back to title page

Title: The Symphony Of Suffering

Bible Book: Job 0

Author: Steve Wagers

Subject: Suffering

Objective: There is hardly a question more difficult for most people than the inquiry into the causes and purposes of human suffering. The Bible does not dodge this subject; on the contrary, the Scriptures describe the trials of mankind and show how God works in and through them. Dr. Steve Wagers continues his Book by Book study of God's Word by sharing a message on the Book of Job.

Introduction

Booker T. Washington was born in slavery.

Thomas Edison was deaf.

Abraham Lincoln was born of illiterate parents.

Lord Byron had a club foot.

Robert Louis Stevenson had tuberculosis.

Alexander Pope was a hunchback.

Admiral Nelson had only one eye.

Julius Caesar was an epileptic.

Louis Pasteur was so near-sighted that he couldn't find his way in his laboratory without glasses.

Helen Keller could not hear or see, but who graduated with honors from a famous college.

But all made history in spite of their handicaps.
It's safe to say that a man named Job made history in spite of his handicaps as well. If God uses suffering as a symphony for his saints, then Job would have been the master conductor.
The book of Job begins the Poetic division of the Old Testament.
The Law Books: Genesis-Deuteronomy
The Legacy Books: Joshua-Esther
The Linguistic Books: Job-Ecclesiastes
Alfred Tennyson called Job, "The great poem, whether of ancient or modern literature."
Job is not a fictitious person. He is a real character, mentioned in the OT (Ezekiel 14: 20) and the NT (James 5: 11). Most believe that the book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible.
John Phillips comments that "Almost certainly Job lived before the giving of the law, and some claim he lived before Abraham, placing the book between Genesis 11-12."
If Job is the oldest chronological book in the Bible, then its authorship must be considered. Was it written by Job himself? Was it written years later about Job? Or, was God the author of it?
The book of Job is written in poetic prose.
(1-3): Prologue
(4-41): Dialogue
(42): Epilogue
Job asks questions that have been asked for centuries: "Why do godly people suffer? Why do the wicked prosper? Why is God silent? Why does God allow tragedy and trouble?"

Central Theme

A righteous man is tested by trial, tragedy and tribulation. He loses everything, but is faithful to God and is restored with twice as much as he had to begin with.

Central Truth

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." (13: 15)

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." (19: 25)

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (23: 10)

Central Thrust

Suffering is not restricted to the ungodly. When suffering visits the Christian, and there is no explanation on this side of Heaven, we must rest in the knowledge of the fact that God is to loving to be unkind, and to wise to make a mistake.

