



# Job

Prologue: 1:1-2:13



# THE PROLOGUE



Job 1:1-2:13


Several thin, curved lines in shades of grey and brown originate from the left side of the slide and curve upwards and to the right, creating a decorative background element.



# What is this really about?

## Theories of Suffering?

- ▶ 1:1-5
  - ▶ Appear to be in the thought world of Old Testament emphasis which avers that when people live just and devout lives they will prosper and enjoy the good things of life.
  - ▶ Conversely, those who are wicked and do not live in the fear of the Lord will not enjoy the good of the land and will (most likely) have to endure suffering.
- ▶ Job is portrayed as living righteously (devoutly) and enjoying the sweet savor of success

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- ▶ This portrayal of things in the opening versus soon falls apart:
    - ▶ While Job is portrayed as righteous/devout, he will lose most of his share of the good things in life
      - ▶ His servants and his animals (1:13-17)
      - ▶ His sons and his daughters (1:18-19)
    - ▶ This deals a blow to the common understanding of suffering as being as a result of or due to human sinfulness and prosperity being the result of righteousness.



# The Satan



- Satan is mentioned in the prologue 14 times
- In each of these occurrences the name comes with the definite article, “the satan”
- Portrayed as being, along with “the sons of God”, part of the divine council
- 1 Kings 22:19-22; Daniel 7:9-14



# Does God wager?

- ▶ The satan of Job 1 - 2 is portrayed as being used by God to “test” Job.
- ▶ It appears as though the satan and the Lord have something of a wager regarding the righteousness of Job:
- ▶ Does Job really serve the Lord for purely disinterested motives? Or does he not rather serve God because he perceives this is how he will gain the most benefit? (1:8-12; 2:1-7)
- ▶ Why do we serve the Lord?




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- ▶ An issue with viewing this as a wager between the Satan and the Lord: it portrays God as rather capricious – as one who will stoop to using his people on earth as pawns as He and one of His entourage wage to see which of them is right:

- ▶ The wager:
  - ▶ God: Job reverences the Lord expecting nothing in return
  - ▶ The Satan: Job reverences the Lord in order that his life will go well.
- ▶ A trial of suffering is set up, or at least being allowed, by none other than the Lord



# Understanding God's character . . .



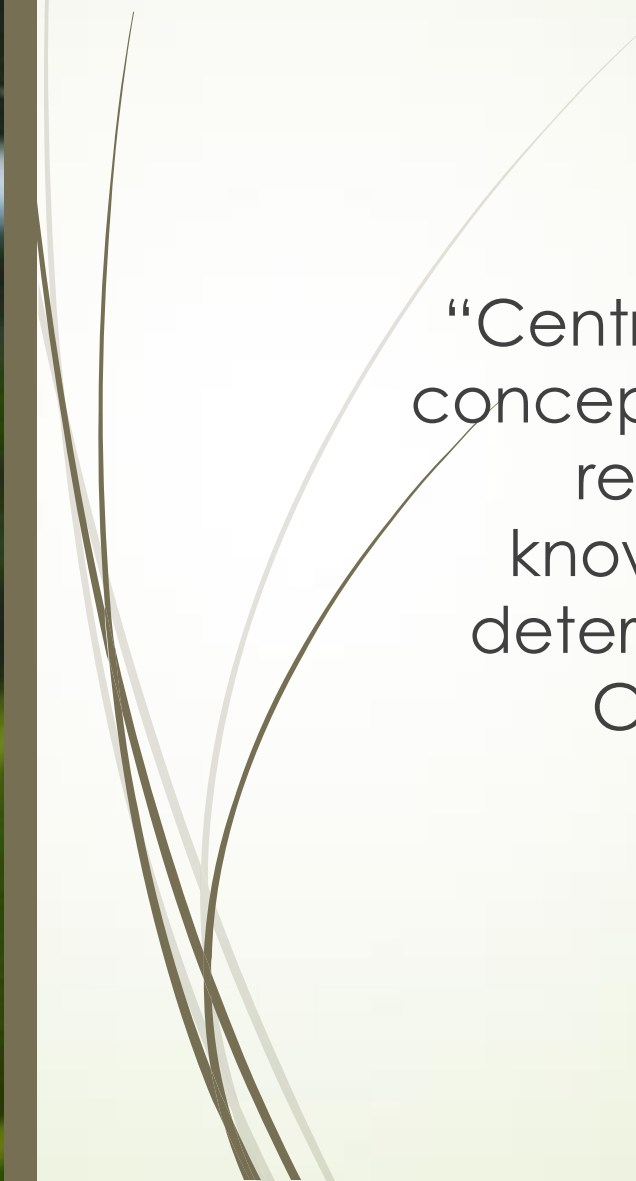
- ▶ This concept of a wager is hardly a worthy picture of God and not a mainstream Old Testament view of God

- ▶ This view of God is more in line with the Greek understanding of the gods and their various antics and their strivings over their interrelationships one with another and with their peoples on earth.





