

1. Let's start with my lesson title: "Angry Young Man Part 2, Intelligent, But Wrong". I was tempted to use some sort of Schwarzenegger title, like "This time it's personal", but it didn't quite fit the lesson. Let me back up and give some background. Most of this book was a debate between three friends of Job and himself over the issue of why is Job suffering so badly. None of them knew it's because God allowed it to happen to test Job's faith. That debate is now over. In Chapter 32 all of a sudden a new guy starts talking to give his opinion. We are now in the middle of a six-chapter speech by this "new guy". Starting in the Chapter 38, God Himself will start talking as He's had enough of all of this. Until we get there, we need to finish what this "new guy" has to say. The positive aspect about his speech is he's pretty brilliant in his arguments. He makes a lot of good points about how God works. The problem of course, is none of it explains why Job is suffering so badly. I think that's why God Himself steps in after this.
2. OK then, time for the important "Why should we care" speech? (You knew it was coming!) Most of us will experience times in our lives when we feel like the world is falling apart around us and we have no idea what to do about it. Sometimes we can get so low, even a brilliant speech given on the topic of "how the world works", doesn't answer our suffering questions or explains what it is we can do to end the situation. We're looking for handouts or help or something to change the situation and nothing seems to be helping. Everybody tells us we should be doing this or another thing, but none of it helps our situation. We get to a desperate point of crying out to God for help but even that feels like as I'm fond of saying, "our prayers are bouncing off the ceiling". We could be like Job who is forced to listen to speeches that he's positive don't apply to him. So what do we do in those situations? (Thought you'd never ask!)
 - a) If there is one thing I've learned in life, is God does His best work when we've run out of options. That way He gets all the credit for the rescue.
 - b) Sometimes hearing out others gives us things to think about. One reason Jesus asks us to keep on praying over a situation is because with multiple prayers comes a better grasp of the situation or the problem. All those prayers gets us to think about the problem from a number of perspectives. That's the great advantage of what Job's dealing with here!
 - c) No our problems don't magically disappear. Often we have to live with our pain or issues for a long time. It doesn't mean God doesn't care. It means He wants to learn from it so it will become obvious as He helps us on His timing. Lately, I've been talking to a number of people who are in serious trouble that I can't help financially or comfort. All I can do is try to be of comfort to them and help them see the situation from God's perspective. As best I can tell, that's what God's called me to do. The difference between me and Job's "gang" is a matter of trying to help versus trying to find fault. We can't fix the world's problems. It is simply a matter of doing what we can to be a good witness for Him in all situations!
 - d) So what if you're the one who's really hurting right now? What if you're experiencing the type of pain that no one can help? I'm reminded of the expression, "When you are going through hell, keep going!" That means make the best decision possible given the situation you're in and do what you can to get help. All people go through hard times. We should never "stay there", but keep fighting for a solution. It's a matter of God saying to us, "Yes I want to help. Keep moving. Keep trying. Keep looking for a solution and trust that I am there guiding you through it."
3. OK, hope all that helps. Meanwhile, it's time to discuss the final 3 chapters of "The Angry Young Man" (named Elihu). In these chapters, he finishes his speech to Job. As I remind us way to often, the chapter breaks weren't added for two millennium (more or less), so don't take those seriously as we discuss the last three chapters of this text. He opens by repeating an argument made earlier in the book. The essence of the argument is, does God benefit from our behavior?

- a) It's the question of, if we sin, does it affect what God does or His nature?
 - i) The obvious answer is no. God is who He is, and He doesn't change when we sin.
 - ii) The related answer is it affect us. The real issue isn't whether or not God changes based on our behavior, but how does our behavior affect our witness for Him?
 - iii) That leads to Elihu's next argument: If we do mess up, does God still need to help us if we're guilty of a great sin? The underlying question is "Does God still help us if we're not living as He desires?" My answer is yes God wants us to repent but we are still one of His and we should desire to live as He desires.
 - b) That leads us back to Elihu. His argument is God ignores us if we're not living that way. I will say as a general principal that's true, but no one would be saved, unless God reaches out to us in our sinful state. Even if we're one of His and messing up, I find that God will still work on our level to draw us back to Him. Anyway, the gist of his argument is that God ignores us when we mess up (even though I disagree with it as a principal.
 - c) In Chapter 36, Elihu continues with the theme that God blesses those who do His will and He punishes those who don't in this lifetime. While I will always argue that living the way God desires is the best way to live, all of us know that not every leader is God fearing and not every poor person is that way because God's punishing them.
 - i) The implication of course is the old "song and dance" of this book that Job did tick God off pretty bad and that's why he's suffering the way he is. As all of us know by now, that's not true, but that's what Elihu's implying just as Job's other friends did through most of the book.
