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

**Answers to Study Questions**

Lesson Thirteen: God’s Second Challenge to Job/Job’s Answer/Epilogue

Text: Job 40:4 – 42:17

Lesson Objectives:

1. Be able to identify the overall purpose of God’s speeches.

2. Be able to suggest the reason for God’s differing responses to the three friends and Job.

1. **Of what did God accuse Job in 40:8?**

God accused Job of condemning Him so that he (Job) might be justified.

**Job 40:8 (ESV)**

**8** Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?

**Job 40:8 (NIV)**

**8** “Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?

At the same time that Job had affirmed his own righteousness (e.g., 31:1-40), he had also questioned God’s fairness (9:21-24; 16:7-14; 19:6-7; 24:1-12; 33:8-12).

**Job 9:21–24 (ESV)**

**21** I am blameless; I regard not myself; I loathe my life. **22** It is all one; therefore I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’ **23** When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent. **24** The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges— if it is not he, who then is it?

**Job 16:11 (ESV)**

**11** God gives me up to the ungodly and casts me into the hands of the wicked.

**Job 19:6–7 (ESV)**

**6** know then that God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me. **7** Behold, I cry out, ‘Violence!’ but I am not answered; I call for help, but there is no justice.

**Job 24:1–12 (ESV)**

**1** “Why are not times of judgment kept by the Almighty, and why do those who know him never see his days? **2** Some move landmarks; they seize flocks and pasture them. **3** They drive away the donkey of the fatherless; they take the widow’s ox for a pledge. **4** They thrust the poor off the road; the poor of the earth all hide themselves. **5** Behold, like wild donkeys in the desert the poor go out to their toil, seeking game; the wasteland yields food for their children. **6** They gather their fodder in the field, and they glean the vineyard of the wicked man. **7** They lie all night naked, without clothing, and have no covering in the cold. **8** They are wet with the rain of the mountains and cling to the rock for lack of shelter. **9** (There are those who snatch the fatherless child from the breast, and they take a pledge against the poor.) **10** They go about naked, without clothing; hungry, they carry the sheaves; **11** among the olive rows of the wicked they make oil; they tread the winepresses, but suffer thirst. **12** From out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded cries for help; yet God charges no one with wrong.

**Job 33:8–12 (ESV)**

**8** “Surely you have spoken in my ears, and I have heard the sound of your words. **9** You say, ‘I am pure, without transgression; I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me. **10** Behold, he finds occasions against me, he counts me as his enemy, **11** he puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.’ **12** “Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you, for God is greater than man.

According to the friends’ theodicy, either Job is guilty or God is unfair. The friends assumed the justice of God, so naturally they accused Job of sin.

In the process of justifying himself, Job had condemned God, i.e., charged Him with injustice.

Theodicy: “defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil” (Merriam-Webster.com)

1. **What challenge did God issue to Job in 40:9-13?**

**Job 40:9–14 (ESV)**

**9** Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his? **10** “Adorn yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory and splendor. **11** Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on everyone who is proud and abase him. **12** Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand. **13** Hide them all in the dust together; bind their faces in the world below. **14** Then will I also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can save you.

God challenged Job to display his power and effect justice. In God’s two discourses, there is very little said about justice. Note the following passage:

**Job 38:12–15 (ESV)**

**12** “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, **13** that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? **14** It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. **15** From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.

The reason for noting this passage (40:9-13) is that this section of text suggests the point of all of the other questions: Job is inadequate in knowledge and power to effect justice, nor can he understand God’s ways.

1. **What animals did God cite in chapters 40-41? Why?**

God referred to the behemoth and leviathan. It does not seem that these creatures were mythical (the effectiveness of God’s argument would then be severely blunted). The descriptions of these animals seem to fit certain of the dinosaurs.

Whatever skepticism we might harbor regarding the true appearance/behavior of dinosaurs, it is essentially undeniable that dinosaurs existed; there is even adequate archaeological evidence that men and dinosaurs lived at the same time. Of course, the implication of the biblical account of creation (assuming the days of creation were 24-hour days) is that men and dinosaurs did live at the same time.

