

The Book of Job

Learning to Trust God

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Outline for the Book of Job

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Reading Assignments

1. Read through the book of Job
2. At the start of a new chapter – read the passage for that chapter.
3. End up reading Job twice

Introduction

The book of Job deals with suffering in poetry.

Outline

I. Introduction to Job

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I. Introduction to Job

A common question asked by unbelievers is, "Why does a loving God allow suffering?" It is a question that we believers need to have a ready answer. The problem of human suffering is addressed throughout the Bible, but perhaps there is no greater book in the Bible, than Job, that gives us an understanding regarding the issues of human suffering.

The purpose of Job is to teach lessons about God to those who trust in Him. In so doing, Job also teaches important lessons on how believers are to view and respond to their own suffering and to that of others.

There are many poems and poetic songs in the Old Testament. However, some Old Testament books are entirely poetic and known as the Old Testament Poetic books. These include Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and the book of Job.

II. Literary Features of Job

A. Job's Parallelisms

The basic linear unit in Hebrew poetry is the couplet, which has two lines of poetry, usually of similar length and style and with parallel or related ideas. There are six major kinds of parallelism.

1. Synonymous parallelism

In synonymous parallelism, line two states essentially the same thought as line one. It may even use the same words and terms or similar words and terms.

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh:
the Lord shall have them in derision.” (Ps. 2:4).

2. Synthetic parallelism

In a synthetically parallel couplet, line two further develops the idea of line one. That is, it either defines it, applies it, or adds further information.

“For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods” (Ps. 95:3)

3. Antithetic parallelism

In antithetic parallelism, line two contrasts the idea of line one, or gives the opposite perspective.

“For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous:
but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Ps 1:6)

4. Emblematic parallelism

In emblematic parallelism, the writer states a truth in one line and gives a figure of speech that conveys that same truth in the other line. Truth → Figure of speech OR Figure of speech → Truth

“The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want” (Ps 23:1)

In this case, the symbol comes first (the Lord is not a literal shepherd); then the truth follows: “I shall not want (lack).” The truth in line two conveys the idea inherent in line one. By saying, “The LORD is my shepherd,” David was essentially testifying, “The Lord meets all my needs.”

5. Formal parallelism

Formal parallelism is somewhat unique. It uses poetic structure to emphasize the point. It is the simple completion of one thought - “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps 2:6)

6. Climactic parallelism

Climactic parallelism normally uses three or four lines of poetry. All the lines of the stanza begin the same way except for the last line, which gives the climactic statement or grand conclusion.

“Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Ps 29:1,2).

As we study the book of Job, we will come to understand better that the message of Job is greatly enhanced through the use of poetry.

B. Job’s figures of speech

Old Testament poetry uses not only structure and parallelism but also figures of speech. A figure of speech is a word or phrase used in a way different from its ordinary and normal usage for the sake of emphasis. The book of Job uses many types of figures of speech. Let’s consider just four of them.

1. Simile

A simile is a comparison, stating that something is like something else. You can usually identify a simile by the use of the word “like” or “as.” Ex/ “She is like her mother”; “He is stiff as a board”; “A day with the Lord is as a thousand years” (2 Peter 3:8).

2. Metaphor

A metaphor is a comparison, stating that one thing represents another. Ex/ Jesus compared himself to bread (I am the bread of life – Jn 6) and to light (I am the light of the world – Jn 8).

3. Merism

A merism is a pair contrasting words used to express totality. For example, someone might say, “I worried about you day and night.” The phrase “day and night” is a merism for “all the time.”

4. Personification

Personification attributes the characteristics of personality to an inanimate object. Examples of this would be when wisdom speaks in Proverbs.

Chapter 1: Live Right

Scripture: Job 1:1-5

Overview

Job exemplified the lifestyle of one who fears God. He led an upright life, shunned evil, and provided faithful spiritual leadership for his family.

Outline

- I. Job's context (1:1)
 - A. The land of Uz
 - B. Historical setting
- II. Job's Character (1:1)
 - A. A good reputation
 - B. A sound relationship with God
 - C. Respect for God
 - D. Resistance toward sin
- III. Job's Circumstances (1:2, 3)
- IV. Job's Care for His Children (1:4, 5)

Job 1:1-5 provides Job's background for the unfolding saga of testing and triumph.

I. Job's Context (1:1)

A. The land of Uz

The story of Job is an historical account of a real man who lived in a real place at a real time. Job begins with the statement: "There was a man in the land Uz, whose name was Job" (Job 1:1). Note, Uz not Ur where Abraham was from. Where was Uz located? Some believe Uz was in Edom, just south of the Dead Sea while others believe Uz may have been located to the north of Israel.

It is not critical to know the location of Uz to understand the background of the book. All the nations were characterized by a godless lifestyle that would have contrasted with Job's life. His testimony would have shone brightly against the sinful darkness of his cultural setting.

B. Historical Setting

Just when did the events of Job's life occur? While no one knows for sure, it appears that Job lived in the time period of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Consider the following evidence:

- In this time period, fathers acted as the priests of the family. They officiated offerings and sacrifices on behalf of their children. Job performed those functions for his children in Job 1:5.
- Job's wealth is described in the same terms as the wealth of Isaac. (Job 1:3, 10 & Gen. 26:13, 14).
- The description of Job's death resembles that of Abraham and Isaac (Job 42:17 & Gen. 25:8; 35:29).
- The currency used in Job's day was like that of Jacob's day (Job 42:11 & Gen. 33:19).
- Job's longevity of years resembles that of the patriarchs (Job 42:16 & Gen. 50:26)
- No reference to the law of Moses appears in the book of Job.

II. Job's Character (1:1)

A. A good reputation

In the first verse of Job, the writer established Job's impeccable testimony. The word "perfect" in verse 1, does not mean that he was sinless. No one can attain sinless perfection this side of Heaven. The same Hebrew word for "perfect" is translated "without spot or blemish" in describing the criteria to be used in selecting animals for sacrifice. That is, the animals were to have no recognizable external uncleanness. Job was a man of great character and blameless before others.

B. A sound relationship with God

Job 1:1 further describes Job as "upright". This term focuses on Job's relationship with God. Job had a righteous standing with God. This explains why his outward testimony was blameless. A person is only as good on the outside as he or she is on the inside.

C. Respect for God

Job "feared God", not with terror but with a humble trust and reverence for God. Proverbs 9:10 says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We cannot possibly live as we ought without fearing the Lord. It is the beginning of a life that pleases God.

D. Resistance toward sin

To "eschew" means to actively depart from evil. A person who truly fears the Lord will keep himself from evil.

Proverbs 16:6 – "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: And by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."

Job departed from evil because fearing God led him to live a perfect and upright life. Developing the fear of the Lord in our lives will help build a godly Christ-like character.

III. Job's Circumstances (1:2, 3)

The designation "greatest of all the men of the east" likely identifies Job as the wealthiest, most influential man in his region. Generally, we don't expect rich, famous people to be righteous, but it's possible for a wealthy, famous person to lead a godly life. Job certainly demonstrated this fact.

Job's wealth began with his own family. A good family life is a rich possession. Job had seven sons and three daughters who would give him descendants and support in his aging years. From later in the passage, we learn that they enjoyed each other's company and spent time together.

Job and his family operated a farm or ranch that covered large piece of real estate. Job (v. 3) had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. The sheep would have provided food and clothing. The camels would have allowed Job to participate in extensive caravan trade. We could equate Job's camels to a large fleet of trucks today. The oxen provided the power to plow a very large acreage, and the donkeys would have been useful for general labor around the estate. The oxen and donkeys would be the equivalent to tractors and farm equipment today.

To assist with all of this management and work, Job had "a very great household" of servants. The fact that Job had such great wealth and still feared God is a testament of the genuineness of his faith. Probably because of the unusual combination of wealth and godly character, verse 3 reports that Job "was the greatest of all the men of the east."

IV. Job's Care for His Children (1:4, 5)

Job's sons were adults. They each had their own houses where they regularly held feasts with each other and called their sisters to participate. Perhaps they celebrated their birthdays or other special days in the year. Job's family was close. They wanted to be together and valued their relationships.

Job took his role as the spiritual leader of his home seriously. After each feast, he would then offer burnt offering to God on their behalf just in case one of them had cursed God in his heart. Job was concerned about his children's relationship with God. His sons were most likely present when he made the offering communicating that fearing God and their relationship with God was important.

It is apparent that from the record of Job 1:4 and 5 that Job was a good father. He obviously fostered family unity and togetherness, provided spiritual leadership, taught his children to despise sin, and faithfully executed his responsibilities as the family's patriarchal priest. In short, he raised his children the way a godly father should.

Chapter 2: Resisting Satan's Attacks

Scripture: Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7

Overview

Satan accused Job before the Lord and afflicted Job with much suffering, while God intervened behind the scenes. God showed confidence in Job, knowing that Job's faith was genuine and would, therefore, withstand Satan's assault.

Outline

I. Scene One in Heaven (1:6-12)

A. Dialogue Begins (1:6-8)

B. Satan's accusation (1:9-11)

C. God's response (1:12)

II. Scene Two in Heaven (2:1-7)

A. Dialogue begins (2:1-3)

B. Satan's accusation (2:4,5)

C. God's response (2:6)

D. Satan's action (2:7)

Two scenes are described in Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7b. In both scenes, God and Satan held conversations. Twice God called Satan's attention to Job's godly character, and twice Satan accused Job of hypocrisy and flawed motives for his faith and faithfulness.

