

Title: **SIX BIG QUESTIONS**

Text: Job 14:1-22

Subject: *Questions About Life, Death, and Eternity*

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 Kingsport Sovereign Grace Ministry
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Introduction:

Serious men are men of thoughtful contemplation. They do not waste their time and energy upon trifles, except for necessary recreation. They take serious things seriously. They ask serious questions. God's servant Job was such a man. His experiences in life caused him to ask some very serious, thoughtful questions about life, death, and eternity. I want us to look at some of the questions he asked. My text is Job 14:1-22. I have titled this message **SIX BIG QUESTIONS**.

We do not really know who wrote the book of Job; but it was probably written by Job himself. The book of Job is one of the oldest books in the Bible, if not the oldest. **It describes the life experiences of a man who walked with God in those earliest days, when very few people knew and worshipped the Lord.** Some suggest that Job probably lived in the days of Abraham. Others suggest that he lived in the days of Enoch, or perhaps in the days of Noah, after the flood. No one can say for certain. But we do know that **Job walked with, worshipped, and served the Lord God when very few did.** God said, there was "*none like him in the earth,*" and described him as a perfect and upright man who feared God and eschewed evil (1:8).

Some have questioned whether Job was a saved man, suggesting that he was a self-righteous man because he justified himself. But such questions should never be entertained. God himself owned Job as one who served him, one who had been saved by his grace and made perfect in Christ. **When he justified himself,** he was not speaking to God, but to men who accused him of hypocrisy and deceit. **When Job spoke to God,** he frankly acknowledged his sin. He said, — "*If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse*" (9:20). This is very important because **unless we understand who Job was and what kind of man he was, we simply cannot understand the book of Job.**

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1. **Job was a faithful, faithful servant of God** (1:8; 2:3).

(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?”

(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.”

2. **He was a man whose faith was greatly tried.**

- The Loss of His Children
- The Loss of His Health
- The Speech of His Wife
- The Loss of His Reputation and Influence
- The Accusations of His “Friends”

3. **At times, Job showed signs of weakness, frustration, and even unbelief; but even in his lowest times he worshipped God, maintained his integrity, and believed God** (1:20; 2:10; 13:15; 19:25-27).

(Job 1:20-22) “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.”

(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.”

(Job 13:15) “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”

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(Job 19:25-27) “For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: 26 And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.”

4. **In the midst of his heavy, heavy trials this man Job acknowledged God’s total sovereignty and absolute dominion over all things** (1:20-21; 12:14-16).

(Job 1:20-21) “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.”

(Job 12:14-16) “Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. 15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. 16 With him *is* strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver *are* his.”

5. **In the end, God honored Job and made even his enemies to know that the Lord accepted him.**

- He **condemned the harsh judgment** of Job’s three “friends” (42:7-8)

(Job 42:7-8) “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.** 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.”

- He **gave Job twice as much** as he had before he was afflicted (42:9-17).

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(Job 42:9-17) “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.** *10* **And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends:** also **the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.** *11* Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: **every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.** *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.** *13* He had also **seven sons** and **three daughters.** *14* And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. *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. *16* After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, *even* four generations. *17* So Job died, *being* old and full of days.”

Divisions: Now, I want you to turn to the fourteenth chapter of Job. I want you to hold your Bibles open at chapter fourteen and follow along with me, as we look together at these **SIX BIG QUESTIONS** that arose from Job’s experiences in this world.

1. “Dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one?” (v.3).
2. “Bringest (thou) me into judgment with thee?” (v.3).
3. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” (v.4).
4. “Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?” (v. 10).
5. “If a man die, shall he live again?” (v.14).
6. “Dost thou not watch over my sin?” (v.16).

Proposition: If we are wise, we will give thoughtful consideration to these six big, serious questions about the most serious of matters: life, death, and eternity.

- I. **“DOST THOU OPEN THINE EYES UPON SUCH AN ONE?”** (vv. 1-3).

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(Job 14:1-3) “Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble. 2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. 3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?”

This question arose from Job’s consideration of the frailty, brevity, and utter insignificance of man. We all like to think that we are somebody, that our lives count, that some part of this world depends upon us. In a natural sense, of course, certain things do depend upon us, because God has so ordered it. Even in spiritual matters, it can be said that certain things depend upon us, again, because God has so ordered it. But once a man starts to look beyond his nose and sees that the first cause of all things is God (12:14-16; Romans 8:28; 11:36; 2 Corinthians 5:18), once he sees that “*all things are of God,*” he realizes that before God he is utterly insignificant.

