

# Job

## Lesson 1



# The Complexity of Job

- We don't know the author
- We don't know the date of authorship
- We don't know the place of authorship
- We are not entirely sure of the original language (or languages) in which it was written



# The Complexity of Job (cont.)

- The book contains hundreds of rare Hebrew words the translations of which are uncertain
- The literary forms used in Job are myriad: proverbs, riddles, hymns, laments, curses, and lyrical nature poems
- The book contains a blend of historical narrative and Hebrew poetry and defies clear classification by genre



# Key Source for this Study

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# 10 Misconceptions About Job

- Most people come to the book of Job with a number of misconceptions which hinder their ability to really understand it
- Before we begin our study, we must “clear the slate” of our misconceptions and open our minds so that we can appreciate what the Lord is communicating to us in this masterful book



# 1. Missing the Middle

- Many people read and really appreciate the first two chapters and the last two chapters of Job
- These chapters announce the catastrophe that befell Job and his repentance and restoration at the end of the book; we learn from these sections that God is sovereign and that things will work out in the end
- However, by not understanding the function of the speeches (the middle) we miss out on the most important functions of the book



## 2. Suffering is the Theme Fallacy

- Those who view the book of Job as being all about suffering have missed the main point of the book!
- The circumstances surrounding and the description of Job's suffering comprise a tiny fraction of the book; this is not the main point
- As we will discover, suffering is simply the vehicle through which the main points of the book are communicated to us
- Suffering causes us to ask really important questions, and it is the answers to these questions that are important



### 3. Theodicy is the Theme Fallacy

- Theodicy: the attempt to answer the question of why a good God permits the manifestation of evil
- Many have assumed that this is the main point of the book of Job
- If this were the main point, then the book would be a colossal failure because THIS QUESTION IS NEVER ANSWERED in the book
- At the end, Job dies and never knows why he suffered



# 4. Satan Suggests that God Test Job Fallacy

- Some have misunderstood the book as some sort of cosmic bet between God and Satan about how Job would handle his suffering
- As we will see when we study the book, it is NOT Satan's idea to test Job; it is God's idea!
- This realization changes everything
- This isn't a book about Satan's dare but God's plan to prove something about Himself



# 5. Job's Friends Repeat Themselves Fallacy

- While Job's friends discuss similar themes, their speeches are not essentially repetitive
- Rather, what they are doing is circling deeper and deeper into these themes to fully explore them
- Their speeches are an expression and justification of their worldview on how God deals with man



## 6. Job's Friends are Stupid Fallacy

- Job's friends were not lowlifes; these men were the aristocracy of the time
- Their speeches are brilliant and border on pure genius
- They make fun of each other over and over while discussing deep philosophy, all presented in very carefully designed Hebrew poetry
- One of the purposes of the book, to show that God's wisdom exceeds that of man, fails unless the men involved are brilliant geniuses



# 7. Job's Friends Were Always Wrong Fallacy

- This cannot be true because Paul quotes from Eliphaz
  - 1 Cor. 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"
- What his friends say is generally right, but how they apply it to Job's situation is wrong
- Job's friends are very astute in the application of human wisdom
- The problem is that they don't know what God is doing because they lack special revelation



## 8. Job's Problems Are Solved at the End Fallacy

- Though God does bless Job materially at the end, He does not answer Job's questions directly
- The questions Job asks are the key to understanding the purpose of this book
- The answers are not provided in Job, but ARE provided in the rest of the Bible



# 9. The Biblical-Theological Disconnect Fallacy

- Those who think that Job is isolated and unconnected to the rest of the Bible have missed the whole point of the book
- Job explains beautifully why we need special revelation
- If Job had received the book of Romans, he would have cried with joy
- As we continue our study in Romans with Tom, you will see how that book provides the answers to the questions raised by Job



# 10. The Messianic Connection Fallacy

- This is a corollary to the “missing the middle” problem; if you think Job is all about how to suffer gracefully, you will miss the connection to Christ
- Job refers to the Messiah directly in Job 19:25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth”
- Job is continually wishing for someone to represent him in the heavenly court, which of course we know he has in the person of Jesus



