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

**Answers to Study Questions**

Lesson Five: Zophar’s First Speech and Job’s Reply

Text: Job 11:1 – 14:22

Lesson Objectives:

1. Be able to summarize Zophar’s counsel to Job.

2. Be able to summarize Job’s requests of God.

1. **What seems to be Zophar’s frame of mind as evidenced by his words in 11:2-6? Why?**

Shock? Anger? Sarcasm? He evidently felt the need to answer Job’s speeches and his speech is one of rebuke. Note also verses 10-12.

**Job 11:3 (ESV)**

**3** Should your babble silence men, and when you mock, shall no one shame you?

**Job 11:10–12 (ESV)**

**10** If he passes through and imprisons and summons the court, who can turn him back? **11** For he knows worthless men; when he sees iniquity, will he not consider it? **12** But a stupid man will get understanding when a wild donkey’s colt is born a man!

He seems to have been bothered/upset by Job’s claim to innocence (vv. 4-6). In a harsh fashion, he also suggested that Job was not being punished nearly as much as he deserved (vv. 5-6).

**Job 11:4–6 (ESV)**

**4** For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in God’s eyes.’ **5** But oh, that God would speak and open his lips to you, **6** and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For he is manifold in understanding. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.

Did Zophar know of specific wickedness in Job’s life? Evidently not. On the other hand, Zophar had to affirm the wickedness of Job in order to sustain the friends’ pet theory about the cause of suffering.

“After his denunciation of Job in the first verses of his speech, Zophar slips in the second part of his chapter into a contradiction. Beginning with v. 7 he begins to insist that man by searching cannot find out God and that man can know very little. Zophar has somehow come to the conclusion that Job is claiming to understand God when actually Job’s main thesis is that he does not understand and the thesis of the friends, including Zophar, is that they do understand God. Such a contradiction is the result of Zophar’s determination to hold on to two theories that contradict each other: the theory that we know why God makes us suffer and the theory that we can’t understand God. He wants to feel that God’s ways are both mysterious and clear. Religious men still claim to grant that God’s ways are so much higher than ours that we can’t figure them out, but the same men will surprise you with their numerous answers to difficult questions about God.” (Hesser, Job, p. 30)

1. **What course of action did Zophar recommend to Job (11:13-14)?**

**Job 11:13–14 (ESV)**

**13** “If you prepare your heart, you will stretch out your hands toward him. **14** If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not injustice dwell in your tents.

Zophar encouraged Job to:

a) “prepare your heart” {repentance}

b) “stretch out your hands toward him [God]” {ask God's pardon}

c) “if iniquity is in your hand, put it far way, let not injustice dwell in your tents” {reformation of conduct}

Those three phrases constitute a good description of repentance and its fruits. Repentance is literally a changing of the mind, a turning from wickedness to righteousness. As an intellectual decision, however, it must be followed by a reformation of conduct.

Both Eliphaz and Bildad had already given the same advice (5:8ff; 8:5-7, 20-22) and preached the blessings that would accompany repentance.

**Job 5:8 (ESV)** [Eliphaz]

**8** “As for me, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause,

**Job 5:17 (ESV)** [Eliphaz]

**17** “Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty.

**Job 8:5–7 (ESV)** [Bildad]

**5** If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy, **6** if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation. **7** And though your beginning was small, your latter days will be very great.

**Job 8:20–22 (ESV)** [Bildad]

**20** “Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers. **21** He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting. **22** Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the tent of the wicked will be no more.”

1. **Was Job being sarcastic in 12:1-3?**

**Job 12:1–3 (ESV)**

**1** Then Job answered and said: **2** “No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you. **3** But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Who does not know such things as these?

Absolutely!! In verse two, his statement reeks with sarcasm. He essentially called his friends “know-it-alls.” Compare 12:3 with 13:2.

**Job 13:2 (ESV)**

**2** What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.

What was Job saying that he knew as well as the friends? That God’s blessings would follow repentance? That God is powerful and cannot be stopped by mere man (11:7-10)?

**Job 11:7–10 (ESV)**

**7** “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? **8** It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? **9** Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. **10** If he passes through and imprisons and summons the court, who can turn him back?