 - ii) In the last part of Chapter 36 and Chapter 37, Elihu goes all "weather" on Job. He's using bad weather patterns such as lightening storms to indicate the power God is showing us in this world. The essence of the argument is just as we don't get how exactly the "weather works", God is beyond our ability to understand him.
 - d) In summary, Elihu's trying to the make the case that 1) God is too big for us to fully grasp, 2) He doesn't change based on our behavior 3) He doesn't owe us an explanation for why we're in the state we're in and 4) our lives do benefit from living as God desires.
 - i) While all of that is true, let's be honest, Elihu still fails to explain why Job's in that state of horrid pain. Elihu gives some brilliant arguments how God works, but it does nothing to comfort Job's pain. That's where he falls short. It's also the perfect place for God to jump in, as he does in Chapter 38.
4. OK then, why read further, if Elihu doesn't get it? Why study the details of these chapters if he's not able to explain why we're suffering so badly? If nothing else to know that understanding how God works doesn't always help the situation we're in. The goal of the book's to help us learn how to deal with pain. In order to get there, it's important to grasp why "This argument and that one" isn't going to solve the problems. In short, I'd like you to finish the "Angry Young Man" case just so we know what to say and not to say to people who are hurting like this. OK let's begin:
5. Chapter 35: Then Elihu said: ² "Do you think this is just? You say, `I will be cleared by God.
- a) One of the great rules of studying one's bible is to never read a bible verse out of context. As I point out all too often, the chapter breaks were not in the original text. So let's back it up and see where we left off. Elihu's last set of arguments were simply based on the idea of God judging us and Job must deal with that. Elihu like Job's other three friends is sure Job must be guilty of something and that's why he's in the condition he's in. This reminds me of the expression, "With friends like this, who needs enemies?" Anyway, what he said in the last part of Chapter 34 fits well with how this Chapter starts.
 - b) To paraphrase Elihu here, "Hey Job, you claim you're innocent of any unconfessed sins. I have heard you claim in the course of the debate that there is nothing to confess. I'd like to share with you Job, what I really think is going to happen to you on judgment day."
 - c) That thought leads perfectly to Elihu's next set of arguments. If you've been following me all through the book, will seem very familiar as we read them:

6. Verse 3: Yet you ask him, 'What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?'
 - a) This is a question we've had earlier in the book. As a refresher from earlier lessons, the issue is, does God benefit if we sin or "lose" if we don't? Elihu's going to make that case here just as one of Job's other three friends did earlier in the book on that. Let's begin:
7. Verse 4: "I would like to reply to you and to your friends with you. ⁵ Look up at the heavens and see; gaze at the clouds so high above you. ⁶ If you sin, how does that affect him? If your sins are many, what does that do to him? ⁷ If you are righteous, what do you give to him, or what does he receive from your hand?
 - a) First, notice that Elihu is speaking to the whole group. He's starting to make an argument that we've heard earlier in the book. It's the old, "How does God personally benefit by us acting well or badly? Does it affect God's mood or His view of us? Does God get a smile if we're pleasing to Him?" The answer is if God is perfect, He knows all things and He will not change based on our behavior. That leads to an obvious question, "Why bother" if all that is true? Elihu will get to that next.
 - b) Let me deviate for a moment and discuss this dilemma from a truly Christian perspective.
 - i) Yes, God is perfect by definition. Therefore, He can't learn by definition.
 - ii) The "problem" is that God loves people. Therefore, how can a perfect God who as best we can tell, wants to spend eternity with those people who also freely choose to live as He desires? The answer is that God Himself has to pay for our sins. Yes, that's old news for Christians. I'm bringing up the Gospel here, because I want us to grasp how God "relates" to us while still being perfect at the same time.
 - iii) OK then, time to get back to Elihu.
8. Verse 8: Your wickedness affects only a man like yourself, and your righteousness only the sons of men. ⁹ "Men cry out under a load of oppression; they plead for relief from the arm of the powerful.
 - a) Notice that Elihu is still convinced the good and bad that Job does in his life, only affects him and other people. It's an argument we've heard earlier in the lesson. To recap a little, if God isn't affected by our behavior, why bother? It's about being a good witness for Him in all situations. That's what He desires of us. Because God already paid the full price for our sins, and we accept that and believe He's in charge of our lives, the purpose of "doing good" is all about living as He desires.
 - b) That leads us back to the issue of suffering and pleading with God for help. Since God is sovereign, He can help who He wants when He wants. Yes, we can ask. However that is not a guarantee He'll do something because we ask. It's the old, "He's in charge, and we're the one's who has to accept it". I know I'm stating the obvious here, but I've seen a lot of people turn from God because He refused to work the way they wanted Him to work.
