord. When I said that, she screamed a maniacal scream, sounded like a banshee, Yaaaaa! It went all over the airport. I thought I was going to get arrested. The very name of Jesus, the very name of Jesus. The Lordship of Christ was a thought that she could not abide. Demon spirits.

We have today New Age syncretism. What is the New Age? It is an amalgamation, a syncretism, of all of the world's religions into a mystical world view. One New Ager said this: We honor the beauty and truth of all the world religions, believing each to have a seed of God, a kernel, now listen to this, of the spirit that unites us. And there is a spirit that unites us and that spirit, of course, is the same spirit that Eliphaz met in the bedroom.

And we have today, many of you who are Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians and Episcopalians and good, honest God-fearing people still dabble in astrology. God pity you. That's of the devil! Do you know what astrology is? *Astrologos*. Astra—the stars, logos—the word. It is the word of the stars as a substitute for the Word of God. Don't mess with it.

A couple of decades ago we have a woman named Jean Dixon taking the world by storm. Everybody talking about Jeanne Dixon, Jeanne Dixon this and Jeanne Dixon that. And somebody says, Well, Brother Rogers, she made some wonderful prophecies. Indeed, I don't dispute that. But was she one hundred percent accurate? Of course not. Well, that's very interesting. So where does she get her knowledge? She doesn't get it from God because she doesn't know enough. She doesn't get it from human intuition because she knows too much. Where's she get it? From the devil himself. It's devilishly inspired revelation. Astrology.

I see it advertised in our papers today, even in school courses, paid for with tax money. Transcendental meditation. All that is is Hinduism and yoga and these other things that have been rebaptized and repackaged and sent over here and paid for with your tax money. Meditation. And you're going to put yourself in a trance.

You say, Well Pastor Rogers, I just believe that if I put myself in a trance, I'll make contact. You will! It'd be like saying at nighttime, I'm going to go to bed and unlock all the doors, all the windows, and go to sleep and see if I make contact. You will. Something will come in. I mean, you put yourself in a neutral spot and make yourself open to the devil. Friend, I'm telling you, the Bible says, "Guard your mind. Keep it with all diligence." You say, you against meditation? No, but when you meditate you don't

put yourself in neutral, you fasten yourself upon the Word of God. Meditate on the word of God. But what we have in these last days, folks, is the way of Eliphaz, which is demonism.

Let me tell you one of the biggest ways that the devil, and, and, this New Age mysticism is coming in. Do you know it's through the drug culture? Did you know that drugs are more than just physiological, they're psychological and spiritual? Did you know that in the Bible the use of drugs is called sorcery? Revelation chapter 21 and verse 8: "But the fearful and the unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and all idolators shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." And in that litany of wickedness is the word sorcery.

Young's Concordance says that the word sorcery is a translation of the Greek word *pharmakeia*, the word we get pharmacist from. Now there's nothing wrong with pharmacy, there's nothing wrong with medicine, but from time immemorial, people have used drugs to put man's mind into a stupor to ha-enable him or to cause him to lose control and to open himself up to demon spirits.

David Wilkerson, who has worked with drug addicts and devil worshippers for many years. I don't agree with everything David Wilkerson says—he's my brother in Christ, however—but here's what he did say. He said, I have yet to see a person who is into devil worship or demon worship who did not first of all open his mind to mystical experiences through the use of drugs. I have yet to see a man who is into devil worship, demon worship, who did not first of all open his mind up to mystical experiences through the use of drugs. It is instant heaven that leads to everlasting hell.

II. Job Didn't Need the Humanism of Bildad

And that is one way. Now, of course, not everybody's going to buy into demonism and Satanic revelation, so the devil is very clever, so he gets another one of Job's friends to give to Job and answers how a man can be just with God. Not only Eliphaz, but Bildad.

Go to chapter 8 now and hear what Bildad had to say. In chapter 8, Job chapter 8. Now I'm going to cut to the chase and just give you the heart of what he had to say in verse 8. He says, "For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age," that is, of our forefathers. "And prepare thyself to the search of their fathers, for we are but of yesterday and know nothing because our days on earth, upon earth are a shadow." That is, we just got here, we're not dry behind the ears, we haven't had the chance to know all that we ought to know, so he says go back to the former age, go back and blow the dust off of some of those volumes in the library, and begin to read the accumulated wisdom of the ages.

Notice in verse 10: "Shall not they teach thee and tell thee and utter words out of their heart? Now, what is the appeal here? The appeal here is not to demonism and

satanic revelation. The appeal here is humanism and sophisticated reason. Humanism. Wha-wha-what-what is this man saying? He's saying, Job, if you want to learn the answer, you need to go and study the accumulated wisdom of the ages. Look to the ancients. Look to the philosophers. Look to the wise, the high, the mighty. We just got here, our days are but a shadow and what you need to do is to go back and go to those big volumes of wisdom. Blow the dust off, get educated.

I don't know who Job's fathers were, I don't know what were in the libraries of his day, but I know who our fathers are. Dave Breese has written a book, "Five Men Who Ruled The World From Their Graves," and indeed, he's right about this, there are five people—all of them in the nineteenth Century—that are ruling the twentieth Century from their graves. Let me just tell you who those five men are.

Number one, Charles Darwin. Charles Darwin, who in 1809 hatched the egg that poisoned the scientific world, who taught us about evolution. There's no way to calculate the damage that is done and we have children who are acting like animals because they've been taught that they come from animals.

You say, Adrian, are you against science? No! Evolution is a philosophy, not a science. I studied science. I know what the scientific method is. I'm not a scientist, but I know that in science you take a, you take a theory, a postulate, you go into the laboratory to see whether it's true or false. But the evolutionists, they take an idea, say it is true, and then move heaven and earth to try to prove it. But there is no proof.

Dr. Newton Tahmisian, a physiologist for the Atomic Energy Commission has said this: Scientists who go about teaching that evolution is a fact of life are great con men and the story they are telling may be the greatest hoax ever. In explaining evolution we do not have one iota of fact. Now get that in your head!

I just read the newspapers this morning. All that hullabaloo about life from Mars. They said, Ooops, we were wrong. We were wrong! I mean, all of the headlines, all of the news stories, it's an incredible thing. They cannot believe in the miracle, they cannot believe in the miracle of creation, and yet they are willing to accept millions of miracles. One life form becoming another life form becoming another life form becoming another life form. Not one demonstrable life form has ever been shown to come from one to another. Where are the fossils? They talk about the missing link, they're all missing! They don't even have a chain, much less a missing link!

Go back and check your fathers, check Charles Darwin, check Søren Kierkegaard. He was born in 1813. He hatched the egg that poisoned the religious world. You say, I've never heard of him. Well, he's a fine man in many ways, in his own way I believe loved God. But he was the father of neo-orthodoxy. And what is neo-orthodoxy. You say, I never heard of it. Well, neo-orthodoxy is a system that says the Bible is not empirical truth, not that the Bible is truth, but the Bible contains truth, it becomes true to

you when you have an existential I-Thou relationship with the Bible.

You say, what does that mean? Well, it means, dear friend, that people no longer believe that the Bible is the fixed, inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. There was a time when preachers would stand in the pulpit and say, "the Bible says." Then they started saying, "The Church says." and now they just say, "Well it seems to me." That's existentialism. No absolute truth. The Bible is not the Word of God, it just contains the Word of God.

And then there's another man who poisoned our world. His name was Karl Marx, he was born in 1818. He hatched the egg that poisoned the political world. He said that man is just simply the tool of dialectical materialism. Karl Marx, the father of Communism, was an atheist. And being an atheist, he had no moral absolutes. Atheism is a vital part of communism. When Karl Marx was asked to give his life's goal, he said it is to dethrone God and to destroy capitalism. At least he had a goal, he knew where he was going. Dethrone God, destroy capitalism.

Now Soviet Communism has imploded. It's shown itself to be a bankrupt system. They've got all these textbooks. I'll tell you where they get rid of them, sell them to the universities in the United States of America, because it's still being taught over here. And you'd be surprised on our major campuses how many thorough-going socialists and capitalists are indoctrinating our children today with our tax money. These men ruling the world from their graves.