Genesis: The Book of Ruin

Exodus: The Book of Redemption

Leviticus: The Book of Regulations

Numbers: The Book of Readiness

Deuteronomy: The Book of Remembrance

Joshua: The Book of Realization

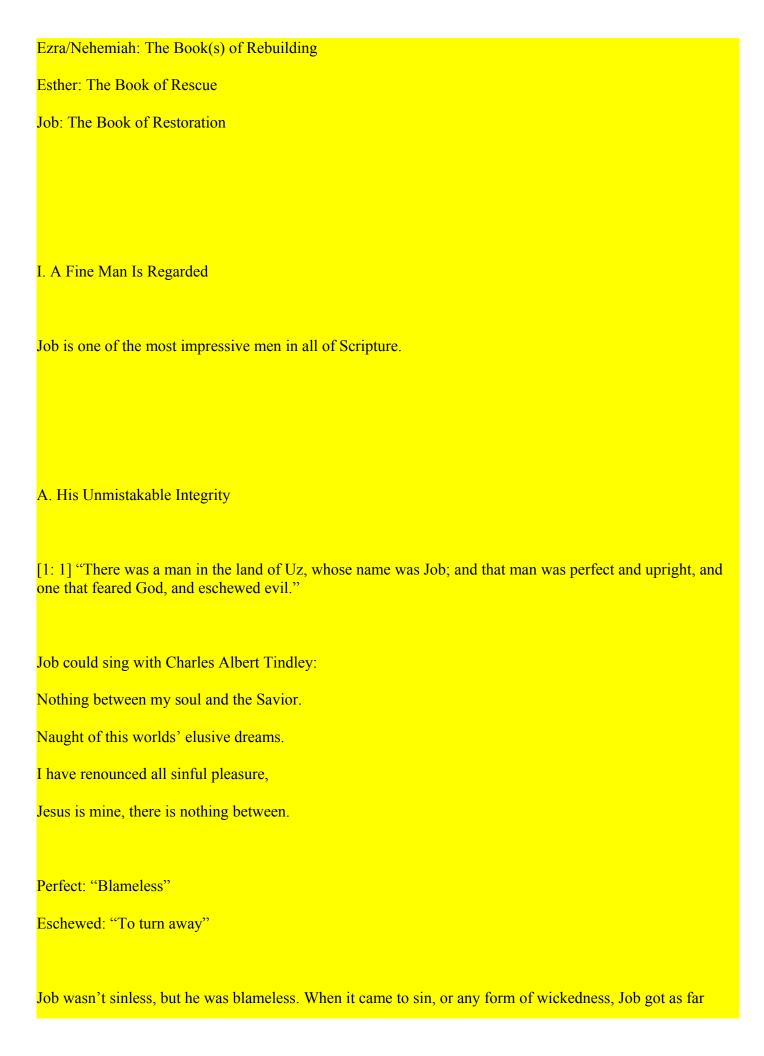
Judges: The Book of Regret

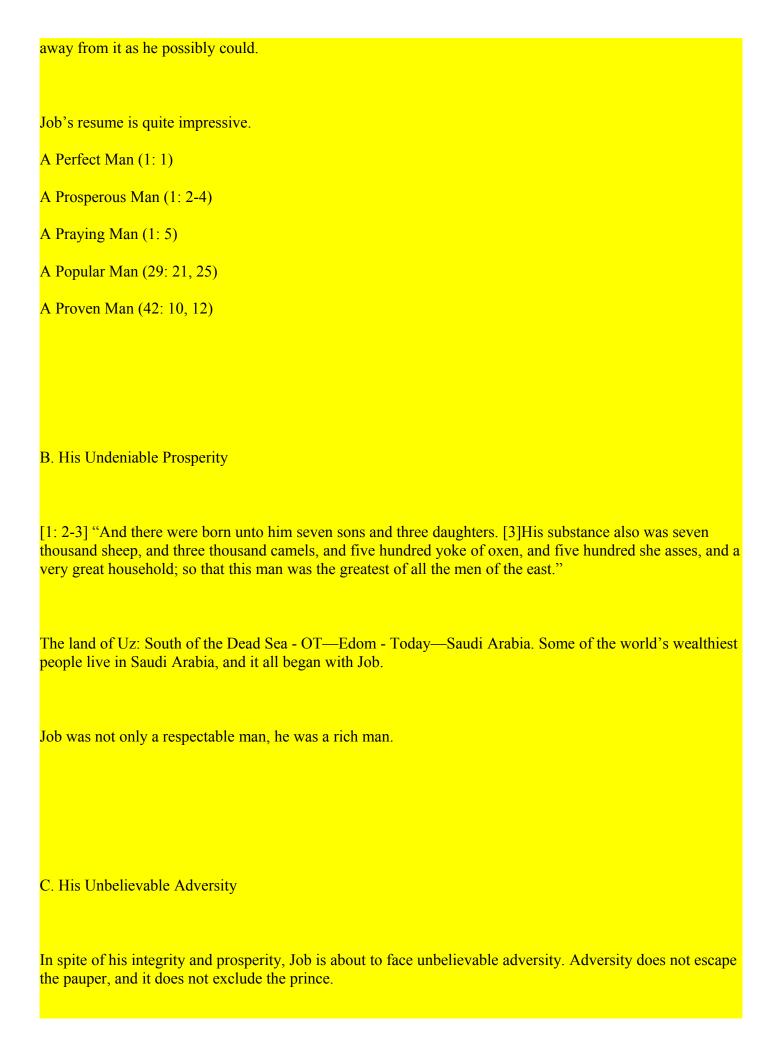
Ruth: The Book of Romance

1-2 Samuel: The Book(s) of Royalty

1-2 Kings: The Book(s) of Revolt

1-2 Chronicles: The Book(s) of Renewal



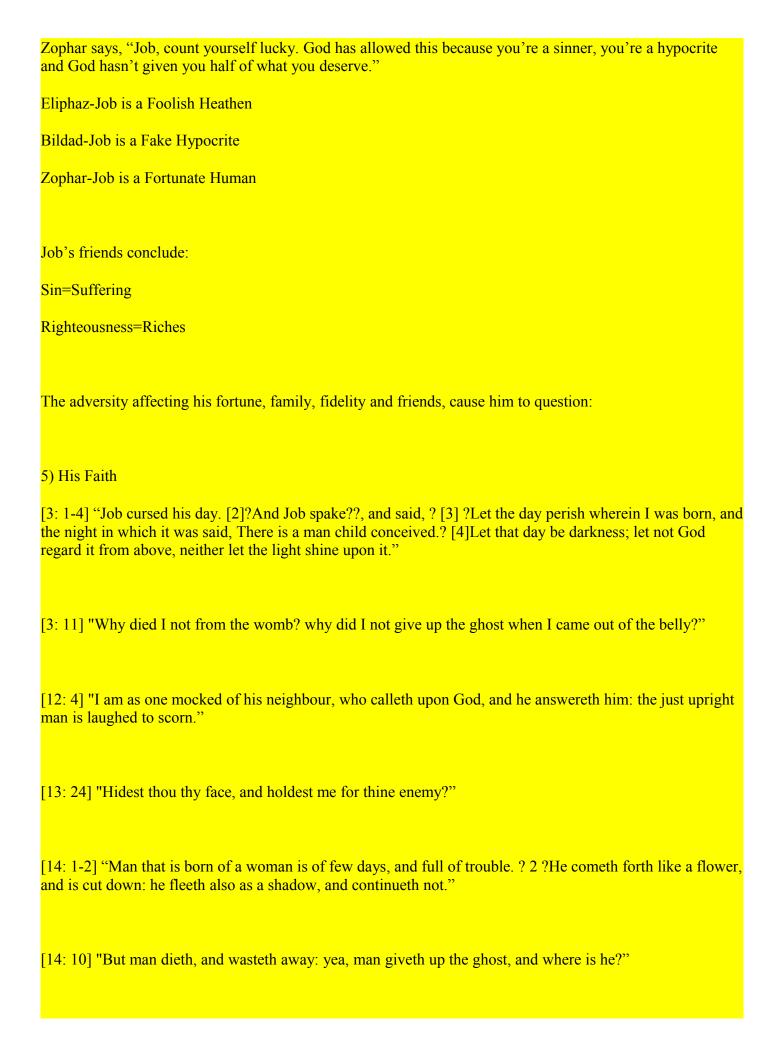


Job's adversity is the main character of the book. It engulfed every area of his life. The amazing thing about Job's adversity is that it came at the recommendation of God Himself.
[1: 6] "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them."
God, who is presiding over a meeting of heavenly beings, is about to assign his angelic messengers specific tasks to perform. All of the sudden, Lucifer, the former angel of light appears.
[1: 7] "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."
God offers a suggestion.
[1: 8] "Hast thou considered?? my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"
Satan, "the accuser of the brethren" brings an accusation against both Job and God.
[1: 10] "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance? is increased in the land."
Satan's accusation is that nobody is good without a cause. Nobody loves God just for the sake of loving God. Satan said in effect, "Everyone is selfish. Men only love God because God is blessing them. Job loves you only because of what You have given him, not because of who You are. "God says, "Well, we'll just see about that."
He hands Satan a permission slip.
[1:11-12] "But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. ? [12] And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