 - c) Therefore, I'd argue that Elihu is wrong in the sense that God only helps the "righteous". If that were the case, no one would be saved in the first place. OK enough of this, let us get back to his speech.
9. Verse 10: But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night, ¹¹ who teaches more to us than to the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the air?
 - a) My first thought here is, who is Elihu referring to when he says "no one" in Verse 10? I do know lots of people who cry out to God in prayer all the time. In context I think Elihu is referring to wicked people don't care about God unless they in desperate straights. From here he's giving us a little lesson on how to "recognize" God in nature.
 - b) Pause to consider, ever seen God? Has He ever spoken out loud to you? How can we tell for sure He exists? First of all, even the most devout Christians go through some moments of doubt, so that's normal. Yes a "lifetime" of studying His word has convinced me more than the fact I'm writing here that He is real. Yes, the fact our world is so finely tuned is to me another example of God's existence. I refuse to believe all of this is an accident. All of that talk, leads us back to Verse 11, as it compares God "talking" to animals talking.

- c) I believe Elihu's point is that God does communicate to us. Yes on a grand scale, by some sort of horrid weather, which we'll get to later in this lesson. I also believes He guides us if we let Him. It's one of those things that works best in hindsight. We look back at how we've lived our life and realize God's been guiding us all the time.
 - d) His related point is that God speaks to us more than the sound of wild animals at night or even the sounds that birds make. I think he's just trying to think of "natural" sounds one's hearing being outside and saying "much more than that, God speaks to us if we'll listen!
 - e) OK then, why this lecture? Maybe he's accusing Job of ignoring God as Elihu himself also thinks Job needs to repent of something. I think his main point is "God's in charge, accept it and deal with it." Let's continue and see.
10. Verse 12: He does not answer when men cry out because of the arrogance of the wicked. ¹³ Indeed, God does not listen to their empty plea; the Almighty pays no attention to it. ¹⁴ How much less, then, will he listen when you say that you do not see him, that your case is before him and you must wait for him, ¹⁵ and further, that his anger never punishes and he does not take the least notice of wickedness.
- a) Elihu's making the case that there is a "too late" with God. I won't argue that. None of us have any idea when "too late" is, but I'm convinced it is. Think of the Pharaoh in Exodus. I think he turned from God so many times, it became a "too late" issue. Think in terms of a person who's spent their lifetime being "wasted" drinking or drugs. Once in a rare while someone will sincerely turn to God, but for most, that lifestyle is so addicting, they really don't want to change. Real change and facing our fears is a very hard thing to accomplish in life. I assume most of us have seen people go down the wrong path in life and stay that course. In effect, that's who Elihu is describing here. Yes he's using colorful language, but it's the same idea.
 - b) Doesn't Elihu realize some people do repent? I'm sure he's talking in generalities. We've all seen people who've hit rock bottom and truly change. However, it's pretty rare to see someone really change for the better. That's why in Elihu's mind, God ignores people like that. Yes, of course God still cares for all people and wants them to repent. Because of our free will, God lets us go down the path we choose. Yes, He wants us to chose Him. From our perspective, it seems like God's ignoring such people, but in realty, it's the other way around. That's what he's saying in a colorful way.
11. Verse 16: So Job opens his mouth with empty talk; without knowledge he multiplies words."
- a) Meanwhile, Elihu turns his attention back to Job. Elihu's point is Job's arguments that he is innocent before God is false (Elihu's opinion) because no one is innocent before God.
 - b) I know the cross is needed here, but Elihu doesn't see that aspect of it.
 - c) Meanwhile, two more chapters of this guy before God chimes in to end all of this.
12. Chapter 36: Verse 1: Elihu continued: ² "Bear with me a little longer and I will show you that there is more to be said in God's behalf. ³ I get my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe justice to my Maker. ⁴ Be assured that my words are not false; one perfect in knowledge is with you.
- a) I can't stop thinking about an old joke about bible commentators like myself. The joke is "When the angels want a good laugh, they read bible commentaries!"
 - i) I say that because the commentators are torn on Elihu. Many say he's just a comic relief (interlude) between Job's final speech and God's big speech coming up when we get to Chapter 38 (next lesson). Others say he's speaking for God so we have to take Elihu seriously. If I had to guess (and pray my way through it), I think reality is somewhere in between. His arguments are not that much different from that of Job's three other friends. He does claim in these verses to be speaking from God's spirit. The guy has guts, so I'll give him credit for that. Yes, His arguments do make some good points so there is some validity to him speaking on God's behalf.
 - ii) My point is in heaven, a lot of commentators are going to find out how wrong they were about Elihu. The trick is to see which group is right.

- b) OK, got that out of my system. Back to the text. As Elihu starts his final speech that will cover the next two chapters, Elihu is claiming he's speaking what God's telling him to say.
