



THE
DEFENDER
OF GOD

UNDERSTANDING
THE BOOK OF JOB

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The Defender of God

What is the gospel? The gospel is simply God's plan to save us. It's the method He uses to lead us to heaven. And it's designed to work within the requirements of His law. Thus, the law and the gospel work together to bring us to heaven.

In her classic book, *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White declares that "to know God is to love Him" (p22). Herein lies the secret of the gospel. When you truly know God, you'll be drawn to love Him. And when you truly love God, you will gladly serve and honour Him. Life experience reveals that it's not a burden to obey or serve those we love. Rather, the labour of love is a joy to the soul. In a similar way, when we truly know God, we will love Him instinctively, and it will be a joy to serve Him. By default, sin will become hateful to us.

Nevertheless, we're not to be ignorant of Satan's devices. Bearing in mind that to know God is to love Him, and to love Him is the key to overcoming sin, what do you think would be Satan's primary device to draw away souls? Undoubtedly, it would be to darken the knowledge of God and misrepresent His character, so that men can neither know nor understand Him. Indeed, an incorrect knowledge of God not only affects one's relationship with Him, but the way one chooses to live their life.

Ellen White reveals that "Satan is determined that men shall not see the love of God which led Him to give His only-begotten Son to save a lost race" (1 Selected Messages p156). Satan is determined in this because he knows that once someone gains a correct knowledge of God's love - which led Him to give His only begotten Son to save them - they will love Him in return. Through doctrines such as the trinity and original sin, Satan has almost wholly obliterated the knowledge of God's love. In other ways also, Satan aims to mystify and falsify the name of God, so that men obtain an incorrect perception of His character.

This theme is exemplified in the book of Job - a book containing many

precious lessons and parallels for the last days. Despite having a wonderful ending, the story of Job is in many ways a tragic account. It all begins with a dialogue between God and Satan. Interestingly, the dialogue is initiated by God who asks Satan: “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him upon the earth.” Job 1:8. Satan replies in verses 9 and 10 by stating:

Job 1:9 ...Doth Job fear God for nought?

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 infers that the reason why Job is upright and faithful is because he’s been so greatly blessed. Thus, Satan challenges God to “put forth thine hand” and remove those blessings, for he is convinced that as a result Job “will curse thee to thy face”.

With divine wisdom, God allows Satan to afflict Job and his family. In a single day, Job loses his servants, cattle, property, and even his children. In fact, Job loses everything except for his wife and his physical health. And yet we read that “in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Job 1:22. As a result, the dialogue between God and Satan resumes. In chapter 2 we read:

Job 2:3 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

On two occasions God calls Job “a perfect and an upright man”, and He honours Job for holding fast his integrity. As the dialogue continues, Satan expands his original charge.

Job 2:4 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

2:5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Satan's initial accusation was proven to be false, yet he insists that if Job loses the blessing of his physical health, he will surely "curse thee to thy face". In response, God tells Satan: "Behold he is in thine hand; but save his life." (Verse 6). Here we see that God has sovereignty over each soul. No one can touch a hair on your head unless God allows it. And as this story reveals, when God does allow suffering to come upon you, it is for your ultimate and eternal good.

At this point, all Job has left is his wife and his physical health. Now he is afflicted with boils and suffering excruciating pain while still lamenting the loss of his children. In the midst of ashes, he scrapes sores from off his body. What happens next reveals why Satan did not destroy Job's wife. In verse 9 we read:

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Remember Satan's accusation. He claimed that Job would curse God to His face. And now he uses Job's wife to tempt Job to do that very thing. Although Job's wife had also lost everything, she did not possess the same trusting faith as her husband. The words she speaks to Job - to "curse God, and die" - are an important lesson for us. There may be times in your Christian walk when your loved ones and closest friends won't understand you or be there to support you. This is what Job experienced. Yet did Job remain faithful? Let us read Job's response to his wife.

Job 2:10 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.

Yes, Job remained faithful. Of course, God already knew that he would. So why did God permit the trial to come upon him? Here is another lesson for us. In the last days, the saints will lose prosperity, property, loved ones,

friends, and their health to some degree. At that time, the story of Job will be an immense encouragement to them.

Indeed, there was a deeper reason as to why God allowed Job to suffer this test. Notice the following statement, in which Ellen White explains how the law of heaven - the law of self-sacrificing love - was first broken.

