

August 9th

Chapter 22, Eliphaz' 3rd cycle speech (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Eliphaz' response is riddled with irony. To vs. 3-4, Eliphaz assumes the answer to his rhetorical questions are "no," but we know from having seen what happened in the first two chapters in the heavenly courtroom that the answers are actually "yes!" God treasures Job because of his righteousness, AND Job is experiencing his present torment as a test of his piety. Vs. 5-11 is a description of God's gripe with the rich of society throughout most of the prophetic literature, but we know from the first two chapters that while Job was incredibly rich, he was also incredibly generous and righteous. Eliphaz' condemnation of Job's stewardship is baseless. Eliphaz continues to encourage Job to change his ways, reject earthly treasures, and return to God, and thus to earn back God's favor. The flaw in this rationale is of course that Job has not done anything in need of repentance, Job has never departed from God.

Chapter 23-24, Job's first response in the 3rd cycle (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Job once again expresses his heartfelt desire to come before God and to lay out his case and to be judged according to his righteousness. Job wants to learn and understand God, he is not arrogant as his friends assert, but humble. Vs. 8-10 are very reminiscent of psalm 139. Vs. 11-12, Job directly addresses Eliphaz' statement that he should treasure God and God's words more than riches, for Job has never stopped treasuring God above all else! Job desires to see God so that he may be acquitted, but he still believes that he will be overwhelmed (terrified) by God's majesty.

In chapter 24, questions why God doesn't just keep office hours. There's so much to discuss with God! Job laments the unjust lot of the oppressed. This is a reality that still holds true today: those who produce our food and drink, those who pick our crops, are some of the poorest, hungriest, thirstiest people in the world. And those who are poor like this are poor because their employers are getting rich off of their poverty. One example? Sugar trade, Tropical fruit, etc. Many places where corporations employ the poor around the world, they do so with little more than a slave's wage. Job questions why the rich get to keep getting richer, while the poor cry out for justice with no answer? Vs. 18-25 are likely a fragment from one of Zophar's speeches, and not actually Job speaking.

Chapter 25-26, Bildad & Job's 3rd cycle response (Learn, Read, Discuss)

It's very likely that Bildad's speech is actually made up of 25: 1-6 & 26: 5-14, as these two fragments form a cohesive whole, and are in line with Bildad's soaring praise of God's grandeur and power. Job's hymns about creation cast God as more arbitrary and irrational in designing the world. Bildad shows God as a heroic warrior, conquering the primordial chaos to create our world. His ultimate objective is to show that Job has no right to question God.

Bildad begins by asserting that no one who has been born is pure, because God is so much greater and mightier than humanity. Job interjects at 26: 1-4, asking Bildad what right he has to speak authoritatively on God's behalf? What help have you given the poor? What wisdom the foolish? What spirit inspires his words and wisdom?

Bildad continues at 26: 5-14. The shades are the inhabitants of the underworld. God's power prevails in the underworld, and in the outermost fathomable universe. Zaphon is a reference to Mt. Zion or to "the north," here God has created Zaphon as the center of the universe and positioned it in its rightful place. Rahab is the primordial sea dragon. Bildad says that God, as Creative Warrior, battled the primordial Sea monster, and ordered the chaos of the sea.