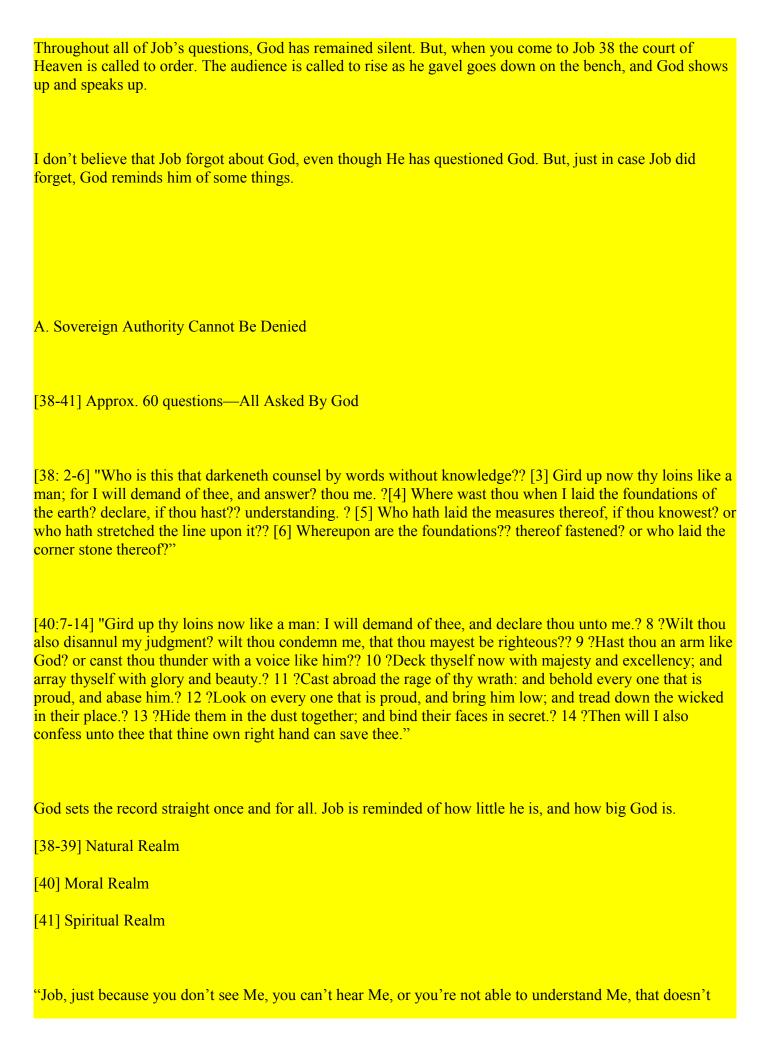
I used to say that I wanted God to brag on me; but, that was until I realized that Job's trouble came all because God bragged on him.
What follows is some of the most unbelievable adversity every experienced by any one person. In just 1 day; 24 hours, 1440 minutes, 86,400 seconds Job encountered a lifetime worth of adversity. It's all because God served Job up on a silver platter to be tempted and tried.
1. His Fortune
[1: 14-15] He loses 500 yoke of oxen
[1: 16] He loses 7000 sheep
[1: 17] He loses 3000 camels
2. His Family
[1: 18-19] All 10 children die-Visits 10 different funeral homes
[2: 9-10] "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. [10]But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."
3. His Fidelity