“In heaven itself this law was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator.”
The Desire of Ages, p21.

In heaven, Satan sought to invest God’s character with his own evil characteristics and he succeeded to a large degree. First he deceived angels, and first he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God and to distrust His goodness. Remember; to know God is to love Him. Satan works to counter this formula. It has always been his method to misrepresent and malign the loving character of God, to prevent others from loving Him in return. For in leading one to doubt God, His word, and His goodness, Satan succeeds. In heaven, Satan misrepresented God’s justice and terrible majesty and caused holy angels to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew others to join him in rebellion against God, and a night of woe settled upon the world.

In the book of Jeremiah, we find Babylon preparing to destroy the kingdom of Judah. At the time, Judah was trusting in Egypt for their strength and protection. They were trusting in their riches and the wisdom of their so-called prophets and priests. Left to their own ways, they would soon be at the mercy of the Babylonians. So the prophet Jeremiah was sent to warn and plead with the people to submit themselves to God. Aside from Christ, the most difficult ministry in the Bible was that given to Jeremiah. And the sum of the message which God gave him to declare to the king and the princes was this:

Jeremiah 9:23 Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

All the power, riches and might in this world mean nothing if one doesn't know and understand who God is. That is what we need to seek for. In fact, it was to teach Job something about Himself that God permitted such a great trial to come upon him. Even though Job was a perfect and upright man, he and his three friends had an incorrect view of God's character, His judgments, and how He deals with men. Job was considered to be the wisest man in the land of Uz. Interestingly, the word Uz means to take counsel or to receive advice. And Job was the wisest man in that land of wise-counsel. Consider Job chapter 4. Here, Job's friend Eliphaz is speaking to him and says:

Job 4:3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4:4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

This verse describes a wise, wonderful and charitable man. Chapter 29 details the things Job would do for others. God twice declared that Job was perfect and upright and God doesn't exaggerate. Job was sought after by many for counsel and advice. He was a teacher of God and His ways. And Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad were also wise men who would teach people about God.

Here is a question to consider. Who do you think Satan most seeks to ensnare with a wrong understanding of God and His character? Surely, it would be the leaders, the teachers, and the wise men. If Satan can ensnare them, they will then have a wrong understanding to teach to the people.

This is truly what the book of Job is about. In Jeremiah 9:24, the Lord declares:

Jeremiah 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

God exercises loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness. As we'll soon see, Job and his friends had a wrong understanding of God. They believed that whenever one saw suffering it was the direct retribution of God and His wrath. This is highlighted by the dialogue in chapter 2.

Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

2:12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

2:13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

Job's three friends travelled a long way to comfort Job and to mourn with him. Yet they cannot recognise him for the man he has become. They're so discouraged when they see their friend and observe what's happened to him that for seven days they sit together in silence. "None spake a word." Then, after seven days, Job begins to lament.

Job 3:1 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

3:2 And Job spake, and said,

3:3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

3:11 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

3:12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

3:13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

Job wishes he had never been born. He wishes that he never came out of the womb and never had to go through the experience he finds himself facing. Job's friends have come to comfort him and Eliphaz speaks first. Notice what Eliphaz says to Job:

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

In essence, Eliphaz turns to Job and says: 'God is correcting you. He's punishing you and chastening you. Don't despise this experience. You should be happy and take it peaceably.' Eliphaz clearly thought that God was punishing His servant for some wrong he had committed. Pay careful attention to the tone in Job's response. The counsel of Eliphaz takes a toll on his spirit.

Job 6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me....

6:8 Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!

6:9 Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

Job declares that the arrows of the Almighty - the terrors of God - have set themselves in array against him. He's struggling to comprehend the reason for his suffering. Far from comforting him, Job's friends tell him that he's being punished by God. Yet as Job considers and reviews his life, he cannot identify anything he's done wrong. Notice Job's appeal to God in verse 24:

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

Job asks God to show him where he's erred. He says: "teach me, and I will hold my tongue." Job cannot understand why he's in the condition that he's in. According to Eliphaz, it was because he'd been transgressing in some way and God needed to punish him for it. Now notice what Bildad says:

Job 8:1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
 8:2 How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?
 8:3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;

Bildad turns to Job and proclaims: 'Do you think that God is punishing you for no reason? Do you think that God would make a wrong judgment?' It gets worse when he adds: 'God killed your children because they were sinners.'

