

Getting Into The Promised Land Without Falling Asleep In Leviticus

16. Job

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**A Teaching Commentary
of the Old Testament**

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1 Introduction

Thus far our study of the Old Testament has been organized around a historical flow. We looked at Genesis, then the Wilderness Books, then Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, then the United Monarchy and the Divided Kingdoms, and last the Exile and Post-Exilic Period. In the process, we skipped the book of Job. The reason that we skipped it is that it does not fit naturally into the historical flow. Nobody is positive who wrote it or when. The things that it teaches are ageless and not tied to a particular time in history. It is generally believed that Job lived in the time of the patriarchs and was perhaps a contemporary of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. The book is very old, perhaps having been written before Genesis. None of that is very pertinent to the study of Job, however.

Job is one of the greatest pieces of literature from ancient times. It deals with the questions of man's suffering and God's sovereignty. It is a mixture of poetry and prose, of narrative and dialogue. It begins with an introductory narrative section, followed by an introductory speech by Job. Next there are three rounds of speeches – dialogue between Job and three of his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Towards the end, another man named Elihu appears and speaks. Then God appears and addresses Job and his friends. Job replies to God. Then there is a narrative conclusion.

1.1 Introduction and Job's First Test

Job 1

Job was a wealthy individual. He had 10 children. He had a good life. He was devoted to God and righteous in the way he lived.

Verse 1:6 says "One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them." This verse is one that is commonly used to demonstrate that Satan was a fallen angel. Notice, however, that he is subject to God. Throughout the book of Job, Satan can do no more than he has permission to do. Even though Satan is in rebellion against God and he will be dealt with properly for his activities in the end, God is able to use Satan to test his people.

Satan indicates that he has been roaming the earth doing his Satan thing. God asks him if he has observed Job, a truly righteous man. Satan replies that Job is only faithful to God because God has built a hedge around him and provided him with everything his heart desires. If life was not so sweet for Job he would not be such a faithful servant.

God gives Satan permission to take away his possessions but not to hurt him physically. Then in a whirlwind of events, his livestock all die, his children are all killed, etc. All the possessions that gave him comfort were taken from him. Job's response was grief but still he said (verse 1:21) "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."

1.2 Job's Second Test

Job 2

There is another meeting in heaven and again Satan is there. Again God asks him what he has been doing and Satan replies that he has been roaming throughout the earth. Again God asks him if he has seen Job, that he is righteous even though Satan has been allowed to take away all

his possessions. Satan replied that a man will do anything to preserve his flesh. Strike his flesh and he will not be so good any more. God gives Satan permission to strike him physically but not to take his life.

Satan strikes Job with body sores from head to toe. Job is in intense pain and spends his days sitting around scraping his sores with pieces of pottery. Still he remains righteous and upright and devoted to God. In 2:9-10, Job gets the first of his bad advice from those close to him:

His wife said to him, "Are you still holding onto your integrity? Curse God and die!"

He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Then three of Job's friends arrived, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Namathite. They had heard that Job was having a hard time so they came to comfort him. When they approached him and saw his condition, they were astonished and dumbfounded. They began to weep and mourn and they sat on the ground with him for seven days without saying a word.

1.3 Job's First Speech

Job 3

In chapter 3, Job speaks. The gist of what he says is "I wish I had never been born or had died in infancy." Job is not saying that God has no right to let this happen to him. He is not calling God unjust. The simple fact is that he is in a great deal of misery. He sees death as a rest and rather than fearing death he longs for it. He does say in verse 23 that God has hedged him in, indicating that he perceives this misery to come from God.

2 The First Round of Speeches

2.1 Eliphaz Speaks

Job 4-5

Chapters 4 and 5 contain a speech by Eliphaz. In essence he says the following:

- (4:1-6) Job is a good man who has always been a help to other people. He is having trouble now. Still he is holding onto hope and confidence because he believes himself to be pious and blameless.
- (4:7-11) Bad things are not supposed to happen to good people. When hard times come, they are judgment for wrong doings.
- (4:12-21) Eliphaz gets an image from some spiritual source, which may well be demonic. Verse 17 contains a word that is a bit difficult to translate. Its rendering in the NIV may not be the best. "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?" The word than can be translated before or even by and those translations may make the verse a bit more readable. Anyway, verses 17-21 portray God as some angry judgmental tyrant who does not trust his angels, much less man.

- (5:1-7) These verses portray Job's lament to God as the lament of a fool. Remember Eliphaz's theology says that the only reason these things could be happening to Job is that he has done something wrong and is being judged by God, the angry tyrant. There is no way for Job to be made righteous before God and he is getting his just reward for whatever it is that he did. That is why his house was cursed (v.3), his children were killed (v. 4), his harvest is gone (v. 5), etc.
- (5:8-27) Eliphaz tells Job to go throw himself on the mercy of the court. Admit his sin to God and let the other side of God – the merciful side – come into play. Eliphaz's message has a great deal of truth mixed with error. He says in verses 17-18, "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal." In fact, God does discipline and he does heal. What Eliphaz did not understand is that hard times are not necessarily discipline; they are not necessarily a sign of judgment or punishment.

2.2 Job Replies

Job 6-7

Job replies to Eliphaz.

- (6:1-7) His complaining is a result of the tremendous anguish and pain that he is experiencing.
- (6:8-13) He just wishes God would let him die. Then he would have the joy of dying knowing that he had never denied the words of the Holy One. After all, he has no hope and thus no reason to patiently endure this suffering.
- (6:14-23) At a time like this, he should have the comfort of his friends to help but instead he has undependable people surrounding him.
- (6:24-30) He tells his friends that if they think he has really been wrong and committed some sin, they should show him. Otherwise they should quit accusing him because his integrity is at stake.
- (7:1-6) We are not in control in this life. We are appointed times of success and times of suffering. He is in his time of suffering. His body is broken and wounded. His days bring no hope.
- (7:7-21) He asks God to remember that his life is a breath and he will soon be gone. That is why he must cry out to God. He does not understand why God is doing all of this to him. What purpose does it serve? If he has sinned, he wants to know what he has done. He asks how he became such a burden to God. If he did sin, he asks God to pardon him and let him die.

2.3 Bildad Speaks

Job 8

Bildad responds with words harsher than those of Eliphaz.

- (8:1) He asks Job how long he is going to go on like this.

- (8:2) In complaining to God, Job is accusing him of perverting justice and God does not do that.
- (8:3) God killed Job's children because of their sin.
- (8:4-6) He says that if Job were really blameless as he claimed to be, he could ask God and God would rouse himself and restore Job to his rightful place.
- (8:7) Job will be even more prosperous than before once he has righted things with God..
- (8:8-10) Look to history and the body of knowledge passed on by former generations. It would support Bildad's view.
- (8:11-19) Just as plants with no water will wither away and die, so is the fate of those forget God. They and their hope will perish.
- (8:20-22) God does not reject blameless men and he does not strengthen evildoers. If Job was blameless as he claimed to be, God would take care of him.

Note a couple of things. Bildad heaps salt upon Job's wounds. He is bound to be mourning for the loss of his children. Bildad says, "Oh well, they deserved it." Remember that Job had been faithful to offer sacrifices for the unknown sins of his children (1:5).

Eliphaz had appealed to a revelation from some spirit for his source of knowledge. Bildad appeals to history and "common knowledge."

2.4 Job Replies

Job 9-10

Job responds to Bildad in chapter 9 and 10. Bildad and Eliphaz had presented an erroneous picture of God as one who consistently punishes evil people and guards good people. Job begins to err on the other side and accuses God of injustice. His speech may be summarized as follows.

- (9:2) He knows that what Bildad said is true (that God does indeed punish evil and reward the just). (Note that Job is agreeing that God does these things at least some of the time. He does not understand, however, why he is being punished.) But how can a mortal person be righteous before God? (Echoing Eliphaz's statement in 4:17).
- (9:3-13) Even if he wanted to confront God, he could not because God is too big and too mighty. He is the creator and Job is insignificant compared to him.
- (9:14-20) Job cannot confront God with this. Even though he has done nothing to deserve this (note that Job is not saying he is free of sin, but he adamantly clings to the fact that he is innocent of anything that should bring this kind of punishment), he cannot dispute with God, because God would only get angry and treat him worse.
- (9:21-24) Even if he was blameless he would be treated as guilty because God destroys both the blameless and the innocent.
- (9:25-31) He is in misery and there is nothing he can do to change it, because there is nothing he did to cause it.