# Important Dates

- Date of events: Patriarchal period, around 2000 B.C.
  - Job's age of 140 years was consistent with the typical age of the patriarchs
  - Job's wealth was measured in livestock rather than coin which places the events in the patriarchal period
- Date of writing: controversial and unknown
  - Time of Abraham, Moses, and Solomon are all possible
  - Had to be before 570 B.C. because Ezekiel refers to Job



# Canonicity

- The book of Job was clearly canonical by the time of Christ
- Multiple NT references to Job prove the book was genuine and that Job was a real person, and that the events described actually happened
- No serious, Bible believing scholars question the authenticity or canonicity of Job

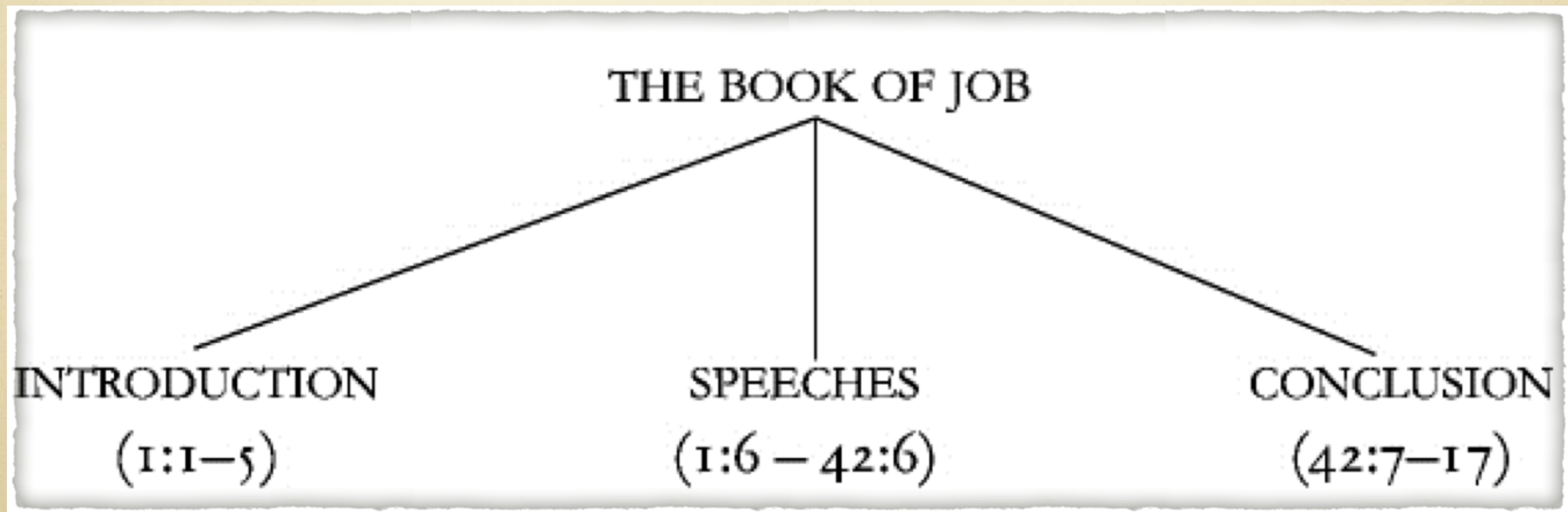


# Authorship

- Author is not known with certainty, and is not named in the book
- Dr. Chou suggests the most likely author is Elihu
  - of Job's friends, he has the most detailed introduction
  - he was of the same family as Abraham and likely a contemporary
    - Job 32:2
    - Genesis 22:20-21
- As Abraham's kinsman, it is likely that Elihu passed along the details of the book to Abraham who would have preserved it until the time it was written