Job has been suffering for over a week, and his comforting friends now tell him that he's being punished for his actions and his children were destroyed by God for their sins. Who do you think was speaking through Bildad? Consider verse 6.

Job 8:6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

Earlier on in this study, I pointed out that God twice calls Job "a perfect and an upright man". Satan wasn't happy when God said that. And so he inspired Bildad to tell Job: 'If you were pure and upright, this wouldn't be happening to you. Instead of suffering, you would be prospering.' These words have an effect. Notice what Job says in chapter 9.

Job 9:17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

Job believes that he's innocent, yet he states that God is multiplying his wounds. Look how low he sinks in verses 22-24.

Job 9:22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

9:23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

9:24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?

Here, Job claims that "God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked." He believes that when an innocent person is persecuted, and the scourge slays him suddenly, God laughs at the trial of the innocent. Job fails to recognise God's mercy and justice, but rather claims that God causes the judges to be blinded.

Since Job knows that God is sovereign over all things, He presumes that the perversion of justice and the suffering of the righteous is the dealing of none other than God. Poor Job repeats the very words of Satan. The truth is that which God declared: "I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight". Jeremiah 9:23-24. Are you beginning to see why God permitted this trial to take place? Notice the kinds of questions Job continues to ask of God.

Job 10:2 "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.

10:3 Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

Job asks God why He's contending with him. He says: 'Is this fair – that

you shine upon the counsel of the wicked while you afflict and oppress your people?’ How can a man who was perfect and upright come to speak like this? Job has come to believe that God afflicts the innocent when it’s the devil who does so. Do you think God is pleased to hear such words coming from His representative? Notice what else Job states:

Job 10:8 Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me....

10:16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.

10:17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me.

These accusations are directed against God. Job believes that God is punishing him as a fierce lion. However, these thoughts bear a pagan origin. To believe that all suffering is the result of God punishing the wicked and the upright is pagan dogma. It’s a belief taught firmly in Hinduism. For example, if one is suffering in the Hindu religion, you aren’t to help that person because it’s believed that their suffering is the result of karma. That’s where this ideology leads. Satan seeks to convince men that God is behind his own evil deeds. Satan slays innocent men and then attributes that evil work to God.

How do you think God feels about this? For six thousand years God’s name has been vilified. Lies have been told about Him not only by His enemies, but by those who call themselves His people. How would you respond? Speaking about Jesus, the Bible declares:

1 Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

God counsels us that even if we are reviled and suffer unlawfully, we will one day be vindicated. In the story of Job, it is God who is vindicated. This was a lesson which God wanted to teach Job and his friends; that He judges righteously.

For six thousand years, God has been misrepresented. God's ministers have taught that there is an eternally-burning hell, and that God creates people as sinners from birth. Every time there's a tragedy people ask: 'Where was God?' God always seems to reap the blame. It is He who is continuously misrepresented.

The truth is that God never sleeps nor slumbers. Every moment He is working to protect, to save, and to sustain life, even for those who mock and curse Him. God sends His angels to protect them. God is ever seeking to thwart the plans of the wicked one. Nevertheless, He's often blamed for all the bad that happens, even by supposedly wise men. Returning to the story of Job, we find the speech of Job's third friend, Zophar, in chapter 11.

Job 11:1 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,
 11:2 Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?
 11:3 Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?
 11:4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.
 11:5 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;
 11:6 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.

Zophar tells Job that for all that he's gone through, and all that he's lost, God has actually exacted less of him than he deserves. Zophar believes that God went easy on Job, and in reality, Job deserves much worse. Yet in spite of all these false utterances and the weighty grief that Job is enduring, there is one thing that Job holds on to. In chapter 13, Job states:

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

Job declares that even if God slays him, he will trust in Him still. However,

despite maintaining his belief in God, Job is still deeply confused. He believes that it's God who is punishing him so severely. Pay careful attention to this next speech in particular.

Job 13:21 Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

13:22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

13:24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

Job wants to know what he's done wrong; where he's transgressed and erred. Job feels cut off from God, and he's longing for God to answer him. Notice what Job says in verse 27.

Job 13:27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

This verse portrays a life of constant fear. Job believed that God had been closely watching his every step, in order to swiftly punish him when he did something wrong. This is why God permitted the trial to take place. As perfect and upright as Job was, he had an incorrect knowledge of God. In chapter 1, we're given insight into what Job had made a practise of doing prior to this experience.

