

“Job’s Final Reply to His Friends”
Job 27:1-31:40
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Introduction

- Our lives are full of questions: Who was involved? What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Why did it happen? How did it happen?
- What question is most frustrating to us? It is the “Why” question. For those of you who have children or grandchildren, what is the toughest type of question they ask? “Why?”
- Have you ever gone down this path in your life with your children or grandchildren or parents? Why is the sky blue? Why did it rain today? Why didn’t it rain today? Why are we going out? Why am I here? Why did this happen? The questions never stop. In fact, it often becomes a series of “Why?” and the parent explains something then they ask “Why?” again and again and again. Though I said to myself I would never end this sequence with the proverbial ending, I must admit that I have used the answer: “Because I said so.”
- Here are a few of Job’s “why” questions directed to God:
- **Job 3:11** *Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?*
- **Job 7:21** *Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity?*
- **Job 10:2** *I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me.*
- **Job 13:24** *Why do you hide your face and count me as your enemy?*
- As a reminder, what do we know about Job?
- **Job 1:1** *In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.*
- **Job 1:8** *Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”*
- **Job 1:22** *In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*
- **Job 2:10b** *In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.*
- What do we learn in these verses? Job’s suffering was not a result of his sin or circumstances. It was a result of God’s sovereign control in Job’s life and allowing Satan to bring terrible calamities and losses. In all this Job did not sin, he did not reject God, nor did he curse God as his wife wanted him to do. He continued to fear God and maintain his integrity.
- I have believed for a long time that maybe Job was a little too proud about who he was. But these passages indicate that Job did not sin. About eight years ago I taught through the book of Job at another Bible study. There was one person that came and said almost every week: “That is not fair. How could God do something so bad to Job? It’s not right.”
- So, where are we in the book of Job? The first two chapters gave us the answer to the why question. Chapters 3-26 gave us Job’s responses to what happened and those of his “three friends.” Each of the friends had indicated that Job was guilty of sin and what happened to Job was justified. Their basic message: You deserve it and you must repent.

- We are nearing the end of the book. It looks as though Job may have interrupted Bildad during his last discourse after only six verses and the third friend Zophar did not get to say his third discourse or the debate had run out of steam and entered a different stage of the book. Today we are looking at Job's final reply to his friends.

Lesson

- **Point #1: God is sovereign**
- **Job 27:2-3** *As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.*
- Job said that God was in control of his life. What happened was not because of some sin in his life, but because God had decided to do this for some unknown reason to Job. It is God who had acted and it was done for His purposes. It is God who had “*taken away my right*” and it is God who had “*made my soul bitter*.”
- Job knew that God was a just God. Job knew that he didn't deserve any punishment. Job knew that God is sovereign and in control of the whole universe. What did Job not understand? Why had it happened.
- **Psalm 71:19** says “*Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?*”
- God is righteous. He always does what is right and He never sins. Job repeated the same theme that God is sovereign:
- **Job 30:11** *Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me, they have cast off restraint in my presence.*
- **Job 30:19** *God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.*
- **Job 30:21-22** *You have turned cruel to me; with the might of your hand you persecute me. You lift me up on the wind; you make me ride on it, and you toss me about in the roar of the storm.*
- Job had continued to trust God. Job was not shaking his fist at God. It was up to God to right the wrongs. It is God who is sole maker and owner and He is behind all secondary causes. It is God's full responsibility.
- Do you truly believe that God is sovereign? Do you continue to trust in God no matter what happens? Are you able to turn to God and acknowledge that the God of the universe has done right?
- R. C. Sproul has said multiple times: “*If there is even one maverick molecule in the universe running free from the sovereign control of God, we have no reason to believe any future promise that God has made, because that one maverick molecule may be the very thing that will destroy those plans.*” – **Sproul, What Does it Mean that God is Sovereign?**
- **Point #2: Not all suffering in life is due to sin**
- **Job 29:2-5** *Oh, that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, as I was*

in my prime, when the friendship of God was upon my tent, when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were all around me.

- Job's former life was full and joyous. Look at his life: his possessions gone, his children dead, his body wracked in pain, his wife told him to curse God, his friends had not shown him comfort, but accused him of sin. Job did not feel that God was still watching over him. He had felt a deep relationship and friendship with God and that seemed to be missing from his life. Job fondly remembered his life when he felt that God was for him rather than against him. God had watched over him. God was his friend. God was with him. What had happened? All was taken away.
- In all that had happened to Job, nowhere was it due to his sin or his fault. His friends had accused him of wrong, slights, and outright sin.
- C. H. Spurgeon has said, *“It is a great thing for a man to be near to God; it is a very choice privilege to be admitted into the inner circle of communion, and to become God’s familiar friend. Great as the privilege is, so great is the loss of it. No darkness is so dark as that which falls on eyes accustomed to the light.”* – quoted by David Guzik, **Enduring Word: Job**
- Look at what Job had also felt: **Job 30:16-17** *And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have taken hold of me. The night racks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest.*
- Job was wracked with pain and had struggled through the sheer pain of his disease that had continued to grow and had not given him any rest. Job's agony didn't go away, and his pain had increased.
- What does this mean to us? Not all suffering that we experience is because of our sins or mistakes. There are many natural consequences in our life that lead to sorrow and pain. There are sins that affect us physically, destroys relationships, costs us our job, but not everything that happens to us is a punishment from God.
- We are called to trust God in everything. We are called to be faithful to Him. We are called to turn to God and cry out to Him, but as Jesus said in the Garden of Gethsemane: **Luke 24:22** *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”*
- Jesus who deserved no punishment, bore our sins on the cross, not for what He had done, but for what we had done. If there was one person on the whole earth that deserved no punishment it was Jesus and yet he voluntarily suffered for our sake.
- **1 Peter 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*
- **Point #3: No hope for the lost without God's help**
- **Job 27:8-10** *For what is the hope of the godless when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life? Will God hear his cry when distress comes upon him? Will he take delight in the Almighty? Will he call upon God at all times?*

