THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

BOOK OF JOB

CLT Bible Study

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Continuing Lay Training
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BOOK OF JOB

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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.

2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.

3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.

4. IMPORTANT: Note that scriptures from the books of Leviticus and Numbers may not have the book's name. In sections referring specifically to the Book of Leviticus, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of Leviticus. Whereas, in sections referring specifically to the Book of Numbers, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of Numbers. Other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.

5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.

6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own. It will be well if you have colored pencils at hand to mark the Bible as you go along. A simple system is to mark promises in blue and warnings in red. But, however you do it, mark your Bible and it will become more and more your very own.

7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning. Perhaps you may benefit of listening to the reading of the Books of Leviticus and Numbers.

8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and other important words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions, please refer to A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English (Eby et al., 2004).

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions:
1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Ministries outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB [JOHB]

NOTES

God's hero, Job, of the land of Uz [UHZ], is the central character of the story. Satan is permitted to try Job, strip him of his wealth and health, and surround him with counselors/comforters who, like himself, equate serving God with prosperity and good health.

The conflict rages, and Job finally cries out in impatience and frustration to curse the day he was born. Through Job's struggle with his Hebrew concept of reward for righteousness and his present plight, God prepares Job for greater faith in God.

The fast-moving narrative catches the reader in the debate and involves him in the drama of God permitting Job to be tested, tasting temporary defeat but emerging triumphantly.

A. AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Speculation varies as to the writer and the period in which the book was written. Some scholars would have it written prior to the giving of the law, while others favor the time of Solomon. Some say Solomon was the writer; others favor Moses, while still others favor multiple authorship. There is no certainty as to either the author or the date of the writing.

Adam Clarke suggests that the book was written by a learned Idumean, well-acquainted with the Jewish religion and its writers. The date would be after Moses's time, and the manuscript would later be translated into the Hebrew language. He also favors the position that Job was a real person and that the story is a statement of facts.

B. PLACE OF THE ACTION

The land of Uz is also known as the land of Edom or Esau and is located on the southern coast of the Dead Sea.

C. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Both Job and his comforters had the same philosophy as to the cause of suffering. Sin and disobedience to God brought suffering. Job was frustrated because he knew that he had been faithful, but still, he was suffering the loss of family and goods. Life caved in on him with relentless force. His comforters, looking on, could only assume that Job had sinned against God.

The book does not attempt to explain the cause of suffering or why good people often suffer while evil people escape. Rather, its purpose seems to be to refute the philosophy of the day, "Success accompanies righteous living."

It is unfortunate that the final outcome of Job's story is often used to teach that if you are faithful, you will receive many material blessings and have good health.

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You may and you may not. In either case, God never forsakes or loses sight of his people. In the midst of suffering and reverses, he is still the Sustainer and the books will ultimately be balanced—not in this life but in the life to come.

Some ideas to keep in mind while studying the Book of Job:

1. God permitted Satan to try Job.

2. God had control of the situation at all times.

3. Although the speeches of Job's comforters are accurately recorded, the content is not necessarily true.

4. Although the question of human suffering comes up, it is not the primary concern of the author.

5. God had faith in Job. God is on trial as well as Job, for Job is a believer in God.

6. Some of the real questions are:
a. Does righteous living always bring material prosperity and health?
b. Will people serve God without a reward?
c. Are poverty, disease, and tragedy always the result of sin?

7. Although Job is restored physically and materially, this should not be interpreted as always being the case. In many cases, Christian people die in poverty and disease but are triumphant in the faith and strength of God. God's ways are above our ways, and he is worthy of worship and adoration regardless of the material or physical condition in which we find ourselves.

Job [JOHB]
Uz [UHZ]

CHAPTER 2. JOB - FROM RICHES TO AFFLICTION (1:1 - 2:13)

NOTES

A. JOB THE HERO (1:1-5)

Job had both inner and outer religion. He feared (reverenced) God and avoided evil (lived uprightly). Job had accumulated wealth, and God had given him a large family. The love of the children for each other is reflected in their visiting each other on the celebration of their respective birthdays.

The concern of a godly parent is reflected in Job's continuous intercession on behalf of the children. He knew the treachery of sin and endeavored to set what safeguards he could to prevent them from sinning against God.

Everything was going well: wealth, family, health, respect, leadership in the community, and fellowship with God. There was not a cloud in the sky. But this was soon to change.

B. SATAN VERSUS JOB - SCENE 1 (1:6-22)

The writer allows us to see the gathering storm. Job is not aware of the impending disaster and temptations. You want to cry out, "Watch out, Job," but instead, you watch the unfolding scene with mixed emotions, depending on the tragedy and sorrow you have faced in your own life and your reaction to the bitter along with the sweet.

Satan, the instigator of evil, the adversary, appears before God in the midst of the angels. This would imply that one may expect an attack from the adversary at any point or find him in any place, including the fellowship of the saints. Satan's response to the inquiry as to where he had been indicates that he had the freedom to move about wherever he pleased upon the earth, evidently seeking to destroy the work of God.

God was proud of Job and asked Satan if he had noticed this man who was upright and feared the Lord. Satan's question (1:9) serves as the springboard for the remainder of the narrative: "Do people serve God for nothing?" What is left unsaid is that it is impossible for us to serve God for nothing. The very act of serving brings its own reward. But, serving brings inward peace, not necessarily health and wealth, as Job is soon to learn.

You might phrase the question this way, "Who would not serve God if it brought the rewards that Job was enjoying?"

Notice it is Satan who touches Job and not God – and that only with the permission of God. God limits what Satan can do. The attack upon Job takes away his wealth and his children, all in swift, successive strokes. From sunshine to shadows, from wealth to poverty, from a wonderful family to just Mom and Dad left alone!

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To get the real impact, try to imagine you are reading the Book of Job without knowing how the narrative is going to come out. Or better still, try to imagine how you would react If suddenly you found yourself the recipient of such messages. Do people serve God for nothing?

Job's reactions are classic. He did not attribute the happenings to Satan. His understanding was that whatever happened came from God since it was God that he served. There is no dualism here. He did not understand why, but in the midst of tragedy he was able to acknowledge – The Lord gave; the Lord took away. Bless his name!

In the first scene, God has won. Job's integrity has held fast. Job still worships God. There is no self-pity! No crying, "This should not have happened to me." Just strength, confidence, and trust.

C. SATAN VERSUS JOB - SCENE 2 (2:1-10)

Satan appears again before God with the same insolence: "Just running around on earth wherever I please." God reminds him that Job's faith is still intact. Satan does not give up but poses that question, which is paraphrased today as: "All have their price. Tempt them enough, and they will give in. Job still has not suffered physical pain."

God again permits Satan to move against Job but with the limitation of sparing his life. The result was painful sores over his entire body. The severity of this physical affliction can hardly be imagined (see 2:12; 7:5; 7:14; 30:17-30). He suffered to the extent that death would have been a relief. But, the Power that was sustaining him was greater than the power that was attempting to destroy him. We see our hero moved from his home to the dump, sitting there scratching himself with a broken piece of pottery (potsherd).

The exact disease is not certain. Some think it could have been elephantiasis, while others suggest leprosy. The type of disease is unimportant.

Job continues to hold fast to his integrity even when his wife appears with the advice to curse God and get it over with. Before we become too severe in our criticism of her, we must remember her children, the benefits of the wealth she used to have, and that the one she loved was now stricken with what seemed an incurable disease. Since death was certain, why not get it over with? She may have succumbed to the suggestion of Satan that her husband was unrighteous, and since the events were the results of his unrighteousness, he might as well commit suicide - for cursing God would certainly bring death.

At any rate, Job still maintains his poise. He does not call her a fool but kindly tells her that she talks like a foolish woman.

Job recognizes that both good and evil exist. Since God is the Ruler over all, why should Job receive only good from the hand of God? Life has sickness, death, disasters of nature, and other calamities. But God is still God, and Job chooses to rest his case with God.

