BRIEF SYNOPSIS AND SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF JOB

Job consists of a prose introduction and conclusion - which may have existed separately from the rest, and of a large poetic core. Satan - who seems not to be the same as the devil, merely an opponent - tells God that Job would not obey if he were afflicted. God gives permission to afflict Job greatly. So Job's suffering is permitted as a test - an idea that is a bit new, for usually suffering had been considered as a divine punishment for sin (and it could be that).

Three friends of Job come, but do not really console him: they say he must have sinned or the affliction would not have come. Job insists on his innocence. The fact that God could afflict an innocent man disturbs Job, he almost becomes angry with God at some points. Finally he asks the Almighty to answer him. God does speak from a storm: Would Job condemn God so he, Job could seem just? Job confesses he has not reacted well, he has tried to deal with things above him, he repents in dust and ashes. God directs Job's friends to ask Job to pray for them, so their fault may be pardoned. In the prose conclusion Job gets back much more than what he had lost.

The Book of Job is concerned with the problem of suffering. Only part of the truth had been revealed at that time. Before, people had tended to think suffering was a punishment for sin. It sometimes is that, but not always. Yet that belief persisted even into the time of Christ. Cf. the question: "who has sinned" This man or his parents? (Jn 9. 2-3).

Job will make a degree of progress, namely, that it comes out clearly that not always is suffering a punishment for sin. Yet the positive value of suffering remained to be made clear by Jesus.

There is however a problem: We know we are adopted children of God. Children, precisely because they are children, have a claim to be in their Father's house, which is heaven. How and why then is there any need or role for suffering?

1) We receive justification with no merit at all. Justification means the first reception of sanctifying grace, which in turn means that the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in our souls makes us sharers in the divine nature (2. Peter 1. 4) and adopted children of God. 2) So we have a *claim* to go to our Father's house. A claim can be called a merit. Yet it is a different kind of merit. Although it is as it were a ticket to heaven, it is a ticket we get for free, without at all earning it. 3) Once we have this status of children, sharing in the very
nature of the Father, any good we do has a special added dignity, which makes it suitable that He increase our ability to know Him face to face. Since that vision is infinite, but we are finite receptacles, our capability to receive could grow indefinitely, for it will never reach the infinite. That growth is what we call growth in sanctifying grace. And even though the first grace-the basic ticket itself - is not at all earned, there is a sense in which additions to the ability to see face to face can be earned. Yet we do not earn these as individuals. It is only inasmuch as we are a) members of Christ and b) like Him, that we get in on the claim which HE established.

In this sense we could say what one student once said in a class about salvation: "You can't earn it, but you can blow it". That is, children do not have to earn the love and care of their parents. Yet they could earn to lose it.

So now we have focused our problem. We can rightly say: All we have to do it to keep from earning to lose this ticket.

How then does this fit in with this such texts as

Romans 8. 17: "We are heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ, provided that we suffer with Him, so we may also be glorified with Him"? Similarly Jesus Himself said that He is the vine, and we the branches (John 15. 1-6). The Father will prune a fruitful branch, to make it bear still more fruit. Again, the Epistle to the Hebrews (12. 5-13) quotes the Old Testament (Proverbs 3. 11-12) saying that the Father disciplines us as children. That is a sign He cares for us, loves us.

The solution is really easy: If we remained always perfectly innocent children, there would be no need at all for purification. But the problem is that we all do sin (1 John 1. 8).

Therefore: a) The Holiness of our Father wants His children clean enough to enter His house. Some sin and estrange themselves from God. Others do not t, but become dirty children, who need a cleanup.

We could explain it this way: The Holiness of the Father loves all that is right and good. But a sinner disturbs the harmony of order, and disturbs His image which He had given us, not only in creating us to His own image and likeness, but still more by making us conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8. 29). Sin disturbs that image, Mortal sin
destroys the image of His Son in us; venial sin may as it were tarnish it. Put it another way: The scales of the objective order need to be rebalanced if we, His children, have put it even somewhat out of order by our personal sins. The sinner takes from one pan of a two pan scales something he has no right to have. It might he so grave as to cause him to lose divine sonship—mortal sin. But it can be something lesser, which while it does not cause us to lose that sonship, yet it does mean we are bad, we might say, dirty children. We need to be cleaned up. The essential, the infinite work of rebalancing the scales is done by Jesus, our Brother, with whom He are heirs as Romans 8. 17 says. Yet the same line, Romans 8. 17 also says we are heirs "provided that we suffer with Him."

