

AUGUST 23

Job 8-11

As you read Job, here are a couple thoughts to consider:

First, what kind of man was Job? Just think, he didn't have the Holy Spirit within him and he didn't have a Bible. Yet, even when God allowed this to happen to him, with his friends brutally accusing him, Job held on to his knowledge of God; and it saved him from ruin. He was definitely "one of a kind" on the earth.

Second, was it OK for God to use Job like this? Remember the death of Stephen and all those people Paul locked up and voted to kill? Those people hadn't sinned either. Was it OK for God to do that? Is it OK for God to use you like that too, and take away all you have to further some purpose of His that you don't understand? Does God somehow become unjust and unfair? Our love for God, our trust in Him and our understanding of our salvation in our Lord is what makes or breaks us on earth.

Job 8

Vs. 1-4 Bildad the Shuhite (shoe-height) was one of those short men of the Bible. The topic of justice is where Job and his friends run off course. They all had the view that things, such as what Job was experiencing, came as the result of sin and God's justice/punishment. Notice this jab at what happened to Job's kids.

Vs. 5-7 Everything here is true, if in fact a person had sinned; but Job hadn't. What is wrong here is that this isn't a statement of spiritual fact. It is an accusation and a call to repentance.

Vs. 8-10 Bildad is telling Job to look at experience on earth over the long years of humanity up to that point.

Vs. 11-19 The idea here is that just as papyrus can't grow without a marsh, no one gets treated like Job without sin being present.

Vs. 20-22 This is both a warning to Job and a call to repentance. This is all good truth; but used like this on the wrong man, it is the hammer of Satan himself, pushing Job toward doubt, anger and self-loathing.

Job 9

Vs. 1-2 Job uses the words of Eliphaz's vision about a man being righteous in the sight of God. Job wants to know how you might appeal God's "judgment." He was now assuming that God had judged him.

Vs. 3-10 Job knew that he wouldn't be able to answer back to God because of God's wisdom, though he was only thinking of God's "wisdom" as in knowing Job's deepest sins. What is so interesting in all of what Job says is that he is only inches from the truth. He understood God's wisdom in creation. When God speaks to Job in the last chapters, He will use much of what Job says here to correct Job. Job doesn't understand that "bad things" do not mean he sinned. Job doesn't understand that in His wisdom, love and purpose, God can bring hardship into our lives without being unfair and unjust.

Vs. 11-12 Job knew of God's authority and that he wouldn't be allowed to speak back to God.

Vs. 13-21 Job says many times that he is innocent, but he knows that if God wanted to find something, He would. Job didn't understand forgiveness. All he can think is that his situation is a result of God holding on to a grudge regarding Job's sin.

In reading this I got a twinge of what Paul says in Romans 9:20, *But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?* I'd bet that Paul knew these verses in Job.

Vs. 22-24 This is where Job steps out of bounds. He accuses God of destroying the blameless and the wicked in judgment. Job is right in that he was blameless. He was wrong in assuming God had judged him. Although Job didn't see the bigger picture we saw in chapter 1, it still was a matter of trust. In a sense, the fact that his friends were judging him, and accusing Job of sin, pushed Job in this direction. Job hadn't cursed God, but now he was showing the limits of his understanding and trust of God. Job was accusing God of injustice. Job should have known that God could not pervert justice, and it should have led him to silence.

V. 23 These are hard words against God. Remember that Job had lost all of his children at one time. He is still mourning.

Vs. 25-35 Job thought again that he would die soon and there was no way to find justice on earth before God. The fact that he was in so much pain and misery made it impossible to cleanse himself or speak to God.

Job 10

Vs. 1-7 Here Job's understanding of God has fully run aground. God wasn't contending against him. It is interesting to think that Job's friends pushed him to this. It is also interesting that God knew that Job and his friends had this enormous misunderstanding of His ways. God is teaching and allowing them to show their hearts and the flaws in their understanding. So, why is God showing US all of this?

Vs. 8-12 Job understood God's part in the making of men and in showing men love and mercy, but then why was God suddenly destroying Job and forgetting that love that He had shown Job?

Vs. 13-17 This is like accusing God of having always been waiting for Job to slip.

Vs. 18-22 What is interesting is that even though Job had a limited understanding of God's goodness and justice, he held it so tightly, that even in this tragedy, it really kept Job out of trouble. Somehow he never doubted his innocence or God's just, loving character. He just couldn't put it all together. Could we have done any better even though we know more than Job did and we have the Spirit?