“**Man that is born of woman is of few days**” (v. 1). — The longer I live, the more thankful I am that life in this world is but a very brief part of my existence. I am truly thankful that since the days of the flood, the life span of the human race has been shortened. Wouldn’t you hate to live in this world, in its present condition, for 969 years, like Methuselah did? I much prefer the expectation of threescore years and ten to 969!

Yet, we ought to learn to recognize the brevity of this life and learn to apply our hearts unto wisdom — TO CHRIST! None of us is guaranteed seventy years in this world, or even another moment. But if we should live to be the age of 80, 90, or even 100 years, that is just a speck, when you think of eternity. And those few days will pass by quicker than a weaver’s shuttle (Psalm 90:12).

The few days we have upon this earth, because we are sinners in a world full of sin and sorrow, are “full of trouble.” — The word “*trouble*” here is one of those words with many shades of meaning.

- It might be translated **trouble** because sin and trouble always go hand in hand. Where there is sin, trouble is sure to follow.
- It might be translated **commotion** because the lives of men in this world are, like the troubled sea, restless. Fallen man is in a constant state of uneasiness.

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- The word might also be translated ***trembling***. The reason for man's restlessness is, to a very great extent, the trembling of his soul in the prospect of death, judgment, and eternity.

Troubled man, whose life is but a momentary thing in this world, is as insignificant as withered flowers after the first winter freeze. — *“He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not”* (v.2).

In the light of these facts, Job was simply overwhelmed with the knowledge that the holy, infinite, eternal, omnipotent God should take notice of him. — *“And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one?”*

(Psalms 8:4) “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

(Psalms 144:3-4) “LORD, what *is* man, that thou takest knowledge of him! *or* the son of man, that thou makest account of him! 4 Man is like to vanity: his days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.”

Think of it. What a wondrous thing this is. — That God almighty should look our way, that he should cast his glance upon us! Job was simply overwhelmed by the thought of it. Aren't you?

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused his pain,
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Does God almighty open his eye upon such useless, sinful wretches as we are? Indeed, he has, he does and he will!

- In Electing Love!
- In Redeeming Grace!
- In Providential Goodness!
- In Saving Mercy!
- In the Exercise of His Preserving Power!

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II. **“AND BRINGEST THOU ME INTO JUDGMENT WITH THEE?”**
(v.3).

What a horrible realization this is for a sinful man to come to. Sooner or later you and I must face up to the fact of divine justice and judgment.

- The Word of God teaches it.
- History illustrates it
- Your conscience bears witness to it.
- Calvary declares it!

When Job thought of God exercising the rigor of his strict justice, it was no laughing matter. He knew that the standard of judgment in that great day would not be the opinions of men, but God himself. He does not say, “*Bringest me into judgment before thee?*” That would be bad enough. But his question is, “*Bringest thou me into judgment with thee?*” Here are two facts that I hope will get your heart’s attention and cause your soul trouble from which you can find no escape until you flee away into the arms of Christ.

A. **There is a day appointed by God when we must appear before his august, great, white throne to be judged by him** (2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-15).

(2 Corinthians 5:10-11) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done in his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. (11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

(Hebrews 9:27) “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”

(Revelation 20:11-15) “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13) And the sea gave up the dead which

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were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

B. In that great and terrible day, the standard of judgment will be God himself.

God will bring us into judgment *with* himself. Someone once asked, “How good does a person have to be to get to heaven?” The answer is, you have to be as good as God. God almighty will not and cannot accept anything less than perfection (Leviticus 22:21; Revelation 21:27).

(Leviticus 22:21) “And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish *his* vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.”

(Revelation 21:27) “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

III. Understanding both the brevity of life and the certainty of divine judgment, Job asked this next question: — “WHO CAN BRING A CLEAN THING OUT OF AN UNCLEAN?” (v.4-6).

(Job 14:4-6) “Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one. 5 Seeing his days *are* determined, the number of his months *are* with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; 6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.”

Our translation reads, in response to this question, “*not one.*” A better translation might continue the question to the end of the fourth verse. “*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, is there one?*” Realizing that man who is altogether unclean, by imputation, by nature, by birth, and by practice, must stand in judgment with the holy Lord God, this question is one for which every sensible soul must seek an answer.

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- The number of our days in this world was determined by God's decree before ever we were born.
- God himself has appointed the boundaries of every man's existence in this world, beyond which none can pass.

“As the time of a man's birth, so the time of his death is according to the purpose of God; and all the intervening moments and articles of time, and all things that befall a man throughout the whole course of his life, all fall under the appointment of God, and are according to his determinate will; and when God requires of a man his soul no one has power over his spirit to retain it one moment.”

— John Gill

If man has no power over his own life and death, or even his own health, it is certain that no man has the power to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. — No mortal can give himself spiritual life. No man can give himself faith, regenerate himself, justify himself, save himself, or even put himself into a savable condition (Job 9:20; Romans 3:9-19).

