

What Was Job's
Self-Righteousness?

What was Job's Self-Righteousness?

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

It is just about universally believed that the Book of Job is about God's efforts to correct Job of his hidden sin of self-righteousness. It is a very strongly held belief by many but what is the real story about what happened to Job according to your Bible?

Preamble

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression "Holy Ghost" used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 **[Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but o to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [\[God’s Son\]](#) might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [\[the glorified Christ\]](#) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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This is a book which has proven difficult to understand and which unfortunately was not explained in a detailed fashion by Mr. Armstrong (HWA) before his death. Mention is made here and there in his writings of Job but no systematic exposition of the book was ever done as he had done for so many other books of the Bible.

However, Mr. Armstrong taught us how to read the Bible so as to get the correct meaning out of it as well as having given us the overall message of the Bible; which nation is the subject of it; the 7 steps of God's master plan of salvation for mankind as revealed to us in the annual holy days and the timeline that flows through it and numerous booklets, articles and books making clear many of the major doctrines of the Bible such as what does it mean to be born again, the falsity of the Trinity doctrine, the resurrection was not on Sunday; Passover and not Easter, God the Father as distinct from Christ the Logos, Word or Spokesman, etc.

We have a great abundance of knowledge and understanding if we have been diligently, attentively and continuously studying the treasure trove of truth God provided to truly converted Christians through HWA. A simple word of caution here is that we have to verify with our Bible everything taught by Mr. Armstrong. He was just a man and as he always said, it was possible for him to have made errors and if we ever found he had, we were not to follow him but our Bible. All verses have to be considered in the context of either, the verse before it and the verse after it, the chapter in which it is located, the book of the Bible in which

it is found and even, sometimes, in light of the total message of the Bible itself.

Also, as we have learned, the Bible does not contradict itself and we cannot give a word, a verse or several verses a meaning that would go counter to any other clear truth of the Bible. With respect to HWA, we were to have proven for ourselves the doctrines taught by him by checking them out ourselves with our Bible. We should be able to discern error when we see it or hear it by simply putting an idea or conclusion that doesn't seem right by verifying it against the Bible. This is what all Christians have to have been doing since they were first called.

All the books of the Bible are fully compatible with one another and none of them teach doctrine that is contrary to any other books of the Bible. There is consistency throughout the Bible as though written by men, they were inspired by God and in a sense, the Bible was written by one person, God. This is why the the Bible does not and cannot contradict itself.

As previously mentioned, HWA always made it abundantly clear to all of us that we should not ever simply take his word for anything; that we should prove for ourselves what he was saying by checking it out ourselves in our own Bible. He said many times: "Don't believe me, believe your Bible." If we have been doing this, then what we believe today is what ourselves we have proven to be true by having verified it with our Bible; NOT BECAUSE ANY MAN SAID IT.

We have not been following Mr. Armstrong or any other man for that matter, we have been following the truth God has given to us in His Holy Bible. Mr. Armstrong was the instrument leading us to the truth but we were to have proven it for ourselves. Most didn't, they were following a man and when Mr. Armstrong died, they followed other men of their choice and are now sitting in one of the many false churches of God which are not part of God's one true Church; they are simply dead branches which are no longer attached to the trunk of the tree.

Let's see what understanding we can get out of the Book of Job by making sure we are applying all the knowledge given us by HWA of the many Bible doctrines and prophecies which we have proved for ourselves with the Bible, as well as making use of the principles given us on how to read the Bible. And, we must be sure we are not reading our preconceived beliefs into the Bible or refuse to accept the self-evident truth of plain and simple verses which require no interpretation

because they go counter to our own ideas about what the book says or to ideas we have accepted from others without ever really having checked them out .

We must keep an open mind and sincerely search for the truth whatever it might be regardless of what we have always thought.

Believe your Bible.

Job's Character

Job in the first verse of the Book is described by God as perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. He even offered burnt offerings for his children in case any of them may have sinned and cursed God in their hearts (i.e., not openly so others would know it (Job 1:5)). And, this is plainly and clearly stated by God Himself in a conversation He is having with Satan.

Job 1:8 And **the LORD said** unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Please note that this is God talking from whom nothing is hidden; there are no secret sins that He cannot see and if Job had a secret sin of which even himself he didn't know he had, God could not talk of him in the way He does in Job 1:8.

Job's First Trial

Satan replies to God saying that the only reason Job obeys God is because of all the blessings he gets out of it. He challenges God to put out His hand and take all that Job has and he says Job will curse Him to His face.

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Job 1:10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Job 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

God is so sure of Job's steadfastness that he gives Satan permission to take

away his material riches and even his sons and daughters. Satan takes all that he has (Job 1:13-19) and what is Job's reaction?

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and **worshipped**,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; **blessed be the name of the LORD**.

22 In all this **Job sinned not**, nor charged God foolishly.

Now, that doesn't sound like someone who had any intention of elevating himself over God in any way. He praised God though he had lost everything. He resigned himself that as the Lord gives He also takes and he worships God. Would we be able to do as much or as well?

The first trial was passed with flying colors and what does **God** say of Job after he had successfully gone through the first trial.