As we indicated, by mortal sin we could even lose our status as sons of the Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus. Yet even lesser, venial sins, make us not clean enough to get in without some clean up or polishing. So that needs to be done. In other words, each one of us has an obligation to rebalance, by suffering, for the imbalance even smaller sins have caused.

b) Just as a really good Father trains His children by discipline to make them grow up and be what they should be, so our Father in heaven, disciplines us for the same purpose, as we said above, citing Hebrews and Proverbs.

c) If we really love our Father, we will want to see that He gets the pleasure of giving to all those whom He wants to be His children. But some of them have even forfeited that position, while others are somewhat soiled. In either case, in order that He may be able to give His favors to them, they need to be open. But many of them do little or nothing towards rebalancing the scales for their own sins. So that they may be put in the condition to receive, we can by taking on difficult things, make up for them. This is love for them - it is also love of the Father, for it gives Him the opening to give to them, while at the same time it gives them the openness they need to receive. (So we see in passing: love of God and love of neighbor are found in one and the same action). Hence St. Paul said, in Colossians 1. 24: "I fill up the things that are lacking to the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church." Of course, nothing is lacking to the sufferings of Christ considered as an individual. But the whole Christ, Head and members, can be deficient. Paul wants to do what we just said, to make up for a lack of opening in other members of Christ.
We gather, there is triple reason for suffering. It cleans up the tarnished image of the Father and of Christ in us; it helps us grow to spiritual maturity to be fully ready to enter His house; it helps give the Father the pleasure of being able to give to other, deficient children.

What was known of this beautiful picture at the tome of Job? As we said, many, such as Job's so-called friends, insisted that all suffering comes from sin. The book makes it finally clear that not always does suffering come from sin. But clearly, Job did not see the full expanses of the splendid picture we have just unfolded.

Could they have reached at least part of this picture? There were grounds for doing that. First, they knew God is our Father—cf. Isaiah 63. 16: "Even if Abraham were not to know us or Israel to acknowledge us, You, Lord, are our Father." And Hosea 11. 1: "Out of Egypt I have called my son", that is, the whole people of Israel. Cf. also Jer 31. 9. But they did not know in how full a sense that is true. They knew He had made them, yet. But they did not know that He gave them a share in His own divine nature. Further, they knew that sin is a debt—that truth stands out all over the OT, the Intertestamental literature of the Jews, the New Testament and the writings of the Rabbis and the Fathers (on this cf. the appendix to Wm. Most, The Thought of St. Paul, pp. 289-301). They knew further the atoning power of suffering for others. This came out specially strongly in the fourth Servant Song in Isaiah 53. It was found also elsewhere in the Scriptures, cf 2 Mac 7. 37; Dan 3. 35 & 40; Job 42. 7-8.

Yet, even though the grounds, we might say premises, for reaching these conclusions were present and were known, they did not draw the implications from them. Similarly, Jesus confuted the Sadducees who denied the resurrection by citing for them the text of Exodus 3. 6: "'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead but of the living." - Yet, did most Jews draw that deduction from those early words? We doubt it very much. Similarly, although they had, as we said, the premises to reach much of the picture we have painted, yet they did not really reach nearly all of it. Instead in the conclusion to Job, the solution seems to be merely that God would give back more than what He had taken away but do it in this life.

Job contradicts? M. Duggan, in The Consuming Fire (Ignatius, 1991) has some unacceptable statements on Job: 1) On p. 435: that the debate is over the very justice of God. So Job asks God: "is it right for you to attack me, in contempt for what you yourself
have made...?" (10. 3). But Job is merely thinking his way through the puzzle. He is not really attacking God. If he were doing that then at the end God was angry at the "friends" of Job, and said (42. 7) "... you have not spoken right of me, as my servant Job has done."