 - i) Stop and consider that God will not say anything negative about Elihu and God is going to say some bad things about Job's other three friends.
 - ii) Therefore, either Elihu has again, a lot of guts to claim that or he's being guided by the Holy Spirit. Hopefully, when we get to heaven, we can find out who was right or wrong about this guy. It's one of those things that we'll have to go to the source to find out. Meanwhile, time for Elihu to continue:
- 13. Verse 5: "God is mighty, but does not despise men; he is mighty, and firm in his purpose.
 - a) The "God is mighty" statement doesn't require much comment. If we believe He's perfect by definition and interferes in the affairs of people, then it's an obvious statement.
 - b) The interesting question is the last part of Verse 5 that says, "Firm in his purpose". What's His purpose? As the old question goes, if God created us, why? What's in it for Him?
 - i) Can one argue that "God was bored" and that's why He created us? Yes, but if God is perfect that doesn't work. The issue is that not only is God a god of justice, but also one of love. He wanted something (us) to express that love upon. God's purpose in creating us was to have entities (people) to express that love upon.
 - ii) Since God is again perfect by definition and can't stand sin, it's necessary that He also pay the price for our sins by Himself, but hopefully we all know it by now.
 - iii) Therefore, His purpose in creating us is for us to glorify Him with our lives. That is to occur in spite of whatever cards we're dealt in life. For what it's worth, Job is doing a pretty decent job in being a witness for God, despite his situation.
 - iv) What if you're thinking, "I'm not as good as Job". I'd say welcome to the club. We can't change our past. All we can do is learn from it. All we can do is try to make the best decisions we can without violating God's principals to live by as we use our time to be a witness for Him. OK then, back to Elihu.
- 14. Verse 6: He does not keep the wicked alive but gives the afflicted their rights.
 - a) Let's start with the obvious. Many a wicked person lives out long lives on earth and we have all seen many a good person die young. Many wonderful god-fearing people will live out their lives barely scraping by. So how can Elihu make this statement here. I am pretty positive human nature was the same in his day.
 - b) My simple point is I'm positive Elihu's talking about eternal justice. We must never forget that God is equally a God of justice as well as God of love. He's always "fully just as well as fully loving". I'm positive God interferes in the affairs of man, to guide us according to His will. No I can't explain all things. I'm just positive He's working in the background as to guide the course of history as He desires. As an example, I've read a lot about WWII. I know there are a lot of little things that occurred that gave the Allies victory. I'm positive that God guided that, despite the horror of it all, as to overcome the evil that the war was.
 - c) Went off on a tangent there, as I'm prone to do. The point being that God cares about the lives of people and "interferes" in the world He created to do His will. That means those who do wicked do get punished and those who are afflicted now but still seek and trust in the God of the Universe will be rewarded based on that trust.
- 15. Verse 7: He does not take his eyes off the righteous; he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever. ⁸ But if men are bound in chains, held fast by cords of affliction, ⁹ he tells them what they have done-- that they have sinned arrogantly.
 - a) This is Elihu's colorful way of saying that God's going to judge people. Many people tend to think that successful people in this life "is the ultimate". Elihu's saying, you know all of those people who are exalted now, well, God's going to bless even more so, those who're seeking Him and living for Him! Then Verse 8 gives the contrary, that the wicked will be bound in chains for eternity. I suspect that's simply how Elihu sees eternity and he wants to give us a vivid picture of the difference between following God and not doing so.

- b) Time for the big "why" question. I suspect part of it is Elihu is still convinced Job must be guilty of something, so it's "Scare Job to confess" time. Elihu will continue this argument line for several more verses. Let's continue:
16. Verse 10: He makes them listen to correction and commands them to repent of their evil.
- a) Let's be honest, God doesn't stick guns to people's heads and say "Repent or else". What I would say God does do is put people in situations where they must face what they have done. Hopefully some repent of that lifestyle before it's too late. Yes criminals should pay for their crimes here on earth, but we're talking about correction to help one's soul.
17. Verse 11: If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment. ¹² But if they do not listen, they will perish by the sword and die without knowledge.
- a) Let's remember we're speaking in general truth's not absolute truths here. Not everyone who honor's God spends the rest of their life being prosperous and content. Get fame or money out of one's mind. The idea of "prosperity" here is more about knowing that you have done the right thing. I had an uncle who used the line, "Keep your nose clean" for describing living the right way. That's in essence what Elihu is saying here.
- b) Again, keep in mind why Elihu's preaching all of this. He's thinking he's "getting to Job" about some unresolved sin and by describing living as God desires we live, he thinks it's a way to get Job to repent. Anyway, let's let him continue:
18. Verse 13: "The godless in heart harbor resentment; even when he fetters them, they do not cry for help. ¹⁴ They die in their youth, among male prostitutes of the shrines.
