

JOB



LOOKING BACK

- Zophar insisted that the success of the wicked is always short-lived and judgment will eventually catch up with them.
- His argument continued the friends' basic formula: wickedness brings suffering; righteousness brings blessing.
- Job challenged that formula by pointing to reality: sometimes wicked people prosper, live long lives, and even die in peace.
- Job was not denying God's justice; he was showing that God's justice does not always operate according to the friends' timetable.
- By the end of chapter 21, the friends' explanation for Job's suffering was becoming harder and harder to defend.

ELIPHAZ HAS
ALREADY
REACHED HIS
VERDICT

22:1-5



“Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 “Can a person do anything to help God?

Can even a wise person be helpful to him?

3 Is it any advantage to the Almighty if you are righteous?

Would it be any gain to him if you were perfect?

4 Is it because you’re so pious that he accuses you
and brings judgment against you?

5 No, it’s because of your wickedness!

There’s no limit to your sins.”

ELIPHAZ HAS ALREADY REACHED HIS VERDICT



- Eliphaz begins with truth about God but uses it to reach the wrong conclusion about Job
 - He no longer wonders whether Job has sinned; he assumes Job is guilty
 - Job's suffering has become Eliphaz's "evidence"
 - We must distinguish between what God has revealed and what we assume God must be doing

WE SHOULD NEVER SPEAK WITH CERTAINTY
WHERE GOD HAS NOT SPOKEN



ELIPHAZ INVENTS THE EVIDENCE

22:6-11



“For example, you must have lent money to your friend
and demanded clothing as security.

Yes, you stripped him to the bone.

7 You must have refused water for the thirsty
and food for the hungry.

8 You probably think the land belongs to the powerful
and only the privileged have a right to it!

9 You must have sent widows away empty-handed
and crushed the hopes of orphans.

10 That is why you are surrounded by traps
and tremble from sudden fears.

11 That is why you cannot see in the darkness,
and waves of water cover you.”

ELIPHAZ INVENTS THE EVIDENCE

- Eliphaz accuses Job of exploiting the poor, widows, and orphans
 - Nothing in the story supports Eliphaz's accusations
 - Eliphaz's theology now requires him to invent sins serious enough to explain Job's suffering
 - His need for an explanation becomes more important than compassion for his suffering friend

WHEN OUR ASSUMPTIONS BECOME MORE
IMPORTANT THAN THE TRUTH, WE CAN DEEPLY
WOUND THE PEOPLE WE ARE TRYING TO HELP



ELIPHAZ

MISREPRESENTS

JOB

22:12-20



“God is so great—higher than the
heavens,

higher than the farthest stars.

13 But you reply, ‘That’s why God can’t
see what I am doing!

How can he judge through the thick
darkness?

14 For thick clouds swirl about him, and he
cannot see us.

He is way up there, walking on the vault
of heaven.’

15 “Will you continue on the old paths
where evil people have walked?

16 They were snatched away in the prime
of life,

the foundations of their lives washed
away.

17 For they said to God, ‘Leave us alone!

What can the Almighty do to us?’

18 Yet he was the one who filled their
homes with good things,
so I will have nothing to do with that
kind of thinking.

19 “The righteous will be happy to see the
wicked destroyed,

and the innocent will laugh in contempt.

20 They will say, ‘See how our enemies
have been destroyed.

The last of them have been consumed
in the fire.”

ELIPHAZ MISREPRESENTS JOB

- Eliphaz accuses Job of believing that God cannot see what happens on earth
 - Job has questioned God's actions, but he has never denied God's knowledge
- Eliphaz is now arguing against a version of Job that Job himself has never presented
 - Listening requires understanding what someone actually said – not what we assume they meant



WE CANNOT HELP PEOPLE WELL IF WE ARE
NOT WILLING TO HEAR THEM ACCURATELY



GOOD ADVICE, WRONG DIAGNOSIS

22:21-30



“Submit to God, and you will have peace;
then things will go well for you.

22 Listen to his instructions,
and store them in your heart.

23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be
restored—
so clean up your life.

24 If you give up your lust for money
and throw your precious gold into the
river,

25 the Almighty himself will be your
treasure.

He will be your precious silver!

26 “Then you will take delight in the

Almighty

and look up to God.

27 You will pray to him, and he will hear
you,

and you will fulfill your vows to him.

