

March 28

Scriptures: Read Job 22 & 23

Key Verse: “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him...” (Job 23:3)

Overview

In Eliphaz’s third and final speech, he takes on a more offensive tone. In the first round of speeches, Eliphaz was cordial to Job and the subject centred around the attributes of God, His justice, omnipotence, wisdom, and sovereignty. In the second round, Eliphaz hinted at Job’s sinfulness and discussed the punishments of the wicked. Now, however, Eliphaz no longer spoke in general terms, but he directly attacks and accuses Job of great wickedness, including terrible crimes and horrible sins.

How typical of a dogmatic theorist to create imaginary so-called facts to fit his theory (evolutionists are guilty of the same). It followed Eliphaz’s logic to assume that beyond any doubt Job must be guilty of these charges, for he believed that God would never reward good by evil; and so the apparent judgments upon Job were of divine origin in punishment for sin. Eliphaz saw God as unconcerned and disinterested in human suffering, except as it vindicates His justice, and since Job could in no way benefit God, there was no ulterior motive involved. This was a pharisaical or a legalist’s position based upon works.

As well as charging Job with abusing his former wealth and power (greed, injustice, oppressing the poor, and the widow, 22:5-9, which Job later denies, 29:12-13; 31:16-23; cf. James 2:1-4; Exodus 22:21-26; Deuteronomy 24:10,17), Eliphaz also twisted Job’s words to make him appear blasphemous and attributes to Job the very things he himself had said of the wicked (compare 22:17; 21:14). He wrongly accused Job of thinking that God was too high to notice him doing evil (22:13; cf. Psalm 94:6-7; Isaiah 29:15). He compared Job to the wicked men who perished in the great flood of Noah’s day and implied that Job deserved the same.

Eliphaz claimed that when the wicked perish, it makes the righteous glad (22:19), but anyone who would laugh and gloat over another’s misfortune is truly not righteous; it should rather bring sorrow that they did not enter into the redemptive joy of the Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 2 Peter 3:9). Eliphaz was ignorant of the Fatherly love and compassion of God for all people who are the work of His hands (Hosea 11:8; Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34).

Eliphaz was also mistaken to think that the righteous never bear hardship. On the contrary, they often do for the purpose of discipline and growth (Hebrews 12:5-11). Job discovered (in part) this very insight which he later came to understand more fully; it was a new and radical idea: “But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (23:10). Pure faith is that which has been tested and refined through the fire (Psalm 66:10-12; 1 Peter 4:12-13; James 1:2-3, 12).

There were, however, some wonderful truths and words of advice in the latter part of Eliphaz’s speech (22:21-30) which showed his true concern for Job, though it did not relate to him. For the one in need of repentance (especially the backslider), it is relevant and meaningful. “Return to the Almighty, you will be built up” (22:23), find peace and safety, joy and fellowship with God,

overcome sin, and benefit others. Instead of gold, God will be your all-sufficiency (22:25-26). Because of the purity of Job's hands, Job later fulfilled the words of Eliphaz; Job interceded on behalf of his friends who were not innocent, but God delivered them (22:30; 42:7-9).

In Job's response, he ignored the accusations against him but accepted Eliphaz's wise advice to "acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace" (22:21). Job truly desired to know God more yet was confused because he felt alienated from Him and did not know where to find Him in order to have that close personal relationship. It is one thing to know about God but quite another to really find Him. Job was convinced that God existed and knew His presence was sovereignly at work in the world, but he desired "the Desire of all nations" (Haggai 2:7), to be by his side that he might "come to His seat [of judgment]" to present his case before Him and understand all His words (23:3-5). Knowing God is a continuous process, for we can never stop learning about Him and His Word. Paul knew God but still prayed that he might really "know Him" (Philippians 3:10).

Job's search for God was ultimately fulfilled in the incarnation of Jesus Christ; for He is the one way to God, and those who have seen Him have seen the Father (John 1:14; 14:6, 9). Mental assent to the existence of God is not enough to find Him, as Job knew well. But by belief and obedience to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, we can see God daily with spiritual sight, and one day we will see Him face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12; Hebrews 11:6; 2 Corinthians 4:6).

On his own, Job could not approach God directly to present his case. However, with Jesus, the Advocate, Mediator, and Great High Priest, mere men can now boldly enter the very throne room of God (Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22). Job's contemporaries saw God as being far removed and disinterested in mankind. They thought Job was ridiculous and conceited to think he could go before God, but Job was learning that God did have a personal interest in him, and He is truly near those who seek Him (Isaiah 55:6; Acts 17:27-28). It is an amazing revelation of Scripture that God does indeed love mankind; He searches us out, chooses us, and has a plan for us. He welcomes everyone to come to Him (Ephesians 1:4; John 6:37; Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16; Luke 19:10).

Prayer

Lord, You are testing us. Grant us Your amazing grace, that we might come forth as pure gold.