

Job 18-21 Not why, but Who

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to Job 18?

We're marching along as we see Job, a righteous and blameless man in God's eyes, struggle with suffering as part of God's will. His 3 friends have come along and have been of zero help.

We've read over the last few weeks how not to counsel someone who is hurting right? And really for the next couple weeks we're gonna see how it's just breaking out into mud slinging and arguing. And remember, Job's 3 friends all subscribe to that faulty theology of "good things happens to good people"

Remember Job's dialogue with his friends consisted of three rounds. Eliphaz was probably oldest so he spoke first – followed by Bildad and Zophar... By chapter 18, Eliphaz has gone twice. Now it's Bildad's turn to step back up and speak again...

Bildad continues to tell Job that God punishes the wicked, which must explain Job's suffering.

But please know this book is critically important for everyone today. God is in control even when life takes terrible turns. The Bible teaches God is just and merciful. He rules over the good and evil.

SHOW PIC Tony Snow was a former White House Press Secretary for President Bush. Several years ago Tony contracted cancer. Just before he died, he wrote, “We want lives of simple, predictable ease – smooth, even trails as far as the eye can see – but God likes to go off-road. He provokes us with twists and turns.” **CLOSE PICS**

God has reasons for all He does, but most of the time His reasons are hidden from view. Life can be perplexing – circumstances seem inexplicable – and like Job, we can be tempted to doubt God. Because of our limited perspective and our false assumptions we question God’s love and fairness. We wonder if He’s fallen asleep at the wheel.

Of course the truth is He hasn’t. **Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.** Everything happens for a reason – even when we don’t see His purpose.

Tonight we’re gonna study chapters 18-21, and the title of tonight’s message is Not why, but Who
Let’s pray

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 “How long till you put an end to words?

Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak. Job had just spent two chapters disagreeing with their conclusions. Bildad wants to know, when is Job going to shut-up and listen to their wisdom?

3-6

3 Why are we counted as beasts,
And regarded as stupid in your sight?

4 You who tear yourself in anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for you?
Or shall the rock be removed from its place?

5 "The light of the wicked indeed goes out,
And the flame of his fire does not shine.

6 The light is dark in his tent,
And his lamp beside him is put out. Bildad says hey the wicked man will fall on hard times. His light will be extinguished. The wicked eventually fall victim to their ignorance.

7-13

7 The steps of his strength are shortened,
And his own counsel casts him down.

8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walks into a snare.

9 The net takes him by the heel,
And a snare lays hold of him.

10 A noose is hidden for him on the ground,
And a trap for him in the road.

11 Terrors frighten him on every side,
And drive him to his feet.

12 His strength is starved,
And destruction is ready at his side.

13 It devours patches of his skin;
The firstborn of death devours his limbs. It's quite possible, maybe likely that Bildad was describing Job. The boils on his body – and the patches of his skin - were devouring his limbs.

14 He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent,
And they parade him before the king of terrors.” Bildad is describing how the wicked will become the poster child for the penalties of wickedness.

15 They dwell in his tent who are none of his;
Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling. Some scholars believe that Bildad is comparing Job’s calamity to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

16-21

16 His roots are dried out below,
And his branch withers above.

17 The memory of him perishes from the earth,
And he has no name among the renowned.[fn]

18 He is driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.

19 He has neither son nor posterity among his people,
Nor any remaining in his dwellings.

20 Those in the west are astonished at his day,
As those in the east are frightened.

21 Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked,
And this is the place of him who does not know God.”What a brutal accusation for Bildad to hurl. He accuses Job of being a heathen – he doesn’t even know God.

Chapter 19 is Job’s response to this fresh set of Bildad’s accusations

1-3

1 Then Job answered and said:

2 “How long will you torment my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?”

3 These ten times you have reproached me;

You are not ashamed that you have wronged me.[fn] Only 3 rounds of dialogue are recorded in the book, but Job says, “Ten times you have reproached me.” Was Job exaggerating, or is it really 10 and the bible only records 3 of these rounds? Can’t say for sure.

