

OUR QUESTIONS: SESSION TWO

A Study of the Book of Job

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we give You thanks that by the patient suffering and death of Your Son You rescued us from all faithlessness. By Your Word and Spirit, teach us to commend ourselves to You and to trust that in all things You work for our eternal good. Strengthen us to bear all crosses, adversities and trials with patience and fervent trust in You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Study

Overview: Today, we will look briefly at the answers that Job's friends offer to the question of why Job is suffering. Much of the book of Job (chapters 3–37) is discourse between Job and his friends. We will only consider this section of the book quickly. The reason for this is that Job's friends do not have the correct answer. While these friends say things that sometimes sound right, their answers do not withstand the judgment.

1. The first of these friends is Eliphaz. What does he suggest is the reason for Job's suffering (Job 4:5–8)? Does this initially seem to match up to New Testament teaching (Rom. 3:10–11)?

2. The second of these friends is Bildad. What does he suggest Job should do if he seeks relief from his troubles (Job 8:2–7)?

3. The third of these friends is Zophar. He seems to suggest not only that Job suffers rightly, but that he is worthy of much more suffering. What insults does Zophar add to Job's injury, and what does he suggest Job do (Job 11:11–16)?

4. Finally, in chapter 32, a young man named Elihu speaks. His answers are much wiser and more helpful. What does Elihu say about the words the other three friends have spoken (Job 32:12–15)?

5. Elihu then begins to address Job directly. What is the first point Elihu makes about the relationship of God to man (Job 33:12–14; 42:3)? Notice how God makes this point also in the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 55:8–9).

6. What does Elihu suggest is God's aim in everything that happens under the sun (Job 33:26, 28–30)?
7. In Job 34, Elihu asserts that God is absolutely just in whatever He does. What truth about God makes it so that His ways are not judged right, but simply are just (Job 34:13–15)?
8. Is God unaware of those who do evil (Job 34:21–22)?
9. Who is the judge, and who are the judged, according to Elihu? What is Job's fault (Job 34:31–37)? Is that what his other friends were accusing him of?
10. In Job 35, Elihu condemns Job outright for his words. What does he say about Job's claim that God is remaining hidden from him (Job 35:13–14)?
11. In Job 36–37, Elihu extols God's greatness and majesty. What characteristic of God makes him so praiseworthy (Job 36:24–26)?
12. What work of God does Elihu use as one example of how God accomplishes things in ways we will never totally understand (Job 36:27–33)?
13. What does Elihu therefore conclude about how men should approach God (Job 37:24)?
14. While Job's first three friends are sure that God must be punishing Job for some specific sin in his life, Elihu contends that the real problem is that Job has forgotten his place and has sought to judge God rather than be judged by Him. Do we sometimes display the same arrogance?

CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful God and Father, remember us all in our sorrow and grief. Support us when we are unable to understand the things that happen to us and those we love. Comfort and console us, and grant that through Your merciful help we may have courage to face the days ahead; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.