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

**Answers to Study Questions**

Unit Two, Lesson Four: Bildad’s First Speech and Job’s Reply

Text: Job 8:1 – 10:22

***Lesson Objectives:***

1. Be able to describe Job’s perception of his suffering.

2. Observe the frustration of both Bildad and Job.

1. **What is the substance of Bildad’s rebuke of Job?**

8:20 is probably a fair summary of Bildad’s first speech.

**Job 8:20 (ESV)**

**20** “Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers.

He affirmed the justice of God, thus implying that if Job was suffering, it was not because God was unjust (vv. 3, 13). It must be that Job had abandoned God (v. 6).

**Job 8:3 (ESV)**

**3** Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?

**Job 8:13 (ESV)**

**13** Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless shall perish.

**Job 8:6 (ESV)**

**6** if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation.

1. **What did Bildad imply about Job’s sons (children)?**

He suggested that they had perished because of their sins. Note the way that Bildad reasoned. He argued:

a) If your sons sinned

b) Then God destroyed them for their sins

But note that the whole point of Bildad’s comment is to affirm that the children of Job had sinned. Although Bildad prefaced his argument with the word “if” (v. 4), one gets the impression that there was little doubt in the mind of Bildad that the cause/effect he described was actually the case. In view of his comments about the justice of God and God’s motivation, it seems that Bildad was actually following this line of reasoning:

a) Your sons were destroyed

b) God destroys sinners

c) Therefore, they must have sinned.

Consider the harshness of Bildad’s statement as seen from Job’s point of view.

1. **Explain 8:11-13.**

**Job 8:11–13 (ESV)**

**11** “Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish where there is no water? **12** While yet in flower and not cut down, they wither before any other plant. **13** Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless shall perish.

Bildad was using the papyrus plant as illustration of the fact that man cannot prosper without God’s favor (is verse 11 an example of synonymous parallelism). Just as these plants need plenty of water, so man needs the favor of God.

The papyrus may be growing just fine - green and not damaged by any cutting. But then it withers because of a lack of water. So the man who forgets God - he will be destroyed just as the papyrus.

1. **Do you think Job was speaking with irony or using sarcasm in 9:1ff? Why or why not?**

**Job 9:1–2 (ESV)**

**1** Then Job answered and said: **2** “Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God?

Both Jackson (p. 39) and Driver and Gray (pp. 83-4) suggest that Job was perhaps answering Bildad with some sarcasm or irony.

Sarcasm – “Oh, yes, God is just - but how does a man obtain justice from this just God?”

Irony – “A sort of humor, ridicule, or light sarcasm, the intended implication of which is the opposite of the literal sense of the words...” (Webster)

“When Eliphaz said, *Can mortal man be righteous before God?* (4:17), he was thinking of the sinfulness of man. Job takes up the thought (9:2), but makes it mean that man is not in the position to establish his right before God, for God always has the *power* to prove him wrong.” (Ellison, p. 44)

The comments of Job in 9:22-24 may indicate that Job’s words in 9:2 are said with irony. I tend to believe that Job was quite sincere in the early part of the chapter. Verse 24b reads like a man who was struggling with a question rather than a man who defiantly challenged the justice of God.

**Job 9:22–24 (ESV)**

**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?

1. **What did Job feel incapable of and why?**

He felt incapable of pleading his case before God (9:12, 14, 32-34).

***Who can challenge the strength and purpose of God? - verse 12.***

**Job 9:12 (ESV)**

**12** Behold, he snatches away; who can turn him back? Who will say to him, ‘What are you doing?’

***Who can “answer” God, reasoning with Him? - verse 14.***

**Job 9:14 (ESV)**

**14** How then can I answer him, choosing my words with him?

***Who can approach God on a level of equality? I need a mediator. - verses 32-33.***

**Job 9:32–33 (ESV)**

**32** For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. **33** There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.

***How can I speak with God while He is afflicting me? - verse 34.***

**Job 9:34 (ESV)**

**34** Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me.

1. **Explain Job’s words of 9:22-24? Did he sin in saying this?**

Job asserted that God must be responsible for the injustice on the earth (v. 24 – “who else could it be?”). He affirmed that God afflicted men indiscriminately, taking no note of whether they are blameless or wicked (v. 22). He even suggested that God mocks (the verb means “to mock, deride”; *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies;* see also p. 374 “scorn” #4; NKJV translates “laughs”) at the plight of the innocent.

**Job 9:22–24 (ESV)**

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**Job 9:22–24 (NKJV)**

**22** It *is* all one *thing;* Therefore I say, ‘He destroys the blameless and the wicked.’ **23** If the scourge slays suddenly, He laughs at the plight 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 else could it be?

Regardless of the attitude supposed behind the comments made, they constitute some pretty rash statements. What are the implications for God’s justice when one says that God afflicts men regardless of their moral conduct?

What of the love and mercy of One who scorns, mocks or laughs when innocent people suffer? What can be said of One who obstructs justice, makes it impossible to obtain (v. 24b)? My conclusion is that Job sinned in making these statements. He impugned the justice and mercy of God.

1. **How did Job challenge God in chapter 10?**

**Job 10:2 (ESV)**

**2** I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me.

**Job 10:2 (NKJV)**

**2** I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; Show me why You contend with me.

1. **What suggestions (in question form) did Job make as possible explanations for God’s treatment of him?**

He asked:

1) …if it seemed good to God that He should oppress His creation and favor the wicked (v. 3)? He pointed out the inconsistency of God destroying what He worked to create (vv. 8-12).

**Job 10:3 (ESV)**

**3** Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands and favor the designs of the wicked?

**Job 10:8–12 (ESV)**

**8** Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether. **9** Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust? **10** Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? **11** You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. **12** You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit.

2) …if God’s perception was so limited that He cannot judge man fairly (vv. 4, 7a)? Did He only look on outward appearance as man so frequently does? (See Gibson, p. 51).

**Job 10:4 (ESV)**

**4** Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees?

**Job 10:7 (ESV)**

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

3) …if God was so short-lived that He must anticipate man's iniquity (vv. 5-6)? (See Driver and Gray, p. 96).

**Job 10:5–7 (ESV)**

**5** Are your days as the days of man, or your years as a man’s years, **6** that you seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, **7** although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand?

Job didn’t pursue these last two questions any further. It is as though the answer to them is so obvious that they are not worthy of any further consideration.

**Application(s)**