

Job 22

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[0:00] This evening as we're in Job chapter 22. I trust that you have had a good week. Hopefully it's been a pleasant week for you.

It's been a busy week here. So thankful for that. But Awana's start tonight. So we want to be in prayer for our Awana groups that are going on back there and all the children and youth that are there as well.

A lot of activities that are going on around the church and around the church building. It's just been a busy, busy season for the last couple of weeks. Job chapter 22 is where we'll be at.

We'll look at that chapter in its entirety as we have with the majority of the chapters here in the book of Job as we just continue to make our way through. Let's pray. Father, we're so thankful for the privileged opportunity of gathering together.

It is such a joy to be encouraged with our brothers and sisters in Christ and to come together with one another and open up the word of God. And now as we come and open it up, we pray that we would see it in its truthfulness.

[1:03] We'd see it in its power. We would see it in its purpose. And that we would come to a greater and grander understanding of it for an understanding yet we would know more and more of you and even know more of ourselves.

So Father, we pray that you would use this word now to shape our hearts and to shape our minds and to mold our lives to become more conformed to your image. We do pray for the work that is going on in the back from the nursery to the youth house.

We pray for the work that's going on with all of our children, the pouring into them. We pray that the gospel would be lifted on high, that Christ would be exalted, that they would hear the good news of Jesus Christ and that it would resonate.

We pray for, as the Awanas begin tonight, we pray for our Awana year. We pray that they would come to an understanding of Christ and that that understanding in the lives of the children would make a huge impact.

May all that we do and all that we are bring glory and honor to you in all ways that we can. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[2:11] Job chapter 22. Job is really circular and that we continue to read the same things over and over again. And it is really challenging when we come to studying it and seeking to apply it because the challenge is that it feels like we just said this a couple of weeks ago or have already said this and we keep saying the same thing.

The good news is that we are entering the third cycle with this 22nd chapter. We are entering the third cycle of arguments, if you will. We have spoken where Job spoke, then his three friends, then Job responded.

He responded to each one of the friends and then Job responds to all three. Then the three friends speak. Job responds. And now we are at the third cycle where only two of the friends will speak.

Here we will see the words of Eliphaz. He will speak. His is the longest discourse in this whole third cycle until we get to where Job's long discourse that spans multiple chapters.

And then it brings us near the conclusion of the book where Elihu begins to respond who is a fourth individual that is present listening to all of this.

[3:22] So we are about to wade our way out of the argument is what I'm trying to tell you. And we are coming now to the closing arguments of the individuals. They have heard Job respond to them and refute their least accusations or implications, what they have implied.

And Job has responded with questioning, not only questioning the Lord God, but questioning them. And we come to the concluding remarks as they kind of wrap their argument up to a close.

And so tonight in this 22nd chapter, I want you to see the closing arguments of the wise. For Eliphaz, the Timnite, if you remember when we first introduced him, Timon was known as a region of wisdom.

He is probably the oldest of anyone present there. All three that speak are definitely older than Job himself. Elihu tells us when he speaks that he is the youngest amongst them.

So Eliphaz is the oldest. He is the oldest and he's from a region that is known for its wisdom. It is therefore, he is therefore given the longest discourses throughout all of this, except for Job himself. [4:29] Eliphaz starts out with a little class, a little sympathy towards the suffering of Job. He picks that up in his second discourse and there's not so much sympathy as it is really just admonition and he's really challenging Job.

And here at the end, he kind of pulls the gloves off, if you will, and really blasts Job. What he has been implying all along, he now very pointedly says. It is his final argument.

We will find out later when Elihu opens up his mouth and begins to speak that though the friends have brought condemnation against Job, they have not proven anything.

So we have that in mind when we read these closing arguments. Now I will go ahead and tell you that as Eliphaz speaks, there are some things where like, yeah, well absolutely, that could be true. And then we see other matters, but that's what we're trying to work our way through here in the 22nd chapter.

We know that when we come to conventional wisdom, there are things that are normally true. It does not mean that they are always true, but they are normally true. There will be circumstances in our lives and circumstances in the lives of those people that we come into contact with, which go against conventional wisdom and therefore make us scratch our heads.