- (9:32-35) God is not a man that can be confronted in court. Job wished there were some sort of arbitrator that could get God to take his rod off him so that he would cease to terrorize him. Then he could speak his mind to him, but there is no such arbitrator.
- (10:1-11) Job hates his life so he might as well go ahead and speak his mind. He asks God to stop condemning him. He wants to know what he has done. He says that God made him and wants to know why God now delights in destroying him. He says that he does not deserve this, but nobody can rescue him from God.
- (10:12-22) Once God gave Job life and showed him kindness, but this is what was concealed in his heart. If this is what he had in mind for Job, then why did he even let him be born? He is near death. He pleads with God to turn away from him that he might have a few moment's joy before dying.

2.5 Zophar Speaks

Job 11

Zophar is the third friend who, up to now, has been silent. For Job's sake, he should have stayed that way. He speaks.

- (11:1-6) He says that he cannot just sit around and let Job's words go unchallenged. Job must be rebuked for the things he is saying. He claims to be pure before God. Zophar just wishes God would speak and reveal what he has against Job. The fact is that God has forgotten some of Job's sins so he really deserves worse than he is getting.
- (11:7-12) One cannot understand God. He is too big, too deep, too wide. If he opposed Job in court as he has suggested, Job could not challenge him or defend himself against God. He knows Job's deceit and has taken note of his evil.
- (11:13-20) Still, if Job will put away his sin and get rid of his evil, then he will be restored, life will be good again, he will have hope, and other men will seek his favor.

2.6 Job Replies

Job 12-14

- (12:1-6) Job says that his friends think that wisdom lives and dies with them, but the fact is that he has a mind as well. He has become a laughingstock even though he is blameless. Men at ease have contempt for misfortune.
- (12:7-25) The animals or the birds or the fish know (i.e., the creatures without this vast wisdom of man of which Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar seemed so proud). What has happened to Job came from God because he is in control. Nothing gets built unless he does it and nothing gets destroyed that he does not destroy. This applies to nations as well as individuals. He sets men up and he takes them down. He is in control.
- (13:1-4) Job is not inferior to his friends. They come and smear him with lies.
- (13:5-14) You offer what you think to be wisdom but for you true wisdom would be to keep silent. You are trying to defend God but you are doing it with lies. If he examined you what would he find? Let me proceed with my course of action. Why would I put myself in jeopardy by confronting God?

- (13:15-28) Even though God might slay him, yet will Job hope in him. Job must defend his ways before God. It might bring his deliverance. If anyone has any charges against him he will be silent. Otherwise, he pleads with God to withdraw his hand from Job and quit frightening him. He asks him to then summon him and let him speak, and God can reply. He wants to be shown his sin. He wants to know why God hides from him and treats him like an enemy. What is he that he deserves this much attention from God – a wind-blown leaf that will soon turn to chaff. God has him shackled and he is rotting away.
- (14:1-14) Job 14:1-2 says: "Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure." Our lives are like a breath in time. Even trees have more hope than we do. If a tree is cut down, in a future season it can put forth new shoots. But when a man is buried he is no more. Job wishes that God would hide him in the grave until his anger has passed. Suspend his life and then call him back once he is back in God's favor.
- (14:15-22) The time will come when God will call and Job will answer. God will be longing for the creature his hands have made. Then he will pay attention to Job but not focus on his sin. As for now, Job is overpowered and cannot focus on anything but his misery.

3 The Second Round of Speeches

3.1 *Eliphaz's Second Speech*

Job 15

- (15:1-13) Eliphaz says that sin pours out of Job's mouth. His words condemn him. He asks Job why he thinks that he is so much smarter than everyone else. God's consolation is not enough for him. He lets words of rage against God pour out from his mouth.
- (15:14-16) Man can never be pure before God. He will never be righteous. God does not trust the angels and does not even see the heavens as pure. How much less does he think of man, who is vile and corrupt and evil?
- (15:17-35) Eliphaz now says that he will share the wisdom of the ages. The wicked man suffers torment all his days. He is destined for destruction. Distress and anguish and terror are his because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty, charging against him. He will be brought down for it.

3.2 *Job's Reply*

Job 16-17

- (16:1-17) Job says to his "miserable comforters," "What's with you guys? If the situation were reversed, I would speak words of comfort to you. Yet I cannot speak words of comfort to myself. Whether I speak or whether I am silent, I hurt. My pain will not cease. God has devastated my household. He has torn me up in his anger. He has turned me over to evil men and they jeer at me. His archers use me for target practice. I am in grief and mourning yet my hands are free from violence and my prayers have been pure."

- (16:18-21) Job says that the earth must not cover his blood and hide the evidence of what has been done to him. He desires a heavenly intercessor – a mediator to plead his case.
- (16:22-17:16) He says that his days are few. He has been made an object of scorn. He wants to know what God wants from him. He cannot provide it. He says to his companions that there is no wisdom in what they say. His only hope is the grave. Can someone else find hope for him? Will it accompany him to the grave?

3.3 Bildad's Second Speech

Job 18

- (18:1-4) Bildad tells Job to quit his complaining. He wants to know why he is treating his companions as if they were stupid. Job is the one tearing himself to pieces in his anger.
- (18:5-21) The fact is that God deals with the wicked. Their lamps are snuffed out. Their flesh is eaten away. Calamity is their fortune. Men are appalled at their fate. Such is the end of those who do not know God.

3.4 Job's Reply

Job 19

- (19:1-24) Job says to his companions, "Why do you continue to accuse and torment me? Isn't it enough that God has terrorized me? He pursues me day and night in an unrelenting fashion. I have no refuge in him. To make it worse, all those who were once dear to me have turned me away as well. My friends have forgotten me. My servants do not acknowledge me. Children and strangers make fun of me. My breath is offensive to my wife. Why can't you have pity on me? You pursue me as God pursues me."
- (19:25-27) Job continues:

I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;

I myself will see him
with my own eyes – I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

- (19:28-29) Job tells his companions that if they are going to sit here and accuse him and pass judgment on him, then they should fear the wrath of judgment themselves.

3.5 Zophar's Second Speech

Job 20

- (20:1-29) Zophar tells Job that he is disturbed at the fact that Job is rebuking them. He says that his understanding of the situation forces him to reply. From the beginning of time the wicked have been able to experience a season of pleasure. They have been able to accumulate wealth and to enjoy it. But God will not allow it to last long. The evil that is

within the wicked man (implying Job) will rise up against him. The treasures that he acquired dishonestly will be taken away from him. His body will be harassed and destroyed. Such is the fate of the wicked.

3.6 Job's Reply

Job 21

- (21:1-34) Job tells his friends again that they do not know what they are saying. Wicked men live to old, ripe ages. They see their children flourish. Their animals breed successfully. They grow old in comfort, even though they have no desire to know the Almighty. God pours out his wrath for their actions on their children. If only he would punish them directly – then they would know the results of their ways. Still, they are spared the day of calamity and die in comfort. He tells his companions that their consolation is nonsense.

4 The Third Round of Speeches

4.1 Eliphaz's Third Speech

Job 22

The third round of speeches begins. This time Zophar does not speak. Eliphaz begins.

- (22:1-4) Eliphaz tells Job, "A man's piety is of no benefit to God. He is no better off because a man might be righteous. Indeed, he is not rebuking you for your righteousness. In fact, your wickedness is great and your sins are endless."
- (22:5-20) Eliphaz says that Job has taken money from his brothers unjustly. He has taken from men their clothing. He has failed to give water to the thirsty and food to the hungry. He has not helped widows and orphans. That is why he is having so much trouble. It is for these sorts of things that wicked men are brought down. Righteous men rejoice to see it because they see their enemies being destroyed. (Note that since "logic" did not seem to impress Job, Eliphaz resorts to accusing him of things he has never done. His assessment of Job here is in direct conflict with what he said in his first speech, where he said that Job had always been a good man, helping other people.)
- (22:21-30) Eliphaz tells Job to submit to God. Be at peace with him. If he will do this, then prosperity will come to him. If he does what God says he will be restored.

4.2 Job's Reply

Job 23-24

- (23:1-17) Job replies to Eliphaz, "If only I knew where to find God. I would state my case before him and he would not press charges against me. Before God an upright man can present his case and be delivered. But I have searched for him in the north and the south and the east and the west and I do not know where to find him. But he knows where to find me. After he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. I have followed his steps and kept his commands and treasured his words. He stands alone. He does what he pleases. He carries out his decrees against me. That is why I am terrified."

- (24:1-25) He continues, "Why does not the Almighty set times for judgment? The righteous look in vain for such a day. The wicked continue to steal and oppress the poor. Their victims cry out but God charges nobody with wrongdoing. They murder and steal and commit adultery and think they can hide their transgressions. The grave will ultimately snatch them away. God may let them rest for a time in a feeling of security but his eyes are on their ways. For a while they are exalted but then they are gone. Who can prove me wrong?"

