

Job Chapters 8-10 – John Karmelich

1. This section is "Round 2". The basic story of Job is that God allowed a man named Job to suffer in terrible ways to test him and, see if he'd not sin faced with horrid physical and emotional pain. If all that weren't bad enough, he then had three friends who lectured him while he was living with all that pain. They all effectively said, "You must have really ticked God off something horrid to be in this situation." In the last lesson, the first of those friends went off on Job and he responded.
 - a) These chapters are "Round 2". We get introduced to "Friend #2" called Bildad the Shuhite.
 - b) In Chapter 8, Bildad is going to give a "cause and effect" speech to Job. Bildad's main point is that Job must have sinned something awful, and if he'd just confess it, his suffering will be over and that's that.
 - c) Job responds in Chapter 9 with, "The principals that you state are true, but I've racked my brain out and I can't think of any sin that I need to confess, so that's not it".
 - d) Job then goes on a two-chapter rant saying that, I require a mediator between God and me as He is too perfect to relate to an imperfect man like me. No matter what I'd say to God, since He's God and I'm not, there's no way I'd win a debate with him no matter how good of a case I'd make. Therefore, I wish there was a mediator who could relate to God as well as relate to the pain I'm dealing with. Now if that isn't a great case for the Gospel Message I don't know what it is! Job then effectively gives the following speech in these chapters:
 - i) "I don't know if such a mediator exists (we're in the Old Testament), so I am stuck in this mess. Bildad, despite your arguments about how God works, you don't get why I'm suffering. I don't know why its so, but there is nothing for me to confess. If there was I'd do it by now". This does not mean that Job thought he was perfect. It just means he refused to go through life feeling guilty about any of his past sins when he's positive he has been forgiven of all those sins.
 - e) So if Job doesn't feel guilty about any sin, why does he want a mediator between God and himself? Because Job sees God as being "too perfect" to relate to imperfect man. Therefore the perfect title for "Round 2" is "Understanding God". It explains the nature of how God relates to us. These chapters explain the need for a mediator between God and ourselves to bridge the gap that exists between us.
2. With that speech out of my system, let me give a related question: Why is Jesus necessary? What I mean is, why can't God just say, "He forgives us of our sins if we confess them and that's that"? Why is a mediator required in the first place? To understand that, first we have to realize God has two natures He can't compromise on: If God is perfect by definition, He must be perfectly just in His dealings with us. To put it another way, God lays out His commandments that He demands people to live by. That's His standards for our lives. When we read those commandments, we'll start to realize, "Hey this is the best way to live life". It's only our built-in sin nature that prevents us from living as God desires. My point is that if God's commandments are stated for us, and we realize God is perfect, that means He can't compromise an "inch" on what are His standards to be with Him forever. To say it simply, a perfect God requires perfection for us to be with Him. That is in effect, Job's point that he makes in his two-chapter response to Bildad.
3. The other thing to grasp is how much God loves people. Ever considered, why did God create us in the first place? What's in it for Him? As I've explained many times in the past, if God is full of love, He needs something or someone to express that love upon. He created us as His "entity" to express that love upon. What He desires of us is to freely choose to love Him back in response to that love He has for us.
4. That leads to the natural question: How do you reconcile a God who requires perfect justice with a God that desires perfect love? The only way is through a mediator who can fully relate to God and can fully relate to us. That's why Christians insist that Jesus is fully God as well as fully man. If either one of those is not true, He can't be a mediator between us.