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is **none** like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and **still** he holdeth fast **his integrity**, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

Are we seeing God here criticizing Job for having maintained his integrity or righteousness as translated in other versions of the Bible? Is Job's integrity or righteousness something unpleasant to God? Is it a sin? If it is a sin, why is God saying that Job is a perfect and an upright man that fears Him and spurns evil and that despite the great trial he has just endured, he still maintains **his** integrity or **his** righteousness. God could certainly not say that of Job if Job's righteousness was the hideous and horrible hidden sin of spiritual pride that he supposedly had and which is supposedly the reason why God is allowing trials to come upon him by the hand of Satan.

The Bible says nothing of the sort nor is there anything said that could be interpreted in that way. Rather, the Scriptures are quite plain, simple and clear that Job's righteousness or integrity is not a sin but is rather Job's steadfastness in remaining a faithful servant of God even under grievous trials but we'll see a lot more about this as we move on in this study.

Job's Second Trial

Job 2:4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

In other words, Satan says to God, it's no big deal if Job remained a faithful servant even if he lost all of his material possessions including his sons and daughters but let he be affected in his body, let me make him physically miserable and he will curse You to Your face for a man will give anything for his life.

Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

Without hesitation, God is so confident that Job will not curse Him i.e., that he will maintain his integrity (his righteousness) that immediately he allows Satan to afflict Job in his body.

The purpose of the trial is like that of the first one i.e., to see whether Job will continue steadfast in being God's faithful servant (maintain his integrity or his righteousness) despite his personal bodily sufferings or will he curse God.

This has been the focal point of the discussion between God and Satan from the beginning of the book. God says Job will remain faithful and Satan says he will curse God.

Job's Reaction to the Second Trial

Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? **In all this did not Job sin with his lips.**

In verse 9, we see Job's wife being astonished that Job is still retaining his integrity or his righteousness (depending on the Bible version used) i.e., he insists on remaining a faithful servant of God; he steadfastly refuses to curse God despite his great bodily torments.

Job is surprised at his wife's attitude and exclaims in verse 10: "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive (accept) evil [punishment]?" He says that she is speaking as one of the foolish women. And God says, "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

It is clear from verse 9 and 10 that Job's righteousness is his steadfast desire to obey God come what may, good or evil. Job's wife is amazed to see that Job continues to refuse to curse God; Job maintains that he is right (his righteousness) not to curse God despite the trials having befallen him. Please take good notice that Job is not in any way saying God is wrong and he is right; rather, he is saying that he is right and that his wife is wrong in what she is saying.

The discussion here is between Job and his wife; not Job and God. And Job says he is right; he maintains his righteousness i.e., that he is right not to curse God and that his wife is wrong for telling him that he should curse God and die to put an end to his suffering.

Job's reaction, as was the case for the first trial, is not to turn away from God but to accept the second affliction as he had the first one and to keep on being a faithful servant.

God tells us clearly that Job is like no one else on earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God and eschews evil.

So the question poses itself for his 3 friends and Elihu as to why is it that Job is being so direly afflicted.

Their conclusion is that Job is being punished because of sin yet God says Job is a perfect and upright man who fears God and eschews evil and we know this to be true as God Himself says so. Job is not being afflicted because of sin; God is allowing Satan to afflict him because God has every confidence that Job will not curse Him no matter how much Satan tries to make him bitter against Him (God) (Job 2:5).

The Rest of the Book

The purpose of the second trial is the same as that of the first trial; to determine whether Job will remain a faithful servant (maintain his integrity or his righteousness as he did during the first trial).

The Bible makes mention of no other purpose, directly or indirectly for the trials allowed upon Job.

Thoughts and discussions about Job trials take up the rest of the book until God's intervention in Job 38.

Until Job 38 we will see Job's 3 friends and Elihu trying to make some sense as to why these evils came upon Job. They do not have the information that we have from Job 1 to Job 2:10 that the reason why Job is being afflicted is because Satan is trying to make him curse God.

He wanted to prove God wrong that Job would remain a faithful servant if he were to lose his material well being and his family and, even if he were to be made extremely uncomfortable by a physical affliction that affected his body from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head.

Job 1 to Job 2:10 sets the scene for everything that will occur from thereon. Will Job remain faithful is the question that is to be answered not whether he will repent of a horrible sin of spiritual pride. Job 1 to Job 2:10 make it clear that Job was like no one else on earth, a perfect and upright man, one that fears God and eschews evil.

This is not any man saying this, this is God Himself from whom nothing is hidden. Satan decided he would try to make Job fall and God gave Satan permission to afflict Job as He was sure he would not. This is the whole focus of the book of Job which is made very clear and plain at the beginning of the book. What goes on from that point on is a debate or discussion between Job and his 3 friends then with Elihu.

And, what is the discussion about? They are trying to understand why Job is being afflicted and they put forth their own thoughts on the matter and Job is countering what they are saying with his own thoughts. It is a discussion among men as to why these afflictions have come upon Job.

It is not a debate between Job and God where Job is trying to out-argue God and prove that he is right and that God is wrong. The problem of his 3 friends and Elihu is that they can't understand why Job is being punished and their conclusion is that it can only be because of sin in life.

The 3 friends and Elihu put forth arguments and Job counters with his own arguments. God doesn't appear until the 38th chapter of the book of Job when the discussion runs out of steam. He knows it is impossible for either Job, his 3 friends or Elihu to ever be able to determine why

these afflictions came upon Job. Their discussion had come to a standstill with no possible resolution. Please notice that God does not reveal to Job, his 3 friends or Elihu why He had allowed Satan to afflict Job. We only know the real reason because of Job 1 to Job 2:10.