Another man was Sigmund Freud. He's the man who poisoned the psychological world. He was born in 1856, he's what we call the father of psychoanalysis. And what did Sigmund Freud teach? He taught that the human race is motivated chiefly by pleasure, primarily eroticism, that everything begins and ends with sex, and so he is the philosopher, the patron of extreme permissiveness that, that little children, you just need to let them unfold. If you resist or rebuke them, if you tell them that fornication is wrong, adultery is wrong, sodomy is wrong, perversion is wrong, lesbianism is wrong, you're liable to give them a little neurosis. So what you do is, you just let them unfold, and, and, this is extreme permissiveness. And we see this in society today, again, where nobody is evil, they may be ill, nobody is wicked, they may be weak. So if little Throckmorton wants to cut the leg off the dining room table, you just keep the saw sharp so he won't frustrate himself. Little Throckmorton, he'll grow up to be wonderful; he'll grow up to black your eye. Now let me tell you something, friend, that thought, that system is in the world today.

Another man of our fathers who has poisoned the world today is a man named John Dewey. John Dewey poisoned the educational world. He was born in 1859 and John Dewey was a humanist. You say, what is humanism? That's a fancy way for saying atheism. The names have been changed to protect the guilty. John Dewey was the

father of progressive education. And he had the idea that ideas and methods are more important than fixed truth.

That's why we have today something called outcome-based education, rather than teaching children to add and subtract, read and write, and to know history as it is supposed to be known. Where did that come from? It came from, uh, the accumulated wisdom of the ages, but it's belched out of hell, really, and today, look at what is happening in education. Look at art.

I was listening to a program the other day, or literature. Kids are no longer studying Shakespeare, they're studying eroticism and homosexual literature and so forth to get a PhD.

And in art, you go to an art gallery, you can't tell whether it's a sunset or a scrambled egg. Two little boys in a modern art gallery who were looking at some of that stuff and one of them said to the other one, We'd better get out of here before somebody thinks we did it!

That's the progressive education that we have here today. And this kind of thinking has sabotaged the Bible, humanized God, deified man, minimized sin, glorified greed, glamorized sex, and liquorized society. That's the wisdom of the ages.

III. Job Didn't Need the Ritualism of Zophar

How can man be just with God? Eliphaz says demonism. Bildad says humanism. Zophar says legalism. Go back, look if you will in chapter 11 now. Here's here's another one of these false answers. How can man be right with God? Here's what Zophar says to old Job. Job's heart wants to know how can I a sinner be right with God? Here's what Zophar says: "If thou prepare thine heart and stretch out thine hands toward him. If iniquity be found in thine hand, put it far away and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, thou shalt be steadfast and shall not fear."

Now what he's simply saying is this: Job, what you need is religion. What you need is to do good. You see, some people are not going to be caught up in Satanic revelation. Other people are not going to be caught up in sophisticated reason. But a great number of people are going to be caught up in sterile ritualism. Sterile ritualism. Rituals. Religion. Legalism.

What he's saying to this man is this. He says, Job, what you need is a religion of form and self-effort. What you need to do is to prepare your heart. That's meditation. What you need to do is stretch out your hands. That's ceremony. What you need to do is put away sin. That is reformation. Meditation. Ceremony. Reformation. Meditation, ceremony, reformation.

May I submit to you that in America today millions are trudging to churches doing

those three things and will leave with empty hearts. They're not into demonism, they are not into irrationalism, they're into ritualism. I mean, they have a form of godliness, but they do not have the power thereof. Augustus Toplady Well said it when he said: "*Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no languor know, these for sin could not atone, thou must save and thou alone.*"

IV. Job Needed a Mediator—the God-Man, Jesus

Well, old Job won't buy any of this. Go back to Job chapter 9. Job was a man after God's heart and so in Job chapter 9, look again in verse 1: "Then Job answered and said I know it is so of a truth, but how shall man be just with God, for thee will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." He said, I couldn't answer one out of every thousand questions God asks me. He's God! I'm a man. And then skip on down if you will and look at, at verse 32. Here's what he says: "For he," God, holy, holy God, he, "for he is not a man as I am that I should answer him and we should come together in judgment, neither is there any daysman betwixt us that he might lay his hand upon us both."

Now if you have a different translation you may read the word *umpire* or you may read the word *middleman* or you may read the word *arbiter* or you may read the word *mediator*. I prefer the word *mediator* as the best. "And neither is there any mediator between us that he might lay his hand upon us both." Do you know what Job says? Job says, Oh God, you are holy, I am sinful, I need you. God I can't argue with you. God if you bring me into court I can't answer one out of a thousand questions. I'm a sinner. I need somebody to go between. I need somebody to bring me to you. I need somebody who can lay his hands upon us both. I need an arbiter. I need a middleman. I need a daysman. I need a mediator.

Do you know who he was crying for? Do you know who he was longing for? You know his name, don't you? Say it: Jesus, Jesus. Listen, take your Bible and turn to First Timothy chapter 2 verses 5 and 6. Listen to it. Listen to it: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all." That's Christmas, folks. That's Christmas. You say, Adrian, I wondered when you were going to get to Christmas. That's Christmas. That's Christmas!

"Neither is there a daysman between us that he might lay his hand upon us both." I need a mediator. And let me tell you what a mediator must be. Number one a mediator has to be qualified. Not just any mediator would do.

Now here's God and here's man. Suppose a king and a beggar were in a controversy and the king is bringing the beggar into lawsuit. And the beggar says, I need somebody to speak, I need a mediator. The king says, All right, I'll get another king. And the beggar says, No, I don't want you two kings to try to determine my fate. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll

get another beggar and let him be the mediator. The king says, You two beggars are not going to gang up on me. I need a mediator. I need somebody who can lay his hands upon us both. Who is that? That, my friend, is the one mediator between God and man given to us in First Timothy 2 chapter 2 verse 5, and his name is Jesus.

And how is Jesus qualified? Because Jesus is both God and man at the same time. God sent forth his son made of a woman. God sent forth his son but made of a woman. Listen, this is the miracle of Christmas. Jesus did not have his beginning in Bethlehem. He had his birth at Bethlehem.

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father, but he stepped out of heaven and came to this earth. He became a mediator and he became a man. Don't get the idea that Jesus was not a man. Don't get the idea somehow that Jesus was God only dressed up as a man.

I was listening to the news the, last week. I heard about a man out in Utah who was in prison, thought he could get out of prison, had a good plan. He got a great big crate, addressed it, sealed himself up in it, had himself mailed in it, put an address. Did you read that, hear that? Put an address on the outside and to ship himself home. And he's on the inside and they take this crate thinking it was legitimate, he was all the way outside the prison with this thing, when somebody bumped it and he said ouch. And so, he's back in prison. This was last week, happened in the news out in Utah.

You see, that was just a man inside of a box, but Jesus was not God simply inside of a man. That was not a package. He became a man. Now listen, don't ever forget this. He wasn't just masquerading as a man, he wasn't just wearing a man suit. He became a man, as much a man as any mother's child in this building is a man. He wept, he slept, he hungered, he cried, he hurt. He was a man! A man!

Why? Because the Bible tells us in First Corinthians "Sin by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Our dominion was lost by a man, legally lost, it must be legally regained by a man. No spirit can die, a man must die. The wages of sin is death. Christ became a man that he might die upon that cross.

But he had to be a sinless man. He could not have been a son of Adam, because in Adam all die. He had to be the son of God, so therefore he had to be born of a virgin because a son of slaves is a slave himself, and Adam was a slave to Satan, but Jesus was the son of God and he stepped out of heaven. Listen to me. Listen to me. He was man, a very man. He could lay his hand upon Job. But he was God, a very God. He could lay his hand upon the Father. He was as much God as God the Father. Everything that God has, says, and does, Jesus has, says, and does. And yet everything that Job felt Jesus felt. He was the daysman who could lay his hand upon us both.

You see, between God and man there is a chasm, eroded by sin. Over here is holy

God. Over here is sinful man. Here is the chasm between the two. The Lord Jesus Christ says, I am going to bridge that chasm. And so over here he puts down the foundation of his deity, very God of very God. And over here he puts down the foundation of his humanity, very man of very man.

As much man as if not God at all. As much God as if not man at all. Not half God and half man, but all God and all man, never another like him, the God-man, the God-man. And having put down a foundation here and put down a foundation there, then the God-man builds a bridge between God and man and man and God and that bridge is made of the rough-hewn timbers of the cross. Listen to this. There is one God and one mediator between God and man, himself man, the Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all.