2) On p. 436 Duggan says Job suspects God uses his power for purposes more destructive than constructive-- God casts down mountains in anger, shakes the earth’s pillars. -- but these expressions merely bring out Job’s understanding of the awful majesty and power of God. The language is borrowed largely from poems of Ugarit, when also came powerful descriptions of God’s majesty in the Psalms. 3) On p. 436 again Duggan says that Job wants his day in court, when he can prove the injustice of God! --but Job is magnificent poetry, semitic expressions at that, in which Job vents his feelings. Again, he does not really charge God with injustice -- had he done that God would not have said in 42. 7 that Job had spoken rightly. --A fuller explanation, based on theological method, for these texts will be given in our comments on chapters 9-10, below.

**Genre:** Is Job meant to be historical? Not likely. Just as Pope John Paul II said Genesis 1-3 was myth - not meaning fairytale, but rather an ancient story put together to bring out some things true in themselves (Cf. his *Original Unity of Man and Woman*. St. Paul Editions, 1981 p. 28 and note), so it is likely with the book of Job. Its real purpose is to explore the problem of suffering, of which we spoke above.

**Introduction:** We learn that Job was a man of Uz. Its location is unknown. Some today put it somewhere in the desert south of the Dead Sea, perhaps near Edom (Lam 4. 21. Cf. Jer 25. 20). Others follow Josephus and Christian tradition in putting it south of Damascus. Cf. Gen 10. 23. But location is not important. for the story is as we said above, just a vehicle for presenting some truths in beautiful poetry.

At the start, Job is fabulously wealthy and blessed in sons and daughters. But then we are taken to the court of God. the sons of God are there, seemingly, angels. But the satan is also there - the Hebrew word is just a general term for the opponent. In Numbers 22. 22 (cf. 22. 32) an angel who blocks the way for Balaam is called angel and also is called the satan, the one who opposes.

In Job the word has not yet taken on the special later meaning of a chief devil. He is merely an opponent. God asks satan if he has noticed Job. Satan replies: Job has no trouble fearing God: God has given him everything. But take something away and see what he will do. God gives permission, and satan takes away everything from Job. Then God says: See
what I said! Satan replies: Yes, but let me touch him personally and see. So it is done. Job
stricken with loathsome sores from head to foot. He sat in ashes scraping himself with a
potsherd. His wife, a foolish woman, urged him to curse God and die. Job of course
refused.

Then three friends of Job heard of his trouble, Eliphaz the Temanite (probably an
Edomite. Gen 36. 4 says an Eliphaz was the firstborn of Esau, from who descended the
Edomites, and Teman was son of Eliphaz: v. 11); Bildad the Shuhite (Bildad is a
nonHebrew name, perhaps standing for Lord Adad, the storm god. He knows wisdom
tradition and uses it against Job. Shuites were descendants of Abraham through Keturah
and lived in the land of the east); and Zophar the Naamathite (no agreement of scholars
on the location of Naamath. Perhaps it was somewhere in north Arabia or Edom).

They came to see him, and then sat on the ground without speaking for seven days and
seven nights - a fine bit of semitic exaggeration of course.

**Job's opening Speech:** Chapter 3. Job curses the day of his birth in colorful language. He
calls on those who curse the day to curse it - they would be men like Balaam who have a
special ability of effective cursing. They can rouse up the Leviathan, the mythical monster
of the sea.

His whole speech amounts to saying: I wish I had never been born. He says that then he
would be lying down with kings and other great men of the past. This could imply an
expectation of an afterlife even before a resurrection. We will comment more on this
matter in connection with 19. 25 below.

**Eliphaz, in chapters 4 and 5:** He was from Teman, an Edomite city noted for wisdom. At
first, it sounds as though E was really concerned with the welfare of J, but still could not
resist the temptation to give J some good instruction: "You have instructed many, but you
yourself are impatient." But he quickly adds: Who has ever perished when he was
innocent-- implying J is not innocent. E is expressing the common old belief that all
suffering is punishment for sin. Therefore Job must have sinned. Then to strengthen his
point, he speaks, in an imaginative way, of a vision he had at night -did he really assert he
had that vision? Within genre rules not necessarily so. In it a voice asked: Can a man be
righteous before God? God charges even his angels with error. But J is acting like a fool-
in wisdom literature this means one who does not pay proper attention to God.
But Eliphaz adds something, in 5. 17-27: God exalts those who are lowly. God may wound, but He binds up again. If Job repents as he should, then he will see his descendants into his old age. The thought is the same as in Proverbs 3. 11-12 [Need not imply author of Job had seen Proverbs or vice versa-- That thought was probably in circulation]. Yet Job has just lost all his descendants!