God's Judgment of the Matter

What does God say about Job's response to his 3 friends who came to see him and to Elihu. Does God say Job spoke wrongly or rightly in his responses to them about his personal situation, maintaining his righteousness, and in what he said regarding God?

Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for **ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.**

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and **my servant Job** shall pray for you: **for him will I accept:** lest I deal with you after your folly, in that **ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.**

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

In Conclusion....

Job 42 is the concluding chapter where the whole of the story is summarized.

Did Job fail the tests God allowed to come upon him by the hand of Satan; did he curse God or did he remain a faithful servant? God calls Job "my servant" throughout.

There is no evidence that God, who should be the final word in the matter, says that Job sinned while being tested.

God summarizes what went on and He declares Job to have remained his servant throughout the trials sent upon him and blesses him more than before. His 3 friends are sent to offer sacrifices to atone for their

sin of having spoken wrongly about God.

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, **in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.**

What happens to Job?

Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

Job received even greater blessings than those he had when first tested; his daughters were the most beautiful women in the land; and Job died old and full of days.

Job 42:13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

Job 42:14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.

Job 42:15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

Job 42:16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

Job 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

Job is not asked to make sacrifices to atone for any sin he would have committed during the trials God allowed to come upon him by the hand of Satan. If Job had sinned as the others had or in some other way, would not God have him also offering sacrifices or is Job being given special treatment. We all know that this is not how God does things. Had Job sinned he would have had to offer sacrifices just like his 3 friends had to do.

Job proved God right in what He said to Satan. God basically said to Satan, "Go ahead and touch his body but take not his life and Job will

not curse me”.

And, Job did not curse God nor speak wrongly of Him in all that he told the 3 friends that came to see him; [so says God Himself](#).

Before I end this study, I would like to address the many arguments put forward by those who persist in saying that Job had a horrible hidden sin of self-righteousness for which God was trying to correct him by allowing Satan to severely try him. This is what most people believe is being described in the Book of Job. So, let's address these arguments one by one and see if the Bible which is the sure Word of God agrees with them.

Arguments Usually Made to Prove Job had a Horrible Hidden Sin of Self-Righteousness

Perfection by Trials

A misunderstanding that was common among both the ministry and lay members alike in the WCG was this idea that Christians are perfected spiritually though the trials that God allows to come upon them. And, with respect to the Book of Job, they say that the trials that came upon Job was God trying to purify him of the terrible sin of self-righteousness that he supposedly had.

The misunderstanding that Christians are perfected by trials is based on the following Scripture:

Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered

Mr. Armstrong explained that here the word “suffered” is another word for “experienced.” With this in mind, the verse then reads,

“Though he were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he experienced.”

Christ learned by the things He experienced as a human what was involved in trying to obey God i.e., how difficult it is to obey God given the weakness of the flesh, the influence of this present, evil world as Paul calls it, and Satan's broadcasting in our minds. Christ was fully human and he experienced the full pull of these 3 influences in his life.

This is why it is said in Heb 4:15 when speaking about the risen Christ as our great, high priest according to the order of Melchisedech:

Heb 4: 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin

Christ was fully divine and fully a human being; His Father was God and His mother was Mary, a human being. Having become a man, the Logos learned just how hard it was for man with the weakness of his human flesh, to obey God. He personally experienced this state of being and could fully understand and be sympathetic toward true believers who have the same human weaknesses and are subject to being swayed by Satan; the

present, evil world in which they live and the weakness of their flesh.

So as Heb 4:15 says, Christ, our great, high priest according to the order of Melchisedech [can](#) be touched with the feeling of our infirmities or weakness having experienced them Himself while a man.

That's what Christ as a man learned, experienced or [suffered](#).

[Christ's spiritual character was not in any way and could not in any way be perfected by suffering; He already had perfect, Holy, righteous character being fully God in the flesh](#); rather, He learned by those things He experienced (suffered as the Bible states it) how difficult it is as a human being to obey God.

Many of those called by God had been exposed to and had absorbed from diverse pagan religious teachings the concept of being perfected by suffering or trials and that God sends us trials for our spiritual perfecting.

This belief is along the same line and a close cousin of the one where our sins are forgiven through our doing penance of one kind or another i.e., by self-willingly causing ourselves physical or mental torment with the erroneous belief that in doing so this will cause God to forgive us our sins.

In the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), suffering was widely understood as being the means for the forgiveness of sin and for the perfecting of the saints.

There is only one way sin can be forgiven and this is by the God applying Christ's sacrifice to our sins. No man has the power to forgive sin and no man can force God by inflicting mental and/or physical pain on himself to forgive him his sins.

Heb 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared [to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself](#).

Heb9:28 So Christ was once offered [to bear the sins of many](#); and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Almost everyone among the ministry and the lay members of the WCG believed in the perfecting of Christians by trials in one way or another. It is part of the many things they did not understand and never understood as HWA said in his last live sermon on the day of Pentecost, 1985.

We Must Choose

Another Biblical concept which needs to be clear in the minds of all true Christians is that God is not in the business of **forcing** anyone to believe including making us suffer physical or mental torment to correct us.