I. Scene One in Heaven (1:6-12)

A. Dialogue begins (1:6-8)

The sons of God came to bring a report to God. Apparently these were angels who were reporting on their activities. While reporting, Satan appeared among them (1:6). Although Satan sinned against God and forfeited his position near God's throne, he still had access to Heaven.

God asked Satan where he had come from. God obviously knew about all of Satan's actions. Satan answered that he had just come from walking about on the earth. As Satan roamed the earth, he watched those who had put their faith in God. Satan wanted to find reasons to accuse them.

God asked Satan if he had considered Job (1:8). God then pointed out what was obvious about Job. He was blameless and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil.

B. Satan's accusation (1:9-11)

The name "Satan" (1:9) means "accuser". Satan roams about, looking for occasions to accuse believers before God. While God commends His children, Satan indicts them.

Satan accused Job of having faulty motives for his righteous lifestyle (1:9,10). In essence, Satan told God that Job was faithful because of all the wonderful things God had given him. If God were to take those things away, Satan argued, Job would depart from the faith and abandon God. This false accusation became the reason behind the suffering in Job's life!

C. God's response (1:12)

God knew Job's faith was genuine. He knew that Job's faithfulness would remain intact. So, to defend Job before the accusations of the Devil, God decided to permit Satan to put Job to the test. He told Satan that he could touch all that Job had.

Although God let Satan test Job, He restricted Satan from affecting Job's physical well-being (1:12). This restriction highlights the observation Satan made in verse 10: "Hast not thou made an hedge about him...?" God did place a hedge of protection around Job so that nothing could enter Job's life without God's approval. The "hedge" in Job 1 assures us of God's protection in this life as well.

Job 1:13-22 reports that Satan did test Job as God allowed. In one painful tragedy after another, Satan took away Job's wealth, his children, and almost all of his servants. He left only those who would bring bad news to Job. Despite emotionally painful circumstances, Job refused to curse God and defect from the faith. God was right, and Satan was wrong!

II. Scene Two in Heaven (2:1-7)

A. Dialogue begins (2:1-3)

After Job successfully passed the "test" reported in Job 1, the angels presented themselves to God again. Once again, Satan appeared with them. Just as in the previous dialogue between God and Satan, God commended Job.

He called Job His servant and described him again as "none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (2:3). However, in this dialogue God called Satan's attention to the fact that Job still "holdeth fast his integrity" (2:3). Job's grasp on his integrity was steadfast. He proved his faith in God was real.

God adds in verse three that Satan incited Him against Job. With this statement, God showed that He took responsibility for the tragedies brought on Job. Satan does not have any power over God. Satan could never make God do anything to Job. God always retains His authority. And it was God Who restored Job's wealth and family. God did not need to ask Satan for permission to restore Job.

The words "without cause" (v. 3) indicate that Job did not deserve what happened to him. Yet he responded by holding fast to his integrity. In doing so, Job proved Satan wrong. Satan believed Job feared God for nothing. He believed Job's fear was fake. Job showed his faith was real.

Adversity had demonstrated that Job's faith was genuine and his motives were pure. God was not surprised with how Job responded. He knew Job's faith was strong before the tragedies came. God knows the hearts of all people just as they are. Satan's accusations did not cause God to doubt Job.

B. Satan's accusation (2:4,5)

Satan remained unconvinced. Using two proverbs, he told God that Job would certainly depart from the faith if his own life were afflicted. Satan does have a point. Intense physical suffering does try a person's faith perhaps more than anything else. Satan's use of the phrases "skin for skin" and "all that a man hath will he give for his life" were probably familiar proverbs of that time. They point out that people in general value their health and their sense of personal well-being.

C. God's response (2:6)

With the same confidence in Job as before, God granted Satan the authority to afflict Job. Again, however, He put a "hedge" around Job. "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life," He commanded Satan (2:6).

God had complete confidence that Job would remain true. He knew Job's heart. The trial of physical suffering would reveal that heart to Satan. Unfortunately for Job, his own wife eventually calls for him to abandon his faith while his friends accuse him of evil. What is obvious to God is not at all obvious to those around Job.

D. Satan's action (2:7)

As soon as he received God's permission to afflict Job, Satan rushed to the task (2:7). Satan just can't wait to inflict hardship upon those who follow God. He is our ruthless enemy. He delights in seeing God's children suffer, and he is eager to see if they will abandon their trust in God.

Satan did all he could to make Job miserable. He afflicted Job's entire body with sore boils. The illness brought intense pain and constant irritation to Job. He had no rest and believed he would eventually die from his illness.

We should not conclude that Satan is to blame for every illness or physical suffering we face. Our focus should be on remaining faithful to God, submitting to His will for our lives, relying on His grace, and glorifying Him through the circumstances He has allowed into our lives.

Job's faith proved strong, but it would grow even stronger. God has big lessons ahead for Job that would help him know God like he had never known Him before. As we study this book, we too, will have the privilege of learning those lessons alongside Job.

Chapter 3: Tragedy Strikes

Scripture: Job1:13-22; 2:7-10

Key Verses

“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 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. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (Job 1:20-22).

Overview

Job suffered the loss of his children, possessions, health, and his wife’s moral support, but he maintained his character. Just as God had predicted, Satan could not destroy Job’s faith.

Outline

I. Job’s External Losses (1:13-19)

A. Job lost his wealth (1:13-17)

1. The Sabean raid (1:13-15)
2. The “fire” storm (1:16)
3. The Chaldean raids (1:17)

B. Job lost his children (1:18,19)

II. Job’s response to External Loss (1:20-22)

III. Job’s Internal Losses (2:7-9)

- A. Job lost his health (2:7,8)
- B. Job lost his wife’s moral support (2:9)

IV. Job’s Response to Internal Loss (2:10)

The test of life normally involve loss - the loss of position, loss of power, loss of self-esteem, loss of finances, loss of possessions, loss of health, loss of friendships or relationships, loss of loved ones. Rarely, however, does one lose everything. But Job lost almost everything. Permitted by God to do so, Satan tested Job with both external trials and internal trials.

I. Job’s External Losses (1:13-19)

While God had built a “hedge” around Job (1:10) and commanded Satan, “only upon himself put not forth thine hand” (1:12), Satan tested Job by taking away virtually all that he had.

A. Job lost his wealth (1:13-19)

In three separate rapid-fire incidents, Job lost nearly all of his possessions, financial assets, and means of livelihood.

1. The Sabeans raid (1:13-15)

The oxen were busy plowing, and the donkeys were grazing beside them, when all of a sudden a hostile band of Sabean robbers burst onto the scene, brutally murdered Job's servants, and took all the oxen and donkeys. The oxen were needed for plowing and the donkeys for general labor. Only one servant had escaped the raid-the one who reported this horrible event to Job.

2. The "fire" storm (1:16)

No sooner had the report of the Sabean invasion rolled off the trembling lips of the sole survivor of the raid, then a second servant frantically approached Job. He, too, carried tragic news. He reported that the "fire of God" had fallen from "heaven" and "consumed" Job's 7,000 sheep and all the shepherds except him. This "fire" from heaven was probably an electrical storm.

3. The Chaldean raid (1:17)

With these two servants still in Job's presence, a third servant brought tragic news. Job was probably thinking, "What next?" This servant told of three bands of Chaldeans who had just plundered another section of Job's farmland and stolen all 3,000 camels. Furthermore, they had stabbed to death all Job's camel workers with the sword! Again, only one man had survived who reported this to Job.

When Job lost his camels, he lost his connection with the world. Camels provided him the ability to transport goods and trade with the other lands. Job lost the last of his vocational and economic resource. His sources of food, clothes, field-plowing, transportation, and general labor were all gone.

B. Job lost his children (1:18,19)

Then a fourth messenger approached Job. This messenger emotionally informed Job that while all ten of Job's children were dining at the oldest son's house, a violent windstorm had uncharacteristically blown in from the desert and destroyed the home – killing every one of Job's children! All of Job's losses were external losses, God had put a hedge around Job's life. Nevertheless, they were tragic losses of catastrophic proportion.

II. Job's Response to External Loss (1:20-22)

What Job did was according to custom. Ripping his clothes and shaving his head were the proper ways to respond to grief. But worshipping God was not an external response. Job showed his deep, genuine faith in God when he began to worship Him.

The first chapter of Job concludes with the triumphant declaration of Job's faith: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (2:22). He had passed the test! As God had said, Job's faith would survive severe testing.

III. Job's Internal Losses (2:7-9)

Satan was not impressed with Job's faithfulness at this point. He believed that if he inflicted physical sufferings on Job, Job's faith would not stand the test. So, after gaining the necessary permission from God, Satan launched a full-scale attack on Job's person.

A. Job lost his health (2:7,8)

God permitted Satan to afflict Job, so long as he spared Job's life. God was confident that Job's faith would endure Satan's attacks.

Verse 7 doesn't adequately describe what Job endured physically as a result of the disease Satan brought on him. Boils were open, oozing sores that covered his body. In addition, Job endured painful itching (2:8), disfiguration (2:12), sleeplessness (7:4), oozing sores infected with worms (7:5), bad breath (19:17), extreme weight loss (19:20), fever (21:6), excruciating pain (30:17), diarrhea (30:27), and shriveling skin (30:30). Job's life was reduced to sitting on ashes and scraping his sores with broken pieces of pottery.

B. Job lost his wife's moral support (2:9)

As if the physical pain and discomfort weren't bad enough, Job lost his wife's moral support. She encouraged him to do what Satan wanted him to do all along – "Curse God and die!" The trials were severe, but when Job encountered physical suffering and heard his wife's demoralizing suggestion, he must have felt emotionally drained.