4.3 Bildad's Third Speech

Job 25

- (25:1-6) Bildad's third speech is the shortest of them all. He says that God is infinite. Man cannot stand righteous before God. Even the moon and the stars do not stand pure in his sight. How then can man, who is but a worm do so?

4.4 Job's Reply

Job 26-31

Bildad's third speech, which is the shortest of them all (six verses) prompts Job's reply, which is the longest of all the speeches (six chapters).

- (26:1-5) Job says to the three, "When have you helped the powerless or given advice to the one without wisdom? What credentials do you have to be offering me this advice?"
- (26:6-14) God holds power over death and destruction, over the skies and the clouds and the moon and the waters. He created all things. Who can understand the thunder of his power?
- (27:1-23) He continues, "As surely as God lives – the one who has denied me justice and made me taste bitterness – as long as I live I will never speak wickedness. I will not speak deceit. I will not admit you are right. I will not deny my own integrity. What hope do the wicked have when they die? When they are cut off, all is lost. Their children face the sword and never have enough to eat. Their widows do not weep for them. The wealth that they accumulated vanishes. Their only inheritance is terror."
- (28:1-28) Man knows how to dig into the earth to find silver and gold and gems. Unfortunately man has never learned to mine for wisdom. Where can it be found? It cannot be bought. Only God understands it and knows where it dwells. "The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding" (v. 28).
- (29:1-25) Job longs for the days gone by. God treated him with favor. His children were around him. People treated him with respect. He was a helper to the poor, the widow, the orphaned, the victim. He expected to die in his own house at a very old age. People looked up to him and respected the words from his mouth.
- (30:1-31) But now men mock him. Children of detestable men make fun of him. God has overcome him with his great power and brought him pain and suffering. He cries out to God, but God does not acknowledge him. He turns and attacks him. He has been one who wept for those in trouble but nobody is here to help him in his time of need. All he has is hurt and pain.

- (31:1-40) Job concludes his last speech, "If I have been guilty of lust, if I have engaged in falsehood or deceit, if I have been unfaithful to my wife, if I have denied justice to my servants, if I have ignored the needs of the poor or the widow or the fatherless, if I have been materialistic, if I have rejoiced in my enemy's misfortune, if I have failed to show hospitality to strangers, if I have hidden sin in my heart for fear of what others might think, then let me suffer the consequences of my sin. Let the Almighty answer me. Let my accuser put his indictment in writing. I would wear it like a crown. I would give an account of every step to him."

5 The Three Rounds of Speeches Analyzed

Throughout their speeches, the three friends of Job stuck firmly by their theology, their view that the righteous are rewarded and the unrighteous punished. Thus Job must have willfully sinned and was in need of repentance. This contradicts what God said of Job (1:1, 8; 2:3)

As the speeches progressed, the friends became more and more accusatory towards Job. In the first round, they hinted at Job's sin and urged him to repent. (In Job 5:8, Eliphaz says "But if it were I, I would appeal to God". In Job 8:6, Bildad says "if you are pure and upright". In Job 11:14, Zophar says "if you put away the sin that is in your hand".) In the second round they turn to insinuation. In chapter 15, Eliphaz said that the wicked are endangered. In chapter 18, Bildad said the wicked are ensnared and forgotten. In chapter 20, Zophar said that the wicked are short-lived and lose their wealth. It is not hard to see that they are taking the circumstances of Job's life at the current time and saying they are symptoms of a wicked person. The third round of speeches proceeds to open accusation of sin (Job 22:5-9).

In all of this, Job continued to plead his innocence (6:10, 9:21, 16:17, 27:6). He also argued that God had afflicted him (6:4, 9:17, 13:27, 16:12, 19:11). He could not understand why God was doing this to him. He felt that if he could get God to appear with him in a court-like setting he could argue that God was doing him wrong (13:3, 16:21, 19:23, 23:4, 31:35). As the speeches progressed, he moved from timid "oh woe is me – why is God letting this happen" to bold confrontation of God. In all of this, however, he never renounced God as Satan had predicted he would. He never cursed God as his wife had suggested. He was not wrong in questioning God. Where he crossed the line was when he began to demand that God account to him for what was happening. In doing so, he challenged God's sovereignty.

There are recurring themes in Job's three rounds of speeches, which include:

- His dismay with the manner in which his friends dealt with him.
- His dismay with the manner in which God is treating him.
- His acknowledgment of the greatness of God.
- His despair at living and desire to die.
- His desire to be justified before God.

A review of the speeches of Job's associates shows that they were poor counselors. They failed in several ways.

- They did not express any sympathy for Job in their speeches.
- They did not pray for him.
- They seemingly ignored Job's expressions of emotional and physical agony.
- They talked too much and did not seem to listen adequately to Job.
- They became defensive and argumentative.
- They belittled rather than encouraged Job.

- They assumed they knew the cause of Job's problems.
- They stubbornly persisted in their views of Job's problem, even when their ideas contradicted the facts. (e.g., In the third round of speeches, Eliphaz began to accuse Job of things he never did.)
- They suggested an inappropriate solution to his problem (i.e., they suggested that if Job would turn away from his evil ways he would be restored to prosperity.)
- They blamed Job and condemned him for expressing grief and frustration.

They came to Job with an agenda – to convince him that he was being punished for wickedness. They did not want facts to get in the way.

6 Elihu Speaks

Job 32-37

In Chapter 32, we are introduced to another player, Elihu. The other three men had stopped answering Job because they could see that Job was righteous in his own eyes. Elihu was angry. He was angry at Job because he was busy justifying himself rather than God. He was angry at the other three men because they condemned Job but at the same time found no way to refute him. He had waited to speak because he is young relative to them and out of respect, waited until they were silent. He says:

- (32:1-22) I have hesitated to speak. I felt that age should speak, that advanced years should teach wisdom. But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. None of you has proved Job wrong. Now I am so full of things to say that I must speak.
- (33:1-33) Listen to me, Job. I am the same as you. I am clay before the Maker. You do not need to fear me. You have said that you are pure and without sin yet God has found fault with you. You said that he considers you his enemy and that he pursues you to cause you distress. This is not right. Why do you complain that he will never speak to you. God does speak – sometimes one way and sometimes another – but a man may not perceive it. God speaks in dreams or he may speak in a man's ears – words that may terrify him. God speaks warnings to men to keep them from wrongdoing and from pride or to preserve them from the pit or from the sword. He may speak to a man by chastising him with pain or letting his flesh rot away but he will provide a mediator to tell him what is right and a ransom to spare his soul from the pit. Once he is saved his flesh will be renewed and he will find God's favor. He will realize that he sinned and perverted what was right but did not get what he deserved. He will tell others that he has been redeemed from the pit. God is always at work trying to turn back men's souls from the pit so that the light of life may shine on them.
- (34:1-30) Let us all listen so that together we may discern what is right. Job says that he is innocent and pure yet God denies him justice and wounds him. He says that it profits a man nothing to serve God. I say far be it from God to do wrong or evil. Men receive the consequences of their conduct. It is unthinkable for God to do wrong. Nobody had to put him in charge. If he withdrew his spirit the whole world would perish. He stands over kings and nobles and does not show favor to rich or poor. All are his creatures. He sees everywhere and no evil is hidden from him. He does not need to hold court because he already knows the ways of men. He overthrows the mighty and crushes men for their wickedness. If he is silent or hides his face, that is his right.
- (34:31-37) Should God reward a man for an apology without repentance? Job should be tested to the fullest. To his sin he now adds rebellion.

- (35:1-16) You ask what does it profit you to serve God and what do you gain by being without sin. Look up into the heavens and see the vast expanse of the sky. If your sins are many, what does that do to him? And if you are righteous, how does that benefit him? Your wickedness or your righteousness only affects you and those around you. Oppressed men cry out for relief from their oppressors but they do not say "Where is God?" God does not answer the arrogance of the wicked and does not listen to their plea. How much less is he going to listen to you when you say you do not see him, that your case is before him and you are waiting, and that he never takes notice of the wicked and does not punish them? Your talk is without knowledge.
- (36:1-33) Listen to me a bit longer. I get my wisdom from above. God is mighty but he does not despise men. He lets the wicked die but stands the afflicted upright. He enthrones the righteous with kings. If men are bound in afflictions he tells them how they have sinned arrogantly, makes them listen to correction, and commands them to repent of their evil. If they do, they spend the rest of their days in prosperity and contentment. If they do not, they perish and die without knowledge. The godless harbor resentment, even when they are bound up and they die in their youth. But those who suffer he delivers from their suffering. He is wooing you from distress to a comfortable place laden with choice food. Now you are laden with judgment due the wicked. Do not be enticed by riches. Would your wealth sustain you from distress? Beware of evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction. God is exalted. Nobody is like him. Remember to extol him and to be in awe at who he is.
- (37:1-24) Listen to the thunder of his voice. He controls the very weather. Can you help him do that? How then are you going to plead your case before him? If you asked to speak to him you would be swallowed up. His majesty is brighter than the sun and you cannot look at him. He is beyond our reach. He is exalted in power. He is exalted in justice and righteousness and does not oppress. Therefore revere him.