[5:39] And so the calling in all of this, we started this book when we started studying the book of Job, was really how do we respond not only to the suffering in our own lives and the challenge in our own lives, but how do we respond to the suffering in the lives of others?

If we are the friends gathered together to bring sympathy and a balm of encouragement, how do we rightfully do that? Do we approach those individuals with the same worldview, thinking that it's such a rigid worldview that it has to fit in my box?

Or are we willing to come live out a relationship, not only with the people we're discussing and talking with, but a relationship with the Almighty that forces us to adjust our thinking every now and then?

By the way, to be forced to adjust our thinking and alter our worldview is much easier said than it is done. It is much easier to say, I need to adjust my worldview than it is to say, no, you have to fit in my box or this isn't going to work.

And we take those lessons from the three friends of Job. And here in the 22nd chapter, we open up with Job chapter 22. It says, Then Eliphaz the Timnite responded, Can a vigorous man be of use to God or a wise man be useful to himself?

[7:08] Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous or profit if you make your ways perfect? Is it because of your reverence that he reproves you, that he enters into judgment against you?

By the way, that's kind of tongue-in-cheek. What he's saying here is, Oh, sure, Job, I'm sure it's because you are so holy. That's why God is judging you. So don't lose kind of the ridicule here. And then he pulls it off in verse 5. Is not your wickedness great and your iniquities without end? For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause and stripped men naked.

To the weary you have given the water to drink and from the hungry you have withheld bread. But the earth belongs to the mighty man and the honorable man dwells in it. You have sent widows away empty and the strength of the orphans has been crushed.

Therefore snares surround you and sudden dread terrifies you or darkness so that you cannot see and an abundance of water covers you. Is not God in the height of heaven?

[8:11] Look also at the distant stars, how high they are. You say, what does God know? Can he judge through the thick darkness? Clouds are a hiding place for him so that he cannot see and he walks on the vault of heaven.

Will you keep the ancient path which wicked men have trod? Who were snatched away before their time whose foundations were washed away by a river? By the way, side note here, I know I'm stopping.

Mark that verse because that word river there means deluge. So the implication is by the flood. So there's a testimony of the earliest book in scripture with reference to the worldwide destruction of the flood.

That they were their foundations which means that they were living securely and then all of a sudden everything was swept away in a flood. So he's talking about the ancient past and here is a scriptural testimony to a historical event found in the book of Genesis that predates the writing of the book of Genesis.

Okay? So stay with me. We've got another one. They were washed away by a river. They said to God, depart from us and what can the almighty do to them? Yet he filled their houses with good things but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

[9 : 20] The righteous see and are glad and the innocent mock them saying truly our adversaries are cut off and their abundance the fire has consumed. Stop right there one more time. Do you know of anybody else that the fire consumed?

That'd be Sodom and Gomorrah. So here's another biblical reference that predates the writing of the book of Genesis that is a reference to Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember we said Job is probably a contemporary of Abraham.

Before the nations he is, when Abraham is sojourning and that's when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. So now what we have, I know I'm stopping. This isn't my message. This is just the Bible geek in me.

Okay? So what we have is scriptural testimony to historical events that get us closer to the historical events. Because the book of Job is closer historically than Genesis and authorship.

They would have probably known people who outwitnessed that who speak of these destructive measures. Okay? So we keep going. Verse 21. Yield now and be at peace with him.

[10 : 25] Thereby good will come to you. Please receive instruction from his mouth and establish his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty you will be restored.

If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent and place your gold in the dust and the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks then the Almighty will be your gold and choice silver to you. For then you will delight in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. You will pray to him and he will hear you and you will pay your vows. You will also decree a thing and it will be established for you and light will shine on your ways.

When you are cast down you will speak with confidence and the humble person he will save. He will deliver one who is not innocent and he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.

Here's the closing argument of the wise man from Timon. And it is an argument that as we will see in just a moment has some wonderful things within it.

[11 : 27] But before we can get to the good let's look at the things that are structuring this closing argument. Within these verses what we find first of all is that there is an implied separation.