God has decreed that we must freely and self-willingly chose to obey Him once the knowledge and understanding of the truth has been given us. And, we must keep on making that choice, without coercion of any kind from God, every day of our lives. He will simply not force us to obey Him and if we ever turn away from Him, He will not by any means force us to return to Him. We must choose and once we have made our choice, God has decreed that He will respect it even if it means the loss of our eternal life.

De 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you,
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:
therefore **choose** life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Every day and for the rest of our lives, we must, freely and self-willingly and in whatever state we may find ourselves (rich, poor, sick, healthy, old, young, happy, sad, etc.) be making the decision to obey God and by doing so choosing life.

If ever we decide we no longer want to be in submission to God, then God will not force us back by trials or any other means for that matter.

God does not want servants who obey Him only because there are being tortured into obedience (physical and mental trials that God would send upon disobedient servants) or out of fear of being tortured. He wants servants that know and understand the truth and freely and self-willingly want to submit themselves to it regardless of the cost to themselves in this present life because they know God is right and that His ways lead to a better, happier and more fulfilling life now and to life eternal in His Kingdom.

Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: **I am come that they might have life**, and that **they might have it more abundantly**.

Absolute Free Moral Agency

At this point, it is necessary to explain that God in creating man gave him absolute free moral agency. What is it and why was it necessary for man to have free moral agency? It is related to God's command to mankind

that it must choose to obey Him and that it must be man's free and self-willing choice.

Why?

If there is a higher power in the universe that can force man to choose one thing over another against his personal wishes, then it is no longer the man that is making the choice but the higher power that forces him to choose contrarily to his personal wishes. Therefore, the man cannot be held responsible for the choice made as it was made under the influence of an overwhelming superior power. It was not his choice; it was that higher power's choice. Basically, man would then be a slave of that higher power.

As an aside, this is why the world is not presently under judgement; it does not presently have the ability to choose as it has been blinded to the difference between good and evil and is under the unknown but very real influence of Satan the devil. It therefore cannot be held responsible for the wrong choices it makes because of its spiritual blindness.

God has decreed that there is no power on earth or in the universe that can force man to choose something contrary to his wishes. As HWA used to say to illustrate this point: "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." God is the only power in the universe that could force men to choose to obey Him and He will not do so because

God wants man to be a being of individuality and character.

Individuality, personality and character are only possible if individuals are left completely free to choose or not God's ways. God doesn't want robots whose every thoughts and actions would be under His control with no ability to do anything on their own. They would then be like a computer whose functioning cannot go beyond what has been programmed into it by its programmer.

This is why God will not force human beings to obey Him or to make them **more** obedient by sending trials upon them.

Character is what one does when he is fully free to follow good or evil and making the choice to do good and to resist the pull to do evil as much as he can.

Man's obedience to God must be an individual and freely taken decision; it cannot be because of a higher power, whether it be God or some other power, forcing him to act one way or another, by physical or mental trials.

How God Teaches His Called Out Ones

This being said, how do God's children grow in knowledge, understanding and in grace of Christ our Lord? (Christ's perfect, holy, righteous character)

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How does God teach His children? Does He punish them before they have been taught? That would be like a parent punishing a child for having done something he should not have done without the parent having first made sure that the child understood that what they were doing was wrong and that if they did it again they would be punished. How can we correct wrong behavior without first teaching what behavior is to be avoided by the child and which one is to be rewarded by praise?

We are God's children. Would God severely punish us for having disobeyed His law without Him first having made it possible for us to know what is His law?

The Scripture says the world is not now being judged i.e., evaluated as to how much effort it is making to obey God's law as they don't even know it exists.

1 Pe 4:17 For the time is come that judgment [must begin at the house of God](#): and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Judgment is now upon us of the house of God or God's Church for we have been given the knowledge of the law.

Those in the world are neither lost nor saved for they live in utter ignorance of the law and neither can they know it.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Except those relatively few.

Luk 12:32 Fear not, [little flock](#); for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Whom God has predestinated.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did [predestinate](#) to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the

firstborn among many brethren.

Eph 1:5 Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

To be called.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me **draw him**: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except **it were given unto him of my Father**.

In this present, evil world.

Gal 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from **this present evil world**, according to the will of God and our Father:

The world is not now being judged because of their ignorance of the truth; mankind has been blinded by God from knowing it until the 2nd Coming of Christ.

This blindness will first be removed during the Millennium, then when the 1,000 years are fulfilled, there will be a 2nd resurrection, that of the Last Great Day. At that time, all of mankind who never knew the truth, will be resurrected to flesh-and-blood existence. They will be given to know God's spiritual truth and their first and only chance for salvation.

God does not punish anyone without first teaching them.

If we have a secret sin, He can show it to us and we then become responsible for trying to avoid it. He will not punish us for a sin we do not know about. First He teaches then we must obey and as long as it is our sincere desire to try to avoid that particular sin with all our strength, if we sin again in that particular way because of the weakness of our flesh, the sin is not imputed to us.

No sin is ever imputed to us, as long as we remain under the conditions established by God for remaining under grace. We are the temple of God

in which God the Father and Christ live and they cannot dwell with sin for even an instant.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Psa 103:10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Psa 103:11 For [as the heaven is high above the earth](#), so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

Psa 103:12 As far as [the east is from the west](#), so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Psa 103:13 Like [as a father pitieth his children](#), so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Psa 103:14 For he knoweth our frame; [he remembereth that we are dust](#).

