

Lesson # 10

Sunday September 13, 2009
Wednesday September 16, 2009
Sunday, September 20, 2009

Job

Bible Reading

Job 32-33
Sunday, 9/13

Job 34-35
Wednesday, 9/16

Job 36-37
Sunday, 9/20

Job: From 10,000'

Job 1-2: Prologue

Job 3: Job's soliloquy

Job 4-14: Discourse #1
(Job w/ Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar)

Job 15-21: Discourse #2

Job 22-31: Discourse #3

Job 32-37: Elihu speaks

Job 38-41: God answers Job

Job 42: Job is restored

Extra Reading

Overview of Elihu's
Speech from, The Book of
Job, Gleason L. Archer,
pages 90-91. – for class
on September 13.

Reaching Forward, 9/8 –
"The Blessed Are Those
Who Endure" – for class
on September 16.

Reaching Forward, 9/9 –
"Bearing Burdens For A
Long Time" – for class on
September 20.

Questions... From Job 32-37

- I. **Job 32 – Intro & Elihu's Defense of His Right to Speak**
 - a. **Why had the 3 friends given up? (vs. 1)**
 - b. **What were the two reasons Elihu's anger burned within him? (vss. 2-3)**
 - c. **What has he found to be an inaccurate indicator of wisdom? (vss. 6-10)**
 - d. **What does he think about the friends polemical skills? (vss. 11-14)**
 - e. **From Elihu's introductory remarks, what might you anticipate about his character and personality? (vss. 5-22)**
- II. **Job 33 – Elihu's First Disputation: God Uses Suffering to Save Humans from Destruction**
 - a. **How does Elihu intend for Job to receive his admonition? Do his motives seem noble? (vss. 1-7)**
 - b. **Do you think he accurately represents Job as he reproduces some of the things Job said? What is his conclusion? (vss. 8-12)**
 - c. **What observation does he make in vss. 13-14?**
 - d. **What is his counsel on suffering and how man should respond? (vss. 16-30)**
 - e. **Can you think of other Biblical examples and passages that would substantiate Elihu's argument?**

III. Job 34 – Elihu’s Second Disputation: God Is Just

- a. What has Job said that Elihu feels puts Job in the company of the wicked? (vss. 7-9)**

- b. Elihu promised that his arguments would be different than those of the friends (32:14); does he stick to that? (vss. 10-11)**

- c. What does he then proceed to defend? (vss. 12-15)**

- d. Who in this world does Elihu challenge a man to condemn? (vss. 16-20)**

- e. What point is Elihu trying to make that might be relevant to Job’s situation (vss. 21-30)**

- f. Though vss. 31-37 are admittedly difficult, what is the clear feeling of Elihu about Job?**

IV. Job 35 – Elihu’s Third Speech: God Is Not Answerable to Man

- a. What question does Elihu intend to answer at the first of this chapter?**

- b. What is his answer? (vss. 4-8) Has this been addressed before? (compare to Job 22:2-3)**

- c. Why does God sometimes not answer those who cry out in their oppression? (vss. 8-13)**

- d. How does Elihu apply this to Job? (vss. 14-16)**

V. Job 36 – Elihu’s Fourth Speech: The Justice and Sovereignty of God

- a. **What role does Elihu see God play toward these various groups:**
 - i. **the afflicted?**
 - ii. **the righteous?**
 - iii. **kings?**
 - iv. **the wicked?**
- b. **What purpose, besides punishment, does suffering serve? (vss. 8-9)**
- c. **How do the godless and the penitent differ in their reaction to suffering (vss. 11-13)?**
- d. **Which does Elihu feel Job to be? (cf. Job 34:37)**
- e. **As Elihu attempts to vindicate God’s use of affliction, what does he caution Job not to do? (vss. 16-23)**
- f. **What characteristics of God does Elihu see in the weather? (vss. 24-29)**
- g. **What work of God is exercised in the power of the storm? (vss. 30-33)**
- h. **Some suggest that Elihu was making his points while observing an actual storm. How does the story support this? (cf. Job 36:30; 37:1; 38:1)**

VI. Job 37 – Elihu’s Fourth Speech Continued

- a. **Note how the final chapter of Elihu’s speech leads us to God’s speech. Could one contribution of this speech be that it prepares us for God’s answer?**

The Speeches of Elihu (Job 32-37)

This is a prose introduction for Elihu, son of Barachel, a younger man who has listened in on the discussion until it finally bogged down in a stalemate. His insights prove to be valuable as a critique of both sides of the controversy and as a theological preparation for the speeches of Yahweh in chapters 38-41. In one sense Elihu serves as an arbiter between Job and his critics, for he rebukes the three counselors in regard to their unsupported accusations and consequent inability to silence Job.

