

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Fourth Quarter 2016: *The Book of Job*

#### Lesson 6 “The Curse Causeless?”

#### Read for this week’s study

Psalm 119:65–72; Job 2:11–13; Job 4:1–21; Romans 3:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 3:19; Hebrews 12:5; Matthew 7:1.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘ “Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?” ’ ” (Job 4:17, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Big Questions
- III. When Have the Innocent Perished?
- IV. A Man and His Maker
- V. The Foolish Taking Root
- VI. Rush to Judgment
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Are Job’s friends strange people that we cannot relate to or do they express what every one of us would say if confronted with a case like Job? What does that tell us about the way we handle the suffering of others? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Psalm 119:65-72. What is the Psalmist saying in this passage? What is the difference between the Psalmist and Job? Are there things one can say to a sufferer after the period of suffering that wouldn’t be appropriate during the suffering? When you look back at your own past trials, have you ever seen good come out of them? How do you deal with trials that have brought nothing good to you or anyone else? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Job 2:11-13. What does it tell us about how Job’s friends viewed his situation? With what kind of mindset did they come to him? How did that mindset change as they listened to Job’s words? What was their motive in “correcting” him? Is it possible to defend God’s reputation in such a way that it hurts His reputation? (Monday’s lesson)

4. Read Job 4:1-11. What is the gist of Eliphaz' words to Job here? How does he view what Job was saying about his situation? How does Deuteronomy 28 support what Eliphaz is saying? What is the fatal flaw in Eliphaz' point of view? Think back on a time when people tried to comfort you at a time of loss and pain. What did you learn from that experience that could help you when you are in a position to comfort someone else? (Monday's lesson)
5. Read Job 4:12-21. What other argument does Eliphaz present to Job? Have you heard this argument before, and how did it play out in your previous experience? What is the biblical basis for Eliphaz' argument with Job? Is it possible to be wrong even when you are right? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Job, chapter 5. Where have you heard these arguments before? What do the following texts add to your understanding of chapter 5: Psalm 33:18-19; 34:4-7; 37:8-11; Proverbs 26:2; Hosea 6:1-7; Luke 1:52; 1 Corinthians 2:18-20; Hebrews 12:5-6? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. It is possible to use the right texts at the wrong time and in the wrong manner. What advice can one glean from the following texts with regard to how one should approach people who are suffering? Read Matthew 7:1-2, Romans 2:1-3 and 1 Corinthians 4:5 with Job 4-5 in mind. (Thursday's lesson)
8. Eliphaz was not without sympathy for Job, what motivated him to be as harsh toward Job as he was? How can we discern when a person needs compassion and sympathy and when they need a lecture or rebuke? Why is the best approach when you are not sure? Is it possible to be sure and yet be surely wrong? (Friday's lesson)
9. Read through Job, chapters 4 and 5 once more. In what situation might those words be more appropriate than they were here? If you had been in Job's place, what would you have wanted your friends to say to you? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Is it because he sinned? No, it's because he was such a perfect man that this was happening. It's just the other way around. Job was right, but he didn't know about chapters 1 and 2. A little later on he says, "I wish I knew. I wish I knew what the accusation is, so I could discuss it with God." But he didn't know. And here's a man without information going on with his trust in God on the basis of previous information. He knew God better than they did, or he would have accepted what they said so simply to him. But you notice what this friend says about God. Look at verse 17 of chapter 4: "Can mortal man be righteous before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?"

God had said, "That man's perfect." They said, "There's no way that can be." Now, look at verse 18. Does yours read this way? "Even in his servants, he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error."

Are they saying, "Look, God doesn't trust anybody"? What about chapters 1 and 2? God has said, "I trust Job. He's a good man." And they were denying that that could be so. See, they didn't know about chapters 1 and 2 either, and they were denying that that could possibly be true.

Now much of what they said is right. Would you agree, as you go on, their statements about God's majesty and power and honor, and the reverence with which he should be treated, his work as Creator? Surely it's all true. These men were believers, weren't they? They just had a very arbitrary, legalistic picture of God. So, as Job goes on, they keep expressing their amazement at a saint's talking back to God the way he did. For example, in 11:7, they say to Job:

Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven what can you do? Deeper than Sheol; what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea [and so on].