1. **What admonition did Job give to his friends (13:5) and why?**

He exhorted them to be silent – that would be better wisdom than what they had been disseminating. Later, in verse 13, he would request, “Let me have silence, and I will speak, and let come on me what may” (see NKJV).

**Job 13:13 (NKJV)**

**13** “Hold your peace with me, and let me speak, Then let come on me what *may!*

He asserted that they have shown partiality; spoken wickedly for God (13:7-12). They have defended the integrity of God by condemning Job unjustly. They were willing to ignore the facts of the situation in order to preserve both their doctrine and the person (justice) of God.

**Job 13:7–12 (ESV)**

**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.

1. **Compare the translation of 13:15 in the versions cited below. What differences exist?**

**Job 13:15 (ESV) 15 Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face.**

**Job 13:15 (NKJV) 15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.**

**Job 13:15 (KJV 1900) 15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own ways before him.**

**Job 13:15 (ASV 1901) 15 Behold, he will slay me; I have no hope: Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him.**

**Job 13:15 (NLT) 15 God might kill me, but I have no other hope. I am going to argue my case with him.**

The ESV/NKJV/KJV present an expression of faith of great magnitude (15a). Job seems to have been saying, “I will trust God no matter what happens.” (The NASB could be included in this group)

In the ASV, however, the first half of the verse seems to indicate an attitude of despair/resignation on the part of Job. Job seemed to be convinced that God would kill him (according to the translation).

The KJV and ASV seem to indicate a commitment on the part of Job to “maintain his ways,” i.e, continue in righteousness.

The ESV, NKJV and NLT, on the other hand, express the determination of Job to defend himself before God.

**(NASB) “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.”**

1. **What possibility was Job considering in 13:23?**

**Job 13:23 (ESV)**

**23** How many are my iniquities and my sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin.

He seemed to be considering the possibility that somehow he was unaware of the actual transgressions which caused his suffering. Unlike the occasion when he challenges the friends to “look at [him],” I believe that here Job is not offering a challenge to God, but rather he is sincerely asking for information (see also 7:20).

**Job 7:20 (ESV)**

**20** If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of mankind? Why have you made me your mark? Why have I become a burden to you?

**Job 7:20 (NKJV)**

**20** Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself?

1. **Does God determine precisely how long each man will live (14:5)?**

**Job 14:5 (ESV)**

**5** Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass,

Yes – in an indirect sense. Job may simply have been saying that God has determined the general limit/shortness of men’s lives rather than affirming that God determines the exact number of days that each individual man will live. Moses refers to the fact that man’s life is limited (Psalm 90:10).

**Psalm 90:10 (ESV)**

**10** The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

As an omniscient Being, God can certainly know the exact length of any man’s life. Note, however, the difference between determination and foreknowledge. Some folks believe that when someone dies, “God took him/her” --implying that God somehow is directly responsible for that death. Thus, the difficulty that people have when a baby dies — “Why did God take him?” Note Job 1:12 and 2:6 – do these verses imply that Satan can take life, if not specifically limited by God?

**Job 1:12 (ESV)**

**12** And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

**Job 2:6 (ESV)**

**6** And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.”

1. **Was Job saying that there is no resurrection or that man has no eternal soul (14:10-12)?**

**Job 14:10–12 (ESV)**

**10** But a man dies and is laid low; man breathes his last, and where is he? **11** As waters fail from a lake and a river wastes away and dries up, **12** so a man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake or be roused out of his sleep.

It seems rather that Job was saying that once a man dies, that is the end of his existence here on earth.

Note two things:

a) In verse 12, man lies down and does not rise, till the heavens are no more. The implication is that eventually man will rise. What does the New Testament teach regarding the resurrection of men?

b) In the latter part of verse 14, the “change” for which Job waits could be the change that is to take place at the general resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15). Verse 15 seems to be saying that Job will wait [in the grave] until God calls for him.

**Job 14:14–17 (ESV)**

**14** If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come. **15** You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands. **16** For then you would number my steps; you would not keep watch over my sin; **17** my transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and you would cover over my iniquity.

**Job 14:14–17 (NKJV)**

**14** If a man dies, shall he live *again?* All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes. **15** You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. **16** For now You number my steps, But do not watch over my sin. **17** My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag, And You cover my iniquity.