- a) Religious Jewish people can't accept the idea of God becoming man, so they reject the idea as "not possible". Many religious cults reject one or the other (that Jesus was either God or man, but not both). My simple point is that Jesus must be both in order for Him to be the type of mediator that Job (and us) desire can relate to us and relate to God! The reason the New Testament is full of so many miracles is to prove that Jesus was both fully human as well as fully God as only God could do the "unexplainable" miracles in the bible. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is proof. All (but one) of the original apostles were martyred as they would not deny Jesus rose from the dead despite the torture they suffered before they died. The apostles "gift" for following Jesus was martyrdom. However, the fact they refused to deny that fact despite the torture is a great proof that Jesus is who He was. If I was tortured, I'd confess to just about anything unless it means eternal damnation. That's why Christians are willing to die rather than deny that truth.
 - b) As the old saying goes, "It's easier to be a martyr for Jesus than to live for Him". Since we don't know how long we get to live, the point of this life, is to use it as a living witness for Jesus until our time is up. How we do that is an individual thing, as we use the gifts that God has given us for His glory. We do what we enjoy doing and do "what's logical" while obeying His commands. The issue isn't about earning God's love, but strictly to live as He desires out of gratitude for what He's done for us.
5. OK John, nice speech. What does any of this have to do with these three chapters of Job? In effect everything! These chapters explain God's nature. Even after Bildad's speech in Chapter 8, realize that Job says in effect, "You're right about God, but I've got no sin to confess here!" That's why all three chapters are in effect one big argument about why God exists, what He expects of us and it touches upon the issue of how we can relate to God through a "mediator".
- a) Suppose you say, I know all of that. Why should I read any further? Great question. Even if we believe Jesus is fully God and fully man and died for every sin we ever have or ever will commit, it is important we grasp "The big picture" of why God exists, why He created us in the first place, what He expects from us and how we're to live for Him.
 - b) Let me put it this way, if Job can effectively sing God's praises despite being in more pain than anybody can be in human history, we too should "sing God's praises" despite any or all things that we're dealing with in our lives. My favorite topic to teach is on "now what". What I mean is I design these lessons for people who believe Jesus is God and died for all of their sins, but "now what"? The book of Job explains how God works. In this section of the book, so we can understand His nature better and better grasp how God expects us to be a living witness for Him. Once we grasp that, we can all be a better witness for Him as we use our lives for His glory. That's the purpose of any bible study, let alone this one.
 - c) With that said, let's get started on this three chapter section about "How God works":
6. Chapter 8, Verse 1: Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:
- a) There's an old joke among bible teachers that Bildad's arguments are "so demeaning" he is "shoe height" as in "Shu-hite". It's silly, but it helps us to remember his name.
 - b) If you want, you can google theories on what is a "Shuhite". The simple point is he doesn't have a Jewish background, but he does believe in a single god. We grasp all of that from studying his arguments to Job. One positive thing to say about him is he is not an atheist. He doesn't believe in multiple gods like the Babylonians or Egyptians did. He believed in a God who blesses those who seek Him and live as He desires. However, what he fails to see is Job's case is the exception, and not the rule. Remember neither Job nor any of these three friends know that God is testing Job through this suffering to see how He'd react.
 - c) As we read Bildad's arguments through the rest of this chapter, realize Job response to his case is that "Bildad's right about how God works in our lives. However, that is not why I am suffering as I've got nothing to confess and I refuse to feel guilt about sins I've already confessed". My point is as we read the rest of this chapter, keep in mind Bildad is saying a bunch of truths about life, but those truth's don't apply to Job here!

7. Verse 2: "How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind.
 - a) Keep in mind that Job just finished a two-chapter response to another of Job's other three friends. Bildad listened patiently to "Round 1" between Job and "Eliphaz the Temanite".
 - b) Now it's Bildad's turn to take his best shot at Job. The first thing Bildad wants to tell Job is "What do you mean you've got nothing to confess? There must be some unconfessed sin in your life or else you wouldn't be in this mess in the first place!"
 - c) Bildad wrongfully thinks that Job must have sinned something awful and that's why he is in the mess he's in. Bildad refuses to accept that anybody could suffer as much as Job is at the moment unless he's guilty of something. It's the "cause and effect" argument. To state the obvious, God does punish the guilty and often people suffer in this lifetime if they fail to live as He desires. However, that's not always the case. I suspect most of us know of at least one person who's had to suffer greatly due to no fault of their own. Remember Job is suffering literally due to a bet between God and Satan to see if Job would still trust in God even if Job lost everything he had and was in tremendous pain. However, we know all of that, so for one chapter, we must listen to Bildad go "on and on" about "cause and effect".
8. Verse 3: Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?
 - a) To state a basic belief by most religious people around the world, "A God exists and he is going to judge people based on how they lived". Keep in mind that Bildad states a lot of basic truths about God in this chapter. Bildad's mistake is they don't apply to Job here!
 - b) To state the obvious some more, most of us realize that many people get away with stuff in this lifetime. The truth of Verse 3 applies to eternity, but not always this lifetime.
9. Verse 4: When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin.
 - a) If it isn't bad enough that Bildad is taking shots at Job, he fires even lower and takes shots at his dead children. Verse 4 is saying in effect, "You want proof that God punishes those who are guilty? Look at your dead children! They must have died for some unconfessed sin!" Of course that isn't true, but that's the argument Bildad's making against Job. It's like saying, "Come on Job, you don't want to end up like your dead children, so just confess to God what you've done, and that'll be that!"
 - b) Of all the types of pain one can have in life, I don't think there's anything worse than if we have our children die before we do. I've personally seen people in pain to their dying day due to the pain of losing their children. You don't get over it, you just learn to live with it.
 - c) Back in Chapter 1, we get the impression that Job raised God-fearing children. It does not mean Job's children were perfect, but simply that they feared God. In fact, Chapter 1 tells us that Job made sacrifices on his children's behalf. That was Job's way to pray for them. Now here in Chapter 8, we've got Job sitting in horrid physical pain, with Bildad adding insult to injury by telling Job the reason his children died is due to unconfessed sin. What I suspect is that if Job had any physical strength, he'd punch Bildad in the mouth for even suggesting such a thing! However, Bildad is on a role, and Job lets him speak his mind.
10. Verse 5: But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, ⁶ if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place.
 - a) Bildad is essentially saying, "Hey Job, just confess whatever sin you're holding back! God will then bless your life and bring you back to your former state."
 - b) As a Christian, like most people when things go wrong in my life, the first thing I consider is, "Is there any unconfessed sin I must turn from?" I'm positive when Job first got hit with all the bad news of losing everything, Job must have examined his life to see if there was a sin he might have missed. What I'm getting at is Job realized once he's confessed a sin and turned from it, it serves no purpose to keep feeling guilty over it. We are much tougher on ourselves than God is. That's because we think, "We could have done better". God is well aware of our weaknesses, which is why He's willing to forgive us when we turn from any sin that we realize isn't pleasing to God. Remember again, why we Christians are to turn from sin: Not to be "more saved", but because God desires we live as a witness for Him!

