



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

JOB

Week 3

Why Are You Mad at Me?

Job 20

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever been in such a hurry to respond to someone that you did not consider the evidence before you? How did you rectify the matter?

DIGGING
into the Word


1. Are you ready for Zophar's second speech? How did he respond to the accusation that Job had made in 19:28-29 (20:1-3)? Did Zophar speak before he engaged his brain?
2. According to Zophar, how long-lived is the joy of the wicked (vs. 4-19)? Did Zophar accuse Job of oppressing and taking advantage of the poor?
3. According to Zophar, is the doom of the wicked inevitable (vs. 20-29)? Will it happen now or later?
4. Did the anger that Zophar felt toward Job influence his understanding of God (vs. 2, 15, 23, 28, 29)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you think Zophar's assessment of the happiness of wicked people was purely subjective? How is God's perspective different?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Zophar's argument**, twisted by his own anger at Job, defines God as impatient and angry. Zophar mistakes the suffering of Job as proof that Job is sinning. Zophar believes God is so angry that he is directly punishing Job.*



*“A fire unfanned
will consume him
and devour what
is left in his
tent.”*

Job 20:26

Mock On!

Job 21

OPENING
up to the Word

Why do the wicked prosper? Why doesn't God reach down and do more?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Who do you think Job's complaint is really against (vs. 1-6)?
2. How did Job's opinion of the prosperity of the wicked (vs. 7-12) differ from that of Zophar in the previous chapter? According to Job, how do the wicked end their lives (v. 13)?
3. According to Job, can the wicked openly defy God and go unpunished (vs. 14-18)?
4. Why did Zophar claim that punishment is given to the children of the wicked (vs. 19-21)? Would that be fair?
5. Did Job see life as essentially unfair (vs. 22-26)? Did he think that blessings came as the result of virtue, and curses as the result of vice (vs. 27-34)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Virtue or vice—which brings lasting happiness? Can your *own* virtue bring *eternal* happiness?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Job's argument turns to observations on the **life and death of the wicked**. Many even seem prosperous, healthy and content at the time of death (vs. 23-24). And though the bodies of the wicked and the righteous are equally subject to decay (vs. 25-26), families of some of the wicked can afford to protect their tombs (vs. 32-33). Does this perspective lead to a relevant or significant spiritual conclusion?*

“Can anyone teach knowledge to God, since he judges even the highest? One man dies in full vigor, completely secure and at ease, his body well nourished, his bones rich with marrow. Another man dies in bitterness of soul, never having enjoyed anything good. Side by side they lie in the dust, and worms cover them both.”

Job 21:22-26



“Will you keep to the old path that evil men have trod? They were carried off before their time, their foundations washed away by a flood.”

Job 22:15-16



Artwork by Basil Wolverton—PTM

Does Your Goodness Do God Any Good?

Job 22

Do you consider your life to be joyful? (a) in love, (b) in marriage, (c) in children, (d) in work, (e) in worship?

1. The third cycle begins with the third speech of Eliphaz. How could Job benefit God (vs. 1-3)? Did Eliphaz hammer on his theme again—that God would never punish the righteous (vs. 4-5)?

2. What sins did Eliphaz imagine were responsible for Job's calamity (vs. 6-11)? How did he suppose Job had wronged God (vs. 12-20)? Could he presume to know Job's secret thoughts?

3. Eliphaz called for Job to turn his life back to God (vs. 21-30). How did he explain true joy?

1. Do you believe that disaster and disease are always connected to anger and punishment from God? Why or why not?

2. Consider the sins of neglect that make up Eliphaz's accusations (vs. 6-11). Could he make those accusations of you? Why or why not?

According to Jesus, judging the sins of others is a perilous spiritual undertaking (Matthew 7:1). *That said, Jesus also encouraged love and compassion for the poor and needy, saying the poor are always with us (Mt 26:11). We may conclude that failure to be aware of and concerned for the poor is sinful. The old covenant prohibited taking the only cloak of a debtor, leaving them "naked" (Ex 22:25-27).*

DAY 17

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Where Was God in Job's World?

Job found himself in the middle of a trial that would make most of us deeply discouraged, if not drive us into grave depression. He longed for a face-to-face meeting with God. Job would question God personally. Job had lived a good and righteous life. Why, then had God allowed such calamities to fall on him?

But Job didn't know exactly where to find God. Like many ancient people, he may have thought that God occupied a particular location. Was he in the east, west, north or south (translated as "forward, backward, left and right" in the New King James Version)?

Assuming that Job lived somewhere near Edom, as many scholars believe, he would have imagined the vast Arabian desert and Mesopotamia to the east. Certainly God would not live there. Toward the west, he imagined idolatrous Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. God gave no indication of living there. To the north, he thought of the Canaanites with their materialistic, pagan culture, and the fabled frigid lands beyond—not a suitable place for God. Sitting on his ash heap, Job thought of the Red Sea and the barbarous inhabitants of the lands to the south. God would definitely not be there.