- a) This is Elihu describing people who really don't care about pleasing God even after living a lifestyle of sin for a while. A lot of ancient temples included having male prostitutes. As an example a fake god that the God urged the Israelites to avoid got "turned on" by males having sexual intercourse with each other. Yes, that's what Elihu is describing here.
- b) Keep in mind that Elihu was not Jewish. Yet he understood instinctively what those male prostitutes were doing was not pleasing to God. The bible command for men and women to marry as taught in the first few chapters of Genesis was understood even before a bible was formally written. My simple point is the idea of "right and wrong" was instinctive. It was still ignored by some and that's the type of person Elihu is describing here.
- c) No Elihu didn't think Job was guilty of this. Elihu is just building a scenario about people who do turn from God with their lives.
19. Verse 15: But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction.
- a) Elihu is going back and forth between those who trust God with their lives and those who do not. So the big question: Does God deliver all who are suffering? Of course not. Most of us have had to watch horrid deaths of God fearing people in our lives. Evil exists and a lot of tragic things occur in this world. I'm sure Elihu is aware of this and he's speaking in generalities or simply about the next life. Again, I'm sure he's secretly hoping all of this is going to get Job to confess something. OK, let's let him continue:
20. Verse 16: "He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction, to the comfort of your table laden with choice food. ¹⁷ But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold of you.
- a) I referred to Elihu is "Brilliant but Wrong" as part of my lesson title. He's right in that God does generally work this way to help lead people down a path in life so that they can even be a better witness for God. He's wrong in that Job did something horribly wrong to be in the shape he's in.
- b) That's why he's practically begging Job, "Come on now, just confess. Then God is going to bless your life and restore you to how life was before this began. Yes, God will do just that at the end of the book, but it's not due to any unconfessed sin. He does it because Job did pass this test with flying colors. Imagine how tempting it must have been for Job to state, "You got me, now can we all get on with our lives?" That'd be lying and Job doesn't do it.

- c) In the meantime, Job's stick listening to this "windbag" go on and on about some sin that he hasn't committed. Elihu is spot on in terms of understanding how God works with us on our level to draw us closer to Him, and let's us suffer when we don't. Like Job's other three friends, all of this philosophy is simply wrongly applied here. OK, let's continue:
21. Verse 18: Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside. ¹⁹ Would your wealth or even all your mighty efforts sustain you so you would not be in distress?
- a) Here Elihu speaks of the dangers of riches. I've always held the belief that money itself is not the problem. It's simply a tool that can be used for good or for bad. Here Elihu wants to warn us of the dangers of accepting a bribe in order to accomplish some wicked goal.
 - b) In Verse 19 Elihu states that having lots of wealth will not save one if one uses it for a bad purpose. Personally, I think Elihu is "fishing" here. He wants Job to confess to any sin he could have done, so Elihu's going through a list of possible things Job could have done as if to say, "Hey, maybe this is your weakness".
 - c) Don't all of us have weaknesses? Of course. One of the secret's of living a life that's pleasing to God is not only to ask Him to help us with our weakness but also in the area's we think is our strong suit. For example, Peter was a "shoot first, ask questions later" type of person. That's why he claimed he would never deny Jesus. Because Satan is aware of our "strong suits" he'll often attack us where we think we don't need God's help. All I'm saying is we must turn every aspect of our lives over to Him.
 - d) Enough about us, time to let Elihu get his rant off his chest.
22. Verse 20: Do not long for the night, to drag people away from their homes. ²¹ Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction.
- a) Here Elihu is listing more ways one can do evil. One way is to take what they legitimately own, which is what Elihu is describing in Verse 20. The enticement to become rich could make us do all sorts of things we'd never dream of doing. Again, think of this section of his speech as a "fishing expedition", listing possible sins as to say, "Hey Job, maybe this is the one you're really guilty of
23. Verse 22: "God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him? ²³ Who has prescribed his ways for him, or said to him, 'You have done wrong'? ²⁴ Remember to extol his work, which men have praised in song.
- a) At this point Elihu switches from a negative to a positive motivational speech. It's as if he is thinking, "If I can't get Job to confess to anything wrong, maybe I'll entice him to confess by listing the benefits of living as God desires."
 - b) Keep in mind that all of this is "Good stuff". Everything Elihu preaches is correct in terms of how God desires we live. Like Job's other three friends it's just misapplied here. With all that said, let's focus on these verses themselves:
 - c) When the text says, "who teaches like God", for us, it's about studying His word as that is a guide to us as to how God wants us to live. I hold the view that we're free to make the best decisions we can in life as long as it's not violating His laws. Making the effort to use some of our time or our resources to glorify Him is even a better use of our time.