Satan loved the lack of support Job's wife gave to her husband. She had already given up on God. Her faith was weak. She gave Satan hope that he would win the showdown with God.

IV. Job's Response to Internal Loss (2:10)

Job didn't follow his wife's advice. He recognized her lack of faith and called her foolish. He rebuked his wife for her lack of spiritual insight, and he reaffirmed his faith in God's sovereign lordship.

Job's Wife's Unbelief vs Job's Trust

Job accepted his circumstances with a deep trust in God. He expressed a total submission to God. He trusted God for Who God is and not for what God gives him. The conclusion was that "in all this did not Job sin with his lips" (2:10b).

Chapter 4: Job Laments

Scripture: Job 2:11-3:26

Overview

After being joined by his three friends, Job openly lamented his tragedies and confessed his confused thoughts and painful feelings. He wished he hadn't been born, then wished he had died, and then wished he might die immediately. Yet in his lament, Job neither cursed God nor gave up hope by taking his own life.

Outline

- I. Job Sat in Silence (2:11-13)
- II. Job Wished He Had Never Been Born (3:1-10)
- III. Job Wished He Had Died at Birth (3:11-19)
- IV. Job Wished He Might Die Immediately (3:20-26)

Following his losses, Job was visited by his three friends and together they considered the “why” question, “Why did this happen?”

I. Job Sat in Silence (2:11-13)

News of Job's tragic misfortune traveled quickly. Three friends came to console Job and sat with him but said nothing. After a week of silence, Job vented the anguish of his soul. He voiced three desires in chapter three that we will look at closely. First, he wished that he had never been born (3:1-10). Second, he wished that he had died at birth (3:11-19). Third, he wished that he could die (3:20-26). He had suffered severe losses and, therefore, had a very heavy heart.

II. Job Wished He Had Never Been Born (3:1-10)

Job cursed the day of his birth (including the day of his conception). He did not curse God, but he wished he had had no beginning—that his birthday would be blotted off the calendar! Job wished the day of his birth were darkness, that God would not seek it, and light would not shine upon it (3:4).

3.6-7 - Job wished he had not even been conceived. These were all ways of saying that Job wished he had never come into existence.

To help Job dissolve the day of his birth, in verse 8, he calls on those who would be able to subdue Leviathan to curse the day into non-existence. The idea is that anyone who could control Leviathan, a giant, terrifying sea creature, could snuff out the day of Job's birth.

God describes Leviathan in detail in Job 41. God used the creature to show Job that since he could not control one of God's grandest creatures, he had no right to question Him, the Creator of the creature. Job must have known in 3:8 that no one would be able to control Leviathan. So no one had the power to snuff out the day of his birth.

V. 9 - Job continues his wish to have never been born. He wishes the stars of the morning, Mercury and Venus, would have been dark and would have kept the day of his birth from dawning.

V. 10 - Job then lamented the fact that the "doors" of his mother's womb had not prevented him from seeing the "sorrow" that befell him.

III. Job Wished He Had Died at Birth (3:11-19)

Despite Job's wish that he had never been conceived or born, the fact remained that he was conceived and born. So he made a slightly different wish. In verse 11 - He wished that he had been stillborn. He stated in this part of his lament that if he had been stillborn, his body would be in a state of rest in the earth instead of being tormented with pain and grief (3:13). Again, these may sound like hard words, but those who have experienced significant pain and hardship will understand how Job felt.

3.14-15 - Job pointed to rulers and princes who had died and were then resting in the tombs they had built (3:14, 15). He just longed to be in a place where there was no more suffering.

3.16 - Job expresses again that he wished he had been stillborn and buried out of sight. If that had been the case, then he would have avoided the sorrows and pains of his present life.

3.17-19 - Job then returns to his thoughts of those who have already died. Job envies their freedom from the troubles of earth. Overall, Job's focus is on the absence of the troubles of life.

IV. Job Wished He Might Die Immediately (3:20-26)

Job's wishful thinking could not alter the past. So he turned his attention to the present. He referred to the horrible nature of his pain, and he longed for death as a release. He was puzzled by the irony that death seems to come to those who don't want it but death escapes those sufferers who desire it.

V. 24 - The "sighing" that Job described is the same word that is used of the sounds slaves make while doing hard labor. Job's "roarings," or "groanings," continued like water rushing over a waterfall. They were intense and never ending.

V. 25 - Before all the tragedies befell Job, he was concerned that he would experience trouble. After the tragedies, he expressed that what he feared and dreaded had come true.

Job does not give up hope by taking his own life. Remember that in spite of our hardships, God is faithful. Even when He seems distant, He is always present and at work in our lives.

Chapter 5: Falsely Accused

Scripture: Job 4—7; 15—17; 22—24

Overview

Eliphaz, one of Job's three friends, offered advice to Job concerning his sufferings. In his three rounds of counsel, Eliphaz falsely accused Job of sin. He tried to convince Job that his trials were God's punishment for his sin. He wanted Job to repent so God would bless him again. Eliphaz's advice was based on a false understanding of God.

Outline

I. Eliphaz's First Debate with Job (4—7)

A. Eliphaz accused Job of foolishness (4; 5)

B. Job responded (6; 7)

1. Job addressed his friends (6)

2. Job addressed God (7)

II. Eliphaz's Second Debate with Job (15—17)

A. Eliphaz accused Job of vanity (15)

B. Job responded (16; 17)

III. Eliphaz's Third Debate with Job (22—24)

A. Eliphaz accused Job of social injustice (22)

B. Job responded (23; 24)

I. Eliphaz's First Debate with Job (4—7)

Job's three friends came from great distances to mourn with him. For a week they said nothing. But following Job's heartfelt lament, they thought it necessary to determine exactly what was going on and to confront Job.

Cycles of Debate - Beginning with the oldest, the three men debated Job. These debates comprised three cycles of communication. Each cycle consisted of a speech by a friend and Job's corresponding response. The cycles of debate comprise the bulk of the book of Job (Job 4—31).

After these cycles, a fourth character, a young associate and observer, gave his own speeches, as the forerunner of the voice of God (Job 32—37). And then God (38-42).

This chapter centers on the first friend, Eliphaz; his three speeches; and Job's response to each speech.

A. Eliphaz accused Job of foolishness (4; 5)

Eliphaz spoke first. He was probably the oldest of Job's friends. While Eliphaz's speeches show some signs of maturity, they become less polite as the debate progresses. By the end of Eliphaz's remarks, his comments are confrontational and in every one of his speeches he accused Job unfairly. Eliphaz believed, as did Bildad and Zophar, that all suffering is the direct result of sin. He reasoned that because Job suffered severely, he must have committed wicked sinful acts!

At the beginning of his speech, Eliphaz confessed that he was almost afraid to say anything in light of Job's scornful words (4:1, 2). Nevertheless, he felt constrained to talk. Without offering any words of comfort, Eliphaz rebuked Job for failing to practice what he preached (4:3—6). Evidently, Job had encouraged others who had gone through significant hardship.

4.7-11 - Records Eliphaz's first major confrontation with Job. He strongly implied that because Job was suffering, he must have fallen into serious sin.

4.9 - Eliphaz was insensitive to Job by saying God was blasting Job with His angry breath, or "wind". Purposely or not, Job would have thought about the wind that killed Job's children.

4.9-10 - Eliphaz referred to a toothless lion as another picture of God's judgment. He believed God made Job as helpless as a lion with no bite.

4.12-17 - Where did Eliphaz get the philosophy of God's retribution on sin? Verses 12—17 reports that he based his viewpoint of suffering on human experience and a vision (not from the Lord). The main point of Eliphaz's vision was that no one can stand before God as pure.

5.1-5 - Moving into chapter 5, Eliphaz also said that Job didn't have a mediator (5:1). He believed Job was helpless and was a fool who would die in his folly (5:2). Eliphaz even went so far as to blame Job's foolishness for the loss of his sons and his prosperity (5:3—5).

5.6-8 - He supported his accusations by saying that hardship comes from what a person sows (5:6, 7). Assuming Job was guilty of some kind of evil, Eliphaz told Job what he would do if he were in Job's situation. He said that he would seek God (5:8).

5.9-16 -He listed some of God's kind acts toward humanity and especially the needy as reasons to seek God.

5.17 - Eliphaz continued his first speech with a call to Job to stop resisting God's discipline.

5.18 -26 - In support of his call, Eliphaz listed all the benefits that would come from such an action. In reality, Eliphaz told Job to seek God for what God would do for him; the benefits he would receive. Seeking God for gain was exactly what Satan accused Job of doing in the first place.

5.27 - Eliphaz ended his first speech with a statement that he was confident in his counsel. He also stated that Job would find he was right if Job would follow his advice.

B. Job responded (6; 7)

1. Job addressed his friends (6)

Job was certainly hurt was disappointed with Eliphaz's accusations. Job began his speech with a response to his friends (6) and then turned his attention to God (7). In both parts of the speech Job maintains that he was innocent.

Job struggled to communicate just how weighty his suffering was. His friends saw the outward signs of his physical disease, but more importantly they could not feel his physical and emotional pain. He believed they would be sympathetic if they could experience what he was experiencing.

6:4 - Job also described his suffering as having been shot with poisonous arrows from God. He felt like he was a city surrounded by an enemy army, so he defended his lament.

6:5 - He was not like a donkey or an ox with plenty to eat. He had reason to complain, and he was repulsed by his suffering.

