



Traveling God's Word

A chronological study of the Bible

WEEK 4

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Read:

JOB



Just one man, living in a forgotten place at an unknown time— it hardly seems the making of a whole book in the all time best selling collection of books. Hardly who you would think would become one of the best known and most often referred to individuals in history. He should have been, would have been, a mere unremembered speck among the billions of people making up the saga of human history. The tragic events of his personal life are small, at least by our standards, compared to the famines and floods, disasters and wars that have marked the rise and fall of whole civilizations and empires.

But God does not see things as man does. God had His eye on this single righteous soul named Job. In fact, He knew Job better than Job knew himself. After all, who among us can imagine the stranger that will emerge under the circumstances that Job experienced? Even though Job was considered blameless, would he have had the same confidence in his faith that God did had he been part of that fateful conversation between God and Satan?

Are we blameless only when things are going well? Would we stand the test? When things go awry for you, do you more doubt God's power, or His love? How can there be suffering if God is really loving and really all powerful? Job's friends explain it by falling back on the tradition that says all suffering is deserved. Job does not accept that answer, but rather dives headlong and first-hand into the problem of pain.

Job addresses some important theological issues. What kind of God is this? If we can't be assured of a life of ease and blessings by , obeying God, then do we lose our motivation to be found blameless?

SPOTTING CHRIST

What did Job hope for in 9:33? _____

In 14:17, Job said his iniquity was covered. How? _____

Where was Job's witness according to 16:19? _____

What prophetic message does Job deliver in 19:23-27? _____

Do you think that Job had any understanding of the coming Messiah? _____



Once Upon a Time...

We really don't know for sure where Job belongs chronologically. It is placed in our Bible according to its poetic style of writing, and not based on its historical timing. Some view it as a purely symbolic and philosophical form of writing. Along with the other "wisdom books", Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, it is placed around the time of Solomon. There is evidence for this in the age of parallel literature like the Babylonian Theodiciy. There are also, however, several reasons to place it contemporary with, or even preceding, the time of Abraham. One is its use of a very early form of Hebrew. Another is the argument that Levitical law could not yet be in place because Job, like Abraham, offered his own sacrifices. In addition, the patriarchal name for God, Lord (YHWH) is used more than 24 times in the book of Job. Job's life-span of 140 years is another clue. Abraham lived 175 years and Joseph

110. Despite a possible early date, this was a pretty advanced society. Refer-

ences are made to specific constellations, to mining, and to a sophisticated structure of society. Assuming it falls sometime between the flood and Abraham, can we then pinpoint a date? Not really. The samech is a Hebrew letter used alone to indicate a break in the text. This samech break occurs 8 times in Genesis 5 (pre-flood) and another 8 times in Genesis 11 (pre-Abraham). These breaks indicate that the text is not one continuous chronological record. Only the individuals of great renown are mentioned, leaving plenty of room for other events, the life of Job possibly being one of them. Another factor to consider as we read the genealogical records is that the Hebrew word translated son can also be used to indicate a male descendant, with an undetermined number of generations in between. One scholar suggests that 2,000-4,000 years passed between the flood and Abraham!

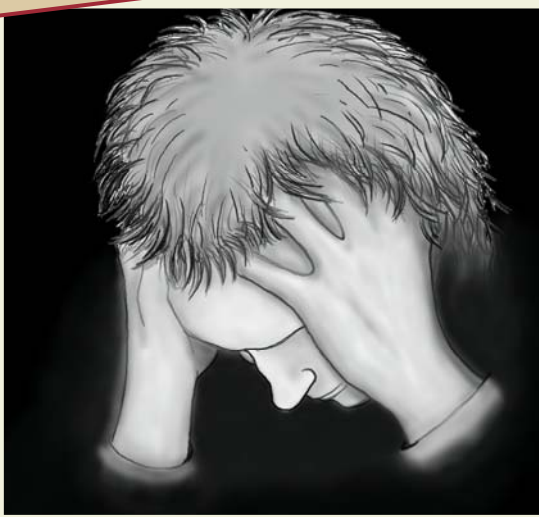
"I will ponder the way that is blameless...I will walk with integrity of heart within my house. I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless."
Ps. 101:2,3

Why?

Babies die, evil men rule, hurricanes and earthquakes bring massive devastation. Why do bad things happen to good people? For that matter, why must bad happen at all? I understand the argument that God gives us free choice, and that explains why some people choose to do mean things to other people, like the Sabeans and Chaldean raiders, but what about "natural" disasters like fire from heaven and great winds of destruction? How often are innocent people destroyed to test the reaction of the blameless left behind?

Why does God so often let Satan have his way?