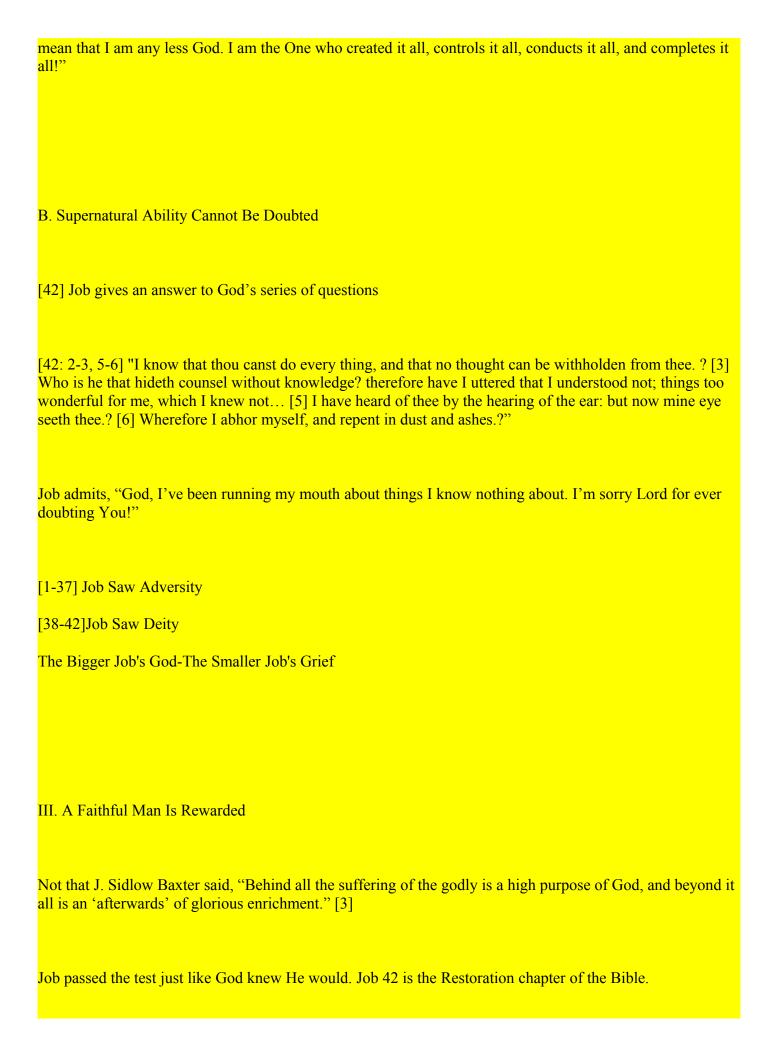
[2: 7-8] "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. [8]And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes."
Most believe that Job suffers from black leprosy, an excruciating, debilitating disease. His only means of relief was a "potsherd," a broken piece of a pot.
God Uses Broken Things
4. His Friends
Times of prosperity bring out people who want to be your friend. Times of adversity show the true color of those you thought were your friends.
Job's 3 friends cause no one to want to have any enemies. They came to Sympathize, but then they began to Sermonize.
[19: 14] "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me."
a) Eliphaz: Voice of Philosophy (Mysticism)
[4: 12-17] "Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. [13]In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.
[14]Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. [15]Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. [16]It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying.
[17]Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?"
Eliphaz uses philosophy to try to explain why Job is experiencing such suffering. He claims that God gave him a vision, or an experience.

The Devil Gives Experiences Too
The Experience Must Line Up With Scripture
Eliphaz says, "Job, the reason God has allowed this is because you are a sinner.
b) Bildad: Voice of History (Traditionalism)
[8: 8, 10] "For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers [10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?"
[8: 3-6] "Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? [4] If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression. [5] If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes and make thy supplication to the Almighty. [6] If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous."
Bildad wants to review the history books and see what the ancient fathers would have to say about Job's condition.
[8: 13-14] "So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish. [14] Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web."
Bildad says, "The reason God has allowed this is not only because you're a sinner, but you're a hypocrite as well."
WCII.
c) Zophar: Voice of Orthodoxy (Legalism)
Zophar is the harshest of all Job's friends. He has a rulebook for a mind. He's got all the answers of orthodoxy/legalism.
[11:5-6] "But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee. [6]And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know Therefore That God Exacteth Of Thee Less Than Thine Iniquity Deserveth."



