



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

JOB

Week 2

Listen to the Evidence

Job 11

OPENING
up to the Word

Has a friend ever critiqued your life—solicited or not? Did you accept their criticism?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Now Zophar enters the fray, with ever more bluntness. Do you think he was too hard on Job (vs. 1-6)?
2. Did Zophar give good advice, that wisdom has two sides—one that humans can see, and one that only God sees (vs. 6-12)?
3. Zophar called for Job to repent (vs. 13-15). But of what? Did he pinpoint Job's problem?
4. What rewards were predicted by Zophar if Job followed his advice (vs. 16-20)?

LIVING
out the Word

Does tragedy, sickness or death mean someone is being punished by God for sins greater than those who are healthy? See the words of Jesus in Luke 13:1-5.

WINDOW
on the Word

Zophar reasons: Job, you are in pain. God gives pain only to sinners. Repent, and everything will be great again. *This argument, however, is flawed, because it assumes that adversity only comes as a result of God's punishment of sin. In a world where free will is allowed, adversity and evil can come from a variety of sources. People may suffer through no fault of their own. Flawed logic like that of Zophar's often leads to religious dogmatism—the pronouncements of humans who presume to speak for God in areas beyond what humans can know.*

“Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then you will lift up your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear.”

Job 11:13-15



Artwork by Gustave Doré

DAY 9

Who Made You Teacher?

Job 12:1–13:12

OPENING
up to the Word

Recall your favorite teacher or professor. Did this person help you to determine what might be important to you in life?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why was Job so resentful of the advice from his friends (12:1-12)? Would you describe them as perched on their pedestals, spouting speculation, comfortably representing God as though they knew all?
 2. Job turned the argument to the power of God (vs. 13-25). Why are natural calamities seen as acts of God? For Job, did God cause each drought (v. 15)? Does God know all that occurs (v. 22)?
 3. Did Job accept his friends' advice or reject it (13:1-8)?
-

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are you ever sarcastic like Job? Under what conditions do you think sarcasm is appropriate—if ever?
 2. Consider Job's argument. Do you ever take the side of someone powerful, not because you know the person to be right, but because you are afraid of their power?
 3. Reread Job's poetic description of the sovereign omniscience of God in 12:13-25. Do you believe Job's description is true, in spite of any calamity?
-

WINDOW
on the Word

*Job is looking for some clear principle to explain **God's sovereign power**. One belief was that every action in nature and life was divinely directed. God created the seasons and started the process of nature—tremendous powers in wind, rain, hail, snow—all bound in uninterrupted cycles of the seasons.*

LESSONS FROM

CREATION

God has revealed himself to us through his creation. As Job discusses his troubles with his friends, he challenges them to learn about God through the creatures that God has made. Throughout the Bible, animals are used to illustrate a lesson that God wants us to learn. Here are a few examples:

Dogs

(Job 30:1, Php 3:2)

Protect sheep and other livestock from predators.

Ostriches

(Job 39:13-18)

Not the best parents, but can outrun horses.

Eagles

(Job 39:27-30)

Their highly sensitive eyes can spot small prey from hundreds of feet in the air.

Ants

(Pr 6:6-8)

Capable of carrying many times their own weight. Disciplined, organized and industrious.

Camels

(Jer 2:23)

Can travel for days without water, and can move quickly. Can also be stubborn.

Sparrows

(Mt 6:26, 10:29-31)

Small, yet fed by God and of great concern to him.

The Judge Will Acquit Me

Job 13:13–14:22

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever felt so burdened with trouble, trials, or tragedy that you'd rather be dead?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Job prepared to address God. Although he knew this move was risky, was he confident that he could prove his innocence (13:13-19)? How did he make his case (vs. 20-28)?
2. Job's despair leads him to focus on death (14:1-22). How could he feel that a tree had more hope than he (vs. 7-12)?
3. The only hope beyond his present distress lay in the afterlife (vs. 13-17). What was his hope?
4. How did his hope fade (vs. 18-22)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you feel free to have a "heart to heart" talk with God? Do you believe God understands when you are angry or grieving?
2. When life turns grim, do you believe you can trust God to bring you through it—even if it ends in your death?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The Hebrew word **sheol** was used for the place of the dead, or the underworld. It is translated "the grave" here (14:13). Job hopes that beyond death and sheol, he will be restored to the presence of his Creator.*

Windbag!