Where *was* God, then? If he were a long way off, how long would it take him to get back? It seemed to Job as if God had departed from his life, and had left no forwarding address.

Of course, circumstances of life and geographical location are no limitations for God. God is everywhere, all the time. There is no place or circumstance of life where God is not present, as Job would discover.

Not Guilty!

DAY 18

Job 23-24

Why does evil exist in our communities? (a) we don't care, (b) God doesn't care, (c) we can't catch everyone, (d) criminals have free will, (e) we all have free will.

1. This is Job's third reply to Eliphaz. Why couldn't Job's accusers see that he just wanted to talk to God—to understand what had happened (23:1-7)?

2. How frustrated was Job in his quest (vs. 8-10)? Did Job's choice to follow God (vs. 11-12) meet the destiny designed by God (vs. 13-17)?

3. Why does God tolerate evil (24:1-24)? Why do the poor suffer (vs. 5-11)? How do murderers, adulterers and thieves escape judgment— (vs. 13-17)? Did Job have any answers to these questions?

1. How intense is your quest to know God, to have a deep, lasting relationship with him?

2. How do you react to your own suffering? (a) angry, (b) bitter, (c) complaining, (d) depressed, (e) hopeful.

3. How do you react to evil in the world? (a) combating, (b) denouncing, (c) fearful, (d) tolerant.

*Job speaks of his **fear of God** in this speech. On the one hand, he does not fear God's great power (23:6-7), for he has faith in his final outcome. On the other hand, in his present distress, he is terrified of God (vs. 14-17).*

OPENING

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Let's Get to the Point

Job 25–26

OPENING
up to the Word

Is Satan, God or human nature responsible for sin? Have you discussed and pondered this dilemma?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. In this third and final speech of Bildad, how did he view a human being in comparison to God (25:1-6)? Do you think he overstated the negative side of human nature to make his case?

2. Job replied in chapter 26. Why such sarcasm (vs. 1-4)?

3. God's control extends even to *Abaddon*, the perceived "place" of destruction of the dead, synonymous with *Sheol* (vs. 5-6). How does all of creation present the whisper and the thunder of God (vs. 7-14)? How do you think Job understood that there are fewer stars in the northern sky, and that the earth floats in space—hung, as it were, by God?

LIVING
out the Word

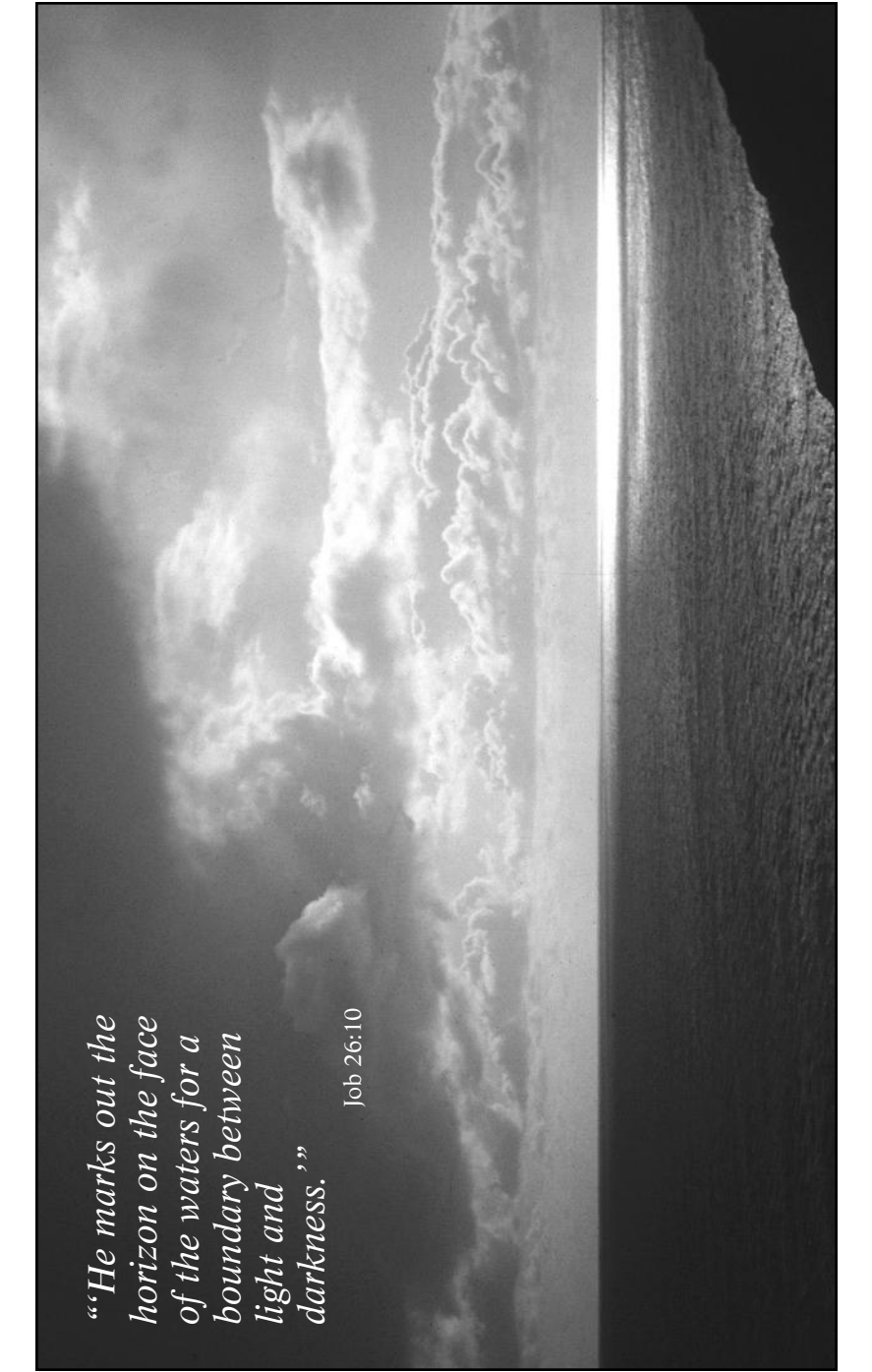
1. How do you view human nature? (a) all good, (b) all evil, (c) a combination of both.