(Job 9:20) “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: *if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*”

(Romans 3:9-19) “What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; (10) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (11) There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (13) Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: (14) Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: (15) Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: (16) Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: (17) And the way of peace have they not known: (18) There is no fear of God before their eyes. (19) Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

But there is One who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. The Lord God our Savior can bring a clean thing out of an unclean! He does so by three marvelous works of grace.

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- Redemption (Romans 3:24-26)
- Regeneration (John 3:5)
- Resurrection (Phil. 3:21) — “*Salvation is of the Lord*” (Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9-10).

IV. Here is Job’s fourth big question (vv. 7-13). Start reading at verse seven.

(Job 14:7-13) “For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. (8) Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; (9) *Yet* through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. (10) But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he? (11) As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: (12) So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. (13) O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!”

“MAN DIETH, AND WASTETH AWAY: YEA, MAN GIVETH UP THE GHOST, AND WHERE IS HE?” — When the wicked die in their sins, though their bodies are in the grave, they are in hell.

Illustration: -- *The Rich Man* (Luke 16)

If you die without Christ, as soon as you close your eyes in death, you will lift up your eyes in hell, tormented in the flames of the damned, forever imprisoned in darkness with Satan, the fallen angels, and in company with all your brethren, all the wicked who have lived and died in rebellion against God. There, in eternal misery, forever banished from God, goodness, and righteousness, you shall suffer the wrath of God forever and forever.

But when the righteous die in faith, though their bodies are in the grave, awaiting the resurrection, they are with Christ in heaven.

- 2 Corinthians 5:1 (Read and explain the intermediate body.)

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(2 Corinthians 5:1) “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

As soon as the righteous close their eyes in death in this world they open their eyes in glory, in heaven, in the paradise of God, in Abraham’s bosom. There we shall forever be in the presence of Christ, the holy angels, God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, the spirits of just men made perfect, free of sin and perfectly righteous, serving Christ in that house not made with hands until the resurrection of our bodies.

This blessed state of death (life) is for the believer a matter of hope and expectation, not dread and fear. — Job prayed for the Lord to graciously take him out of this vale of tears and keep him, hiding his body in the grave and his soul in heaven until the days of God’s wrath and judgment against men is over (v.13).

(Job 14:13) “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!”

(Isaiah 26:19-21) “Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. *20* Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. *21* For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”

(Isaiah 57:1-2) “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth *it* to heart: and merciful men *are* taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil *to come*. *2* He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, *each one* walking *in* his uprightness.”

Illustration: When God takes one of his elect out of this world he graciously takes them away from sorrow and trouble.

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V. “IF A MAN DIE SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?” (v.14).

Read verses 14 and 15, and you will understand that Job had absolutely no question about the blessed hope of the resurrection of the body.

(Job 14:14-15) “If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.”

(1 Corinthians 15:51-58) “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? 56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

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Illustration: *The Robin's Eggs*

VI. Now, here is a sixth question, the answer to it is so delightful, I cannot send you home without it. — “**DOST THOU NOT WATCH OVER MY SIN?**”

(Job 14:16-17) “For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? (17) My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.”

- Our great God numbers our steps in this world. As he has numbered the hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30), so he has ordained every step we take in this world, o matter where they lead.
- He watches over our sin. Does God look upon our sin? Bless his name, he does not (Palm 130:3-4). The word translated “sin” is the very same word translated “*sin-offering*.” — The Lord God watches over Christ our Sin-offering, upon the mercy-seat with relentless satisfaction!

Let me show you three things that I hope you will take home in your heart, for the comfort of your soul. The Word of God describes a bag, a book and a bottle, which ought to console our hearts throughout the days of this earthly pilgrimage.

1. God has given us **A Bag for our Sins** (Job 14:17). Like men buried at sea are sewn and sealed in a weighted bag and cast into the depths of the sea, so the Lord God has cast the sins of his people into the depth of the sea of his infinite forgiveness.
2. The Lord has written **A Book for our Names** (Psalm 139:16; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8). Take heart, child of God, all is well for those whose names are written in the book of God!
3. The Lord God keeps **A Bottle for our Tears** (Psalm 56:8-9). It was customary at ancient Egyptian funerals for mourners to have a small sponge or cloth to wipe away their tears. Then they were squeezed into a tear bottle and placed in the tomb with the dead, symbolizing the care the mourners had for the one who died. Even so, the Lord God cares for us.

Can anything be more comforting? In this world of sin, sorrow, and death, the Lord our God has put our sins in a bag and buried them, our names in a

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book to remember them, and our tears into a bottle to show his tender care for us.

Amen.