**JOB IN GROUPS**

For our study of Job, you can skip the readings in the syllabus (Collins, TBC, and AB). Instead, we are using as our resource a Study Guide prepared by Dr. Chuck Melchert, a former professor of Religious Education at Presbyterian School of Christian Education and a former adjunct at Lancaster Theological Seminary. He prepared this guide for congregations many years ago and it is shared here with the permission of his wife, Dr. Anabel Proffitt. Dr. Melchert died in 2019.

We will divide into groups and prepare to teach each other about the various sections of Job. Prepare to lead us through the questions I’ve provided, using Melchert and your Bible as resources. passages.

When we meet on Zoom, each group will have about 5 minutes for your teaching segment.

**Group 1: Chapters 1-2 (Melchert session 1)**

**Your task: Help us appreciate the narrative elements of this story: genre, setting, and characters.**

genre: What kind of story is this? What clues in the text suggest the story’s genre?

setting: Where does the action take place in these chapters? Show us where the location shifts: what happens where?

characters:

*God:* How is God portrayed in these chapters? Does God know everything?

*the Adversary*: Who is “the Adversary”? Is he the “devil” in the way that later Christianity describes him?

*Job:* How does the narrator shape our view of Job? Where does the narrator directly tell us about Job’s character? Where does the narrator imply something about Job’s character?

**Group 2: Chs. 3-9 (Melchert session 2)**

**Your task: Help us understand the difference between Job’s perspective and the perspective of his friends.**

*Look at the Melchert’s outline of the book to see that in these chapters the speakers alternate: Job and his friends.*

Job’s voice: What is the basis of Job’s complaint? According to chs. 1-2, is his complaint justified?

the friends’ voices: What do the friends say in response to his complaint? What are their assumptions about suffering and God’s justice? Highlight some key passages in the friends’ speeches that reflect their theology. (You don’t need to distinguish between the various friends for our purposes.)

**Group 3: chs. 9; 13; 19;23, 29-31 (Melchert session 3)**

**Your task: Help us understand the lawsuit that Job brings against God.**

What is the basis of Job’s charge against God?

In which passage(s) is the lawsuit language clearest?

Walk us through what is going on in ch 19, including the translation issues.

**Group 4: chs. 38-41 (Melchert session 4; save his discussion of 42 for the next group)**

**Your task: Help us think about God’s speech from the whirlwind—its style and its meaning.**

What is the literary style of God’s response to Job’s lawsuit?

Explain the various options Melchert gives for understanding what God’s response means.

**Group 5: ch. 42 (end of Melchert session 4 and all of session 5)**

**Your task: Help us think about the ending of Job—the translation issues and whether it solves the problems raised by Job.**

Explain Melchert’s discussion of 42:6. In what way does Job “repent” if God says that Job has “spoken of me what is right” (42:7)? What does Melchert say about “dust and ashes”?

Is the “restoration” of Job a happy ending?

In our Zoom session, after we teach each other we will discuss these questions:

**What is the message of the book of Job?**

**What does the narrator want you to think/feel about**

**Job? God? suffering?**