

Comments About Job 4–31

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss the book of Job. There will be times when we talk about (1) a group of chapters, (2) one chapter and (3) a portion of a chapter. Today, we will discuss Job 4-31.

I hope this project encourages you to review the valuable history and lessons found in the book of Job.

Chronology of the dialogue

Last week, we mentioned the following chronology of the dialogue between the three friends and Job.

- Job spoke in chapter 3.
- Eliphaz spoke in chapters 4-5.
- Job spoke in chapters 6-7.
- Bildad spoke in chapter 8.
- Job spoke in chapters 9-10.
- Zophar spoke in chapter 11.
- Job spoke in chapters 12-14.
- Eliphaz spoke in chapter 15.
- Job spoke in chapters 16-17.
- Bildad spoke in chapter 18.
- Job spoke in chapter 19.
- Zophar spoke in chapter 20.
- Job spoke in chapter 21.
- Eliphaz spoke in chapter 22.
- Job spoke in chapters 23-24.
- Bildad spoke in chapter 25.
- Job spoke in chapters 26-31.

Overlooked observation

When some Bible students read the words of Job's three friends, they sometimes wonder why God criticized their advice (as recorded in Job 42:7).

Some Bible students conclude that the words spoken by the three friends don't seem to be that bad. Some Bible students will even go so far as to say that the words spoken by the three friends seem to be logical, right and true.

As Bible students look at the words of Eliphaz in chapters 4-5, they often overlook a description found in Job 4:12-16.

At this time, it might be helpful to notice those five verses that describe the source of the words spoken by Eliphaz. Have you ever noticed how Eliphaz described the source of his words?

Job 4:12-16—"Now a word was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a whisper of it. In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair on my body stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence; then I heard a voice saying."

From God?

It is my perspective that it is appropriate for a Bible student to ask if this "whisper" was from the Lord.

Do you remember the "still small voice" that talked to Elijah?

1 Kings 19:11-12—"Then He said, 'Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.' And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."

Friendly advice

As you study the dialogue between the three friends and Job, I would like to give you the following friendly advice.

- If you are given the opportunity of teaching or preaching about the book of Job (whether within a congregation or within a community Bible study), remember Job 42:7 and please refrain from quoting the words of the three friends as words from God.