

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Structure

- 13 Now on the day
when his sons and his daughters
were eating
and drinking
wine
in their oldest brother's house,
- 14 a messenger came to Job and said,
"The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,
15 and the Sabians attacked and took them.
They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword,
and I alone have escaped to tell you."
- 16 While he was still speaking,
another also came and said,
"The fire of God fell from heaven
and burned up the sheep
and the servants
and consumed them,
and I alone have escaped to tell you."
- 17 While he was still speaking,
another also came and said,
"The Chaldeans formed three bands
and made a raid on the camels
and took them
and slew the servants
with the edge of the sword,
and I alone have escaped to tell you."
- 18 While he was still speaking,
another also came and said,
"Your sons and your daughters were eating
and drinking wine
in their oldest brother's house,
19 and behold,
a great wind came from across the wilderness
and struck the four corners of the house,
and it fell on the young people
and they died,
and I alone have escaped to tell you."
- 20 Then Job
arose
and tore his robe
and shaved his head,
and he fell to the ground
and worshiped.

21 He said,
 "Naked I came from my mother's womb,
 And naked I shall return there.
 The LORD gave
 and the LORD has taken away.
 Blessed be the name of the LORD."

22 Through all this
 Job did not sin
 nor did he blame God.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

13 Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." 22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God. Job 1:13-22 (NASB95)

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

See sentence structure.

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. The Stage is Set: A Family Gathering (13)

II. Calamity Strikes: An Appointment with Tragedy (14-19)

A. The Four Horsemen of Doom (14-19)

1. The First Horseman: Raiders (Sabeans) (14-15)
2. The Second Horseman: Natural Disaster (Lightening) (16)
3. The Third Horseman: Raiders (Chaldeans) (17)
4. The Fourth Horseman: Natural Disaster (Wind) (18-19)

III. Job's Conduct: 5 Verbs (20)

IV. Job's Confession: 5 Statements (21)

V. Closing Commentary (22)

VI. Concluding Thoughts

- A. Beware: calamity strikes without warning
- B. God is always in control, always
- C. We leave this world as we enter it (naked)
- D. Are you willing to pay the cost of faith
- E. Know the difference between a loan and a gift
- F. The Shadow of the Cross Is Never Absent

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job's worship is tested by calamity

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): And Job responds with worship.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job's worship is tested by calamity and Job responds with worship.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: True worship survives the fires of affliction.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: When Calamity Comes Knocking (Part 1)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

There are scene shifts in this extended prologue. The first scene is on earth, 1:1-5, giving us a preview of this man named Job and his family. Then the scene shifts to heaven in vv. 1:6-12. Back to earth in vv. 1:13-22; Back in heaven in 2:1-6. Back to earth in 2:7-13. That brings us back to the extended dialogues between Job and his friends that dominate the rest of the book all the way up to chapter 42.

Earth to heaven

<=== 2 cycles

Earth to heaven

Back to earth (balance of the book)

Another way to look at it (reproduced from Talbert, 36):

The prologue divides naturally into four parts, each signaled by a repeated transitional phrase.

“There was a man . . .” (1:1-5) introduces the reader to Job.

“Now there was a day . . .” (1:6-12) informs the reader of the proceedings of the divine counsel in heaven.

“[Now] there was a day . . .” (1:13-22) recounts the earthly impact of that divine counsel, namely, Job’s possessional losses and his response.

“Again there was a day . . .” (2:1-13) relates the second divine council and its impact on Job’s personal suffering and response.

1:13–15. Satan began his assaults on Job when his 10 children were feasting in the eldest brother’s house (vv. 13, 18; cf. v. 4). The assaults were alternately caused by human and “natural” forces: a Sabeian attack (v. 15), “the fire of God” (v. 16), a Chaldean raid (v. 17), a great desert wind (v. 19). God permitted Satan to move both kinds of causes to accomplish his purposes—and to do so in rapid, precise timing. Job, while reeling in shock from the news of one loss, was stunned by another. —Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 720.

VERSES 13-15

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

13 Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and reported: "While the oxen were plowing and the donkeys grazing nearby, 15 the Sabeans swooped down and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job's first test was possessional—attacking Job's possessions, and relational—attacking Job's family. This goes back to vv. 10-11. Job's calamities unfold like falling dominos.

13 Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

Cf. vv. 4-5. Connection? I take it that this was the day we see in vv. 4-5. Providential. "On the day" = appointed day.