7 God Speaks

Job 38-41

All along, Job has wanted God to appear and let him defend his case. In chapter 38, Job gets his wish, only he is unable to say much before God (just as Elihu had predicted). God speaks to Job.

- (38:1-41) Who is it that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man and I will question you and you will answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Who marked off its dimensions and set its cornerstone in place? Who made the seas and the clouds and set limits for them, telling them "This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt"? Have you ever told dawn when to break? Have you journeyed to the springs of the seas? Have you seen the gates of death? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me if you know all this. What is the way to the abode of light and where does darkness reside? Surely you know if you are so wise. Have you entered the storehouses of snow or hail or the place where lightening is dispersed or the place where winds are scattered over the earth? Who fathers the rain and the drops of dew? Who gives birth to the ice and the frost? Can you set the stars in their places? Who endowed the heart with wisdom and gave understanding to the mind? Who feeds the animals in the fields?
- (39:1-30) Who is there when animals give birth to their young? Who lets the wild animals go free? Who set nature on its course to take care of these creatures? Did you give the horse

his strength and power and speed? Did you give the hawk or eagle its flight or teach them how to hunt?

- (40:1-41:34) God said to Job, "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!"

Job replied that he is unworthy and unable to reply. He has nothing to say.

God continues.

I am going to question you and you will answer me. Do you discredit my justice? Are you condemning me to justify yourself? Are your arms like God's or your voice? Are you able to adorn yourself with beauty like God or to unleash wrath like him? Can you bring every proud man low and humble him? Can you crush the wicked? If you can do all that then your own hand can save you. I made the mightiest beasts in creation. I care for them. You cannot even approach them. How much less can you challenge me?

8 Job's Reply and Epilogue

Job 42

Job speaks. "I know you can do all things and that nobody can thwart your plans. I spoke of things that I did not understand. My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Then God spoke to Eliphaz. "I am angry with you and your two friends. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. Job will pray for you and I will accept his prayers and not deal with you as you deserve."

They did it. Job prayed for them and God accepted Job's prayers.

After that, God restored Job. He was more prosperous than before and had seven more sons and three more daughters. He lived to see his grandchildren to the fourth generation.

9 Analysis of Characters in Job

9.1 Nature of Satan Revealed

Satan has access to the presence of God. Satan is completely subject to God and cannot act without his permission. Satan challenges God and attempts to tear away from him those who are faithful to him. He desires to drive a wedge between God and his creation. He is willing and anxious to kill, maim, crush, and destroy in the process.

9.2 Nature of Job's Wife Revealed

Job's wife enjoyed good times with him. We assume that when times were prosperous, the home was full of children, and when Job was an upstanding and highly respected member of the community, she was a happy and loyal wife. When situations were reversed, we have two

glimpses of her. First of all, she encouraged Job to curse God and die. Second, in chapter 19, we learn that his wife would not have anything to do with him because she found his physical appearance to be offensive (his breath offended her).

What a trooper! She was absolutely no comfort to Job in his time of need. We must recognize that she, too, was going through a very difficult period. When Job's home and children were destroyed, so were hers, but her loss was not followed by physical affliction of her flesh. Rather than face this as a team and work through their grief together, she cut Job off. She was angry at God and felt the only way she could get back at him was get Job to curse him. We can only assume that she felt that God had no right to do all of these things to her and she was willing to sacrifice Job's integrity and his life in order to get even. She was no Mother Theresa.

9.3 Nature of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar Revealed

Even though Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are three separate people, they are of a common mind and character.

They are very judgmental and they are very poor counselors. They are very impressed with their own wisdom.

It is a bit difficult to understand why they ever came to be with Job in the first place. In the beginning, it seemed that they came out of true compassion. They heard that their friend was hurting and they came to console him. They sat with him in stunned silence for seven days before speaking. But when they began to speak, they did nothing but make things worse. They rubbed salt in his wounds (emotionally speaking) and accused him of everything under the sun. Perhaps they had good intentions in coming but were so utterly inept socially that they could do nothing but insult and injure. Who knows?

Their theology is fairly simple and it is wrong. They believe that God sits up in heaven with a stick and a carrot. When you are doing good, he lets you nibble on the carrot. When you do bad, he hits you with the stick. No exceptions. Thus Job's kids were killed because they were evil. Job's current misfortune is because he is wallowing in sin. If he would repent and reconcile with God, his fortune would be restored.

9.4 Nature of Elihu Revealed

Elihu shares many of the traits of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. He boldly challenges Job and offers him no real comfort. He, too, implies that Job's suffering is a result of some sin in his life. He has several twists on his thinking, however, that bring him much closer to the truth.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were so busy trying to convince Job that they were right that they had no time to listen to what he had to say. In Elihu's speeches, he quotes many of the things that Job has said, which implied that he was listening (examples 33:9 quotes 6:10, 13:23 and 9:20-21, 33:10 quotes 13:24 and 10:6, 33:11 quotes 13:27 and 7:17-20, etc). Furthermore, he takes several of Job's specific complaints and answers them directly.

Job had complained that God is silent and that he does not respond when Job called upon him. Elihu responded that God does speak – sometimes in dreams and other times with pain (chapter 33). Job had complained that God is unjust and did not relieve him of his suffering. In chapter 34, Elihu painted a picture of God as just.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had stressed that suffering is punishment for sin. Elihu says that suffering can be redeeming rather than condemning (Job 33:19-30).

Elihu made a big breakthrough in matters, however, because he was the first to put his finger on several things that were going on. Whereas Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had tried to impress on Job that he was suffering because of his sin (a point that Elihu did not deny), Elihu emphasized that Job was sinning because of his suffering. He pointed out that Job had stated that serving God is of no value (Job 21:15). As long as Job feels that way, why in the world would God respond to his cries (Job 35:1-3). Furthermore, Elihu pointed out that God would not respond to Job because of Job's arrogance and pride (Job 35:12). Job's purpose in challenging God was to vindicate himself. As long as pride was his motivating force, God would not respond.

It is interesting that once Elihu got all of these cards on the table, Job did not respond. Perhaps his silence was a sign of humility. Whatever the reason, this set the stage for God to begin speaking.

Elihu was not gentle. He was not comforting. He was not completely correct in his understanding of God in that he too viewed Job's situation as being the result of some sin. He was the only one there, however, who fully appreciated the sovereignty of God. He understood the negative effects of pride. He understood how God was to be approached. And he was the one that was able to bring the situation to a climax.

9.5 Nature of Job Revealed

At the beginning of the book, Job is a man who is full of the knowledge of God. He has great respect for and fear of God. He lives his life according to the revelation of God that he has. He is a righteous man.

When his initial trial occurred (his children and his possessions taken away), he took it in stride. It is reasonable to suppose that he felt grief as would any father, but he recognized the sovereignty of God and did not question his ways. He remained faithful and righteous.

When his second trial occurred, he accepted it as well. He was in great agony and physical pain and wanted to die in order to escape his suffering, but he still recognized the sovereignty of God. He knew enough to know that God is in charge and that this could not happen without his permission. He assumed, however, that God must have had a good reason for letting this occur and was willing to submit.

Only when his friends tried to take away the last thing he had – his integrity – did he get to the point where he began to get agitated. As he began to air his feelings and to listen to the barbed remarks of his friends, he became more and more agitated and his speech became bolder and more accusatory towards God.

His theology was correct in that he did not believe that God always rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. He recognized that suffering was not necessarily a punishment for sin. He did not understand why God was being so hard on him. It seems that the loss and the physical pain were not as hard for him to take as the loss of his integrity in the eyes of those around him. When they began to taunt him by saying that he was being punished for his wickedness, he boldly confronted God and demanded an explanation. At the heart of this was pride. He was demanding that God vindicate him before others.

At his low point, we see Job doubting the justice of God and questioning the value of serving him. Still, we do see in Job a great hope in God. We hear this echoed repeatedly in the text.