If ever we sin in rebellion against God or willfully, we are no longer under grace. Sin is then imputed to us for any wrongdoing no matter how small. And, no matter how small the sin, the penalty is the second death or the loss of our salvation.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God first brings us to the knowledge of the truth and teaches us correcting us from our past false beliefs which we used to think were the truth. From that point on we are responsible for trying to obey God to the best of our abilities in all things. If we fall short after doing all we can not to sin, our sins are covered by grace.

Our efforts to obey God in all things is our part in the salvation process. Doing so makes it possible for us to remain under grace. We are to spend all our lives trying to come out of sin as much as we can while knowing we will nonetheless remain sinners despite our best efforts. We must never willfully turn away from the truth we have been given which results in sinfulness for which there is no forgiveness. This occurs when we start interpreting what we know to be the the clear truth of the Bible in such a way as to give ourselves permission to break God's law without feeling guilty. In other words, we deny what we know to be the clear message

of the Bible and interpret (twist and distort) its verses to allow ourselves to indulge in behavior which we know to be clearly sinful. We are then knowingly and willfully opposing ourselves to the truth of God. We are then blaspheming against the holy spirit God the Word which is a sin that cannot be forgiven. It is the unforgivable sin.

Mar 3:28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

Mar 3:29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost [the holy spirit God the Word] hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

Now, pursuing with the point I was making, we have to always remember that God first teaches, then requires obedience. We cannot be held responsible for disobeying the law in a way that is not known to us; God must first teach us to what it is we must obey. This is why that the world which knows not what is sin is not now being judged and neither can the saints be judged for a sin of which they are not aware.

Job's Secret Sin

If the preceding comments are true, then does it make any Biblical sense to believe that God through allowing evil to come upon Job by the hand of Satan was trying to bring Job to the realization that he had a horrible, secret sin.

God, the perfect parent, first teaches His children; otherwise, it would be grossly unjust to punish them for disobeying Him.

Another point closely linked to this one is the question of how does God correct us given that He will not force us to obey Him through fear of punishment and that He wants us to freely, without coercion of any kind, and self-willingly choose to obey Him after coming to the knowledge of the truth. God's kingdom will not be made up of robots who have no self-will or of servants who are reluctantly obeying God out of the ever-present fear of immediate punishment for disobedience.

We punish our children to correct them but how does God correct us?

God's Chastening

Let's see what the Bible has to say on the matter.

Heb 12: 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, **My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord**, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 **If ye endure chastening**, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

God is no longer dealing with a flesh-and-blood physical nation as in the days of ancient Israel but with a Spirit-begotten nations whose members are from all nations.

The chastening we receive from God is not being physically whipped or scourged as God will not by any means force anyone to obey Him.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led **[not forced]** by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

What is the chastening that can be as painful as being scourged which true believers have to endure and which few have been able to so so. They have become bastards spiritually-speaking i.e., God is not their father, they are of another father again spiritually-speaking.

Joh 8:44 **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

There is a battle going on for the control of our minds and it starts right after conversion and lasts till the end of our lives.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The battle is going on in our minds; who will control it; to whom will we be obedient.

So, again, what is the chastening rising up to the level of being scourged that true believers (the sons of God) have to endure and over which many become bitter, reject God's correction, and become spiritual bastards refusing to acknowledge the supreme authority of God in their lives?

What is God's Scourging of His Sons?

When we are first called to the truth, we are so excited we can hardly believe that all these wonderful things existed and that we had never known about them.

We have found the great treasure buried in the field, the pearl of great price. We want it badly and are ready to do anything to get it; no hardship would be too hard and no price too high. This is our first love of the truth which early in our conversion gives us great, boundless zeal for obeying God. .

However, at the time of our calling, we only have a small part of the truth but we will grow in knowledge of the truth as we pray and study. We come to know truth which goes squarely against some of our most cherished beliefs which we had manufactured for ourselves while cut-off from God and which, in most instances, were picked up from false religious teachers or paganism.

God's correction starts off easy and at first we agree to let go of certain things which though important to us we decide we can live without them. But as time goes on and we grow in knowledge, we become aware of aspects of God's law that are contrary to some of our most precious beliefs which we thought were the truth but which we now know to be wrong. We are so attached to them that we don't want to let go of them. It can be so painful for us to abandon these beliefs that to do so is like enduring a physical scourging. But yet, if we are to grow in the knowledge of the truth, we must abandon our previous and, Oh! so precious to us, false beliefs no matter how important they were to us as God leads us into ever more spiritual truth.

Many become bitter and refuse to be corrected, accept the truth and walk in it and, in the process, they lose their salvation no longer having God as their father because of their unwillingness to let go of their cherished false beliefs.

This is how God corrects us, by teaching us more and more of His truth

and us having to exercise our self-will to freely and willingly cease to hold on to past false beliefs no matter how important to us they might have been, and to follow Christ.

We are not corrected by trials though we have to endure trials because of the righteousness that we have. Freely and self-willingly accepting to abandon our past false beliefs and have our old self die in its many facets, aspects and ways that are contrary to God's truth, are the trials we have to endure unto the end. We also must endure all the other physical, emotional and mental trials that are common to all mankind (sickness, grief, sorrow, ageing, death, etc.)