6:8-9 - Job then revisited his desire for God to kill him and release him from his suffering. Death was an attractive source of hope for Job.

6:10 - He was not suicidal, he wanted God to end his life as a testimony to his innocence.

6:11-12 - Notice that Job was not following Eliphaz's advice. He was not repenting before God, though his patience and ability to continue to stand under such anguish was waning.

6:13 - Job lacked the fortitude and resourcefulness that marked his life before the string of tragedies.

Having communicated his lack of patience and strength, Job turned to his friends and accused them of failing to comfort him as their friend when he needed it the most (6:14–23).

6:14 - He said they forsook their fear of God when they reneged on their duty as his friend.

6:15-17 - They became like dry stream beds in a desert when Job needed their refreshing comfort.

6:21-23 - Job did not make any demands on his friends or even cost them money. Yet, they did not help him.

6:24-30 - Job finished by saying he was willing to listen to them if they would acknowledge his righteous standing before God and believe that he was telling the truth.

2. Job addressed God (7)

7:1-5 - Job began his address to God by stating his toil was worse than that of a soldier, servant, or hired worker because his toil had neither an end nor a reward.

7:6-10 - He concluded that his life would be brief and he would never know happiness.

7:11 - Job turned his focus to complaining against God. In his complaint, Job spoke loudly and forcibly according to the level of anguish he felt. His hope was to cause God to deliver him out of compassion.

7:13-19 - Job then simply wished God would just leave him alone and let him return to normal before he died.

7:20-21 - Job ended his complaint against God by questioning why He had set His target on him.

II. Eliphaz's Second Debate with Job (15—17)

A. Eliphaz accused Job of vanity (15)

After hearing Job's response, and the first speeches by Bildad and Zophar with Job's responses to each of them, Eliphaz became indignant.

15:2-6 - He asserted that Job was offering "vain knowledge"—knowledge that excluded God.

15:9-10 - Eliphaz wondered what Job could possibly know that he and the other older wise men did not know.

15:11-16 - Eliphaz also questioned why Job would reject him and his vision to help Job.

Eliphaz finished his speech with more "wisdom" concerning the suffering of the wicked (15:17—35). He was convinced Job had done something evil and was suffering as a result.

B. Job responded (16; 17)

16:1-4 - Job responded out of hurt to the words of Eliphaz. He called his words hot air.

16:5 – Job said he would encourage his friends with his words if their roles were reversed.

Job then recognized that his lot does not change whether he speaks or keeps silent. So he decides to speak another lament.

16:7-8 - Job began his lament by pointing out that his diseased appearance kept anyone from believing that he was innocent before God.

16:9-14 - He then shared that he felt brutally attacked by God.

16:15-17 - As a result of the affliction, Job mourned in pain and agony while he knew in his heart that he was not wicked and his motives were pure.

16:18-20 - Job desired that God would vindicate him and act justly on his behalf.

16:21 – Job even wished for an advocate to stand before God on his behalf. This advocate was likely God Himself. Job knew that no man would take up his case. Only God knew the truth about Job.

17:3 - In chapter 17, Job expressed his depression and his desire for God to "post bail" for him and relieve him of his suffering. Job knew he would be vindicated. Until that time he turned to God for relief. His friends would be no help.

17:4 - God kept them from seeing the truth

17:6 - And Job's community mocked him and spit in his face. Job believed God was his only hope for vindication.

17.11-14 - Job ended his speech by acknowledging that he realized his death was near. His home would be his grave.

17.15-16 - And with his death, his hope of vindication and the restoration of his body and his honor would end too. So Job wanted God to act before he died.

III. Eliphaz's Third Debate with Job (22—24)

A. Eliphaz accused Job of social injustice (22)

Beginning the third cycle of debate, Eliphaz was again the first to speak.

22.6-11 - Based on his faulty conjecture that truth comes from human experience, Eliphaz apparently mused on his past experiences with the wealthy. Since Job was wealthy, he must have been guilty of similar offenses and therefore was suffering on account of those offenses.

22.6-9 - Specifically, Eliphaz accused Job of cheating the poor (6), withholding food from the hungry (7-8), and mistreating orphans and widows (9).

22.12-14 - After accusing Job of specific sins, Eliphaz turned to instructing Job. He concluded that Job believed God was distant and uninvolved in the affairs of man. Job didn't believe that. Eliphaz had errantly drawn that conclusion from some of Job's complaints.

22.15-20 - Eliphaz then warned Job that he was walking in the paths of the wicked whom God eventually cut down.

22.21-25 - Eliphaz believed that Job needed to repent of his sins. If he did, God would be his gold and silver. God would also restore Job and give him benefits (26—30).

B. Job responded (23; 24)

In responding to Eliphaz, Job ignored his call for repentance. Job's interests were with God Himself, not with what he stood to gain from God. Job proved he was much wiser than Eliphaz.

23.1-9 - Job desired to have a day in court before God, but at the present he could not find Him.

23.10-12 - But when he did gain an audience with God, he knew God would recognize his uprightness and his character would be restored.

23.13-14 - In considering a day in court before God, Job said that no one can make God do anything.

23.15-16 - In fact, Job's fear of God overwhelmed him. He believed he might not be delivered from his trouble before his death.

Job then turned to the social injustices in the world (24:1–17). He gave several examples and believed that God would eventually judge them (24:18–24). Job wanted God to be swift in judging the wicked.

24.25 – Job ended his response to Eliphaz by challenging anyone to prove his position was wrong. Job was convinced of his innocence and was confident that God would indeed judge the wicked.

Chapter 6: God’s Justness and Job’s Suffering

Scripture: Job 8–10; 18; 19; 25–31

Overview

Bildad's three talks demonstrated that Bildad believed that Job could not be suffering as a righteous person because that would violate God's justice. So he counseled Job to repent. Job was, however, a believer who maintained a close relationship with God. His trials did not occur because he had sinned against God. Job defended himself and even warned his friends about their attacks on him.

Outline

I. Bildad's First Debate with Job (8–10)

A. Bildad spoke on God's justness (8)

B. Job responded (9; 10)

1. Job sought a trial before God (9)

2. Job gave a lament (10)

II. Bildad's Second Debate with Job (18; 19)

A. Bildad spoke on the fate of the wicked (18)

B. Job responded (19)

III. Bildad's Third Debate with Job (25–31)

A. Bildad spoke on God's sovereignty (25)

B. Job responded (26–31)

This section focuses on the three speeches of Job’s second friend, Bildad, and Job’s response. In each of his three speeches, Bildad disclosed his own misunderstanding of Job and Job's situation. In chapter 8, he thought that Job was blatantly accusing God of injustice. In chapter 18, he thought that Job was spiritually corrupt. In chapter 25, he thought that Job was denying the sovereignty of God.

Like Eliphaz, Bildad assumed that suffering is always the direct result of sin. Bildad was supposed to be Job’s friend, but he spoke harsh and cutting words like Eliphaz before him.

I. Bildad's First Debate with Job (8–10)

A. Bildad spoke on God's justness (8)

Bildad could not believe Job's response to Eliphaz's first speech. For Job to claim innocence as a sufferer was to question the character of God! Bildad believed that suffering is always a result of God's chastisement for sin.

8.3 - He believed that if Job was not suffering because of sin, then God would be perverting justice.

8.4 - Bildad argued that if Job's children were taken in death, they must have been wicked as well! That statement was perhaps the most inaccurate and most insensitive statement any of Job's friends made. Bildad lacked true compassion for Job.

8.5-7 - Bildad told Job to earnestly seek God so God might prosper Job once again. Bildad in essence held the same conclusion as Eliphaz, but he held it for a slightly different reason.

8.8-10 - Eliphaz had based his understanding on human experience while Bildad based his understanding on human tradition (traditionalism) and on what made human sense (rationalism).

8.8-11 - Bildad gave evidence from nature to support his conclusions about God. He used the papyrus plant to illustrate the pride of the wicked. Papyrus quickly grows to eight to ten feet tall when it has water. But with no water, it withers away in the sun. Bildad believed those who "wither" in life must have forgotten God as they focused on themselves. Their withering was evidence of God's judgment.

8.14-15 - Bildad then used a spider's web to show the fragile foundation of the wicked person's trust. Bildad concluded that Job must have been trusting in something other than God when tragedy struck. When Job "leaned" on his foundation, it gave way like a fragile spider's web.

8.21-22 - According to Bildad, if Job is truly righteous, then he will be restored and those who have shamed him will themselves be put to shame.

B. Job responded (9; 10)

1. Job sought a trial before God (9)

9.1-2 - Job began by agreeing with Bildad's assertion that God is God and that God must judge evil. He continued, however, by voicing his confusion. He knew that he was upright before the Lord; therefore, he didn't understand why he was suffering.

9.3-13 - Job realized the futility of attempting either out arguing God.

9.14-16 - Job rightly concluded that he was no match for God. Even if God did give him an opportunity to share his case, Job could only plead for mercy.

9.21-24 - Job then turned his thoughts to how God was treating him Even though Job knew better, it still seemed to him that God was being unfair. If what Bildad was saying was true, that all suffering is because of wickedness, then God was unjust because Job knew he was upright..

9.25-26 - Job returned to the fact that he was innocent but bemoaned that he had no way to prove it.

9.27-28 - Forgetting his pain and have a positive attitude was pointless. God would not acquit him.

9.29-31 - Job even considered conducting a public ceremonial washing to show his innocence. But he believed God would somehow disgrace him.

9.32-35 - In the face of his despair and helplessness, Job again mentioned the need for an arbitrator to stand in the gap between him and God. The arbitrator could relieve Job of God's punishing staff so Job could speak his defense with clarity.