Job replies to Eliphaz' first speech: chapters 6 & 7: Job ignores the thought just mentioned. Probably his suffering was too great to appreciate the advice practically. And perhaps he would feel that to say that would be an admission of guilt - which Job insists he does not have. Further, there could be a realistic situation: often when another is speaking, the one who should listen does not really listen, he is preoccupied with what he wants to say next. So Job continues: Oh I wish God would crush me and cut me off. I have not denied what the Holy One says. [We recall that the Holiness of God is that quality in virtue of which He loves all that is right. So Job is expressing the rightness of God.] Man's life is hard, says Job.

In 7. 6-7 we read important words of Job: " My life goes by faster than the shuttle of a weaver. . my days come to their end without hope... . My eye will never again see good." We note that Job sees no possible relief in this life. Therefore when in 19. 25 he speaks of a future hope, it must be not in this life, but in a future life. (cf. also 13. 15). We will discuss this more fully at 19. 25.

In 7. 20 Job also says God frightens him with visions (v. 14). He adds (v 20): "If I sin, what do I do to you, who scrutinize men?" I spite of language, even used today, that sin offends God, Job knows that God cannot be harmed. Yet God examines most closely the sins of men - very true. But His mercy is true too, He readily forgives those who repent. The last verse (31) even seems to have J implying he might have sinned. That could merely be: Even if I have sinned, please pardon me. It is best taken as just emotional language, as so much of the poetic part of this work is.

First Speech of Bildad. He shows no sympathy for J. He calls J's words a great wind. He insists God does not pervert justice. He tells J to just pray to God and God will listen and reward J. God will not reject a blameless man- with the implication that somehow J is not blameless. Eliphaz had seemed at first to have some feeling for J, but then lost patience. The other Two, Bildad and Zophar, seem to have no feeling at all for J.
Chapters 9-10: Job replies to first speech of Bildad: Some think Job here falls God unjust, and says He may afflict without cause.

Part of the explanation of the puzzle lies in the fact that the Jews normally attributed to God things they knew He only permitted: In Amos 3. 6: "If evil comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" In 1 Samuel 4. 3: "Why did the Lord strike us today before the face of the Philistines?" In the account of the plagues in Exodus, a few times the Pharaoh was close to letting them go, but then although a few times the text says that he, the king, hardened his own heart, mostly it says that God hardened the king’s heart.

But more importantly, we need to observe splendid theological method at work here: In studying divine things one can at times meet two conclusions, which seem to clash head-on. Of course, then he will recheck his work, but the two still are there. Then he must not deny either or strain either. He must simply hold both, even if that seems utterly impossible.

In accord with this method: First, we must notice one of two truths, expressed in verses 1-4: God is awesome justice, and no man can be just before God. He adds that God’s power is tremendous - He can overthrow mountains, shake the earth, He made the stars. The helpers of Rahab (mythical sea monster, personifying chaos) cannot stand against Him. Secondly, He may afflict without cause: v. 17: "He multiples my wounds without cause." But Job can hold both things: that God is supreme justice, and yet God may afflict without cause. Job does not know how to put them together. But in splendid theological method he holds to both. Later, in the revelation of Jesus, we could see how to put these together: there is another life, and likeness to Jesus in suffering is of supreme worth. But even at that time, they could and did say: God disciplines His children - even Proverbs and Job knew this.

Semitic did not find it hard to use this method of holding two things: They could readily take two seemingly incompatible statements without calling it a clash, and without drawing an implication. Thus in Matthew 4. 6: "When you pray, pray in secret" - but yet in Mt: 5. 16: "Let your light shine before men, so they may see your good works."

The Fathers of the Church in the first centuries in a similar way made both negative and affirmative statements on two great questions: 1) Did Jesus really advance in wisdom (Lk 2. 52) and 2) Did He know the day of judgment (Mk 13. 32. Most of the Fathers wrote opposite statements on these two passages. (Cf. Wm. Most, The Consciousness of Christ,
chapter 6, for over 100 patristic texts). There are similar pairs of statements on the equality of the Logos with the Father in several Fathers, especially Origen, who both affirmed equality, and yet implied a denial of equality. Again on membership in the Church, we find very many Fathers who made both strict statements, sounding almost like L. Feeney, and yet made astoundingly broad statements. On this cf. Wm. Most, *Our Father’s Plan*. Appendix.