By the way, the hyper-Calvinists have difficulty with this: a ransom for all. He died for all! People say, am I one of the elect? Let me tell you something, friend, the elect are whosoever will. People have been arguing about that for two millenniums and I settled it in three seconds. Whosoever will, you want to be saved, come. Jesus said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And with the blood of his cross, he bridged the chasm between holy God and sinful man and he, the mediator, the God-man, built a bridge that demonism and humanism and ritualism cannot build, 'cause all those bridges fall under their own weight.

Conclusion

Do you know Jesus? Let me tell you something. A mediator must be accepted by both parties. A mediator must be given absolute authority. A mediator must have both parties in mind. He must be totally just. Do you know anybody else other than Jesus who can fit that bill? I don't. How can man be just with God? His name is Jesus. No wonder the angels said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." If I had a thousand lives, I'd give every one of them to Jesus and I want you to know it.

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed. Why don't you say, Lord, I cannot lift myself to you in my sinful state and you cannot come down to me until something is done with my sin, so now, now I believe that there's one who can bridge the gap between me and you and his name is Jesus. Pray like this: Lord Jesus, come into my heart today. Give me the courage not only to receive you, but to make it public. In your name I pray.

How Can Man Be Justified with God?

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: August 31, 1980

Main Scripture Text: Job 9:1–2

“Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?”

JOB 9:1–2

Outline

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Introduction

I want you to find, please, the Book of Job. That’s easy to find. Psalms is about in the middle of your Bible; so, just open up to Psalms, and then turn left, and you’ll come to the Book of Job—Job chapter 9 and verse 2. You will know, perhaps, already, that we’re in a series. And, the series deals with “Portraits of Christ in the Old Testament.”

We believe that all of the Bible is about the Lord Jesus. And, the Old Testament anticipates His coming. The Gospels present His coming. The epistles and Revelation tell us that He is coming again. And, Christ is in all of the Bible. Someway, somehow, standing somewhere in the shadows, you’ll find Christ.

Now, we have already dealt with the Lord Jesus in what we call biblical types, and we’ve talked about various pictures of Christ. For example, we showed you that Joseph

and Isaac were what we would consider to be types of Christ.

Now, I want to move away from the idea of types and get into the idea of prophecy that prophesies the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, we're going to do that in the Book of Job. So, let's look, if we will, please, in Job chapter 9 and verses 1 and 2: *"Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?"* (Job 9:1–2). Now again, I want us to read in Job chapter 25, verses 4 through 6—we get the same question: *"How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?"* (Job 25:4–6).

Now, there are two great questions in the Book of Job. Question number one is: Why do the righteous suffer? And, indeed, as you study the Book of Job, you can learn some great and marvelous truths there about why good people, righteous people, sometimes suffer. But, there's another question that is put forth in the Book of Job that, many times, we overlook. And, that question is this: *"How then can man be justified with God?"* (Job 25:4). Because, you see, there is a great problem. Here is the problem, and it is delineated by two facts: Number one, the sinfulness of man; and, number two, the holiness of God.

A. **The Sinfulness of Man**

Now, Job tells us that man is very, very sinful. Again, for example, turn to Job chapter 15, and let's look in verses 14 and following—Job 15, verse 14: *"What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he"*—that is, God—*"putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"* (Job 15:14–16). Man is abominable. Man is filthy.

And, man drinks *"iniquity like water"* (Job 15:16). As a matter of fact, Hollywood has learned that, if you want to get a good box office, just advertise a film as sexy, shocking, sinful, filled with debauchery, and people will line up. That's the way they advertise it, because man loves sin. He drinks *"iniquity like water."* And so, there is the sinfulness of man. Man is sinful by birth: *"Behold...in sin did my mother conceive me"* (Psalm 51:5). Man, because he's sinful in birth, he is sinful in nature. We are *"by nature the children of wrath"* (Ephesians 2:3). And, because he's sinful in nature, he's sinful by choice. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). And, because he's sinful in choice, he's sinful in practice. And, man just continues to sin. Man is sinful. For further information, just read today's newspaper, any newspaper, for some documentation on the sinfulness of man.

B. The Holiness of God

But, now, over against the sinfulness of man, is the holiness of God. God is Holy. If you wanted one word that would characterize God, one word that would describe God, one word above all other words in the dictionaries of Earth that would describe God, it would not be, contrary to popular opinion, the word love. Now, God is love. God is perfect love, infinite love, unending love, beautiful love, pure love. God is love. But, I want to say, dear friend, that if you wanted one word that would describe God—and I'm so grateful we're not limited to one word—but if you wanted one word, in my estimation, it would have to be the word *holy*. "*Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts*" (Isaiah 6:3). Psalm 99, verse 9: "*Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy*" (Psalm 99:9).

And, because He is holy, that means He is the complete opposite, the antithesis, the other, of sin. He is set over against sin so much that He cannot even look upon sin. Habakkuk chapter 1, verse 13: "*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity...*" (Habakkuk 1:13). God is so holy that He cannot even look upon sin.

And so, you have over here the sinfulness of man. Man is sinful, sinful, sinful. And, over here, you have the holiness of God. He is the thrice-holy God of Israel; and He is Holy, holy, holy.

Now, the question that is put forth in the Book of Job is, "*How then can man be justified with God?*" (Job 25:4). How can sinful man and holy God get together? Now, that's a good question, isn't it?

"Well," you say, "the way that sinful man could get together with Holy God is that sinful man could just work his way up to God." No, you can't do that. You might as well try to put your fingers under your shoes and lift yourself off the ground, as for sinful man to try to lift himself to God. Man is sinful, and there is nothing that man, in and of himself, can do about his sinfulness.

"Well," you say, "if man can't lift himself to God, then maybe God can descend and come down to the level of man." No, God cannot do that. God is holy, and God never has, God never will, fellowship with unholiness in sin. God is "*of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*" (Habakkuk 1:13).

So, we've got a problem. Up here is Holy God, and down here is sinful man. And, there is a gap, a chasm, between Holy God and sinful man. And so, the question in the Book of Job is, "*How then can man be justified with God?*" (Job 25:4). God is holy, and you're sinful. And, mister, if you think that you can go to Heaven, or be right with God, without the new birth, you're ignorant of two things. You just don't know how sinful your heart is, and you just don't know how holy God is. And so, there is a real problem; and that's the problem that's set before us.

I. The Devil's Wrong Answer to the Question

Now, the devil knows that this is a problem, and the devil knows that this is a question in the hearts and minds of people, so, the devil endeavors to give the wrong answer to this right question. Now, here's the question: "*How then can man be justified with God?*" (Job 25:4). That's a very good question. And, the devil knows that it's a good question, and he knows that sooner or later, you and everyone else are going to ask it. And so, the devil endeavors to give the wrong answer to the right question.

Now, I want to say it again, and I want you to understand it, that the devil is not against religion. The devil is in favor of religion. He is in religion up to his ears, and the devil is always giving religious advice. The devil is glad to tell you how to be right with God, so long as he tells you the wrong way, so that you're not truly right with God. He is glad to give you the wrong answer to the right question. You see, the devil has always been in the realm of religion. The very first temptation in the Garden of Eden was what? It was a religious temptation. Do you know what the temptation was in the Garden of Eden? It was what? To be godly, wasn't it? That's in the realm of religion. The devil said to Eve, "Do this, and you'll be like God." It wasn't a temptation to fall down; it was a temptation to fall up. It was a temptation to be like God.

The devil has always been trying to give man religious advice, because the devil knows if man gets the wrong advice, he will not, therefore, believe God's pure truth. Now, the devil, therefore, inspired three men in the Book of Job to give the wrong answer to the right question. And, that's going to be the basis of our message today. We want you to see these three wrong answers to the right question: "*How then can man be justified with God?*" (Job 25:4).

A. Satanic Revelation

Now, I want you to turn to Job, chapter 4, and we're going to find the first of these three men who gave the wrong answer to the right question. His name was Eliphaz—Eliphaz—and, he was one of Job's three comforters. And, we read here, in Job, chapter 4, beginning in verse 12, these words—Eliphaz is speaking, and he says, "*Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: t stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying...*" (Job 4:12–16).

Now, I'm not going to tell you, right now, what the voice said, because that's immaterial to my point. But, here was Eliphaz. Eliphaz was in his bedroom one night. It was in the middle of the night. He'd been sleeping deeply. And, suddenly, he awakened, and he is aware of a presence in the room. Something or someone is there. He blinks

his eyes. He tries to see. He can't tell. It's blurred. It's sort of a vision. It's like a spirit. "Oh," he says, "look—I'm getting a communication from the other world. I'd better listen." And, this thing, whatever it was, starts to speak to Eliphaz. And, he takes it down, and then he passes it on.

