

AUGUST 27

Job 23-27

What is kind of interesting to see is that as a result of this conflict with his friends, Job is getting clearer in his thinking. It's almost like he is coming closer to understanding God in what is happening to him. When God makes His statements to Job at the end, some of what He says sounds like some of what Job is beginning to say. This is all to suggest that there is even wisdom in God allowing these friends to misunderstand Job the way they did. When God finally speaks, Job has almost come to the place of solving the mystery for himself.

Job 23

Vs. 1-7 In spite of his suffering, Job is very positive about the reception he would have from God. Job is confident that if he were to present his case to God, he would be acquitted. He is right in that, but wrong in the reason for this trial.

Vs. 8-12 Job couldn't see God, but he knew God could see him. And Job himself was confident that he had not strayed from God and that God knew it. It is interesting that Job felt that if tried by God, God would pronounce him "pure" *as gold*. He didn't consider that God was trying him to drive out impurities (not sins) in his thinking, so that Job would be refined and become as pure as gold.

Vs. 13-17 Though some light is breaking through here, Job still considers God to be hard and mad at him.

Job 24

Vs. 1-9 This is what the wicked do to others. Job knows the wicked will be judged. But this entire ordeal has made him wonder why God delays. The answer to this will be the same answer as to why Job is suffering: Trust in God's wisdom and goodness.

Vs. 10-12 As a result of the way the wicked treat the poor, this is what happens to the poor. Verse 12 is a pretty strong statement by Job, but it makes more sense if you understand him as saying that God doesn't execute judgment immediately.

Vs. 13-17 This is still the mystery of how the Lord works with the wicked. It seems that everything they plan works out for them, but having read Esther, we know that isn't true. And, eighty years on this planet is less than a scratch on the timeline of eternity.

Vs. 18-20 Job is quoting his friends and their black and white idea of God's judgment.

Vs. 21-25 So, why does God allow this at all? Job seems to be beginning to understand that that mystery is tied together with his own mystery. Verse 25 is a challenge to his friends to prove him wrong. Obviously they can't, and with that, they are running out of ways to beat Job.

Job 25

Bildad gives the best speech of all the friends because it is not only the shortest speech, but also because it is their final speech.

Vs. 1- 6 Notice that what he says here, and what all Job's friends have said, is hinged on these words which they heard from a spirit. Actually, the words and vision from Satan confirmed what they already believed. They believed in total depravity from conception on. But the full truth is more than that. As we saw in the garden when Satan spoke with Eve, he dealt in lies that were framed in half-truths. The minute God promised Adam and Eve that one of their offspring would crush the serpent's head, God was declaring there was a way for man to stand righteously before Him. Knowing God through His Word and through the love of Christ, we have the correct

answer. Job knew that a future righteousness existed in the promise of God to Adam and to Noah and he held to this in his heart because he knew God.

V. 6 There is no reason for us to be proud, but I'm not sure that this kind of self-effacement is honoring to God either. We need to see ourselves in Christ.

Job 26

From here to chapter 31 are Job's closing words of argument. This part of Job's argument seems to show that God's power and ways are deeper than our understanding. That will be good for Job to remember in a few chapters.

Vs. 1-4 It seems that Job is showing them that they have helped no one by what they have said. Even though it was God who gave them breath, whose breath actually came out of their mouths?

Vs. 5-14 As Job described God's ways and showed his accusers that he knew a lot about God, Job failed to apply God's wisdom to his own situation. In describing God's power like this, Job was not giving God the trust He deserved. His power is irresistible and beyond our understanding, but His character of love doesn't change.

Vs. 13 and 14 continue the theme of God's breath, by mentioning both wind and whisper.

Job 27

Vs. 1-6 Job still thought he got a raw deal from God. Notice that the theme of breath from 26:4 is still being developed. Job said that as long as he had breath, he would continue to follow God in integrity and hold to his own innocence.

Vs. 7-10 This is a warning to his friends. They accused him of being wicked; now Job says that their behavior toward him defined them as being wicked.

Notice *will* in vs. 9-10. Job is defining a godly person. He cries to God, delights in the Almighty and calls upon God at all times. That is a very interesting definition of the righteous, virtually hidden in the text.

Vs. 11-12 Now Job will tell them about the wicked.

Vs. 13-23 But Job acknowledges that the wicked eventually are judged. He just doesn't include himself with the wicked. He is still thinking along the old lines: "The wicked get judged, the righteous get blessed. I'm righteous and have incurred judgment, so God made a mistake." God will correct this wrong thinking in a few chapters.

As we think of our work in the harvest, we need to remember that there is judgment coming for all who do not turn to Christ as their Savior. While God is showing us something important behind the events of Job's life and the pruning He is doing in Job's life, the storm of God's judgment is on the horizon of the field of harvest. We need to submit to our Lord and follow Him, making disciples, who make disciples.

2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11

2 Corinthians 1:12-24

V. 12 Paul is gently defending himself here. His mention of conscience, simplicity, sincerity, etc., shows that he's dealing with criticism. Notice that the mention of *earthly wisdom* is sort of what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1.