2. Did Bildad intend to demean God's creation (25:4-6)?

3. Where do you hear God's whisper? And his thunder?

WINDOW
on the Word

Bildad's third speech is the shortest of all the speeches of Job's friends. Scholars debate whether this is a shortened fragment of Bildad's speech or whether it reflects Job's friends exhausting their arguments.



*“He marks out the
horizon on the face
of the waters for a
boundary between
light and
darkness.”*

Job 26:10

I Don't Think So

Job 27–28

OPENING
up to the Word

Where does wisdom come from? Can you acquire it like a miner searching for gold, silver or diamonds?

DIGGING
into the Word

- 1.** Job addresses his friends in chapters 27–31. How did he start—by admitting guilt or by affirming his innocence (27:1-6) ?
 - 2.** How did Job describe the result of evil (vs. 7-23)? Some scholars feel he is sarcastically responding to Zophar (ch. 20). How did Job say that God's ultimate judgment defies the present prosperity of the wicked (27:7-23)?
 - 3.** How does this soliloquy on wisdom describe the process of its development (ch. 28)? How is it like a miner searching for valuable resources (vs. 1-11)? Can a person find wisdom (vs. 12-14)? Can one buy wisdom (vs. 15-19)?
 - 4.** Did you know that the wind has weight (v. 25)? Galileo discovered this in 1630. Where did Job say wisdom came from (vs. 20-28)?
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LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** How do you teach about the power of God (27:11)?
 - 2.** How much enduring value does wealth have (v. 19)?
 - 3.** Is there a type of wisdom which is obtainable by human effort, while another kind of wisdom is only a gift of God?
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WINDOW
on the Word

Wisdom lies within the mind of God (ch. 28). Job refers to the work of a miner to illustrate the quest for wisdom. The miner digs a shaft and descends into it, dangling in a swaying basket (v. 4). He "assaults" the hidden parts of God's creation to bring minerals and precious stones to the surface where they can be seen (vs. 9-11).

The Good Ol' Days

DAY 21

Job 29:1–30:19

Have you ever wished that the good times would last forever? Have you wished this during the good times, or looking back, remembering past good times?

1. Job continues, with memories of good times long ago (29:1-25). How did he view God's care back during his good times (vs. 1-4)? Did the good times compensate for his present suffering (vs. 5-10)?

2. Next, Job answered the accusations of his friends. How had he treated the poor, the needy (vs. 11-17)? And how confidently had he anticipated the future while times were good (vs. 18-20)?

3. Job turned to the present misery of his life (30:1-18). How was he insulted (vs. 1-15)? Would he have defended these people in the past (29:11-17)?

4. How had disease inflamed his misery (30:16-18)? How did his physical condition reflect his inner turmoil?

1. How much better do you feel when everything is going well? Can you feel sympathy for those in pain?

2. How much worse do you feel when everything is going badly for you? Can you still keep your chin up and be thankful for God's love?

Righteousness was topped with justice, as in some some cultures a garment is topped with a turban (29:14). Job correlates his feelings about good times with the prevailing belief that God blesses the righteous and curses the wicked.

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