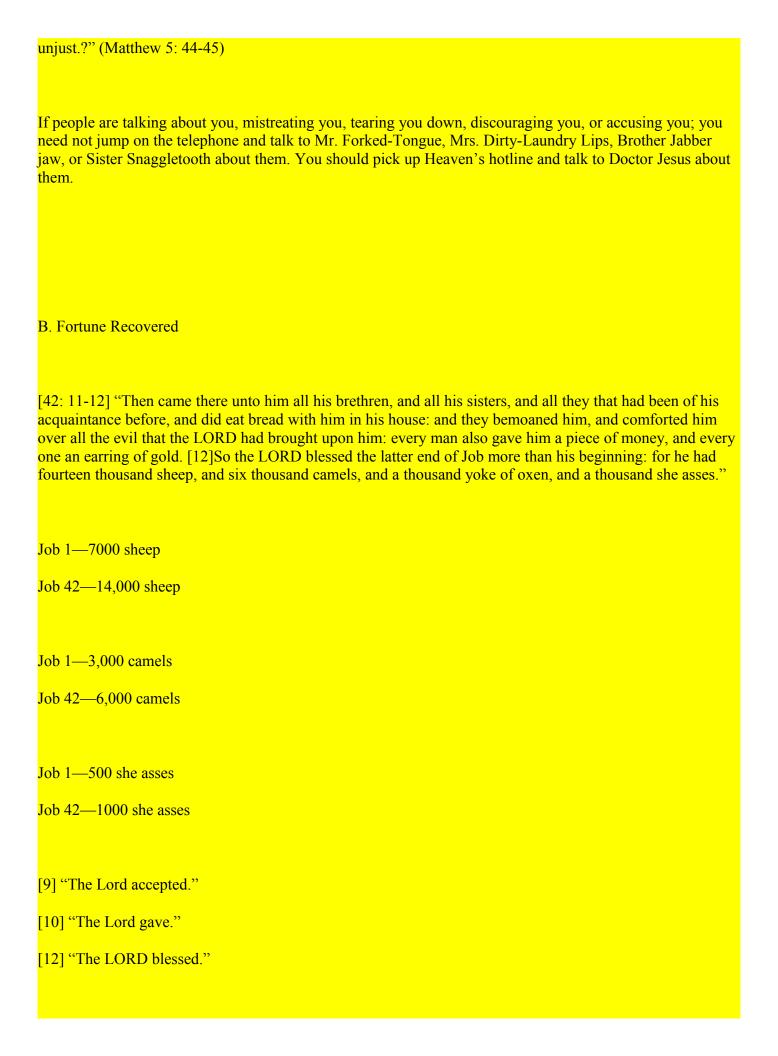
[16: 11-12] "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. ? [12] I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark."
[19: 8-13] "He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.? [9] He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.? [10] He hath destroyed me on every side, and am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.? [11] He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.? [12] His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.? [13] He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me."
I have often heard people say, "We shouldn't question God." But, Job did. In fact, he questioned God repeatedly. He questioned his faith. He questioned his future. He questioned his Father.
There is a vast difference between questioning God and challenging God. Questioning God is human nature, because we aren't God. We don't understand His ways, His workings, and His will.
But, when a person charges God they are bringing an accusation to God. They are challenging God's authority and ability. They are shaking their fist in the face of God in defiance and rebellion.
This was something of which Job wasn't guilty.
[1: 22] "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."
I am certain of 2 things: (1) There Is A God - (2) I'm Not Him
He didn't give Job an explanation, and He's never given me an explanation. Someone has well said, "We don't live by explanations, we live by promises."
II. A Forgetful Man Is Reminded





A. Friends Rebuked Do you remember Eliphaz the voice of Philosophy that said, "Job, you're a Foolish Heathen?" Do you remember Bildad the voice of HISTORY that said, "Job, you're a Fake Hypocrite?" Do you remember Zophar the voice of Orthodoxy that said, "Job, you're a Fortunate Human?" Well...they're back in Job 42. They come to present an offering to God. [42: 7-8] "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.? [8] ?Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him?? will I accept." These 3 men have played the part of spiritual know-it-alls in their critique of Job's life. Job has been down, and they have kicked him while he was down. They come to give an offering, but God tells them that he will not accept their offering. Rather, they are to go and have Job pray for them, and God will accept Job's offering of thanksgiving. I can just see these 3 boys, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar as they try to digest crow for lunch. They walk up to Job, clear their throat and say, "Brother Job, uh, would you mind praying for us?" What a turn of events! [42: 9-10] "So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. [10] And The Lord Turned The Captivity Of Job, When He Prayed For His Friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." I wonder if, while Jesus was preaching the greatest sermon ever preached titled, "The Sermon on the Mount," He was thinking of Job's story when He said:

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;? [45] ?That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the