DAY 11

Job 15

Do you know anyone who talks a lot, yet doesn't really say anything? Do you listen to them?

1. This chapter starts the second cycle of speeches, beginning with Eliphaz. Was he really calling his friend Job a windbag (vs. 2-3)?

2. Why was Job ignoring the wisdom of his aged friend (vs. 7-13)? Was he correct to do so?

3. Why did Eliphaz stick to his theme of believing that Job was hiding some sin that was offending God (vs. 14-16)?

4. How did Eliphaz see the fate of the wicked (vs. 31-35)?

1. Do you agree with the premise that calamities and catastrophes are often the evidence of God's displeasure and that one's search, discovery and repentance of secret, hidden sins will appease God?

2. Are you quick to judge goodness based on the outward appearance of wealth or poverty? Consider 1 Samuel 16:7 and Matthew 7:1-5.

Middle eastern patriarchal culture held senior leaders of the community in high respect. Wisdom and insight was understood to be vested in them due to their years of experience (15:8-10). Eliphaz probably spoke first because he was the oldest.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

What Miserable Comforters!

Job 16–17

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever reached out to a friend for help and support and received none—or received instead criticism and condemnation?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Here comes Job's response to Eliphaz. How did Job describe his "miserable comforter" (16:1-5)? And his own miserable, uncomfortable life (vs. 6-17)?

2. Job needed a divine comforter (vs. 18-21). How did faith focus his sense of hope as he endured his problems?

3. Was Job feeling old (16:22–17:2)? Who could provide him with true security (17:3-7)?

4. In spite of Job's dilemma, he called for the righteous to stick to their ways (vs. 8-9). Why did he fall back into the depth of depression (vs. 10-16)?