Eliphaz, at first, was so frightened that the hair of his neck stood up, like that man walking through a cemetery: He said he thought he saw a ghost, and he put out his hand to see if the ghost was there, and, he said, "The ghost wasn't there." He said, "Then, the ghost put out his hand to see if he was there," and he said, "he wasn't there either." Now, that's the way Eliphaz was: He was in the middle of the night—here is the form, this substance, something, and, it is talking with him. And, he got this information, and he passed it on.

Well, with whom did he talk? Who was speaking to Eliphaz that night in his bedroom? Pay attention. It was a demon spirit. It was a demon spirit. He says, "There was a spirit in my room, and it spoke. And, it gave me advice. And, Job, I'm going to pass this advice on to you." Eliphaz did not know that it was a demon spirit, but it was a demon spirit. You say, "Brother Rogers, how do you know that it was demon spirit, and not an angel from the Lord?" I know, because, in the last part of this Book of Job, God took Eliphaz, and his two other friends, and said, "You have not spoken the thing that has come from me." This was not from God, and it was, indeed, a demon spirit.

I want you to jot these verses down in your margin—1 John 4, verse 1: "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (1 John 4:1). And, a false prophet is someone who is inspired by a demon spirit.

And, then again, put this scripture down—1 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 1: "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*" (1 Timothy 4:1)—doctrines of demons.

And so, what is the devil's first answer to Job's good question? It is an answer in the form of what I call satanic revelation—satanic revelation. And, there are so many people who are taking that route, the route of the occult, the route of spiritism, necromancy, séances, contact with the dead, astrology—which is the word of the stars as over against the Word of God—transcendental meditation, and the drug culture. All of these are forms of Satanic revelation.

You say, "Why do you say the drug culture?" Did you know that, in the New Testament, a sorcerer is an "enchanter with drugs"? The Bible warns against sorcery, but the word that is translated *sorcery* in our New Testament comes from the Greek word *pharmakeia*, which means "an enchanter with drugs." And, I believe that the devil has done such a tremendous job on this generation by destroying men's minds with drugs and, therefore, opening them up to satanic infestation.

As a matter of fact, David Wilkerson—and I don't buy everything that David Wilkerson has to say, but he's a man of God and my brother in Christ—but, David Wilkerson said this, as he dealt with many people who were Satan-worshippers—David Wilkerson said: "I have yet to see a man who was into Satan worship who did not, first of all, open his mind to mystical experiences through the use of drugs." You see, there's something about this mind-altering drug culture that opens the mind to a demonic invasion, and that's the reason the Bible calls it *sorcery. Drugs are instant heaven that leads to everlasting hell* . They are the devil's synthetic salvation.

And so, here, first of all, was a satanic revelation. Here, the devil was glad to give to Eliphaz some information that he hoped Eliphaz would pass on to Job, and to others, about how man can be right with God.

B. Sophisticated Reason

"Well," you say, "Brother Rogers, he'll never get me that way. I'm scared to death of the occult, and I wouldn't have anything to do with it." Or, "I don't believe in it," or whatever. That's true. Many of you will not be caught this way, and the devil knows that. So, he gives another answer to Job's question, "*How then can man be justified with God?*" (Job 25:4). He knows that he's not going to catch some of you with what I call satanic revelation, so he'll try to get others of you through what I call sophisticated reason—sophisticated reason.

Turn, if you will, now, to Job chapter 8, and we're going to find the advice, now, that another man gave to Job. This man's name was Bildad. Job chapter 8, and let's begin reading in verse 8. Now, here's what Bildad said to Job, and it sounds so good: "*For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)*"—that is, we're just here recently; we're not even dry behind the ears yet—" *shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*" (Job 8:8–10).

Now, what is Bildad saying? Bildad is saying, "Job, you want to learn the secret of life? Do you want to understand the mysteries of how to be right with God? Do you want to understand what it's all about, Job? Then go to the library, and blow the dust off of some of those books of history, and philosophy, and so forth, and study the accumulated wisdom of the ages."

That's what he's saying in verse 8. Look at it: "*For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.*" Verse 10: "*Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*" (Job 8:8–10). Now, there are a lot of people who are not going to be caught up in the occult; they're not going to be caught up in what I call satanic revelation. But, they are going to be caught up in what I call sophisticated reason. That is, they're going to go back, and study the philosophers;

they're going to study the great thinkers; and, they're going to say, "Surely, I need to learn from these people."

Now, I don't know who the fathers were in Job's time, and I don't know the philosophies that were extant in his time. So, let's look at our fathers, and let's look at the philosophies that are around us today, and you'll see how relevant this is. Now, you may not know it, or you may not understand it, but there are about five men who are ruling the world from their grave, five men who lived in the last century who are having a profound influence on this century.

And, your children, when they go to school, are having their minds molded by the thinking of these five men. And, it is a philosophy that is rooted in Hell. Who are these five men who rule the world from their graves? I just want you to jot them down. I don't have time to give a dissertation on them, but you need to be aware.

1. **Charles Darwin**

The first of these was a man named Charles Darwin. Charles Darwin was born in 1808, and he hatched out the egg that poisoned the scientific world. Now, Charles Darwin, of course, taught evolution. And, there's no way possible to calculate the damage that has been done through the evolutionary teachings of Charles Darwin and those who follow after him. We've said from this pulpit before, and we'll say it again: You teach people that they came from animals; they then begin to live like animals. And, that is exactly what is happening to us. An animal lives for self-preservation, self-propagation, and, self-gratification. And, that's what our generation, spurred on by the teachings of evolution, is living for. Now, Darwin and his teachings are influencing the minds and the lives of your children.

2. **Søren A. Kierkegaard**

The second of these fathers that I want us to notice is a man who has a strange name, but you need to be aware of his name. Soren A. Kierkegaard was born in 1813, and he hatched out the egg that poisoned the religious world. Now, Kierkegaard was the father of what we call today neo-orthodoxy, or existentialism. You say, "What on Earth does that mean?" Well, Kierkegaard taught there is nothing that you can say emphatically, "This is true." There is no absolute truth, no definite reason for anything. He would not say, "The Bible is the Word of God." He would say, "The Bible may contain the Word of God, as it speaks to you, if it is real to you, if it is relevant to you, if you have an existential experience with the Bible." And, what we would call *faith*, he called *a leap in the dark*. And, modern theology has been conformed to the thinking of Kierkegaard, and those who followed after him.

3. **Karl H. Marx**

The third man that I want to mention, not only Darwin and Kierkegaard, but Karl H.

Marx, who was born in 1818, hatched the egg that poisoned the political world. He was the father of what we call today communism. He taught that man was but the tool of *dialectical materialism*, and that man was not important, as such. And, because man was not important, as such, there are no moral absolutes. A thing is right, if it furthers communism. It is wrong, if it does not further communism. And, when asked about his goal in life, this is what Marx said: “It is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism. It is not religion that creates man, but man that creates religion. It”—religion—“is the opiate of the people.”

And, Marx and his followers have never swerved from their purpose to dethrone God, and to destroy capitalism, and to enthrone communism. And, I, for one, am distressed that, in our schools, communism is taught as one more of the methods of government, and one more of the methods of economics, but the evils of communism so many times are not taught. And, I want to say, because it is atheistic at the core, it is unspeakably immoral. And, I would to God that we would have, today, in our schools, the right things taught about communism. But, this is the third of these men ruling the world from his grave.

4. Sigmund Freud

Now, the fourth that I want to mention is a man named Sigmund Freud. He was born in 1856, and he had hatched out the egg that poisoned the psychological world. He was what we call the father of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud taught, basically, that the human race is motivated chiefly by pleasure, that everything starts and ends with sex. And that, if man is repressed by society, and his sexual desires, he will develop a neurosis. And so, he became the father of extreme permissiveness. “If it feels good, do it. And, if Junior wants to cut the leg off the dining room table, you keep the saw sharp, so it won’t frustrate his little psyche.”

You know, that’s the idea today that’s being taught: Just let that little rosebud unfold. And, the permissive society that we have today is rooted very deeply in the teachings of Sigmund Freud. And, he’s the one who poisoned, in many ways, the psychological world.

