

JOB'S RESPONSE TO 1ST DEBATE

We are studying the Book of Job as a seven-act play. We will study selective passages from each of the seven acts. The seven acts are listed in previous studies.

The lengthy debates between Job and his three friends might cause one to forget that the first two acts were action packed.

Let me remind you of the size of the cast of Acts 1 and 2: Job and wife, 7 sons and 3 daughters, sons of God and Satan, Lord, servants of Job, 4 messengers, Sabeans and Chaldean raiding parties, and Job's three friends.

We are presently studying Acts 3 (chs.4-14) and the First Debate of Job's suffering by the three friends. I have tried to give dispositions to the three friends: **Eliphaz** (diplomacy- praise, probe, but pick); **Bildad** (insensitive – confront but cruel); and **Zophar** (tough love – bottom line but bully).

At the end of the First Debate, the three friends agreed that Job's suffering was due to divine discipline regarding some unconfessed sin. In fact, if you want to study great doctrines on divine discipline due to unconfessed sin, read their debate.

Unfortunately, Job was not suffering from divine discipline but rather from undeserved suffering in angelic conflict (2:9-11; 2:4-5).

Last week we learned an important counseling principle from Act 2 – “false assumptions lead to misinterpretations that lead to false expectations that lead to misapplications.”

<p>Today's lesson will study SIX aspects of Job's response in the First Debate of Act 3.</p>

1. Job's response to Eliphaz was that he had no concept of Job's unrelenting pain (6:1-6).

This pain was every moment of everyday and the only thing that Job had to hold to for any comfort was hope in God's mercy (6:10-14). Job considered his condition hopeless apart from the mercy of God.

Now Job feels that his friends have attacked this hope (6:14-21; Gal.6:1). “Relent, do not be unjust; reconsider, for my integrity is at stake.” (6:29)

2. Job's words turn from Eliphaz to God in prayer (7:1-6, 7-21).

Job describes some of the things associated with his suffering causing his pain (7:3-6, 13-15).

Job complains to God out of bitterness of soul and feels he is suffering unfairly (7:7-11).

Job feels that his life no longer has any purpose (7:16). Job is operating from OMCD – false assumption lead to misinterpretation that led to false expectation that lead to misapplication (7:20-21).

Job is living in death rather than life. He is attempting to live in something that is future rather than the life that is staring him in the face! (2 Cor.1: 8-9) Job is losing hope of ever getting well (7:16).

Bildad responded in his usual fashion of insensitivity (confront and cruel) (8:1-7, 13).

3. Job responded to Bildad with a descriptive outline of the essence of God (ch.9).

Job declares that he is not disputing with the character of God – but although he is not sinless, he is innocent and pleads for mercy (9:14-16, 21, 27-28).

Job pleads for a heavenly arbitrator (9:33-35). Like his friends, Job does not understand the doctrine of undeserved suffering in the angelic conflict.

4. Once again, Job's words turn from Bildad to God in prayer (10:1, 2-23). Job tells Bildad that he loathes his life (10:1).

Job declares to God that he has decided to argue his own case (10:2-17). Job's argument will be that although he is not sinless, he is innocent (10:6-7, 14-15).

Job believes that he is close to dying and the three stooges are not going to argue his case for him (10:17). **[Before we go any further, we need to compare 10:20 to 42:16.]**

5. Job responded to Zophar's tough love approach with sarcasm (11:1-5, 14; 12:1-3, 20; 12:1-13:19).

Job gave another discourse on the essence of God (12:3, 7-25).

Job tells his friends that he is not inferior to their doctrine and that as counselors, they are spiritual quacks (12:3; 13: 4-5). Job wonders how it would turn out if God examined them? (13:9)

“Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses of clay.” (13:12)

Job is prepared to defend his own case before God and is confident of vindication - “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in Him; I will surely defend my ways to His face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before Him!” (13:15-16)

“Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated.” (13:18)

6. Once again, Job's words turn from Zophar to God in prayer (13:20-14:22).

Job begins his case before God by requesting two things (13:20-21).

Job understands that life is more like a flower than a tree that it is brief and fragile (14:1-10).

“Job's words are based on the counselors' point that suffering always implies sinfulness. He does not yet understand that God has a higher purpose in his suffering.” (NIV, 13:23)

“Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin.” (14:16-17)

“If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come.” (14:14)
[Job 14 is used in funeral services.]