

OT Term2: Week 7

The Book of Job

AN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK JOB

- A. Prose prologue 1-2
- B. The dialogue 3-31
- C. The speeches of Elihu 32-37
- D. The theophany and the divine speeches 38.1-42.6
- E. Prose epilogue 42.7-17

A. THE PROSE PROLOGUE 1-2

- 1.1-6 Introduction to Job's setting and his family life
- 1.6-12 Dialogue between God and Satan in heaven
- 1.13-22 Job's children and wealth are destroyed.

- 2.1-6 Further dialogue between God and Satan
- 2.7-10 Satan's action in respect of Job
- 2.11-13 Job's friends come. Maintain a respectful silence.

B. THE DIALOGUE 3-31

I - THE FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES

1. Job's opening speech [3]

He regrets being born, wishes he was stillborn. Asks, "can he continue" living under such conditions.

2. Eliphaz's opening speech [4.1-5.27]

Courteous oriental manner

States that:

[i] Job is suffering because of some guilt

[ii] Job should repent, and then after a while God would restore his fortunes.

3. Job's reply to Eliphaz [6-7]

Intensity of his sufferings the ground for his speech

Asserts innocence, they should prove his guilt

The miseries of God. They should leave him alone.

4. Bildad's opening speech [8]

A much blunter statement of Eliphaz's thesis

Death of Job's children is a divine punishment

5. Job's reply to Bildad [9-10]

On basis of power, rather than justice, impossible for a man to be just before God.

Tirade against God of unjustly using His great power

Criticises God for having brought him into existence

6. Zophar's first speech [11]

Follows general pattern of others, more superficial

7. Job's reply to Zophar, and a development [12-14]

Wisdom of Zophar was pretentious, God was in fact, acting unjustly in his case. Begins to raise questions as to whether it is true that in this life good is rewarded and evil punished.

In desiring to discuss it with God, he recognises that God is just, and was his superior and would listen to his trials

He is resigned to death, and laments the weakness of mankind

II - THE SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES [15.1 - 21.34]

1. Eliphaz - speech No.2 [15]

Job's talk is empty and impious, he appeals to the sages who have gone before.

2. Job's reply [16-17]

If he was fortunate enough to be in the place of his friends then, he too, would be able to confuse with meaningless remarks. As it is he is under divine judgment, and, overwhelmed by this thought, lapses into hostility with God.

3. Bildad's - speech No. 2 [18]

Continues counsel by painting sombre pictures of woes overtaking the wicked.

4. Job's reply [19]

He stingingly states that they have let him down

5. Zophar's - speech No.2 [20]

Forceful description of the punishment which would overtake the wicked, ignored the appeal of Job to a final judgment in the flesh in favour of declaring that the wicked had been judged already.

6. Job's reply [21]

Increasing dissatisfaction with the original view. The fact is that many people who are evil prosper in life. His friends have spoken despairingly of God, for his ways are inscrutable.

III - THE THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES [22-31]

1. Eliphaz No.3 [22]

God derived no benefit from human virtue, had no concern for human suffering, it simply vindicated his justice, or didn't. Job should repent.

2. Job's reply [23-24]

Perplexity in inability to find God. Attitude changed, lacks the bitterness of before. The ways of God, though hidden, He will give justice.

3. Bildad - No3 [25]

Short speech - lacking in coherence.

4. Job's reply [26-31]

- [1] repudiates the arguments brought forward by a sarcastic set of questions. [26.1-4].
- [2] He then speaks of God's evidences in the natural world and describes them as the edges of God's ways - they are a faint word. But God's mighty thunder, who can understand that? [26.5-16]
- [3] While he has life, Job will not speak unjustly or deceitfully - but he also won't allow it that his friends are right. [27.1-6]
- [4] Thinking of his opponents as unjust, Job spends time outlining the fate of the wicked - he asks why they have acted so foolishly then? [27.7-23]
- [5] While it is in the hands and industry of man to dig out the precious metals of the earth, and to seek after things which are hidden [28.1-11] wisdom cannot be found the same way [12-22]. However, God understands its way, and He knows its place and He declares to man what is wisdom - "the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding." [23-28]
- [6] Job remembers his former days - God was with him, he lived well, he had the respect of people and had many opportunities to bless people. He was needed and well regarded - his counsel was sought. [29.1-25]
- [7] Now he is humiliated - mocked by the young and disdained by the old. People are standing aloof from him - and he has become a taunt to them. All this because God has loosed His bowstring and afflicted Job - he is no longer valued, and his prosperity has gone. [30.1-15]
- [8] In distress of soul he sees God has closed him in - and when he cries for help, does not answer him. [30.16-23] - expecting God to be good to him, he is now afflicted. [30.24-31].
- [9] He asks doesn't God see how carefully he has lived. [31.1-4] He hasn't walked in falsehood [5-8], or been enticed by a woman [9-12], been unfair to his slaves [13-15], or not cared for the poor and orphan 16-23]. Neither had he put his confidence in money [24-25], or worshiped the sun or the moon [26-28]. Neither has he rejoiced at his enemy's misfortune nor cursed him [29-30] - nor had he hidden his sin in his heart [33-34].
- [10] He longs to be answered by God - and to know what he is charged of - so he can understand.[35-40]

