

God's Megaphone: Pain and Providence in the Book of Job, 4

First Cycle of Dispute: Job's Friends vs. Job

Job 4–14

Sunday Evening Bible Study

January 26, 2020

The Three New Testament References to Job

Ro 11:35 “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” [quoting Job 35:7 (Elihu speaking) and 41:11 (God speaking)]

1Co 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; [quoting Job 5:13 (Eliphaz speaking)]

Jas 5:11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Was Job a real, historical person?

Yes. The New Testament affirms that the book of Job is God's Word, that Job was a real, historical person, and the events described in the book really took place (Heb. 11:32).

Did Job and his friends really sit around and talk to each other in poetry?

No. The Bible records actual historical events in two different genres: prose and poetry. Prose is the ordinary language that we speak and write in every day. Because it is ordinary, it is less memorable, less colorful, but more literal and precise. In poetry, the writer takes more care with rhythm, structure, cadence, and rhyming, using many figures of speech. ***The result is a paraphrase that captures the essence of the event or conversation that is more colorful and memorable.*** As a mnemonic device, poetry is easier to memorize than prose, which is essential in a low-literacy society. The mnemonic advantage is generally lost in the translation process.

The First Cycle of Dispute: Job's Friends vs. Job

1. Eliphaz: “Welcome to Prosperity Theology 101” (4–5)
 - 1.1 Sickness and poverty are always the result of sinful choices 4:7,8
 - 1.2 You should listen to me because God spoke to me (direct revelation) 4:12
 - 1.3 Therefore, to argue with me is to argue with God—I'm anointed! (4:17)
 - 1.4 Since God is against you, who can you appeal to? (5:1)
 - 1.5 You are being disciplined for secret, unconfessed sin in your life (5:17)
2. Job: “With friends like you, who needs enemies?” (6–7)
 - 2.1 I wish God would just end my suffering by ending my life (6:8,9)
 - 2.2 I am innocent of these charges you bring against me (6:10)
 - 2.3 You, Eliphaz, by condemning me, are the one who is sinning (6:14,15).
 - 2.4 I am not lying. I have no secret, unconfessed sin in my life (6:28–30).
3. Bildad: “If you repent, God will relent!” (8)
 - 3.1 I am defending God against you, Job (8:3)

- 3.2 Your kids got what they deserved (8:4).
 - 3.3 If you repent, God will return your health and wealth (8:5,6)
 - 3.4 I know this because of tradition (vs. Eliphaz' revelation) (8:8).
- 4. Job: "It seems hopeless, but I'll plead my case to God!" (9–10).
 - 4.1 The most important question ever asked! (9:2; cf. Acts 16:30)
 - 4.2 God is omniscient, omnipotent, immutable, just, and sovereign (9:3–12).
 - 4.3 My only hope is to appeal to God's mercy (9:15).
 - 4.4 I am aware of no unconfessed sin in my life (9:21).
 - 4.5 Get real! Suffering afflicts blameless *and* the wicked by God's design (9:22-24)
 - 4.6 I need a mediator between God and me (9:32-33; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5).
 - 4.7 God, why? (10:2,18).
- 5. Zophar: "Yeah! What Bildad said!"(11)
- 6. Job: "Here's what I think about prosperity preachers (12–14)
 - 6.1 You guys have a very high view of yourself (12:2)
 - 6.2 You are oblivious to reality (12:6)
 - 6.3 You are theologically illiterate on the doctrine of sovereignty (12:9).
 - 6.4 You misrepresent God to the people and you need to shut up (13:4,5).
 - 6.5 You will not keep me from trusting in God and asking him "why?" (13:15).
 - 6.6 Even prosperity preachers get old and die like the rest of us (14:5,19).
- 7. **Summary of Job 4–14:** Job's friends not only believe *that* God ultimately ordained this pain in Job's life (which is true), but also believe they know *why* God ordained this pain in Job's life (which is false). They operated on an airtight rule that the wicked suffer and the righteous are rewarded. Since Job is suffering, he must be hiding wickedness. Therefore, if you want to stop suffering, stop sinning. They allow no exceptions to the rule: the righteous prosper, the wicked suffer. Job's friends compliment themselves by criticizing Job. *We* are not suffering, therefore *we* are righteous.