In confirmation we recall again that at the end of the dialogue, God says (42. 7) that Job has spoken rightly.

After such statements, Job returns to wishing he had never been born.

**Chapter 11: First Speech of Zophar**: Instead of consoling Job, he is harsh, calls him man full of talk, and says God exacts of him less than he deserves! If only Job would repent, his life would be brighter than midday.

**Chapters 12-14: Job answers Zophar**: Zophar had seemed to claim wisdom. Job says he is as wise as Zophar: everyone knows the things Z has said.

He says that God may shut a man in, and no one can open for him. This is the sort of thing we commented on in remarks on the reply of J to Bildad. God can make counsellors foolish, can take away the ability to speak from those who are trusted. God uncovers the deeps which had been dark. He makes nations great, then makes them fall. He takes away understanding from princes— we think now of Isaiah 29. 14 where God said since they did not worship Him rightly: "Wisdom will perish from the wise."

So J says: What you know, I know too. He calls his friends "worthless physicians"- and they were that. J says He knows that if he were allowed to plead his case before God, he would be vindicated, so convinced is he of his own innocence.

But a man's life is short: why should God bother with him at all -- an echo of Psalm 8? Why should God bother to look at man? If a tree dies, it may sprout again - but when man breathes his last, there is no more. He never rises again to the present life.

That thought leads into a difficult passage, strangely badly misunderstood by some, in 14. 13-22.
Did Job, as some say, deny a future life in 14: 13 ff? Not at all. Here is an outline of what Job really said in chapter 14: In verses 10-12: Even though a tree may put forth shoots again, a man who dies does not come back, i.e., not to this life. In verse 13: Job indulges in a poetic fancy - he knows it is only a fancy: He wishes God would hide him in Sheol until His anger would pass, and then remember Job again. This is a fancy for certain, but we must remember Job is high poetry, and such poetry can indulge in fanciful things. Marvin Pope, In Anchor Bible, Job does take this view of verse 13, and Pope points out that Is 26: 20 indulges a similar fancy: let the people of Judah hide in their chambers till God's wrath passes. Amos 9: 2 ff. pictures the wicked as trying in vain to hide in Sheol, in Heaven, on Mt. Carmel or on the bottom of the sea. Verses 14-17 continue the fancy of verse 13: "If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my service I would wait until my change would come. You [God] would call, and would answer and you would want the work of your hands. Then You would number my steps, and not keep watch over my sin. My transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and you would sew up my iniquity. Verses 18-22 return to reality: just as a mountain may lose strength and a rock be moved from its place, just as waters wear away even rock, so, in the end, God prevails, and destroys man's hope of this life. God sends him away. In verses 21-22: Man goes to sheol, and does not know whether his sons fare well or not, "His flesh on him has pain, and his soul mourns over him." To sum up: Job for a moment indulges fancy, then returns to reality: No one can win against God, he must go to Sheol. There he will not know what goes on on earth - as we saw earlier, even the souls of the just there, not having the vision of God before the death of Christ, have no normal means of knowing things on earth, unless God gives a special revelation. But Job adds that his flesh has pain and his soul mourns over him. This at least seems to imply some awareness after death.

**Chapter 15: Second speech of Eliphaz:** A wise man, he says, should not be so windy. Job is really doing away with the fear of God - yet Job had given a graphic picture of God's might in Chapter 9. Eliphaz continues, saying no man can be clean. Why God finds fault even with His angels! So man should fear, and not trust in emptiness. He will be paid in full by God.

**Chapters 16-17: Job's Second Reply to Eliphaz:** Job calls them "miserable comforters." Is there no end to windiness, he asks? God has worn me out, he has torn me in his anger. I was at easy, and He broke me, even though there is no violence in my hands. He claims his witness is in heaven while his friends scorn him. God has made him a byword for
people, and upright men are shocked to see the state of Job. But his "friends" come on and on again after him!

**Chapter 18: Second speech of Bildad:** He asks Job: How long will Job hunt for words, and consider them as stupid cattle? The light of the wicked is put out. His skin is consumed by disease— that was true of Job. West and East are appalled at him.