Job 11

Vs. 1-7 Zophar (literally, friend) gets unfriendly and totally nasty with Job. In fact, all of his friends will get meaner and meaner as they desperately try to "save" him.

Vs. 8-12 This is so close to what God will say later about His wisdom, but this is totally directed toward God's wisdom in seeing and punishing Job's sin. Verses 11 and 12 are cruel attacks on Job.

Vs. 13-20 This is another version of "turn to God and He will turn to you," except that Job hadn't turned away from God. I suppose Zophar was trying to show he really loved Job after he just said Job was dumber than a donkey. Nice guy.

1 Corinthians 15:1-28

There is a lot of great stuff in these verses. Enjoy.

Vs. 1-2 This message was being called into doubt, but Paul showed that it had worked on them.

Vs. 3-7 The message was linked to the resurrection, and the resurrection was a broadly known fact for which there were many, many witnesses.

Vs. 8-11 This might show that it may have been a point of contention that Paul wasn't one of the original Twelve. Here Paul defends himself a little. He will defend himself a lot in 2 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians we'll see more clearly that Paul was being put down by others in Corinth as a 2nd rate apostle.

Notice the "tension" of Paul's working: it was God's grace, but Paul worked hard. The Spirit wrote these words, saying that Paul worked harder than, literally, "all" of them. Yet, it was the grace of God working in Paul. There is a reason why most of Acts is about God's work through Paul, and why God used Paul to write most of the New Testament letters; but it's God's working, not Paul's. Paul understood that God both enabled and drove him.

The point in this section is the final verse, *Whether then it was I or THEY, so WE preach and so you believed.*

Vs. 12-19 As I suggested earlier in the letter, Paul wrote with emotion and I think there is some emotion here. And, the logic is very tight. If you have some time, try reading this chapter out loud a few times. This is a great portion of Scripture. Verse 19 is very powerful. Even unbelievers understand the truth in this confession that if believing in Jesus is just for this life, it is a waste of time. The resurrection, the close of the age, and the fulfilling of the plan of redemption are always linked together and they are always in view.

Vs. 20-28 Notice that there is no mention of Satan here. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Paul will talk about death's defeat one more time in this passage. One interesting note is that when Jesus talks about the church, He says, *the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.* The gates of Hell were looked at as the entrance to death, not the office building of the bad angels. The gates of Hell were like the "broad gate" to destruction, or like an open mouth ready to devour those who had died. Obviously it preaches better if those gates are the military headquarters of the enemy; but in the resurrection, *Death is swallowed up in victory* (1 Cor. 15:54b). What to do? Preach both.

Isn't it interesting how the plan of redemption, the close of this age, and the resurrection are all linked together? Everything in our lives in Christ is focused on those coming events. We can never lose sight of the harvest, because it is the field of this life. How can we ignore it? Yet, many believers do. Among the people we are trying to reach in the harvest, the fear of death reigns. The promise in Christ is life. Hebrews 2:15 - *and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

Psalm 38

Vs. 1-11 Doesn't this sound like Job? This was David's experience and was the true result of his sin. It might have been because of his lying that resulted in a town and family of priests being slaughtered, or it could have been his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. David's guilt was real and deserved. Reading this, you can see that what Job's friends were saying was biblical, but horribly misapplied to Job.

V. 12 As a result, people were waiting for David to fall.

Vs. 13-14 Unlike Job, David was quiet in his suffering. He was broken because his punishment was just. Job kept talking, egged on by his friends, because he thought God was being unfair. Once David confessed his sins, he was forgiven and knew to be silent before God in the face of the accusations of his enemies.

Vs. 15-16 Still, David knew of God's heart and faithfulness. And, God had made promises to David.

Vs. 17-20 In spite of David's brokenness and confession, his enemies only wanted his ruin - not justice or reconciliation.

Vs. 21-22 David's plea to God was based on what David had learned of God's love and faithfulness.

Since we are not Job, we need psalms like this to encourage us to confess our sin and trust God for His forgiveness and love.

Proverbs 21:28-29

V. 28 I guess this not only means that false witnesses die with their lies and that truth endures, but it also speaks of the legacy of these two men in the lives of others.

V. 29 Again, the idea here is truth. The upright doesn't need to do stuff or live in a way where he has to pretend that things are other than they are.