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D. THE COMFORTERS ARRIVE (2:11-13)

The three friends arrive to take their places in the dialogue. They are:

Eliphaz [ELL-eh-faz] - from Edom. His name may have meant "God crushes."
Bildad [BILL-dad] - from the tribe of Shuah. His name may mean "beloved of God".
Zophar [ZOH-far] - from northwestern Arabia. The name has an uncertain meaning, perhaps "twittering bird," "sharp nail," or "goat-like jumper."

The three have heard of Job's disaster and agreed to leave their homes and come to comfort him. When they arrive, they fail to recognize Job because of the ravages of the disease. When they become aware of his condition, they enter a ritual usually reserved for the dead: tearing their clothes, sprinkling dust on their heads, and observing a seven-day period of silence.

Job's comforters have been the brunt of many tales and jokes. The years have been hard on them. They came voluntarily with some effort. They were sincere, and they earnestly desired to be of help to Job. However, they were ill-equipped for the task. Their neat answers were not enough to help. Paul Scherer sums up the attitude of the comforters in his "Exposition on Job," saying:

> "God punishes the evil and rewards the good, so ran their logic. His mercy is toward them that fear him; and his wrath upon the disobedient, that they may forsake their wicked ways and live. The man whom catastrophe overtakes, that man has sinned. Let him repent and his deliverance is sure. If he will not, the very stars in their courses will fight against him. That was the Hebrew faith, straight out of Deuteronomy and the prophets, and it was their faith. There was certainly nothing contagious about it to bring a soul to cry out, "Immanuel, God with us!" Quite the contrary. But, they could not themselves afford to become involved with anyone who would break with it, as Job had broken with it. For it had been his faith too, until he saw that never again for him could it cover the facts. He had done nothing commensurate with this disaster. There was no answer that way. But, what other way was there and what other answer? ("Exposition on Job," Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), III, 923).

Eliphaz [ELL-eh-faz]
Bildad [BILL-dad]
Zophar [ZOH-far]

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C. Case of Sacrilege (10:1-20)

1. Nadab and Abihu (10:1-7)

In chapter 10, Israel sees the inevitable consequences of presumptuous drawing near to God. The nature of the sin of Nadab [NEI-dab] and Abihu [ah-BEE-hoo] (10:1) is not recorded. The main thing is that the two priests performed priestly functions in a manner contrary to that commanded by the Lord.

2. Strong Drink Forbidden (10:8-11)

The priest was to distinguish for Israel between holy and unholy and between unclean and clean (10:10). People dare not come to God on their own terms and in their own way if they expect to find acceptance.

3. Instructions to the Priests (10:12·20)

Moses now spoke to Aaron about the portions of the offering that were to belong to the priests for their own consumption (10:12). The meal offering, the breast (called the wave offering), and the shoulder (which was called the heave offering, 10:14) were to be eaten by the priests and their families. The sin offering of the people (not that offered by the priests for themselves) was to be eaten by the priest in the holy place (10:12-13). It was given to the priest by God that he might bear the iniquity of the congregation (10:17).

Section 3. Laws Concerning Uncleanness (11:1 – 15:33)

Israel was to be a holy people. This was because they were in covenant with the Lord, the Holy One. The covenant demanded that their total life be brought into conformity with God's demands. The third section of the book reveals what this covenant meant in terms of daily living. The purpose of all of this is clearly stated: Israel should not defile itself (11:44).

A. Uncleanness from Animals (11:1-47)

The key words in this section are clean, unclean, abomination, defile, sanctify, and holy. In chapter 11 alone the word "unclean" occurs some 100 times. The most important thing is not the specification of what is clean and unclean but the underlying motivation that demanded the drawing of such a line.

These restrictions, so unusual to us, have far more religious, and thus ultimately more moral, significance than is first apparent. Through these laws, everything that had to do with alien gods was condemned as unclean.

CHAPTER 3. COMFORTLESS COMFORTERS - ROUND 1 (3:1 - 14:22)

NOTES

A. JOB'S LAMENT (3:1-26)

We now see a different Job from the man who said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away" (1:21) and, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (2:10)

Job begins to ask why. He desires some answers, and he feels he can surely voice his inner frustrations in the presence of his friends. His questions tumble out. His curse is not against God but rather against his own existence. He expresses three wishes:

1. that he had not been born (3:3-10),

2. that if he was to be born, he had died as an infant (3:11-19), and

3. that death might come quickly (3:20-26).

Nothing ties together. Life has no meaning. It is beyond his understanding, and his pain is intense. His patience has turned into impatience. He will feign no false humility that says all is right with the world and himself. He chooses to wrestle with the contradictions he is experiencing, which contrast his understanding of God's goodness. A spark of faith remains, for he never renounces God. Through this searching, suffering, and questioning, God can finally break through with the assurance that he is still in the heavens despite the earthly conditions that Job is enduring.

B. ELIPHAZ SPEAKS (4:1 - 5:27)

As the rounds of speeches begin, we should be aware that little progress is to be made. The comforters grow more intense as they try to force Job to admit that which he has not done to bring him relief from God. This intensity increases until the comforters are more interested in proving their point than in comforting Job.

Eliphaz begins tactfully and cautiously (4:2) but quickly reveals that he has a message to give. He must straighten Job out in his thinking. He rebels against Job's outburst, for it cuts across the very grain of his belief.

There is enough truth in what Eliphaz says to make one want to agree. However, he ignores Job's position as a righteous sufferer. Eliphaz's counsel consists of reminding Job:

1. That he has counseled others as he is now being counseled (4:3-5);

2. That the righteous don't suffer or perish (4:6-7);

3. That the wicked perish (4:8-11); then

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4. Drawing on a vision (imaginary or real) to give credibility to his counsel (4:12-20). When a counselor can claim divine guidance, how can the one being advised dare question? This device is too often used, as in this case, unknowingly to advance that which hinders. A devout Christian may sincerely feel that he has divine guidance or has prayed through on a matter and has the answer to another's problem or a problem in the church. Anyone who objects or disagrees is placed in the position of being a "God-fighter." Even though Eliphaz's vision may have been authentic, this does not mean that it applied to Job's situation - which it is apparent that it did not.

C. JOB'S REPLY (6:1 - 7:21)

Job talks to himself while his friends listen in (6:1-20). He feels that Eliphaz has not properly considered his calamity (6:2), or he would have understood why his words were so rash. His aloneness contrasts with the contentment of animals with plenty of food. He has no word from God, contentment, food for his soul, or kindness from his friends (6:3-5).

Again, Job desires to die. It seems that he is afraid that he may blaspheme God, and he would welcome death while he is still holding to his faith (6:8-13). In 6:14-30, Job speaks of his friends who withheld kindness as forsaking the fear of the Almighty. Job is not defensive here. They stand in judgment, for their lack of kindness could contribute to his possible downfall. To refuse kindness to a person in need is a dangerous thing to do.

After having let his friends listen in on how he feels about them (6:1-20), Job turns to them in direct response to what has been said (6:21 - 7:6). He accuses his comforters of being afraid of what they see. Job does not want their money, gifts, or their arguments. He wants sympathy and understanding. Once again, he challenges them to prove that he is lying. Why should he? He believes as they do, and if he had sinned, he would be quick to admit it to secure the relief he so desperately desires.

Job's final response to Eliphaz is to turn to God in prayer (7:7-21). In his prayer, he moves quickly from one thought to another, as if one's mind is racked with fever and pain. The main ideas are:

1. Life is brief (7:7-8);

2. There is no resurrection (7:9-10);

3. Since this is true, "I will speak my mind" (7:11);

4. God punishes him through dreams and visions (7:13-14);

5. "Let me die" (7:15-16);

6. "Why do you continually bother me?" (7:17-19);

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7. The possibility of sin enters his mind, and he does not understand why God does not forgive. Job closes his prayer with the thought that God will seek him, but it will be too late, for death will have come. Job wants to believe in the goodness of God but cannot reconcile it with his suffering.