- c) The reason for that little speech is Bildad is "barking up the wrong tree". What he says is true, but it doesn't apply to Job. I should also add here that God does not guarantee that we'll be rich if we just live as He desires. There are many devoutly religious Jewish and Christian people throughout the world. Business success is about saving and investing in things that provide a good return on one's investment. Living a life that's pleasing to God is about obeying His commandments, most of which we know instinctively such as not to lie, steal or murder. My point is if one could live perfectly as God desires or even live as a devoutly religious Christian, that alone isn't a guarantee of a financially successful life. In that sense, Bildad is wrong about God. What he's right about, is that if we do live as God desires, He will guide us to use the gifts He's given us to make a difference for Him.
 - d) In the meantime, Bildad's got more "cause and effect" statements to make:
11. Verse 7: Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be.
- a) It's as if Bildad is saying, "If you just confess whatever sin you're holding back, then God is going to bless your future far more than all the riches you've had in the past!"
 - b) We all know that life isn't fair and what Bildad says is not true. While confessing sins is a good thing to do as far as clearing our conscious and improving our relationship with the God we worship, it's not a guarantee that God will financially bless us or even restore our health to what it was. That's where Bildad's case falls apart here. However, he's still going to go "on and on" about this, so let's here him out.
12. Verse 8: "Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned,⁹ for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow.¹⁰ Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?"
- a) Bildad's saying, "Doesn't history tell us what I'm claiming is true?" Bildad's describing the people of past generations have learned that trusting in God benefits their lives. We're all aware that our time on this earth goes fast and we're to make the best of it. Living as God desires is the best way to live with the unknown amount of time God gives us. The great people of the past realized that and all we have to do is study their lives to realize this.
 - b) Again, "success in life" and living as God desires are interrelated, but not necessarily the same thing. People succeed in life by taking calculated risks, believing that God did give them a talent to succeed and pushing themselves to do what they believe they're capable of doing. Living as God desires is the best way to appreciate life while making that effort to succeed in whatever it is we wish to accomplish. My point is success in life is not 100% related to our trust in God. Many devout Christians exist who are poor. Some do have a gift for making money just as there are many ungodly people who have the gift and took the time to be "successful" whatever that means to them. These concepts are interrelated, in the sense that appreciating life and being joyful can be done through our trust in God and what He's done for us. However, Bildad is wrong that success is guaranteed if all it takes is to trust in God and "that's that". Effort is required to live as God desires and effort is also required as well as time to take risks and be "successful" in whatever we think that terms means in life.
 - c) OK now that I've stated the obvious for a paragraph, it's time to get back to Bildad.
13. Verse 11: Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water?¹² While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass.
- a) After a few verses of "People in the past realize that trusting in God is the secret to success in life" (Not always true, but that's his "cause and effect" statement.) Bildad now moves to nature, to make his case of how God works. The papyrus plant grows along the edge of a river. The same with a reed. Those plants need lots of water to survive. It grows quickly, but it can wither away faster than grass dies out from a lack of water.
 - b) Bildad's essential point is that just as a "water reed" can die really fast, so God can end our life whenever he wishes. The implication is Job sinned and that's why he's in that state.
 - c) He's effectively saying since God can end us instantly, confess your sin and move on!