Job 1:5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Job occupied an unhealthy fear of God. He feared "continually" for his family. Job considered his children feasting and feared the possibility that

they might have sinned. “It may be,” he said, “that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts”. He sacrificed offerings for his children just in case they cherished a wrong thought. When Satan took his children away, Job’s fears became a reality. Yet his friends provided no comfort or aid. In chapter 16, Job addresses his friends and says:

Job 16:2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.

Job’s friends certainly were miserable comforters. Job also speaks about God and states:

Job 16:7 But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company....

16:9 He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

Job believes that God hates him, and is gnashing His teeth upon him as an enemy. How low this poor man has sunk! This certainly contains a lesson for us. When we go through the trial of affliction, we might find that our faith is not the pure gold we thought it to be. Look at what else Job says:

Job 16:12 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.

16:13 His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

16:14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

Here, Job portrays God as one who is taking him by the neck and setting him up for target practice. This is God he is speaking about! Job genuinely believes that God is punishing him, not only once, but over and over again. He wants to know when it will end. He wants to know why God has become his enemy, and why God has prescribed this torment to befall him. If only Job had someone to encourage him. In verse 20 he says:

“My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.” In Job’s mind, he is all alone. He feels forsaken of God and despised by his friends. He proclaims:

Job 16:21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

Friends, if we are to go through a trial such as this, we have the assurance of One that pleads our case. A correct understanding of God makes all the difference. Let us continue to read Job’s lament in Chapter 19.

Job 19:6 Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.

19:7 Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.

19:8 He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

19:9 He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

19:10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

19:11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.

19:12 His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

19:13 He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

19:14 My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me....

19:19 All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

19:20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Job continues to express the same sentiments. He declares: ‘God won’t hear me. He won’t administer proper judgment.’ Incidentally, the mean-

ing of Job's name is 'persecuted'. He feels that there is no one to plead for him. And yet, we are about to read some of the most beautiful words ever recorded in Scripture. Amidst all this sorrow and confusion, there is one thing that Job chooses to hold onto. Although He feels that he is without an intercessor; although he sees no hope in this life; and gains no support from his friends, there is one thing to which Job will not let go.

As a Christian, you may go through a similar experience to that which Job feels here – forsaken of friends and even of God. Notwithstanding the circumstance, you can hold on to this beautiful promise found in the 19th chapter of Job.

Job 19:23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

19:24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

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

19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

19:27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Job longed for these words to be enshrined in eternity. His longing came true. This is the hope that drives every Christian; the hope of the resurrection. Satan took everything from Job but he could not take away Job's blessed assurance that this life is temporal, and that he will one day see his God.

In chapter 29, Job provides a sort of resume listing the work he's done throughout his life. He was a father to the fatherless. He gave sight to the blind. He helped those who were without. He would counsel and comfort those who mourned. Job was a wonderful, godly man and his friends knew this. In fact, Eliphaz gave a similar character reference in chapter 4. He mentioned how Job "instructed many" and "strengthened the feeble knees". Yet now Job's friends are getting more desperate, or I should say,

the devil is. Pay attention to what Eliphaz says next.

Job 22:5 Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?

22:6 For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

22:7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

22:8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.

22:9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

22:10 Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;

22:11 Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.

Everyone present knows that these things aren't true. Yet Job's friends have to find some iniquity in Job for which he's deserving of God's wrath. They resort to lies which directly contradict the things they had testified of earlier. Eliphaz declares that Job needs to repent and turn away from his "infinite iniquities" for which he's being punished.

Job 22:22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

22:23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

How do you think Job felt, knowing for certain that these things weren't true? In the next chapter, Job responds to this accusation by saying:

Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

23:4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

23:5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

Job is longing to appear before God. He believes that he has some very good arguments to put forth. Job is thinking this way because he knows that he hasn't done anything wrong. He isn't being self-righteous; he's being sincere. We know from the story why this trial occurred, but Job didn't. Nor did his friends. Job asserts his innocence by declaring:

Job 23:11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Job was correct in this statement. However, verse 15 reveals where the problem lay, and why God permitted the trial to take place. Indeed, Job needed this trial in order to find out something about himself. Now, Job really begins to search his heart. He examines his life and motives and then he realises something. Look at what he says in verse 15:

Job 23:15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

When Job looks deeply into his heart, he sees that his relationship with God has been based largely on fear. 'When I truly consider it,' Job says, 'I am afraid of God. I am afraid for myself as well as for my family'.