God referenced these creatures so that He might compare their power to Job’s. If Job was unable to subdue these creatures, how could he expect to stand before their Creator?!

1. **Did God in this speech explain to Job why he was suffering?**

Just as in His first discourse, God did not explain to Job in His second discourse why he is suffering. Job summarized God’s point at the end of the second discourse: “I know that You can do all things” (42:2a).

The fact that God offered no explanation suggests that He expected Job to trust Him. The book of Job is not really an ***explanation*** of innocent human suffering, but rather a treatise on the necessity of faith (trust) in God.

1. **Of what did Job repent (cf. 42:6)?**

**Job 40:9–14 (ESV)**

**9** Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his? **10** “Adorn yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory and splendor. **11** Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on everyone who is proud and abase him. **12** Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand. **13** Hide them all in the dust together; bind their faces in the world below. **14** Then will I also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can save you.

Job repented of his attitude in questioning God’s justice; he was not repenting of any sin which was “responsible” for his suffering.

Job spoke of his eye seeing God, but Job did not actually see God (38:1; 40:6). In what sense did Job see God?

**Job 38:1 (ESV)**

**1** Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

**Job 40:6 (ESV)**

**6** Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

1. **Why was the Lord’s anger aroused against the three friends?**

The Lord spoke to Eliphaz and told him that he and his two friends “had not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has” (v. 7). Note that Job had also accused the friends of not speaking what was right concerning God (13:1-12; esp. vv. 7-8).

**Job 13:1–12 (ESV)**

**1** “Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. **2** What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. **3** But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God. **4** As for you, you whitewash with lies; worthless physicians are you all. **5** Oh that you would keep silent, and it would be your wisdom! **6** Hear now my argument and listen to the pleadings of my lips. **7** Will you speak falsely for God and speak deceitfully for him? **8** Will you show partiality toward him? Will you plead the case for God? **9** Will it be well with you when he searches you out? Or can you deceive him, as one deceives a man? **10** He will surely rebuke you if in secret you show partiality. **11** Will not his majesty terrify you, and the dread of him fall upon you? **12** Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay.

Job suggested that the friends had shown partiality for God, i.e., they had “respected the person of God by showing partiality for Him, in jumping to the conclusion that Job must have been a sinner, because God was afflicting him so grievously” (Gibson, p. 64).

1. **In what sense had Job spoken that which was right about God (cf. 42:7)?**

Obviously not everything that Job spoke concerning God was right. God’s statement concerning Job’s correctness must be qualified in some sense. It is possible, indeed likely, that God was speaking of Job’s admission that he was incapable of understanding the great works of God (42:2-6). The friends, on the other hand, believe that they have God’s judicial work all figured out!

**Job 42:2–6 (ESV)**

**2** “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. **3** ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. **4** ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ **5** I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; **6** therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Of course, Job also recognized that the innocent sometimes suffer. He denied that all suffering is sent from God as a punishment for sin (24:9-12).

**Job 24:9–12 (ESV)**

**9** (There are those who snatch the fatherless child from the breast, and they take a pledge against the poor.) **10** They go about naked, without clothing; hungry, they carry the sheaves; **11** among the olive rows of the wicked they make oil; they tread the winepresses, but suffer thirst. **12** From out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded cries for help; yet God charges no one with wrong.

1. **Why do you suppose that Elihu was not included in the rebuke of verse 7?**

Note that Elihu was not mentioned nor included in the condemnation of the three friends. Observe the following comment by Gleason Archer:

“It is significant, by the way, that Elihu was not included in God’s judgment of condemnation. He was not required to offer any atonement offering, presumably because despite his occasional harshness and misinterpretation of Job’s complaints, he had put his finger on Job’s true sin – pride and insubordination toward God. In that sense he had prepared Job for humble submission to Jehovah’s admonition and rebuke in His speeches from the whirlwind” (pp. 113-114).

Elihu noted man’s inability to understand the working of God--a point which God made amply plain in His two speeches.