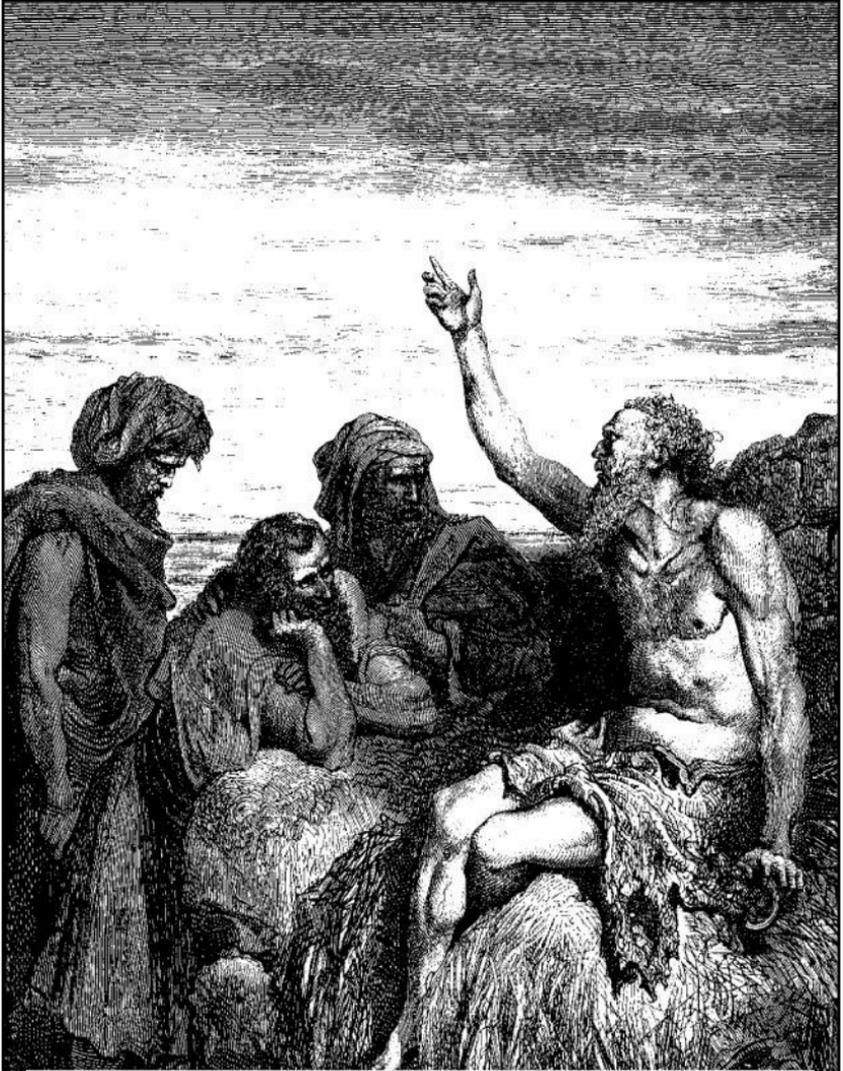
LIVING
out the Word

1. How often do you feel just plain miserable? What pulls you out of it? What action do you take? (a) sleep in, (b) seek friends, (c) take a walk, (d) dine out, (e) go shopping, (f) eat chocolate.

2. Who comforts you? Is your Comforter described by Job (16:19-21)? Is this the One the apostle John describes (1Jn 2:1)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Job was feeling **disappointed with his friends**, so in his depression he turns to thinking about his family. Family members are intertwined with his feeling of dejection, linking the grave to home (17:13), darkness to the bed, decay to his father, and the devouring worm to his mother or sister (v. 14). How morbid is that?*



“Then Job replied: ‘I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all! Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?’” Job 16:1-3

Resentment and Name Calling

Job 18

OPENING
up to the Word

Can you think of an example when resentment leads to name calling and worse?

DIGGING
into the Word

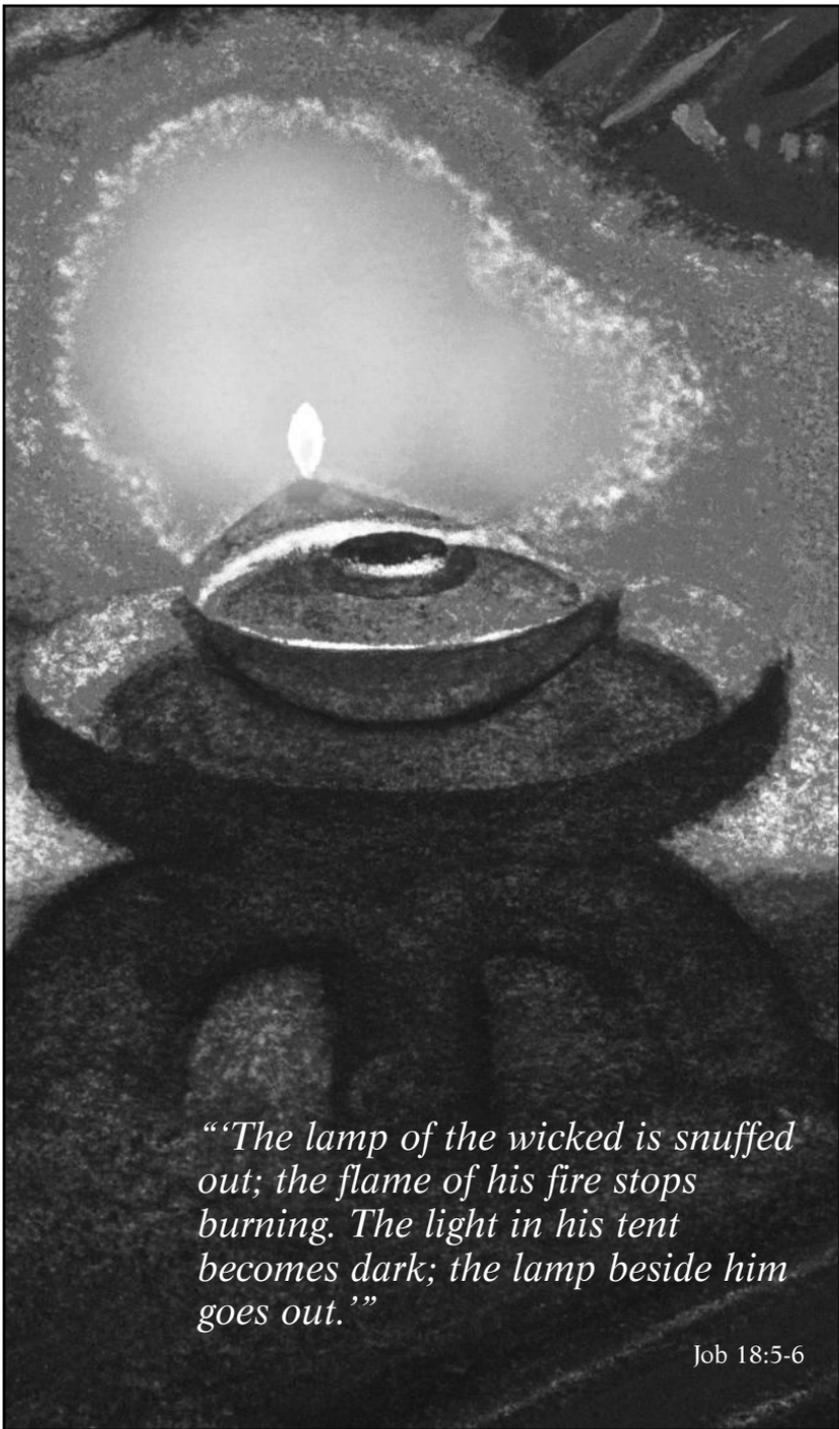
1. Did Bildad have anything new to add in his second speech (18:1-21)?
2. How resentful was Bildad of Job's refusal to listen to his friends (vs. 1-4)? Did name-calling help the situation any?
3. What fate did Bildad predict for Job (vs. 5-13)?
4. How does "burning sulfur" (v. 15) smell like the punishment of God in Genesis 19:24?