14. Verse 13: Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless.
- The implication is life is short no matter how long we live. Those who don't believe in the existence of God will soon enough realize He does exist and suffer eternally.
 - Pause for a moment and consider all the people around us who don't believe Jesus is God. Think of all who have heard of Him, but refuse to give their lives to Him. Think about all those who don't take those facts seriously. The truth is that God exists and the trust is He is going to judge people for their sins. Whether people want to accept that fact or not, will not change the reality of that judgment.
15. Verse 14: What he trusts in is fragile; what he relies on is a spider's web. ¹⁵ He leans on his web, but it gives way; he clings to it, but it does not hold.
- The topic of the moment is people who refuse to put their trust in God. If you've ever had the "joy" of walking through a spider web, it's sticky, but not strong enough to prevent us to go forward. The analogy is supposed to show that the things people trust in, or like to do in comparison to trusting in God to guide their lives.
 - Bildad's still trying to make the point that Job must have "ticked God off somehow" and if he just confessed it, he wouldn't end up being like the type of people who ignore God.
 - With that said, let's get through Bildad's misplaced rant and then get to the important case of how we should see our relationship with God.
16. Verse 16: He is like a well-watered plant in the sunshine, spreading its shoots over the garden; ¹⁷ it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks and looks for a place among the stones. ¹⁸ But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you.' ¹⁹ Surely its life withers away, and from the soil other plants grow.
- Bildad is still off on a tangent saying effectively that people who ignore God do have their "moment in the sun", but like a plant that grows fast due to good soil for support, will also will wither away without it.
 - My favorite example on this is Julius Caesar: Since he lived and ruled over a large portion of the world, people have named their dog Caesar. Compare that to Jesus, who's honored and respected throughout the world. Bildad's right in that many people who ignore God have their moments, but in effect that's all they'll ever get as they'll live forever in hell.
17. Verse 20: "Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers. ²¹ He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. ²² Your enemies will be clothed in shame, and the tents of the wicked will be no more."
- You can summarize Bildad's whole argument with the idea that God will bless you if you only will repent, so get at it Job! Bildad sites a bunch of things that are true about nature and how God usually works, but it doesn't mean Bildad is correct about Job here.
 - Keep in mind in two verses Job will say that "Bildad is correct" in his analysis of how life usually works. Therefore, as we read Chapter 8, we should not reject it as bad advice. It's just a case of wrongly applied. OK enough on that. Time to get to Job's response.
18. Chapter 9, Verse 1: Then Job replied: ² "Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can a mortal be righteous before God? ³ Though one wished to dispute with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand.
- As I've been stating in this lesson, Job opens with a compliment. He wants to Bildad to get the point that his arguments are sound, but there are exceptions to that rule! It's the point that some people do suffer due to circumstances that were not their fault. Think of all the people who've suffered from some horrid accident that wasn't their fault or were born in a state with a disability or even hurt in war. Bildad's cause and effect argument is generally true, but the world is full of exceptions. That's Job's opening point.
 - Then Job gets into an interesting question: Can a person argue with God and win? I recall many years ago, a famous musician wanting to argue with God (Keith Richards). I believe he said he wanted to ask God, "Don't you know who I am? Who are You to judge me?" I don't know if he was kidding, but it makes a great point about who we're arguing with!

- c) That leads back to the question can we "argue" with God? If He explains to us how we've failed to live as He desires, do we have a right to question Him? Do we have a right to ask why should we live by Your rules in the first place? It's the argument of "Why are You in charge anyway? Why do I have to live as You desire?" The fact we can even ponder that question is only because He gave us free will to do so in the first place! What we forget is the simple point that if a God created us in the first place, we must accept the fact He's in charge of us whether we like it or not. It's a little like listening to the judges of a Supreme Court tell us, "This is our decision and you can't appeal it any more!"
 - d) Job's essential point is since we're human, we can't win in an argument with a perfect God no matter how hard we try. It's a waste of time to try and even if we tried many multiple times, we can't win. If that's the case, how do we win? We're getting to that! First Job will explain how God "works" a little better, as that's the theme of these three chapters.
19. Verse 4: His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed? ⁵ He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them in his anger. ⁶ He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. ⁷ He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars. ⁸ He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.
- a) This section is Job saying, "You want proof that God's far greater than anything than what any of us can do? Who "shaped" the mountains in the first place? Explain how the earth is the way it is in the first place without a God who created it? There is the classic argument that if one took a large junkyard, and a jet airplane just appeared out of it, we'd say that it could not be an accident! Yet the human eye is more complex than that airplane and some still argue that the world happened "by accident". The more we grasp how complex is the world we live in, the more we realize there must be a God who created it. That's Job's key argument here.
 - b) Job goes on to explain that the sun will only burn as long as God wants it to. Think about a shooting star, and we realize that "suns" do burn out. From the expanse of the heavens to the waves of the sea, there must be a God that created all of that as it couldn't just have happened by accident. The underlying point is if all that's true, how could we ever make an argument against God if He did all of that in the first place? Job continues in Verse 9.
20. Verse 9: He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south.
- a) The Bear and Orion, the Pleiades are simply "shapes" of the stars as one sees them in the night sky. It doesn't mean Job believed in astrology. It simply means anyone can look up at the stars in the sky, and combine them into shapes that we can give names to.
 - b) The term " constellations of the south" probably refers to star shapes that are only visible in the Southern Hemisphere. I don't know if Job ever traveled there. He grasped the idea that since the earth "moves" and stars are visible in the Northern Hemisphere, there must be other stars that are only visible in the Southern Hemisphere. It's the reminder that the bible is not designed to be a science book, but when it does quote science it is accurate in it's statements about how the universe works!
 - c) From here, Job's going to move from things we can perceive to those we can't!
21. Verse 10: He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. ¹¹ When he passes me, I cannot see him; when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.
- a) The point is we can sense how vast God is by looking at the night sky. However, none of us can perceive how God can watch all of us at the same time. One of my favorite quotes on this is "Every time I try to think how big God is, all I do is get a headache". That's from David Hocking. Just as Job realizes here that a God who's capable of doing all of that can perceive all of Job's life but we can't see how God watches us.
 - b) To borrow another famous quote, "If God is small enough that we could fully understand Him, then He wouldn't be big enough for us to worship." (Evelyn Underhill).
 - c) Anyway, even the oldest bible book (Job) grasped that God is too big to fully grasp!