5. John Dewey

And then, there was John Dewey, the last of these five men that I want to mention— our fathers. He was born in 1859, and he hatched out the egg that poisoned the educational world. John Dewey was the father of progressive education, that taught that ideas and methods are more important than truth and fact.

And so, children go to school today, and they’re asked questions, and then, the answer they’re told: “Now, remember, there are no right and wrong answers. What does it seem to you? How do you feel about it?” And, we see the result, now, as we look at

this progressive education in music, and morals, and amusement, and art, and all of these things—the chaotic conditions. If you look at a piece of art, you can't tell whether it's a scrambled egg or a sunset.

Two little boys were walking through an art gallery. They were in the section where the modern art was, and one of them said to the other one, “Don't you think we'd better get out of here before somebody thinks we did it?”

Now, Bildad said to Job, “Now, Job, if you really want to learn, just go back to the library, blow the dust off some of those books, and enquire of the fathers. See what the accumulated wisdom of the ages is, and follow that.” I want to tell you what the accumulated wisdom of the last century has done for this century: It has sabotaged the Bible, and humanized God, and deified man, and minimized sin, and glorified greed, and glamorized sex, and liquorized society. That's what it's done.

C. Sterile Ritualism

Now, there's a third answer. There was someone else, and this man's name was Zophar. And, you see, the devil knew that some of you were not going to be caught by satanic revelation, and he knew that others of you were not going to be caught by sophisticated reasoning, so, he has a third plan, and it's what I call sterile ritualism—sterile ritualism.

Look, if you will, please, in Job 11, verse 13. Here was the advice of Zophar, and it sounds so good. Listen to it: *“If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear”* (Job 11:13–15). Now, this sounds like such good advice. Listen to it. What could be wrong with this?

First of all, there's preparing your heart. That's meditation. And then, secondly, you stretch out your hands. That's ceremony. And then, you put away sin. That's reformation. It all sounds so good, but it is all the religion of self-effort. And, I want to tell you, there are millions of people in America today who are trudging to church, Sunday after Sunday, doing those three things. They, dear friends, are going to church to meditate. They're going to church to go through ritual. They're going to church to turn over a new leaf, and put away sin, and, somehow, see what they can do to reform their lives. But, their hearts are still empty, because they've never had a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is form without substance. Paul talked about those who would have a form of godliness who would deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5). And, there's nothing deader than religion without Jesus Christ. I want to tell you, dear friend, that most of the people in America don't need religion. They've got that already. It was a religious crowd that crucified Jesus.

They need to turn from religion to Jesus Christ. They need a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. But, here was this man, Zophar, who said to Job, “Now, Job, if you’ll just go through meditation, ceremony, and reformation, that will be the answer.” But, Job knew that it wasn’t the answer. I like that part in “Rock of Ages Cleft for Me” that says,

*Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow, All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

—AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY

And so, Job knew that this wasn’t the answer. And, his heart is still crying out.

II. God’s Right Answer to the Question

So, I want you to see what Job said. Turn again to Job, chapter 9. This is where we started. Let’s go right back to it—Job chapter 9: “*Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*” (Job 9:1–2). And then, I want you to see Job’s reasoning. Go over to verse 32, if you will, of that same chapter—Job says, “*For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us*”—now, let’s just slow right down here and park for a moment. Look at that word *daysman*. It’s a word we don’t use much today. Our modern word is *mediator*. It means precisely the same thing. So, just write down there in your margin somewhere: “Neither is there any *mediator* betwixt us”—“*that might lay his hand upon us both*” (Job 9:32–33).

Now, Job says, “I want to be right with God, but He’s so holy. And, I’m so sinful. And, He’s not a man like I am, that I can talk with Him and fellowship with Him.” And, he said, “There’s no mediator between us, that He might lay His hand upon us both.” Now, you know who Job’s heart was crying out for, don’t you? You know who Job was anticipating? The Lord Jesus Christ. For the Bible says, in the New Testament, “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5). You see, Job wants a mediator.

Now, our city recently has been going through labor negotiations in several places. And, when labor and management get together, what do they do? They get some mediators, right? And, these people, they are supposed to act as a representative of labor and management, and settle the whole thing. Well, a mediator has a real job to do because he has to, in a sense, be able to represent both sides; especially, when it goes into mediation. Sometimes, of course, these people are not willing for things to go into mediation. But, a mediator is a man who is supposed to represent both sides. He’s supposed to be fair, really, to both sides.

Now, suppose there are a king and a beggar, and the king and the beggar have a

controversy. And so, they decide to get a mediator. And so, the king says, "All right. I know another king over here in a country next door to ours. I'll get that king to come over, and I'll let him be the mediator." That beggar says, "Oh, no. You two kings would never understand what it's like to be a beggar. No, sir." And, the king says, "Well, what do you want to do?" The beggar says, "Well, I know another beggar who works the street corner where I work. We'll let him be the mediator." And, the king says, "No, you two beggars will never gang up on me. No, sir. I know what you'd do to me. You see, isn't there someone who could lay his hand upon us both?"

You see, a mediator has to be qualified. And then, not only does he have to be qualified to be able to represent both sides, but he has to be accepted by both sides. He has to be accepted by either side in order to be the right kind of a mediator. Only Jesus, dear friend, is qualified. Jesus is the one that God has sent to be the mediator between God and man. He and He alone is qualified.

You see, dear friends, there is a chasm and a gap between God and man. Over here on this side of the chasm is Holy God, the thrice-Holy God of Israel. And, over here on this side of the chasm is sinful man. And, there is a chasm eroded by centuries of sin. Now, Holy God is over here, and He loves man. And, sinful man is over here, and he needs God. And, man is instinctively religious. So, man says, "I will build a bridge from my side to that side." And so, man starts to build, with his man-made religion, a bridge. He may be building the bridge of demonism, or humanism, or ritualism. It may be a bridge built on satanic revelation, or sophisticated reason, or sterile ritual. But, he's building a bridge. But, all of these bridges have two things in common. They're all made of corruptible materials, and, sooner or later, they all fall under their own weight, and everybody who tries to cross them falls into the chasm. Now, that's man's effort to bridge this gap.

On the other side is Holy God. And, God sees the pitiful plight of sinful man, as he tries to bridge that gap. And so, God decides He will do something. And, God gets a mediator. And so, on this one side of the chasm, God builds a foundation of the humanity of Christ. And, on this side of the chasm, God builds a foundation of the deity of Christ; for Jesus is both God and man.

I want you to understand this: He was both God and man at the same time. As much God as though He were not man at all, and as much man as though He were not God at all. Not half God and half man; not all man and no God; not all God and no man; but the God-Man. Never been another like Him. He was the God-Man. "*Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh*" (1 Timothy 3:16). And so, on this chasm that separates Holy God and sinful man, God puts down the foundation of the deity of Christ, and the humanity of Christ.

And, there upon that foundation, with the rough, hewn timbers of a cross, He builds

a bridge. And, that cross becomes a bridge. And, Jesus becomes the Mediator. That's the reason we sing:

*I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
There's no other way but this;
I shall ne'er get sight of the Gates of Light,
If the way of the cross I miss.*

—JESSIE BROWN POUND

And, those who travel from the side of sinful man to Holy God can only come through Jesus, who said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6).

And, when Job said, *"Neither is there any daysman...that he might lay his hand upon us both"* (Job 9:33), Job's heart was crying out for the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Mediator between God and men. And, I want to tell you that Jesus Christ is the only way that you can come to God. *"How then can man be justified with God?"* (Job 25:4)—be just with God? Only through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the one Mediator between God and man.

Conclusion

Let's bow our heads together in prayer.

Can God Be Trusted in Your Troubles?

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: May 30, 1999

Main Scripture Text: Job 13:15

*“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:
but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”*

JOB 13:15

Outline

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Conclusion

Introduction

Take your Bibles; find the Book of Job—you’ll find Job just before the Book of Psalms—and turn to the 13th chapter of the Book of Job. And, we’re going to look at one verse and then many other verses in the book, but this is the verse that sets the tone for what I have to say today. You know, all of us have trouble. Most of us think we have more trouble than we really have, and most of us think we’re having more trouble than other people are having. But, few, if any—perhaps none—have ever had the trouble that a man named Job had. And, in the midst of his troubles, his sorrows, his difficulties, his perplexities, his heart brokenness, his consternation, his bewilderment, he makes one incredible statement, and here it is in Job chapter 13 and verse 15: Job says, concerning Jehovah, *“Though he slay me”—“though he slay me”—“yet will I trust in him”* (Job 13:15). Now, the title of the message is “Can God be Trusted in Your Troubles?” All of us know that God is necessary; we know we could not exist without Him. I hope

you know that. But, that's not really the greatest question. Not only, "Is God necessary?"—the great question is, "Is God enough?" And, we all know that God brings blessings, but we have to admit also that God allows troubles. Now, can God be trusted with our troubles?