14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15a and the Sabeans attacked and took them.

The scene of feasting (pending sacrifice?) was suddenly broken.

The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them: the scene reveals a normal agricultural day in the Middle Eastern winter, when plowing is done; winter in the Middle East starts in October and ends in April. This is the second time the author calls attention to the fact that life was going along in its habitual routine. Job's sons, if they ever worked, certainly did not do so when feasting was called for. Plowing was done by Job's farm hands using teams of oxen joined by a yoke. The asses refers to the female donkeys of verse 3. —William David Rebyburn, A Handbook on the Book of Job, UBS Handbook

Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 48.

Sabeans =

The collective form the Sabeans translates the singular *seBa*, which refers to the Sabeans in the same way that “Israel” refers to the “Israelites.” There are two groups with similar spelling mentioned in the Old Testament. Some interpreters doubt that these were the Sabeans from distant South Arabia, and find it more reasonable to believe they were from North Arabia (so Pope). In either case, their location and ethnic identity is uncertain. —William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 48–49.

The Sabeans were nomadic marauders descended from Sheba, a grandson of Abraham (Gen 25:3). Eventually they settled in the southernmost part of the Arabian peninsula.²⁶ Sheba became a wealthy nation by the time of Solomon. That the Sabeans were pirates points to a time earlier than that of the famous Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10; 2 Chr 9). From Marib, the capital of Sheba, to where we think Job lived was over a thousand miles. — Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 58–59.

. . . the raiders are from Sheba. In biblical and other literature from the ancient world, there was a Sheba in the south (same spelling; vicinity of modern Yemen, from where the Queen of Sheba traveled to learn of Solomon), but some have suggested a northern Sheba in the region of Edom. This suggestion is probable, given the towns listed in connection with Sheba and the improbability of raiders coming from a thousand miles away. — John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 69.

15b They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Literally the Hebrew reads: “And I have escaped! Only me! I alone to tell you!”

VERSE 16

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: “A lightning storm struck from heaven. It burned up the sheep and the servants and devoured them, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

I take this to mean a “natural” fire (i.e. “lightening”) as the wind in v. 19 was.

Fire of God can mean lightning. (See 1 Kgs 18:38, the contest between Yahweh and Baal on Mount Carmel; also Gen 19:24; Num 11:1; 2 Kgs 1:12.) Thunder is the “voice of God” in Psalm 29. NEB, TOB, GECL, NJB prefer to keep “fire,” while TEV, SPCL, FRCL have “lightning.” Fire of God may easily be misunderstood if translated literally. Therefore it is probably best to follow TEV. — William David Reayburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 50.

Did God effect this, or Satan?

“The devil causes strife, murder, rebellion, and war, also thunder and lightning, and hail, to destroy corn and cattle, to poison the atmosphere. . .” [Martin Luther, *Larger Catechism*, Question 4]

God as the primary means (efficient cause).

“The Egyptians,” says Herodotus, “believe fire to be a live animal, which eats whatever it can seize, and then, glutted with the food, dies with the matter which it feeds upon” (Herod., iii. 16). — H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Job*, *The Pulpit Commentary* (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 6.

VERSE 17

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

That messenger was still speaking when yet another came and reported: “The Chaldeans formed three bands, made a raid on the camels, and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Formed three companies translates the Hebrew “put three heads,” meaning they made a three-pronged attack (so Pope); for similar strategy see Judges 7:16; 9:43; 1 Samuel 11:11. This maneuver would enable the raiders to surround the fast-moving camels, which they came to steal. Again the fate of the herdsmen is the same as in verse 15. Since all three groups of attackers were of the same body, it is the same whether one translates “three groups of Chaldean robbers” or “Chaldean robbers who came in three groups.” And made a raid upon the camels and took them: camels were in great demand for transporting goods from India westward. A herd as large as Job’s would be a great prize to camel raiders. — William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 51.

While Chaldeans are best known from later OT history as the core of the neoBabylonian Empire, in the early period they were nomads whose base was in southern Mesopotamia. The only early OT references apart from here are to Ur of the Chaldeans in Gen 11:28, 31; 15:7. The Hebrew word מִדְּשָׁן is related to the Akkadian kašdu, but there are no records of them from the second millennium B.C. — Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993).