**Chapter 19: Second reply of Job to Bildad:** Job asks: How long will you friends torment me? This is ten times you have attacked me. If I sinned— he is not really admitting that, this is hypothesis— my error remains within me, and does not harm others. It is God who has put me in these straits. He has walled up my way, and kindled His anger against me. He has put my brethren far from me. He is repulsive to his wife, even young children look down on him. He pleads: Have pity on me, my friends. For the hand of God has touched me. Why do you pursue me like God? He wishes his words were written in a book, or engraved in a rock with iron pen and lead forever.

Next comes the most famous line in the entire book, about which there has been much discussion. He says he knows that his redeemer, his *goel* [the next of kin who had the right and duty to rescue his kinsman in dire need], lives and at last he will stand upon the earth. After his skin has been destroyed, yet Job will see God from his flesh. His own eyes shall behold this. His heart faints at the thought.

Now this passage could not mean a rescue in this life, for in 7: 6-7 Job said: "My days have passed more swiftly than the web is cut by the weaver, and are consumed without any hope." So he had no hope for this life - the hope must have been for the future life. (The NRSV, the RSV the NAB and the NIV all have substantially the thought as we rendered it above. So our rendering is at least not impossible. We will see more in our comments later on Qoheleth and on Sirach 14: 16-17.)

What of fact that 19. 25 seems early to speak of a resurrection? The argument is circular: We do not know anything so early, so this cannot be it!--What of fact that this 19. 25 does not seem to affect general thought of Job? It can be a flash in the pan, like the lines in the Psalms on seeing God, though on the whole that notion seems not known so early, unless we accept the revisions by Dahood in the introductions to his three volumes of *Anchor Bible, Psalms*. On the basis of Ugaritic, a related Semitic language, he proposed retranslations of about 30 Psalm lines. If he is right, the knowledge of the Jews on the future would be much earlier than many suppose.
Chapter 20: Second Speech of Zophar: He becomes even more harsh now. From the beginning the exulting of the wicked is short. Wickedness is sweet in his mouth, but his food turns bitter in his stomach. He has crushed and abandoned the poor: with limitless greed. But God will send fierce anger against him. Utter darkness awaits him and a fire will devour him. The heavens will reveal his wickedness.

Chapter 21: Job replies to second speech of Zophar: Why should I not be impatient? Why do the wicked prosper and live long? They tell God to depart form them, they do not want to know His ways. One dies in prosperity. Another dies in bitterness of soul without ever tasting good. Job adds: I know your thoughts, your schemes against me. There is nothing left of your answers but falsity.

Chapter 22: Third Speech of Eliphaz: No man can be profitable to God, nor does it give the Almighty pleasure if a man is righteous. Is not your wickedness great? Then Eliphaz makes specific, totally rash charges, with no foundation. He says Job has stripped the naked, has sent widows away empty. That is why the snares are about him. So agree with God and you will he at peace. Return to Him and humble yourself. God abases the proud, but helps the humble. He delivers the innocent man.

Chapters 23-24: Reply of Job to Eliphaz: Job says his pain is bitter. He wishes he could present his case to God in court. He would be acquitted forever by God. God knows the way I have taken, when God has finished trying me, I will come out like gold. Yet I am terrified at His presence. Why does the Almighty let the evil prosper? God pays no attention to the groan of the dying and the suffering.

Chapter 25: Third reply of Bildad: He seems to be giving up on Job. He repeats what Eliphaz said in chapter 22: How can a man be righteous before God? Even the moon is not bright or the stars clean in His sight--how much less man. Implication: You, Job, claim to be clean!

Chapters 27-31: Final Reply of Job to the Three: What helpers you are! God is all powerful: Sheol is naked before Him. He hangs the earth on nothing, binds up the waters in thick clouds. The pillars of heaven shake at his rebuke. His power stills the sea and smites Rahab-- and these are only the outer edges of His power.
As God lives, I will not speak what is false as long as I have breath. I will not put away my integrity. My heart does not reproach me. All of you have seen it yourselves: why have you become so vain? The wicked man does receive his deserts from the Almighty.

But where can Wisdom be found? Man does not know the way. The deep says: Wisdom is not in me. Gold and silver and jewels cannot equal wisdom. It is hid from the eyes of all the living. Abaddon and Death say they have heard a rumor of Wisdom. But God understands the way to wisdom. He knows its place. He said: Behold, the fear of the Lord: that is wisdom.