For instance, in Job 14:15, "The time will come when you will call and I will answer because you are longing for the creature your hands have made." Again, in Job 19:25ff, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

In the end, after God actually revealed himself directly to Job, Job realized how insignificant he was as compared to God and yet how significant he was to God. As is typical when God revealed himself to a man in the Bible, Job felt totally unworthy and unclean to be in the presence of God. (Examples, see the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 6, the call of Ezekiel in Ezekiel 1:28, the reaction of Peter to Jesus in Luke 5:8, John in the presence of the resurrected Jesus in Revelation 1:17). He realized that he had been out of line in his pride and in demanding a response from God and repented of his action.

At the beginning of the book, Job was a prosperous man with a big family, who was respected by the community, who was full of the knowledge of God, and who loved the things of God. At the end of the book, Job was a prosperous man with a big family, who was respected by the community, who knew God, and who loved God. What a difference.

10 Nature of God Revealed

The ultimate benefit that we get from a study of the Book of Job is not what we learn about the nature of Job or of his wife or of any of his friends. It lies in what we learn about the nature of God.

The Book of Job has in it the longest narrative by God Himself that is recorded in the Bible. The majority of it is spent in reminding Job that God is the God of creation. He made the world and everything in it. He made the mightiest beasts in the world and he cares for them. He is in control.

The point of this is that his sovereignty is not up for grabs. It is not to be questioned. It is not to be challenged. And because of that, he owes us no explanations for the things he does. Even though things worked out well for Job at the end, God never did feel obliged to explain the game plan to him. He never felt that he had to tell Job step-by-step why he allowed to happen the things that did.

God's sovereignty extends even to the big bad wolf. Satan, as you recall from the first few chapters, could do only what God let him do. Satan is not an all-powerful threatening force that can do whatever he wants to believers. Remember 1 John 4:4, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

That being the case, then, why does God let bad things happen to good people? There could be many answers to that. For one, when you get right down to it, there are no good people. (Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no not one.")

The three friends said that the suffering was for discipline. Job thought it was for his own destruction. Elihu said it was for direction. In fact, God used it for demonstration (that Satan was wrong) and development (of Job's understanding and character). We may never understand why we undergo seemingly unmerited tragedy. The fact is, God is sovereign and he has something in mind that he is not obliged to explain to us.

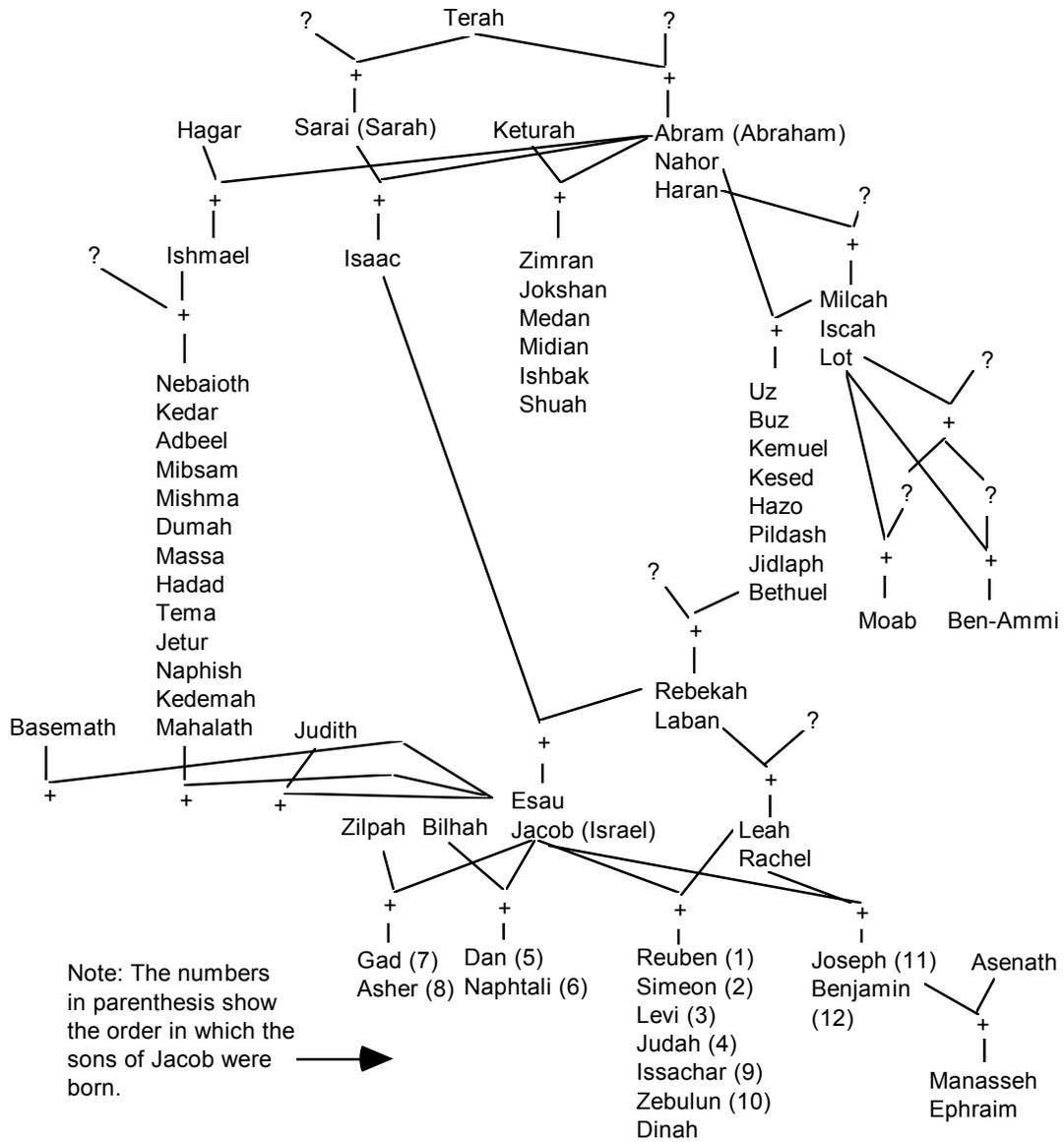
We do not challenge him. To do so implies equality with him and it goes back to the same issue of sovereignty. We do not have it. He does. Note that Job demanded an explanation from God but when God appeared it was he who demanded an explanation from Job.

Perhaps the last major revelation in Job has to do with the nature of worship. We see in this book that worship should be a result of adoration of who God is and has nothing to do with comprehension of his ways. Worship of God is not a give and take. We do not give worship in exchange for material rewards from God. We do not have a contract with God that requires him to reward every good act on or part (and gratefully we do not have a contract that requires punishment for every wrong act). We are to trust him regardless of our situation. We are to trust who he is even when we do not understand his ways.

If that is true, then why does the book illustrate that Job got all his "stuff" back when he was right with God again? This was a result of God's grace and not God's obligation. The Book of Job does not deny that God does indeed bless the righteous (even materially). It does show, however, that this is not always the case and God can choose to give or to withhold blessings because of (shall I say it again) his sovereignty.

11 Appendices

11.1 The Family Tree of Terah



The family included some unusual relationships. For example, Sarah was Isaac's mother and aunt. Lot was Moab's father and grandfather. Nahor was Uz's grandfather and uncle. Laban was Reuben's grandfather and great uncle.

11.2 Significant Names Used in The Old Testament

Today when a baby is born, most parents commonly make up lists of names that sound good with the new baby's last name. They may pull in names that have been in the family for some time or they may pick names that are currently popular. Choosing the exact name for a baby is not easy because once it is given it sticks for life. But generally people today do not attach a great deal of spiritual significance to the name given a child.

Things were different in the days when the events of Old Testament took place. The name given to a child could mark his destiny. It could carry prophetic influence in the life of the person being named. Names were assigned in accordance with the nature or the promise of the person. Thus some insight may be gained into the nature of Biblical characters if we know something about the meaning of their names.