You know what the devil thinks? The devil thinks that any body who serves God without some ulterior motive is a fool. Just go back to the first part of this book; go back to Job chapter 1, and look, if you will, in the first three verses: *"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed"*—that means "had turned from"—*"evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man"*—now, here's a big statement—*"this man was the greatest of all the men of the east"* (Job 1:1–3). Now, he was the big shot. Spiritually, he was a great man. Financially, he was a great man. Domestically, he was a great man.

But, the devil is suspicious of the motives of Job. The devil says, "Well, now wait a minute—the only reason that Job serves God is that God has been so good to him, God has bribed him, and God has bought him off." Skip on down to verse 6, and you'll see this: *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and"*—watch this—*"Satan came also among them"*—did you know Satan is called, in the Bible, *"the accuser of [the] brethren"* (Revelation 12:10)? And so, the angelic creatures are coming to present themselves, and along came Satan—*"And the LORD said unto Satan"*—and, by the way, the word *Satan* means "adversary"—*"Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it"*—and, by the way, he's still doing that today, isn't he?—*"And the LORD said unto 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?"*—now, watch verse 9—*"Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?"*—that is, "God, isn't there some ulterior motive, that he serves You?" Then, verse 10—*"Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land"* (Job 1:6–10).

Now, here is a challenge that Satan throws into the face of God concerning Job: *"But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face"* (Job 1:11). "God, he doesn't really love You. He doesn't really care about You. He's not really trusting You. You've just bought him off; You've bribed him. He doesn't even know what trouble is. You've put a hedge around him. I know there's a hedge around him because I've been trying to get through that hedge, and You won't let me." Satan

says, “You just let me at him. Let me give him some industrial-strength problems. Let me hurt him. Let me put him into darkness. Let me cause him loss, and suffering, and pain. God, I’ll tell You how much he loves You. He’ll spit in Your face; he will curse You to Your face.”

And, notice verse 12: *“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD”* (Job 1:12). Now, Satan, we’re going to see, is going to cause incredible trouble for this man Job. And, finally, after all of this trouble, Job says, *“Though he slay me”*—*“though he slay me”*—*“yet will I trust in him”* (Job 13:15). Now, the devil said, “God, he loves You because... He loves You because—because You’ve been good to him, because You’ve given him riches, because You’ve given to him children, because You’ve put a hedge around him. That’s the kind of love he has for You: ‘because love.’”

And, by the way, that’s the weakest kind of love, isn’t it? You say to your wife, “I love you because you’re beautiful.” Or, you say to your husband, “I love you because you provide for me.” Well, what if he loses his job, or she loses her beauty? You see, that kind of love can be threatened, and that’s the kind of love that Satan thought that Job had for God. “You love Him because...” “Take away the ‘because,’ and he won’t love You anymore.” And, by the way, let me just say parenthetically and incidentally here, that if you’re expressing love to your children, to your wife, to your husband, to any body that you truly love, take the *because*s out of it, and just say, “I love you. I love you—not for what you have or for what you’ve done, but I love you for who you are.”

Now, the devil could not believe that Job loved God for who God is: “There has to be some ulterior motive.” And, the world is that way. You know what the world will say? “Well, that man just goes to church for business reasons,” or, “That man is in the ministry just for what he can get out of it,” or whatever. You see, the devil—he’s full of that kind of a lie—that no one can simply love God simply because he loves God. And so, the Book of Job is going to show that God, in Himself, not only is necessary, but God Himself is enough, that we can love God and trust God even in the midst of our problems.

Now, here are three questions that I want to ask you, and if you can answer “yes” to those questions, you have the same kind of faith that old Job had.

I. Can You Trust God When You Are Submerged in Suffering?

Question number one: Can God be trusted when you are submerged in suffering? Can God be trusted when you are submerged in suffering? Now, remember what Job said: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”* (Job 13:15).

A. Job Lost His Fortune

Job suffered incredible loss. Beginning in about verse 13 (we're in chapter 1): *"And there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee"* (Job 1:13–15). That is, first of all, Job had lost his finances. He had all of these things—his animals, his flocks, his herds. He was a rancher, and in one fell swoop, they were all taken away. Now, if, tomorrow morning, you wake up a pauper, if the crash market—if the stock market crashes—and goes to the bottom, and you have everything in stocks and bonds, and your so-called "fortune" is gone, can you still trust God? Can you? Well, I hope so. Job became bankrupt overnight. There was the loss of finances. That's chapter 1, verses 13 through 17 (Job 1:13–17).

B. Job Lost His Family

And then, right on the heel of that, not only the loss of finances; he lost his family. Look, if you will, in verse 18 of chapter 1, and you're going to see what else happened: *"While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee"* (Job 1:18–19). Remember the tornado that hit Dell City, Oklahoma; Moore, Oklahoma? A great tornado like that from the hand of Satan hit the home where Job's kids were, and they were blown into eternity. I mean, the entire house fell in upon Job's family.

C. Job Lost His Fitness

Now, Job's lost his finances; and then, right on the back of it—back to back, heel to toe—he now loses not only his fortune; he loses his family. But, the devil is not finished with him yet. He's going to also lose his fitness; he's going to lose his health. Go to chapter 2, and look, if you will, in verse 4: *"And Satan answered the LORD, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life"* (Job 2:4–6). And now, Job is covered from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet with great huge ulcers and boils that wrack his body with fever and pain. His body is consumed with infection—infections that erupt with such purification that Job goes out on the ash heap, and takes a broken piece of pottery, and begins to scrape away the substance that oozes from his boils. Can you imagine—just covered—not with one painful boil—but from the top of his

head to his feet? He has lost his fortune; he has lost his family. Now, he has lost his fitness, and the devil's not finished with him yet.

D. Job Lost His Face

Now, he has three friends who come—his comforters—to speak with him and to try to give him comfort. Some comforters they are! I want you to hear what one of them said. You might look in chapter 4 and verse 7: and this was a man named Eliphaz, and he says, *“Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?”* (Job 4:7). That is, “Job, you old rascal, what have you been doing wrong? Nobody ever suffered like this who was innocent. Righteous people have never had God turn their back on them. Old Job has a secret sin. If old Job had been doing right, none of this would have happened.” You see, what he lost—he lost his fortune; he lost his family; he lost his fitness; and now, he loses his face. What I mean is this: that even his reputation... And, all of us are grateful for our reputation. What if your reputation were taken away from you? What if you'd done nothing wrong, and everybody thought you did? What if people are criticizing you and blaming you?

You see, there are a lot of people who have that philosophy today. They're some of the people who will get on television—I call them the “joy boys.” They get on television, and they have this message: “If you get right with God, you're going to be healthy; you're going to be wealthy. It's cash, comfort, Cadillacs, key to Fort Knox—you'll have it all, just, by the way, send me a little money. Send me a little money, but you can have it all.” There's a lot of that going on. Have you noticed that? Have you noticed that? The idea, the philosophy, is that the only reason you suffer is that you've done wrong. You can just get right, and believe God, and have anything you want. There's just one thing wrong with that philosophy: it ain't so—it ain't so. Some of God's choicest of saints have suffered.

But, here's old Job, but Job has lost it, folks. I mean, he is submerged in suffering. He's become bankrupt. His kids die in a tornado. His body is infected with a horrible disease. And then, on top of that, everybody's saying, “I wonder what he did wrong”—“I wonder what he did wrong.” Well now, in the midst of all that, Job praises God and gives God the glory. Can you do that? Can you do that? Can you trust God—can you trust God—when you are submerged in suffering? Now, don't think that faith is the way to get out of suffering; faith may be a way to endure suffering.