LIVING
out the Word

1. When you strike at someone's self esteem, especially when that person is trying to help you, how do you expect the person to react? Do you think Job should have anticipated this response?
2. How will you be remembered after you perish from the earth (v. 17)? As (a) miserable, (b) resentful, (c) loving, (d) uninvolved, (e) life of the party, (f) responsible.

WINDOW
on the Word

"Burning sulfur" or "brimstone" was mentioned by Moses in his final speech to the Israelites (Dt 29:23). As he faced his death, Moses charged Israel to obey God, lest the land become as barren as Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim (v. 24).



“The lamp of the wicked is snuffed out; the flame of his fire stops burning. The light in his tent becomes dark; the lamp beside him goes out.”

Job 18:5-6

Why are You Attacking Me?

Job 19

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever been verbally attacked for something you did not do? How did you react? (a) spitefully, (b) graciously, (c) self-righteously, (d) painfully.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. This was Job's second reply to Bildad. The deep anger now moved toward sadness. Who would Job's alleged sin affect (vs. 1-4)?
2. Who had wronged Job (vs. 5-11)? Were Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad a part of God's supposed onslaught toward Job (vs. 12)?
3. What effect did Job's calamities have on Job's relationship with others (vs. 13-19)? What did Job wish from these friends (vs. 20-22)?
4. Hope lives! How did Job express his deepening hope in his redemption (vs. 23-29)? Although he hoped to have a record of his arguments preserved, what was more important to Job?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have any of your bad decisions affected your loved ones? What steps do you take to make the best decision for everyone involved in an issue?
2. Do you believe God is your Redeemer (vs. 25-27).
3. Would the apostle Paul have agreed with Job's statement about a resurrection in the afterlife? See 1 Corinthians 15, especially verses 35-57.

WINDOW
on the Word

*Job refers to God as his **Redeemer** (v. 25). He believes he will be vindicated by God, even as relatives vindicated their kinsmen through redeeming them from debts (Ru 3:9; Isa 59:17-21). Christians see a foreshadow here of the redemption that comes through Jesus (Heb 7:25).*

“Then Job replied: ‘How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me.’”

Job 19:1-3



Artwork by Basil Wolverton—PTM