22. Verse 12: If he snatches away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?'
- a) To give examples of Verse 12, if somebody dies at a young age say of a heart attack or if they are "hit by a car", can we change those facts? Whether we like it or not, only God is aware of how long we'll live. That doesn't mean we're try to end our lives early. All that I'm trying to remind us is that if God knows all things and exists outside of time, then He knows how long anybody or anything will exist.
 - b) Even in Job's case, he's making the point that God allowed Job to suffer the way he is, so who are we to question Him about why things happen? We're effectively seeing a rebuke to Bildad's argument that Job must be suffering due to some unrepentant sin. Job's saying that "God does what God does and who are we to question Him?"
23. Verse 13: God does not restrain his anger; even the cohorts of Rahab cowered at his feet.
- a) "Rahab" is a name of a mythical, but powerful beast. Whether or not Rahab referred to a literal animal or not, the point is God has no fear of anything any "creature" can do. The implication is even as powerful as Satan is, Satan is no match for God nor does God fear anything that He has created. The underlying point is that even if Satan allowed what is happening to Job, who is Job to question God about why he's suffering the way he is!
 - b) This point leads Job "full circle". It reminds him that Job's not powerful enough or smart enough to question why God does what He does in the first place:
24. Verse 14: "How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words to argue with him?"¹⁵ Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy.¹⁶ Even if I summoned him and he responded, I do not believe he would give me a hearing.¹⁷ He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds for no reason.¹⁸ He would not let me regain my breath but would overwhelm me with misery.
- a) Job's essential point is "How could I even argue my case against God? I couldn't even if I tried a million times! All I could do is plead for mercy, as I could never win against God. Even if I tried to present my case to God, I'd be instantly crushed as I can't win!"
 - b) Job's getting to the point that many Christians have come to realize. The only way we can even relate to God would be if there was a "thing" that was fully God as well as fully man. In effect, Job's going to make his case for Christianity without using that term! However, Job first wants to emphasize the point to Bildad that even though God works the way He works, we have no right to question Him in the first place.
25. Verse 19: If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty! And if it is a matter of justice, who will summon him?²⁰ Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty.
- a) This continues the "I can't win against God even if I gave it my best shot" argument. Even if I never sinned once in my life, I'd still "blow it" as I'm not smart enough to argue before a perfect God.
 - b) Let me explain this idea another way: Would God have every right to send us to hell even if we've never sinned once in our lives? It's His world so therefore He's got every right to do what He wants when He wants. One of the basic principals about God is that He's just because we accept Him as perfect. If we are as truly innocent as Him, He'd let us be with Him forever. Since we can never be perfect, we must be perfectly forgiven to be with Him forever. That's a key aspect of the Gospel message right there. The problem with saying I was good "80% of the time" to pick a number at random, is we don't know what's the right percentage that's good enough for God. If He's perfect by definition, I'd argue we must be 100% perfect to be with Him forever. Since that's not possible, we must be 100% forgiven to be with Him. That's another part of the Gospel message with that argument.
 - c) Anyway, Job knows he's not 100% perfect, so it's a waste of time to argue with God.
26. Verse 21: "Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself; I despise my own life.
- a) Job is not saying he is perfect. He just realizes that once he's confessed his sins, he doesn't have to go through life feeling guilty over sins he's already confessed.