Put a bookmark there in Job—the Book of Job—and turn to the Book of Hebrews—would you please?—for just a moment. Turn to Hebrews chapter 13—Hebrews chapter 13...excuse me, chapter 11—Hebrews chapter 11. In Hebrews chapter 11, God gives a roll call of the heroes of the faith—those people who did incredible things by faith. And, like most preachers, He's running out of time; and so, He begins to collapse and just give little vignettes, little snapshots, of victories. And, He says, beginning in verse 32—I

mean, He's been going for 31 verses; and now, He comes to verse 32, and He says, *"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me"*—see, I told you—*"for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets"*—and then, He tells what they did by faith—*"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again"* (Hebrews 11:32–35). Boy, if that's all I read, I'd say, "Sign me up. Boy, if that's what the Christian faith is, sign me up. Looks to me like it's all honey and no bees."

But now, wait a minute—in verse 36, there is a change. Just underscore this phrase: *"and others"*—*"and others."* Now, look at this: *"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawed asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth"*—"well," you say, "what did they do wrong?" Well, let's continue to read—*"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith"* (Hebrews 11:36–39)—"a good report." They hadn't done anything wrong—not one thing wrong. We think of all of those who escaped, and we say, "How did they escape?" Well, they were given faith to escape. We think of the others who endured. How did they endure? They were given faith to endure. Some had faith to escape; some had faith to endure. Others were delivered. Some were delivered, and some died. Do you have faith to be delivered? I'm happy for you. Do you have faith to die? I wonder.

What am I trying to say? I'm just simply saying, folks, that you can have faith and calamity all at the same time. Faith does not mean that you are going to escape always. *Faith is not receiving from God what you want; faith is accepting from God what He gives.* Now, the question, again, is this: Can you trust God when you are submerged in suffering? There are some who are listening to me through television. Perhaps you're so sick and shut in that you can't even get out of the house, and the only way that you can worship is through television. Can you say with Job today, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust...him"* (Job 13:15)? If you can—if you can—you will shut the devil's mouth.

You see, the devil just thinks, "Let those Christians have a little trouble, let them have some persecution, let them have some bankruptcy, let one of their children die, let them have some greedy malady that consumes their body, let them have those kind of troubles—and then, let people blame them for doing wrong when they haven't done anything in the world wrong. They'll curse God." But, old Job said, "I'm not going to curse Him; I'm going to praise Him." Job said, *"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath*

taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). Now folks, I want to tell you, we’re doing something; we’re beat, right now. Look in chapter 1, verse 20: *“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD”*—now, watch this—*“In all of this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly”* (Job 1:20–22).

II. Can You Trust God When You Are Forsaken by Your Friends?

Now, here’s the second question. First question is, “Can God be trusted when I am submerged in suffering, or when you are submerged in suffering?” Here’s the second question: Can God be trusted when you are forsaken by friends—when you’re forsaken by friends? Now, it is one thing to be submerged in suffering, but what about when we suffer and there’s nobody there with us to suffer with us—there’s nobody there who really cares? As I said, Job had three friends, three comforters. But, what kind of comforters were they? Ultimately, we’re going to see all they did was to come and give platitudes, and to critique him, and to criticize him. They weren’t really friends at all.

Turn to Job chapter 19. Go back to the Book of Job; turn to Job chapter 19, and look what poor Job had to say in verse 14: Job said, *“My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me”* (Job 19:14). Can you trust God when you’re forsaken of friends? *“My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me”* (Job 19:14). And then, look in Job 19, verse 19: *“All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me”* (Job 19:19). Am I talking to somebody who’s going through that, right now? Has your husband forsaken you? Have your children abandoned you? Has a friend that you’ve trusted turned on you—perhaps, a business associate? The devil says, “Yes, let that happen to him. God, he’ll curse You to Your face.” But, that wasn’t true for Job.

I thank God for friends; friends are wonderful. But, what happens when your friends don’t understand—when you’re in trouble, and nobody seems to understand? And, by the way, they cannot understand, because they didn’t know any more about what was happening than old Job did. Job was completely in the dark, and so were they in the dark. And, they... Perhaps even worse than suffering physically is to have friends to forsake you; there’s probably not a deeper hurt than this.

Put these verses in the margin. Psalm 41, verse 9: *“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me”* (Psalm 41:9). That was a prophecy of what Judas would do to the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, the psalmist said in Psalm 55, verses 12 through 14: *“For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did*

magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" (Psalm 55:12–14). Think about it. Here's Job's best friends. Here's Job in his deepest need, and his friends have just turned their backs on him. It's like old Paul was in the Philippian jail, and Paul, needing some comfort, had to say, *"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world"* (2 Timothy 4:10).

Now, that can happen to you. Perhaps I'm talking to some preacher, right now, and your church just turned on you. Perhaps the pulpit committee that called you to the church now wants you to leave, and the reason is you're just preaching the gospel. Don't think that, if you preach the gospel, the world's going to love you. The same world that hated Jesus is going to hate you. You can get in trouble preaching the gospel. Sometimes your closest associates—the people you take counsel with in the house of God—will turn against you. That's what happened when... Preacher, listen, you'd better trust God when friends forsake you.

It can happen to kids at school. You can go to school, some of you students... Now, I know that you think this doesn't happen, but it does. A student will go to school, and he'll have his best buddies at church and his friends at church. And, they laugh, and they're in the youth group together and all this. And then, at school, you take a stand for what is right—there's some event that's put on by the school, and you say, "I don't think a Christian ought to go. I don't think a Christian ought to attend." And so, you take a stand for God, and all your friends leave you—all your friends leave you; they forsake you. In business, it can happen. You can take a stand for righteousness, and your business partner will turn against you and perhaps undercut you.

Now, the question is, can you trust God when you're submerged in suffering? Can you trust God when you're forsaken by friends? Did you know that even Job's wife turned against him in Job chapter 2, verses 9 and 10? *"Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not, Job did not sin with his lips"* (Job 2:9–10). His wife comes in there. I can... Old Job is suffering. He's right down there, sitting on the ash heap. She comes in; she says, "Just look at you. Look what God has done to you. Job, why don't you just curse God and die?" Now, this is his wife! You know what he says to her? He says, "Woman, are you crazy? You're speaking like one of the foolish women. Woman, are you crazy? I don't understand this, but I tell you one thing: I am trusting God, and I will not deny..." When she said, "Curse God and die," do you know what she was doing? She was doing the work of the devil. That's exactly what the devil said that Job would do.

Now, the question is this: When everybody else turns their backs on you, when nobody understands, when friends forsake you—not only are you suffering, but you may be suffering alone—can you trust God? If you can, you’ve shut the devil’s mouth—if you can, you’ve shut the devil’s mouth, if you will say, *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust...him”* (Job 13:15).

III. Can You Trust God When You Are Dismayed by Darkness?

Now, here’s the third question. First question: Can you trust God when you’re submerged in suffering? Second question: Can you trust God when you’re forsaken by friends? Third question is perhaps even harder: Can you trust God when you are dismayed by darkness—when you are dismayed by darkness? Now remember, you understand why all of this was happening. I mean, you read the first chapter of the Book of Job; you understand there’s a contest here, and Satan has slandered the character of God and slandered the character of Job. And, you understand that God is allowing Job to be tested—not to show that Job would fall, but to show that Job would not. You understand that, but Job didn’t understand that. Job had not read the Book of Job. He did not understand all of this. He is in absolute darkness. He hasn’t got a clue what is happening to him.

I mean, it’s like tomorrow morning—if you wake up, and everything went wrong. I mean everything—tomorrow morning, you become bankrupt; tomorrow morning, your children die; tomorrow morning, you get some disease, and everybody’s pointing a finger at you of accusation. I mean, tomorrow morning—it happened just like that to this man. And then, all of his friends leave him, and his wife says, “Why don’t you just die?” And, he doesn’t know what on earth is going on. He is in darkness.

Look, if you will, in chapter 23 of Job; just turn to chapter 23, verses 1 through 5: *“Then Job answered and said, Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning”—*he says, “I’m not even groaning compared to the way I feel”—*“Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!”—*and, the word *seat* means “throne” here—*“I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me”* (Job 23:1–5). What Job is saying is, “God, I’d like to talk to You. I’ve got some questions for You; they’re welling up within me. God, You owe me some answers. What is going on?”