D. BILDAD SPEAKS (8:1-22)

No niceties here! Bildad immediately confronts Job with his irreverence, inferring that God is unjust (8:2-30). Then comes the low blow - Bildad implies that Job's children were destroyed because of their transgressions (8:4). This would be like telling a father who lost his family in a tornado that God had a message for the father that could be delivered in no other way than to kill his family because they were sinners.

In verses 5-7, Bildad implies that Job's sin must not have been as great since he still lives. Then, Bildad entices Job to repent, holding up the promise of material restoration. This was the very motive that Satan had said was the reason men serve God. Bildad appeals to tradition and history as the authority for his counsel. Something old must be true. What Job says is new, cuts across the tradition, and cannot be valid.

The analogies from nature effectively show man's dependence upon and relationship to God (8:11-19). However, Bildad sees a man in a proper relationship with God only as long as he has health, wealth, and good fortune. The analogies could only further add to Job's frustrations at this point. It is worth noting that Bildad closes his speech with the prophecy that those who hate Job will be clothed with shame. When God reveals himself, this is what happens to the comforters.

E. JOB'S REPLY (9:1 - 10:22)

In Job's responses, he seems to react not to the previous speaker but to the one before him. Here, he answers Eliphaz's comment in 4:17 concerning how a person can be pure before his Maker. Job recognizes God as wise, powerful, in complete control, and One whose ways are above human understanding (9:2-10).

Job fluctuates between maintaining his innocence (9:15) and acknowledging that he cannot answer God (9:19). Again, Job accuses God of destroying the blameless along with the Wicked (9:22). There is still a conflict in Job's mind between what has happened to him and his concept of God's power and might. He longs for an umpire (9:33), someone to properly bridge the gap between Job and God, correctly interpret the facts and force God to acknowledge the right.

Job acknowledges God as the Creator and Keeper of his life (10:8-12), and his heart wants to praise him. But, then, his suffering and the inward contradiction of his station in life as compared to his understanding of what it should be overwhelm him.

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The tone of his speech again turns to complaining (10:14-17), then to the desire to die and to be released from the pain and suffering. There does not appear to be any concept of life after death or that some things are made right only in the future.

F. ZOPHAR SPEAKS (11:1-20)

Eliphaz was courteous, making indirect accusations. Bildad inferred that Job's children were sinners. Zophar attacks directly Job's declaration of innocence. He accuses Job of being a babbler whose words must not go unanswered.

Zophar is the best theologian of the group. Eliphaz appealed to a special revelation, Bildad, to history and tradition, while Zophar approached Job from the standpoint of the nature of God. His speech is filled with truth:

1. You cannot know God in entirety, neither can you limit him;
2. God knows the nature of each person;
3. There is hope for the unrighteous. The steps suggested for the wicked to be restored are relevant:

a. Set your heart right,
b. Approach God, and
c. Put away iniquity.

However, there is no concept of grace here. It is salvation by works. Do this, and God will do this. There is no seeking Savior or a concept of the atonement.

Even though Zophar's argument is true, the application is wrong, for he cannot relate Job's relationship to God to his physical suffering. He assumes the position of knowing all the answers and does not consider that Job could be telling the truth. He almost seems fearful to do this, for if he did, then there would be nothing for him to say. How can he be so knowledgeable of Job's condition? Does Zophar claim to be God?

G. JOB'S REPLY (12:1 - 14:22)

Job responds not only to Zophar but to all three. He sarcastically calls them "the people" with whom all wisdom rests. When they are gone, wisdom will be gone (12:3).

Then, Job reminds them that he has some sense. He is not inferior to them. The truths they are proclaiming are common knowledge. The beasts, birds, and fish know that God is the Creator. Job extols God's power, judgment, and creative nature (12:9-25). He strives to convince the comforters that he is no fool and that he also knows something of the nature of God. There is no question about God being in control and the Dispenser of justice. Job knows all of this. But he also knows it does not apply to him in his present state.

CHAPTER 4. COMFORTLESS COMFORTERS - ROUND 2 (15:1 - 21:34)

NOTES

Job's friends have displayed little understanding of the situation. But in the first round of speeches, they did offer hope if Job repented. They have been incensed by what they consider his arrogant attitude to their words of wisdom. Because of this, they begin the second round of speeches with nothing but condemnation of Job.

A. ELIPHAZ AGAIN (15:1-35)

Eliphaz accuses Job of being wordy, like the east wind, which brings heat, drought, and destruction. Job is accused of hindering their mediation and trying to do away with the fear of God (15:5-6).

Since "age brings wisdom," Eliphaz sarcastically asks Job if he is the first man ever born since he seems so sure of himself and to have such knowledge (15:7-9). Job is reminded that some comforters are old enough to be his father and should be respected. All of them have spoken to him of God's way, and Job has rejected everything they have said. There is nothing left but destruction.

Eliphaz restates his concept of humankind's sinfulness and frailty (1514-16), then accuses Job of being abominable, corrupt, and drinking in iniquity like water.

Eliphaz seems to enjoy restating the end of a wicked person and assigning Job to his punishment. He is no doubt puzzled by Job's constant denial of guilt in the face of such suffering and words of wisdom. The magnitude of the denunciation makes one think Eliphaz is trying to convince himself that there is no possibility of Job being right.

Evidence of compassion or a message of hope is missing. Job is condemned to the pit for rejecting God, as reflected in their counsel.

B. JOB RESPONDS (16:1 - 17:16)

What! Are you still playing the same recording? Is there no end to your accusations? Job reminds them that if they change places with him, he can easily voice the exact phrases he hears. It is easy to comfort from the gallery when you are not experiencing the torture of the one being comforted.

Job feels that God is angry with him. This is evidenced by:

1. Loss of weight (16:8).

2. People stare at him and physically strike him (16:10).

3. He has been abandoned to ungodly people (16:11).

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4. His physical condition worsens (16:13-15).

5. His weeping and praying have gone unnoticed (16:16).

Job still testifies that his hands have committed no violence and that his prayers are pure. His heart does not reject God, for he continues to turn to him and expresses confidence in his "witness" in heaven (16:18-19).

Verse 21 refers to verse 19, where Job rests his case with a witness in heaven. He seems aware that he needs someone to plead his case with God. This may reflect a desire for his friends to pray for him rather than exhorting or praying at him. The same feeling is expressed in 9:33, where Job desires an umpire between him and God.

Job turns again to prayer (17:1-4). It is hard to tell whether he uses this method to let his tormentors listen in or whether his agony is so great that he forgets he has an audience. It could be that the only way he can avoid listening to them is either to talk to them or to God. His spirit is broken, and death seems imminent.

Since God has closed his friends' understanding, Job suggests that God put up surety (bail) until his innocence is established (17:3-4). Since God has turned everyone against him, no one else is left to stand up for him.

The meaning of 17:5 is uncertain, although some scholars hold that it introduces verse 6 and would more properly read verses 5 and 6: "As one invites his friends to partake while the eyes of his children languish, God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit."

This would more properly reflect Job's attitude toward God at this point: God is just the kind of person who would feast in front of his starving children. Job considers himself a child of God and resents his comforters' well-being while suffering. His name has become "a byword of the people" since they are all familiar with the story of his downfall. Children are no doubt exhorted to righteousness or threatened with the thought that they will end up like Job if they do not behave.

The last part of verse 6 is translated in the RSV as "I am one before whom men spit." Our hero's eyes have become dim, and his flesh has disappeared, but Job maintains that he has clean hands and believes those who do will become stronger and stronger. The ray of hope quickly turns to despair as he faces the impending prospect of death before the vindication he expects takes place.

C. BILDAD AGAIN (18:1-21)

Bildad's second response clearly reflects the fact that he, too, has given up on the possibility of Job's repentance. His resentment at Job's reaction to their "kind" words causes him to plunge immediately into a tirade.

NOTES

Bildad paints a graphic word picture of his concept of a sinner in the hands of an angry God. This is his understanding of Job's plight, and he seems happy about it. There is no sorrow, no compassion - just a speech to establish the rightness of his own words.

Since Job deserves the punishment he is receiving, Bildad tries to undermine any confidence or assurance that may remain in Job.