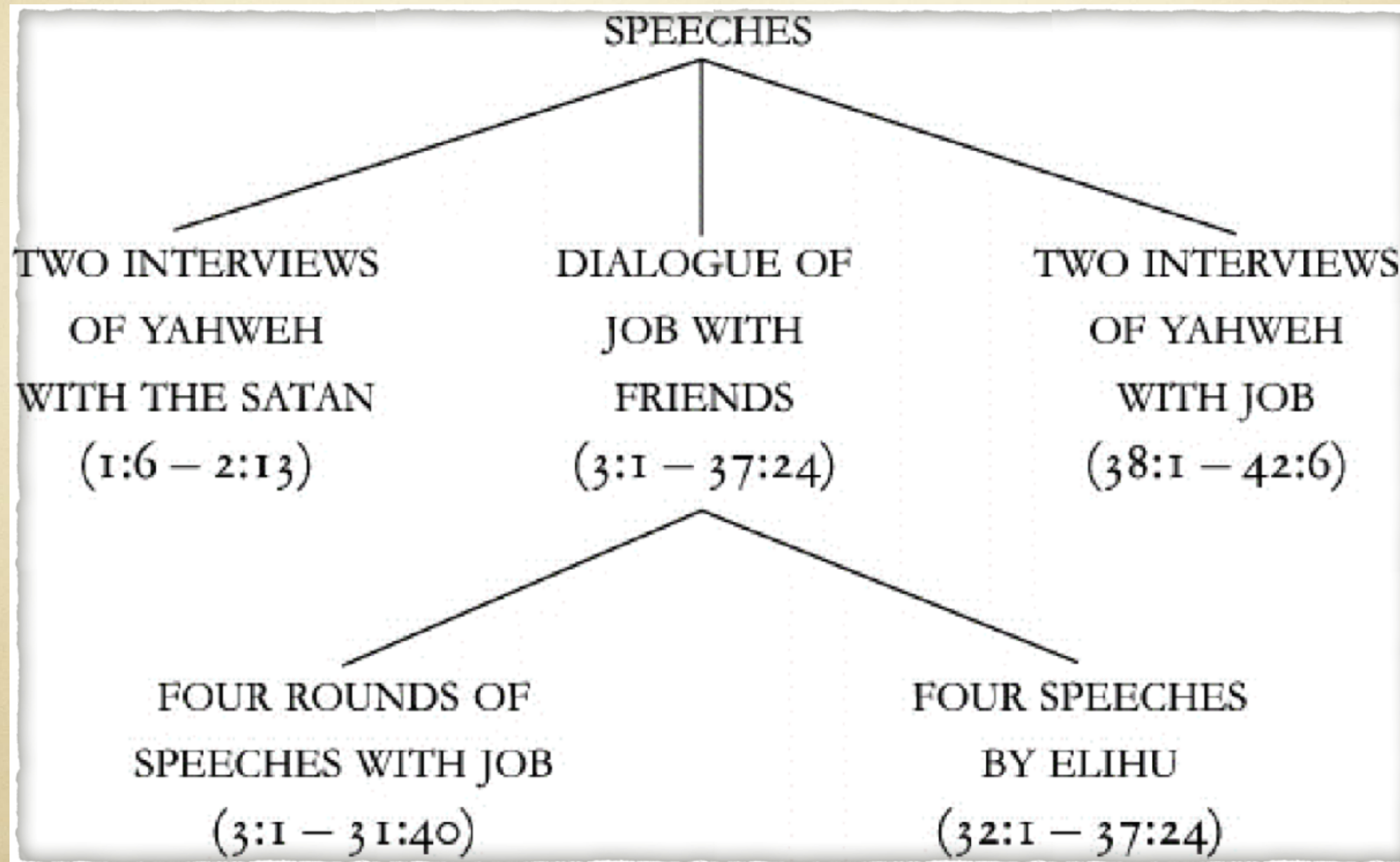


# Structure of the Book





# Structure (cont.)





# The Function of Job in the Bible

- Job is best understood as the “prequel” to the Bible
- The events and speeches of Job unfold in the setting of two courtroom scenes
  - the heavenly court: God places himself on trial, is God right?
  - the earthly court: centers in the speeches of the book, Job appears to be the one on trial, but really, it is still God who is on trial and the question is, is He right?
- The overriding theme of Job is the **rightness** of God (not righteousness)
- **rightness** is the characteristic of being right or correct while **righteousness** is the quality or state of being righteous which means holy or pure