Look in chapter 23, verses 8 and 9: Job says, *“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him”* (Job 23:8–9). Here’s old Job—I mean, in the darkest of suffering. “Maybe God’s over here? No, He’s not over here. Maybe He’s back here? No, He’s not over here. Maybe He’s

over here? No, He's not there. Maybe He's over here? God, where are You? Where are You, God? I don't understand, God. What is going on? I sure would like to talk to You, God. I want to know. Tell me why." As a pastor, I've been asked that question so many times: "Why, Pastor, why? Why?" And, I can't answer the question, "Why?" because "Why?" is God's question. "How?" is our question: How are we going to react? God doesn't tell us the *whys*. You're going to find that many of God's saints have gone into darkness—I mean, deep darkness—and they've not known why.

Put in your margin "Isaiah 50." Turn to Isaiah 50—turn to it. If you're in darkness right now, if you're saying, "God, You owe me some answers," turn to Isaiah chapter 50. Isaiah asked a great question here in Isaiah chapter 50, verses 10 and 11: "*Who is among you that feareth the LORD*"—well, that's good, isn't it, to fear God? Yes—"*that obeyeth the voice of his servant*"—that's good, isn't it, to obey God? But now, what's the next thing?—"*that walketh in darkness*"—wait a minute, that doesn't seem to fit. A person who fears God and obeys God; and yet, he's walking in darkness and hath no light—not even a little? Well, what does God say to do?—"*let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God*"—you know what it means to lean upon God? A "stay" is a staff. His rod and his staff—he's talking about leaning upon God. What do you do when you're in darkness? Look in verse 11—"*Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow*" (Isaiah 50:10–11). What's he saying? When you're in darkness, don't light your own fire—don't light your own fire. You can be serving God, fearing God, obeying God, and darkness can come.

Now, what is darkness? Darkness is merely the absence of light. The only way there can be darkness is for the light to be withdrawn. Who is the light? God—God—is the light. And so, sometimes God may just back off and leave His servant in darkness. If you will read biographies of great Christians, almost all of them will talk about something they call "the dark night of the soul." I mean, they're serving God; they're loving God. And then, things come—perplexities. They can't understand.

Habakkuk was one of these. Read the Book of Habakkuk. Habakkuk saw things that he just couldn't understand. He said, "God, how can You do this? Why are You doing this, God? I just don't understand."

John the Baptist—Jesus said, "Not a greater was born among woman than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11). And, John the Baptist got put in a prison by old Herod, and he's down there in such darkness. He can't understand what's going on. He's the one who said, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). He's the one of whom Jesus said, "Not a greater was born of woman than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11). He's a prophet, but more than a prophet. But, John the

Baptist got into such darkness he sent for his servants, and he said, “You go ask that man Jesus—is He really the Messiah or should we look for somebody else?” That’s John—I mean, in darkness.

The Apostle Paul—the great Apostle Paul—said, on one occasion, “*We are perplexed*”—but, thank God, he said—“*but not in despair, but not in despair* (2 Corinthians 4:8). There’s going to come a time when all your theology will go upside down. There’s going to come a time when you won’t understand where God is; you’re going to be in such darkness you won’t see your hand in front of your face. You know what you do then? Isaiah says, “Just stay upon your God and trust Him. Trust Him.” “*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*” (Job 13:15).

Can you trust God when you’re submerged in sorrow? Can you trust God when you’re forsaken by friends? Can you trust God when you are dismayed by darkness and you don’t even know what’s happened? Perhaps if you knew why you were suffering and why you were forsaken, then perhaps you could deal with it. Well, if you can, you’ll shut the devil’s mouth.

Let me just draw this to a conclusion. God finally does answer Job—at least, He speaks to Job, but He didn’t answer one of Job’s questions. Go to chapter 38, and look at it. He’s going to teach Job three things.

A. The Sovereignty of God

First of all, He’s going to teach Job about His own sovereignty. Chapter 38, verses 1 through 7: “*Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*”—“Job, you’re just talking; you don’t even know what you’re saying—“*Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*” (Job 38:1–7). “Job, sit down. I want to ask you some questions, son. Job, were you here when I made everything? Job, when I created this universe, when I flung this world out into space, when I fashioned it all, were you there? Do you understand, Job?” Well, friend, the scientists today with their Hubbell telescope are still trying to figure out the same thing. And, they’ve not figured it out, and Job’s not figured it out; and you won’t figure it out. And, there are some things that God knows when nobody else knows. Isn’t that true? And, what God is saying to Job—“Job, when I did all this, did I ask your advice? Were you My instructor?” He’s saying to Job, “Look, Job, I have a right to do as I wish.” And, in your trouble, you better learn the sovereignty of God.

B. The Sufficiency of God

Something else he learned—he learned the sufficiency of God. Finally, when he sees God in a new light—Job chapter 42, verses 5 and 6—he says this great statement in the Book of Job: *“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee”* (Job 42:5). What does he mean by that? He said, “Listen, I’ve gone from mere theology to personal relationship through this trouble.” The time when God will be the nearest, and the dearest, and the most precious to you is when you’re submerged in suffering, forsaken by friends, and dismayed by darkness. God alone is not only necessary, but at that time, God will be enough.

C. The Sympathy of God

And then, finally, he learned not only the sovereignty of God, and not only did he learn of the sufficiency of God, but he learned the sympathy of God. The book ends this way—Job 42, verses 10 through 13: *“And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends”—and, God will turn your captivity, too, friend—“also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been his acquaintances before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep”—that’s twice as many—“and six thousand camels”—that’s twice as many—“and a thousand yoke of oxen”—that’s twice as many—“and a thousand she asses”* (Job 42:10–12)—that’s twice as many.

But, watch this: *“He had also seven sons and three daughters”* (Job 42:10–13). Now, wait a minute—how come He didn’t give him 14 sons and six daughters? He’s got twice as much of everything else. I’ll tell you why: he never lost his sons and daughters. They just went to Heaven. I’ve got a little boy in Heaven. I haven’t lost him; I know where he is. Somebody talked to the late great Vance Havner and said, “I’m sorry that you lost your wife.” He said, “I haven’t lost her. I know where she is.”

Death can hide, but it cannot divide.

They are but on Christ’s other side.

They with Him, and He with us

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

That’s what it’s all about, folks.

Conclusion

Friend, listen to me: *“Man that is born of woman is...full of trouble”* (Job 14:1). Thank God for His blessings. He blessed Job. “God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His

servants” (Psalm 35:27), but you’d better get the faith of old Job and say, “*Though he slay me, yet will I trust...him*” (Job 13:15), okay? Okay. There’s a song—I love the song, Brother Jim—“When Answers Aren’t Enough, There’s Jesus”—“There’s Jesus.” Sooner or later, you’re going to have to have the faith of Job; you’re going to say, “*The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*” (Job 1:21). “Well,” you say, “I don’t think I want to be a Christian if I’m going to have all that trouble.” My precious friend, you’re going to have trouble anyway. “*Man that is born of woman is...full of trouble*” (Job 14:1). We’re the ones who have the answer in the Lord Jesus Christ, amen? Amen.

Bow your heads in prayer. Father God, I pray that You’ll give us the faith of old Job, and You’ll teach us, Lord, to trust You in our troubles. And Lord, I pray—I sincerely pray, Lord—that many in this building today will come to know Jesus.

Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. How many can say today, “Pastor Rogers, I know that I know by the grace of God, and by the Word of God, and by the witness of the Spirit that if I should die today, I’d go straight to Heaven. I have a Bible reason for knowing it”? May I see your hand? Hold it up high. Thank God for that. Now, take it down.

If you could not lift your hand, let me talk to you. I believe you’d be saying, “Pastor, if I can know it, I would like to know it.” I don’t think you’d be here in the house of worship if you were not concerned about it. Well, you can know it, because salvation is a gift. There’s nothing to earn. There’s no requirement except that you bring your sin to Him. And, we’re all sinners. If you’ll come to Him in repentance and faith, He’ll save you. And, the Bible says, “*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life*” (1 John 5:13). You can know it today by receiving Christ.

Would you pray a prayer like this: “Dear God, I acknowledge that I’m a sinner. My sin deserves judgment. I need mercy. Jesus, You paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. Thank You for being my substitute. Thank You for taking my place. I now repent of my sin. I turn to You, Jesus. I receive You now into my heart as my Lord and Savior. I don’t ask for a sign; I don’t look for a feeling. I stand on Your Word. And, with all of my heart, I trust You. Come into my life. Forgive my sin. Save me, Jesus”?

Did you pray that? Then, pray this: “Thank You for doing it. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be. Give me the courage to make it public, this morning. I will not deny You, because You died for me. In Your name I pray. Amen.”