The hardest thing for man to do is admit that he was wrong. We all think of ourselves as being pretty smart and good looking too; we are filled with physical and mental vanity and had lived our lives accordingly up to the point of our calling. Then we find out as we grow in knowledge and understanding that much of what we used to think was the truth is wrong. Many have been unable to accept that they were wrong. They refused the truth God was revealing to them to hold on to their past false beliefs. which were more important to them.

All you have to do is read some of the comments left on different Web sites by former members of the WCG while HWA led it and see how happy and relieved they are to have finally found the truth i.e., a church that teaches what they believe; not the truth of God. They had refused God's chastening while they were in the WCG but had remained there nonetheless fearing losing their salvation. But though they may have been member on the physical level, they had ceased to be a member of God's church on the spiritual level. They had lost their salvation from the time they refused to believe God because His teachings or correction went against their own, self-made truth which they placed above the truth of God.

They were not able to endure God's correction and became bitter.

Job's Repentance

In the Book of Job there is a reference to Job repenting.

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

The immediate conclusion reached by most at reading this verse is that Job was guilty of sin; otherwise, why would he repent. Whenever the word "repent" is used in the Bible it always means to stop sinning or, does it?

In Genesis 6:6 we read that God repented.

Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Gen 6:6 And it **repented** the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

The LORD was sorry for having made man, it grieved him at his heart; the thoughts of men were evil continually.

God also repented at other times.

Jer 26:19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD **repented** him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

Amo 7:3 The LORD **repented** for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

Amo 7:6 The LORD **repented** for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

Jon 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God **repented** of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

Now, if the one and only meaning of the word “repent” is in reference to a person having sinned and having come to the decision to no longer sin then the only conclusion that can be reached from reading these verses is that God is a sinner which of course doesn’t make any sense.

The word “repent” in the context of these Scriptures is simply to not go forward with a planned course of action. In Jer. 26:19 God was going to punish Hezekiah but changed His mind (He repented) and didn’t do so; in Jonah 3:10 God was going to destroy Nineveh but Nineveh turned away from its evil ways and God did not go through with punishing them; “And God repented of the evil, that he had said he would do to them.” In Amos 7:3 and 6 God puts a stop to certain events He was using to punish Israel; “The LORD repented.”

Therefore, the word “repent” does not uniquely and always refer to sin

and someone making the decision to no longer sin. It can also refer to feeling sorry for having sinned and resolving not to sin again as is the case in the following verses.

Mat 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luk 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

One last point worth mentioning with respect to the term “repent” is that it basically means to stop doing something which we had been in the habit of doing. For example, I can repent of sleeping in late in the morning and resolve to get up early from now on; I repent of sleeping in. My attitude becomes that from now on, I will make an effort to get up early in the morning; that is my repentance.

However, as usually understood by most people, the term always has a religious connotation and refers to stopping sinning. This understanding is incorrect and a big source of error when reading the Bible and applying it indiscriminately. We always need to consider and understand the context in which it is used in order to get the intended meaning.

So when we come to the book of Job and Job's repentance we can now hopefully correctly understand just what it was Job repented of.

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

Job like his friends and Elihu was trying to figure out just why it was that so many afflictions were coming upon him. After long discussions no one was able to come up with the right answer and God decided to intervene to bring the matter to a close.

In Job 38-42 we see God giving Job and those with him a glimpse of his great glory and power. I'm quoting some of the verses here to give you an idea of what God was doing.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Job 38:4 *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?* declare, if thou hast understanding.

Job 38:5 *Who hath laid the measures thereof*, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Job 38:6 *Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?* or who laid the corner stone thereof;

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Job 38:8 *Or who shut up the sea with doors*, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

Job 38:9 *When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,*

Job 38:10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

Job 38:11 And said, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further:* and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

I would encourage you to read chapters 38-40 of the book of Job which give us interesting information about God's creation.

in Job 42:7 we see God's judgment of the discussions between Job, his 3 friends and Elihu.

Job 42:7 And it was *so*, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, *as my servant Job hath*.

Job did not sin in all that he said in the long discussions that went on for most of the book of Job; Job spoke correctly; they did not.

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, *in that ye have*

not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

So, of what did Job repent which was not sin; otherwise, God would have required of him that he offer burnt offerings as He had commanded the others to do?

Job repented (decided to stop) of trying to understand why he had been so severely afflicted. God showed him something of His great glory and Job realized that as a human being it was not possible for him to understand some of God's ways and what had happened to him was one of those situations. So, he stopped trying to understand the reason for his suffering trusting God as he had all through the time of the long and painful trials that came upon him.

Job's repentance was NOT of sinning against God.

My Righteousness and Self-Righteousness

Here is a Bible expression which needs to be explained to be correctly understood. The Bible explains its own symbols and the Bible interprets itself. We need to find the Bible explanation when symbols are being used and to get the right understanding of words and expressions where the meaning is not clear or seems to be saying something which goes against many other clearly established truths of the Bible.

The ministry generally and, the members of the Worldwide Church of God, widely believed that Job had a horrible, hidden sin of spiritual self-righteousness. This was based to a large extent on their finding the expression "my righteousness" in the book of Job and their jumping to the conclusion that "my righteousness" is sin without bothering to verify what is the meaning of the expression as defined by God in the Bible.