D. JOB RESPONDS (19:1-29)

Job begins his response by saying something like, "Look, I am fed up with your speeches. These 10 (numerous) times, you and your friends have reproached me. You should be ashamed to have wronged me in such a way."

Job does not admit error, but if he were at fault, he would remember it ("my error remains my concern – 19:4). If he had erred and remembered it, would he not confess it to secure relief? He seems to feel that his friends are continuing to magnify themselves since God has already overthrown him. It is God who has acted unjustly. It is Job's complaint not only that he has not been heard, but that he has been humiliated in the eyes of the community. He has been forgotten by his family, friends, and former employees and is repulsive to his wife. Even his own brothers avoid him. Job feels that God is the cause of it all.

In verses 23-24, Job desires that a record be made of his words so that, eventually, he will be vindicated, and the facts will be known, not just the facts provided by the counselors.

Rejected by people, pressured from without and within, Job is yet able to turn from despair and make one of the greatest expressions of faith in the Old Testament: " I know that my Redeemer lives" (19:25). This is despite Job's feelings as expressed in verse 22 and his continued wrestling with God. This is especially true when we see a hint of Christ, the Redeemer, or make the word "redeemer" synonymous with God in the passage. The word translated as "redeemer" is "goel" and usually means "the next of kin."

At this moment, the developing thought of an "umpire" or "mediator" expands to become the "redeemer" who will properly represent Job to God. He feels that he will be allowed a face-to-face meeting with God. Job expresses confidence in a resurrection and his vindication in the future since it seems that it will not happen before his death (19:25-26).

This flash of insight is amazing in one who had no knowledge of Christ who became the Redeemer - the One who represents us before God and in whom we are justified, not by works, but rather by faith in his atonement for our sins.

E. ZOPHAR AGAIN (20:1-29)

Read chapter 20 rapidly without pausing in order to get the full effect of the picture painted by Zophar of the end of the wicked. For Job to have had to listen to such an accusation and description, even if he had not been sick, would have been terrible.

NOTES

Job is accused indirectly of enjoying wickedness (20:12), being a tyrant landlord (20:19), greedy (20:20), and deserving of the final destruction which shall overtake him (20:28-29).

F. JOB RESPONDS (21:1-34)

The response of Job to Zophar is in direct conflict with the comforters' line of reasoning. Job requests their careful attention (21:2), after which they may continue to mock him.

Job's complaint is against God, not man (21:4-6). What he is going to say will shock them. Indeed, when he thinks of what he is going to say, he begins to shudder. Job proceeds to point out observable facts that are in contrast to what he has heard from the lips of the counselors:

1. The wicked live to an old age.

2. Their children prosper.

3. Their homes are safe.

4. Their cattle are fertile.

5. Yet they reject God and his ways.

These things are observable and in direct conflict with what he has been hearing from the comforters. The sovereign God does as he pleases with both the just and the wicked.

The reaction of Job to the idea of God punishing the children of the wicked is that the wicked should be punished themselves, for what happens after their death matters little (21:19-21).

All people face death - both the rich and the poor, the righteous and the unrighteous. If what the friends have been saying is true of God, then someone should teach God the facts of life, which are observable every day (21:22-26).

The reaction of the counselors is expected. They will not agree with Job. They are invited to get the testimony of the man on the street; who knows if what Job is saying is true. Since life is in conflict with what Job is hearing, he wants no more of these falsehoods (21:27-34).

CHAPTER 5. COMFORTLESS COMFORTERS - ROUND 3 (22:1 - 27:23)

NOTES

A. ELIPHAZ INSISTS (22:1-30)

A wise man profits himself, but God is not dependent upon the wisdom of people. The proposal that God does not derive any pleasure if Job is righteous is in conflict with previous statements of the comforters in which God is said to reward righteousness.

The sarcasm of Eliphaz is evident when he refers to Job's righteousness and his making his ways perfect. He sees Job as lifting himself up as wise, righteous, and one who expects God to fear him (22:3-4).

Again, the question is raised concerning Job's wickedness and his iniquities (22:5). In his desire to bring Job to repentance, Eliphaz overstates the case and permits himself to engage in presenting false statements of Job's wickedness:

1. Unfair to his brothers,

2. Withheld help from the hungry and weary,

3. Took advantage of widows,

4. Misused his power.

Here he describes the accusations often levelled at the rich. These evil acts which Job has supposedly done have brought about Job's condition (22:10-11).

In verses 12-14, Job is accused of saying that God doesn't know the facts and is far away. What Job said was that God did know but did not care.

The plea is still to repent - repent and be restored in both health and material things. We can almost detect a bit of tenderness in the promise of God's intervention (22:21-30). Perhaps Eliphaz's own conscience is bothering him because of his use of falsehoods to condemn Job.

B. JOB DESIRES GOD (23:1 - 24:25)

Job recognizes that his complaints are increasing. He desires to come before God but cannot find him. There does not appear to be any feeling of humility or dependence upon the grace of God. Job desires to vindicate himself.

Job, in the first cycle of speeches, turned to God in prayer five times; in the second cycle, once; and in the third cycle, not at all. In earlier chapters, God is the Hunter, but now God is the God who hides. The defense Job wants to make is before God (23:4).

NOTES

He does not try to defend himself against his friends anymore. Perhaps they are as troubled as Job.

There is still the confidence in Job that God, who is righteous, would vindicate him if he were allowed to present his case (23:10). God knows the way Job takes (23:10) - no unknowing or limited God for Job. The sovereignty of God gives Job confidence but also strikes fear in his heart (23:15-16). He was neither killed nor prevented from being afflicted and placed in a position of utter alienation (23:17).
Chapter 24 is sometimes considered to include both a part of the reply of Job to Eliphaz and the third speech of Zophar (24:18-24), which is not identified as such but reflects the general tenor of the comforters' argument and is out of character for Job.

Verses 1-12 deal with the burden of human pain that is caused by the wickedness of people and the seeming neglect of God. The description of the triumph of evil on the earth is reflected in verses 13-17. This is also a vivid description of people under the control of their own intellect and emotions. One is a lover of darkness rather than light or self rather than others.

The wicked perish (24:18-24). This is in direct conflict with the preceding verses if attributed to Job. So, perhaps they are, as some suggest, a part of the third speech of Zophar.

C. BILDAD'S FINAL EFFORT (25:1-6)

The final speech of Bildad is brief. He lifts up the truth but arrives at faulty conclusions:

1. God is great; dominion and fear are with him. However, this does not make a person a worm.

2. There is no limit to his power; the power of the moon and the sun are his. Then how could he be mindful of people? But he is!

3. If God is so great and righteous, then how can people be righteous? Yet they can by the grace of God.

Some scholars indicate that verses 5-14 of chapter 26 are also the words of Bildad in response to Job's reply in 26:1-4. You may want to read this portion in this manner:

Job 23:1 - 24:17
Zophar 24:8-25
Bildad 25:1-6
Job 26:1-4
Bildad 26:5-14

D. JOB'S IMPATIENT REPLY (26:1 - 27:6)

The sarcasm of Job comes through. Oh! how you have helped him who has no strength! Your talk of the grandeur of God, while refusing to comfort the one who has no strength, is of no help.

NOTES

The majesty of God in nature is also known by Job. Nowhere do you find a greater description of God in nature than in 26:5-14.

Job's final reply to the comforters is to maintain his innocence. He asks them why they have become altogether vain in their dealing with him.

E. ZOPHAR'S CONCLUSION (27:7-23)

Although this is not identified as a speech from Zophar, it appears to reflect his thinking and style and form the final response of the three friends.

The wicked one perishes along with one's children. There is nothing but destruction for the unrighteous.

As we read the Book of Job, we clearly see the unfairness and the bungling of the comforters. They mix so much truth with falsehood that it is difficult to sort out. We rise in praise with them as they speak of the power and transcendence of God as Creator and then plunge in disgust as they hold so steadfastly to their one theme: "The righteous prosper, and the wicked suffer and perish."