## Simon Chan






“Central to any spirituality is its conception of what is ultimately real. . . (T)he Christian knowledge of who God is determines the character of Christian spirituality.”



# Trevor Hudson

“There is a picture of God drawn inside each of our hearts and minds. This picture, formed over the years through various influences, significantly shapes the way we live our daily lives. As we reflect on our ideas about God, we are invited to enter a redrawing process in which we gain a clearer view of who God truly is.”

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- ▶ Dallas Willard noted that we live at the mercy of our ideas, and therefore it is wise to reflect carefully on our ideas about God.
  - ▶ The way we live is profoundly shaped by our picture of God . There is a connection between your daily schedule, attitudes, interactions and your view of God.
  - ▶ A dysfunctional view of God will display itself in a dysfunctional view of living.



# Remembering the character of God

Psalm 103

# The centrality of Job's Integrity


- ▶ The “wager” is not a central element in the Book of Job:
  - ▶ Not referred to again in the Book of Job
  - ▶ The figure/personality of the satan is not mentioned again in the Book of Job
  - ▶ These elements are not integral parts of the argument of the Book of Job (and therefore they ought not to constitute an explanation for certain suffering of people on the earth)
- ▶ The emphasis in Job is on his attitude, especially within suffering.
- ▶ The expression of utter trust and dependency on the will of God and commitment to God's service – the idea of serving God for naught (מְהִינָם; ḥin ·nām)
- ▶ The Book of Job does not try to explain suffering so much as to develop intentions or attitudes that influence how one deals with suffering.



# THE BIBLE ON SUFFERING

SOCIAL  
AND  
POLITICAL  
IMPLICATIONS

EDITED BY ANTHONY J. TAMBASCO  
PROLOGUE BY TERRENCE W. TILLEY  
EPILOGUE BY WALTER BRUEGGEMANN



“All for Naught:  
My Servant Job”  
Susan F. Matthews

- “When the full structure of the book is considered in its integrity . . . *the Book of Job is understood to be primarily about the relationship of Job and God and the role of Job’s affliction in that context.*”





# Susan F. Matthews

- “The overall structure of the prologue and the structure of its two scenes in heaven serve to prepare the reader to read the dialogue, not as a reflection on the problem of suffering or the like, but as a consideration of Job’s piety, whether he truly serves God for naught, that is for God’s own sake.”



# ḥin · nām (for naught)

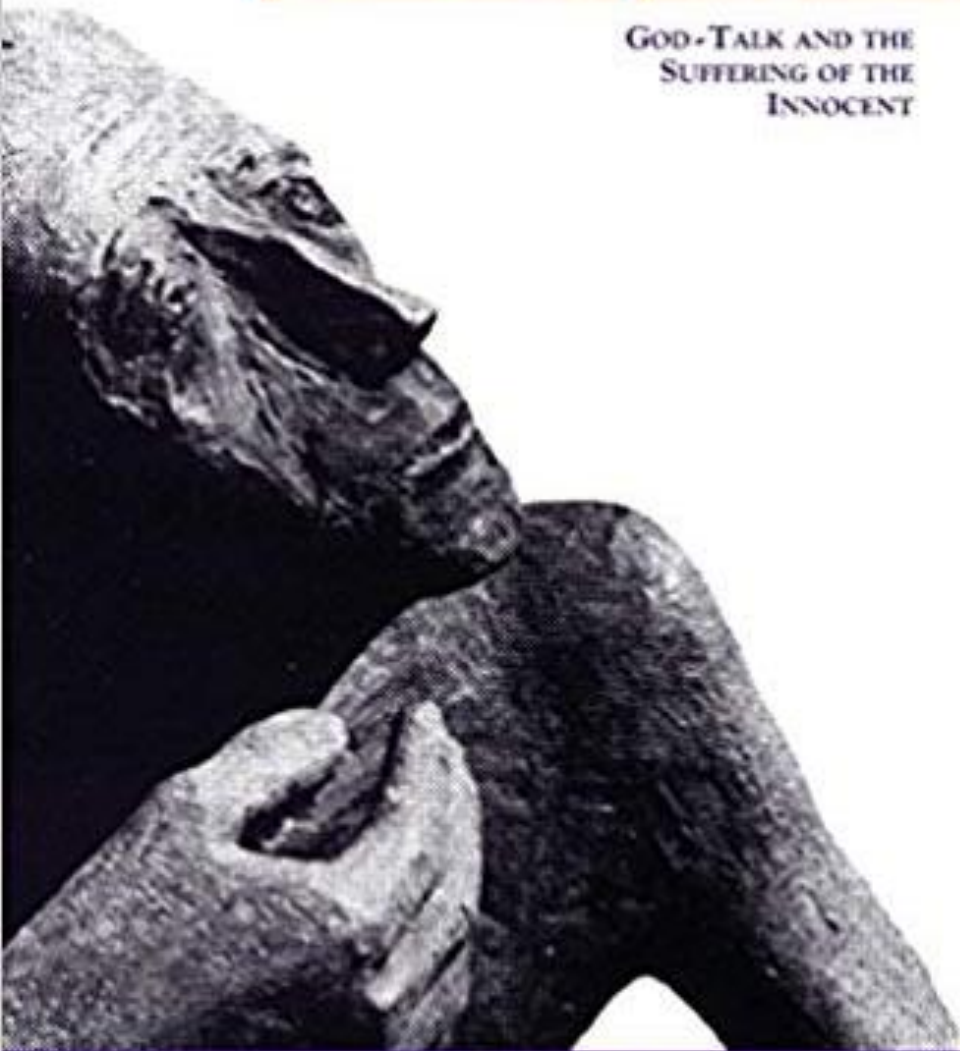
➤ 1:9 . . .