28 You will succeed in whatever you
choose to do,
and light will shine on the road ahead of
you.

29 If people are in trouble and you say,
‘Help them,’
God will save them.

30 Even sinners will be rescued;
they will be rescued because your
hands are pure.”

GOOD ADVICE, WRONG DIAGNOSIS

- Eliphaz calls Job to return to God, pray, and make God his treasure
- Much of his advice is true – but it is based upon the false assumption that Job has abandoned God
 - Biblical truth can still be misapplied
 - Good theology requires both truth and wisdom about how that truth is used

A TRUE STATEMENT APPLIED TO THE WRONG SITUATION
CAN STILL CAUSE HARM



“IF ONLY I
KNEW
WHERE TO
FIND GOD”



23:1-7

“Then Job spoke again:

2 “My complaint today is still a bitter one,
and I try hard not to groan aloud.

3 If only I knew where to find God,
I would go to his court.

4 I would lay out my case
and present my arguments.

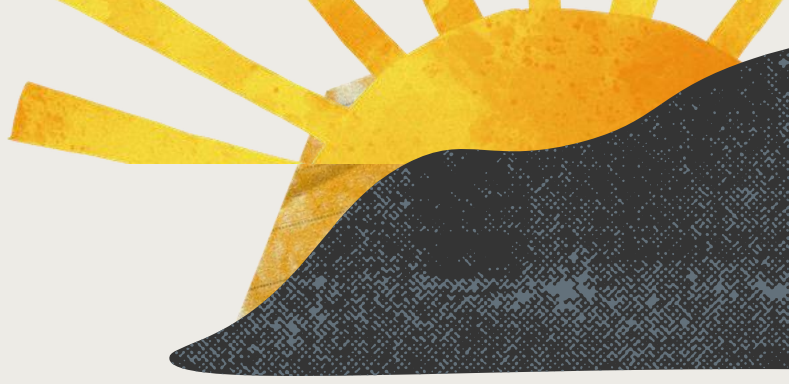
5 Then I would listen to his reply
and understand what he says to me.

6 Would he use his great power to argue with me?

No, he would give me a fair hearing.

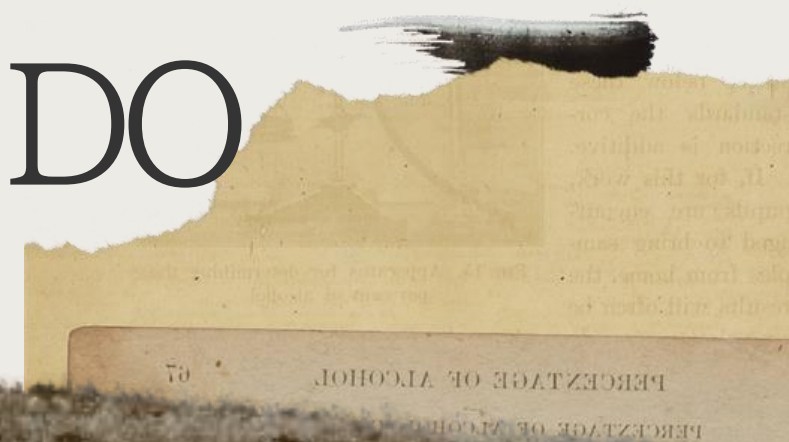
7 Honest people can reason with him,
so I would be forever acquitted by my judge.”

“IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE TO FIND GOD”



- Job desperately wants an audience with God
 - He is not trying to escape God; he is trying to get to God
 - Beneath Job's questions and frustration is still a desire for relationship with God
 - Job believes God would listen if he could only present his case

FAITH SOMETIMES LOOKS LIKE
CONTINUING TO SEEK GOD WHEN YOU DO
NOT UNDERSTAND HIM



“HE
KNOWS
WHERE I
AM”

23:8-12



“I go east, but he is not there.

I go west, but I cannot find him.

9 I do not see him in the north, for he is hidden.

I look to the south, but he is concealed.

10 “But he knows where I am going.

And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold.

11 For I have stayed on God’s paths;

I have followed his ways and not turned aside.