William B. Ward, in his book Out of the *Whirlwind*, has a bit of advice for each of us concerning our attitude toward Job's friends:

> Before we can condemn them too bitterly, however, let us remember how easy it is for us to make their mistake when some pet orthodoxy is challenged. How quickly we forget the personal needs of those who oppose us and become calloused as we defend our own system! How readily we equate our own position with God's and assume that anyone who opposes us is opposing the Almighty! How easy it is for us to discredit the character and life of the person who is opposed to us, assuming that only the truth as we hold it will produce righteousness and that those who disagree with us are not only mistaken but evil. If we are honest, we can identify ourselves with the reaction of these three men. (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1962, pp. 71-72).

CHAPTER 6. JOB'S FINAL SPEECH TO HIS FRIENDS (28:1 - 31:40)

NOTES

The final speech of Job does not offer new arguments but rather summarizes his previous position. The exception is chapter 28, which is called the "Hymn to Wisdom." Most scholars feel that this may have been inserted by a later writer since it is somewhat out of character with Job's attitude. Also, if Job said these things, it would remove some of the reasons for the words of God to him in subsequent chapters.
In chapters 29 through 31, Job reflects on the past and sums up his present dilemma.

A. HYMN TO WISDOM (28:1-28)

The description of a mining operation and the ingenuity of men discovering riches in the earth is marvelous - but wisdom is not found this way (28:1-12).

Where is wisdom to be found? People do not know. It is not to be found in the land of the living. What is the value of wisdom? It is more valuable than all earthly treasures (28:15-19).

If people cannot find wisdom and it is more valuable than anything of a material nature, then it is to be desired above all else.

God knows the way to wisdom (28:23). The world's beauty and order testify to his wisdom in nature. The final description of wisdom and understanding is given in verse 28.

B. JOB REMINISCES (29:1-25)

It does not appear that Job is responding to his friends. He does not address them at all. He seems to be talking to himself. He is remembering happier days, his present suffering, and making his final statement of innocence.

The days when Job enjoyed God's presence are precious in his memory. He had everything a person could desire.

There are several things that stand out in Job's memory of life as it was and which were meaningful:

1. God watched over him and was his Friend (29:2-4).

2. His children were with him (29:5).

3. He was accepted by his friends and had social esteem and influence (29:7-11).

4. He was a defender of the poor, afflicted, and persecuted (29:12-17).

5. He was treated like a king (29:25).

NOTES

What more could a person desire? His only thought was to continue in such a pattern until old age and death would come upon him. He is pictured as a righteous man who was living unselfishly, serving the needs of the people, and receiving the blessings that came from compassionate living. Then, it happened - the bottom fell out and with no apparent cause.

C. HIS PRESENT SUFFERING (30:1-31)

Things are different. Job never thought that the loss of one's possessions would so affect those who had been his friends. He speaks of his condition now:

1. People whom he once helped despise him. People he had considered of less repute are now making fun of him. They spit at his very appearance. This loss of social esteem troubles him as much as his suffering. Such is true of everyone, for it is natural for us to want to feel needed, respected, and of value to others. To be removed from such a position for no apparent cause troubles Job (30:1-15).

2. Now, the physical pain is intense. The pain gives him no rest. This is all because of God (30:16-19).

3. In addition to loss of social esteem and pain, Job is troubled by a lack of fellowship with God. He cries to God and gets no answer (30:20). He accuses God of being cruel (30:21). Job feels that God will bring him to death and nothing will be changed.

Job's final description of himself as a friend of jackals and ostriches, of his skin turning black and his bones burning with fever, indicates he has every reason to believe death is near. He has seen other men die and knows that life is about over (30:24-31).

D. FINAL OATH OF INNOCENCE (31:1-40)

In the days of Job, it was the custom for a person falsely accused of a crime to make an "oath of clearance," which declared what punishment he was willing to accept if he was found guilty. The amazing aspect of this chapter is the high ethical standard Job claims for himself. It is sometimes called the Sermon on the Mount of the Old Testament. Nowhere in the Old Testament is there a declaration of a higher set of standards.

Various possibilities of sin are introduced, usually with "if," and then usually followed by the punishment Job is willing to accept if guilty.

1. Adultery (31:9). If guilty of adultery, he is willing for his wife to become a slave of another (31:10).

2. Unfair treatment of servants (slaves). Job recognizes no difference between people, for God made all equal. He would be able to expect no mercy from God if he had done such a thing (31:14-16).

NOTES

4. Worshipping riches rather than God (31:24-25) - then he should be judged by God.

5. Worshipping the sun or moon or other idol gods (31:26-27) - then he should be judged by God.

6. Rejoicing at the destruction of his enemies (31:29) - then he should be judged by God.

7. Covering his transgressions (31:33) - then he should be judged by God.

Job is willing to be punished if guilty. The list of sins mentioned of which he is innocent would justify God's description of Job at the beginning of the narrative.

Job concludes his speech by once again expressing a desire to be heard by God (31:35). If he is guilty, then let the land become desolate and cry out against him. Job desires to go before God as a prince, not as a coward. His case is closed. He is finished, ready to die, and seems to fully expect such a fate.

The writer comes to the end of Job's sayings. Evidently, he is awaiting death, and his friends are silent because they despair of any hope of Job repenting.

CHAPTER 7. ELIHU - A NEW VOICE (32:1 - 37:24)

NOTES

Elihu [el-EYE-hew] has not been mentioned so far in the narrative. That he could have remained silent throughout seems unlikely to some scholars. The style of these five chapters varies, and there seems to be some reason to believe that this portion was added later. Others, however, feel it is a necessary transition from the interchange of Job and his friends to the voice of God.

Elihu is introduced as the son of Barachel [BAR-akh-el] the Buzite [BUZZ-ite] of the family of Ram [RAHM] (32: 2). Elihu means "My God is he", and Barachel means "God blesses." Elihu was a fellow countryman of Job, for he was a son of a Buzite, and Buz [BUZZ] was the brother of Uz (Genesis 22:21). He was probably more closely related to Job than any of the other speakers.

The speeches of Elihu can be divided into four sections:

1. Anger at Job for justification of self (32:1-22)

2. Pain is used to chasten people (33:1-33)

3. God is not unjust (34:1 - 35:16)

4. God's ways are unquestionable (36:1 - 37:24)

A. ANGER AT JOB FOR JUSTIFICATION OF SELF (32:1-22)

Elihu is ready to explode. He has been silent because the others were his elders. He has some wonderful things to say. In fact, he is going to set everybody straight in his thinking. However, little new is said, and basically, his arguments are the same as the others.

His anger is kindled because of three things:

1. Job's attitude of self-righteousness,

2. The counselors' failure to give a proper answer, and

3. Because he had to wait to speak.

Elihu claims inspiration for his words (32:18). He is so certain of his wisdom that he is ready to burst with words. This is no exaggeration - for once he starts, there is no stopping. Neither Job nor his friends have a chance or a desire to respond.

NOTES

Although Elihu shows no humility, he admits in 33:6-7 that he is also formed from the earth and that there is no need to fear him. He also acknowledges that the Spirit of God has made him and given him life (33:4-5). When you take this into account, his confidence could have a source outside himself, and you can better understand the certainty of his message.

B. PAIN USED TO CHASTEN (33:1-33)

The idea of the value of pain to discipline people was referred to by both Job: "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." (23:10) And Eliphaz: "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal." (5:17-18).

Elihu reminds Job of his accusation against God as being his "enemy" (33:10-11). But this is not true. God is above man. He speaks to people in various ways, but many do not listen (33:12-14). God's primary desire is to keep people from perishing under the judgments of God.

People are chastened by pain (33:19), which takes away one's appetite (33:20), and one's life draws close to death (33:21). In verse 23, there is a reference to the need for an angel or a mediator. There seems to be a flash of insight into the coming Christ, One who could say, "Deliver him" for "I have found a ransom." (33:23-24).

There is a part for people to play when they receive word of what is right from the mediator. One must pray to God and accept him, and one may enter into his presence rejoicing. Then, the redeemed person tells others of personal conversion and redemption (33:26-28).