And then 13:

If you set your heart aright, you will stretch out your hands toward God. If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in your tents. Surely then [see, if you confess and repent] you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure, and will not fear. You will forget your misery; you will remember it as waters that have passed away. And your life will be brighter than the noonday;

"God will accept you. That's a great case, Job. All that's wrong is you've misbehaved." Now we know that isn't true. They didn't know the facts. They were wrong. They were wrong about Job, and they were wrong about God. But they were believers in God, and they cared about Job. They were theologians who came to help him, and still they were wrong. And yet they weren't wrong in a rebellious sort of way, were they? And yet, were they not in effect supporting Satan's charges that God seeks to win and sustain our trust by reward, rather than by being the kind of God he is? And all Job was left with, no rewards at all, all he said was, "As I know God, I don't know why this is happening. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't fit in with what I know about him so far. But one thing does fit in. I'm sure if you'd be quiet long enough and let me talk to God, and if he would come from wherever he is and talk to me, I'm sure we could work this out and it would make sense." And he was absolutely right. Because where is the 'make sense'? It's in chapters 1 and 2. You see, if you know about the great controversy, it makes sense. If you know about Satan being the accuser and God being the defender, if you know about the universe watching and God saying, "Let me show you a really trustworthy friend. I

will let Satan test him to the limit, and he won't let me down." See, Job didn't know that. But he wasn't afraid to talk to God. He knew God that well. He had the same confidence Abraham did, that it would make sense. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther & Job, recorded March, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/25MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: There's another phrase in here that raises questions many times. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, have you ever wondered about this, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation?" That God would really want to do that?

Graham: One thing that helps is the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable, as our Heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this. That when we're tempted, don't even blame the devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "Lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't you tempt us." But "Lead us not into testing," Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today." I believe we should say, "Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done."

I think, "Lead us not into testing" must be coupled with, "Nevertheless, thy will be done." Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord's Prayer. You know, the Lord's Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. "Lead us not into testing, Remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, thy will be done." So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps us to understand the Lord's Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, "Talking to God as A Friend" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

And as you know, all of chapter 8 describes the rescue. The chapter begins by Paul saying that God does not condemn his struggling children. He is not only our Father, but our Divine Physician, and he knows that the habits of a lifetime are not cured overnight. And so, as we struggle, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all on our side to help us and to heal us. Look at the marvelous summary at the end of Romans 8, verses 31, 38 and 39:

If God is for us [the subject of the whole chapter, in fact the first eight chapters of Romans], who can be against us? . . . I am certain that . . . neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers . . . will ever be able to separate us from the love of God. (GNB)

In fact, if we need discipline to overcome bad habits and learn new ones, God will give it to us. But when the discipline comes, we will understand. He's not angry with us. He is disciplining us because he loves us. We will not allow the discipline to disturb our peace with God. Look at Hebrews 12:11. Just a line out of that whole section on God disciplines whom he loves as a father disciplines his son. Now, no discipline seems pleasant at the time. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace. In fact, if we've been set right with our God and we've been won back to love and trust, God can even turn our trials and troubles to our advantage. Going back to Romans 5, look at verses 3 and 4, next on our list: "We can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. These very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character. . . ." (Phillips)

And you know how that passage goes on. And a mature character produces a hope that will never let us down. And that makes for great peace between us and our God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20, "At Peace with our Heavenly Father" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/20MMCAG>*

After Job had expressed his utter depression in chapter 3; he wished he'd never been born, do you say, "Shame on Job for being so depressed"? Or how much do you ask of a man under those circumstances. Imagine being under similar circumstances. What do you expect of a man? Then the three friends began their counsel. And they must have been friends to talk to him as straight as they did. They were very candid with Job. And they, if Deuteronomy had already been written, which it hadn't, they could have quoted from Deuteronomy and other places in the Bible where you had the lists of the blessings and the cursings. And this idea, if you're good you're blessed; if you're bad you're punished, runs all the way through the Bible, and it's the basis for the story of the rich man and the eye of the camel. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom." And the disciples said, "Well if that's true, who can be saved?" And you know the background for that is this: You see, if you're rich, it's because you're blessed. And you're blessed because you're good. Therefore, if you're rich, you're good. So if a rich man cannot be saved, a good man cannot be saved. That's the way they had worked it out. And so Jesus told them that story. So this prevailed right on down to the first members of the General Conference committee, that when you see a man who is poor, he is a sinner. The hand of God is on him. Now isn't that a pretty widespread view even to this day?

Then Eliphaz the Terminate answered: "If one ventures a word with you, will you be offended? Yet who can keep from speaking? Behold, you have instructed many, Brother Job, and you have strengthened the weak hands. Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, and you have made firm the feeble knees. But now it has come to you," [trouble has come to you] and you are impatient; it touches you, and you are dismayed. Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope? Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same."