No wonder the Bible states: "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice." 1 Peter 4:12-13. It is in times of trial that we are led to thoroughly search our hearts. In these occasions, we often discover things we weren't previously aware of. King David also prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24.

Do you remember what Job said after the trial first settled upon him? In chapter 3 He declared:

Job 3:25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

Job had lived in fear his entire life. That's why God began the conversation with Satan in the first place. God had a precious lesson for Job to learn, as well as his friends. When you walk with God, you need not live in fear. All God wants for you is your good. Yet Job was afraid of God. Returning to chapter 23, we read:

Job 23:16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

23:17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

Again, Job questions God's providence, when in reality, God was allowing this to happen for His servant's good. Nevertheless, Job maintains his integrity and innocence. Meanwhile, his friends continually charge him with being a base sinner who is being punished for his transgressions. Bildad declares:

Job 25:4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

25:5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

25:6 How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?

Have you noticed the erroneous views these men held towards God? Bildad claims that God looks at man as a worm. He asks: "how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Some are even teaching this today. In chapter 26, Job directly answers Bildad's claim that nothing born of a woman can be clean or innocent. He says:

Job 26:4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

Job knew that it wasn't the Spirit of God which led Bildad to speak those words. No matter what Job's friends have to say, his conscience remains pure. In chapter 27, he proclaims:

Job 27:5 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

27:6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

Job asserts: 'I'm not going to acknowledge what you're saying because it's not true.' Friends, if your conscience doesn't condemn you, nobody can. The Bible clearly explains how men will be judged. It is by "their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Romans 2:15. This man's conscience was clear before God regardless of anything the wisest men on earth had to say.

Job's friends believed that Job was suffering the retribution of God for being a sinner. Job believed that God was punishing him as an innocent, having done nothing wrong. In both cases, God is the one being defamed.

I want you to notice a pattern in this dialogue. Job speaks first, followed by his friends. Job answers, the friends speak again, and Job responds again. Job always speaks last. In the end, Job's friends can't answer him. They cannot confound him. Until now, Job has always been the last to speak.

However, in chapter 32, we're introduced to a new speaker; the defender of God. By this time, the discussion between Job and his friends has continued for several days. Until now, the young defender of God has been a silent observer. He felt that it wasn't right to speak while his elders, the wise men, were speaking. Yet for days he's listened to men defame and dishonour God. And now, fuelled with righteous indignation, he's compelled to act. This man's name is Elihu. His name means: 'My God is He'.

Elihu is jealous for the honour of his God and he does not fail to uphold it. After Elihu speaks, no man returns a reply. The next speaker we read of is the voice of God in heaven. Elihu speaks for six whole chapters and when

he's finished, not even Job says a word. The man whose name means 'My God is He' indeed honours God. He honours His justice and His character. And he shows who stands behind the misapprehension and darkness of God's name.

Job had previously said: "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred." Job 6:24. By the time Elihu finishes speaking, Job's desire is manifest. Job understands where he's erred and he certainly holds his tongue. In fact, after God speaks, Job declares: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:6.

Before we read Elihu's defence, take notice of how God concludes the matter. In the last chapter of Job, God finishes His speech from the whirlwind. His thunderous voice has spoken for quite a period of time (during which Job and his friends stood trembling before His presence) and just after Job repents, God turns to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and says:

Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 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.

42:8 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: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

42:9 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.

God rebukes Job's three friends directly, then instructs them to prepare bullocks to offer as a sacrifice. Just prior to this, Job is also rebuked, and as we saw, Job repents, as do the three others. Every man repents except for Elihu. Elihu isn't rebuked and he does not repent because he speaks God's words. Let's read some of the things that Elihu says to Job in chapter 32.

Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

32:2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

32:3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

32:4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

32:5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

32:7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

32:9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

32:10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

32:11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.

32:12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

32:13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

32:14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

Elihu declares that he's not going to answer Job in accordance with the arguments that the wise men have set forth. Notice how the men react to this bold introduction:

Job 32:15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

32:16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)

32:17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.

32:18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.