VERSES 18-19

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

18 He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house. 19 Suddenly a powerful wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on the young people so that they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house,

This is also the only episode in this first stage of testing that employs the particle *hinneh* “behold,” suggesting this is the climactic episode. While the number of Job’s children did not compare with the numbers of lost livestock, there is no comparing the grief that arises from losing children. —Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 60.

19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

The wind came across the desert, indicating the sirocco, a hot sandy wind that blows predominately at the beginning and the end of summer. —Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 60.

“An alternation of two human terrorist attacks and two ‘natural’ disasters have deprived Job of everything. If we dwell for a few moments on this scene, it is hard not to weep

with Job. Throughout the rest of this long book we must never forget the trauma of this scene. We are used in our culture to post-traumatic stress disorders and to the training of trauma counselors to assist in times of natural disaster, terrorism, and war. But rarely if ever in human history can there have been a succession of such extreme disasters as this. Bankrupt and bereft, Job is basically left alone. His protective hedge has been broken, his outer skin so to speak violated, and all he had has been taken away.” [Ash, 48]

Note how rapidly the scene shifts from delight to doom. Cf. our going to get a Xmas tree (had been a busy day, a frustrating day, relief to finally call it quits, looking forward to a relaxing Xmas eve with Lois and Giana, maybe watch *It's a Wonderful Life* . . . Delight to Doom. We're not in control.

VERSES 20-21

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

20 Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, 21 saying: Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of Yahweh.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Five of the nine Hebrew words in this verse are verbs, and Job is the subject of all of them: He got up, he tore, he shaved, he fell, and he worshiped. The rising and falling at the beginning and end of the series creates poetic balance, a merismus. — Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 61.

In the English translation (NASB) we see those 5 verbs.

20a Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head,

Verbs 1-3.

Job was likely sitting. He stood, tore his robe, shaved his head.

Robe = outer garment that fits over the body loosely. Down below the knees. Customary. Often worn day and night. An action of a man in anguish. I’ve torn at least one shirt during a moment of agony.

The tearing of clothing and the shaving of the head were standard ancient Near Eastern demonstrations of grief.³⁵ Only the wearing of sackcloth is absent here as a typical expression of anguish, but that will appear in 16:15. The garment he tore was his robe . . . an outer garment worn by people of rank such as the high priest, Saul, Jonathan, David, and Job’s three friends (2:12). —Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 61.

Shaved head = picture of grief and mourning. Hair was the glory of a man; shaving it was to say that glory has departed.

20b and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

Verbs 4-5.

Job responds to his adversities with adoration. His woes with worship.

21a He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there.

Not a return to the womb, but the grave as a figure. “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will leave this life.” [HCSB]

21b The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

“Blessed” = barak (curse/bless). See previous uses (1:5; 2:9). Meaning according to context. Satan predicted Job would curse, instead he blesses. What a wonderful conclusion to a terrible story.

This is “the noblest expression to be found anywhere of a man’s joyful acceptance of the will of God as his only good.” [Francis I. Anderson, cited in Talbert, 49]

You have to hear the words of v. 21 through the tears of v. 20. You hear the tear of the robe, you watch Job shear his head, you see the tears and sobs (cf. 16:16,20; 30:31) as he falls to the ground. Then trust.

When calamity strikes do you run to God or away from Him?

All of our possessions have been accumulated since our birth. Everything we have is surrendered at death. You come naked (literally) and you leave this earth the same way. Ecc. 5:15-16. Cf. 5:18.

“Job had not done anything to deserve the removal of all God’s blessings. God Himself acknowledges this (2:3). But neither had he done anything to deserve all those blessings in the first place.” [Talbert, 51]

Everything we have is on loan (health, possessions, spouse, children). Loan vs. gift (as in the gift of salvation).

“It’s as if he is saying, ‘The One who gave me life and has put everything on loan to me during my lifetime has chosen (and has every right) to take everything away. I won’t take anything with me anyway. Blessed be His name for loaning it to me while I had it. And blessed be His name for choosing to remove it.’” [Swindoll, 24]

Words I uttered at G's memorial service.

We are not entitled.

Ray Stedman, a popular preacher from a few decades ago, spoke of having traveled to a site for a series of meetings. He was scheduled to speak and realized that he didn't bring a suit (which was expected). He had a novel idea: see if one could be borrowed for a day from a funeral home. He did that and appeared in a cadaver suit. As was his habit, while he was speaking he reached to put his hand in the pocket. There wasn't one. Cadaver suits don't have pockets!