Either way these guys have been relentless in their attempts to wrongly pin a sin on Job.

Yet Job says to them

4-5

4 And if indeed I have erred,

My error remains with me.

5 If indeed you exalt yourselves against me,

And plead my disgrace against me, In the restricted theology of good things happen to good people, there are only two choices... either God failed to do the right thing, or the person in question is directly responsible for their suffering.

This is why Job’s counselors insist that Job must’ve sinned – if not, it means God has failed and they’re not about to entertain that possibility – that would be a blasphemous thought. But where his friends draw the line, Job is not so reverent.

In essence Job says in verse 6, if my only two choices are God failed or I’m a failure – then God failed.

6 Know then that God has wronged me,
And has surrounded me with His net. This is why we mentioned in our earlier studies that in asking why, Job loses his way. Job is now accusing God.

Job was a humble man who becomes a hurting man, and ends up a haughty man. He's lost his respect and reverence for God. Job forgets who God is - His holiness, His righteousness, His justice. Job is teetering on the edge of blasphemy

7 "If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard.
If I cry aloud, there is no justice. Job had asked for his day in court. He accuses God of denying justice.

This is why Job is such a contemporary book. This attitude and faulty logic permeate our society, even among some Christians. Mankind has dared become God's critic. People, even us at times, dare to tell God - how to be God.

This is what Job is now doing. Job has become so preoccupied with wanting to know why – with demanding an explanation from God – he ends up losing his reverence for God.

Knowing why becomes more important to Job than knowing Who. Job puts God on trial. Of course when we get to chapter 38 God will turn the tables.

Job continues his accusations against God

8-11

8 He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass;

And He has set darkness in my paths.

9 He has stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown from my head.

10 He breaks me down on every side,
And I am gone;

My hope He has uprooted like a tree.

11 He has also kindled His wrath against me,
And He counts me as one of His enemies. Again Job assumes
that God considers him an enemy. Just the opposite was true.
God was so proud of Job that God staked His honor on Job's
reactions to suffering.

12-16

12 His troops come together
And build up their road against me;
They encamp all around my tent.

13 "He has removed my brothers far from me,
And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.

14 My relatives have failed,
And my close friends have forgotten me.

15 Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants,
Count me as a stranger;

I am an alien in their sight.

16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer;
I beg him with my mouth." Job is in such a desperate place even
his own employees no longer return his calls.

17 My breath is offensive to my wife,

And I am repulsive to the children of my own body. Job is as low as he can go... His wife won't kiss him and his kids won't hug him. He's untouchable.

Children-did he have children that didn't die-younger children, or could this be talking about grandkids?

18-20

18 Even young children despise me;

I arise, and they speak against me.

19 All my close friends abhor me,

And those whom I love have turned against me.

20 My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh,

And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth. Ever heard the expression, "escaped by the skin of my teeth" - did you know it originated in the Bible?

Here's a list of common expressions that come from Scripture...

"Read the handwriting on the wall..." Daniel 5:5

"The apple of one's eye..." Deuteronomy 32:10

"He brought the house down..." Samson in Judges 16:30

"There's a fly in the ointment..." Ecclesiastes 10:1

"A little bird told me..." Ecclesiastes 10:20

"Seeing eye to eye..." Isaiah 52:8

21-24

21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me!

22 Why do you persecute me as God does,
And are not satisfied with my flesh?

23 “Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!
24 That they were engraved on a rock

With an iron pen and lead, forever! Job doesn't know it, but his words were written! We're reading them 4000 years later. Job is crying out that everything, and everyone was against him, including God. Little does he know how God is using Job throughout thousands of years.

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth; Job's pain and agony have put him on an emotional rollercoaster. One moment he borders on blasphemy – the next moment he utters a prophecy. Job ends his frustration with God by rising up and reiterating his faith.

