***Job: A Study in Suffering…And Faith***

**Answers to Study Questions**

Lesson Ten: Job’s Two Monologues

Text: Job 27:1 – 31:40

Lesson Objectives:

1. Be able to contrast Job’s standing among his peers prior to and after his suffering.

2. Understand the textual difficulties in this section of Job.

1. **What do all of the following passages have in common: 6:29, 30; 10:7; 12:4; 13:18, 19; 16:17; 23:1-12; 27:1-6?**

**Job 6:29–30 (ESV)**

**29** Please turn; let no injustice be done. Turn now; my vindication is at stake. **30** Is there any injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern the cause of calamity?

**Job 10:7 (ESV)**

**7** although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand?

**Job 12:4 (ESV)**

**4** I am a laughingstock to my friends; I, who called to God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, am a laughingstock.

**Job 13:18–19 (ESV)**

**18** Behold, I have prepared my case; I know that I shall be in the right. **19** Who is there who will contend with me? For then I would be silent and die.

**Job 16:17 (ESV)**

**17** although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure.

**Job 23:1–12 (ESV)**

**1** Then Job answered and said: **2** “Today also my complaint is bitter; my hand is heavy on account of my groaning. **3** Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! **4** I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. **5** I would know what he would answer me and understand what he would say to me. **6** Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; he would pay attention to me. **7** There an upright man could argue with him, and I would be acquitted forever by my judge. **8** “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; **9** on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him. **10** But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. **11** My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept his way and have not turned aside. **12** I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.

**Job 27:1–6 (ESV)**

**1** And Job again took up his discourse, and said: **2** “As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, **3** as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, **4** my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit. **5** Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. **6** I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.

6:29-30 “my righteousness still stands”

10:7 “you know that I am not guilty”

12:4 “a just and blameless man”

13:18-19 “I know that I shall be in the right”

16:17 “no violence in my hands and my prayer is pure”

23:1-12 “an upright man” (v. 7)

“I shall come out as gold” (v. 10)

“I have kept His way and have not turned aside” (v. 11)

“I have not departed from the commandment of His lips;” (v. 12)

27:1-6 “I will not put away my integrity from me” (v. 5)

“I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go” (v. 6)

“my heart does not reproach me for any of my days” (v. 6)

These passages all contain some claim to innocence or assumption of innocence (in the sense of not deserving the suffering that he was experiencing).

1. **Why do some scholars assign 27:7-23 to Zophar as his third speech?**

The text does not identify any material as belonging to Zophar and constituting his third speech. Some scholars appear to feel compelled to complete the third cycle of speeches by assigning some material to Zophar.

Part of the reason that this material is sometimes assigned to Zophar is that the theme of this text, the downfall of the wicked, is a theme running through the speeches of the friends. One could argue that the material contained in this section would fit in the mouth of Zophar better than the mouth of Job!

Note, however, that Job is identified as the speaker in 27:1. In all of the other speeches of the friends, the speaker is always identified. Although Driver and Gray [228-229] argue that vv. 13-23 must belong to Zophar, they offer no manuscript evidence (e.g., manuscript variations) to support their claim.

1. **With what accomplishment did Job illustrate the skill and intelligence of man?**

He noted the ability of man to mine the earth for precious metals. Despite the qualities of the lion and the falcon, man is superior to them in his ability to delve into the earth for these treasures.

**Job 28:1–8 (ESV)**

**1** “Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold that they refine. **2** Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore. **3** Man puts an end to darkness and searches out to the farthest limit the ore in gloom and deep darkness. **4** He opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives; they are forgotten by travelers; they hang in the air, far away from mankind; they swing to and fro. **5** As for the earth, out of it comes bread, but underneath it is turned up as by fire. **6** Its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold. **7** “That path no bird of prey knows, and the falcon’s eye has not seen it. **8** The proud beasts have not trodden it; the lion has not passed over it.

1. **Why might Job have said the things contained in 27:13-23?**

Job had not disagreed with the general rule that the wicked suffer (cf. 24:18-25), although he had noted that there were exceptions (cf. 21:7-15; the wicked did not always seem to suffer – sometimes they even prospered!). He believed that justice was fulfilled when they did suffer and believed that the wicked should suffer their punishment in this world (21:17-21). Job objected to the friends’ conclusion that he was a sinner because he was suffering. Job believed in the ultimate fairness of God; he just didn’t understand how divine justice was being applied to him.

Some suggest that Job was actually quoting the friends in a sarcastic way in this passage. By condemning him unfairly, they were, in fact, acting as wicked men. He was thus using their arguments against them. I suppose that such is possible, but there is nothing in the text to demand it.

1. **What is the only way by which man may possess wisdom from God?**

Man does not know, i.e., appreciate, its value (28:13). It cannot be bought; in fact, there is nothing which man possesses which compares in value (vv. 15-19). Man cannot find wisdom (v. 21). The only way that man can possess divine wisdom is for God to “declare” it (vv. 27-28). Note the summary of divine wisdom in verse 28. Compare this to the message of the Proverbs writer in Proverbs chapter one.

