

Questions from Job for God

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Wayne Duncan – James 5.9–11
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on God

Prelude:

I. Have you heard the history of Job?

II. He was the man that you would love to have as a neighbor.

- A. He was above suspicion.
- B. He an unashamed life.
- C. He feared God.
- D. He did not want any part of evil.

III. However, Satan believed that Job was that kind of man, because

- A. allegedly, God had never allowed Job to suffer.
- B. Then Satan worked through evil men and nature
 - 1. to take away all of job's income,
 - 2. to kill almost all of Job's workers,
 - 3. to kill Job's 10 children, and
 - 4. to bring Job to the edge of death with boils all over his body.

IV. Finally, the poor man spoke.

- A. He did not direct his *first* questions toward God, but
- B. just kind of spoke them in agony,
 - 1. knowing that his friends *and God* would hear.
 - 2. So, let's consider his first set of questions as meant for God.

Persuasion:

I. Job's Questions for God

- A. Job 3.11–12, 16, 20–23 • Why Can't We Die Before We Suffer?

11 **“Why did I not die at birth?**

- 12** Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?
Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?"
- 16** "Or why was I not hidden like a stillborn child,
Like infants who never saw light?"
- 20** "Why is light given to him who is in misery,
And life to the bitter of soul,
21 Who long for death, but it does not come,
And search for it more than hidden treasures;
22 Who rejoice exceedingly,
And are glad when they can find the grave?
23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
And whom God has hedged in?"

B. Job 7.17–21 • Why Does God Exalt Us Only to Make Us a Target?

- 17** "What is man, that You should exalt him,
That You should set Your heart on him,
18 That You should visit him every morning,
And test him every moment?
19 How long?
Will You not look away from me,
And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?
20 Have I sinned?
What have I done to You, O watcher of men?
Why have You set me as Your target,
So that I am a burden to myself?
21ab Why then do You not pardon my transgression,
And take away my iniquity?"

C. Job 9.2–4, 11–12, 14, 19 • How Can We Contend with God?

- 2** "...how can a man be righteous before God?
4 GOD is wise in heart and mighty in strength.
Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?
- 11** "If He goes by me, I do not see Him;
If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;
12 If He takes away, who can hinder Him?"

Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'"

- 14 "How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words to reason with Him?"**
- 19 "If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong;
And if of justice, who will appoint my day in court?"**

D. Job 10.3-7 • Is God Like Man?

- 3 "Does it seem good to You that You should oppress,
That You should despise the work of Your hands,
And smile on the counsel of the wicked?**
- 4 Do You have eyes of flesh?
Or do You see as man sees?**
- 5 Are Your days like the days of a mortal man?
Are Your years like the days of a mighty man,**
- 6 That You should seek for my iniquity
And search out my sin,**
- 7 Although You know that I am not wicked,
And there is no one who can deliver from Your hand?"**

E. Job 13.24 • Why Does God Hide His Face?

- 24 "Why do You hide Your face,
And regard me as Your enemy?"**

F. Job 14.1-3 • Why Does God Judge a Fading Flower?

- 1 "Man who is born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble.**
- 2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue.**
- 3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one,
And bring me to judgment with Yourself?"**

G. Job 24.1 • Why Can't We Have Meetings with God?

- 1 "Since times are not hidden from the Almighty,**

Why do those who know Him see not His days?"

1. Homer Hailey commented that:

"Job had expressed his desire to know where he might find God and bring his cause before His seat (23:3–5), but he had been unable to do either (23:8–9). He now asks why the Almighty does not appoint times to hold such meetings for those that know Him. Those who know Him are those in fellowship with Him, those who look to Him in faith. To 'see his days' meant to see His judgment exercised and the proper disposal of conditions Job described. Although Job's questions were presumptuous, they sprang from an honest heart. He was perplexed over the Almighty's actions toward the wicked and His disregard for the poor."

– Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on Job*, page 213

H. Before I can deal with Job's questions, there are things for us to consider first.

II. How did God deal with Job?

A. Job got out of line when he became God's judge.

- 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
3 Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me."**

– Job 38.2–3

B. God presented Job with 76 questions,

1. designed to show

- a) that Job was not qualified to run the universe.
- b) How then could he run his life and know all secrets?
- c) Job 38.4

- 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding."**

d) Job 40.2

**2 “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?
 He who rebukes God, let him answer it.”**

e) Job 40.7–8

**7 “Now prepare yourself like a man;
 I will question you, and you shall answer Me:
8 Would you indeed annul My judgment?
 Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?”**

f) Later, God told Job

- (1) to have an arm like God,
- (2) to have glory like God,
- (3) to humble all the proud, and God said:

**14 “Then I will also confess to you
 That your own right hand can save you.”**

– Job 40.14

- (a) Therefore, Job was dependent upon God.
- (b) He had to trust God.