God must have a much different perspective on the suffering that happens in this world than we do. I am sure that He cares, and even grieves—but I also think that the suffering that seems so huge to us, must be relatively small in the whole scheme of things. After all, this life that is all we know, is actually but a vapor. What happens here only really matters relative to how our spiritual life is affected. The bottom line is—this world is not our home!



The Land of Uz

Uz as the name of an individual appears as early as Gen. 10:23. In Gen. 36:28 and 1 Chron. 1:42, it is mentioned as an Edomite name. Uz is named as a specific location in Jer. 25:20. Although scholars are not certain of its location, it is thought to have been to the northeast of Edom. (Unger 694)

Who were these people likely descended from going to Gen. 10?

How much did the people of Uz know about God? _____

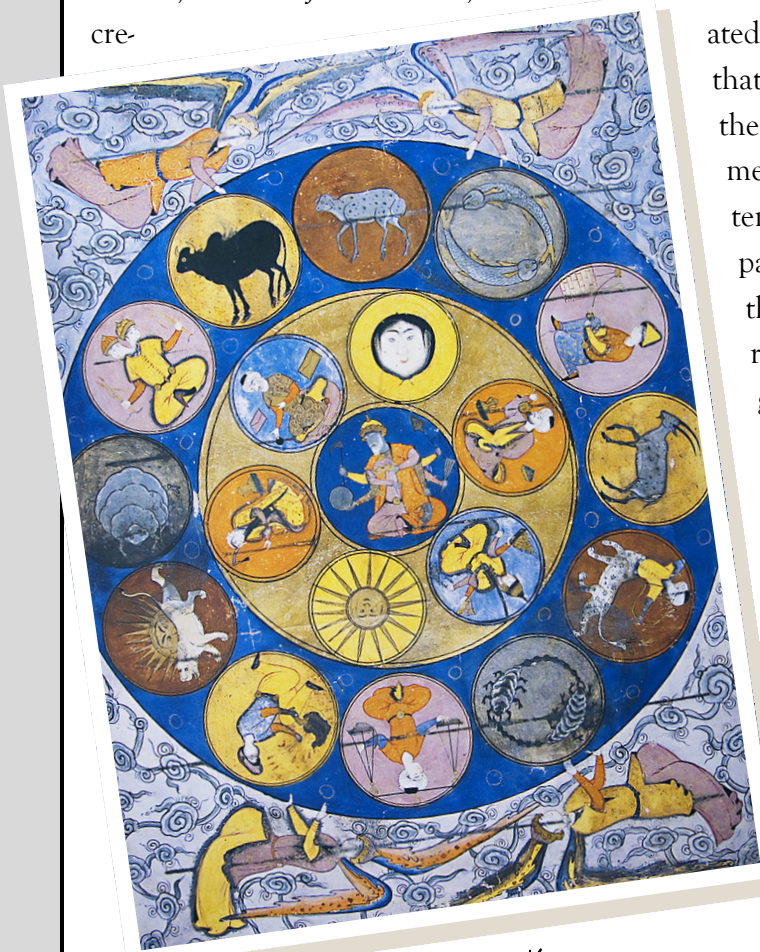
Where did that knowledge come from? _____



The Zodiac -

I'm not sure that there is anything that God has created that Satan has not tried to twist for his own purposes. In Genesis 1:14, back when God proclaimed everything good, God created lights in the heavens as signs and seasons. God reminds Job that He is the controller and creator of the constellations that we have come to associate with the twelve signs of the zodiac. While I enjoy and marvel at the stunning display of stars in the night sky, I have never been much of a fan of the signs of the zodiac and the horoscopes and mythology that has been connected with them. It all seems part of the pagan worship that God warns against in Deut. 18:9-14.

But, as I read Job 38:31-32,
cre-



An Ancient Arabic Zodiac

I am reminded, along with Job, that it is God who created these signs of the zodiac, the constellations that have long been seen as fascinating “signs” in the night sky. I wonder if the very first astronomers were merely those seeking God’s truth written in the night sky? What if the stars that the pagans saw as living things that could determine the destinies of humans, actually were arranged in a way to be signs that testify to the glory of God? What Satan has meant for harm, God meant for good. What God has made good, let us not turn evil. Yet, so often we do. In chapter 31, Job gives a list of possible sins that he has not committed. Among them, in verses 26-28, he lists the worship of the sun and the moon—common objects of worship throughout the ancient world.

Why do you think man seems so strongly tempted to worship the created instead of the Creator? _____

“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?” Job 38:31-32 (KJV)

Mazzaroth means constellations, or collectively, the zodiac.