There is an implied separation that Eliphaz says exists between man and the Almighty. And he implies this separation in the very opening verses.

He makes this declaration can a vigorous man be of use to God or a wise man be useful to himself. So he is stating a fact and we have to be careful how we tread upon this ground.

Okay? Because just to be honest with you when I was first studying this I almost leaned one way but I brought myself back through scriptural cross references to where I'm at right now. So we have to be careful because when we're dealing with the holiness of God and we're dealing with the sovereignty of God and we are posing questions such as this can a vigorous man be of use to God? The kind of the agenda behind that question is is God any better because we are good? Now the theological answer to that is no. Our goodness doesn't make God better.

[12 : 43] God is not benefited or made grander or greater by our success and he's not lessened by our failure. Now we have to say this because God is the great self-sufficient one.

God's glory comes from within himself. He is glorified in his own being. We exist to bring him glory but we do not impart glory to him.

Much like when Christ was on the Mount of Transfiguration the glory did not radiate upon his face it radiated from within his being. There's a big difference there. His garments shone from the inside out.

He wasn't reflecting glory. He was displaying glory. That's a big difference there. As his people we are like Moses. It's going to get deep for just a minute but stay with me.

We can get deep. As his people we are like Moses. We can ascend and be in the presence of God and leave there with our faces radiating reflecting the glory which we have just stood there in.

[13:42] And our faces can shine with his glory but we must veil our face because that glory can depart from us until we have Christ within us and then we are with unveiled face because the glory resonates from within us because of who he is.

So stay with me. Are you still with me? Is God benefited from us being good? The technical answer is no. I don't make God better because I am righteous.

Now Eliphaz likes to say so Job since there is no benefit to God what claim do you have of righteousness?

Now hidden behind this agenda and this is where we have to balance ourselves and we don't want to tip the scale too much is that God is so distant and separate from us that who we are really has no impact.

So God gives us what we deserve down here but it really has no impact or influence in the court of heaven. Now that is directly argued from the book of Job because we know the whole reason Job is in this trouble is because God did something in the courts of heaven that was being played out in the realm of earth.

[14:56] And so there is the next question that is answered. What Eliphaz is doing is saying Job you really have no right being in that court. God is not made better because you are righteous.

you don't have the opportunity to go stand trial before him. But here is the next question. Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous? Now this is a far different question.

Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous? Now this is a far different question in which we do not need to say that God is so self-sufficient and other than us that he is not.

Sure we don't make him better but does scripture give us scriptural evidence for his rejoicing in us? And to that we have to say emphatically yes.

We wouldn't have to turn much further than the book of Psalms Psalm 18 verse 19 the Psalm of David in that it says that God redeems us because he delights in us.

[15:55] So it is clearly told us there in Psalm 18 verse 19 that God takes delight in his children.

And so what we have is this balance that God is self-sufficient therefore we do not make him better or improve him by our goodness.

But even in that holiness that exalted stance he still takes pleasure and rejoices and delights in our righteousness.

Why? Because he is other than us but he longs to be in relation with us. As he walked in the cool of the day in the Garden of Eden completely separate from his creation but connected to the creation because the grand danger is this if he is self-sufficient therefore he doesn't need anything from us then he is a big distance God who spins it all into existence and what we do really makes no difference in the course of heaven.

And the only realm in which we play everything out is in this world. Yet over and over again in scripture we find that he delights in us he rejoices in us he sees us as the apple of his eye.

He calls us to himself. And so then we must move from God is wondrously glorious glorious and without need.

[17:28] He doesn't need us but he wants us. And that's a big different matter. Just a few moments ago I was sitting in an office I was doing pre-marriage counseling part of my pre-marriage counseling is to go through needs and love languages and all these things and I take them through all these things and every time I give a couple that there's like this shock look on their face and they're like oh no I'm about to answer all these questions and I have to tell them this one thing I know what you're thinking I know you're going to think that you're going to answer all these questions all of a sudden you're going to go we're not compatible.

I said don't worry. I don't expect you to have the same answers as one another because compatibility is not found in similarities. We are often most compatible with that which completes us. Now God doesn't need us to complete him. it's far different. God didn't create the heavens and the earth and mankind so that we can complete him.