# The Divine-Retribution Principle: The Worldview of Job and his Friends

- This is the ancient principle that if you sin, God will punish you, and if you are righteous God will reward you
- This principle is the foundation for all the arguments in the speeches
- Scriptural support for the principle
  - Proverbs 22:8
  - Hosea 10:13–14
  - Galatians 6:7–8



# The D-R Principle Critiqued

- If scripture affirms the D-R principle, and if Job's friends affirm the D-R principle, how can we explain the suffering of Job? Were his friends right and was Job actually suffering for his sins?
- What is the proper understanding of the operation of this principle?
- Answer
  - God's dealings are NOT constrained by a simplistic application of this principle; He is more complicated than that!
  - This principle does play out in the ultimate, eternal sense but not in the temporal sphere
  - Even the ultimate application of the principle is subject to a major caveat; all men sin yet the elect are resurrected to glory so they escape the curse of this principle



# The Purpose of Job with Respect to D-R

- Job makes the powerful point that you CANNOT understand how the D-R principle will work without SPECIAL REVELATION
- The Bible is that special revelation, so Job shows us just how much we need the Bible
- God afflicts Job for the express purpose of drawing out of him the deepest questions possible which can only be answered by special revelation
- Job's suffering was not for him, and it certainly wasn't for the benefit of Satan, it was for us!
- Does this theme of one suffering on behalf of another sound familiar?



# Job's Wishes

- As we study this book, you will see Job wishing for two main things
  - An opportunity to have his day in the heavenly court
  - An advocate for him in the heavenly court
- Neither are provided to Job in the book
- Yet God has provided exactly this in the gospel!
- Job is therefore the setup to why we need the gospel, and the provision of the gospel is seen as the ultimate demonstration of the goodness of God



# The Error of Job's Friends

- Job's friends set up a false dichotomy: either God is right and man is wrong, or vice versa
- But because of the Gospel, God can be right and man can be made righteous!
- This is what Job is wishing for and when we understand this, it makes the Gospel that much more precious to us



# Job's Chief Literary Device: Irony

## ➤ Irony defined

- the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect (verbal irony)
- a state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects (situational irony)
- a literary technique by which the full significance of a character's words or actions are clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character (dramatic irony)
- The point is that irony is among the most complex of all figures of speech which adds to the complexity and difficulty of this book
- You really have to think about what the friends and Job are saying to understand the full significance



# Example of Irony in Job

- We will see that Job clearly expresses the wish that God would stop paying attention to him, because His attention is **causing him agony**
- Yet David, in Psalm 8, quotes this very wish of Job and uses it to express exactly the opposite thought; how wonderful it is that God notices and thinks about man **for the purpose of saving him**
- The reader therefore understands Job's original wish as ironic



# Summary of the Effect of Job

The Bible is Job's wish granted; Job wants his day in court with an advocate to defend him, the Bible reveals exactly how this is made possible by the substitutionary atonement of Christ



# The Significance of Job from the NT

- James 5:11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.
- How does the book of Job show us that God is merciful?
  - Yes, in the end he got his stuff back, but that's not guaranteed to us when we suffer
  - The real demonstration of His mercy was that after Job's death, He gave Job his day in court with The Advocate, the One whose sacrificial death makes possible our being in His presence
  - 1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous
- Can you imagine what Job felt the day he died and went into the presence of the Lord and met his Redeemer, the one he spent so much time wishing he could have?



# The Big-Picture Significance of Job

- Job is a carefully-designed scenario to show that not only is God **right**, but He is also **good**
- Job points us to focus our minds and our lives on the heavenly realm, not on this passing world, for it is there that we will fully appreciate the rightness and goodness of God
- Matthew 6:19–21 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”