32:19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

32:21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

Elihu couldn't restrain himself any longer. Like wine bursting out of new bottles, he was constrained to share what he knew about God and His character. He starts by imploring the brethren not to take any person's side or seek to flatter anyone with their words. In a time of crisis such as this, one is simply to stand for God's truth.

The Bible proclaims: "faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Proverbs 27:6. Elihu wasn't interested in defending anyone for friendship's sake. His only desire was to stand for God and His truth. Consider how Elihu addresses Job in the next chapter. Elihu paid careful attention during the previous days' discussions, and he recalls the very words which Job had spoken.

Job 33:8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

33:9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

33:10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy,

33:11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

33:12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

Elihu tells Job that his view of God is false. He rebukes Job for counting God as his enemy, as one who has put his feet in stocks. Don't you know

“that God is greater than man?” Elihu asks.

Unfortunately, the same reasoning which led Job to count God as his enemy is prevalent today. Men choose to reason about God the way they reason about each other. Yet God is greater than man. He is an awesome and terrible God. We should reverence Him, trusting that His ways are decided by a divine eye, instead of bringing Him down to our level of reasoning.

In the next passage, Elihu recalls Job’s claim that God wouldn’t answer him, and to this he states:

Job 33:13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

33:14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

33:16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

33:17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

33:18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

Again, Elihu tells Job that his assessment of God is incorrect. God speaks more than once but man doesn’t want to listen. In fact, God pleads with us our entire lives, but we often don’t respond to that call. We ignore God’s voice, and sometimes it’s only in dreams and visions that God finds an opportunity to be heard. Nevertheless, God opens the ears of men and seeks to instruct them. He works to reveal to them their errors and their secret faults. What’s more, He saves their lives. Job and his friends were claiming that God was punishing Job with His arrows, His sword, and His armies. Elihu tells them: ‘That’s not the God I know. My God is working constantly to save life, to protect us, and to keep us from death.’

Yet most of the time people are indifferent to the voice of God. So what does God do? He waits. He keeps you alive, He protects you, and He waits

for an opportunity when finally His words may pierce through to your soul. He waits for circumstances which might find you ready to open your heart and welcome some light. This is what Elihu is referring to. Now notice what Elihu says happens to the man that refuses to listen to God's voice:

Job 33:19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:

33:20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

33:21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

33:22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

The man in the illustration gets sick. He gets so sick that he's close to dying. You might have witnessed a case like this before. I knew someone who, as much as they believed in God, never wanted to acknowledge God's counsel or obey Him heartily. It wasn't until the bones stood out of their skin that I saw them open their heart towards God. God waits for these moments of willingness and He doesn't give up. Just as one is about to die, God sees an opportunity to get through to him or her. Notice the following passage:

Job 33:23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:

33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

The New International Version translates verse 23 as the following:

Job 33:23 (NIV) Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright,

Finally, God finds an opportunity to speak to the soul. He sends an angel to be by his side and He commands the angel to "deliver him from going down to the pit". Why? Because "I have found a ransom." The word 'ran-

som' means 'an atonement'. God strives to save you till the last moment of your life. Indeed, all your life He pleads with you and protects you. You would have died a thousand times over if it weren't for His care. Yet when your life is nearing its end, and you're ready to listen, God even then wants to save you. He lifts you up and restores you to health. He says: "deliver him... I have found a ransom". There is someone to redeem you from death.

Job's three friends had proclaimed the exact opposite. Yet Elihu understood the gospel. He knew that God does everything in His power to deliver and save man. Paul described God's grace as the following:

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Those who believe in the literal Father and Son should understand better than anyone else the value of the gift of Christ. John 3:16 tells us how unfathomable and great this gift is.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God's grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Can this gift be measured? On the contrary, this gift is infinite! It is immeasurable. That's how much grace we are given. The reason men are lost is not for a lack of grace, but because they have rejected the grace that was made available. Let us now return to the book of Job to see what happens to the man in Elihu's illustration.

Job 33:25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

33:26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

33:27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and per-

verted that which was right, and it profited me not;

33:28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

33:29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

33:30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

33:31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

33:32 If thou hast anything to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

33:33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

The man who was about to die and be eternally lost is renewed to health. He's given something to live for. Elihu uses this example to defend God's character and love before the wise men who were repeatedly stating that God cuts off the transgressor and punishes him severely. Now Elihu addresses all four of them and says:

Job 34:10 Therefore hearken unto me ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.

