

The Bible Story In A Year

Week 2

After considering the early part of the Genesis story, we turned our attention to the story of Job. There, we saw Job's righteousness and how Satan wanted Job's faith to be tested by these blessings being taken away. So, after some great trials, Job and his three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) engaged in the first of three rounds of speeches. Remember that the friends have been accusing Job of sinning so as to cause God to punish him, while Job maintained his innocence and claimed he did not know why God was opposing him.

1) The second round of speeches between Job and his friends. The speeches seem to become more intense with each round. Again, this second round gives opportunity for all three friends to address Job and for Job to issue a reply to each (Job 15-21). Eliphaz accused Job of arguing with useless talk that comes from his sinfulness (15:2-6), concluding that the wicked are the ones who experience trouble. Bildad urged Job to stop all his foolish talk so they could talk some sense into him (18:2-4), painting pictures of how the wicked experience many terrible things. Zophar is troubled by what he hears from Job so as to speak (20:2-3), making the case that the joy of the wicked is brief (20:4-5). To each of these accusations, Job consistently maintained his innocence in the sense of committing sin that has resulted in his suffering. Instead, he believed God had wronged him so as to treat Job as His enemy and wanted to plead his case before God (16:11-14; 19:5-6). In addition, Job asked that if the conclusions of his friends are true, then why do the wicked continue to live and prosper (21:7-9)? Yet, even though these things had happened, he concluded that his Redeemer lives (19:25-29). Furthermore, he identified that his friends are miserable comforters (16:2-5; 19:2-3; 21:34).

2) The third round of speeches between Job and his friends. Unlike the prior two rounds, only Eliphaz and Bildad speak in this final round of speeches, with Job speaking after each (Job 22-31). Note that Job gave an extended speech after Bildad. It is more of the same in this round, with the rhetoric becoming even more intense. Eliphaz concluded Job's wickedness is abundant and his sin is endless (22:5), even making specific accusations against Job and urges Job to come to terms with God so he can experience good and peace (22:21). Bildad's brief speech focused on the dominion of and dread that comes from God (25:2). In Job's speeches, his mouth was filled with arguments about why God should act differently than He had. He maintained his innocence and claimed God had done these things to him for no good reason (23:10-16; 27:2-6). He wished God would weigh him with accurate scales (31:4-6).

3) Elihu speaks. After the three rounds of speeches concluded (Job 32:1), we are introduced to another man (Elihu) who has been present for the speeches. He has held his tongue because he was younger than the others. He was angry at Job because he had justified himself rather than God and with the friends because they could not answer and yet condemned Job (32:2-5). Elihu wanted Job to prepare his case against him rather than God, since Elihu and Job were both men (33:5-7). He simply told Job he was wrong in the matter for trying to take God to court and make Him give Job an answer for what happened (33:8-13). He said that God has the right to do whatever He pleases and does not act wickedly (34:12-15). Job is said to have multiplied his words against God (34:35-37). He said Job should stop and consider God's wondrous works (37:14) and know that God does not violate justice and abundant righteousness (37:23-24).

4) God speaks to Job. At the conclusion of all these speeches, God answers Job from a whirlwind (Job 38-41). Interestingly, He never addressed what Job and the friends have said directly or answers why the trials had occurred. Rather, God simply demonstrated time-after-time how insignificant Job was compared to Him (38:1-7). Many examples are given from the wonders of God's creation concerning how God has designed and provided for each one. Surely, Job did not and could not do any of these things. God challenged Job to answer and correct Him after Job had been arguing that God afflicted Job unjustly and wanted a hearing with God in court (38:3; 40:1-2, 6-8). If Job could do these marvelous things, then Job could deliver himself (40:9-14). Particularly, God pointed Job to the examples of Behemoth (40:15-24) and Leviathan (41:1-34) as spectacular creatures God had made but people cannot conquer (40:19; 41:10).

5) Restitutions between Job, the friends, and God. Job is recorded as speaking twice after God spoke (Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6). Both acknowledged Job's insignificance and God's greatness. So, he repented for speaking of things that were too wondrous for him, calling God into question (though Job still acknowledged God's greatness). Then, God also rebuked the three friends (though saying nothing about Elihu, who had spoken with much greater wisdom than the others). Interestingly, they were told to offer burnt offerings for themselves by bringing them to Job (42:7-9). When this was all done, God then restored the fortunes of Job (even doubling them) and blessed Job greatly (42:10-16).

The story of Job reminds us that we do not always know why things happen to us the way they do. However, our wisdom and experiences do not put us in a position to call God into question. Instead, God is always unmatched and we should never question His commitment

Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?