12 I have not departed from his commands,
but have treasured his words more than daily food.”

“HE KNOWS WHERE I AM”

- Job searches in every direction but cannot perceive God’s presence
 - Even when Job cannot find God, he believes God knows exactly where he is
 - God’s apparent silence doesn’t mean God has lost sight of Job
 - Job continues to treasure God’s Word even in the middle of suffering

YOU MAY NOT KNOW WHERE GOD IS IN YOUR SITUATION,
BUT GOD KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE



FAITH AND FEAR

23:13-17



“But once he has made his decision, who can change his mind?

Whatever he wants to do, he does.

14 So he will do to me whatever he has planned.

He controls my destiny.

15 No wonder I am so terrified in his presence.

When I think of it, terror grips me.

16 God has made me sick at heart;

the Almighty has terrified me.

17 Darkness is all around me;

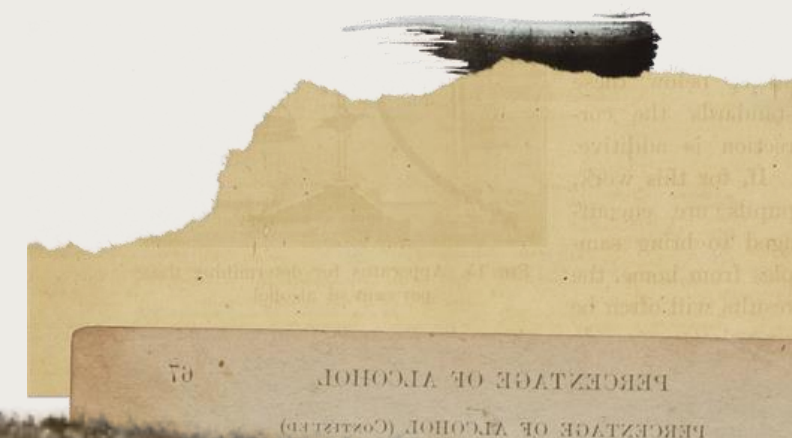
thick, impenetrable darkness is everywhere.”

FAITH AND FEAR



- Job believes God is sovereign, but he is still frightened by what he does not understand
 - Confidence in God does not eliminate human emotion
 - Fear, grief, and uncertainty are not necessarily evidence of faithlessness
 - Faith acknowledges the darkness while continuing to trust God within it

FAITH AND FEAR CAN EXIST IN THE
SAME HEART



JOB LOOKS AT AN UNJUST WORLD



24:1-12

“Why doesn’t the Almighty bring the wicked to judgment?

Why must the godly wait for him in vain?

2 Evil people steal land by moving the boundary markers.

They steal livestock and put them in their own pastures.

3 They take the orphan’s donkey
and demand the widow’s ox as security for a loan.

4 The poor are pushed off the path;
the needy must hide together for safety.

5 Like wild donkeys in the wilderness,
the poor must spend all their time looking for food,
searching even in the desert for food for their children.

6 They harvest a field they do not own,
and they glean in the vineyards of the wicked.”

“All night they lie naked in the cold,
without clothing or covering.

8 They are soaked by mountain showers,
and they huddle against the rocks for want of a home.

9 “The wicked snatch a widow’s child from her breast,
taking the baby as security for a loan.

10 The poor must go about naked, without any clothing.
They harvest food for others while they themselves are starving.

11 They press out olive oil without being allowed to taste it,
and they tread in the winepress as they suffer from thirst.

12 The groans of the dying rise from the city,
and the wounded cry for help,
yet God ignores their moaning.”

JOB LOOKS AT AN UNJUST WORLD

- Job moves beyond his own suffering and notices the suffering of others
 - The poor, widows, orphans, and vulnerable are being exploited
 - Job refuses to assume suffering people must deserve their circumstances
 - His struggle becomes: If God sees injustice, why does He allow it to continue?

FAITH DOESN'T REQUIRE US TO PRETEND INJUSTICE
MAKES SENSE



CHOOSING THE DARKNESS

24:13-17



“Wicked people rebel against the light.
They refuse to acknowledge its ways
or stay in its paths.

14 The murderer rises in the early dawn
to kill the poor and needy;
at night he is a thief.

15 The adulterer waits for the twilight,
saying, ‘No one will see me then.’
He hides his face so no one will know him.

16 Thieves break into houses at night
and sleep in the daytime.

They are not acquainted with the light.