2. Job lamented (10)

Since there was no true advocate, Job pled his own case before God. He asked God not to condemn him but to show him what he had done wrong.

10.1-7 - Job believed he was innocent and wanted to know why God was treating him like He was.

10.8-17 - Job also pointed out that God had created him. He wondered why God would destroy him and increase His anger toward him as one of God's creatures.

10.18-22 - Job ended his lament returning to his wish that he had never been born or that he had died at birth. But knowing that was not possible, he asked God to give him at least a moment of comfort before he went to the grave.

In spite of his confused state of mind, Job's response contained great confidence in God's power and wisdom. He continued to believe that God is God no matter what! True faith, like Job's faith, is based on fact and not on feeling.

II. Bildad's Second Debate with Job (18; 19)

A. Bildad spoke on the fate of the wicked (18)

After accusing Job for his confusion (18:1—4), Bildad accused Job of paying the consequences of his own wickedness (18:5—7).

18.8-10 - Using the implied metaphor of a trap and related items—snare, gin, robber, and net—Bildad attacked Job as one who had trapped himself in his own snare.

18.11-13 - He reiterated that Job's terrible disease had been caused by Job's own sinfulness.

18.14-18 - He painfully reminded Job of his loss of wealth and loss of children, and he put the blame squarely on Job and his faulty character.

B. Job responded (19)

Job addressed his friends and told them they were wrong to disgrace him. Job's friends were supposed to help him. Instead, they added to his suffering (19:1–4).

19.5-6 - They accused him of wrongdoing, but Job pointed out that God had wronged him. It was God's net that was around him. God had pursued and hunted him down.

19.7-20 - Job went on to complain about his enmity with God. He included in his complaint some more details about his physical suffering and the people from whom he had been ostracized.

19.21-22 - Job in his aloneness asked his friends to have mercy on him and to stop pursuing him like God was.

Job then gave perhaps the greatest confession of faith found in the book of Job. He longed that somehow these words would be written in a book—and not just in a book that would be soon forgotten but in one that would endure forever (19:23, 24). If only he had known that his words would in fact be written in the eternal Scriptures.

9.25-27 - Job's great confession of faith to Bildad included four major affirmations. Job knew that his Redeemer lives! He knew that his Redeemer will someday stand upon the earth! He knew that in his resurrected body he will see God. And he knew that he would see his Redeemer for himself in that glorious day, despite the agony he now experienced.

19.28-29 - Job ended his speech with a warning to his friends. They were committing sin that was worthy of judgment. Eventually the friends would be held accountable to God for their counsel while Job would be delivered from his suffering.

III. Bildad's Third Debate with Job (25–31)

A. Bildad spoke on God's sovereignty (25)

Bildad's third speech was short comprising only five verses. Bildad suggested that God controls everything and gives peace. Bildad implied that Job did not believe these truths.

B. Job responded (26–31)

In response to Bildad's third speech, Job boldly rejected Bildad's claim. He knew Bildad wanted him to seek God for wrong reasons.

26.5-14 – Job began with a praise of God's majestic power and lordship over creation.

27.1-6 - Job continued in his response with a statement of his innocence, a warning against his enemies (7–10), and an intent to teach his friends (11, 12). By committing to teach his friends, Job showed he rejected their wisdom. They were the ones needing instruction.

27.13-23 - Job then spoke on the fact that the wicked do experience retribution.

In Job 28, he talked about wisdom and rightly concluded that wisdom lies with God.

In the last long section of Job's speech, he rose to a new level in his struggle with his suffering. He refused to let his agony leave him in despair. Job began his last section of his speech by recounting his days before he was sick.

Job had been highly respected as the greatest man in the east. His troubles changed all that. He described his present circumstances once again in chapter 30.

30.16-19 - Job described his physical suffering again

30.20-31 – Job described his frustration with receiving hardship at the hand of God when he had poured out his heart in tears for the poor.

In Job 31, he finished his speech with a long section listing the sins he had been careful not to commit. He listed both sins of commission as well as sins of omission. He truly was as God described, an upright man.

But Job suffered greatly and would cause some to think that God is not fair. God is not governed by what is fair. God is just. Everything He thinks, says, and does is right.

Chapter 7: Unjustly Confronted

Scripture: Job 11 – 14; 20; 21

Overview

During two conversations, Zophar unjustly accused Job of hypocrisy and told him to return to the Lord. Job responded to Zophar with a tone of sarcasm and maintained that his wisdom was superior to Zophar's wisdom, which needed to be reevaluated.

Outline

- | | |
|---|---|
| I. Job and Proverbs | III. Zophar's Second Debate with Job (20; 21) |
| II. Zophar's First Debate with Job (11 – 14) | A. Zophar confronted Job as wicked (20) |
| A. Zophar confronted Job as simpleminded (11) | B. Job responded in dismay (21) |
| B. Job defended himself (12 – 14) | |

Zophar believed that Job's sinfulness had brought on his sufferings. He rudely told Job that his suffering was far less than he probably deserved. Wounded by Zophar's attack, Job defended himself.

The book of Proverbs identifies and describes several types of characters. Job and his friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—exemplify some of those character types. Zophar's confrontational speeches to Job and Job's responses further depict the character types found in Proverbs.

1. Job and Proverbs

Proverbs teaches the reader that the "fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (9:10). In developing this theme, the writer of Proverbs depicted different kinds of people. The writer contrasted each of these types of character with the ideal "wise" person. God wanted to help the reader identify his own character type and have more wisdom.

The book of Job seems to allude to each of these character types so that the book provides a vivid example of the principles taught in Proverbs. The types taught in the book of Proverbs are as follows.

1. The **fool** hates knowledge (Pr. 1:22); lacks wisdom (10:21); thinks he is always right (12:15); teaches without understanding (16:22); meddles or causes quarrels (20:3); and speaks every thought (29:11).

Job called his wife foolish for telling him to curse God and die (Job 2:10). Eliphaz accused Job of being a fool (5:2, 3). The former statement was true, the latter was not.

2. The **wicked** offers abominations to the Lord (Prov. 21:27); is far from the Lord (13:29); speaks perversely (10:32); devises evil imaginations (6:18); bears the fruit of sin upon sin (10:16); and lives deceitfully (11:18).

Bildad made the strongest accusation against Job. He accused Job of being an unbeliever and therefore wicked (Job 18:21). This was another false accusation against Job.

3. The **simple** is spiritually complacent (Prov. 1:22); is easily led astray (7:7ff); lacks insight (9:4); believes everything he hears (14:13); and has no foresight (22:3).

Zophar, whom we will meet in this section, accused Job of being simpleminded (Job 11:12). Job responded that Zophar and Job's other two friends were the ones who weren't very wise. He sarcastically suggested that they were so wise that wisdom would die with them (12:2).

4. The **scorner** enjoys criticizing others (Prov. 1:22); is characterized by anger (15:10–13); will not accept correction (9:8); needs correction (19:29); causes strife and division (22:10; 29:8); and is an abomination to men (24:7–9).

All three of Job's "friends" showed some characteristics of the scorner. Job told them they were the ones who needed instruction (Job 27:11).

5. The **sluggard** has no care for future needs (Prov. 6:6—11); daydreams a lot, but doesn't do much (13:4); lets little things hinder his work (20:4); is not a self-starter (21:25); does not face challenge (26:13, 14); and seldom finishes what he starts (26:15).

Job's friends could have called Job a sluggard, but his inactivity was due to his extreme circumstances. Job's former days showed that he was a diligent person.

6. The **wise** knows the Lord and lives accordingly (Prov. 1:7); possesses understanding (16:21); accepts correction (19:25); speaks accurately, tenderly, and carefully (15:1, 2); walks prudently (14:15b); and gives godly guidance and direction (16:21—24).

Of Job's friends, young Elihu, whom we will study in a later section, came the nearest to the truth. He also demonstrated many of the characteristics of the wise person. Of all the characters, Job was indeed the wisest. He understood that wisdom came from fearing God (Job 28:28).

II. Zophar's First Debate with Job (11—14)

Zophar was evidently the youngest of Job's three "friends."

A. Zophar confronted Job as being simpleminded (11)

11.1-4 - Like Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar believed that Job's blatant sinfulness had brought on his sufferings. He got straight to the point with Job and didn't try to spare his feelings.

11.6 - Zophar abrasively told Job that his suffering was far less than he probably deserved.

11.7-9 - Zophar also challenged what he thought was Job's claim that God had judged him wrongly.

11.12 - Zophar was guilty of dogmatism. He based his view of Job on nothing but his own opinion. And in his opinion Job was "vain," or simpleminded. Zophar used a word for "vain man" that is related in meaning to the word for "simple" in Proverbs 1:22.

These related Hebrew terms convey the idea of emptiness. In Zophar's opinion Job's mind was like an empty jar or an uncultivated field. Zophar accused Job of lacking understanding and insight.

11.14 - This statement was the barb in Zophar's confrontation of Job. In essence Zophar, the younger man, clearly called upon Job—the older man—to repent.

11.15-19 - Zophar promised Job that if he repented, he would be healed, released from his fear, and restored to his place of prominence by God.

11.20 - Zophar ended his opening speech with a warning to Job that the wicked shall not escape God's punishment. Zophar wanted Job to repent of whatever wickedness he must have committed.

B. Job defended himself (12–14)

Job reacted strongly to Zophar's unkind confrontation. Although he never lost his spiritual integrity or cursed God, Job retorted to Zophar while maintaining his innocence. It is significant to note that Job's pride began to surface more and more during these cycles of debate, as Job felt compelled to vindicate himself before other men. He also voiced his doubts, confused thoughts, and hurt spirit.

