

God's Megaphone: Pain and Providence in the Book of Job, 9

"The Role of Suffering in Missions"

Job 28

Sunday Evening Bible Study

March 1, 2020

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains:

it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world" –C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

"The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin." –

Westminster Confession, 5:4

"The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand." –*Heidelberg Catechism, Question 28*

Job 1-27

1. Prologue: Four disasters that set the scene (1,2).
2. Monologue: Job's Curse: "I wish I had never been born." (3)
3. Dialogue #1: Three Friends With Semi-Good Advice (4–14)
 - 3.1 Eliphaz: "You are being disciplined for secret sin in your life" (4-5).
 - 3.2 Job: "I expected my friends to stand by me" (6-7).
 - 3.3 Bildad: "If you repent, God will relent" (8)
 - 3.4 Job (9–10): "It seems hopeless, but I'll plead my case to God."
 - 3.5 Zophar (11): "Yeah! What Bildad said."
 - 3.6 Job (12–14): "God knows I'm innocent; I'll talk to him about it."
 - 3.7 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 they don't). Job's friends operated on an airtight rule that the wicked suffer and the righteous are rewarded. Since Job is suffering, he must be hiding some secret sin. 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 are complimenting themselves by criticizing Job. We are not suffering, therefore we are righteous.
4. Dialogue #2: Three Semi-Friends with Harsh Accusations (15–21)
 - 4.1 Eliphaz: "People are totally depraved!" (15)
 - 4.2 Job: "Tell me something I don't know! I need a good lawyer!" (16,17)
 - 4.3 Bildad: "You are suffering what evil people suffer!" (18)
 - 4.4 Job: "Someday, somehow, SOMEONE will come to my defense and I will be vindicated!" (19).
 - 4.5 Zophar: "Ditto Bildad— I got nothin' left to say" (20).
 - 4.6 Job: "Wake up dude! The wicked really do prosper on this earth!" (21).
 - 4.7 Eliphaz: "Prosperity Theology 101: Manipulate God with good behavior" (22).
 - 4.8 Job: "My God (who feels very far way) cannot be manipulated" (23-24).
 - 4.9 Bildad: "Compared to God, you are nothing" (25).

- 4.10 Job: “My sovereign God will make everything right in the end” (26-27).
 5. Intermission (Wisdom Chapter): “Wise people know that God knows what He’s doing” (28)

Job 28:1–11	Job 28:12–19	Job 28:20–28
Q: Where are treasures found?	Q: Where is wisdom found?	Q: So then, where is wisdom found?
A: In the earth!	A: Not in the earth!	A: In the fear of the Lord!
Implication: If you want to see what is important to someone, look where they spend their greatest effort.	Implication: 1) Wisdom is not found in the creation, but only in the Creator; 2) You don’t have to be rich to be wise.	Implication: Only a fool would judge, rebuke, lecture, question, doubt, accuse, demean, belittle, or deny God, EVEN in the midst of suffering. The fool says God is weak, or stupid, or wicked, or all of the above.

Seven Things We’ve Learned from Job About Suffering Applied to Missions:

1. Out of context, our suffering seems pointless, but God sees the beginning and the end (Job 28:4; Acts 13:16-41).
2. God is sovereign over evil acts and turns them to advance the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 2:23; 4:28; Acts 8:1; 11:19,20).
3. God is sovereign over sickness and uses disease to change our plans, keep us close to him, and arrange divine appointments (Acts 13:13,14; Galatians 4:13,14; 2 Cor. 12:7).
4. God is sovereign over natural disasters and through them accomplishes his global purposes (Acts 11:28).
5. God is sovereign over salvation (unconditional election) and guarantees that our obedience to the Great Commission will result in spiritual multiplication (Acts 13:34,35).
6. To remove suffering from the original missionaries would forfeit the strongest argument for our faith (Acts 13:30,31).
7. To remove suffering from our present missionaries would forfeit a key component of their credibility (Acts 14:20,21).