Elihu invites Job to speak, but one gets the feeling that he doesn't expect him to interrupt the flow of wisdom (33:32-33).

C. GOD IS NOT UNJUST (34:1 - 35:16)

Elihu addresses himself to the comforters, who evidently are still there (34:1), and appeals to them to agree with the same argument they previously presented to Job. He describes Job as one who proclaims his innocence, charges that God has not been fair, keeps company with the wicked, and proclaims that it profits one not at all to take delight in God (34:5-9).

Elihu lists a number of things that prove God is not unjust:

1. A Creator would not act unjustly, for there is no need.

2. God, who has charge over all that which he created, has no need to pervert justice.

3. If God should change, then all humankind would perish. No, whatever the problem with Job, it is not that God is unjust. The answer has to be somewhere else.

NOTES

Elihu then asks Job how he could question the One who is righteous, mighty, who knows all the thoughts of people, and makes no distinction between the rich and the poor. If Job was right, then God would be unjust - and how could an unjust God be a Ruler (34:16-20)?

God's knowledge is so absolute that there is no place for evil people to hide (34:21-22). Because God knows the words of people, he does not have to have time for a trial. He punishes them when he chooses. God punishes only those who turn aside from him, so it would not be true to say that he fails to hear the cry of the oppressed (34:23-28).

Chapter 34, verse 29, is sometimes translated as "When he is quiet, who can condemn? When he hides his face, who can behold him, whether it be a nation or a person?"

It is not a person's place to condemn God, for we do not know the things he knows. He can be quiet or speak and does not justify his actions to people.

Elihu returns in his argument to add condemnation to Job and seek the support of the other counselors after he has rebuffed them for their failure. He describes Job as speaking without knowledge or insight, being rebellious, and answering like wicked people (34:34-37).

Accusing Job of saying his righteousness is greater than God's (35:2), Elihu proceeds to answer Job and his counselors.

God is not affected by people's sin nor by their righteousness (35:6-7). One's actions, whether they be evil or good, affect one's fellowman - but God is above all and not affected (35:8-9). This type of thinking sees God as One who is above people and worthy of worship.

God will not regard the cry of the vain. Job says he does not see God, but just the same he will, and his case will be before him (35:13-14).

Job is disturbed by the seeming failure of God to punish the wicked, but Elihu implies that Job opens his mouth without knowledge. God may have other ways of punishing wickedness - or perhaps those whom Job considers wicked have repented (35:15-16).

D. GOD'S WAYS ARE UNQUESTIONABLE (36:1 - 37:24)

The great beauty of Elihu's speech is his understanding of God's nature and his desire to uphold him. He desires to continue to show God to be above all.

1. God is mighty in strength and wisdom (36:5).

NOTES

2. He is righteous, despising none, giving right to the poor, and destroying the wicked (36:6).

3. His eyes are ever on the righteous (36:7).

4. Should the righteous fall, he will discipline with the thought of restoring (36:8-10).

5. Those who do not heed will perish. Here, Elihu is again trying the same tactic as the others, for he assumes Job is guilty of wickedness (36:11-17).

After lifting up God and his characteristics, Elihu delivers three warnings to Job:

1. Job is admonished not to let his wrath cause him to scoff at God (36:18-19).

2. Job has often wished for death, but Elihu seems to warn him that death is not the answer (36:20).

3. Job is warned not to add further iniquity to his account. It seems that he has chosen to do this by questioning God rather than accepting his suffering as coming from God and for some good purpose (36:21-23).

Then Elihu asks Job to magnify the Lord in praise. Rather than argue with God, praise him. God is great, and beyond our knowing him, so the safe course is to praise him even in our despair (36:24-26).

It seems at this point, a storm is gathering, and Elihu begins to use that which he sees happening as a visible means of magnifying God (36:27-33). The storm intensifies, and Elihu becomes frightened (37:1). The thunder and lightning rage (36:2-5). This display of nature reminds Elihu of the other elements -snow, rain, whirlwinds, and frost (37:6-13).

Elihu makes a last appeal to Job on the basis of the power of God. Can't you look around you and see that the One who controls the clouds, the winds, and the elements is above you and worthy of being trusted? Although the sky is obscure now, the clouds will pass, and you will behold the beauty of the sky again.

In chapter 37, verses 23-24, God is pictured as beyond people's knowledge, powerful, just, and not afflicting people. The one thing God cannot stand is a person who is wise in one's own heart or who has the audacity to question his wisdom.

Elihu has not been able to convince Job of his sinfulness or satisfactorily answer the question of pain and suffering. He has lifted up God in all his glory and prepared Job for his confrontation with God. People cannot convince others of sin, and people's answers are not sufficient to answer the problem of human suffering. Only God can do this.

NOTES

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Elihu [el-EYE-hew]
Barachel [BAR-akh-el]
Buzite [BUZZ-ite]
Ram [RAHM]
Buz [BUZZ]

CHAPTER 8. GOD MOVES IN (38:1 - 41:34)

NOTES

The storm moves in and probably causes Elihu and the others to seek shelter. Only Job remains in the storm when God speaks from the whirlwind.

Both Job and his friends had repeatedly expressed a desire for God's presence. Now, God has come. God does not mention Elihu or the fact that God has permitted Job to be tested by Satan. Neither does God accuse Job of ethical transgressions but rather reveals to him through a series of searching questions that people have no right to judge God.

Job has been questioning God. Now God declares he wishes to question Job, the one who has spoken without knowledge (38:1-2).

A. GOD'S FIRST SPEECH (38:1 - 39:30)

In chapters 38 and 39, God asks questions of Job that are difficult to answer. The most brilliant people of today would be unable to answer them fully.

Verses 4-38 pose questions about creation and nature. It is good to read and reread these until you catch a glimpse of the majesty, power, might, and wisdom of God. People cannot escape frustration as long as their mind is concerned only with themselves or the deeds of others.

In verses 39-41 and in chapter 39, God continues to question Job about the creation and sustaining of animal life.

These two chapters are often referred to as the most beautiful description of God's activities to be found anywhere.

B. JOB SUBMITS TO GOD (40:1-5)

God turns his attention to Job directly with the question, "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?" (40:2) Job's reply indicates that he has caught another vision of God. He sees himself as insignificant and places his hand upon his mouth. He will speak no more (40:3-5).

C. GOD'S SECOND SPEECH (40:6 - 41:34)

God asks Job if he is willing to justify himself at the expense of trying to put God in the wrong. He challenges Job to do the things that only God can do, and then God will acknowledge that Job's own strength can give him victory (40:10-14).

NOTES

God reminds Job that God is superior to people, as evidenced by God's creation of a behemoth [buh-HEE-muth] and leviathan [luh-VY-uh-thuhn] (a sea creature/ monster). The behemoth (plural of the Hebrew word for "beast") is most often identified as the hippopotamus. At any rate, the beast was representative of unusual animal life that only God could create (40:14-24).

Then God begins to question Job about the leviathan. Can he create such an animal? Can he control such an animal?

Often, the leviathan is the name for a mythical sea monster that cannot be handled or controlled by people. It is associated with chaos and also the forces of evil. Yet, God can control and destroy the leviathan (Psalm 74:13-14).

behemoth [buh-HEE-muth]
leviathan [luh-VY-uh-thuhn]

CHAPTER 9. JOB'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION (42:1-17)

NOTES

Job's response is now positive. He knows God can do all things and knows all things. He also recognizes that he has spoken as though he understood when he did not (42:3-4).

Verse 5 is considered by many as the key verse of the book:

"My ears have heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you."

Job and his friends both displayed knowledge of God they had received from others - tradition, wisdom, schools, etc. Job had been trying to reconcile his concept of God with suffering and conditions as he saw them. He kept running into blind alleys, for his concepts were built upon people's ideas and understanding of morality.

This immediate confrontation with God so changes his ideas that he can only express it as "Once I heard—now I see." A similar reaction can be found in anyone who has heard about Christ, heard others speak of the joy of salvation, or heard of the awfulness of sin—all just hearsay until God appears on the scene.