34:11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

34:12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

Here, Elihu outlines the principle of cause to effect, of sowing and reaping. Although this wasn't the reason for Job's loss, Elihu wants them to know that when bad things happen, it's not necessarily a punishment from God, but most likely the reaping of what one has sown. God renders unto a man the work of his own hands. Elihu rebukes the others for suggesting that God is unjust in judgement. He goes on to say:

Job 36:6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

36:7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

Job once said that God preserves the wicked and afflicts the innocent but here Elihu pronounces the opposite, that “He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.” Job 36:15. Can you see what Elihu is responding to? He’s refuting all the claims in which God was falsely accused and misrepresented.

Job 36:22 Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

36:24 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

Essentially, Job was informing God that He’d made an incorrect judgment. To this, Elihu replies: ‘Remember that you are to praise God’s work, because men are watching. You are to bring glory to God before the world, not falsely accuse and misrepresent Him.’ In the following passage, Elihu says a few things about God’s creative power, much like the words of God Himself in the succeeding chapters.

Job 37:14 Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

37:15 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?

37:16 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?

37:17 How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?

37:18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?

Elihu tells Job that he ought to reconsider what he’s been saying about God. His message is epitomised in verse 23. This verse contains the last words that Elihu speaks, and it summarises the entire book of Job.

Job 37:23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

I've heard preachers say that God never really answered Job in his trial. This simply isn't true. God did answer him. He answered him through one who is called 'My God is He'. Job and his friends believed that God was punishing him as a transgressor on the one hand, and as an innocent on the other. Elihu exposes the error of this reasoning by illustrating the lengths God goes to in order to protect and save man. He then affirms that God is perfect in justice and judgment. That's what Job most needed to learn: that even if "we cannot find Him out", as Elihu acknowledges, we are to know that "He will not afflict". That was the reason for Job's trial, that he might learn to live in faith and not in fear.

After hearing this powerful conclusion, Job is convicted. He doesn't return a reply. In fact, nobody does. The next speaker we hear from is God Himself, and God isn't pleased. Rather, God utters almost two thousand words from a thunderous whirlwind. This certainly isn't a still, small voice. God particularly wasn't happy because Job and his three friends (the wisest men in Uz) were supposed to be upholding God's justice and goodness before the people whom they taught. When in reality, God's character and justice was being questioned. These men believed that God was ever ready to punish the disobedient. False doctrines such as this have made millions of doubting infidels, even if they were proclaimed by good men. How do you think God feels when His own ministers defame Him from the pulpit? In the story of Job, Elihu was the only one that defended God's name. He proclaimed: "[God] is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict."

The first Angel's message is to "fear God and give glory to Him." The phrase 'to fear God' doesn't only mean to keep His commandments. It means to hold Him in awe. After Israel crossed the Jordan River, the people looked up to Joshua and feared him all the days of his life, just as they had feared Moses. To fear means to view someone with awe and respect.

And in the case of God, it means to reverence Him.

When men fail to hold God in awe, and instead present doctrines which undermine His judgements, doubts rightfully appear in the minds of others. Thus, the message for the last days will be one to expose and remove any theory which misrepresents God's character. Revelation 18:1 tells us that because of this message, the whole world will be lightened with God's glory.

Speaking of that time, Sister White states that "the darkness of misapprehension of God" is going to be swept away. Very soon this message from God will be proclaimed, "a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power". Why is this message so powerful? She goes on to say: "His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth." *Christ's Object Lessons, p415.3.*

A world enshrouded by the darkness of misapprehension is a place where men have lost the "knowledge of [God's] character". Only the truth can dispel this darkness and bring man into a saving connection with God. This principle is magnified in God's opening words to Job.

Job 38:1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,
38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Out of a whirlwind God addresses His trembling servant. God wants to know why Job has been obscuring and misrepresenting His ways. Job had once declared that if he could speak with God, he would have many questions to put forward. How do you think Job feels now? Do you think he's ready to present his arguments? Job and his friends would have struggled to merely stay on their feet. Notice what God says in the next verse.

Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

God tells Job to stand up like a man. ‘I have some questions for you to answer,’ He says. Just as Elihu had done in the previous chapter, God uses the events of creation to illustrate the limited nature of Job’s understanding. Elihu asked: “Hast thou with him spread out the sky?” And God declares:

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding....