12.2 - Job mockingly told Zophar and the other two friends that wisdom would end with their deaths.

12.3 - Job added that he too has wisdom. By doing so he countered Zophar's notion that Job was an empty-headed man.

12.4 - Job pointed out his disgrace. Though he was wise, he had become a laughingstock.

12.5 - He had also endured the ridicule of those who were at ease.

12.6 - The tents of the robbers prospered served as a counter argument to his friends' belief that the wicked will always suffer.

12.7-11 - Job turned the conversation toward wisdom. He pointed out that creation offers lessons in wisdom. Specifically, God directs the life and holds the breath of every living creature.

12.12 - God has given people the ability to discern wisdom.

In verses 13-25 Job continued his development of his discussion of wisdom that God is able to control the intelligent and powerful of the earth. God overwhelms kings and princes with destructive forces.

In chapter 13, Job turned his complaints to his friends.

13.6-12 - Job expanded on his friends' misrepresentation of God and then renounced their instruction and wisdom. He compared their proverbs to lifeless ashes and their answers to clay pots that eventually crumble. Job was beginning to make clear that he had no use for their help.

13.13 - Job told his friends to be quiet and let him take the course he had chosen. He wanted a hearing before God.

13.14-15 - He was willing to endure any fallout from his choice, even death. Job would never fall for the easy solutions his friends offered.

13.16 - Job believed he could find deliverance before God because he was not a hypocrite.

13.17 - Job also hoped that his friends might yet hear him and support him.

13.18 - Job was ready to plead his case before God.

13.20-22 - In Job's anticipation of his time before God, he asked God to relieve him of his physical illness. Job knew that he could not stand in God's full presence and survive.

13.23-28 - In further anticipation of his day in court, Job questioned God. He wanted to know if there was indeed some sin in his life that God was punishing him for. Job believed there wasn't.

Then in chapter 14, Job went on to describe the troubles of man in general.

14.1-3 – Job said life is short and man is relatively powerless. Job wondered why God would bring judgment and its accompanying distress on both the righteous and the wicked.

14.4-6 - Job asked God to turn away His watchful eyes and let those suffering have a rest like a hired worker does at the end of a hard day of work. Job obviously was thinking about his own situation. He longed for a break from the suffering and pain.

14.7-12 - Job's thinking shifted to the possibility of dying and then starting life all over again. But he realized that death does not give a person a second opportunity to live.

14.18-22 - Eventually Job's life would end in death. If Job were to be vindicated, then he believed it needed to happen before he died.

III. Zophar's Second Debate with Job (20; 21)

A. Zophar confronted Job as deplorably wicked (20)

Zophar was not about to change his mind about Job. From his perspective he was right and Job was wrong. So Zophar attacked Job even more vehemently than he had before. His criticism is the most stinging speech recorded in the book of Job!

B. Job responded in dismay (21)

21.1-6 - Job responded as a wounded person. He wondered if anyone would listen to him.

21.7-16 - Job countered Zophar by saying his assumption couldn't be true for the wicked often prosper. Sometimes the wicked prosper and live a long life.

Chapter 8: Praise God's Majesty

Scripture: Job 32—37

Overview

In four powerful speeches, Elihu reminded Job that no matter what happens, God is good and right in all His ways. Although Job faced severe trials and nagging perplexities, God had not abandoned him. Job needed to trust God and perceive that God was refining his faith.

Outline

I. Job and Ecclesiastes

II. Elihu's First Speech – "God Is not Silent" (32; 33)

III. Elihu's Second Speech—"God Is Just" (34)

IV. Elihu's Third Speech—"God Is Great" (33)

V. Elihu's Fourth Speech—"God Is Sovereign" (36; 37)

I. Job and Ecclesiastes

Like Job, Ecclesiastes is a book of struggle. The writer tells how he sought in vain to make sense of life's experiences. Judging from a human viewpoint, he didn't perceive life as either fair or fulfilling, but learned that contentment comes from a relationship of trust and obedience with God.

In the book of Job, the struggle for perspective dominates the conversations between Job and his three "friends." Job focused on his own character and his adversities and tried to make sense of life.

After Job's three friends finished speaking, a young observer, Elihu spoke up.

II. Elihu's First Speech – "God Is not Silent" (32; 33)

Each of Elihu's speeches appears to have a slightly different appeal, but all focused the attention on God and His character. Elihu's speeches show that his viewpoint differed from that of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Regardless of what Job said, these three contended that suffering is directly attributable to a person's sin. They had concluded, therefore, that Job was wicked. Elihu, on the other hand, listened to Job and believed that he was upright, though not sinless. Elihu believed that God sometimes uses suffering as a refining process.

32.6-10 – Elihu’s first key thought was that wisdom does not belong exclusively to those who are old. God’s Spirit gives wisdom to all who will receive it. There have been countless people who have grown old as fools who claimed wisdom simply by virtue of their age. Elihu made clear that age does not equal wisdom.

32.11-14 - Elihu concluded that Job's friends didn't answer Job's questions against God. Instead, they kept answering Job according to their own understandings of God.

32.15-20 - Elihu went on to say that he felt compelled to speak even though the older, wiser friends of Job had come to the point of speechlessness.

32.21-22 - Elihu claimed loyalty to God. He desired to speak according to truth. He wanted his words to be unaffected by the position or prestige of anyone else.

33.1-7 - Elihu addressed Job not as one superior or inferior, but as a fellow believer and spiritual peer. Elihu wanted Job to feel free to express himself to him.

33.9-11 - Elihu summarized Job's speeches in just six lines. He reiterated Job's claim to be pure and innocent before God, his claim that God looks for opportunities to afflict him without cause, and his claim that God never lets him have a respite from his afflictions.

33.12-13 - Elihu told Job that his fault was not in some unconfessed sin but in his desire to contend with God. To contend with God was a sin in Elihu's estimation.

33.14 - Job wondered why God didn't answer him. Elihu addressed this bewilderment by saying that God does speak to people to warn them.

33.19-22 -Elihu also pointed out that God speaks through pain. He afflicts people to make them aware of a serious problem.

33.23-28 - Elihu informed Job that there was a mediator on his behalf. Elihu doesn't give the identity of the mediator, but his point is that God works redemptively with people.

33.29-30 - Elihu ended his first speech by saying that God is diligent in carrying out His work on behalf of man. He is not silent. He listens and is active.

33.31-33 - Before Elihu started his second speech, he gave Job a chance to speak and then assured him what he had to share was wise.

III. Elihu's Second Speech—"God Is Just" (34)

34.1-4 - Job opened his second speech with another call for those nearby to listen. He wanted Job in particular to listen and then decide to stop questioning God.

34.5-6 - Elihu again started with a summary of what Job said in his speeches: Job thought he was innocent, that God had denied him justice and gave him an incurable disease despite his innocence.

34.7-9 - Elihu condemned Job's attitude. Elihu was basically saying Job was wrong to question God.

34.11-12 - Elihu then defended God's just rule. Elihu stated that God cannot do wrong and that He pays man back according to what he deserves. God cannot pervert justice.

34.21-30 - Elihu declared that God is just in His dealings because He is omniscient; He knows everything. He acts in fairness because He knows everything about everyone.

34.31-37 – Elihu finished his second speech by warning Job that although he was hurt and confused, it was not right for him to tell God what to do.

IV. Elihu's Third Speech – “God Is Great” (35)

Elihu wanted Job to depend upon God's character regardless of circumstances.

35.1-4 - In his third speech, Elihu began by characterizing Job's claim of innocence as a claim to being more righteous than God.

35.5-8 - Elihu called for Job to look at the expanse of the sky and consider the greatness of God. Man cannot gain an advantage with God through good deeds. Nothing that we do can manipulate God.

35.9-13 - Elihu addressed Job's notion that the wicked go unpunished.

35.14-16 - Elihu concluded that Job had acted foolishly by all his lamenting.

V. Elihu's Fourth Speech—“God Is Sovereign” (36; 37)

In his fourth and final speech, Elihu pointed to the truth that God controls everything—including every event in Job's life.

36.1-2 - After asking Job to be patient, Elihu assured Job that there were more words to share about God's ways.

36.3-4 - Elihu assured his listeners that he would speak the truth as an expert in his defense of God.

36.5 - Elihu started with a statement that God is mighty, so He cannot be threatened or coerced into acting out of fear.

36.5-10 - Elihu then spoke of God's sovereign acts toward both the wicked and the righteous, God uses pain and affliction to discipline the righteous and cause them to return to Him.

36.11-14 - Those who respond to God's discipline will enjoy God's blessings for the rest of their days while the godless will die in the sinfulness.

36.15 - God's purpose, according to Elihu, is to save the afflicted through their affliction and cause them to listen to Him through tribulation.

36.16 - Elihu turned his speech to a personal nature. He spoke to Job and told him to accept God's discipline. If he did, then God would restore him.

36.17-18 - Elihu believed Job was being disciplined by God. Job could respond as long as he did it out of pure motives.

36.21 - Elihu warned Job not to turn to evil instead of responding to God.

36.22-25 - Elihu's call for Job to remember that God is unequalled. There is no teacher like Him. In response to God's majesty, Job should praise Him instead of complaining.

In chapter 37, Elihu used an illustration of a thunderstorm. In verse 13, he acknowledged that God uses them both for blessings and for discipline.