The expression "my righteousness" is used in other books of the Bible and depending on the context, has different meanings. In one context, it is God speaking and referring to His righteousness; fine, no problem to be had in this context. In other parts of the Bible the expression "my righteousness" is being used by men. Whenever that occurs, we need to carefully consider the context which more often than not will give us the correct meaning. Sometimes, we have to look at several verses in different books where the expression is used to finally get the complete and right meaning.

Do we want to know what the word "love" means according to the Bible, we have to go through the process of checking all the verses where the word is found, consider the context, consider like context to like context in different books and finally develop a complete and correct understanding

of what the Bible or God means when it talks about love as opposed to what men say the word means.

As we will see, David talks about “my righteousness” and yet these same ministers and members who so readily believe that Job had a secret sin of spiritual pride solely on the basis that he uses the expression “my righteousness” are oddly silent when it comes to David who uses the same expression in reference to himself. No long and intense sermons were ever preached as far as I know about David's horrible hidden sin of spiritual pride.

In the following paragraphs, we will see what is the correct meaning of the expression according to what the Bible or God says about “my righteousness.”

David in the Psalms – My Righteousness – My Integrity

In the Psalms, we see David talking about his righteousness or “my righteousness.”

Ps 4:1 «To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David.»
Hear me when I call, O God of [my righteousness](#): thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Ps 7:8 The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to [my righteousness](#), and according to mine [integrity](#) that is in me.

Ps 18:20 The LORD rewarded me according to **my righteousness**; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

Ps 18:24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to [my righteousness](#), according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

These verses define and make clear what is the meaning of the expression “my righteousness.” It is far from being something undesirable or from being sin. Let's take a closer look at these verses.

Ps 4:1 makes it clear that David's righteousness which he calls “my righteousness” comes from God: “Hear me when I call, O [God of my righteousness](#).”

David says that God judges him, (Ps 7:8) rewards him (Ps 18:20) and recompenses him (Ps 18:24) according to his (David's) righteousness which is: "according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me."

It is also clear in the other verses quoted above that when the expression "my righteousness" is used, it refers to the righteousness that comes from God and not to any righteousness David may have thought he had separate from God.

We also know from Ps18: 20; 24 that the "my righteousness" of which David speaks has to do with his obedience to God i.e., ".....according to the cleanness of my hands...." and verse 24 adds ".....the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight..." i.e., according to God and not according to any criteria David might have devised for himself.

The expression "my righteousness" in the Psalms clearly refers to David's righteousness which is from God (the God of my righteousness as David says) and which David has because of the cleanness of his hands in God's eyes i.e., because of his attitude of obedience to God which results in no sin being imputed to him.

2nd Samuel – My Righteousness

In the book of 2nd Samuel we see the same expression "my righteousness" being used as Samuel tells the story of what David did in the day the Lord delivered him out of the hand of his enemies. 2nd Samuel also provides more information as to what is meant by the expression "my righteousness" as we shall see.

2nd Samuel 22:1 And **David** spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. [\[Here I'm skipping over verses that are not directly related to the point I am trying to make for the sake of brevity; feel free to read them\]](#)

18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.

19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

20 He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because [he delighted in me](#).

21 The LORD [rewarded me according to my righteousness](#): according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.

24 I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.

25 Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to [my righteousness](#); according to my cleanness in his eye sight.

2nd Samuel 22: 21-25 provides a great deal of information as to what is meant by the expression “my (David’s) righteousness.”

David’s righteousness or “my righteousness” as he calls it refers to the cleanness of his hands (2nd Sam 22:21); to David having kept the ways of the Lord and not wickedly departing from God (2nd Sam 22:22); to David not having departed from God’s statutes and judgments (2nd Sam 22:23); and with David being upright before God and keeping himself from iniquity (2nd Sam 22:24).

And David concludes in 2nd Samuel 22:25, that the Lord has rewarded him according to his righteousness or “my righteousness” as stated in the verse.

What was the reward David received because of his righteousness (“my righteousness” in the verses quoted above)? “....the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies and out of the hand of Saul...” (2nd Sam 22:1).

Here again we have the Bible clearly defining what it meant by the expression “my righteousness,” and it is not sin or spiritual pride against God. It is simply an expression which is used to mean the righteousness a person

has in them due to their obedience to God. This is the meaning in the Psalms and in 2nd Samuel, but it is not the meaning of the word as used in the book of Job as we will see a bit later on in this study.

David in the Psalms – My Integrity

In the following verses, we see David talking about his integrity or “mine integrity.” “Mine integrity” becomes of course “my integrity” in more modern English. King James is 17th century English I believe (1611 is date of first King James Bible).

Ps 26:1 «A Psalm of David.» Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in **mine integrity**: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

Ps 26:11 But as for me, I will walk in **mine integrity**: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

Ps 41:12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in **mine integrity**, and settest me before thy face for ever.

Here we see the expression “mine integrity” which we also find in the Book of Job and which has been said by many when found in the book of Job, to prove that Job had a horrible hidden sin of spiritual pride. But yet, here we see David talking about his integrity and the ministry never preached that David had a horrible secret sin of self-righteousness.

If we look at Ps 26:1 David says his integrity consists of “.....I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.” In other words, David has shown a complete (integral or complete trust in God) and therefore he says, he shall not slide in his obedience to Him.