38:12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

More than witnessing the creation of the earth, God asks Job if he’s ever commanded the dawning of a new day. The sun only rises because God commands it. And every morning brings hope. Each day there are souls being saved. God goes on to say:

Job 38:18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all....

38:22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

38:23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?...

38:25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

38:26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

38:27 To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

38:28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

God points Job to the great wonders of the universe and asks: ‘Do you understand these things? Can you explain them?’

Job 38:31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?...

38:36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?...

38:39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,...

38:41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Job 39:26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

39:27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

God's thoughts extend even to the young ravens in the nest who cry out to Him for food. God looks after the stars, the snow, the lions, and the birds. Do you think He is going to forget you? Through the prophet Isaiah, God declared:

Isaiah 49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

49:16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

By illustrating His care for the animal kingdom, God proves to Job that He is not his enemy. Throughout this entire speech, God exposes the error of Job's limited understanding, and defends His true character of love, patience, guardianship and protection. In chapter 40 God says:

Job 40:2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

God reminds Job of his own words - how Job had reproved God repeatedly - and now He invites Job to speak. Job had earnestly desired to talk with God. Finally his opportunity arrives.

Job 40:3 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

40:4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

40:5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Job now realises the truth of Elihu's words, that "if a man speak [with God], surely he shall be swallowed up". Job 37:20. When the moment came, Job had no argument to present, and no question to proclaim. He sees that His words were untrue, and he covers his mouth. Yet in verses 7-8 God continues His rebuke and says:

Job 40:7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

Some people go so far in confirming their own righteousness, that they condemn God through their words. In chapter 42, God speaks about the great beasts; leviathan and behemoth. God talks about the seas and the changing of the tides, the snow, and the rising sun. In all this, the message that God most wants to convey is that He is in control.

God commands the dawning of each new day to bring us hope and life. He provides food for the lions, the ravens, and their young. He sends showers of blessing to nourish our crops. He imparts wisdom and understanding. God is always in control, regardless of what we see happening around us; regardless of what was happening to Job. Remember; Job believed that God had forsaken him. He felt that God was nowhere to be found. Now God says to him: 'Job, I have always been there.'

When David looked up into the heavens and observed the wonders of God's creation, and then turned his gaze towards fallen humanity, he said: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Psalm 8:4.

Friends, God is more mindful of us than anything in His entire creation.

That was His message to Job; 'I haven't forgotten you'. Nothing can happen which God does not allow. He controls the sea, the rain, and the course of the planets. He provides and He protects for all the wonders of the universe. He says: 'Why do you doubt me? Why do you question me?'

When Job was being blessed, and was more prosperous than any other man, he didn't doubt God's love or care then. Yet once the blessings were removed, Job viewed God as his enemy. This was what the devil had sought to achieve. And up till now, he'd succeeded to a large degree in coercing Job and his friends to doubt and question God. However, once God speaks, Job understands that all things work together for good. Notice what Job says in chapter 42.

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not....

42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

If ever a man lived who was just in questioning God, it was Job. His was possibly the greatest trial that any man, other than Jesus, has been through. And yet, when given the opportunity to challenge God, he sees that God has always been with him. He sees that God was always in control. And so he says: "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job had nothing more to say.

Through this experience, Job realised where the problem lay. He realised that he had been afraid of God, and had lived in constant fear of losing the things most dear to him. Afterwards, Job knew that God was truly in control, no matter what might happen.

Today, God is being misrepresented by His own people just as He was

back then. His character is being defamed by knowledgeable orators just like Job and his three wise friends. Today, God is waiting for someone to take a stand. Someone like Elihu who is jealous for God and His truth. Someone who is willing to say: “My God is He.”

Elihu stood for God then, and God is waiting for men and women to stand for Him now, to testify of His righteousness, His character of love, and how He works to save men. Indeed, we can attest with the Psalmist: “Thou coverest me from the womb”. Psalm 139:13

The book of Job was written for us. In the last days, we will experience similar and even more trying circumstances. Through this story, God wants us to know that He is in control. Just as He guides the stars in the universe, He is also watching over you. Nothing will happen to you that He does not allow, and He does so to teach you and purify your heart. Time and time again, God sends His angels to keep you safe. He commands His messengers to restore you from out of the pit. For He says:

“Deliver him.... I have found a ransom.”

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perplexing questions that arise.

**Why did God allow the trial to
take place?**

Was Job at fault?

Who is the defender of God?

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2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