Job was accepted. Job was given. Job was blessed. Who did it? God did it! Job may not have demanded it, desired it, or deserved it; but, God delivered it.	
Any Gift Of God Is A Gift Of Grace	
C. Family Reborn	
Job received double fortune/not Family	
Job 1—7 sons/3 daughters	
Job 42: 13—7 sons/3 daughters	
Can I Suggest That The Reason Job Didn't Receive Double Children Is Because He Didn't Lose The First	
Children. They Were Dead, But Not Lost. Job Knew Exactly Where They Were.	
Names of his 3 daughters	
[42: 14] "And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch."	
Jemima: "Beautiful"	
Kezia: "Fragrant"	
Kerenhappuch: "Plenteous"	
[42: 15] "And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren."	
I can just imagine Job sitting on his porch. He looks like hell, he smells like hell, because he has been through hell. He looks down at his arms and can still see the scab of his boils. He vividly remembers the day, which seems like an eternity, where he lost it all.	
But, then, he remembers that God brought him to it, and God brought him through it. He remembers that God guided, but God also provided. He remembers that, even when he may have forgotten God, God did not forget him, forsake him, fool him, flee him, or fail him.	

Then, he looks and sees Jemima playing in the yard and says to himself, "That's the most Beautiful sight I have ever seen." Kezia jumps up in his lap and Job thinks, "That's the most Fragrant, and best smelling kid I've ever been around. He looks at Kerenhappuch and considers how Plentous and bountifully God has blessed him. Names Are His Testimony Of Thanksgiving Unto God. He is reminded that what the devil tried to use to defeat him. God used to deliver him. He sees that what the devil meant to crush him, God meant to crown him. He understands that what the enemy tried to use to humiliate him, God used to elevate him. He knows that what the devil tried to make ugly, God had made Beautiful Through Jemima. He knows that what the devil tried to make a foul odor, God had made Fragrant Through Kezia. He knows that what the devil tried to use to deplete him, God used to make him Plenteous Through Kerenhappuch. Devil: Destroy you/God: Distinguish you Devil: Demote you/God: Promote you Devil: Crush you/God: Crown you Devil: Break you/God: Bless you Devil: Ruin you/God: Reward you D. Future Revealed [19: 25] "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Job: Oldest book/oldest man

Looked thousands of years into the future
Redeemer: Virgin Birth/Vicarious Death
Liveth: Victorious Resurrection
Stand: Visible Return (Second Coming)
In the midst of suffering, sorrow and sickness, Job could Testify:
[19: 26-27] "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. [27]Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."
In the midst of despair, doubt, and facing death, Job could Trust:
[13: 15] "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."
In midst of trial, trouble, tragedy and tribulation, Job could Triumph:
[1: 21] "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."
When I was young I read the remarkable novel, "Treasure Island," by Robert Louis Stevenson. His father was a chief engineer in establishing lighthouses all up and down the coast of Scotland. While just a boy, his father took him on an ocean voyage inspecting the lighthouses and the towers along the coast of England. They were not out for very long, when suddenly a tremendous storm came upon them. For over 24 hours they literally fought for their lives.
During the course of the storm, Robert Louis Stevenson's father made his way up on deck instructing his son to stay below. There was only one man up there, the captain of the ship. The waves were so boisterous; the winds were so loud; the rain was so hard; and, the storm was so strong that he had taken a rope and literally strapped himself to the mast of the ship so he would not be swept into the ocean.
When Robert Louis Stevenson's father finally made it to the deck, he took one look at the face of the captain, and without saying a word, went back downstairs into his cabin. With his little boy waiting at the door, he heard him asked, "Daddy, are we going to drown? Is the ship going down? Are we going to die?" His father picked him up, held him to his chest, and said, "No son, we are going to make it through the storm." Young Robert said, "Daddy, how can you be so sure?" His father said, "Son, I just looked into the captain's face, and

everything is going to be all right."
Job looked into the face of the captain, and when we look in the face of the captain, we will endure the symphony of suffering.
Endnotes
1) ""What the Bible is All About," Henrietta Mears, pg. 183.
2) "Exploring the Scriptures," John Phillips, pg. 91.
3) IBID, pg. 92