In Ps 26:11 David is calling on God to redeem him and be merciful to him because he will walk in his (David's) integrity i.e., his full, complete, always-abiding attitude is to obey God. That is what it means to have integrity. Integrity means to be whole, complete, without reservations in what one does; in this case, David's desire to obey God fully.

The dictionary defines integrity as “an undivided or unbroken completeness or totality with nothing wanting.” David had a complete and total desire to obey God.

It is the same thing we must have if we are to remain under grace, have Christ's righteousness imputed to us or His perfect, holy, righteous character which makes us worthy to be redeemed. We possess it fully by grace (a free, unmerited gift from God) through faith i.e., because we

believe God and have an attitude of wanting to obey Him in all things. We must have integrity as David had integrity to be saved. It is our integrity, i.e., our complete and total desire to obey God in all things though we remain sinners because of the weakness of our flesh.

That is our part in the salvation process; choosing to obey God by exercising the absolute freewill giving us by God. Having absolute free will or free moral agency means there is no power that can force us to believe something we have not chosen to believe.

But we here still have not gotten to the meaning of “maintaining my integrity” or “maintaining my righteousness” or self-righteousness as used in the Book of Job. We have shown that maintaining my integrity and maintaining my righteousness are not expressions that mean someone is sinning; in most cases the meaning is that someone is striving to obey God.

Self-righteousness as Sin

Part of the problem with claiming that Job was self-righteous in a way that was sinful comes from some of the statements attributed to him in the long discussions that went on between him, Elihu and Job's 3 friends. The following is one such discussion where Elihu is saying something about Job which is not true as God Himself clearly states that Job said nothing wrong in all he said during these long discussions (See Job 42:7-8).

Job 35:1 And Elihu answereth and saith: —

2 This hast thou reckoned for judgment: Thou hast said—‘My righteousness is more than God's?’ [Nowhere does Job say anything of the sort; in fact it's quite the opposite (See Job 2: 7-10; especially, verse 10; in the next section of this study we will look at the proof that Job did not say that his righteousness is more than God's)]

The Proof

Job was not commanded to offer any sacrifices as were Job's 3 friends. God says that Job spoke rightly or in other words, that he said nothing about God or to God that wasn't right in the long discussions with Elihu and with Job's 3 friends.

Job 42:7 And it cometh to pass after Jehovah's speaking these words unto Job, that Jehovah saith unto Eliphaz the Temanite, 'Burned hath Mine anger against thee, and against thy two friends, because ye have not spoken concerning Me rightly, like My servant Job.

8 And now, take to you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go ye unto My servant Job, and ye have caused a burnt-offering to ascend for you; and **Job My servant doth pray for you, for surely his face I accept**, so as not to do with you folly, because **ye have not spoken concerning Me rightly, like My servant Job**.

9 And they go—Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite—and do as Jehovah hath spoken unto them; and **Jehovah doth accept the face of Job**.

So that settles it. Some of the things said by Job's friends about Job are not the truth; it was a vain effort on their part to try to explain why Job was so severely afflicted. Consequently we can't use what they said to make a case that Job was self-righteous against God. God Himself says Job was right in what he was saying and that his friends were wrong.

Job's Self-Righteousness

So, what was Job's self-righteousness that was not sin as God Himself at the very end of the Book of Job makes it very clear that He finds nothing wrong with Job?

Job's self-righteousness was that he was right in maintaining in his discussion with his wife that he should not curse God as a means of ending his sufferings by God causing him to die. Job was self-righteous against his wife NOT against God and God rewards him for having maintained his righteousness i.e., that he was right in maintaining his decision not to curse God to end his sufferings despite the urging of his wife to do so.

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Job 2:10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? **In all this did not Job sin with his lips**.

God rewards Job for having remained steadfast and patiently enduring all the suffering that came upon him by restoring double to him those things which he had lost.

Among many other reasons as we have seen, the wrong words of Job's friends are probably one of the main reasons why so many have thought that Job had a horrible case of self-righteousness against God. They are using the words of the 3 friends and Elihu to build their case even though

God Himself says that some of the things they said were wrong, in error, not right especially, the part where one of Job's friends is saying that Job's said that his righteousness is more than God's (Job 35:2).

So let's be clear.

Self-righteousness becomes a sin when a man opposes himself to God and says that what he thinks is right and what God says is wrong. This kind of self-righteousness would be sin.

When holding steadfastly to one's opinion in a discussion with other men, one may be called, and correctly so, self-righteous but there is no sin against God as the difference of opinion is with another human being and NOT with God.

Final Thoughts

When I first started this study, I never intended for it to become such a long document but I felt I had to provide answers to the principal objections that are always raised to maintain that Job was a sinner with a horrible hidden sin of spiritual self-righteousness which they say God was trying to correct by sending Job grievous trials to get him to repent of that particular sin.

As it may now be realized, there a lot of basic Biblical concepts that have to be correctly understood to be able to finally come to a right understanding of the Book of Job. Christians must clear their minds of all the false religious teachings they have experienced before their calling and/or while sitting for a time in one of the many congregations of the false churches of God that have arisen after the death of HWA.

Job, far from being a grievous sinner, is an outstanding example of Christian patience under severe trials which ultimately resulted in great blessings from God.

So says God and your Bible if you will believe them.

