

AUGUST 25

Time to celebrate! Today we are almost half way through Job and we'll finish 1 Corinthians. And, there are only 123 shopping days left until Christmas! Get a *Frappuccino*® (or the local equivalent of something you like) and go nuts.

Job 16-19

I really wonder if Job would have said some of this if his friends hadn't accused him and urged him on. It seems to me that Job's friends were the greatest challenge that Satan threw at him. In defense of his friends, they had been mobilized by a lying vision and so they thought they were on a mission. But, if they had known God as deeply as Job did, they would have known, too, that Job wasn't guilty and that something else was going on. In that case, their only recourse would have been to comfort Job and strengthen him until God spoke.

Job 16

Vs. 1-5 The irony of how they were treating Job is that he was a champion of the weak and knew how to encourage them. Job would have treated them with kindness.

Vs. 6-11 It isn't God who is wearing out Job; it is Job's friends. But wait, the fact that God is allowing this means that God is involved. But, for what purpose? We shall see.

V. 9 Job is suffering in pain and grief; and now he has Moe, Larry and Curly entertaining him, so we should go easy on him. Still, he is wrongly accusing God of motives like hate. Job clearly had something to learn.

Vs. 12-17 Job was wrong to accuse God of all of this.

V. 17 sounds like Isaiah 53:9.

Vs. 18-19 These verses hint at Job holding some knowledge of God that told him there was still hope.

Vs. 20-22 Job really wanted to talk with God. It may have been too, that he didn't want to be shamed in the sight of others, since he had put so much hope in God and spoken of Him to others.

Job 17

Vs. 1-2 Not only was his spirit broken, but now Job felt he might not recover from the poison of his friends.

Vs. 3-5 It sounds like Job wanted God to make a pledge for him, because now that God had brought this event into his life, no one else would.

Vs. 6-10 Notice the reaction of the righteous to Job. They know that Job is innocent and are appalled that this could happen. Still, they hold to their faith and trust in God. Job's friends, on the other hand, should be warned. Verse 10 is like Job saying to them, "put up your dukes."

Vs. 11-16 After Job's burst of energy, he seems to fall back into despair.

Job 18

This is like tag-team wrestling, except Job is alone and there are three of them fighting against Job. Now Bildad enters the ring. If you look at what Bildad says, he is basically saying, "This is what happens to the wicked. Oh look, it just happened to you. Any questions?"

Vs. 1-4 Can you believe that Job had a friend like this? Here Job is in his grief, scraping pus out of his boils, and Bildad decides that Job needs a good beating.

Vs. 5-21 In this description of how the wicked are going to get it, he is describing Job in somewhat veiled terms.

Job 19

This is a very strong chapter.

Vs. 1-6 They were destroying Job with their misapplied righteousness. Job is basically saying that if he has sinned, it is between him and God and they should let him alone.

Vs. 7-12 Job is crying for their compassion, but all they see is that Job must have sinned. In v. 11 Job is overstepping his bounds, but this is out of his grief and agony. I think God understood.

Vs. 13-19 Can you imagine this? Everyone was condemning Job because of what had happened to him: everyone he had helped, his family, the entire community. That is a lot of rejection to throw on top of a very high mountain of grief and pain.

Vs. 20-22 What a sincere cry for help and compassion.

Vs. 23-29 Job doesn't understand what has happened to him, but there is something he knows because of knowing God. He knows that there will be a fair, final judgment; and in that judgment, he will be vindicated.

Vs. 28-29 Job knows his friends will be judged for what they are doing.

Reading this reminds me of Paul's words in Ephesians 5:15-16, *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.* As disciples in the harvest, the easiest way Satan can stop us is to get our eyes on ourselves, our needs, our rights and what we deserve. What we know because God has saved us lifts us above all of that. The Word shows that this world is dying, that God's love is enduring, and that now is the time to work and sacrifice. We are loved beyond reason and left here to work with the Lord to make disciples of those He died for. It is no news to us that this life is full of danger, and it shouldn't shake our confidence in the Lord if He uses us as an example to the world, to angels and to men. We need to keep alert to His working. His love never fails. I think this is why we have the book of Job.