➤ 2:3; 9-10

➤ The common thread in the scenes within the prologue is Job's piety (integrity of faith) which remains intact

# ON JOB

GOD-TALK AND THE  
SUFFERING OF THE  
INNOCENT



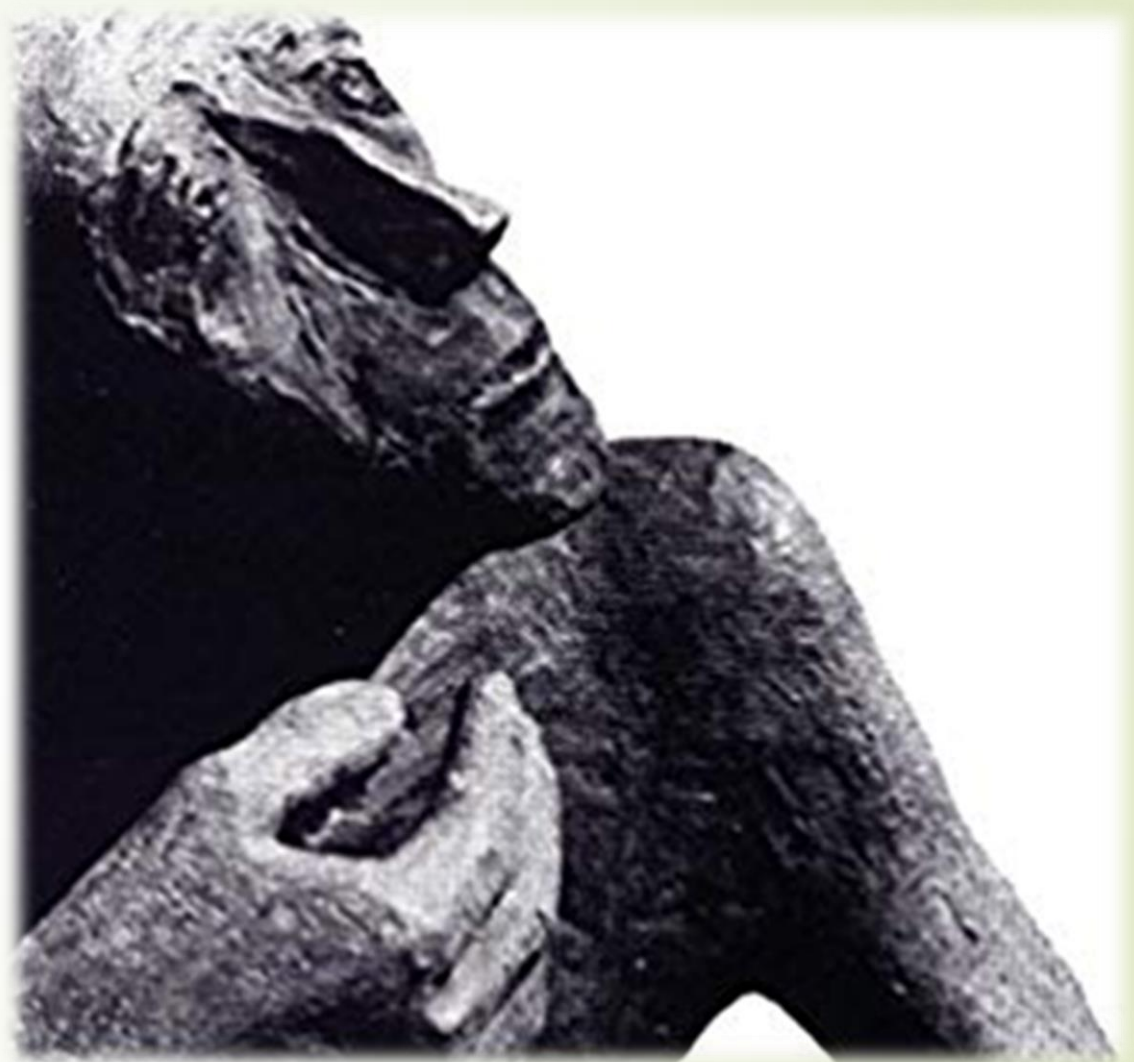
GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ

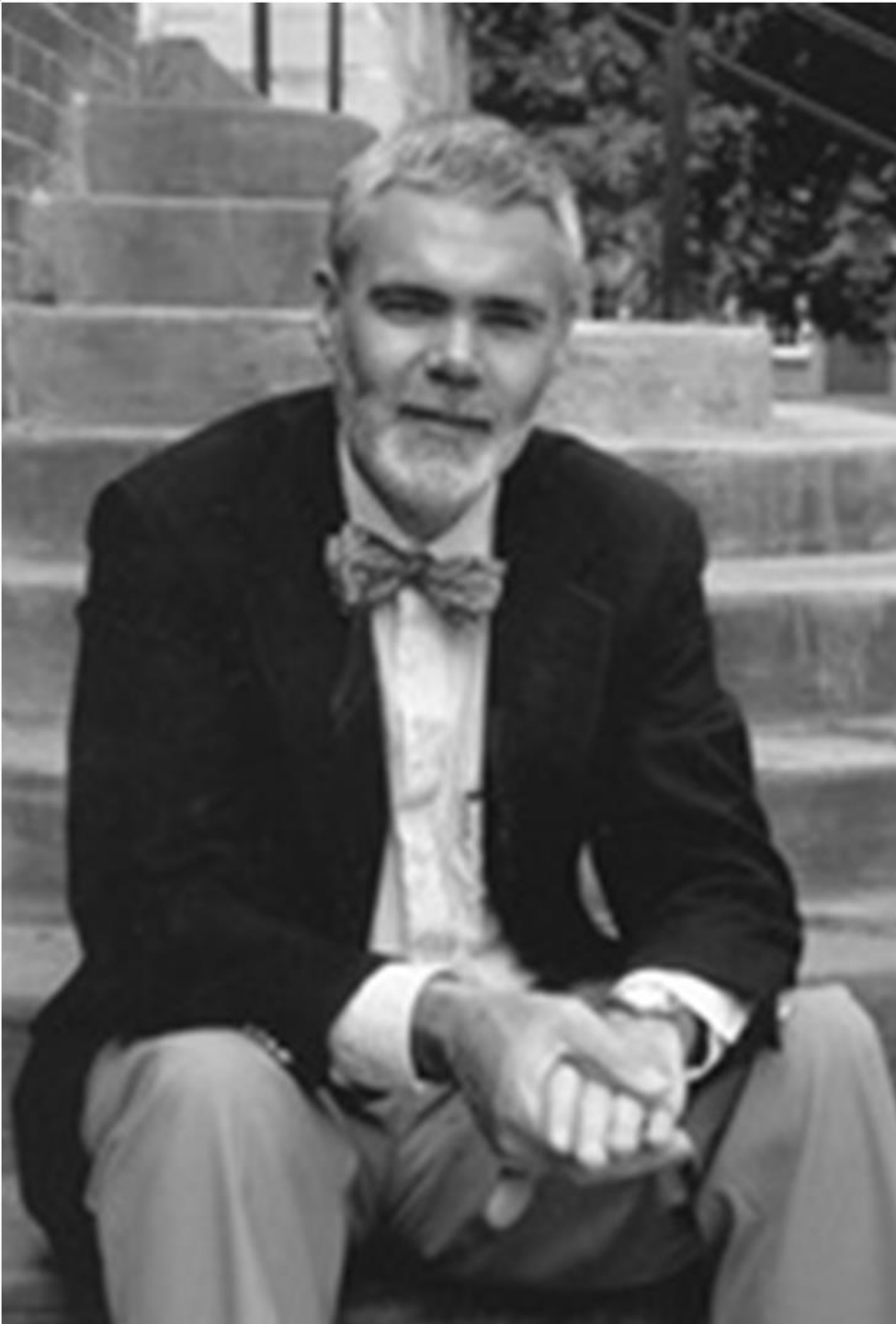
## Disinterested Faith?