**Job 28:28 (ESV)**

**28** And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’ ”

**Proverbs 1:7 (ESV)**

**7** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

1. **What contrast stands out as Job compared his past with his present?**

Job noted the respect and high esteem in which he had been held prior to his calamities (29:7-11, 21-25).

**Job 29:7–11 (ESV)**

**7** When I went out to the gate of the city, when I prepared my seat in the square, **8** the young men saw me and withdrew, and the aged rose and stood; **9** the princes refrained from talking and laid their hand on their mouth; **10** the voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth. **11** When the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it approved,

**Job 29:21–25 (ESV)**

**21** “Men listened to me and waited and kept silence for my counsel. **22** After I spoke they did not speak again, and my word dropped upon them. **23** They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain. **24** I smiled on them when they had no confidence, and the light of my face they did not cast down. **25** I chose their way and sat as chief, and I lived like a king among his troops, like one who comforts mourners.

In contrast, he was now mocked and shunned by the lowest of society, those who had been cast out by others (30:1-15).

**Job 30:1–15 (ESV)**

**1** “But now they laugh at me, men who are younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock. **2** What could I gain from the strength of their hands, men whose vigor is gone? **3** Through want and hard hunger they gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation; **4** they pick saltwort and the leaves of bushes, and the roots of the broom tree for their food. **5** They are driven out from human company; they shout after them as after a thief. **6** In the gullies of the torrents they must dwell, in holes of the earth and of the rocks. **7** Among the bushes they bray; under the nettles they huddle together. **8** A senseless, a nameless brood, they have been whipped out of the land. **9** “And now I have become their song; I am a byword to them. **10** They abhor me; they keep aloof from me; they do not hesitate to spit at the sight of me. **11** Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. **12** On my right hand the rabble rise; they push away my feet; they cast up against me their ways of destruction. **13** They break up my path; they promote my calamity; they need no one to help them. **14** As through a wide breach they come; amid the crash they roll on. **15** Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is pursued as by the wind, and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.

1. **Of what sins did Job declare that he was innocent?**

***Lust (31:1-4)***

**Job 31:1–4 (ESV)**

**1** “I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? **2** What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? **3** Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? **4** Does not he see my ways and number all my steps?

***Lying/deceit (31:5-8)***

**Job 31:5–8 (ESV)**

**5** “If I have walked with falsehood and my foot has hastened to deceit; **6** (Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!) **7** if my step has turned aside from the way and my heart has gone after my eyes, and if any spot has stuck to my hands, **8** then let me sow, and another eat, and let what grows for me be rooted out.

***Adultery (31:9-12)***

**Job 31:9–12 (ESV)**

**9** “If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor’s door, **10** then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down on her. **11** For that would be a heinous crime; that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges; **12** for that would be a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn to the root all my increase.

***Misuse of power (31:13-15)***

**Job 31:13–15 (ESV)**

**13** “If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me, **14** what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? **15** Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?

***Neglect of the needy (31:16-20)***

**Job 31:16–20 (ESV)**

**16** “If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, **17** or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it **18** (for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother’s womb I guided the widow), **19** if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, **20** if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep,

***Abuse of justice (31:21-23)***

**Job 31:21–23 (ESV)**

**21** if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, **22** then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. **23** For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.

***Materialism (31:24-25)***

**Job 31:24–25 (ESV)**

**24** “If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence, **25** if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much,

***Idolatry (31:26-28)***

**Job 31:26–28 (ESV)**

**26** if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, **27** and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, **28** this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above.

***Bitterness/spite (31:29)***

**Job 31:29 (ESV)**

**29** “If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him

1. **How did Job declare himself innocent of these sins?**

In each section of text, Job suggested a curse that should be placed on him if he had indeed sinned in these areas. Thus he proclaimed his innocence by implication. The reasoning is as follows:

a) If I have sinned in this fashion, may this horrible thing happen to me (the curse).

b) Surely I would not wish such a horrible thing (the curse) to happen to me.

c) The fact, then, that I am willing to pronounce such a curse against myself must mean that I believe myself to be innocent of these sins.

Example: 31:21-23

**Job 31:21–23 (ESV)**

**21** if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, **22** then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. **23** For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.

1. **What reason(s) did Job give for his caution in avoiding lusting after young women?**

a) He noted that God dealt out destruction and disaster for the wicked, the workers of iniquity (31:2-3).

b) He also noted that God sees all. He saw Job’s ways and counted all his steps (31:4), implying that Job could not lust after a young woman without God knowing about it and then punishing him.

1. **List the passages in the lesson text which suggest Job’s commitment to benevolence. What lesson can we take from his emphasis?**

29:12-17 - Job noted that the reason for his respect was his commitment to benevolence.

30:25 - Job emphasized his sympathy for the unfortunate.

31:16-20 - Job proclaimed his innocence in the matter of neglecting the needy or unfortunate.

The whole Old Testament emphasizes the importance of concern for one’s fellow man. This was a prominent theme in the Mosaic law which most certainly came after Job’s time. God's assessment of Job in the beginning of the book makes Job’s concern for his fellowman very important.

It seems that it is simply not enough for us to avoid immorality in our own lives. We must also be concerned about the needs of others.