On the other hand he severely castigates Job for his belligerent self-justification and his unfair criticism of God. But his most important role is that of an advocate for the wise and loving providence of God. In some ways he can be considered as the most acute theologian of them all, and he throws more light upon the central problem of undeserved suffering than any other speaker in the book (except for God himself, of course, in the prologue and epilogue).

He is displeased with Job for the way he attempted to justify himself and prove himself in the right, at the expense of God's righteousness and integrity. He shows that Job has overlooked the possibility that suffering may be permitted by the Lord for wise and benevolent purposes, and that the only proper response of a true servant of God is a posture of humble acceptance and uncomplaining submission.

What Job needs to realize is that even though he may be innocent of any and all of the charges the three critics have leveled against him, his resentful attitude toward God manifests an insubordination bordering on arrogance. It is for this sinful presumption that he needs to humble himself in abject repentance. Significantly enough, even though Job makes no verbal response to Elihu whatever, he finally complies with that counsel and roundly condemns himself as a presumptuous fool, casting himself completely upon God's mercy (40:3-5; 42:3). Elihu thus serves as a key figure in this whole drama, and despite his occasional unfairness in his criticism of Job, he succeeds as a counselor, where Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar fail abysmally.

--The Book of Job, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., pages 90-91.



Reaching Forward: Daily Motivation to Move Ahead More Steadily

September 8

The Blessed Are Those Who Endure

Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord -- that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

James 5:11

Many may agree to live the Christian life when it's easy, but there aren't many who will live it when it's hard. Difficulty has often been the deterrent of those started out to follow the Lord. So James says, "We count them blessed who *endure*."

One of Jesus' most familiar parables is the Parable of the Sower, the story of the seed scattered on different kinds of soil. In interpreting the parable, Jesus said that the "stony ground" represented the person "who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. *For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles*" (**Matthew 13:20-21**). It's a sad fact that some will renounce the gospel when serious difficulty arises.

No doubt, there are times when all of us are tempted to say, "But Lord, this is *hard*." At such times, He would probably say, "I told you that it would be hard. What were you expecting?" Paul said that "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (**Acts 14:22**), and he often warned his hearers that being a Christian would involve hardship (**2 Thessalonians 3:3-4**).

It is not as if God doesn't *know* the difficulties we face. We can never say, "God, You have no idea what You have asked of us or how hard it is." He *does* know how hard it is, and He is not unaware of our efforts on His behalf (**Hebrews 6:10**). Besides, nothing we can do for God will ever be as hard as what Jesus did for us.

In secular matters, the honorable people are those who tackle difficulty with a do-or-die attitude. The quitters are soon forgotten; they are irrelevant to the real work that goes on in the world. In spiritual matters, it is no different. Those who complain, "Lord, I would have done my duty, but it was just so *hard*," won't ever make much of a contribution to the kingdom – because "hard" is exactly what the work of the kingdom is. So we need to take heed how we deal with difficulty. The Lord has always been patient with those who are willing to keep trying. But those who *quit* trying shouldn't expect the Lord's praise or anybody else's.

Difficulty is the excuse history never accepts.

Samuel Grafton



Reaching Forward: Daily Motivation to Move Ahead More Steadily

September 9

Bearing Burdens for a Long Time

Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Many may agree to bear a burden for a while, but there aren't many who will bear it indefinitely. Some hardships are short-term, but others last much longer. In the case of these long-lasting difficulties, we must not only accept tribulation, but be “*patient in tribulation.*” It may be a long time (at least from our perspective) before rest and relief are able to be enjoyed.

Job would be a good example here, wouldn't he? The things he suffered would have been terrible even if only for a short time. But at the worst of his ordeal, he had no idea how long it would go on. It might have lasted the rest of his life! As we read Job's story, we know that his burden was eventually lifted, but he did not know that while he was suffering. His steadfastness in the midst of suffering is all the more amazing in that, for all he knew, it could have been indefinite. He was willing to endure whatever was necessary *for however long it took to see God's face* (**Job 19:25-27**).

I fear that our dealings with God sometimes involve a bit of “bargaining.” We say to Him, “Lord, I will deal with this difficulty if You will remove it within a reasonable time.” And, of course, it is we who define what is reasonable. When that time passes and the difficulty is still there, we grow resentful, as if God had somehow fallen down on His end of the bargain. But He never agreed to the bargain. He never said how long the difficulty would last.

I find myself reading Hebrews more often these days. Its message is that we need to accept whatever problems have to be dealt with *for however long it takes to get to heaven!* “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward,” the writer said. “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (**Hebrews 10:35-36**). The promise will surely come, but it may not come very soon.

So let us not dictate to God the terms of our service to Him, as if we were only obligated to do what we define as reasonable. He asks of us an *unconditional* commitment to serve under *any* circumstances. When our service involves difficulty, as it often will, let us endure. Even when we can't see the end, let us *still* endure.

Patience: accepting a difficult situation
without giving God a deadline to remove it.

Bill Gothard