Aaron	meaning is uncertain
Abel	In Hebrew the name is "Hebel", meaning emptiness or vanity, something transitory and unsatisfactory
Abimelech	from two Hebrew words, "ab", meaning "father" and "malik", meaning "king" – "father of the king"
Abraham	father of a multitude. Note the significance of shift in name for Abraham. His initial name could simply be a testimony to his own father – Terah. Changing the name to Abraham pinned the promise of fatherhood on him – not only that he would be a father, but that he would be the father of nations.
Abram	high father
Absalom	father of peace
Adam	Adam is a straightforward transliteration of the Hebrew word "Adam", meaning man (i.e. mankind).
Amos	from a word meaning "burden" or "load"
Arphaxad	(son of Noah) meaning is unknown
Asher	happy
Baruch	blessed
Ben Ammi	(son of Lot through daughter-in-law) In Hebrew "ben" means "son". "am" means "people". The "i" ending is a first person singular possessive ending meaning "my". Put them all together and you get "Son of my people."
Benjamin	from two Hebrew words, "Ben", meaning "son", and "jamin", meaning "right hand" – son of the right hand. Note that in Genesis 35:18, as Rachel was dying she named him Ben-Oni, which means "son of my trouble".
Bethuel	destroyed of God, wasted by God (see the "el")
Bilhah	(Rachel's maidservant, mother of Dan and Naphtali) timid
Cain	a lance or a spear
Caleb	forcible attack or the yelp of a dog
Dan	judge
Daniel	judge of God
David	loving
Dinah	justice
Eber	(son of Shelah, son of Arphaxad) across, opposite
Eleazar	God is helper

Elijah	God of Jehovah (Note – when you see an "ah" ending on a name, it is often an abbreviation of "Jehovah," which means "Lord." Examples include Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Josiah, etc.)
Elisha	God of supplication (or riches)
Enoch	(son of Cain, also son of Jared through the line of Seth) Enoch's name in Hebrew is "Chanok", meaning "initiated."
Enosh	(son of Seth) mortal
Ephraim	double fruit
Esau	rough to the touch, which might be caused by being hairy
Esther	
Eve	Eve's name in Hebrew is actually "Chavvah", which means "life giver."
Ezekiel	God will strengthen
Ezra	aid
Gad	to crowd upon, attack
Gideon	from a word meaning "to fell" or "to destroy"
God	First of all, God had two different English designations in Genesis: God and Lord. Both are used extensively. When the word "God" occurs in the text, the vast majority of times it is translating the Hebrew word "Elohim". In a fewer instances it is also used to translate the Hebrew word "El".

"El" is a word in Hebrew that, when used as an adjective, means "mighty." When used as a proper noun, it carries the meaning of "Almighty". "El" was used in Hebrew to refer to a god, but is also used to refer to God. Most words in Hebrew that end in "el" (or contain the "el" syllable) are referring to God, such as Bethel, which means "House of God."

Another such word is "Elohim". "Elohim" is a plural word that could refer to gods, but is used as a plural in reference to God to express majesty – the God of gods.

When the word "Lord" occurs in the text, it is normally a translation of the Hebrew word YHWH. I elaborated on the meaning of this word in my discussion of Genesis 1. YHWH is the word that we normally pronounce either Yahweh or Jehovah (depending on which of the two traditional pronunciation systems of Hebrew you use). It is the imperfect mood of the "to be" verb, implying "I AM, I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, I ALWAYS WILL BE". It is a name given to one who is self-existent and eternal. This is the national name of God to the Israelites.

There are a few instances in Genesis where the English word "Lord" is used to translate the Hebrew word "Adonai." In Hebrew, when a word has a form of an "i" ending, it normally denotes a first person singular ending. In Adonai, the "i" means "my". This word is an emphatic Hebrew word meaning "My Lord."

Habakkuk	embrace
Hagar	meaning is uncertain
Haggai	festive
Ham	hot
Haran	mountaineer ("har" is Hebrew for "mountain")
Hezekiah	strengthened of the Lord

Hezron	(son of Perez, ancestor of Christ) courtyard
Isaac	laughter
Isaiah	the Lord has saved
Ishmael	God will hear (see the "el")
Israel	he will rule as God (see the "el"), one who contends with God
Issachar	he will bring a reward
Jacob	heel-catcher, carries a connotation of deceit or mistrust
Japheth	expansion
Jared	(son of Mahalalel) a descent
Jehu	the Lord is he
Jeremiah	the Lord will rise
Joel	the Lord is God
Jonah	dove
Joseph	let him add, adding, addition
Joshua	the Lord saves
Josiah	founded of the Lord
Judah	celebrated
Kenan	(son of Enosh) fixed, as a nest
Keturah	(Abraham's second wife) perfumed
Laban	white
Lamech	(son of Methushael through the line of Cain, also son of Methuselah through the line of Seth) the root meaning of this name is unknown
Leah	weary, tired, faint, disgusted
Levi	united, attached
Lot	veil, covering
Mahalalel	(son of Kenan) praise of God (see the "el") (you should recognize the "halalel" as being the root of our word, "hallelujah")
Malachi	ministrative
Manasseh	causing to forget (Joseph's firstborn helped him to forget the troubles of his past)
Melchizedek	from the two Hebrew words "malik", meaning "king" and "tsedek", meaning "right" – king of right or righteous king
Methuselah	(son of Enoch through the line of Seth) man of a dart, from the Hebrew word "shelach", meaning missile of attack, spear, or dart
Micah	who is like the Lord
Midian	brawling, contention
Milcah	queen
Miriam	rebelliously
Moab	(son of Lot through daughter-in-law) from father (consider the circumstances of his conception)
Moses	drawing out of the water
Nahor	(son of Serug and father of Terah, also a son of Terah) one who snores or snorts
Naphtali	my wrestling (the "i" ending is the first person singular modifier)
Nehemiah	consolation of the Lord
Noah	quiet, rest, resting place
Obadiah	serving the Lord
Peleg	(son of Eber) earthquake
Perez	(son of Judah, ancestor of Christ) break, breach, breaking forth (this was a breach birth)
Phinehas	mouth of a serpent
Rachel	ewe, sheep
Rebekah	fettering (by beauty)
Reu	(son of Peleg) friend

Reuben	from two Hebrew words that together mean "see, a son" ("ben" in Hebrew means "son")
Samson	sunlight
Samuel	heard of God
Sarah	princess and mistress
Sarai	princess
Saul	asked
Serug	(son of Reu) from the word meaning entwine, wrap together, wreath
Seth	substituted
Shelah	(son of Arphaxad and also son of Judah) petition, request
Shem	honor, authority, character
Simeon	hearing
Solomon	peaceful
Tamar	(mother of Perez) straight, erect, a palm tree
Terah	meaning is uncertain
Zebulun	habitation, dwelling
Zechariah	the Lord has remembered
Zephaniah	the Lord has secreted
Zilpah	(Leah's maidservant, mother of Gad and Asher) fragrant dropping

11.3 A Brief History of Israel

- God created the world and created man. Man rebelled and was driven from God's presence in the Garden of Eden. Things got worse and worse so God flooded the world, sparing Noah and his family. Man tried to unite against God by building the Tower of Babel but God scattered man and confused the tongues. Things turned bad again so God selected one man, Abraham, through which God would bring a message of salvation to the world. God promised Abraham (who was very old and childless) that he would have too many descendants to number. He promised a land to Abraham and his descendants.
- Abraham had Isaac. Isaac had Jacob. Jacob, also known as Israel, had twelve sons. Their descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel. Because of a famine in the land that God had promised to Abraham and his descendants, Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt. Things were OK for a while but after a period of time they became enslaved there.
- After 400 years in Egypt, God raised up Moses to lead the people back to the Promised Land. Things did not go too smoothly because of the people's stubbornness and they were forced to wander in the desert forty years before entering the land. During this time, God used Moses to give the people the books of the law (the first five books of the Bible, or the Pentateuch). After Moses' death, Joshua led the people into the Promised Land. A series of battles ensued through which the tribes of Israel took the land.
- Initially they lived with no real governmental structure, but as twelve tribes affiliated with one another. They would unite for defense when necessary. God raised up among them various leaders, known as the Judges, who would provide national leadership from time to time. The book of Judges concludes with "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." This is a nice way of saying that the land was in chaos and people were not following God. God raised up Samuel, the last judge and also a great prophet, who would usher in the monarchy, being used by God to choose and anoint the first two kings.
- The story of Ruth takes place during the time of the judges.
- First Samuel focuses on the united kingdom under Saul. Second Samuel focuses on the united kingdom under David. First and Second Kings focus on the rest of the history of the united kingdom and the divided kingdoms. This covers the period from the time of Solomon through the beginning of the end of the Southern Kingdom. First and Second Chronicles are a retelling of the story. First Chronicles gives a very brief history of the world pre-David and focuses on David's monarchy. Second Chronicles tells the story from the reign of Solomon through the beginning of the return from exile in Babylon, focusing on the Southern Kingdom only.
- Saul was the first king and reigned from around 1020 BC to around 1000 BC. His capital was at Gilbeah. The nation was united under a monarchy but retained its tribal structure. He had some military success and expanded the borders somewhat, driving out the Philistines from some areas. He was ultimately killed in battle by the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa.
- Saul's son, Ishbosheth, succeeded him very briefly. The northern tribes followed him as Saul's heir, although the southern tribes followed David right away. When Ishbosheth died, the northern tribes followed David as well. God had promised him the throne through Samuel.
- David reigned from approximately 1000 BC to approximately 961 BC. His initial capital was in Hebron but he moved it to Jerusalem. He greatly expanded the borders, "from Dan to Beersheba." The nation prospered greatly under David. Neighboring nations became vassal states to Israel and Israel was a bona fide world power. Still, the seeds of Israel's destruction were sewn under David. It began with his own sins and blossomed in the form of deterioration of his own family. David had multiple wives and children with the various wives. One of David's sons, Amnon, raped his half-sister Tamar. Tamar's full brother, Absalom, waited for David to do something about it, but David never addressed the issue.

