

“The Verdict”
Job 42:7-17
Series: Book of Job [#8]
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Introduction

Twelve years ago a court case rivetted the attention of millions. The trial went on for over a year. 126 witnesses were called and over 850 exhibits were entered. A combined total of 20 attorneys appeared for the prosecution and defense. The official court transcript was over 50,000 pages. And there were over 1,000 credentialed media covering the trial. An estimated 150 million curious and anxious people watched as the jury announced its verdict that O. J. Simpson was not guilty of murder.

Today we come to “*The Verdict*” in the book of Job. In some ways, this book proceeds like a court case.

- There is an opening statement.
- There is testimony, examination and cross examination.
- There are concluding statements.
- Job and his three prosecutor friends have rested their cases
- God, the judge, has addressed Job and now, in chapter **42**, delivers His verdict.
- If we had been reading this for the first time (and had not skipped ahead to read the ending), our big question would be, “What is the Verdict?”
- Interestingly, God passes judgment on both the defendant *and* the prosecution; on Job *and* his friends.

So, let’s look at “*The Verdict*,” and some *Final Lessons*.

God’s Judgment Of Job’s Friends.

We find God’s verdict in verses 7 and 8.

“It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job

has.”

At the end of the first round of debates, Job asked his friends a few questions. (13:7-11)

“Will you speak what is unjust for God, and speak what is deceitful for Him? Will you show partiality for Him? Will you contend for God? [Now Job’s key question] Will it be well when He examines you? Or will you deceive Him as one deceives a man? He will surely reprove you if you secretly show partiality. Will not His majesty terrify you, and the dread of Him fall on you?”

- They *knew* how things worked.
- They *knew* how God worked.
- They *knew* Job had to be guilty of gross hidden sins.
- They *knew* God was punishing Job for his sins.
- They *knew* they were defending God and His justice.

We have known all along that they were wrong. And now, they know it.

The answer to Job’s question, “Will it be well [for you] when [God] examines you?” is no. God gives no hint of praise. God gives not even the slightest suggestion of “Well done, good and faithful servants.” God’s verdict was that they had not spoken what was right—what was correct and true—of Him.

Job’s friends had said some things that were true, and others that were not true about God. Let’s review one example of each of them saying something that was not right about God.

Eliphaz claimed that God punishes all the guilty here and now and preserves all the righteous. There are no exceptions. And so, all the bad things happening to Job were God’s judgment. His words, 4:7-9,

“Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it. By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of His anger they come to an end.”

Bildad said that God killed Job’s children because of their sin.

“Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right? If your sons sinned against Him, then He delivered them into the power of their transgression.” (8:3-4)

In chapter 21 Zophar said the wicked only prosper for a short time, and then are gone. God always judges them here and now (verses 1-7).

Job’s friends had a mechanistic view of God’s administration of His world. They thought

they had good logic here. They started with the premise that God is sovereign and righteous, which is true. Then, they added the premise that God punishes sin and blesses righteousness, which also is true. Therefore, they concluded, God always punishes sin and blesses righteousness in this life. All the bad things that happen to me are God's punishment for my sin, while all the good things are God's blessing on my righteousness. This conclusion is *not* true.]

They insisted on their system—one which they could understand, which left no room for, in the words of the Psalmist, lovingkindness and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other (85:10). Persisting in their assumptions and insisting on their own system, they misrepresented God—they misrepresented who He is and how He runs His creation.

God's verdict: that is foolish; that is sinful. Their attitudes and words "*kindled*" God's righteous anger, which burned against them.

Now, in their defense, they believed in God. They sincerely tried to understand Him. They fervently sought to defend His character and truth. But here they were wrong.

It is serious to say things about God which are not true. God always takes note of and judges those who misrepresent Him and His truth.

Let's move from *God's Verdict* to God's mercy, which we note in verses 8 and 9.

"Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job."

Back in 11:6 Zophar told Job, "Know then that God forgets part of your iniquity." That is, "Job, you think what you are going through is bad. Well, God is only giving you part of what you actually deserve! You should be thankful it isn't a lot worse!" When Eliphaz told Zophar what God said, that they had not spoken rightly of Him and had kindled His anger, you can be sure that Zophar was thankful and glad that God was not giving *him* all *he* deserved.

Eliphaz, in 22:30, told Job he could have better days ahead, days when "[God] will deliver one who is not innocent, and he will be delivered through the cleanness of *your* hands." Little did Eliphaz realize those words would apply to him being delivered through Job!