Vs. 13-14 Paul had no hidden agenda or ulterior motives as he worked in the harvest. Especially in the case of Corinth, he didn't allow them to help him financially. It must have been apparent that they didn't trust him. In accepting the message that Paul brought; however, they acknowledged Paul as a servant of Christ. Paul hoped that when they were glorified before Christ, that they would be proud of knowing Paul as the servant the Lord sent to them.

Vs. 15-24 What you notice in this section is Paul's outpouring of heart to show the Corinthians that he loved them and was working for their good. This will be typical of the letter up to chapter 9. This gentleness and expression of how God soothed Paul's own heart will explain some of his digressions. It is sad that Paul had to live under this tension and suspicion, but as a result God tempered his heart; and we have this letter and what Paul taught about the Lord and leading His people.

V. 17 I think the best way to understand this is as follows. At the end of 1 Corinthians, Paul mentioned that neither he nor Apollos would be able to visit them. The Corinthians apparently had deep issues that needed an authority figure. It seems that Paul made an unplanned visit to Corinth, and it was a real showdown with a group or an individual. Whatever it was, it was hard. He planned to go again; but instead of risking another confrontation, he decided to send a very strong letter suggesting that the church or churches of Corinth should follow the Lord and exercise discipline. The fact that Paul decided to forgo this second visit was used by his critics to show that Paul was insincere.

Vs. 18-22 Paul is motivated by the glory of God and the work of Christ, not politics. His only interest was in their growth in Christ. Instead of looking at people and motives, they needed to look at the "non-vacillating" effect of the power of Christ among them. They came to know Christ who fulfills all of the promises of God. Not only did they find the power and working of Christ, Paul pointed to the faithful workers of God among them. They should have felt honored because of the heartfelt love of men like Silvanus, Timothy, Paul and others. God would faithfully continue working with them, and they should have been thankful for all the effort being made on their behalf. Both Paul's conscience and God bore witness to Paul's sincere intentions and pure handling of this matter.

Vs. 23-24 Do you see how Paul was trying to answer their suspicions and still express his love? Paul didn't "lord it over them," but worked with them, even taking their immaturity into account.

2 Corinthians 2:1-11

V. 1 After sending 1 Corinthians, Paul made an unplanned visit; and it was a hard one.

Vs. 2-4 Apparently Paul found his "soft side." Actually, what you see is Paul letting them into his reasoning and his heart in making these decisions. These aren't "rabbit trails," but instead he is opening up to show them the process of his thinking. He is trying to describe the influence of his affection for them in making these decisions. Verse 4 is very strong and passionate. I don't think the super-apostles had this same heart for the people.

Vs. 5-11 It seems likely that this letter was sent to reprimand someone who was creating dissension against his authority. This guy and Paul probably had it out. Rather than Paul going back to confront this person, he wrote the letter to tell the church to correct this man before Paul returned. This action showed their spiritual maturity in standing for Paul and following the Word. Paul reminded the church to show love and forgiveness to this repentant person.

Just as side note here, look at these things that Paul wrote regarding conflict in the church.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 - And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

And the following was actually written from Corinth when Paul made his scheduled visit over the winter. *I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.* (Romans 16:17)

I once spoke to a member of a search committee who expressed a major problem with someone on the church's board. My advice to him was to take care of the problem before they hired a

pastor. It amazes me that some groups that have problems won't deal with them but expect someone totally new and unsuspecting to move his family, relocate, enter a situation, and then find the church is built over a cesspool of problems and dishonesty. And we wonder why the harvest gets neglected. Paul's simplicity needs to be modeled in following Christ. To follow Him in the harvest, the group needs to be honest, and behavior needs to reflect love and obedience to Christ. Ignoring problems makes it impossible to move forward in love, and the harvest is forgotten.

Psalm 41

Earlier in the year when we read this psalm, I mentioned that it could have been written when David was running from Absalom, and the friend in v. 9 could have been Ahithophel. That could be. On the other hand, when David began to run from Saul he was certainly betrayed by many "friends," and his situation looked hopeless. Imagine, David had all of the army of Israel searching for him.

Vs. 1-4 It appears that David considered himself to be this poor man. When he was running from Saul for those ten years, living in caves and on the open fields in the wilderness, he was certainly poor. David's sin could have been because of the priests who were killed, because of his lying, or because David sought refuge with the Philistines rather than going to God.

Vs. 5-9 Doesn't this sound like Job? It seems that David is still running from Saul, but having seen God save him in many small ways, his faith was strong. He was suffering, but he still believed. If this wasn't Ahithophel in v. 9, it could have been any of the fighting men, including Abner, who turned on David when Saul declared his hatred for David.

Notice that v. 9 is prophetically referring to Jesus. *I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, "He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me."* (John 13:18)

Vs. 10-13 Notice how David says, *but you*. God saved David from the intent of his enemies and upheld him, because he sought to live according to what he knew was the true, loving character of the Lord. This is just like Job. David fell, but what made him a man after God's own heart was that he rose and followed the Lord.

Proverbs 22:5-6

V. 5 I think it is safe to assume that this is generally how God does things, but Job's friends were telling Job that this is what had happened to Job because of his sin.

V. 6 This is every believing parent's prayer and hope.