Absalom finally murdered Amnon and later led a rebellion against David. He was killed by David's general Joab. There was jealousy and intrigue in David's harem. There was the ever-hanging question of which son would succeed David. His own family was crumbling underneath him and he did not do anything about it.

- When David died, Solomon took over. He reigned from around 961 BC to 922 BC. He inherited the fruits of David's labor and continued to expand the influence and wealth of the state. During his reign there were no major wars. He began a massive building program, building the temple, palaces, and fortified military cities. They were massively expensive. He financed them by heavily taxing the people AND conscripting them into labor a certain number of months each year (a double whammy – they were forced into basically slave labor a portion of the year and heavily taxed from what they could make the rest of the year). More than likely the tribe of Judah was exempted from both the taxes and the conscripted labor, which upset the other tribes even more. Solomon sold off some cities to pay debts and also lost some territory through rebellions. He also brought religious disintegration to the nation through his foreign wives. He married daughters of foreign rulers to form alliances with their fathers but allowed them to bring their foreign religious practices to Israel. At his death he left the nation in debt and tired of his rule.
- When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam was heir apparent. The other tribes (other than Judah) were weary of Solomon's practices and asked Rehoboam whether or not he would reform. He accepted some bad advice and told the people that he would be harder than Solomon. The northern tribes said "adios" and set up the Northern Kingdom, Israel, with Jeroboam as the first king. The tribe of Judah remained with Rehoboam. Since it was geographically isolated from the other tribes, Simeon stayed with Judah. The two new nations were each weak and neither had the influence that they had collectively. They lost all of their vassal states. They almost immediately began fighting one another. Furthermore, they began trying to form alliances with other nations. Judah looked to the Arameans for support and Israel went to Egypt.
- In 918 BC, Egypt invaded Judah, probably at the request of Israel. Rehoboam had to pay tribute to Egypt and stripped the temple of its gold instruments and replaced them with bronze artifacts. More than likely, after having success with Judah, Egypt turned around and invaded Israel as well, much to Jeroboam's surprise.
- Jeroboam set up two sanctuaries (golden bulls) at Bethel and Dan (the northern and southern ends of the Northern Kingdom). Having sanctuaries at national borders marked off the territory of the nation's gods to the ancient people. Jeroboam wanted to stop the people from going to Jerusalem to worship. Jeroboam might not have been trying to get rid of the God of Israel. The move seems to have been politically motivated, not religiously. However, in doing this, he set up an apostate religious system in the Northern Kingdom that is one of the primary reasons that Jews (i.e. residents of the Southern Kingdom of Judah) began to see Samaritans (i.e. residents of the Northern Kingdom of Israel) as unclean.
- Judah and Israel were involved in constant border conflicts. The territory of Benjamin seems to have been a major point of contention.
- Omri was one of the more successful kings of the Northern Kingdom. He moved the capital to Samaria. He had great military strength. In an alliance with Tyre, his son Ahab married Jezebel. There was peace with Judah during this period and Judah prospered during this time. Ahab's daughter Athalia married Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram. The influence of this family was very evil and ultimately Jehu purged the house of Omri, both in Israel and in Judah. The alliance between the two nations was lost.
- The Assyrians and Arameans continued to be alternating threats over time. During the first half of the 8th century BC (800 - 750) both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms experienced a period of great prosperity (under Jehoash and Jeroboam II in Israel and Amaziah and Uzziah in Judah). This set the stage for excesses spoken of by the prophets (e.g. Amos). This ended with the renewed Assyrian power of Tiglath-Pileser III (745 - 727 BC). He made vassal states of many of the neighboring states.

- Isaiah was a prophet in the Southern Kingdom during the last year of Uzziah, through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Hosea was a prophet in Northern Kingdom during its last 25 years or so. Amos was a prophet from the Southern Kingdom but ministered to the Northern Kingdom during the reigns of Uzziah in the South and Jeroboam II in the North. Jonah was a contemporary of Amos, from the Northern Kingdom, sent to Ninevah. Micah was a prophet of the Southern Kingdom during the time of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
- In 735 BC, Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus decided to revolt and not pay taxes to Tiglath-Pileser. They tried to force Ahaz of Judah to join them in the rebellion. Ahaz refused. They attacked and laid siege to Jerusalem. Ahaz sent a message to Tiglath-Pileser asking for help even though Isaiah told him not to. (This is also the opportunity for the Isaiah prophecy, “The Lord Himself will give you a sign, Behold a virgin will conceive ...”.) Tiglath-Pileser responded and invaded Israel, greatly reducing its size (the rest was annexed to Assyria). Damascus was destroyed. Ahaz (Judah) became an Assyrian vassal as a result.
- Tiglath-Pileser III died in 727 BC and Israel and some other territories revolted. His successor, Shalmenesar V responded. He besieged Samaria for 3 years. Shalmenesar died, and the city was finally taken by Sargon II in 722 BC. Thus the Northern Kingdom lasted from 922 BC to 722 BC. The Israelites were deported and other people were moved in to occupy the land. The people were disbursed and forced to inter-marry, becoming half-breeds and totally losing their tribal identity. The ones that were left behind in Israel intermarried with those moving in and with the Philistines and became the Samaritans of the New Testament.
- Hezekiah succeeded Ahaz. When Sargon II died in 705 BC, Hezekiah rebelled against the Assyrian influence. Sennacherib came to the Assyrian throne. Hezekiah anticipated an attack and fortified Jerusalem and some other cities. He built the water tunnel into Jerusalem. In 701 the attack came. Forty-six Judean fortified cities were taken. While encamped outside Jerusalem one night an angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Jerusalem was saved but Judah was greatly reduced and Hezekiah did end up paying tribute to Sennacherib.
- Following Hezekiah are Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah. Josiah was righteous and made religious reforms. Judah enjoyed peace with Assyria during the reign of these kings.
- Nahum was a prophet of the Southern Kingdom during the time of Josiah. Contemporary prophets of the Southern Kingdom during this time include Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Ezekiel (although Ezekiel’s prophecies came during exile in Babylon).
- Around 614 BC, the Babylonians and the Medes formed an alliance and attacked and subdued Assyria. The king of Babylon was Nabopolassar and his son was Nebuchadnezzar. Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt tried to assist the king of Assyria. In 609 BC, Josiah was killed in Megiddo trying to stop Neco. Jehoahaz succeeded him. On the way back from battle, Neco deposed Jehoahaz and put Jehoiakim in his place as king. Judah became a puppet state of Egypt.
- In 605 BC at the battle of Carchemish, Babylon defeated Egypt under General Nebuchadnezzar. Then Nabopolassar died back home. Nebuchadnezzar returned home. This spared Egypt from becoming completely a Babylonian vassal that year (and also Judah since Judah was a puppet of Egypt). In 604 and 603 Nebuchadnezzar returned to the area with renewed military campaigns. Jehoiakim broke away from Egypt and became a Babylonian vassal.
- The prophecy of Habakkuk was approximately coincident with the battle of Carchemish.
- Jehoiakim rebelled around 601 and was captured. Jehoiachin succeeded him. He ruled until March 16, 597, and gave up when the city was sacked. In 597 BC was the first deportation of people from Judah to Babylon. (Daniel would have been one of the earlier exiles to Babylon.) Babylon treated its conquered people differently than Assyria. They were taken away, but allowed to live in communities and to retain their identities. They had

fairly prosperous lives in Babylon. Ezekiel would have been taken in the first deportation and prophesied from Babylon.

- Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon and his uncle, Zedekiah, was put in his place. The bulk of Jeremiah's prophecies were under Zedekiah. Jeremiah did not like him.
- Zedekiah rebelled around 589. Babylon sieged Judah and ravaged it. In 587-586 BC they totally destroyed Jerusalem, including the temple. Zedekiah fled towards Jericho. He was captured and taken to Babylon. He was forced to watch his sons being slain and then he had his eyes put out. The second deportation was in 586 BC.
- Nebuchadnezzar set up Gedaliah as king over what was left of Judah. His capital was at Mizpah (Jerusalem was gone). Jeremiah had the option to go to Babylon or to stay and he chose to stay (even though it was probably much nicer in Babylon). Gedaliah was assassinated. Nebuchadnezzar sent his army. Many people fled to Egypt and they made Jeremiah go with them. They set up a Jewish colony in Egypt called Elephantine. The third deportation to Babylon occurred in 582 BC.
- The date of Joel's prophecy is uncertain. It is probably pre-exilic, but the dating is unknown.
- The exile lasted from 597 - 539 BC. The Jews in Babylon were not really slaves. They led lives of relative freedom and financial success. Many rose to high positions. Daniel and Ezekiel were written during this period. The Babylonian Empire was short-lived, however. Nebuchadnezzar died. The Persians and Medes gathered to fight them. (The Persian king was Cyrus.) Babylon fell in 540 BC. Cyrus was the new king. In 539 BC he issued the edict to let the Jews return and rebuild the temple. In 515 BC it was finished.
- Cyrus (559-530 BC) was followed by several Persian kings, including Cambyses (530-522 BC), Smerdis (522 BC), Darius I (521-486 BC), Xerxes (also known as Ahasuerus) (485-465 BC), and Artaxerxes I (also known as Artashasta) (464-424 BC). Darius I was king when Haggai and Zechariah prophesied. He was king when the temple was completed. Ezra ministered during his reign, and continued to minister on into the reign of Artaxerxes. Xerxes was the king who made Esther queen. Artaxerxes I was the king during the ministry of Nehemiah and during the ministry of Malachi.
- After the prophecies of Malachi, there were approximately 400 "years of silence" until the coming of John the Baptist, who is the last prophet of the old covenant.
- The Persians continued to rule until around 330 BC. The Jews were allowed a great deal of freedom, including religious freedom, during this time.
- Around 330 BC Alexander the Great, a Greek, began domination of the known world. He conquered the Persians and took control of the land of Israel. This Greek military conquest had the side effect of spreading Greek culture and the Greek language. The world adopted Greek as the common language of business. Educated people could converse in Greek. God gave the world a very rich and a universal language that would be used to write the New Testament. During this time, the Jews who had settled in Egypt (Elephantine) translated the scriptures of the Old Testament into Greek, producing the Septuagint. This became a universally available Bible to the people of the time (i.e. a copy of the scriptures in the language of the people). When the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament, it is typically the Septuagint that is being quoted. Alexander's rule only lasted around 10 years. Following that, the land of Israel was under the rule of the Ptolemies of Egypt and then under the Seleucids of Syria. Both of these rulers maintained a Hellenistic culture. The Seleucids began to enforce Hellenistic ways on their subjects. Judaism was outlawed under Antiochus Epiphanies. Pigs were sacrificed in the temple and an altar to Zeus was erected in it.
- In 166 BC, the Maccabean revolt occurred. Righteous Jews rebelled against the Syrian rulers and gained control of the land of Israel. This was the first time since before the exile that the land had been under Jewish control. The period from 166 BC to 63 BC is known as the Hasmonean period. The Festival of Dedication or the Festival of Lights, also known as Hanukkah, commemorates the rededication of the temple by the Maccabees.
- In 63 BC, Jerusalem was conquered by Rome and the Promised Land came under Roman domination. This set the stage for the events of the New Testament. There were several

important side effects of Roman domination. First of all, the Romans were brutal to their enemies, but the result of that was that peace prevailed among their subjects, where were afraid to do anything but submit. Because of that, international travel was easy and common. This made it easy for the gospel to spread. Second, Romans were builders. Herod was set up by the Romans as the ruler of Israel. He undertook massive building projects. One of the things that he did to try to pacify the Jews was to basically rebuild the temple. The temple of Jesus' day was Herod's temple, which was a massively remodeled and expanded Zerubbabel's temple.

- Between the close of Malachi's prophesy and the beginning of the first century, several developments occurred in Judaism. First of all, the canon of Hebrew Scripture was closed and organized into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The synagogue became a permanent fixture in Jewish life, focusing on a teaching-based, nonsacrificial form of worship. Rabbinism came into being, with the rabbis, or teachers emerging as an important part of the culture. The Jews themselves began organizing into factions. The primary parties of Jews were the Sadducees, with an emphasis on a very legalistic study of the law, and the Pharisees, with an emphasis on the priesthood. Two other factions existed as well. The Essenes were a separatist group, seeing the Sadducees and Pharisees as being somewhat apostate. They tended to live in communities off to themselves. The community at Qumran, which preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls, was one such community. John the Baptist is thought to have been heavily influenced by the Essenes. The other faction is the Zealots, which was more of a political movement, seeking political freedom for the nation. During this time, racial hatred grew between the Jews and the Samaritans.
- From around 3 BC to around 30 AD, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
- In the late 60s, the Jews revolted against Roman domination. Rome came down hard on them. In 70 AD, the city of Jerusalem including the temple, was destroyed by Rome. About all that was left was the western retaining wall of the temple compound, now known as the Wailing Wall. A few hundred Jews were able to hold out for three years in Herod's mountain fortress, called Massada, but they were eventually defeated as well. After that, the Jews were a disbursed and homeless people for almost 2000 years.
- The land of Israel remained under Roman rule through the 500s. During the 600s, Arabs conquered the area and spread their new religion, Islam. In the 1000s, the Turks took over the area. At the end of the 1000s, the Crusades began and European Christians took over control of the area. Towards the end of the 1100s, the Muslim leader Saladim took over the area. In the mid-1200s, it came under Egyptian control. Then 1517, the Ottoman Turks conquered Palestine.
- In the late 1800s, Jews began to experience various forms of oppression in Europe. This triggered what is known as the Zionist movement. Masses of Jews began to return to Israel. The area was still under control of the Ottomans and that government opposed the movement. Still colonies of Jews began to develop in Israel. By the 1910s, the masses of Arabs living in Palestine began formal opposition to this resettling of Jews, because the stated goal of the Zionist movement was to form an independent Jewish state in Palestine.
- World War I resulted in British control over Palestine. In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which was official support for a Jewish state, although it expressed support for the Arabs living in the region as well. There were various proposals given for how to implement the declaration. They met with various forms of protest from Jews and Arabs alike. The declaration never really came to fruition.
- During the second world war, Adolph Hitler, in an impassioned effort to rid the world of Jews. This prompted more and more Jews to return to Israel. It also prompted a certain amount of global sympathy for the problems of the Jews. Great Britain asked the United Nations to deal with the Palestinian problem. On November 29, 1947 the UN adopted a plan dividing Palestine into two independent states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Jews

accepted the plan. The Arabs did not. The surrounding Arab nations immediately prepared for war against the new Jewish state.

- On May 14, 1948, under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion, Israel declared itself to be an independent nation. The next day, her Arab neighbors attacked.
- Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan all attacked Israel on May 15, 1948. By the end of 1948, Israel had defeated them all. This can only be called a miracle. Israel had not only secured the borders given to it by the UN resolution, but it had taken control of about half of what was to be the Arab state as well. The UN resolution had called for Jerusalem to be under international control. Israel had occupied about half of that city as well. The nation of Jordan controlled the other half of the city.
- Egypt continued to harass Israel from the Gaza strip, which was controlled by Egypt at this time. They harassed Israeli ships in the Suez canal area. In July of 1956, they seized the Suez Canal from England and France. On October 29, 1956, Israel, England, and France went to war against Egypt. Egypt was beaten back from these areas during this war.
- Border skirmishes continued between Israel and her Arab neighbors. They intensified in the mid-1960s. War seemed eminent. The UN had peacekeeping troops in the Sinai peninsula to serve as a buffer between Egypt and Israel. In May of 1967, Egypt ordered these troops out of the Sinai. Knowing that war was about to happen, Israel attacked first. On June 5, 1967, Israel attacked airfields in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. They destroyed the air power of all three nations. Then they set about to defeat the land troops. By June 10, 1967, they occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai peninsula, the Golan heights, and all Jordanian territory west of the Jordan river (now known as the West Bank). Included in that was the rest of Jerusalem. This miraculous war is known as the Six-Day War.
- On Yom Kippur (October) of 1973, Egypt and Syria again attacked Israel, expecting to find them militarily weak on this holy day. War erupted. They battled Egypt until January of 1974 and Syria until May of 1974. Israel was able to defend her borders during this war.
- Since 1973, there have been a number of efforts to establish peace in the area. In 1979, the Camp David Peace Treaty was signed between Israel and Egypt. As a result of this treaty, Israel withdrew from the Sinai peninsula. Other more recent peace agreements have resulted in Israel returning areas back to groups of Arabs to establish self-rule. A very uneasy peace has settled over the land. Hostilities and hatreds still run deep.

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4)

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