He is whole on his own and since he lacks nothing it's even more wondrous that he still wants us.

That he does find pleasure in the righteous. Be careful how you imply the separation because what Eliphaz was doing here was implying the separation that exists between man and the almighty without acknowledging that there is at the wisdom of the almighty and at his doings there is a desire

for God to be in relationship with that man before him.

[19:16] And that God was actually using this man before him to display his concern and glory and his presence in his life even in the midst of his suffering. But we want to dismiss that sometimes.

I mean what benefit are you going to bring to God? Does God really care? And I bring no benefit to God but God does care. And that's what's so wondrous about the gospel.

That's what's so amazing about scripture. Is that we don't find anyone in scripture that brings a benefit to God. Not even the strong. Not even the weak. None of those bring a wholeness and a completeness to God that he lacked apart from them.

But we also don't find anyone in scripture that God is not pursuing and rejoicing in when he calls them to himself. That he, all of heaven rejoices over the one who comes to Christ.

Why? Because there is a celebration for this fact that God takes pleasure. As a matter of fact what is the only part in scripture where it says that God rejoices in the death of what? In the death of the righteous or the saints.

[20:23] It says that God was pleased to crush his son, Isaiah. God was pleased to lay upon him our strikes and our suffering and our, in his humanity, God was pleased to crush his son.

And it also declares in scripture that God is pleased when the righteous die. Why? Because we are in his presence. We are his children.

This is the spirit of adoption. Brought to fullness. Don't ever lose that wonder and live with an implied separation that does not exist as if this world dictates all that's going on in heaven.

Because Eliphaz is, because the circumstances that he's looking at before him seem to make no sense. Why would heaven be concerned about this? Be careful of the implied separation.

Next in the passage when we get to this, we get this increased accusation. Because, because of this implied separation that God is a third, he kind of increases his accusation.

[21:25] What all three friends have said by hints and suggestion now are being revealed by clear declarations. He says in verse five, is not your wickedness great?

Now what grounds does he have for saying the wickedness of Job is great? The grounds that he has are the circumstances that Job is walking through.

It is what he is observing in his life, his observation. Now he makes this bold declaration because Eliphaz will not move off of his rigid world view.

It makes no sense to him. There is no way you could suffer in that measure and not be wicked.

There is just no way. And his world view was so a part of him and held so dearly by him that he would not in the least bit sway from it.

He had kind of said, well, he had suggested that there are wicked people that go through these things. And he has suggested in doing that that this is what we see of the wicked. And we see it in you, Job. But Job hadn't caught on yet.

[22:33] So now all of a sudden he says, your wickedness is great. And he begins to make very false accusations against Job. Now Job waits a few chapters before he answers these accusations, but he will.

He begins to declare things like you took pledges from men and you left them naked. You were not hospitable. So both of those are really things that are very contrary to scripture. God said that you could take a pledge, but you couldn't keep it overnight because you didn't want your brother to freeze at night.

So you would have to give it back to him. And hospitality was like the number one thing in that region. It still is today for the most part. So to be inhospitable was really to be the lowest of the low. He says you've sent away the widow. You've not fed the orphan, the thirsty. You haven't given a drink. You've taken food from the hungry. Now all of these things, for lack of better way of saying it, are just flat out lies. Because the testimony that we find in the first couple of chapters are that Job is not doing any of these things.

And the testimony that Job would give is, he says, go out into the streets and ask. See if I did not feed the hungry to clothe the naked, that I did not give a drink to the thirsty, that I did not care for the fatherless and the orphan, and I did not help the weak and the widow.

[23:49] Go see. Go ask. And this is why Elihu says, at the end, he says, you've brought these grand accusations, but you haven't proven anything.

So it teaches us to be cautious about the conclusions we jump to just because of the observations we are making. And it teaches us to tread carefully there, and he heightens it up, and he even

begins to kind of refute.

And the reason he brings up the flood, or the delusion, he brings up what I believe is Sodom and Gomorrah, being destroyed by fire, is because Job has just argued the points that he said, the righteous sometimes seem to flourish, and God does not bring judgment.