1 Corinthians 16

Vs. 1-4 Notice that Paul says this is the same thing he directed the churches in Galatia to do. We've seen this reminder to the Corinthians ever since the first chapter. Paul tells the Corinthians that he is giving them the same teaching and directives that he gives everywhere in every church.

This "encouragement" for them to help the church in Jerusalem will continue into 2 Corinthians and be complete when Paul writes Romans, which is actually written from Corinth just before Paul headed to Jerusalem with this gift.

Vs. 5-14 I think these verses comprise a unit, because the Corinthians needed help now, but the help they thought they needed wasn't available.

Vs. 5-9 Paul was coming, but the Lord had him busy in Ephesus. Notice the *wide door* and *many adversaries*. The fruit that the Lord provided drove Paul on even in the face of danger. Paul saw suffering as an indication that he was near the battlefield and important matters were being decided. We see this in Job.

Vs. 10-11 Timothy was probably returning with the letter, but it is clear from I Timothy 4, that some people didn't respect him. Timothy would probably have been a help to those who were really following Christ, but not to the critics.

V. 12 Apollos wasn't in a hurry to visit Corinth, that high maintenance church.

Vs. 13-14 Therefore Paul told them to stand strong in the Lord. Notice all of the advice. This sounds like what Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:58, in the reading from yesterday, and in the verses above, from Ephesians 5:15-16. This is how we should live every day.

Vs. 15-18 And Paul told them to look to the servants/leaders among them. Stephanas and his family had devoted themselves to the service of the saints. They might not have been "super" apostles, but they were worth following. Paul urged them to receive these servants as leaders and to give them the recognition of the church. Notice that Paul talked about people being recognized or not recognized at the end of chapter 14. I was reading this morning of Jesus teaching His disciples that the humble servant would be the greatest among them. Looking at Corinth, I don't think they were looking for that kind of leader. Second Corinthians will show that they enjoyed the forceful kind. I think this is why Timothy was scorned and why they didn't appear to value Stephanas.

Vs. 19-20 The Corinthians should have valued the greeting of *Aquila and Prisca*. Apparently they loved this couple.

Vs. 21-24 This is one of Paul's stronger endings. Notice the mention of any who do not love the Lord being accursed.

So what does it mean to love the Lord? We all love Jesus. Right? I think it would be better to define love as doing what Jesus said to do (John 14:21-23, John 15:8-10): following Him in the harvest, reaching out to the lost, making disciples, who make disciples. As shown in this letter, the church can be full of people who do church and use their gifts for themselves, yet don't really love their Lord. Jesus Himself said that not everyone who calls Him Lord will enter the kingdom of Heaven. The safest way to follow Jesus and show that we love Him is to obey Him in the harvest, reaching the lost and making disciples, who make disciples. Had the Corinthians obeyed Jesus like that, many of their malfunctions would never have been.

Psalm 40:1-10

Another wonderful psalm. This is the first year that I've felt the connection between reading Job and reading these psalms.

Vs. 1-3 This was not only David's experience, but it became Job's experience too. Waiting on the Lord is worth it and out of it you get *a new song* and a heart of praise.

V. 4 This is the blessing of those like Job who hold to what they know is true about God.

V. 5 This is what David discovered by waiting for the Lord, and it is also what Job discovered.

Vs. 6-8 Even in 1 Corinthians we saw something like this. The people were doing church things, but the love of God was not within their hearts. They didn't delight to follow the Lord as their spiritual father Paul did.

Vs. 9-10 David gave great testimony to the Lord and His deliverance. The book of Job is testimony. And just reading Paul share his heart with the Corinthians is an amazing testimony of God's works and grace in working His plan of redemption.

Proverbs 22:1

Maybe this is the same as saying that being approved by God is the best thing on this planet.