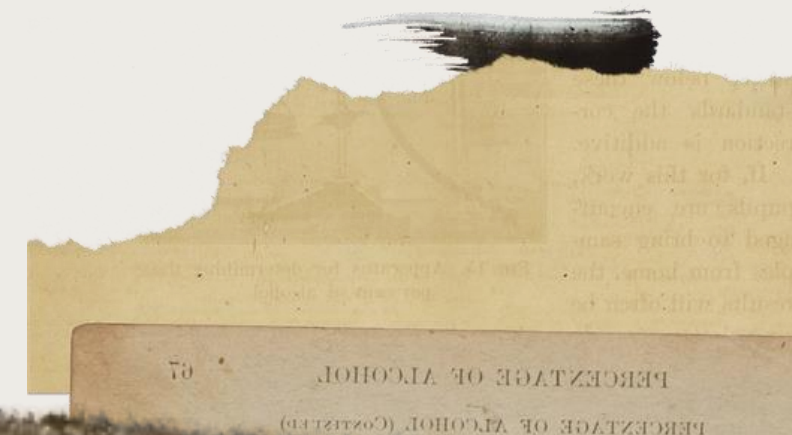
17 The black night is their morning.
They ally themselves with the terrors of the darkness.”

CHOOSING THE DARKNESS



- Job describes people who deliberately use darkness to conceal evil
 - Job longs to find God in his darkness; the wicked use darkness to hide from evil
 - People may conceal evil from one another, but nothing is hidden from God
 - God's knowledge of evil raises Job's difficult question about why judgement sometimes seems delayed

DARKNESS MAY HIDE OUR ACTIONS
FROM PEOPLE, BUT NEVER FROM GOD



WHEN
JUSTICE
SEEMS
DELAYED

24:18-25



“But they disappear like foam down a river.

Everything they own is cursed,
and they are afraid to enter their own vineyards.

19 The grave[\[a\]](#) consumes sinners
just as drought and heat consume snow.

20 Their own mothers will forget them.
Maggots will find them sweet to eat.
No one will remember them.

Wicked people are broken like a tree
in the storm.

21 They cheat the woman who has no son

to help her.

They refuse to help the needy widow.
23 “God, in his power, drags away the rich.

They may rise high, but they have no assurance of life.

23 They may be allowed to live in security,

but God is always watching them.

24 And though they are great now,
in a moment they will be gone like all others,

cut off like heads of grain.

25 Can anyone claim otherwise?
Who can prove me wrong?”

WHEN JUSTICE SEEMS DELAYED

- Job still believes wickedness ultimately matters and judgment will come
 - His disagreement with friends is primarily about **when** that judgment occurs
 - God's justice does not always operate immediately or visibly
 - A delay in justice should not be mistaken for the absence of justice

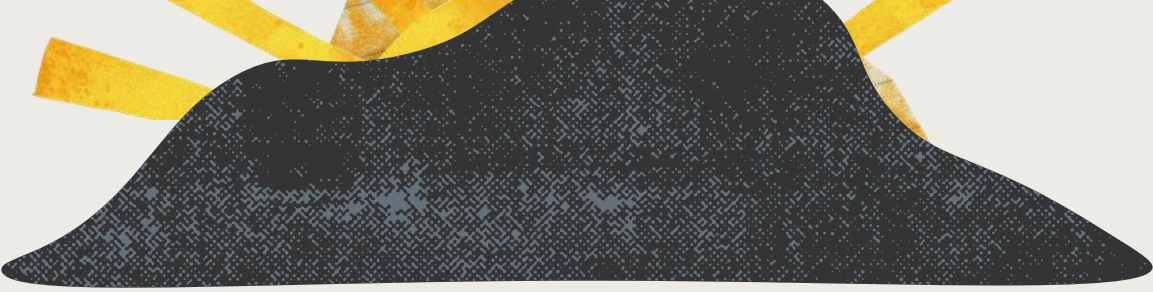
GOD'S JUSTICE IS CERTAIN EVEN WHEN HIS TIMING
REMAINS MYSTERIOUS



WHAT DO WE TAKE WITH US?

- Be careful about explaining someone else's suffering
- God can feel absent without actually being absent
- Faith and fear can exist in the same heart
- We should not confuse delayed justice with absent justice





QUESTION???

Job 24 wrestles with injustice that appears to go unanswered.
How do we continue trusting God's justice when we cannot see it happening on our timetable?