- b) The next question is Job said he has no concern for his own life. It could be a statement of his horrid health and as far as he's concerned, he's as good as dead. A more positive view of that statement is Job realized that God's judging his life and therefore all the things that we do that don't ultimately make a difference for God, don't matter. You could argue this either way.
- c) Before I move on to Verse 22, I have an incredible urge for a "seventh inning stretch". For those of you who don't know anything about American baseball, it's a tradition about the two-thirds mark of the game to stand to stretch before watching the last part of the game. By now, most of us get this lesson: Job's got a friend who is saying, "Just confess your sins and all of this will go away". Job's response is in effect, "I've got nothing to confess, and if I did, who am I to argue with God?" We all of us get that by now. So why should read the rest of this lesson, if "that's it"?
- i) I could cheat and say, "it's the bible meaning God wants us to learn this stuff".
 - ii) A better answer is to realize how we should respond to the "just confess it", type of argument when we shouldn't feel guilty over sins we've confessed.
 - iii) Finally, realize that Job through all his pain and suffering, still needs wants to trust in God and explain his trust in Him through all of it. Job teaches us that pain often goes "on and on" and how we can still trust in God despite everything we face in a lifetime no matter how good or bad. Job has plenty of good lessons that can apply to our lives if we ever go through our own form of suffering, or at the least be of a help to others dealing with pain. There, now we're all stretched, back to Job.
27. Verse 22: It is all the same; that is why I say, 'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'
- a) Job's main point is that all lives come to an end, no matter what occurred within that life. I believe he's making this point as if to say, "Yes, I'm in horrid physical condition and I'm in a lot of physical pain. However, it's not due to sin, it's just what I must deal with now!"
28. Verse 23: When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent.
- a) As I said during the "stretch", tragedies just occur in life. Often it brings death. Job is not saying God "mocks" at how people suffer. It's an analogy that effectively says bad things occur and people suffer as if God doesn't care. Job is suffering horribly and nothing Job is doing is changing that situation, so it seems like "despair" is all there is. Let's be honest, if we're suffering horribly, often we complain to God or whoever is listening, that God does not care for us and we need somebody or something to pour out our complaint to. That is what Job's doing at this low point in his life. That's all it is. Therefore he continues:

29. Verse 24: When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it? ²⁵ "My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy. ²⁶ They skim past like boats of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey. ²⁷ If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile,'

 - a) Since Job's going through a "woe is me" moment, it's probably best if I just laid out a big bunch of verses, as essentially they all make the same point. That point is "I'm enduring a lot of suffering, and there's nothing I can't figure out any way to change this situation. It's not going to change by confessing any unconfessed sin. Despite the fact Job can't think of any unconfessed sin. Job's well aware that Bildad won't consider Job to be innocent.

30. Verse 28: I still dread all my sufferings, for I know you will not hold me innocent. ²⁹ Since I am already found guilty, why should I struggle in vain?

 - a) It's the "I can't convince you otherwise argument, so why am I bothering to try?" Job is at a point with Bildad where he's giving up trying to convince him of his innocence as there is no way to prove it other than him claiming it to be so.

31. Verse 30: Even if I washed myself with soap and my hands with washing soda, ³¹ you would plunge me into a slime pit so that even my clothes would detest me.

 - a) Job's pounding the point by saying even if he's completely clean, you'd still condemn me. He's using physical cleanness and then being thrown in a slime pit as a visual example.

32. Verse 31: "He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. ³³ If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, ³⁴ someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. ³⁵ Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.
- a) Job now turns his focus back to God saying in effect, "If there was somebody or something that can fully relate to God as well as fully relate to my pain, then and only then could I or any human make an argument to God to defend myself".
 - b) By the way, Job's not saying if there was a mediator, then my pain would go away. What his argument is about is the idea that God's too big and perfect to relate to, which is why a mediator is needed in the first place.
 - c) This gets back to the opening question of this lesson, of why is Jesus necessary? Can't we just be forgiven of our sins and that's that? Can't God just "skywrite" I forgive you so we know we are forgiven? First, God wants to trust that He exists, so no "skywriting". Next, how can we ever know that God can relate to our problems unless He became human for that purpose? There's the classic illustration of a bird stuck in a house, and the owner can not communicate to the bird how to escape. The owner thought, the only way was for me to become a bird and then that bird could follow me to freedom. That is an illustration of why God Himself had to become a man as to solve Job's dilemma here.
 - d) Job got the idea that God is "too big" to approach and we can't argue with Him. Therefore he understood that a mediator is necessary who can relate to us as humans and still have that mediator be God Himself. That's the Gospel in a thought.
 - e) Meanwhile, Job's got more to say before we start "Round #3" in the next lesson.
33. Chapter 10, Verse 1: "I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.
- a) At this point, Job's going to go on another of his "pity party" speeches. He's still suffering in too much physical pain to ignore it. Let's be honest, when we are really hurting due to either physical or emotional pain, it's practically impossible to have "mind over matter" as to not think about it. All we can do is pour out our hearts to God or to whoever else will listen. In effect, Job's done defending Bildad's arguments. Now he just wants to ask God, why are You allowing all of this to occur? It's sort of a prayer but it's more of a question of why is God allowing this suffering to occur.
 - b) OK then, now that we get that, let's continue:
34. Verse 2: I will say to God: Do not condemn me, but tell me what charges you have against me.
- a) This is the classic question one asks in pain, "Hey God, what did I do to deserve this?" It is a reminder that God doesn't owe us an answer for how life works. God explains to us how we're to live to glorify Him. He's not required to explain Himself to us. Our job is simply to honor Him as God and use our lives as a living witness for Him.
 - b) With that said, Job continues His questions to God in Verse 3?
35. Verse 3: Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the schemes of the wicked?
- a) This the classic question of "Why do you allow me to suffer (or good people to suffer) at the same time that You allow wicked people to prosper?"
 - i) Let me take a stab at that question while I'm in the neighborhood. God allows the wicked to prosper in effect because that's all the pleasure they'll get for eternity. It is also a matter of good people standing up for God to oppose them. Because God allows free will, evil will exist. What God desires is the boldness of good people to stand up to such evil and call it out for what it is.
 - ii) As to why God allows good people to suffer, I can't explain all suffering. The bible teaches that for believers, God allows us to go through things ultimately to glorify Him. (That's Romans 8:28). Obviously there are things God wants to teach us by us going through horrid things, but ultimately it's there for His glory somehow!