“Can human beings have a disinterested faith in God – that is, can they believe in God without looking for rewards and fearing punishments? Even more specifically: Are human beings capable, in the midst of unjust suffering, of continuing to assert their faith in God and speak of God without expecting a return? (The) Satan, and with him all those who have a barter conception of religion, deny the possibility. The author, on the contrary, believes it is possible . . . Job, whom he makes the vehicle of his own experiences, will be his spokesperson.”

# The sympathy of friends

- ▶ “The three friends were so moved by Job’s plight that before they spoke they wept; then ‘they sat on the ground beside him for seven days and seven nights. To Job they never spoke a word, for they saw how much he was suffering’ (2:13). Their attitude was one of respectful compassion that showed how seriously they regarded their friend’s situation. The silent sharing of suffering is a manifestation of fellowship.”





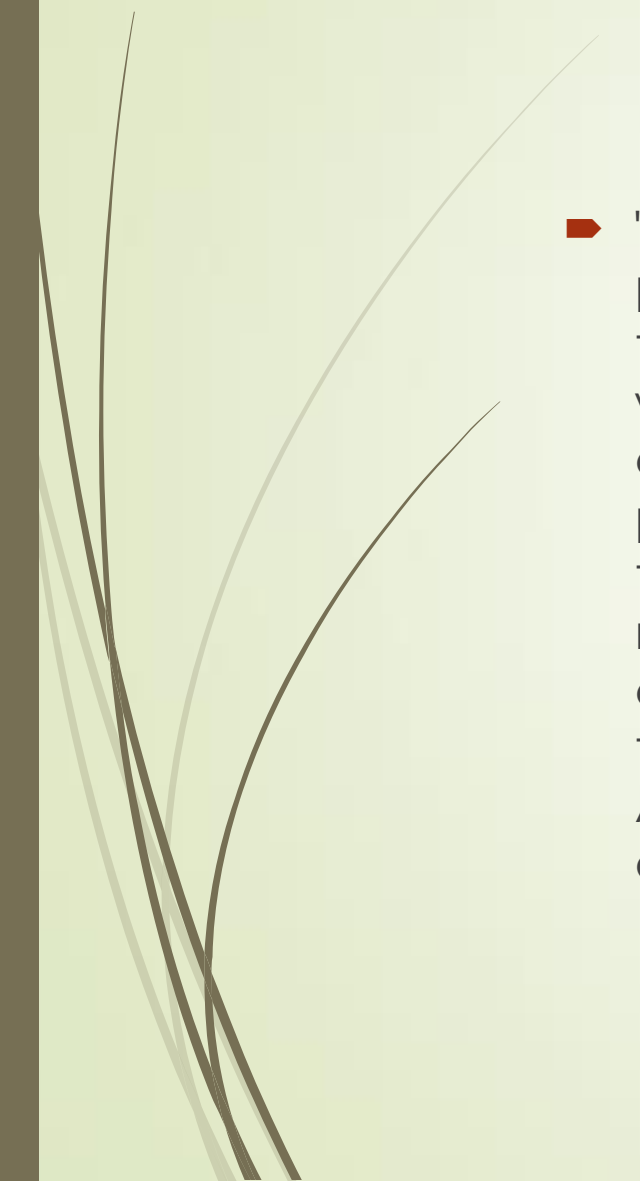
## Andrew Purves

- ▶ *“Compassion means ministry for in Christian compassion the gospel of Jesus Christ meets a person in their specific situation and need. This ministry of compassion is a ministry of relationship, of companionship between two or more people. Compassion means to walk with others through their suffering, shepherding them by entering with them into the mystery of their suffering. . . . It is a ministry without limits, leading beyond what some persons may regard as an acceptable level of commitment. It can demand great personal cost.”*





# Henri Nouwen




- ▶ "Our tendency is to run away from painful realities or to try to change them as soon as possible. But cure without care makes us into rulers, controllers, manipulators, and prevents a real community from taking shape. Cure without care makes us preoccupied with quick changes, impatient and unwilling to share each other's burdens. And so cure can often become offending instead of liberating."

- ▶ "Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."





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- “When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.”