 - d) So if there was no bible in Job's day, how did God "teach"? Because we as humans have a built in instinct that knows murder and stealing is wrong. That's how God teaches.
 - e) Verse 24 says to "extol his work". This is about singing out to God in gratitude for all He's done for us. It's about praising Him because He's God. Grateful people are happy people. Appreciating what we have, makes us a better person. Prayer should not just be stating a "wish list" of what we want. It should also include being grateful for any and all ways we are blessed in life. It's not to "butter up" God for a request. It's for us to appreciate all He has done for us and put our lives into perspective of who He is. That's how we should be praising Him as Elihu correctly states here.
24. Verse 25: All mankind has seen it; men gaze on it from afar.
- a) Anyone can look up at the sky and think, "Something greater than us created all of it!"

- b) It's always amazed me how many people are curious about God but are afraid to actually step inside a church as if they'd catch a disease. One of my favorite memories was going to a Christian concert in a big tent at a secular music festival. I remember at one point as the music was going strong, looking behind me at all the people standing outside of that tent, but refused to come in even though there were plenty of seats. That to me is another example of gazing at God from afar.
 - c) Reading this in context, the point is Elihu is stating that God desires to be worshipped. It isn't that He needs to hear it. It's for our own happiness. Joy without gratitude does not work. Sometimes just doing something as simple as looking at some aspect of nature as to realize that there must be something greater than us that created all of this is a way of us appreciating God, which is Elihu's point here.
25. Verse 26: How great is God--beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.
- a) Is it possible to fully understand God? Of course not. Are we aware of how long He has been "at it"? Of course not. For example, I'm a "young earther" meaning I believe that the bible is literal in the length of time creation took. That just means I'd argue that the earth is about 6,000 years old. However, I'm not going to "Die on that hill". If it turns out that I am wrong, I'll shrug my shoulders and say I'm wrong. My point here is simply that fact that understanding all that God has accomplished in whatever time length He took to get it all done, is beyond anyone's understanding. I am convinced that the bible is the Word of God, and I'm very willing to "Die on that Hill". That just means there are things God does reveal about Himself to us through His word, but we can never comprehend all that He has done and over what time period. OK, enough of that, let's move on.
26. Verse 27: "He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams;²⁸ the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind.
- a) For the next twenty verses more or less, we're going to get a "weather lecture". There are scholars who ponder if a rain and lightening storm started and that's why Elihu uses the weather as examples of how God works. Who knows? All we do know is the weather is a focus of Elihu's closing remarks that run for awhile.
 - b) Notice that Elihu understood the water cycle. He got that water evaporates, turns into the clouds and than brings rain on the earth. Weather scientists will tell you that the amount of water we have in our world is fairly consistent. For example when a hurricane brings a lot of rain, that's water that has risen from the seas up into the clouds. All I'm saying is all that water comes from "somewhere" and Elihu understood the water cycle.
 - c) So why is Elihu getting into all of this? One reason is to prove God exists by reminding us how He created a world with a water cycle that we can use to grow things as well as have a continuous source of fresh water. Since he's just getting warmed up, let's continue:
27. Verse 29: Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds, how he thunders from his pavilion? ³⁰ See how he scatters his lightning about him, bathing the depths of the sea.
- a) Most of us at some point in our lives have stared at clouds and wondered how they got to form those formations. How do they move across large areas and still rain at times or just disappear at other times? Atheists may argue it's all random or we just happen to live in a world that "naturally" exists this way. Personally, I find the world way to finely tuned for that "cop out" of an explanation. If understanding the rain cycle isn't enough to convince us that God is real, Elihu slips into "thunder and lightening" references as well. Yes, those in the "weather business" will tell you that thunder and lightening storms will occur if the conditions are right. Still, who's the one who brought those conditions together? All I am saying is Elihu is correct in his arguments that God exists and brings "weather" to us!
 - b) As we read all of this, keep in the back of your mind, why Elihu's going all "weather" on us. He's convinced Job is failing to honor God by not confessing his sins. Elihu wants to prove that God exists and that's why we're getting the weather lecture here.

28. Verse 31: This is the way he governs the nations and provides food in abundance. ³² He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark. ³³ His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach.
- a) Elihu gets into the "why" question for weather cycles. We couldn't have food grow unless we have our weather cycle. So what's the purpose of thunder and lightening, other than to scare us and drive us to shelter? For starters, it proves His existence and the noise is a way to remind us, "Something greater than us is causing all of this". I'm sure there's also a scientific explanation for it that has to do with clouds "mixing". All we have to consider at this point is thunder and lightening exist and prove something greater than us is out there who created all of this.