37.14-20 - Elihu called for Job to listen and consider God's works. He wanted Job to realize just how majestic and wise God is and just how limited man is. Elihu questioned Job about God's control of nature. Job was clueless as to how God worked the winds and clouds and rain. So if Job could not answer God on creation, then how could he possibly question God?

Elihu sought to bring Job to a place of contentment, even in his great adversity. He wanted Job to find contentment in knowing that God is sovereign. Even if Job had lost everything, Job should have been content in having God as his Lord.

In a sense, Elihu wanted Job to learn the message of Ecclesiastes that true joy does not come from one's career, circumstances, riches, or one's spouse. It comes only from knowing God.

Chapter 9: Trust Him

Scripture: Job 38—40:5

Overview

God spoke to Job out of a mighty whirlwind. He asked Job a series of questions and described for Job His sovereign control of all things. These questions and descriptions showed Job that God deserved his trust and obedience—even in times of suffering.

Outline

I. God's Challenge to Job (38:1—3)

II. God's Rule over Creation (38:4—39:30)

- A. God's rule over the world's structure (38:1—24)
- B. God's rule over the world's processes (38:25—38)
- C. God's rule over the animal kingdom (38:39—39:30)

III. God's Interaction with Job (40:1—5)

- A. God's question (40:1, 2)
- B. Job's answer (40:3—5)

Job's complaint against God had become clear. He did not know what God was doing and it seemed to him that God didn't care what was happening to him. Job's trials caused him to be discontent and to question God's goodness. Speaking for the first time, God manifested Himself to Job through a mighty whirlwind. This section will focus on God's first speech and Job's response.

1. God's Challenge to Job (38:1-3)

Job desired to take his case before God and now God comes to speak to Job. Job believed God had treated him unfairly. If God really ruled the world without violating His justice, then Job wanted answers to why he suffered as a righteous person.

38.2 - Job darkened counsel when he accused God and called for a hearing before God. God's speech would reveal just how dark Job's counsel and understanding were. God was not saying Job sinned. He was simply saying that Job spoke from a limited knowledge about God and His ways.

38.3 - God commanded Job to prepare for an encounter with Him. "Gird up now thy loins like a man" pictures the act of a soldier, fighter, or wrestler in Bible times preparing for a fight by pulling up and tucking in his robe. God expected Job to have answers for all His questions. No doubt this was a frightening experience for Job.

II. God's Rule over Creation (38:4—39:30)

A. God's rule over the world's structure (38:4—24)

God gave Job a verbal tour of the universe designed not only to humble Job but also to stimulate his trust in God's wise goodness.

38.7 - God planned for the earth and created it according to His plan. When He laid the cornerstone, the angelic beings rejoiced but no man was there to witness it.

38.8-11 - God's next set of questions had to do with the sea. God created the sea and then set boundaries for it. Again, Job was nowhere in sight when God set the boundaries for the oceans.

38.12-15 - The dawn formed the topic for God's third set of questions. Job had seen countless days dawn in his life. God asked Job if he had ever been able to make a day begin. The answer is no.

38.14 - When the rays of the sun hit the earth, they make the earth beautiful like a lump of clay is made beautiful after being impressed with a seal.

38.15 - God added that during the day those who raise their arms in defiance have their arms broken, a symbol of the judgment that has been handed down to them. God communicated to Job that the wicked do not get away with their wicked acts as Job had thought.

38.16 - God then turned His questioning to focus Job's thoughts on remote parts of the earth. No one could ever walk on the bottom of the ocean. The extreme water pressure makes the ocean floor virtually inaccessible even with today's advanced technology.

38.19-21 - Returning to the topic of light, God asked Job if he knew the path of light so he could control it.

38.22-24 - Weather was also not under Job's control. God controlled snow, hail, and wind and used them at His discretion to bring judgment.

B. God's rule over the world's processes (38:25—38)

Whether it rained in the wilderness in Job's day was not anyone's concern. But God made sure the wilderness was watered. His actions communicated to Job that He rules with wise goodness.

38.28-30 - God stayed on the topic of water and pointed out that it does not have a father or a mother to tell it what to do. God directs water into its various forms as He wills.

38.31-33 - Moving beyond the earth, God directed Job's attention to the stars. He asked Job if he could control the constellations of stars and determine the rules that govern them.

38.34-38 - Coming back down to earth, God asked Job if he could control the weather. Could he command lightning bolts and have them come to him to report in for duty? Could he count the clouds and put them in the right place? Obviously not.

In asking Job all these questions, God was saying, "I know what I am doing, Job. I am God. Trust my wise goodness."

C. God's rule over the animal kingdom (38:39—39:30)

In the second portion of His first speech, God continued to ask questions of Job. This time, He questioned Job about the animal kingdom. Most people could care less about ravens. We don't concern ourselves with feeding their young. But God does and provides food for them.

39.1-4 - God questioned Job about taking care of pregnant mountain goats and deer and helping them give birth. The thought of Job crawling around sharp cliffs after pregnant mountain goats is silly. Of course Job hadn't ever given one thought to who cared for goats and deer through their pregnancies. But God has since the day He created them. He cares for them and knows all about each one of them.

39.5-8 - The wild donkey is able to enjoy its freedom because it has God to take care of it.

39.9-12 - The dangerous wild ox also enjoys freedom with God as its caretaker. No one would think of trying to harness a wild ox's strength.

39.13-18 - God used the ostrich as His next example of His wise rule over nature. The ostrich seems to treat its young poorly, but in reality it cares for its young. When a predator is around the mother ostriches run off and leave their young to hide. Their intent is to get the hunters to follow them. God gave the ostrich that motherly instinct as well as the ability to outrun a horse.

39.19-25 - Though people can train horses to do all kinds of tricks, it is because of God's design that they work so well for man's uses. God is the One Who gave the horse its strength and eagerness to take its rider where he needs to go, even into fierce battle.

39.26-30 - Birds of prey are the subject of God's final line of questioning before He interacts with Job. As with all the rest of the animals God cited, Job had to answer that he had no power over the animals God created.

In this section of His speech, God was telling Job in effect, "I know what I am doing, Job. I am God. Trust my wise goodness."

III. God's Interaction with Job (40:1—5)

A. God's question (40:1, 2)

God rebuked Job for contending with Him. When Job began to understand God more fully he realized his demand of God was not warranted.

B. Job's answer (40:3-5)

Job's answer was an admission of his own inability to defend himself. Perhaps by laying his hand over his mouth, Job signified respect and submission to God.

In his response to God's first speech, Job did not repent of his arrogance and former accusations against God's justice. Although he was silent, he may still have felt innocent. This is probably the reason God spoke to him a second time—to bring Job to repentance.

Chapter 10: God's Sovereign Power

Scripture: Job 40:6 – 42:6

Overview

God used a second speech to convince Job that he is the master over all powers. God used two beasts, behemoth and leviathan, to show Job his smallness. Job responded with humility and repentance.

Outline

I. God Questioned Job's Power (40:6–14)

II. God Is Sovereign over His Mighty Creatures (40:15–41:34)

A. God's power over behemoth (40:15–24)

B. God's power over leviathan (41)

III. Job Was Humbled before the Lord (42:1–6)

Although Job had not cursed God or depart from the faith, he had questioned God's justice. He had also engaged in a relentless effort to vindicate himself in self-righteousness, and he had grown arrogant. In His great grace, God humbled Job.

It is significant to note that in his response to God's first speech (40:4, 5), Job did not repent of his arrogance and former accusations against God's justice. Although he was silent, he may still have felt innocent. This is probably why God spoke to him a second time—to bring Job to repentance.

I. God Questioned Job's Power (40:6–14)

40.7 - Having more to learn, God told Job to gird up his loins once again. He was about to face round two of God's questioning.

40.8 - God began by pointing out to Job that when he protested his suffering he was accusing God of acting without justice. That is obviously a serious problem.

40.9 - Based on Job's protest, God asked Job if he was like God in his power and authority.

40.10-14 - If Job could match God's power and authority, then he should be able to do what God does.

Job complained to God about the prosperity of the wicked and lamented that God didn't seem to judge the wicked. So God challenged Job to bring down the wicked himself. (40:12b, 13). It was obvious that Job was no match for God. In His speech He presented two of His most majestic and terrible creatures as ways to further illustrate Job's smallness.

II. God Is Sovereign over His Mighty Creatures (40:15—41:34)

A. God's power over behemoth (40:15-24)

40.15-19 - God told Job to look at behemoth and described a real creature. Picture. Some people think that it is a dinosaur that is now extinct. Others think that God is describing a hippopotamus.

40.20-24 - God went on to describe behemoth's actions. Most notable was its ability to navigate a flooding river. Again, that would have made Job see the creature as much bigger than himself.

B. God's power over leviathan (41)

Picture. Leviathan is the second creature God used to teach Job about His power. Again, this creature is most likely an extinct sea creature. The descriptions of it don't match any creatures alive today.

41.2 - God came right out and asked Job if he had the power to capture leviathan. The obvious answer was no.

41.3-5 - God also asked Job if he would be able to tame leviathan or put a leash on him for his children to play with. God's questions seem absurd, but they helped Job to see how insignificant his power was compared to the sea creature's power.

41.6-7 - Job and his friends would not be able to capture leviathan and auction his carcass off because they would not be able to get close enough to kill him with their harpoons and spears.

41.8-10 - Anyone who had aspirations of killing leviathan had a false hope. No one was fierce enough to stand against leviathan. God made clear that no one could confront Him.

