

July 12

Chapters 6-7, Job's first response (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Eliphaz warned that vexation against God can have deadly consequences, but Job's intense suffering is the foundations of his vexation. Job's vexation against God is justified. He is not just complaining for complaining's sake, his suffering has weight. Job questions why God doesn't just kill him and end his suffering as a means of honoring his innocence. Job is deeply disappointed by the lack of sympathy he has received from his friends. He accuses them of being like a desert stream that runs dry at the most critical time. He feels like a burden to them rather than like a friend whom they love. Job needs compassion, not to be debated over like a theological case study to be won. His friends are too busy trying to win their argument that Job must have done something to deserve his suffering, that they haven't actually listened to Job. Job is angry at God. He blames God for his suffering, and for the miserable estate of all humanity, calling God the "watcher of humanity," but he does not curse God. Job's suffering, thus is set in the context of ALL of humanity, and in solidarity with ALL of those around the world who suffer innocently. This calls into question the fundamental principal of justice "you get what you deserve." For no, in fact, there are times when people suffer through no fault of their own.

Chapter 8, Bildad's Response (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Bildad is shocked that Job –through his first response- essentially rejects that God is just. Justice according to the Bible involves upholding the innocent and punishing the wicked. Bildad goes a step further to suggest that Job's children must have been sinful to have been killed in such a dramatic way. This is not best practices in caring for the suffering and grieving.

Bildad continues Eliphaz' attempt to get Job to repent of some sin. He says that God WILL redeem Job, but only in he stops lamenting, repents of his sin, and throws himself on God's mercy. Bildad assumes that Job will take his advice, advice based on the ancient wisdom/foolly dynamic.

Chapter 9-10, Job's second response (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Job takes Bildad's assertion of God's justice in a strictly legal sense, asking who is "just before God, who can contend with God?" Job wants a trial to prove his innocence, but does not see that as a possibility for God is so much more powerful and holy than Job and there is no one who could judge (umpire) between God and Job. Even though Job is innocent, compared to God Job would appear guilty. On the one hand, Job knows that it is futile to summon God to trial, but on the other hand Job lays out the charges against God anyway (10:8-17). Job's ultimate desire is to argue his case before God on a level playing field, but as that is not possible, Job simply asks for a few days of comfort at (what he presumes to be) the end of his life.