In verse 6, Job responds to what he has seen. One who sees God as God can only abhor oneself, repent, and desire grace and mercy. Job's repentance is thorough and complete, without any desire to lay down terms for God.

The evidence that God has accepted Job's repentance is that God now turns to speak to the three counselors (42:7). He tells them of his anger at them for misrepresenting God. Then comes the humbling instruction to prepare and present an offering, and Job will pray for them (42:7-8).

It probably took as much grace for Job to pray for his friends as it did obedience on their part to present themselves for prayer (42:9). It seems, however, that Job was not completely accepted until after he had prayed for those who had so taunted him with their words (42:10).

Verse 11 indicates the extent of the change in Job's physical appearance. Without such a change, his friends would not have returned. His friends also brought an offering to help restore his material possessions.

The restoration of Job's material blessings is described in verses 12-17. Some feel that this weakens the poem, for Job is rewarded with the very things that Satan said motivated him to serve God. However, it would have been hard for the Hebrew people to conceive of Job being forgiven if he remained destitute. It seems necessary for the restoration to have occurred in order for their concept of justice to have been fulfilled. It was in this life, not the next.

NOTES

SUMMARY

Now that Job has given up his claim to vindication, been purged by suffering, and had his egocentric will changed, he is free to enjoy the blessings of life for what they are. The innocent "do" suffer. Suffering is not the result of wickedness. Suffering is not due to God's indifference or that God does evil. The Book of Job points toward the New Testament, where Christ, the innocent One, suffers for people so that they might be redeemed. We are told by Christ that his followers must deny themselves, take up their "crosses," and follow him (Matthew 16:24).

Suffering must be viewed in the light of the Cross, with the understanding that we are justified by faith in Christ, that God loves us, and that our salvation is in him. The suffering that comes our way is not without his knowledge and concern. He also wants to use it to help us in our pilgrimage of faith.

Book of Job Study Questions

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO JOB

1. Job, God's hero from the land of Uz, is the central character of the story.
A. true
B. false

2. What is true of God's permission for Satan to do things to Job?
A. Satan was permitted to try Job.
B. Satan is permitted to strip Job of his wealth.
C. Satan is permitted to strip Job of his health.
D. all of these are true

3. Job was surrounded by counselors/comforters who, like himself, equated serving God with prosperity and good health.
A. true
B. false

4. Through Job's struggle with righteousness and his present plight, God prepared Job for a greater faith in God.
A. true
B. false

5. The Book of Job is a drama of God permitting Job to be tested, tasting temporary defeat but emerging triumphantly.
A. true
B. false

NOTES

6. What is true of the author and date of the Book of Job?
A. Speculation varies as to the writer and the period in which the book was written.
B. Some say Solomon was the writer.
C. Some say Moses was the writer.
D. all of these are true

7. Adam Clarke suggests that the book was written by a learned Idumean who was well-acquainted with the Jewish religion and its writers.
A. true
B. false

8. The land of Uz, where Job lived, is also known as the land of Edom or Esau and is located on the southern coast of the Dead Sea.
A. true
B. false

9. What is true of the purpose of the Book of Job?
A. The book does not attempt to explain the cause of suffering.
B. The book does not attempt to explain why good people suffer.
C. It seems to be an attempt to refute the philosophy of the day, "Success accompanies righteous living."
D. all of these are true

10. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that God permitted Satan to try Job.
A. true
B. false

11. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that God was always in control of the situation.
A. true
B. false

12. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that the speeches of Job's counselors/comforters are accurately recorded and the content is true.
A. true
B. false

13. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that although the question of human suffering comes up, it is not the primary concern of the author.
A. true
B. false

14. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that God had no faith in Job.
A. true
B. false

NOTES

15. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that God is on trial as well as Job, for Job is a believer in God.
A. true
B. false

16. As one reads the Book of Job, one must remember that since Job was restored physically and materially, this should be interpreted as always being the case.
A. true
B. false

17. Which is a "real Question" of the Book of Job?
A. Does righteous living always bring material prosperity and health?
B. Will people serve God without a reward?
C. Are poverty, disease, and tragedy always the result of sin?
D. all of these are true

Chapter 2. JOB – FROM RICHES TO AFFLICTION (1:1 – 2:13)

18. What is true about Job at the onset of this drama?
A. He had both inner and outer religion.
B. He feared (reverenced) God.
C. He avoided evil (lived uprightly).
D. all of these are true

19. Job showed little concern for his children.
A. true
B. false

20. Job rarely prayed for his family.
A. true
B. false

21. What is not true about Satan in chapter 1?
A. Satan is the instigator of evil.
B. Satan is the adversary.
C. Satan praised Job.
D. Satan appeared before God in the midst of the angels.

22. What is not true about God in chapter 1?
A. God was proud of Job.
B. God asked Satan if he had noticed this man who was upright and feared the Lord.
C. God chased Satan away.
D. God limits what Satan can do.

NOTES

23. What is true about Satan toward Job in Chapter 1?
A. Satan asked: "Do people serve God for nothing?"
B. Satan's attack upon Job took away his wealth.
C. Satan's attack upon Job took away his children.
D. all of these are true

24. In the first scene, God has won. Job's integrity has held fast.
A. true
B. false

25. What is true about Satan toward Job in chapter 2?
A. Satan's attitude was, "All have their price. Tempt them enough, and they will give in."
B. Satan argued that Job still had not suffered physical pain.
C. Satan caused Job to suffer to the extent that death would have been a relief.
D. all of these are true

26. What is true about Eliphaz in chapter 2?
A. He was from Edom.
B. He went to comfort Job.
C. His name may have meant "God crushes."
D. all of these are true

27. What is true about Bildad in chapter 2?
A. He was from the tribe of Shuah.
B. He went to comfort Job.
C. His name may mean "beloved of God".
D. all of these are true

28. What is true about Zophar in chapter 2?
A. He was from northwestern Arabia.
B. He went to comfort Job.
C. The name has an uncertain meaning, perhaps "twittering bird," "sharp nail," or "goat-like jumper."
D. all of these are true

Chapter 3. COMFORTLESS COMFORTERS - ROUND 1 (3:1 - 14:22)

29. What is not true of Job's wishes in chapter 3?
A. that Satan would stop persecuting him
B. that he had not been born
C. that if he was to be born, he had died as an infant
D. that death might come quickly

NOTES

30. What is not true of Eliphaz's counsel in chapter 4?
A. that Job has counseled others as he is now being counseled
B. that the righteous don't suffer or perish
C. that Job was a righteous sufferer
D. that the wicked perish

31. What is not true of Job's response to Eliphaz in chapters 6 and 7?
A. Life is brief.
B. "My hope is in the resurrection."
C. God punishes him through dreams and visions.
D. "Let me die."

32. What is not true of Bildad's counsel in chapter 8?
A. He immediately confronts Job for being irreverent.
B. He implies that Job's children were destroyed because of their transgressions.
C. He implies that Job's transgression must have been greater than that of his children.

D. He entices Job to repent, promising material restoration.

33. What is not true of Job's response to Bildad in chapters 9 and 10?
A. He seems to react more to Eliphaz's counsel.
B. He fluctuates between maintaining his innocence and acknowledging that he cannot answer God.
C. He accuses God of destroying the blameless along with the wicked.
D. He pleads with Bildad to serve as his umpire before God.

34. What is not true of Zophar's counsel in chapter 11?
A. He directly attacked Job's declaration of innocence.
B. He accused Job of being a babbler whose words must not go unanswered.
C. His argument and application are correct.
D. He approaches Job from the standpoint of the nature of God.

35. What is not true of Job's response to Zophar in chapters 12 - 14?
A. He responds not only to Zophar but to all three counselors.
B. He sarcastically calls his counselors "the people" with whom all wisdom rests.
C. He realizes that he is inferior to his counselors.
D. He reminds his counselors that they are also accountable to God for their actions.