God's lovingkindness and truth do meet, they do go together. God loved Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. They believed in Him. So, with God's righteous anger, there was also His mercy, His offer of forgiveness. There is no direct statement of their confession, but it says they "went and did as the LORD told them." Their response, like Job's, was immediate and

sincere obedience.

Why did God say Job had to pray for them? God is not trying to *rub it in*, or humiliate them. Job didn't know this was coming. It was not as if God came to Job and said, "You were wright, they were wrong. Tell you what, I'll even this out. They will have to come and ask you to pray for them." That didn't take place.

God *did* humble them. They had been self-assured and arrogant. They had come to believe their long-time friend was a terrible sinner and told him so—and waxed long and eloquently about it. God is telling them that Job, with all his questions and frustrations, still had his heart set on God & His truth.

God's Judgment Of Job.

At the end of verse 7 God says that Job had spoken rightly of Him. If you have followed the events with any attention, you may be surprised at this statement. After all, remember Job's litanies of "*Why me?*"

- "God, why is your attention continuously on me?"
- "Why do you hide Your face and consider me as Your enemy?" (13:24)
- "Why do You bruise me with tempests and multiply my wounds without cause? Why won't you even let me catch my breath?" (9:17-18)
- "God, why do You destroy my hope?" (14:19)
- "Why have you laid waste to all I have? Why have You hunted me down, torn me apart, shaken me to pieces, used me for target practice?" (16:7 f.)
- "Why God? Why??"

Always remember, God gave Satan permission to test Job, to sift him like wheat. Every attack, every loss, disaster and tragedy was the work of Satan and his forces. So, Job was wrong more than once, or even a few times. Yet God says that Job spoke rightly of Him.

So, *what does* God mean? Some suggest this refers only to Job's confessions after God's speeches. I can't see any solid textual or logical basis for limiting God's statement to those two confessions. Others suggest that it refers to Job's heart—that his heart was truly set on seeking, understanding and obeying God. This certainly is part of the answer.

Remember, when God said Job "was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil" (1:1, 8; 2:3), He was not saying Job was perfect, that Job never sinned. Rather, He is telling us that Job was a man of godly character and integrity in his actions. His heart was set on God. He was, like David, a man after God's own heart. A man whose heart was wholly devoted to walk with God in obedience to all that God has said (cf. 1 Samuel 13:4; 1 Kings 8:61; Acts 13:22).

Unlike his friends, Job wasn't locked into his own assumptions and systems. When his thinking didn't line up with reality, he asked, probed, even demanded answers—seeking both instruction and correction. Job held resolutely to both the sovereignty and love of God, even though at times he could not understand how they mesh. All of his frustrations with and accusations against God were part of the process of seeking God and His truth.

And God reinforced Job's righteousness by referring to him as "My servant" four times in verses 7 and 8.

That is what God was looking for in Job ... also in Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar ... and, yes, also in you and me!

God's verdict of Job was that Job was and is "My servant. He was and is upright." God vindicated Job.

Verse 10 gives us a summary of God's blessings on Job,

"The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold."

Verse 11 tells us his family, which had deserted him in his time of trouble, was now back and brought him money and gold—this may have been his startup fund for moving forward. His flocks and business doubled from what they were before the original ones had been wiped out. He had seven sons and three daughters, and continued his graciousness to his children by including his daughters in his estate—something not normally done at that time. And, he lived a long life. In line with life spans of the time, another 140 years for, perhaps, a total of about 200 years. And so, his health had also been restored.

Many have breathed a sigh of relief and smiled at this *happy ending*. Some have thought it ruins the story—that it reinforces the arguments of Job's friends that God always rewards righteousness with things in this life; that Satan, after all, may have been right, that Job was a mercenary, serving God for what he got out of the relationship; and, more seriously, that God bribes people to serve Him.

These people miss the point. God could have left Job in poor health and poverty for the rest of his days. But God in His sovereignty blessed Job with these gifts of His sovereign *grace*. God blessed Job not because he had earned it, but as a *gift of His wonderful, marvelous, amazing grace*.

Some Final Lessons.

It is difficult to select just a few lessons as we conclude this study. I am not suggesting that the three that I have chosen are the most important lessons from the book. They are among of the ones that have been reinforced in my own thinking in this journey.

First, our sovereign, loving God does not answer all of our questions. This in itself raises the question “Why.” “Why didn’t God answer Job’s questions?” “Why doesn’t God answer my questions?”

God does not answer some questions because the answers are beyond us, *e.g.*, “How do God’s sovereignty and our free will mesh perfectly?” Only God can understand all that is involved here. He describes some facets of both, but the rest is beyond our ability to comprehend.