- b) Anyway, Job doesn't know all of that. He just knows he's in tremendous pain and needs to pour out that pain to God. At the same time he ponders, why me? I suspect most of us go through moments like that in our lives. My favorite prayer in such moments is to ask God to explain to me or others what is it He wants me to learn from that experience.
 - c) In the end of this book, Job gets back all he lost and doubles his possessions. Until we get there, he needs to figure out that God allows good people to go through things ultimately for God's glory. That's why we're going through all these arguments here.
36. Verse 4: Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a mortal sees? ⁵ Are your days like those of a mortal or your years like those of a man, ⁶ that you must search out my faults and probe after my sin-- ⁷ though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand?
- a) This is the "Hey God, are you human enough to relate to my pain" argument. Job realizes that God is not mad at him for some unconfessed sin, but he also realizes nobody can help with his dilemma. Job realizes God's in charge of his life, but can't figure out why he must suffer so much, if he's been faithful to God. Job pleading for an explanation from God for why he's suffering! He's asking God, "Can you really relate to what I'm dealing with?"
 - b) In effect, we're reading of Job's plea for a mediator, as he wants someone who's capable of relating to God as well as himself. It's as if Job wants to successfully plead his case to God of his innocence, but realizes that unless a mediator exists, it is not possible. We're back to my question of, "Why can't God just forgive us and that's that?" The answer is to realize if He is perfect, that means He can't just forgive us, as the price of justice must be paid. Lots of people throughout history have realized this, but few people before Jesus time realized that the only solution is for God Himself to pay for our sins. That's the Gospel message!
 - c) OK then, back to Job.
37. Verse 8: "Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? ⁹ Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? ¹⁰ Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, ¹¹ clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? ¹² You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.
- a) Job's effectively saying, "Hey God, I'm well aware that You made me. I'm painfully aware that You allowed all of this to occur to me, both the good and the bad. I'm aware that my time on earth is limited. Since I can't think of any sin that I haven't already confessed, why am I suffering so badly right now? What did I do to deserve this?"
 - i) Pause and consider all the young people who've suffered from cancer. Consider a person who got horribly injured due to no fault of their own. Think of people who suffer from some sort of physical ailment. My point is many people could ask God the same question Job's asking, "Why me?"
 - ii) Again, I can't explain all the tragedies that exist. I just know that all (big emphasis on all) things do work for God's good (here's the important part) for those who do trust Him. God doesn't owe us explanations for tragedies, but there are lessons for us to learn from going through them. The lesson for Job is about still trusting Him in spite of all he's going through. At the least, that's the lesson for all of us whether we're suffering at the moment or not.
 - iii) With that point made, let's get through the last of Job's points here:
38. Verse 13: "But this is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind: ¹⁴ If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished. ¹⁵ If I am guilty--woe to me!
- a) Job is well aware that God punishes the guilty. Job's well aware that He designed us with a built in conscious. Unfortunately, when people ignore that conscious long enough we'll get to a point where our heart is so hardened we literally can't turn back to Him. In effect we're back to Bildad's arguments that the guilty don't get away with stuff forever. We see Job acknowledging Bildad's got a point. The problem is that point doesn't apply to Job.