C. God did not forbid Job from asking questions, but

- 1. to remember who he was,
- 2. to show respect,
- 3. not to judge God, but
- 4. to trust him to keep running things.

III. How did Job deal with God’s response?

A. Job realized that he had gotten out of hand:

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

- 4 **“Behold, I am vile;
What shall I answer You?
I lay my hand over my mouth.**
- 5 **Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further.”**

– Job 40.3–5

B. God was not done and asked Job more questions.

C. Job humbled himself:

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

- 2 **“I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.**
- 3 **You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.**
- 4 **Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’**
- 5 **I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.**
- 6 **Therefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes.”**

– Job 42.1–6

D. Ask your questions, just remember

1. who is the Creator and who is the creature,
2. who is the Teacher and who is the student,
3. who is the Master and who is the servant.

E. Now, let’s consider Job’s questions.

IV. Why Can’t We Die Before We Suffer?

A. First, we have to understand that *man*

1. brought sin and death into the world, and

2. the suffering that precedes death.

B. The fact

1. that we have life after we have sinned

2. shows God's grace, because

23 ...the wages of sin is death...

– Romans 6.23

C. There is a place of no suffering coming:

4 “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

– Revelation 21.4

1. Why can't we go there now?

2. It is not just a place of no suffering, but

a) it is a place of righteousness:

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

– 2 Peter 3.13

b) God is looking for those who want to live righteously *now*.

D. That means remaining here until we die, and

1. that includes times of suffering, but

2. it also includes times of rejoicing.

E. Suffering shows whether we will stay with God or not.

1. A young married couple in love

2. are willing to live poor, because

- a) of their love for one another.
- b) Likewise, can I, will I still love God while I suffer?

V. Why Does God Exalt Us Only to Make Us a Target?

- A. I can see why Job asked this question.
- B. His days of sorrow overshadowed his days of gladness.
 - 1. What brought him joy,
 - 2. brought him depression.
- C. God has every intention of exalting us higher than we can ever imagine.
 - 1. However, like Jesus
 - 2. that requires suffering here first:

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

– Romans 8.18

VI. How Can We Contend with God?

- A. We can't.
- B. Yet, he invites us
 - 1. to pray about our situations,
 - 2. to reason with him,
 - 3. to ask him questions.

**18 “Come now, and let us reason together,”
Says the LORD...**

– Isaiah 1.18

- C. Don't contend with him.
 - 1. Understand him.
 - 2. Check your attitude and learn.

VII. Is God Like Man?

- A. It was just the opposite.
 - 1. God does not act as man would.
 - 2. That is precisely why we often do not understand how he operates.
- B. Joseph could not see how his suffering could be good.
- C. Remember:

**9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

– Isaiah 55.9

VIII. Why Does God Hide His Face?

- A. He wants to see whether we are men and woman of integrity.
 - 1. Integrity is what we are when we think no one is watching.
 - 2. So God wants to see what we will do.
- B. He also hides himself for our own protection.
 - 1. Remember that Job said:

5 “...my eye sees You. *Therefore* I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

– Job 42.5–6

- 2. Exodus 20.18–19

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

3. Isaiah 6.5

**5 “Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts.”**

IX. Why Does God Judge a Fading Flower?

- A. In our eyes, we seem as a fading flower, but
- B. we are made in the image of God.
 - 1. Therefore, he desires to save us and to bless us.
 - 2. Think about why Jesus died.

1 ...we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

– 1 John 2.1

X. Why Can't We Have Meetings with God?

- A. We will have a meeting with God.
 - 1. It is known as the Judgment.
 - 2. Everyone shall be raised from the dead to meet God.
- B. At the Judgment, according to Revelation 20.12,
 - 1. he will give the wicked their just due, and
 - 2. he will reward the righteous:

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Exhortation:

- I. God knows your questions.**

- A. This is why he included the narrative of Job's suffering, debate, and questions.
- B. He wants you to ask questions, because
 - 1. he wants you to know him fully, but
 - 2. that will not happen until you ask questions and seek the answers.
 - a) God did not rebuke Job for asking questions, but
 - b) he did rebuke him for thinking that a man can hold God accountable.

II. God knows why you are asking your questions.

- A. He knows whether you intend on judging him.
- B. He knows whether you are looking for an excuse to continue in sin.
- C. He knows whether you truly want to understand him.

III. There is an element of trust that we have to have

- A. that he knows what he is doing, and
- B. that he has all the answers.

IV. God wants to save you from the ultimate suffering: Hell.

- A. Therefore, he sent his Son to die for our sins,
- B. saving us from eternal punishment.