- **Job 27:13** *This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage that oppressors receive from the Almighty...*
- What follows this last verse is a series of judgments that fell upon the wicked man: death, loss of children, loss of food, loss of riches, and being swept from his place.
- There is coming a time when life on this earth comes to an end. If God ends the life of the godless the next step for them is judgment. While we are alive, we can turn to Jesus and believe in Him as our Lord and Savior, but after we die, the die has been cast, and the decision has been made. After a person dies and then cries out to God it is too late. God will not hear his cry. For those who rejected God and refused to submit to God during their life there is no help.
- What does Scripture say? **Heb. 9:27** *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...*
- After death is judgment. There is no reincarnation. There is no second chance. There is no temporary time in purgatory. There is no arbitrary forgiveness of sin. There is no balancing of our good and bad deeds. What is the answer?
- **John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*
- The only way to God is through Jesus. There is no other way. There is nothing anyone can do on his own to be saved.
- **Point #4: True wisdom is from God alone**
- **Job 28:12-13** *But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living.*
- Job asked the question: How can I gain wisdom? Man searches for wisdom throughout his life, trying to find it in many ways or through many people. He tries to buy it, but it cannot be bought. It is not found in the world. It is not found in some mysterious cult. It is not found in some new philosophy of life. True wisdom is hard to find, for it is only found in one place:
- **Job 28:23, 28** *God understands the way to it, and he knows its place...Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.*
- True wisdom is found in God. It starts with understanding that we are to fear and reverence God. Understanding is found when we turn away from evil. Only then will we understand true wisdom.
- *Job concluded this great speech by coming back to the touchstone of revelation. Since true wisdom comes from God, it is found by being in right relation to Him (the fear of the Lord), and it is shown by a life that does depart from evil. – Guzik*
- **Point #5: Believers are called to be faithful and obedient**
- **Job 27:5-6** *I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.*
- Job was committed to following God and doing what He said. He held to his integrity and his righteousness. He refused to agree with his friends that he had sinned. He had not done the

things that his friends said he did. In fact, they had not singled out one instance that supported their position. They had lied. Job had not let sin rule in his life and if it had, he deserved punishment as each of these verses indicate:

- (1) Immorality: **Job 31:1,10** *I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? ... then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down on her.*
- (2) Falsehood: **Job 31:5-6** *If I have walked with falsehood and my foot has hastened to deceit; (Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!)*
- (3) Unloving: **Job 31:16,22** *If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, ... then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket.*
- (4) Avarice and false worship: **Job 31:24,26-28** *If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence, ... if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above.*
- (5) Revenge and concealed sin: **Job 31:29,33,36** *If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him...if I have concealed my transgressions as others do by hiding my iniquity in my heart, ... Surely I would carry it on my shoulder;*
- (6) Stealing: **Job 31:39-40** *if I have eaten its yield without payment and made its owners breathe their last, let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley.*
- He had refuted all of his friends charges and he had relied upon God to right the wrong. If he had done any wrong, he deserved punishment.
- *But Job is not shaking his fist at God...It is up to God to set right the wrongs which, in a world of which He is the sole Maker and Owner, must, behind all secondary causes, be His full responsibility.* – Francis Anderson, Job
- **Point #6: God answers prayers in His time and way**
- **Job 30:20** *I cry to you for help and you do not answer me; I stand, and you only look at me.*
- **Job 31:35** *Oh, that I had one to hear me! (Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!)*
- One of the hardest things in our Christian life is to wait for God to answer our prayers. Job had cried out to God for help and answers. Over and over, he had requested help from God. He wanted an answer from God. He felt that God had turned against him and he wanted to understand why. He felt that God had been cruel to him. But he had not fully understood what God had done. From his perspective there was no reason or cause for what had happened to him. Job was dying and he was at the end of his rope and endurance. He had broken off his line of reasoning and appealed directly to God for help and the text says:
- **Job 31:45** *The words of Job are ended.*

- No answer received. No relief from his suffering. No rebuke of his friends. No vindication for Job. Job had to wait a little bit longer...
- **Review**
- Let's review the lesson from our passage today:
- **Point #1: God is sovereign** – No matter what happens in our lives God is in control.
- **Point #2: Not all suffering in life is due to sin** – Suffering often does not come because of our sin but it is God's means to conform us to His image and character.
- **Point #3: No hope for the lost without God's help** – There is only one way to God and that is through Jesus, there is no other way.
- **Point #4: True wisdom is from God alone** – Wisdom is not found in nature, books, or philosophies, but only in God.
- **Point #5: Believers called to be faithful and obedient** – Not only are we to believe in and put our trust in God, we are to be consistent in following and being obedient to Him.
- **Point #6: God answers prayers in His time and way** – God has promised to answer our prayers, but sometimes it takes longer than we want or desire.

Application

- How does this passage impact our lives? Here are my suggestions:
- **(1) We need to trust in God daily**
- **Prov. 3:5-6** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*
- **(2) We are to be obedient and do what God says**
- **1 John 5:2-3** *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*
- **(3) We need to examine ourselves to make sure we are not sinning**
- **2 Cor. 13:5** *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*
- **(4) We need to accept what God puts in our lives with joy**
- **Col 1:10-11** *...so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;*