 - b) What does the text mean by "cattle knowing it's approach?" The point is even animals do sense the danger of storms and seek to get away. As a rough comparison, I've talked to a few firemen who've worked forest fires. They'll describe seeing animals trying to run out of there as fast as they can. All I'm saying is animals have their own sense of danger and can run away from it.
 - c) With that said, one more chapter of Elihu to go, before God "steps in".
29. Chapter 37, Verse 1: "At this my heart pounds and leaps from its place. ² Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth. ³ He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth. ⁴ After that comes the sound of his roar; he thunders with his majestic voice. When his voice resounds, he holds nothing back.
- a) Speaking of "running to shelter" when lightening storms strike, that's in essence what we are reading here. If you've ever been inside a powerful storm, it's a scary thing to witness as well as being deadly at times. Elihu's simple point here is that if you want proof of the existence of God, consider the powerful sounds and sights of a thunder storm.
 - b) What about the damage done by bad storms? Why does God allow that? Besides proof of His existence, it's another reminder that we live in a fallen world and the power of God is greater than all the things we can create. It's God's way of saying, "He's not to be messed with". I know that's little comfort to those who've suffered from such storms. The point is horrid weather conditions will exist at times and we have to do our best to protect our self when such conditions arise.
30. Verse 5: God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. ⁶ He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.' ⁷ So that all men he has made may know his work, he stops every man from his labor.
- a) The "weather forecast" continues with mentions of rain and snow forecasts. He discusses the fact that people have to stop working at times due to bad weather conditions. All that Elihu is doing is proving that a God exists who is greater than us, causes the weather to be a "force" we must deal with at times.
 - b) Again, I'm convinced he's doing all of this to "guilt" Job into confessing. In the meantime, he's only about half way done with his weather speech. Let's continue:
31. Verse 8: The animals take cover; they remain in their dens.
- a) As I stated a few verses back, even animals have the instinctive knowledge to survive and will do what they can to avoid bad weather conditions. It's another reminder that God did create the world with a built in survival instinct. The reason animals have that, is to drive them to live out their lives and reproduce as to continue the animal kingdom.
 - b) Meanwhile, Elihu continues his weather forecast:
32. Verse 9: The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. ¹⁰ The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. ¹¹ He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. ¹² At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them.
- a) I don't know about you, but I'm getting cold just reading this!

- b) As Elihu describes a cold weather day, with icy conditions and the fact that water travels all over the world to bring those conditions around is simply a proof of His existence and He created our world in a way that it will be inhabitable because fresh water exists over most of the land areas.
 - c) The really good news is Elihu's close to wrapping all this up.
33. Verse 13: He brings the clouds to punish men, or to water his earth and show his love.
- a) Here Elihu states God's purpose for weather: To punish people, water the earth and show His love by the fact He provides this weather system.
 - b) This leads to question of does God use the weather to punish people? What about those who innocently suffer due to bad weather? As an interesting example there was turning point in the Second World War in the Pacific when a Japanese plane couldn't spot where the American fleet was located due to bad weather until it was too late. Would the west still have won the war without that change? Who knows? I just know the weather played a part in a key naval battle as it probably has in many battles over the millennia. All I am saying is I wouldn't put it past God to use the weather in order to accomplish what it is He desires to accomplish in our world. Elihu's correct on that point.
 - c) OK, enough weather talk for "weather's sake". It's time to direct all of that back at Job:
34. Verse 14: "Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders. ¹⁵ Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash? ¹⁶ Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who is perfect in knowledge?
- a) My loose translation, "Hey Job, can you explain how all this works? Do you understand all the ways God works in our world?" The underlying question is "Hey Job, why do you demand God to explain how He works in your life when none of us can fully understand how God works in the world around us!"
 - b) That leads to the great question: Does God owe us an explanation? My simple answer is if God is God, He doesn't owe us anything. It's only because of His love for us that we do know He's willing to go out of His way to guide our lives as we use it for His glory!
 - c) It's only based on the proof that God loves us (via the cross) or by the fact He rescued the nation of Israel out of slavery to prove He does care about people. Even if we accept all of those facts, none of us can fully grasp how God works in our world with the weather as a prime example of that fact. That's Elihu's big point here.
35. Verse 17: You who swelter in your clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind, ¹⁸ can you join him in spreading out the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze?
- a) First realize that Elihu switches weather aspects from cold to heat. The Middle East is for the most part hot weather. The "south wind" is what blows in the heat there. The point is while Job is sitting while a hot wind is blowing, Elihu's asking, "Can you assist God in any way with the weather? Are you powerful enough to change the weather?" Obviously the answer is no, and that's Elihu's point. This comes back to the "We're not powerful to mess with God" argument. Remember that Job desires that God explain why Job's in this mess. Elihu is essentially saying, "Hey, who are you to even question what God will do?"