C. ELIHU'S REPLY [32 - 37]

The younger man Elihu's anger at Job, because he justified himself; and his anger at the three friends, because they had no answer. He makes the following points:

- [1] He is young, and had waited for the older men to speak [32.6-10]
- [2] No one has answered Job's words [11-12]
- [3] Their answers are weak [13-15]
- [4] Elihu is bursting to speak [16-22]
- [5] Elihu helped in his speaking by being upright [33.1-3]
- [6] They shouldn't be awed by him - he is just a man as they are [4-7]
- [7] Job had spoken in Elihu's hearing of the innocence of his life; this is not right to do, because God is greater than Job [8-12]
- [8] God doesn't have to give account to man - He speaks once or twice, and He can rescue man from his mistakes.[13-18]
- [9] If a man finds pain in his life and he comes near death [19-22], and God should, through an angel, graciously rescue him, then the man would have a

different attitude. He would sing of his own sin and how God had rescued him. God does this often to men, so that they are enlightened [23-33].

[10] Job has said: "it profits a man nothing when he is pleased with God" [34.1-9]. But God does not do wickedness, and He has no one who grants Him authority - indeed if He took back His Spirit - the whole earth would cease to be! [10-15].

But not only is God great He rules and "shall one who hates justice rule" [spoken concerning Job or God?] and you cannot condemn a mighty one. He shows that God is great ruler, and Job has taken a stance in challenging the Almighty [16-37, 35.1-4].

[11] Our sin or our righteousness does not change God, it is rather a relative thing about which men are concerned. People cry to God because of the oppressions they suffer, the reason God doesn't answer is because of the pride of evil men. Job should wait for a visitation of God to see what He would answer. [35.5-16].

[12] There is more to say on God's behalf: while God does not despise any, but He doesn't let the wicked live. And He does deliver the afflicted from their affliction [36.1-16].

But Job has judged the wicked, he needs to be careful that he doesn't let his anger make him a scoffer. No one can call God to account. [36.17-23]

God's powerful natural works are to be sung by men and exalted. [36.21-33].

[13] Whatever happens, whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, God causes it to happen. [37.1-13] Job should consider the works of the Lord, we don't know how He does it. We cannot arrange our case because of ignorance.

_The Almighty cannot be found, he is not inconsistent to justice; he is to be feared.[37.14-24]

D. THE THEOPHANY AND THE DIVINE SPEECHES 38.1-42.6

1. God speaks to Job [38-40.2]

[1] Where was Job when God laid the foundations of the earth? The whole chapter is a series of rhetorical questions; Can you do what I do? Do you know what I know? [38-39]

[2] Will a fault-finder contend with the Almighty?

2. Job replies to God 40.3-5

[1] Job sees that he is insignificant and refuses to answer any more on those grounds.

3. God speaks to Job [40.6-34]

[1] He challenges Job that will Job really annul God's judgment? Will Job condemn God so that he may be justified? There follows more series of questions concerning the comparison of God knowledge and power with Job's weakness and ignorance.

4. Job replies to the Lord [42.1-6]

[1] He acknowledges that God can do all things and that nothing He does can be thwarted.

[2] He admits that he spoke out of ignorance.

[3] He states that his previous knowledge was drawn from what he had heard. Now his eyes have seen God.

[4] So, he retracts, and repents in dust and ashes.

5. Lord spoke to Eliphaz [42.7-8]

[1] He says that they haven't spoken of Him what is right as God's servant Job had.

[2] They are to offer sacrifices and let Job pray for them.

6. Job's fortunes are restored [42.10-17]