

BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 3

### Job 2:11-3:26: The God-In-A-Box Syndrome

*What I always feared has happened to me. What I dreaded has come true.  
I have no peace, no quietness. I have no rest; only trouble comes.*

– Job 3:25-26 NLT

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”  
– A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

- **Job had God figured out**

- He was comfortable with his **theology**
  - But it was based on **experience**, not **exegesis**
  - Job had no Scripture to **interpret**
  - He had no **written Word of God** to reveal the **character of God**
- An overly simplistic view of God
  - His God was...sovereign
    - powerful
    - just
    - and good

*“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” – 1:21*

*“Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” – 2:10*

- Job is saying all the right things
  - Despite his losses, he expresses faith
  - He remains somewhat optimistic
  - Based on his limited theology of God  
God **rewards** the righteous

- Prosperity was proof of God’s pleasure
- Health was God’s gift for good behavior
- Fruitfulness was evidence of faithfulness

God **punishes** the wicked

- This is what is known as **Retribution Theology**
  - ~ He has no Scriptures to support this doctrine
  - ~ His conclusions are evidential
  - ~ Now the evidence is contradictory
  - ~ He, a righteous man, is suffering
  - ~ His theology no longer makes sense

“...the structure of the universe and human existence no longer make sense to Job. He had pinned all his hopes on the doctrine of retribution...The doctrine had imposed order upon all the evil and chaos we see in the world, and Job depended upon it for his well-being.” – Duane A. Garrett, *Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*

- **When God doesn’t play according to our rules**

- Job’s concept of God had taken a hit
  - His explanation for good and evil had failed
  - His worldview had been shattered
  - And time doesn’t always heal all wounds

*Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. – Job 2:11 ESV*

- A friend in need is a friend indeed
  - News of Job’s losses reaches his friends
  - They each travel to see their suffering friend
  - No timeline is given

*They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great. – Job 2:11-13 ESV*

- Sufficient time has passed...
  - ...for his friends to make the trip
  - ...for Job’s physical appearance to change
  - ...for doubt and despair to kick in

“...time passed but the grief that accompanied his losses failed to dissipate. He continued to struggle with residual physical as well as psychological pain. The arrival of his friends must have meant a lot to Job and he probably appreciated their willingness to sit with him in silence for seven days as he attempted to process all that had happened. But the time came when Job couldn’t hold back his frustration and anger any longer, and the blunt-force nature of his honesty leaves us feeling a bit uncomfortable.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on the Book of Job*

- **An existential crisis of confidence**

*After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. And Job said: “Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, ‘A man is conceived.’” – Job 3:1-13 ESV*

- For Job, life no longer had any meaning
  - He had lost everything
  - And he was angry, frustrated, and hopeless
  - But he refused to curse God
- Instead, he cursed the day he was born
  - He had enjoyed a very good life
  - Now he wished he had never lived at all
  - What happened to...
    - ...“*The Lord gives and takes away?*”
    - ...and “*Blessed be the name of the Lord?*”

- **The dark night of the soul**

*Let that day be **darkness!***

*May God above not seek it,  
nor light shine upon it.*

*Let **gloom** and **deep darkness** claim it.*

*Let clouds dwell upon it;*

*let the **blackness** of the day terrify it.*

*That night—let **thick darkness** seize it!*

*Let it not rejoice among the days of the year... – Job 3:4-6 ESV*

- Job is in a pit of despair
  - His perspective on life has taken a hit
  - His Maker made a mistake in making him
  - He is questioning his very existence
  - He has lost all his reasons for living

- **Your best life now**

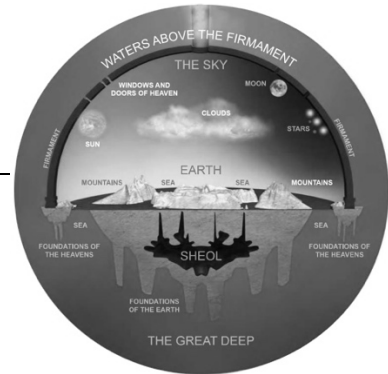
- This is a pivotal chapter in the story
  - It reveals a lot about Job’s theology
  - His words reflect a temporal mindset
  - He has a “now-or-never” outlook