A Friend in Need

Edom is known for its wise men, so the presumed proximity of Uz and Edom make sense in light of the 'wisdom teaching' of Job's friends. They seemed to draw on an established notion of who God is and how He should behave. Job rejects their traditional view that God operates according to man's understanding of justice. Job did not call such suffering upon himself by sinning against God, but that was the assumption that the friends made. The story of Job provides a counterpoint to the story of the flood where the evil were destroyed and the righteous were rescued. How does Job's story differ?

What was revealed to Eliphaz in the vision that he describes in 4:12-5:7? _____

Why did Job disagree with Eliphaz in 6:24-26? _____

What was the assumption that Bildad made in 8:4-6? _____

What is Zophar's assertion in 11:7-8? _____

How does Job answer his friend's accusations in chapters 12-14? _____

How does Bildad present death in chapter 18? _____

What different angle did Elihu present in chapters 32-37? _____

Puzzle Clues

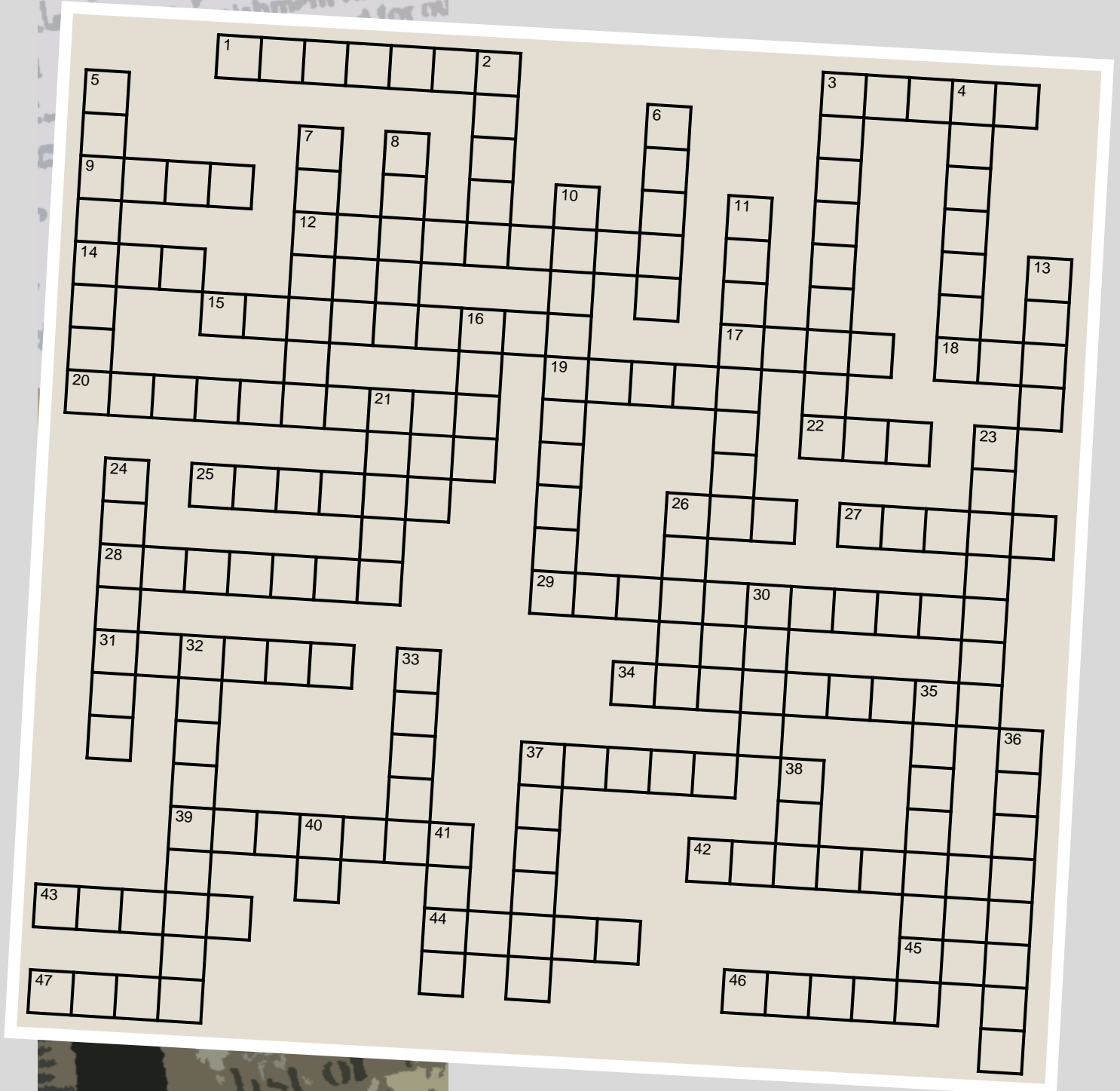
Across

1. Job didn't believe that God would give him one 9:16
3. what Satan wanted Job to do to God 1:11
9. destroyed Job's sheep 1:16
12. How can a mortal be _____? 9:2
14. color of Job's face 16:16
15. Job was 1:1
17. molded like this 10:9
18. shut behind doors 38:8
19. has a flowing mane 39:19
20. Job begged his friends to 9:2
22. Job didn't 1:22
25. the Naamathite 11:1
26. Elihu wasn't 32:6
27. according to Eliphaz, should be Job's confidence 4:6
28. runs faster than a horse 39:18
29. this will turn out for _____ 13:16
31. the Shuite 8:1
34. Job maintained his 2:3
