

LIVE DRAMATIC READING OF  
**THE BOOK *of* JOB**



*Woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1860*

*“Have you considered my servant Job?”*

New King James Version

Wednesday, April 2nd, A.D. 2025

2:00-4:30pm, Werner Auditorium

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

## *A Guide to the Book of Job*

Since Adam and Eve's fall into sin, trauma has been the lived experience of humanity. Job, who is an example of this, loses his ten children, his health, and all his life's possessions in a single day. In her analysis of Job, Ronnie Janoff-Bulman argues that trauma leads to a fracturing of the core assumptions of human existence in the world: (1) Belief in the meaningfulness of the world; (2) Belief in the goodness of the world; (3) Belief in the self-worth of the individual. In the book of Job, the all the characters question these assumptions.

*"Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"* (Job 2:9). With these words, Job's wife questions the meaningfulness of the world. The universe is meaningless; there is no escape from senseless suffering. Job's wife lays down the gauntlet: why *shouldn't* we curse God and die? Five of the greatest sages of antiquity engage in a Socratic-like dialogue about suffering. Job's wife sits in silence for the rest of the story, but her presence is a continuous reminder of her words and the haunting question: does life have any meaning at all?

Job doubts the second assumption, calling into question the benevolence of the world. Job asks, *"why did I not die at birth?"* (3:11) and *"why do the wicked prosper?"* (21:7ff) In doing so Job calls into question the very goodness of existence itself. In his opening discourse, Job mentions Leviathan, the great monster who embodies the primordial chaos from before the foundations of the world. In questioning the very goodness of existence itself, Job calls God himself to give an answer.

Confronted with the victim of trauma, Job's friends deny the self-worth and innocence of Job, questioning the third assumption. They engage in the perennial act of blaming the victims, demonstrating the tragic failure of human communities to care for the victims of tragedy. In their eyes, an innocent Job is a threat to human existence itself—if he is innocent, then his fate can befall any of us. But if Job is guilty, then his friends can sleep at night knowing that his tragedy will never befall them.

Like the very nature of trauma, the book itself is a shattered discourse about trauma and its effects. The seemingly innocuous narratives which bookend the story are torn apart by fragmented poetic discourses. Yet, there the Gospel is there, for God himself *does* speak into the human cacophony. Faced with Job's words which question the very goodness of creation itself, God responds with His Word, Christ, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who is sovereign over all things—even over the chaos of Behemoth and Leviathan.

Perhaps Jonathan Edwards gave the best summary of the book: the story of Job is humanity's universal story. Every one of us will lose everything—either in this life or at our life's end. This Lenten season, may you find comfort in the words of Job 19:25: *"I know that my Redeemer lives"*—Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word.

## *Outline of the Book of Job*

- I. Opening Narration (1:1-2:13)
- II. Job's Opening Discourse (3:1-26)
- III. Three Rounds of Discourse (4:1- 27:23)
  - Eliaphaz's First Speech (4:1-5:27) & Job's Response (6:1-7:21)
  - Bildad's First Speech (8:1-22) & Job's Response (9:1-10:22)
  - Zophar's First Speech (11:1-20) & Job's Response (12:1-14:22)
  - Eliphaz's Second Speech (15:1-35) & Job's Response (16:1-17:16)
  - Bildad's Second Speech (18:1-21) & Job's Response (19:1-21)
- *Intermission* —
  - Zophar's Second Speech (20:1-29) & Job's Response (21:1-34)
  - Eliphaz's Third Speech (22:1-30) & Job's Response (23:1-24:25)
  - Bildad's Third Speech (25:1-6) & Job's Response (26:1-27:23)
- IV. Job's Discourse on Wisdom (28:1-28)
- V. Job's Final Defense (29:1-31:40)
- VI. Elihu's Four Speeches (32:1-37:24)
- VII. The First Divine Discourse to Job (38:1-40:2) & Job's Response (40:3-5)
- VIII. The Second Divine Discourse to Job (40:6-41:34) & Job's Response (42:1-6)
- IX. The Divine Response to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (42:7-8)
- X. Closing Narration (42:9-17)

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### *A Note from Dr. Timothy Saleska on Chapter 42, Verse 6:*

Job's final words are enigmatic. The conventional translation shows us a broken man repenting: *"Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* But this implies his friends were right—that Job only needed to repent (of what, we are never told) for God to restore him.

However, lexical, grammatical, literary, and theological factors challenge this reading. Edward Greenstein argues that Job instead says, *"I am fed up; I take pity on dust and ashes,"* with "dust and ashes" as a metaphor for us mortal human creatures. This suggests that before an incomprehensible, utterly hidden God, Job remained defiant to the end.

**Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler** (*Narrator*) is the Speaker of the Lutheran Hour, a broadcast ministry of Lutheran Hour Ministries. Prior to that, he was a pastor at Epiphany Lutheran Church and Assistant Pastor at Timothy Lutheran Church. His Ph.D. Dissertation (Concordia Seminary, 2014) was entitled: “Christian Hope Among Rivals: Life-Organizing Stories As Narrative Theodices.” In 2013, he performed the Book of Mark with a group of other scholars before live audiences.

**Rev. Dr. David Schmitt** (*Job*) is the Gregg H. Benidt Memorial Professor of Homiletics and Literature, and professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis since 1995. He specializes in preaching, the intersections of faith and culture, particularly literary culture, spiritual autobiography and the devotional life. In 2013, he performed the Book of Mark with a group of other scholars before live audiences.

**Lydia Rose Grabau** (*Wife of Job*) is a second-year deaconess student at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis. Prior to that she served in outdoor ministry for ten years. She specializes in asking questions, being confused, and yapping.

**Rev. Dr. Peter Nafzger** (*Eliphaz the Temanite*) is Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary since 2016. He specializes in theology of Scripture, the theology of preaching, ecclesiology, the Lutheran Confessions, and confirmation and Christian formation. Previously, he was pastor of New Life Church in Hugo, Minnesota.

**Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen** (*Bildad the Shubite*) is the Director of Placement, Director of Certification, and Senior Professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He has been a faculty member since 1990. He specializes in communication, rhetoric and homiletics, particularly the use of creative means within a sermon

**Rev. Dr. Joel Okamoto** (*Zophar the Naamathite*) is the Waldemar and Mary Griesbach Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, where he has taught since 1998. He specializes in Christian life and witness, and a contemporary account of the theology of Lutheranism and of systematic theology for our post-Christian times.

**Rev. Dr. Ryan Tinetti** (*Elihu*) is the assistant professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis since 2024. He specializes in the use of the use of classical rhetoric in preaching, community-building in the parish, and the writings of Eugene Peterson, Wendell Berry, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Previously, Tinetti has been a guest speaker of The Lutheran Hour and served as a Parish Pastor for fourteen years.

**Rev Dr. Kent J. Burreson** (*Voice of God*) is the Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis since 2000. Previously, he was the Dean of Chapel (2009-2021) and a parish pastor. He specializes in liturgical studies, sacramental theology and Reformation worship. In 2013, he performed the Book of Mark with a group of other scholars before live audiences.

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This event was organized by Seminarians **Daniel Johnson & Isaac Hedstrom**.