- Elohim is God of the living
- His view of the afterlife was **incomplete** and **inaccurate**
  - Blessings come only in this life
  - Rewards are reserved for the living
  - Everyone suffers the same fate

*There is nothing ahead but death anyway. There is hope only for the living. – Ecclesiastes 9:3-4 NLT*

*...the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. Whatever they did in their lifetime – loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth. – Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 NLT*

- The ancient Hebrew’s concept of the universe
  - They had no fully developed doctrine of the afterlife
  - All who died ended up in the same place: Sheol



“One of the main attributes of Sheol, at least in the early stages of development as a postmortem concept, was its amoral character. Existence in Sheol was neither good nor bad; it was an underground domain of the dead, completely beyond the care and control of God.

“The nefesh hayyah (living person) dwelt with family clan, tribe, or nation in the terrestrial realm. Upon death, the individual descended into the subterranean realm and as a nefesh met (dead person), dwelt in the grave, in the family tomb, and eventually in Sheol, the abode of the ancestral dead.” – Simcha Paull Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*

*“Why did I not die at birth,  
 come out from the womb and expire?  
 Why did the knees receive me?  
 Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?  
 For then I would have lain down and been quiet;  
 I would have slept; then I would have been at rest,  
 with kings and counselors of the earth  
 who rebuilt ruins for themselves,  
 or with princes who had gold,  
 who filled their houses with silver.  
 Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child,  
 as infants who never see the light?  
 There the wicked cease from troubling,  
 and there the weary are at rest.*

*There the prisoners are at ease together;  
they hear not the voice of the taskmaster.  
The small and the great are there,  
and the slave is free from his master. – Job 3:11-19 ESV*

**Sheol is home to...**

the powerful & wise	the wicked & weary
the wealthy	the prisoner & slave
the miscarried & stillborn	the small & the great

- **Job expected his best life now**

- He had experienced it
  - But then he lost it
- A less-than-optimistic view of the afterlife
  - No concept of heaven
  - No doctrine of the resurrection
  - No hope of eternal life
  - No promise of future glorification

*I have only a few days left, so leave me alone, that I may have a moment of comfort before I leave — never to return — **for the land of darkness and utter gloom. It is a land as dark as midnight, a land of gloom and confusion, where even the light is dark as midnight.** – Job 10:20-21 NLT*

*...when people die, their strength is gone. **They breathe their last, and then where are they?***

*...people are laid to rest and **do not rise again.** Until the heavens are no more, **they will not wake up nor be roused from their sleep.** – Job 14:10, 12 NLT*

*For soon I must go down that road **from which I will never return.** – Job 16:22 NLT*

*What if I go to the grave [Sheol] and make my bed in darkness? What if I call the grave my father, and the maggot my mother or my sister? **Where then is my hope? Can anyone find it?** – Job 16:22 NLT*

- **The question of the ages**

*Where then is my hope?*

- Job had put all his hope in the **present life**
- He was expecting **his best life now**
  - **Temporal** rewards, not **eternal** ones
  - **Fleeting pleasures**, not **lasting treasures**
  - A **long and prosperous life**, not **eternal life**

*Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. – 1 John 2:15-17 NLT*

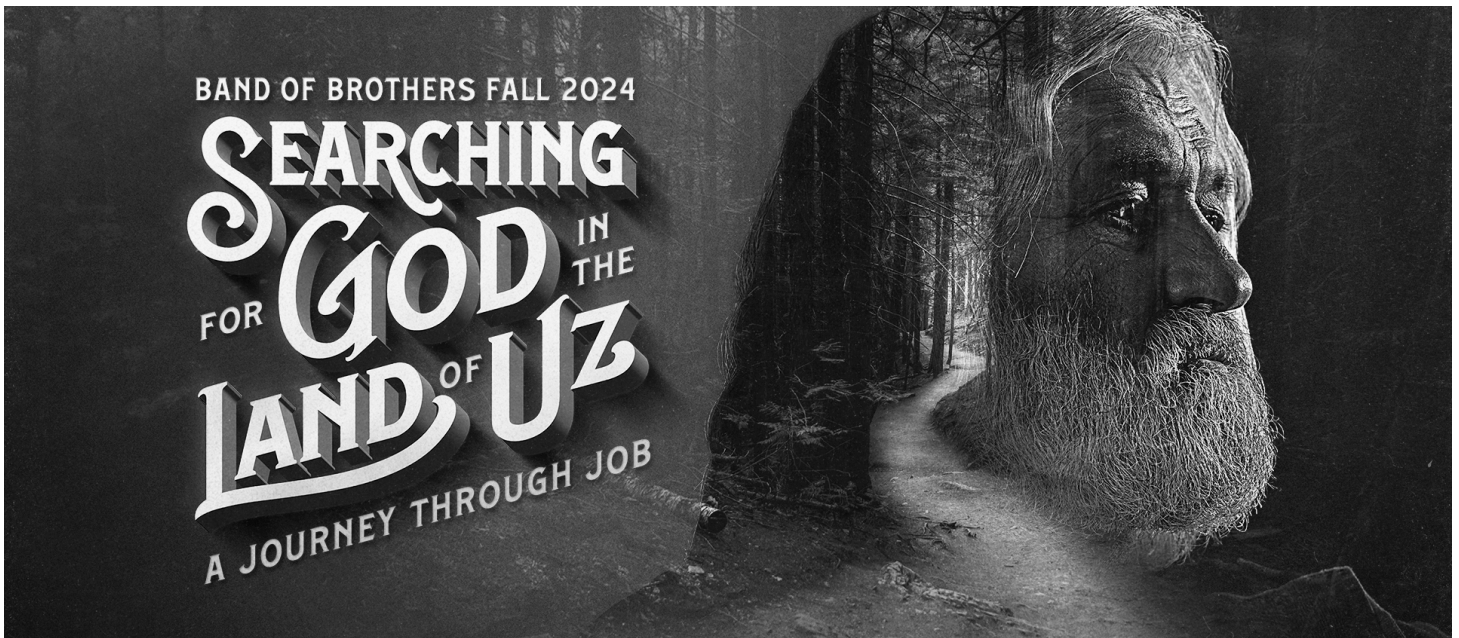
*“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” – Matthew 6:19-21 NLT*

- **Discussion questions**

In what ways do Christians reveal their hope is in this life rather than the one to come, and what difference does it make?

Why should the fact that this world is fading away be a source of hope for Christians?

Read Colossians 3:2 and discuss how we can set our minds on things above?



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FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 4 HOMEWORK

#### **WEEK 4 – Job 42:7-9: A Divine Perspective on the Message of Job**

To better understand the Book of Job, we'll take this week to fast-forward to the very last chapter where God provides a surprising but often overlooked insight into its over-arching message. The Book of Job is not about suffering; that's just the context. It is really about the character and nature of God Almighty. In these three verses, God indicts Job's friends for speaking about Him with great confidence but in total error. Their finite ability to understand the infinite God has caused them to boast in things they did not understand. In their zeal to explain the cause of Job's suffering, they made wrong assumptions that led to wrong thinking about God.

- Read Job 42:7-9. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
  
- Now read pages 285-288 of Ken's Devotionary™ on Job.
  
- We have fast-forwarded to the end of the story to get a much-needed perspective on what is going on in the middle section of the book. The vast majority of the Book of Job contains speeches made by Job and his friends. They all have a lot to say. But according to verses 7-9 of chapter 42, what is God's assessment of what they have to say?

Why do you think God is so angry with Job's friends?

Robert Alter translates verse 7 this way: "You have not spoken rightly of me as did my servant Job." How does this translation shed light on God's indictment against these men?

- Take some time to skim through the following chapters and write down some of the things Job's friends say about God. What is it about what they said that God deems to be wrong:

Job 4-5 (Eliphaz)

Job 8 (Bildad)

Job 11 (Zophar)

Job 15 (Eliphaz)

Job 18 (Bildad)

Job 20 (Zophar)

What do you think was behind their wrong statements about God?

What are some things we say about God that sound good but that might actually be wrong in His eyes?