O, I wish I were as I was in the past when God watched over me. When I went to the city gate, young men saw me, and pulled back. The aged rose and stood. Princes put their hand on their mouth. For I delivered the poor, helped the fatherless. So the blessing of the one about to die came to me. I made the heart of the widow sing for Job. I put on righteousness like a garment. I was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, a father to the poor. I broke the fangs of the evil. So men listened to me, and kept silent. After I spoke they did not speak again. -- But now even young men make sport of me, men whose fathers I would not have respected. Those who were wicked and ate the inedible now abhor me. The spit at the sight of me. Terrors are turned upon me. I cry to God and He does not answer. Yet I know God will not bring me to death. Did I not weep for the man whose day was hard? I even made a covenant with my eyes, not to lust for a virgin. [Some think the reference is to looking at the goddess of fertility - but this is much less likely]. If I have walked in falsehood, if I turned aside from the way, then let me sow and other eat. If my heart gave in to the enticement of a woman, then let my wife grind for another. If I withheld anything the poor desired, if I caused the face of the widow to fall, or if I ate my bread without sharing it, then let my arm fall from its socket. For I feared calamity from God if I did not do right. I could not have faced His Majesty. Let the Almighty answer me! [End of the words of Job].

**Chapters 32-37: The Long Speech of Elihu:** Commentators have discussed much the nature and quality of this long speech. The ideas he presents are not really different from those of the others. But he does show an overweening confidence in his own ability to express them. Yet he does express some things in fine poetic form.
Elihu says that since he was younger, he waited for his elders to give their speeches. But he says he will not use their words. Yet his heart is full of things to say, like a new wineskin it is ready to burst.

Job says that he is clean. But he is wrong in this. God is greater than man. Why contend against Him? Man is sometimes warned in a dream or is chastened by pain.

What man is like Job, who drinks up scoffing as if it were water? God will not act wickedly. God sees all the steps of man, He knows their works. But Job speaks without knowledge or insight.

God put kings on their thrones, and if they serve Him, they finish their days in prosperity. But Job is full of the judgment on the wicked. He should beware so that his own anger might drive Job into scoffing. Can anyone understand God's awesome power in thunder and lightning? Consider His wondrous works. He is clothed with terrible Majesty.

**Chapters 38-41: God speaks to Job out of the storm:** It might seem at first sight as though God is rebuking Job, yet at the end in 42. 7-8 God says Job has spoken rightly. The difference is this: Job has not understood the power and Majesty of God sufficiently, though he has known it somewhat. But in spite of all that, Job has not said anything contrary to God's will - the difference is between defect in understanding, and defect in will.

So we have here a long and poetically beautiful presentation of the awesome power of God in creation, going into some detail. Among other things God says He made Behemoth: sense is uncertain. It may mean the same as Leviathan, standing for the mythical monster of the sea, which in mythology God can overcome and tame. Or since the word is a feminine plural, it might be an expression of the beast *par excellence*.

**Chapter 42: Job answers God. Conclusion:** Job properly says He understands better the marvelous power of God, and is sorry he has spoken with insufficient understanding. So he despises himself in dust and ashes.

Finally the Lord spoke to the three counsellors, and rebuked them: they had not spoken right as Job had done. Therefore they must offer a sacrifice of seven bulls and seven rams. But to gain acceptance, they must ask Job to pray for them. God will accept the prayer of Job. It is very significant here that Job is an intercessor, in spite of foolish Protestant claims.
that there can be no intercessor but Christ--based on 1 Tim 2. 5. That verse speaks of a mediator who is a) by very nature, having both divine and human natures; b) is necessary -- only Christ was necessary; c) who can work by his own power-- secondary mediators depend on the power of the One par excellence Mediator. So Job is a mediator. And for that matter, so many times, Moses was a mediator between God and the sinful people.

After all this was done, God restored to Job twice as much as He had taken away. This fact does not deny the essential message of the book which is this: suffering is not always due to sin. In Job his suffering was not due to sin. It was for some other purpose the idea, that it is for instruction, "discipline", is present there, as it is also in Proverbs. But as we said in the introduction to this book of Job, the full purpose of suffering was still to be revealed in Jesus, even though the premises from which they might have reached a point at least close to that conclusion were already present.