 - i) By the way that thought will lead perfectly into the big "God speech" that begins in the next chapter (and the next lesson). By the way, I consider that part of the book to be the best, so hang tight for the next few lessons.
 - ii) Remember we pondered the question, "Why does God step in right after Elihu has a six chapter speech? While I can't prove it, I think Elihu's on track by saying who are we to speak on God's behalf or demand that He give an answer? I'm realizing the reason Elihu is hear, is yes he's wrong to say Job has sinned, but he's right for saying, "Who are we to question God's motivation as to why He does, and what's His timing?" Yes it took six chapters to figure it out, but I did.
 - iii) Meanwhile, we've still got a handful of verses to finish, including a discussion of one a phrase in Verse 18 that I want to touch upon:

- iv) The idea of "hard as a mirror of cast bronze" is simply a colorful way of describing the sky. Elihu's point is essentially, "Do you Job, have any of God's power when it comes to something as simple as controlling the weather or the night sky?"
36. Verse 19: "Tell us what we should say to him; we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness." ²⁰ Should he be told that I want to speak? Would any man ask to be swallowed up?
 - a) Verse 19 is another way of saying, "We're not smart enough to argue with God". You may recall that earlier in the book, Job wanted to argue his defense to God. Elihu's effectively making a comment on that saying, "what makes you think we can even argue with Him?"
 - b) That gets into the question of how does God judge us? Does He ask questions as if He has no idea what we'll say? If He does ask, I'd suspect it's only to see what is our standard for salvation. Then I suspect God might say, "So that's your standard, let me explain how it is you've blown that!" That's why we can only plead God's grace to enter heaven.
 - c) With that bit of philosophy out of my system, Elihu's simple point is what makes us think we can even argue our case before God in the first place. OK then, four more verses:
 37. Verse 21: Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.
 - a) A month or two before I wrote this, there was a full eclipse over parts of the United States. Even then, people couldn't look at the sun without damaging their eyes. Even with that in mind, Elihu's making the obvious point that no one can look at the sun on a clear day or it will damage their eyes. All of that leads to his next point:
 38. Verse 22: Out of the north he comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty.
 - a) Is it just me, or is Elihu prophesying here? Is Elihu describing Jesus "Second Coming" in the sense that God will appear one day to rule the world from this world? Could be.
 - b) We're a few verses away from God speaking, so maybe Elihu is "God Inspired" as he has claimed two chapters back. At the least, he's saying God's coming to judge us, so we must accept it as fact.
 39. Verse 23: The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.
 - a) When the text effectively says, "God is beyond our reach", it's not saying we can't talk to Him. It's the idea that He's far too big and vast for us to grasp. There's a famous line that goes, "A God that's big enough to fully grasp is not a God worth worshipping." That's in effect what Elihu is talking about here.
 - b) At the same time Elihu's clearly making the point that God is going to judge each person based on how we've lived as a witness for Him. No, I don't know how God's will judge a child who dies. I don't know how He'll judge the truly naïve. All I do know is He'll judge us based on what information we did have about God or what information was available to us and what we did with that information. That's judgment in a few thoughts. Finally, Elihu is making the point that God won't eternally "oppress" those who seek Him and do turn from sin! OK, then, one more verse:
 40. Verse 24: Therefore, men revere him, for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart? "
 - a) Keep in mind Elihu's been talking for six chapters now. Keep in mind that God steps in, beginning in the next verse, with no comment good or bad about what Elihu says. I'd say that God's timing is about the fact that Elihu brought up the idea of "Who are we to even question what God does in the first place?" and that's the main topic that God speaks on over the next few chapters of this book.
 - b) Even with that said, the final line of Elihu's speech is a reminder that people ought to have a lot of respect for God because our eternity is based on what we did with the information we are given or could have known in our lifetimes! Let me put it this way, do I believe I will meet non-Christians in heaven? Yes, if they trust that God paid the complete price for their sins and they desired to make God the center of their lives. Whether or not Elihu is part of that group, we'll just have to see when we get there.

41. With that said, I'm shocked we've now made it through most of the book. The last big challenge left is to analyze what God says, but I'll save that for next time. In the meantime, celebrate that you've made it through the entire debate, all the speeches by Job and his three friends and yes we made it through six chapters of Elihu. I figure if we've made it this far, discussing what God has to say to us directly can't be any less of a challenge. Thanks as always for reading, and it's time to close in prayer.
42. Heavenly Father, We don't know why You picked us to be Your witnesses for You, but we accept that You have. Help us to use the most valuable thing You've given us, our time to be a witness for You in all that we do. While we can't control all the things that happen to us in life, we can make the best decisions we can given whatever situation is in front of you and still honor You as we go through those situations. Guide us by Your Spirit, so we can and do live as You desire. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.