This Redeemer Job describes is none other than Jesus.

26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,
That in my flesh I shall see God, Job believed in a literal resurrection of the body. His boil-covered, disease-wrecked flesh will be made whole.

What an encouragement to anyone who suffers from a terminal disease.

One day we will get new, resurrected bodies, undefiled and incorruptible bodies. **1 Corinthians 15 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a**

natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

27-29

27 Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

28 If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?'—

Since the root of the matter is found in me,

29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves;

For wrath brings the punishment of the sword,

That you may know there is a judgment.” Job’s counselors had

concluded his suffering was the result of direct sin and

wickedness in his life. But Job warns them, be careful when you judge me... for they too are destined for God’s judgment.

It appears that Job foresaw his Redeemer standing on the earth to judge all men. This means he didn’t just see Jesus’ first advent, he also saw Jesus second coming.

Evidently, the OT patriarchs knew a lot more of the Gospel than we might at first assume... Remember Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam.

Jude 14-15 14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Chapter 20

Zophar gives a message on wicked men.

1-3

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2 “Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer,
Because of the turmoil within me.

3 I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me,
And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer. Job’s refusal to acknowledge his guilt and own up to his suffering has made Zophar angry.

4-6

4 “Do you not know this of old,
Since man was placed on earth,

5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment?

6 Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens,
And his head reaches to the clouds,

7 Yet he will perish forever like his own refuse;
Those who have seen him will say, ‘Where is he?’ Zophar says
‘for a moment the wicked might prosper, but eventually he
perishes like his own garbage.’ This is cruel- remember Job was a
very prosperous man prior to this suffering.

8-19

8 He will fly away like a dream, and not be found;
Yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.

9 The eye that saw him will see him no more,

Nor will his place behold him anymore.

10 His children will seek the favor of the poor,
And his hands will restore his wealth.

11 His bones are full of his youthful vigor,
But it will lie down with him in the dust.

12 “Though evil is sweet in his mouth,
And he hides it under his tongue,

13 Though he spares it and does not forsake it,
But still keeps it in his mouth,

14 Yet his food in his stomach turns sour;
It becomes cobra venom within him.

15 He swallows down riches
And vomits them up again;
God casts them out of his belly.

16 He will suck the poison of cobras;
The viper’s tongue will slay him.

17 He will not see the streams,
The rivers flowing with honey and cream.

18 He will restore that for which he labored,
And will not swallow it down;

From the proceeds of business
He will get no enjoyment.

19 For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor,
He has violently seized a house which he did not build. Again
notice the implication here. Job must’ve gotten all of his previous
wealth in an ungodly, criminal way. Why else would God take
away Job’s wealth?

20 “Because he knows no quietness in his heart,[fn]
He will not save anything he desires.

21 Nothing is left for him to eat;
Therefore his well-being will not last.

22 In his self-sufficiency he will be in distress;
Every hand of misery will come against him.

23 When he is about to fill his stomach,
God will cast on him the fury of His wrath,
And will rain it on him while he is eating.

24 He will flee from the iron weapon;
A bronze bow will pierce him through.

25 It is drawn, and comes out of the body;
Yes, the glittering point comes out of his gall.

Terrors come upon him;
26 Total darkness is reserved for his treasures.

An unfanned fire will consume him;
It shall go ill with him who is left in his tent.

27 The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
And the earth will rise up against him.

28 The increase of his house will depart,
And his goods will flow away in the day of His wrath.

29 This is the portion from God for a wicked man,
The heritage appointed to him by God.”

Zophar gave alot of truth here in these verses. Yes sometimes evil seems to triumph, but ultimately their time is short.

Yes these are truths, many of which are confirmed in Psalms and proverbs. But these truths don't apply to Job's situation!

Remember, we need grace and truth. **John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Chapter 21 Job's gives a discourse on the wicked to show he's not a wicked man as he's been accused of

1-4

1 Then Job answered and said:

**2 "Listen carefully to my speech,
And let this be your consolation.**

**3 Bear with me that I may speak,
And after I have spoken, keep mocking.**

4 "As for me, is my complaint against man?