- b) Job realized that if he was guilty of some horrid sin, he wouldn't be able to get away with it as the guilt would eat him alive!
 - c) Let me quickly ask a related question: Can someone guilty of a horrid sin be forgiven? If we killed lots of people, is heaven even possible? Jesus stated the only unforgivable sin is in effect a lifetime denial that Jesus is God. That doesn't give us a license to sin. We'll still have to suffer in this lifetime for sins and crimes we've committed. The question really is, how much punishment is enough? Are we required to do some "purgatory time" if we're guilty of some horrid crime? (By the way, the bible has no mention of any purgatory.) All I'm saying is God decides who will get to live with Him forever. If God decides He wants to forgive murderers who've confessed that sin and turned from it, that's His business and not ours. We may want justice for those who've hurt us or our loved ones. That's how life works in this world. A perfect God is perfectly loving as well as perfectly just. Therefore He's willing to forgive the most horrid of sins if we truly turn from them and confess it as not living as He desires. Again, it's not a license to sin, but just a realization of how God is willing to forgive us of all sins, if we trust in Him, Himself paying for those sins.
 - d) OK then, back to Job:
39. Verse 15: Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction. ¹⁶ If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me. ¹⁷ You bring new witnesses against me and increase your anger toward me; your forces come against me wave upon wave.
- a) This is Job telling God, "I can't win". Job's saying that even if he never committed any sort of sin, he's still not God and he still must suffer the fate of all humans. Even if Job claimed to be "someone special", Job realizes He's not God and being someone special doesn't give us a license to think for example, we're worth more than other people, just because we are say famous or wealthy. This is the reminder that, "He's God and we're not". We must deal with that fact as we go through life.
 - i) OK so what? A reason this story is here is when we face some sort of horrid pain it is a reminder that God's still there, He still cares for us and whether we realize it or not, there is some grand purpose for us to go through those situations. It's just another reminder that "He's God and we're not" and we must accept that there is a reason for God to put us through what we're going through whether we can fix it or not.
 - b) Sometimes in horrid situations, all we can do is cry out to God or whoever else is willing to put up with us in that pain. The good news is God gives a lot of people a special gift of comfort to help those in pain. I'm endlessly grateful to such people and I myself make an effort at times to try to comfort others when they are in pain. It's how we help others in a hour of need like Job is going through here.
 - c) Job's saying here even if I try to "rise up above it" (the pain), God's still far more powerful than anything I do and the waves of pain still hurt even if I "suck it up" to deal with it.
40. Verse 18: "Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. ¹⁹ If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave! ²⁰ Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy ²¹ before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and deep shadow, ²² to the land of deepest night, of deep shadow and disorder, where even the light is like darkness."
- a) Unfortunately Job ends this argument with another "woe is me" moment. He can't see of any solution to his pain. He's in so much physical and emotional pain, he can't see a way to end it other than God ending his life. He's effectively asking God here, "Hey is it almost over yet? How much more of this do I have to take?" Unfortunately for you and me that answer is many more chapters. Often God has to allow us to get to a really low moment when all we have is Him before He effectively says to us, "Do you still trust Me now, even through all of this?" That's what God's asking Job at this moment in his life.

- b) The good news for Job is that God will bless him in the end with twice as much stuff as he had in the first chapter of the book. Job doesn't know that and here in the early-middle of the story all Job can do is cry out in pain. Unfortunately, I've had those moments where I have questioned God, "Why are you allowing me to go through this?" It's not a plea for a suicide, but just an explanation of why is this happening to me? Many times in life we'll go through moments where we think, we can't fix this, all we can do is deal with the pain and plead for God to change things.
 - i) So why doesn't God respond? Obviously Job's trusting in God alone through all of this. Why doesn't God help Job if there's nothing to confess? Best I can tell, is there is more for Job to learn through all this suffering. Remember why it started in the first place: It was a test to see if Job will sin. So far, he's been passing that test with flying colors. However, God wants Job to endure more rounds of this testing with his "friends" pounding on him for many more chapters.
 - c) OK John, this is a sad story and we get it. Why read further? Because a time may come in our own lives when we're this "low" or we may have to comfort someone that low. We've got the book of Job in the bible for a good reason: As I've been stating the Gospel message is woven throughout this book as I've pointed out in these chapters. Over and above that, reading chapter after chapter about Job's fate gives us perspective about how to deal with life through whatever God allows us to go through. Therefore, we plow on! My gratitude for reading all of this and I hope you join me as we work our way through the rest of this book. With that said, time to close in prayer:
41. Heavenly Father, First, I can assume that many people will read this as they deal with moments of horrid pain. Help all of us to learn what it is You want us to learn from such moments. Help us to comfort those who are hurting as we use our lives as a living witness for You through all of our lives. You've separated us from nonbelievers so we can use our lives to glorify You by being a witness for You. Comfort us through our suffering and help us to be comforters to those who are hurting as well. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.