"So Job, you've done something terrible. We've known you for years, Job, as the most prosperous man in the area, and we all know that if you're prosperous it's because the Lord is blessing you." Isn't that what Hezekiah told them? "See all this wealth? The Lord has blessed me." "You have been greatly blessed, Job—your family, your estate, your health. You've been a greatly honored man. Now you've lost it all. Truly God is punishing you. You must not have done something minor. You must have done something very serious. Now you know also, Job, that if you will confess your sins, God will forgive you and restore your blessing and your prosperity. It's a clear case, Job. On your knees! Confess your sins, repent and God will receive you and bless you once again." And Job said, "There's something that doesn't make sense in there." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther & Job*, recorded March, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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Ellen White warns that one of the worst things that has ever been said about God is that he will torture his sinful children for eternity. But that is the devil's picture. We're no friends of God if we picture him that way. Then how shall we picture him? How do you preach the third angel's message as a friend? Or do you preach the third angel's message in such a way as to undermine friendship and produce fear, and the obedience that springs from fear? So we really have an assignment with that third angel's message. We have to be able to explain wrath and fire and destruction, so that we're really putting God in a true light and not turning people against him, or worse, leading to the obedience that springs from fear.

Well now, what is Christ's role when all these people gather together, a hundred million, to watch him say, "Yes, Jones has done all these things. The devil has told the truth. But the devil left out something of great consequence. He didn't mention that this sinner also has a new heart and a right spirit."

We will not be judged by the record of our sinful pasts. We will be judged by the kind of people we are now. Legalists judge by records of sins and even virtues. God judges by what's going on in the heart. And incidentally, he's the only one who can do it. So the angels have to accept his diagnosis, don't they? Well, isn't that why he resurrects the wicked, because he diagnoses them as not safe to save? And is there confirmation of his diagnosis in the resurrection of the wicked?

When they see the New Jerusalem and they see Christ and the Father and the angels, and they have a panoramic review of the whole great controversy and Gethsemane and Calvary, are any of them won by that light and truth? Not a one. Then did Jesus diagnose them correctly? They were not healable as he says of Israel, "You are beyond healing."

That's why the wicked must be raised—to confirm his diagnosis. And then when the love of, the glory of him who is love surrounds the wicked, would it hurt anybody who's in harmony?

There's further confirmation that they're out of harmony by being consumed by the glory of him who is love. Otherwise it's cruel and inhuman to resurrect the Sodomites to burn them all over again. Imagine God doing that! Here the Sodomites arise and look around and say, "Here we go again!" And some people who arise in the special resurrection die three times! What kind of a God would do that? It is painful, but he has paid much pain to clarify these issues in the minds of his family that the universe may be free and secure for eternity. We will not see him torturing his children in the end. But they will indeed die. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Three Angels' Messages*, #4, recorded October, 1981, Loma Linda, California}

*To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/4MM3ANGELSM>

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. "We love Him, because He first loved us." In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ. {COL 384.1}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

Search heaven and earth, and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is made manifest in works of mercy to those who need our sympathy and aid. This is the truth as it is in Jesus. When those who profess the name of Christ shall practice the principles of the golden rule, the same power will attend the gospel as in apostolic times. {MB 137.2}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

It was by deception that Satan seduced angels; thus he has in all ages carried forward his work among men, and he will continue this policy to the last. Should he openly profess to be warring against God and His law, men would beware; but he disguises himself, and mixes truth with error. The most dangerous falsehoods are those that are mingled with truth. It is thus that errors are received that captivate and ruin the soul. By this means Satan carries the world with him. But a day is coming when his triumph will be forever ended. {PP 338.3}

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies. {MB 123.1}

The Pharisees were of this class. They came forth from their religious services, not humbled with a sense of their own weakness, not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They came forth filled with spiritual pride, and their theme was, "Myself, my feelings, my

knowledge, my ways.” Their own attainments became the standard by which they judged others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment seat to criticize and condemn. {MB 123.2}

The people partook largely of the same spirit, intruding upon the province of conscience and judging one another in matters that lay between the soul and God. It was in reference to this spirit and practice that Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” That is, do not set yourself up as a standard. Do not make your opinions, your views of duty, your interpretations of Scripture, a criterion for others and in your heart condemn them if they do not come up to your ideal. Do not criticize others, conjecturing as to their motives and passing judgment upon them. {MB 123.3}

“Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” 1 Corinthians 4:5. We cannot read the heart. Ourselves faulty, we are not qualified to sit in judgment upon others. Finite men can judge only from outward appearance. To Him alone who knows the secret springs of action, and who deals tenderly and compassionately, is it given to decide the case of every soul. {MB 124.1}