God does not answer other questions because He has given us all that we need to know Him, to grow in the character of Christ, and to serve Him. The basics are His truth in the Bible and the Holy Spirit to instruct, guide, empower and correct us. God has, as the apostle Peter wrote, “granted to us *everything* pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3).

You see, our fundamental need to fulfill our purpose is not to have answers to all our questions. It is to let the word of God richly dwell in us and to live each moment, in each circumstance by *faith*, trusting God. Just as it was more important for Job to trust God in his suffering than have his why questions answered in order to grow in godliness, so it is for us. To grow and live in godliness requires walking by faith not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Yes, when bad things happen to us we, like Job, want God to speak and explain. Sadly, 4,000 years after Job, when tragedy strikes a believer, *Job’s friends still show up!* They show up in people ready and eager to tell you why it happened and, in the process, they also speak that which is not right about God.

While God does not answer all our questions, in addition to His Word and the Holy Spirit, He gives us everything else we need, including Himself and His peace to guard our hearts and minds. Remember, it is the God of peace Himself and His perfect peace which goes beyond our ability to comprehend that God promises and gives (*cf.* Philippians 4:4-9).

A second lesson to take with you today is that Satan’s lies are proven to be lies. You may be surprised that I list this as a key final lesson to remember from the book of Job. I admit it is not usually found in the lists of top lessons from the book. But, in light of the fact that we all face Satan’s lies every day, I want us to remember it.

Satan is *the father of lies*, *i.e.*, the one who, if you will, *invented* lying. In **John 8:44** Jesus said,

“...He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

He is the one who deceives individuals and nations, who deceives the whole world (*cf.* Revelation 20:3, 8; 12:9). “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:14)

Satan’s charges in the first two chapters were lies. Job was not a mercenary, serving God for what he could get for himself. God does not bribe anyone to serve Him. The outcome of

the book proves that Satan's challenges were lies.

You and I encounter and are even bombarded with Satan's lies every day. Satan and his forces lie to you as they tell you ...

- that you are not good enough to be a child of God;
- that you have done too many bad things and not enough good things and so, God will not save you;
- or, that you cannot be and do the things God tells you in the Bible—others, maybe; you, no.

Satan and his forces lie to us on every hand with messages that the truths of the Bible are not really true; or if true, not all that important, at least right now.

Always remember Satan was summoned to report to God and answered God's questions with *lies*. He was bold and brash enough to lie to God, and never hesitates to lie to us. The book of Job proves that his lies are lies; that he is the liar and deceiver.

One of my greatest disappointments would be for us to walk through this book and for even one of us to believe Satan's lie that the truth here is great. It can change people's lives—other people's lives, but not mine.

The third lesson to take home with you today is that True faith perseveres even in the face of unjust, terrible, inexplicable circumstances. Pastor Tyler read from James 5 earlier. In the first six verses James addressed those who were trusting in their wealth and taking advantage of others to get and grow it. In verses 7-8 he challenged them to look beyond the present and physical things, to live patiently and righteously waiting for the coming of Christ.

Then, he wrote in verses 10-11,

“As an example, brethren, of suffering and *patience*, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who *endured*. You have heard of the *endurance* of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.”

Note two qualities listed here. First, *Patience*. The word literally meant “long-tempered.” Job was not always long-tempered or patient. He had outbursts of frustration. But he *endured*. That's the second quality, and the one specifically applied to him here. While the KJV also translates it as “patience,” it is another word. A word which had its roots in being able to bear or stand up under a load or in a storm. And so, to *endure*. Job *endured* the storm. He persevered.

“True faith perseveres even in the face of unjust, terrible, inexplicable circumstances.” Naturally, we don't want to face terrible and troubling things. But we do. God has not promised us, in the words of Isaac Watts, “flowery beds of ease,” but ...

- *He has promised* never to leave or forsake us;
- *He has promised* to give us the strength and peace we need. So that even if for His sake we are being put to death all day long, are considered as sheep to be slaughtered, in each and every circumstance no one and nothing can condemn us; no one and nothing can ever separate us from the love of God (Romans 8);
- He has promised that “in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Romans 8).

Conclusion.

As you spend some time with God now,

- Thank Him for Job. For his faith and faithfulness, for his endurance, for his example.
- Ask God to help you live in peace with the reality that He will not answer all of your questions.
- Ask Him to help you spot and renounce all of Satan’s lies.
- Ask Him to will and to work for His good pleasure in you so *you* will overwhelmingly conquer.

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