NOTES

36. What is true of Eliphaz' counsel in chapter 15?
A. He seemed to enjoy restating the end of a wicked person and assigning Job to his punishment.
B. He accused Job of hindering their mediation and trying to do away with the fear of God.
C. He accuses Job of being wordy like the east wind which brings heat, drought, and destruction.
D. all of these are true

37. What is true of Job's response to Eliphaz' counsel in chap
A. "Is there no end to your accusations?"
B. "Are you still playing the same recording?"
C. It is easy to comfort from the gallery when you are not experiencing the torture of the one being comforted.
D. all of these are true

38. What is not true of Bildad's counsel in chapter 18?
A. His response clearly reflects the fact that he too has given up on the possibility of Job's repentance.
B. His resentment at Job's reaction to their "kind" words causes him to plunge immediately into a tirade.
C. He paints a graphic word picture of his concept of a sinner in the hands of an angry God.
D. all of these are true

39. What is true of Job's response to Bildad's counsel in chapter 19?
A. "Look, I am fed up with your speeches."
B. "You should be ashamed to wrong me in such a way."
C. Job does not admit error.
D. all of these are true

40. What is not true of Zophar's counsel in chapter 20?
A. For Job to have to listen to such a accusation and description, even if he had not been sick, would have been terrible.
B. He accused Job indirectly of enjoying wickedness.
C. He accused Job of deserving of the final destruction which shall overtake him.
D. all of these are true

41. What is true of Job's responce to Zophar's counsel in chapter 21?
A. His response to Zophar is in direct conflict with the comforters' line of reasoning.
B. His complaint is against God, not man.
C. Since life is in conflict with what Job is hearing, he wants no more of these counselors' falsehoods.
D. all of these are true

NOTES

Chapter 5. COMFORTLESS COMFORTERS - ROUND 3 (22:1 - 27:23)

42. What is not true of Eliphaz's counsel in chapter 22?
A. A wise man profits himself
B. God is not dependent upon the wisdom of people.
C. His proposal that God does not derive any pleasure if Job is righteous agreed with previous statements.
D. His sarcasm is evident when he refers to Job's righteousness and his making his ways perfect.

43. What is not true of Job's response to Eliphaz's counsel in chapters 23 and 24?
A. He has no desire to vindicate himself.
B. He desires to come before God but cannot find him.
C. He recognizes that his complaints are increasing.
D. There does not appear to be any feeling of humility or dependence upon the grace of God.

44. What is not true of Bildad's final effort in chapter 25?
A. It was brief.
B. He lifts up truth and arrives at truthful conclusions.
C. He affirmed, "God is great; dominion and fear are with him."
D. He affirmed that there is no limit to God's power.

45. What is not true of Job's response to Bildad's counsel in chapters 26 and 27?
A. He was impatient.
B. His sarcasm comes through.
C. He was comforted much by Bildad's kind words.
D. The majesty of God in nature is also known by Job.

46. What is not true of Zophar's final effort in chapter 27?
A. Although this section is not identified as a speech from Zophar, it appears to reflect his thinking and style.
B. It forms the final response of these three counselors.
C. He acknowledged that the wicked and the righteous alike suffer greatly.
D. There is nothing but destruction for the unrighteous.

47. What is true of Job's final speech to his 3 friends in chapters 28 - 31?
A. For the most part, he does not offer new arguments.
B. He summarizes his previous position.
C. He reflects on the past and sums up his present dilemma.
D. all of these are true

NOTES

Chapter 7. ELIHU - A NEW VOICE (32:1 - 37:24)

48. Elihu was only mentioned once previously in the narrative.
A. true
B. false

49. What is true about Elihu?
A. He was introduced as the son of Barachel.
B. He was introduced as a Buzite.
C. He was of the family of Ram.
D. all of these are true

50. Elihu was probably more closely related to Job than any of the other speakers.
A. True
B. False

51. What is not true of Elihu's speeches?
A. He expressed anger at Job for justification of self.
B. He indicated that pain is used to chasten people.
C. He affirmed that sometimes God is unjust.
D. He affirmed that God's ways are unquestionable.

52. What kindled Elihu's anger?
A. Job's attitude of self-righteousness
B. The other counselors' failure to give a proper answer
C. Because he had to wait to speak
D. all of these

53. The great beauty of Elihu's speech is his understanding of the nature of God and his desire to uphold him.
A. True
B. False

54. What is true about Elihu's desire to show God to be above all?
A. He affirmed that God is mighty in strength and wisdom.
B. He affirmed that God is righteous, despising none, giving right to the poor, and destroying the wicked.
C. He affirmed that God's eyes are ever on the righteous.
D. all of these are true

55. What is true of the warnings Elihu delivered to Job?
A. Job is admonished not to let his wrath cause him to scoff at God.
B. Job has often wished for death, but Elihu seems to warn him that death is not the answer.
C. Job is warned not to add further iniquity to his account.
D. all of these are true

NOTES

56. Elihu was able to convince Job of his sinfulness.
A. True
B. False

57. Elihu was able to answer satisfactorily the question of pain and suffering.
A. True
B. False

58. Elihu lifted up God in all his glory and prepared Job for his confrontation with God.
A. True
B. False

59. People cannot convince others of sin, and their answers are not sufficient to address the problem of human suffering.
A. True
B. False

Chapter 8. GOD MOVES IN (38:1 - 41:34)

60. Both Job and his friends had repeatedly expressed a desire for God's presence.
A. True
B. False

61. God praised Elihu for his great comfort to Job.
A. True
B. False

62. God emphasized that he permitted Job to be tested by Satan.
A. True
B. False

63. God accused Job of ethical transgressions.
A. True
B. False

64. God declared he wished to question Job, the one who spoke without knowledge.
A. True
B. False

65. In chapters 38 and 39, God asks questions of Job that are difficult to answer.
A. True
B. False

NOTES

66. What is true of Job's response to God's question: "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?"
A. Job's reply indicated that he had caught another vision of God.
B. Job saw himself as insignificant.
C. Job placed his hand upon his mouth to speak no more.
D. all of these are true

67. God asks Job if he is willing to justify himself at the expense of trying to put God in the wrong.
A. True
B. False

68. God challenged Job to do the things that only God can do, and then God acknowledged that Job's own strength could give him victory.
A. True
B. False

69. God is superior to people, as evidenced by God's creation of a behemoth.
A. True
B. False

70. What is true of the behemoth?
A. Behemoth is the plural of the Hebrew word for "beast."
B. Behemoth is most often identified as the hippopotamus.
C. Behemoth is representative of unusual animal life that only God could create.
D. all of these are true

71. The leviathan is the name for a mythical sea monster that humans could not handle or control.
A. True
B. False

72. The leviathan is associated with chaos and also the forces of evil, and not even God can control and destroy the leviathan.
A. True
B. False

Chapter 9. JOB'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION (42:1-17)

73. Verse 5 of chapter 42 is considered by many to be the key verse of the book: "My ears have heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you."
A. True
B. False

NOTES

74. Job had been trying to reconcile his concept of God with suffering and conditions as he saw them.
A. True
B. False

75. It probably took as much grace for Job to pray for his friends as it did obedience on their part to present themselves for prayer.
A. True
B. False

Methods of Study

Have you enjoyed this study of the Book of Job? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Compare the authorship of the Book of Job to the writings of Moses.

2. Compare the authorship of the Book of Job to the writings of Solomon.

3. Consider the relationship of the Book of Job to the Book of Proverbs.

4. Consider the relationship of the Book of Job to the Book of Ecclesiastes.

5. Contrast the relationship of the Book of Job to the Song of Songs.

6. Compare suffering in the Book of Job to Jesus' teaching on suffering in the Gospels.

Allow God to challenge your conception of good and evil as you study the Book of Job!

Pronunciation Guide

Barachel [BAR-akh-el]
behemoth [buh-HEE-muth]
Bildad [BILL-dad]
Buz [BUZZ]
Buzite [BUZZ-ite]
Elihu [el-EYE-hew]
Eliphaz [ELL-eh-faz]
Job [JOHB]
leviathan [luh-VY-uh-thuhn]
Ram [RAHM]
Uz [UHZ]
Zophar [ZOH-far]