“God has given [Job] a rehearsal for death. All things belong to God absolutely, to be given as a [loan] . . . to be taken back without wrong. There is no talk of human ‘rights.’ The Lord is the sovereign owner of all, and Job rejoices in this wonderful fact.” [Francis I. Anderson, cited in Swindoll, 26]

Thus the chapter ends with “the greatest man among all the people of the East” destitute, childless, and broken. In the space of less than a page and in a brief span of time, he went from being the greatest to being the least of men. —Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 62.

Observe three things in what he says.

First, “naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there”. The phrase “mother's womb” is often a symbolic reference to the earth (cf. Ps. 139:15; in the ANE they would customarily bury a corpse in the fetal position, suggesting a return to the womb). His point is: “I didn't bring it with me when I came and I won't take it with me when I leave. All I own is on loan from God.”

Second, “the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.” He doesn't say, “the Lord gave and the Sabeans have taken away,” or “the Chaldeans have taken away,” or even, “Satan has taken away.” He acknowledges that whatever secondary causes may be involved, ultimately nothing could touch him apart from the permissive will of God. As one commentator has put it:

“Job sees only the hand of God in these events. It never occurs to him to curse the desert brigands, to curse the frontier guards, to curse his own stupid servants, now lying dead for their watchlessness. All secondary causes vanish. It was the Lord who gave; it was the Lord who removed; and in the Lord alone must the explanation of these strange happenings be sought” (FA/ 88).

Third, “may the name of the Lord be praised” or “blessed be the name of the Lord”. God is blessed not only for the giving but also in spite of the taking. In every circumstance he is to be honored. Thus, although Job knows nothing about Satan's involvement, he in

effect says: “Satan, you are wrong. God is still worthy of worship even when life is hard.”
— Sam Storms, *Biblical Studies: Job* (Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016), Job 1:20–22.

Horatio G. Spafford was a successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago with a lovely family - a wife, Anna, and five children. However, they were not strangers to tears and tragedy. Their young son died with pneumonia in 1871, and in that same year, much of their business was lost in the great Chicago fire. Yet, God in His mercy and kindness allowed the business to flourish once more.

On Nov. 21, 1873, the French ocean liner, *Ville du Havre* was crossing the Atlantic from the U.S. to Europe with 313 passengers on board. Among the passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters. Although Mr. Spafford had planned to go with his family, he found it necessary to stay in Chicago to help solve an unexpected business problem. He told his wife he would join her and their children in Europe a few days later. His plan was to take another ship.

About four days into the crossing of the Atlantic, the *Ville du Harve* collided with a powerful, iron-hulled Scottish ship, the *Loch Earn*. Suddenly, all of those on board were in grave danger. Anna hurriedly brought her four children to the deck. She knelt there with Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie and Tanetta and prayed that God would spare them if that could be His will, or to make them willing to endure whatever awaited them. Within approximately 12 minutes, the *Ville du Harve* slipped beneath the dark waters of the Atlantic, carrying with it 226 of the passengers including the four Spafford children.

A sailor, rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down, spotted a woman floating on a piece of the wreckage. It was Anna, still alive. He pulled her into the boat and they were picked up by another large vessel which, nine days later, landed them in Cardiff, Wales. From there she wired her husband a message which began, “Saved alone, what shall I do?” Mr. Spafford later framed the telegram and placed it in his office.

Another of the ship’s survivors, Pastor Weiss, later recalled Anna saying, “God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why.”

Mr. Spafford booked passage on the next available ship and left to join his grieving wife. With the ship about four days out, the captain called Spafford to his cabin and told him they were over the place where his children went down.

According to Bertha Spafford Vester, a daughter born after the tragedy, Spafford wrote “It Is Well With My Soul” while on this journey.

When peace like a river attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll,

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

Chorus:

It is well with my soul,

It is well, it is well with my soul

Anna gave birth to three more children, one of which died at age four with dreaded pneumonia. In August 1881, the Spaffords moved to Jerusalem. Mr. Spafford died and is buried in that city.

VERSE 22

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

“Blame” = tiphlah - something that is empty, unseemly. Was this in response to: 1) Job’s attitude toward what happened; 2) that Job did not attribute any folly or wrongdoing to God; 3) God did nothing inappropriate; 4) God was not acting without purpose.

Irony in that “Job’s faith did not does not relieve his agony; it causes it.” [Anderson, cited in Talbert, 52]

See the “What does all this have to do with me” section (application) in Talbert, 54.