And if it were, why should I not be impatient? Job's crisis was more than a medical crisis, an economic crisis, a social crisis, or a family crisis. His struggle was against God, and he wondered where God was in the midst of this very dark time.

5-7.

**5 Look at me and be astonished;
Put your hand over your mouth.**

**6 Even when I remember I am terrified,
And trembling takes hold of my flesh.**

7 Why do the wicked live and become old,

Yes, become mighty in power? Job says hey, if God always judges the wicked, why is it so many of them rise to power and live full lives? He's disproving his friends of their faulty theology.

Job describes in 8-15 how the wicked oftentimes prosper

8 Their descendants are established with them in their sight,

And their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses are safe from fear,
Neither is the rod of God upon them.

10 Their bull breeds without failure;
Their cow calves without miscarriage.

11 They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance.

12 They sing to the tambourine and harp,
And rejoice to the sound of the flute.

13 They spend their days in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the grave.^[fn]

14 Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us,
For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways.

15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?

And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?" Job is confronting their false theology head on. The wicked deny God, and seem to prosper.

16-17

16 Indeed their prosperity is not in their hand;
The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?

How often does their destruction come upon them,

The sorrows God distributes in His anger?? The answer is not enough. God doesn't punish the wicked as often or as severe as they deserve in Job's estimation.

18-21

18 They are like straw before the wind,
And like chaff that a storm carries away.

19 They say, 'God lays up one's[fn] iniquity for his children';
Let Him recompense him, that he may know it.

20 Let his eyes see his destruction,
And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21 For what does he care about his household after him,
When the number of his months is cut in half?As Job thinks a
bout the seeming comfort and ease of the wicked, you can almost
hear tears, he cries out to God to bring destruction upon the
wicked in their own day, and not in the time of his household after
he dies.

22-26 Job now lists the questions we've all asked...

22 "Can anyone teach God knowledge,
Since He judges those on high?

23 One dies in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and secure;

24 His pails[fn] are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moist.

25 Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul,
Never having eaten with pleasure.

26 They lie down alike in the dust,
And worms cover them.Why does one man live in ease – while
another man dies in bitterness?

Why does the young child die, and the murderer lives a long life?
Why does the child abuser repeatedly get pregnant, but the godly
wife can't conceive?

Why is one faithful believer living paycheck to paycheck, yet the
immoral sell their bodies and live the high life?

The answers are in God's hands.

Isaiah 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Job addresses his friends
27-29

27 “Look, I know your thoughts,
And the schemes with which you would wrong me.

28 For you say,
‘Where is the house of the prince?
And where is the tent,^[fn]
The dwelling place of the wicked?’

29 Have you not asked those who travel the road?
And do you not know their signs? Job’s friends have said that the wicked live in tents while the righteous live in palaces. Isn’t that proof enough that the wicked are judged and the noble are blessed?

30 For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath. Job knows that God sees to it that wicked people are judged, but of course it doesn’t always come in this lifetime. It does pay to be good and godly, but payday doesn’t always come in this life.

31 Who condemns his way to his face?

And who repays him for what he has done? The wicked man dies and never has to face his crimes – he's never charged or confronted with his evil while he lives on earth.

32 Yet he shall be brought to the grave,
And a vigil kept over the tomb. Here's an irony – he was guilty in life, but honored in death.

33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him;
Everyone shall follow him,
As countless have gone before him.

34 How then can you comfort me with empty words,
Since falsehood remains in your answers?"

See the prom job's friends had, is the problem that Job had, and it's the problem that we all often times have. We judge this life without being privy to all the information.

As one man put it, "Life is painted on too large a canvas." We lack the vantage point to see all the brush strokes. Our role is to simply love and trust the painter

Don't let the question of why cloud out the WHO