And the righteous seem to prosper, and God does not bring judgment. Well, to argue against that, Eliphaz says, do you forget about the flood? I mean, they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving away in marriage.

They were celebrating and living in full houses until the day came that the flood washed them away. Or what about Sodom and Gomorrah? Did you forget about those that were destroyed by fire? They were eating and drinking and all these things, giving and taking in marriage and having a party until the fire and brimstone fell.

[25 : 01] Now, here again, we must tread carefully. Because never use an isolated event, even in scripture, to prove a desirable worldview.

In biblical study, we call that proof texting. What does the flood show us? The flood shows us that there will eventually be a day of reckoning for the righteous and the wicked.

And the preservation of the righteous is the work of the Almighty. The flood is really giving us a picture of Christ and the security we find in Christ.

It's not declaring to us that just because someone is wicked in this world that God will eventually sweep them away by a flood. That's not what it's telling. What about Sodom and Gomorrah? It's telling us about God's, it is displaying God's hatred for sin.

It is displaying God's hatred towards fornication and on all these matters. It is displaying that hatred. But it does not mean that every time someone gets into that, God's going to rain fire and brimstone down upon them.

[26 : 17] Because the sons of thunder asked for that in the New Testament, right? That'd be James and John. And Jesus says, you don't know what you're asking. I'm not going to do that yet. So don't use an isolated event, much like Eliphaz was in his wisdom.

I'm sure what he was pointing to did literally happen. But we must not use isolated events to prove steadfastness to our own worldview. I mean, there was a time where God spoke through a bush that was on fire, but it didn't burn.

But we don't like to go around proof texting that saying that every time God speaks to his people, they walk upon a burning bush. There's a time when a donkey spoke, but we don't use that as a proof text, right? We're not looking at donkeys. We're not walking around in the farmyard asking for a donkey to speak to us.

So we must be careful. Read it in its context and its setting and let it speak the truth to you.

Because, oh how easy it is, by the way, that when we're sitting before someone and we don't understand what they're going through, but we want, we so desperately want to fix it and we want to understand it, that we can find something in Scripture to affirm the worldview we desperately want to hold on to.

people all throughout this world are finding everything in Scripture to affirm what they want to affirm. But read it in its fullness.

[27 : 35] We are not limited as Eliphaz the Timonite was to what we see. We are given the responsibility of having the full revelation of God. God. And so what we have here is we have this implied separation, this increased accusation, but there is this glorious thing I want you to see here.

Look at this embedded truth. This embedded truth there that is at the end of the chapter. By the way, it is true. So when we look at conventional wisdom, we can say that some of these things are true.

Some of these things are right. And it's okay to affirm the truth. It's okay to say, yes, that's right.

Even if someone wrong is speaking it. When God gives the great prophetic word that a star shall arise out of Judah and the scepter shall never depart from his hand.

That was not a true prophet speaking. Numbers 24, 17. It was a false prophet that ends up dying and getting killed by the people of Israel later declared to be the wicked prophet who is going after money.

But yet God spoke through him this glorious truth that eventually led the Magi to search him out following that scripture reference from a false prophet.

[28 : 49] So truth can be found even coming from the lips of the worldly wisdom. And here in scripture we find it starting in verse 21.

And it is this truth that says yield now and be at peace with him and thereby good will come to you. So now the premises for this truth is seem kind of wrong. And it's a worldly point of view. What he is saying is if you were to repent and you would return to the God, God will bless you. God will do these things. We're not so concerned about that. But what I want you to see is the blessing that flows from repentance.

And I want you to see the assurances that we can even move over into the New Testament and we can affirm them there and say absolutely these things are true. So what blessings can an individual expect and we find it in the remainder of this chapter from genuine repentance.

What truth is embedded here? Please receive instruction from his mouth and establish his words in your heart. So here's the first blessing we have from repentance is that we receive his word.

[29 : 52] We hear a word from him. We position ourselves before him and the Lord God Almighty speaks to us. We see it in scripture and we hear it.

If you return to the Almighty you will be restored. It is the word that brings us unto salvation and salvation is the restoration of that relationship. So we are restored.

