

SUMMARY OF JOB 23-29

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It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to
Cry if I want to, cry if I want to
You would cry too if it happened to you.

In these chapters, Job continues to struggle with the apparent contradiction between his belief in a just and powerful God and the reality of his undeserved suffering. His friends persist in their traditional views, attributing suffering to sin, while Job maintains his innocence and seeks deeper understanding and wisdom.

Eliphaz's advice in chapter 22 didn't help Job. He failed to do what he came to do – to comfort Job.

And that was his third chance at trying to comfort Job. And you know what they say – three strikes and ... you're out.

In the book of Job, chapters 23 through 29 continue the intense dialogue between Job and his friends, as Job grapples with his suffering and seeks answers from God. Here are the main arguments presented in these chapters:

Job 23-24: Job's Speech

Job expresses his longing to present his case before God, confident that he would be vindicated if he could only find Him. He laments that God seems to be hiding from him.

Job observes that the wicked often go unpunished and prosper, while the innocent suffer. He describes various injustices in society, questioning why God allows such things to happen.

o, Job imagines appearing before God to find out why God appears to be punishing him for nothing – Job imagines that he would lay out his case with God. He would argue that what God was doing to him was wrong.

And surely Job would be telling God that he hadn't sinned and therefore God shouldn't be punishing him!

Because that doesn't make sense to Job. It doesn't make sense to him that an innocent man should be given difficulties by God. Even though Job had originally told his wife that they should receive both good and bad from God – but now Job has had enough of it.

It's one thing to give verbal assent to a spiritual truth. It's quite another to internally agree with that truth and submit to it when it's in action in your life.

So Job plans – in his mind – that he could come to God and set God straight on some things. And – of course – he's expecting that God will answer back.

So, Job wishfully imagines a time when he comes before God and argues that God should stop doing bad things to him. But as yet God is nowhere to be seen.

But, despite that problem of not being able to find God to discuss matters with him – Job bounces back in his own spirit and recognises that even though he can't find God – he knows that God can find him, and that God knows the truth about Job and his righteousness perfectly well.

His friends repeat that God pretty much always punishes the wicked immediately in this life. But Job see instances where that doesn't happen? Why doesn't God store up times of recompense for the wicked and of deliverance for those who know him? Job's not seeing that happen in his life.

And then Job reviews the plight of the powerless who are abused by the wicked, he sees the powerless serving the wicked but they themselves go unpaid from the harvest they're helping to reap. The wicked don't feed the powerless who serve them. They also don't clothe or house them. They are carrying sheaves but don't get to eat the grain. They press wine but don't get to drink. In Eliphaz's last speech, he accused Job of assuming that physical darkness would hide his presumed evil deeds from God. And of course, Job denies that. But he doesn't deny the fact that the wicked do engage in their evil behaviours in the dark. And yet, despite these realities that Job is pointing to, Job is amazed that these friends of his keep making facile claims about the wicked that just aren't true. And then challenges his friends to prove him wrong .

Job 25: Bildad reenters the conversation.

Bildad reiterates the greatness of God's power and the insignificance of humans. He suggests that no one can be righteous before God and emphasises human frailty and impurity.

Job 26-27: Job's Response

Job answers Bildad sarcastically mocking the lack of help and insight in his words. He extols God's majesty and the wonders of creation, highlighting the limits of human understanding. He asserts his commitment to maintaining his integrity despite his suffering. He affirms his righteousness and refuses to concede to his friends' accusations of wrongdoing.

Job 28 A Poem on Wisdom

Job reflects on the elusive nature of true wisdom. He describes how humans search for valuable resources like gold and gems but notes that wisdom cannot be found through human effort or wealth. He concludes that true wisdom is found in the fear of the Lord and in departing from evil. He emphasises that God's understanding is beyond human comprehension.

Job chooses to remain faithful to God. He understands that God's wisdom is beyond his understanding. He employs mining as an analogy for searching for wisdom. It reveals that wisdom "is not found in the land of the living", but in the mind of God. "God understands the

way to it and he knows its place”. This is a reminder that technical knowledge and practical skill are not enough for truly meaningful work. We also need God’s spirit as we go about our tasks. We need God’s guidance far beyond the realm of things we commonly think of as “spiritual.” When a teacher tries to discern how a student learns, when a leader tries to communicate clearly, when a jury tries to determine a defendant’s intent, when an analyst tries to assess a project’s risks, all need God’s wisdom. Whatever the goal of our work is, “God understands the way to it, and he knows its place”.

Yet we cannot always get in touch with God’s wisdom. “It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the air”. Despite our best attempts — or sometimes because of our lacklustre efforts — we may not find God’s guidance for every action and decision. If so, it is better to recognise our ignorance than to put our trust in speculation or false wisdom. Sometimes humility is the best way to honour God. “Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding”.

Job 29: Job's Lament of Better Days

Job reminisces about the days when he was in God's favour, respected by his peers, and blessed with family and prosperity. He recalls his role as a judge and benefactor, helping the needy and fighting for justice. Job contrasts his former esteemed position with his current state of suffering and humiliation.

Job longed not only for the days before he lost his children and health and wealth; he especially longed for the days before he lost his sense of God’s closeness. There was a time when he felt that God watched over him, and those days were gone. He fondly remembered the days when it seemed that God was *for* him rather than *against* him. It reminds us that Job’s great crisis after his catastrophic losses was primarily *spiritual*, in that he did not sense the support and succour of God in the aftermath of his loss.

Lyrics from “It’s my party” by Lesley Gore