37. Job cursed his 3:1
39. outweighs the sand of the seas 6:2
42. Satan was in God's 1:12
43. denied to the wicked 38:15
44. for a land where no man lives 38:26
45. number of things Job asked God to grant 13:20
46. number of Job's daughters 1:2
47. "_____ for skin" 2:4

Down

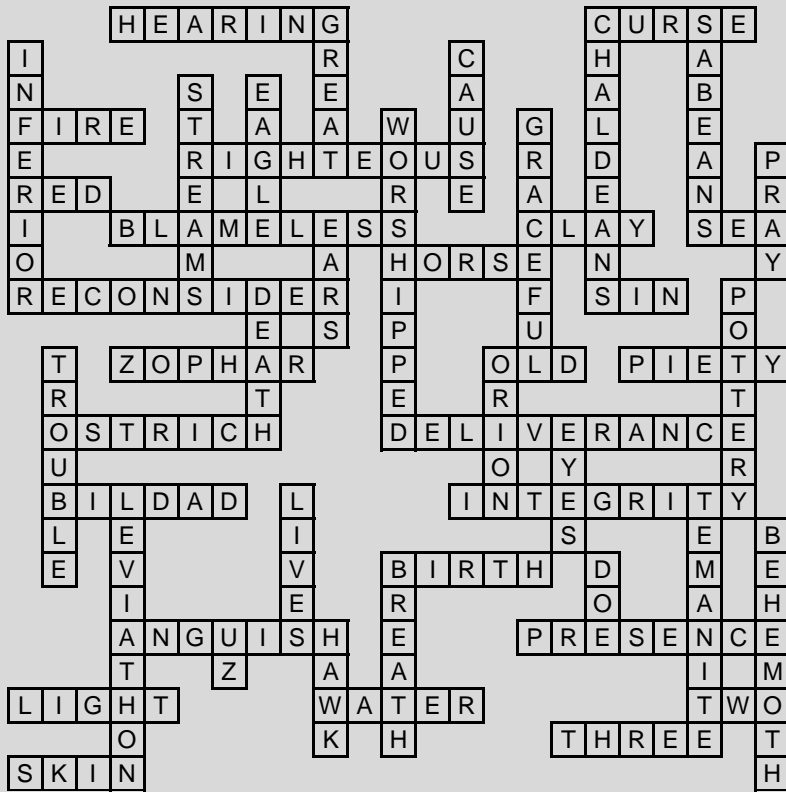
2. God makes nations this 12:23
3. took Job's camels 1:17
4. took Job's donkeys 1:15
5. Job said "I am not _____ to you" 12:3
6. Job advised to lay his before God 5:8
7. "as undependable as intermittent _____" 6:15
8. soars at God's command 39:27
10. Job did this when he fell to the ground 1:20
11. "his strength and his _____ form" 41:12
13. Job was told to do this for his friends 42:8
16. "my _____ have heard" 13:1
21. Job longed for this 3:21
23. Job scraped himself with broken bits of this 2:8
24. man is born to this 5:7
26. constellation 38:31,32
30. "my _____ have seen" 13:1
32. sounds like a dragon 41:1-34
33. "I know that my Redeemer _____" 19:25
35. Eliphaz was one 2:11
36. tail sways like a cedar 40:15
37. Job's was offensive to his wife 19:17
38. bears a fawn 39:1
40. where Job lived 1:1
41. takes flight by God's wisdom 39:26

Puzzle Page





ANSWERS AND SOURCES



Suggested Reading:

Some thought provoking reading on the subject of why bad things happen:

When Bad Things Happen to Good People by Rabbi Harold Kushner

The Trial of God by holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel

The Problem of Pain by C. S. Lewis

Sources:

Once Upon a Time p. 2

The Land of Uz p. 3

Unger, Merrill F. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. 1988.

Moody Publishing.

For more studies, go to
www.downvictoryrd.com