The heart cry of every individual is to love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, with all their strength. Why? Because that is the reason for man's existence. Most don't understand that but we know that when we come to the word of God now we are restored back to our creative purpose.

It is to have him as our greatest joy and to be rejoicing in him in all things. To love him supremely and to find him as our greatest joy and we are restored to that through the word of God.

So you will be restored if you remove unrighteousness from your tent. That is if we would allow him to do that through that restoration. And by the way I love verses 14 and 15 or 24 and 25 that if you place your gold in the dust and the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.

[31 : 02] A little translation of this is this okay. It is kind of hard to find it in English and you have to kind of break it down but this is what it is literally saying. That when you come and are restored to him you will take your precious jewels.

Your fine ore. The word there is ore. You will take your fine ore and you will lay it in the dust. Even gold from Ophir the purest gold.

You will cast it among the stones which is where it came from because they would find it as it gathered along the rocks as it went down the river. He said you will take what is valuable most precious to you and you will cast it down.

Why? Then the almighty will be your gold and the choice silver to you. So what he is saying here. He said when you are restored to him he will become your great precious stone.

You will cast your worldly goods to the ground and bury them into dust for what you have found is more precious than that. Jesus told a couple of parables about that right. The man who found a treasure hidden in the field and he went and sold all that he had to buy the field so that he may have that treasure and that's what the kingdom of heaven is like.

[32 : 08] That's introduced for us in the book of Job. Or the man who found a pearl of great price and there's the greatest pearl and went and sold all that he had and he came back with rejoicing and he bought this one pearl or that one treasure for this is the greatest thing he could ever have.

This is what the kingdom of heaven is like and what it's telling us is that when we are restored to the almighty all of our worldly riches will be like the dust of the ground for what we have found in him is greater and grander than anything we could ever hold in our hands.

He is our gold, our silver, our precious metals, our ore. He is our rejoicing. He is our hope. He is all of the goodness that we need and whatever was once precious to us we will lay it in the ground and say I don't even care about it anymore.

We'll throw it back where we got it from. We'll throw it back in the river and we'll let it gather along the stones because we're no longer picking among the stones trying to find flakes of gold for we have found the creator of the gold.

We have found the almighty. Don't let that truth slip your notice. that he's your precious possession and when he is it tells us that then for then you will delight in the almighty you will rejoice in him and lift up your face to God and you will pray to him and he will hear you.

[33 : 26] So here's another great truth that those who are restored and have repented that God hears them when they pray and their delight is in the almighty and he hears them when they petition and since he hears them there's an overflow of this you will also decree a thing and it will be that is not a name it and claim it by the way because if he is your delight then your desire will be according

If he is not your delight follow the order but you are your own delight then what you decree will be what you want and it may not be but if he is your delight then you will decree a thing and he'll say yes I'll give you that but he goes a little further says when you're cast down you will speak with confidence that is you'll go through difficult times but you'll still have confidence why? Because he's your delight and the humble person he will save verse 30 is astounding by the way he will deliver the one who is not innocent how?

and he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands what is he saying here? one grand product of the redeemed is that they get to intercede on behalf of others that God chooses to deliver them through the intercession of those who are his you know what's so wonderful about this is that Eliphaz will be delivered from destruction and doom based upon the intercession of Job when we get to the end of the book Eliphaz will be dependent upon the intercession of Job why? because through the suffering Job has delighted in the almighty he's questioned but he's still delighted through the misery he has never forsaken his righteousness and God will say Job if you pray for them I will restore them it's astounding isn't it?

[35 : 27] does God have to limit himself that way? no he doesn't have to because we do not make him better but he takes pleasure in it why? because it brings him glory and so look at this embedded truth that is here contained in this and Eliphaz spoke such truth so one final word of caution and we'll be done it is absolutely possible to have correct theology and wrong practice Eliphaz Eliphaz had good theology but what he didn't have was wise observation of the man in front of him the calling is to balance the two we must have our theology that is the study of God we must know who he is but we must unite that theology with the heart of God for the men and women that are around us because if our theology is right and our practice is wrong all we do is bring a wagging finger and casting of judgment but it's when we ask

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