41.11 - Everything under heaven is subject to God. God's sovereign power rules over all. If Job's complaint were valid, then God's power would not be sovereign. God's sovereign power ensures that Job could never raise a valid complaint against Him.

In a beautiful litany of descriptive phrases, God described leviathan in detail. In doing so God cemented in Job's mind that no one could ever raise a complaint against God. His sovereign power over such a magnificent creature left no room for God to ever be wrong or weak.

III. Job Was Humbled before the Lord (42:1—6)

God's second address brought Job to the place of humility before God. Overwhelmed by God's sovereign control over creation, Job answered God with a truly broken, contrite heart. After all that time, Job's heart was finally refined. A righteous, proud Job had become a righteous, humble Job.

42.2 - Job reaffirmed his faith in the justice of an omnipotent, omniscient God.

42.3 - When Job said, "Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?" (referring to himself), he used the same words God had used against him in 38:2, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" In an act of genuine confession, Job said the same thing about himself that God had said. No longer did Job try to defend himself. He now saw himself as he really was.

42.4 - Job conceded the debate when he finally realized there was no debate to be made.

42.6 - In the grand climax of Job's response to God's second speech, he stated, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes".

Finally, Job humbled himself before God and repented. He did not repent of the sins for which he had been falsely accused by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. He did, however, repent of his pride and need for self-vindication.

Although Job had not cursed God or departed from the faith during his trials, he had questioned God's justice. He had also engaged in a relentless effort to vindicate himself in self-righteousness, and he had grown arrogant. In shame and repentance, Job grieved deeply over his behavior and attitude. He sat in ashes and sprinkled dust on his head.

Chapter 11: Restored

Scripture: Job 42:7-17

Overview

God recognized that Job's friends did not speak the truth about Him. God required them to offer up a burnt offering for their sins. Job then showed his faith in God by praying for his friends. God restored all of Job's losses, and He blessed Job tenfold.

Outline

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|---|--|
| I. God Restored and Blessed Job (42:7—17) | E. God doubled Job's wealth (42:12) |
| A. God vindicated Job (42:7—9) | F. God gave Job 10 more children (42:13—15) |
| B. God granted Job intercessory ministry (42:8) | G. God gave Job long life (42:16) |
| C. God restored Job's health (42:10) | H. God helped Job mature (40:4; 42:3) |
| D. God comforted Job (42:11) | II. God Rewards and Blesses Faithful Believers |

We learn from the book of Job that sometimes the wicked prosper until they die (but then they are punished in Hell). Sometimes the righteous suffer until they die (and then they are rewarded in Heaven). At the end of Job's story, he is blessed tenfold because he refused to curse God.

I. God Restored and Blessed Job (42:7—17)

A. God vindicated Job (42:7—9)

After speaking to Job, God turned His attention to Eliphaz. Eliphaz believed that the wicked always suffer, the righteous always enjoy God's blessing and prosper.

Based on these rigid beliefs, Eliphaz condemned Job as a sinner and instructed Job to repent of his sins so he could earn God's favor once again. If Job had followed Eliphaz's advice, Job would have been guilty of serving God for what he could gain from God.

Eliphaz pressured Job to treat God as if He could be manipulated. Job recognized Eliphaz and his friends had bad theology, so he refused to follow it. The friends tried even harder to convince Job he was wrong. The truth about God is what was missing in Eliphaz's reasoning.

42.7 - God made clear that Job spoke the truth about God while Eliphaz and his friends did not.

God commanded Eliphaz and his friends to bring burnt offerings to Job so Job could offer them to God on their behalf. Seven bulls and seven rams was an expensive offering.

B. God granted Job intercessory ministry (42:8)

As part of the vindication process, God told Job to intercede for his three "friends." Because no official priesthood existed in Job's era, Job functioned as the priest on behalf of his three friends. He offered sacrifices for them and prayed for their ceremonial forgiveness.

C. God restored Job's health (42:10)

42.10 - The Lord did this for Job when Job "prayed for his friends." Job received grace for grace. Although it is not always God's will to heal, every believer in poor health or any other trial may claim the promise that God gives sufficient grace for every infirmity (2 Cor. 12:9).

D. God comforted Job (42:11)

Hardship usually draws families closer together. Job's brothers, sisters, and friends visited him after his trials. They comforted him and mourned with him because of the severe trials he had experienced. They even took an offering for him, each donating a piece of money and a gold earring.

E. God doubled Job's wealth (42:12)

In comparing Job's pre-trial and post-trial assets it is easy to see that God doubled his assets. Job ended up with 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. God delights in handing out blessings, especially to those who are faithful to Him.

F. God gave Job 10 more children (42:13–15)

God gave Job a second set of sons and daughters—seven sons and three daughters (42:13). His three daughters—Jemima, Kezia, and Keren-happuch— were very beautiful.

G. God gave Job long life (42:16)

While the Bible does not say how old Job was when his calamities struck, Jewish history records that Job was seventy years of age. If the record is dependable, we can conclude that God gave Job twice as many years after his trials as Job had lived before his trials.

God was gracious in denying Job's request that he die during the days of his affliction. Had God answered his request to die, he would have died in loneliness, barrenness, and misery. As it turned out, Job lived to enjoy many descendants—to the fourth generation. Like Job, we often find that the passing of time reveals the truth that God knows what is best for us and does what is best for us.

H. God helped Job mature (40:4; 42:3)

Had it not been for his sufferings, Job would never have experienced his special encounter with God. He enjoyed the ongoing benefits of this encounter throughout the rest of his life. As a result of his encounter with God, Job was stripped of his pride. He recognized God's strength and his own weakness. He gained a deeper appreciation of God's love and grace.

II. God Rewards and Blesses Faithful Believers

Can we anticipate rewards from God as we maintain our faithfulness to Him through trials? Yes. Although our ultimate reward is reserved for us in Heaven, we receive some spiritual rewards now. These benefits include spiritual learning, validation of faith, ministry to others, a stronger testimony, character refinement, deeper humility, and greater dependence on God. In fact, these are the reasons God allows affliction in the lives of His children.

Chapter 12: Summary – Suffering and Sovereignty

Scripture: The Book of Job

Overview

In order to vindicate Job and silence Satan's accusations, God allowed Satan to bring suffering into Job's life. However, He imposed limits on Satan's attacks, and He used the entire experience for Job's ultimate good. In the end, Job was better off than he had been before; his perception of God was stronger than it had been before; and his perception of his own inadequacies was clearer than before.

Outline

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| I. Summary of Job | C. The lesson of good and evil |
| A. Introduction to Job | D. The lesson of humble trust |
| B. Purpose of Job | E. The lesson of defense |
| II. Lessons from Job | F. The lesson of perspective |
| A. The lesson of sovereign design | G. The lesson of helping those who hurt |
| B. The lesson of emotion | |

I. Summary of Job

By looking back over the book of Job, we can see several key lessons that pertain to both doctrine and related spiritual living. Taken together, they show that suffering does not imply unrighteousness. They teach us to live faithfully and to trust in God.

A. Introduction to Job

The problem of human suffering is addressed throughout the Bible. Genesis 3 records the roots of suffering (disobedience) and James 1:2–12 states the purpose of suffering (maturity). The book of Job provides the reader with a depth of understanding concerning the profound issues of human suffering. The book of Job is a gift from a loving God to those who seek wisdom to life's most perplexing questions regarding affliction.

B. Purpose of Job

In general, the book of Job addresses the problem of human suffering; more particularly, the problem of suffering by the righteous person. The purpose of Job is to teach us a lesson about God to those who trust in Him. In so doing, Job also teaches important lessons on how believers are to view and respond to their own suffering and to that of others.

II. Lessons from Job

By looking back over the book of Job, we can see several key lessons that pertain to both doctrine and related spiritual living.

A. The lesson of sovereign design

The key issue in the book of Job is not "why?" but "Who?" Who is in control? God is. The sovereign and just God does all things well and is to be trusted no matter what.

B. The lesson of emotion

Job is an emotional book. It is drama in poetry. It blends a right use of metric parallelism with all the major figures of speech to make its point with freshness, power, and feeling. We learn from Job that human emotion is not wrong but that it must be subject to truth.

C. The lesson of good and evil

The book of Job powerfully communicates the ongoing conflict between the Devil and the people of God. However, it demonstrates that even evil is under God's sovereign control. Satan could not cross the "hedge" that God had built around Job. The book of Job also demonstrates that God uses fiery trials to refine His people's character.

D. The lesson of humble trust

During times of severe hardship, the suffering believer should humbly trust God with a committed heart. He can take great confidence in the following spiritual truths taught in the book of Job.

- God understands (12:13).
- God is our Redeemer (19:25).
- God refines our character (23:10).
- God is in control (38—41).
- God rewards those who humbly trust in Him (42:10—17).

E. The lesson of defense

Job was not guilty of the sins his friends accused him of. Although Job voiced great frustration and struggle at times, he was honest and open.

F. The lesson of perspective

Perspective often becomes distorted in the heat of a trial. For Job, maintaining the correct perspective was a difficult challenge.

G. The lesson of helping those who hurt

Although they had come to comfort their friend, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did just the opposite. They added misery to misery. From the negative examples of Job's friends, we could make the following suggestions for comforting.

- Empathize genuinely with the one who hurts.
- Pray earnestly for the one who hurts.
- Don't ignore expressions of physical or emotional pain.
- Don't talk too much. Listen.
- Don't become argumentative.
- Don't belittle the one who hurts.
- Don't assume that you know all the answers.
- Don't condemn with words that hurt.
- Share encouraging words from God's promises.
- Tenderly pray with the one who hurts.

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