

SPECIAL SPEECHES ON SUFFERING (part 2)

Act 6 has two special speeches. Last week we studied the first speech given by Elihu (chs.32-37).

Elihu was confident that he would be able to succeed where the other three had failed – “Behold, I waited for your words, I listened to your reasoning, while you pondered what to say. I even paid close attention to you, indeed, there was no one who refuted Job, not one of you who answered his words.” (32:11-12)

As eloquent as his speech was regarding the divine discipline (32:19-35) and the essence of God (chs.36-37), his conclusion was much the same as the others – “Job speaks without knowledge, and his words are without wisdom. Job ought to be tried to the limits, because he answers like wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sins; he claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words against God.” (34:34-37; 36:21).

The second speech of Act 6 is given by God (chs.38-42:6). Job didn’t have a chance to respond to Elihu because God intervened. The second speech of Act 6 consists of two discourses by God (38:1-40:5) and 40:6-42:6).

Each discourse begins with a similar opening statement – “Then the Lord answered Job out of the *whirlwind* (*storm*) and said,” (38:1 and 40:6). *It is the same Hebrew word (ha searah / tempest, storm-wind)*. Elijah was taken up into heaven by it – As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a *whirlwind*.” (2 Kings 2:11)

At the end of each of God’s two discourses, Job responded briefly (1st - 40:3-5) and (2nd - 42:1-6).

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of Act 6: Special Speeches on Suffering given by God.

1. God’s intervention reflects His faithfulness regarding not allowing the believer to be tempted beyond what he is able to endure.

“No *temptation* (*peirasmōs*) has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you *to be tempted* (*peirazo* / a.p.infin) beyond what you are able, but with the *temptation* (*peirasmōs*) will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Cor.10:13)

In fact God commanded Satan to stay within the limits of the divine decree – “Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’” (1:12) and “So the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.’” (2:6)

2. The Lord came to answer Job’s prayer for a hearing as to why he suffered unjustly – “But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue with God.” (13:3; 19:7)

“Oh that my request might come to pass, and that God would grant my longing! Would that God were willing to crush me; that He would loose His hand and cut me off! But it is still my consolation, and I rejoice in unsparing pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.” (Job 6:8-10; 12:9; 13:22-28)

“According to Thy knowledge I am indeed not guilty; yet there is no deliverance from Thy hand.” (10:7)

“Behold now, I have prepared my case; I know that I will be vindicated.” (13:18; 23:3-7)

“Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written.” (31:35)

3. The Lord responded to Job's complaint of unjust treatment at the hand of God.

"Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." (7:11; 10:1-2; 21:4; 27:1-6; 30:16-23)

"Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?" (12:9-10; 23:2, 16-17)

The Lord addressed Job in both of His discourses in similar terms - "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!" (38:2-3) (40:6-9).

4. Lord asked Job to answer a series of rhetorical questions in both discourses (38-40:5) and (40:6-42:6).

"Now gird up your loins, and you instruct Me! *Where were you* when I laid the foundation of the earth!" Tell Me, if you have understanding (38:3-4) first discourse / inanimate creation.

"Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. *Will you* really annul My judgment? *Will you* condemn Me that you may be justified? Or do you have an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His?" (40:7-9) Second discourse / animate creation.

"God says nothing about Job's suffering, nor does he address Job's problem about divine justice. The divine discourses, succeed in bringing Job to complete faith in God's goodness without his receiving a direct answer to his questions." (NIV, 38:3)

It is interesting that in the section on the ostriches in Job 39:13-18 God didn't ask any questions.

5. Job is allowed to respond at the end of each discourse (40:3-5) first discourse / inanimate creation and (42:1-6) second discourse / animate creation.

"The Job answered the Lord and said, 'Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to Thee? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add no more.'" (40:3-5)

"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, 'I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask Thee, and do Thou instruct me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee; therefore I retract, and **I repent** in dust and ashes.'" (42:1-6)

"Job adds repentance for the presumptuous words he had spoken to God." (NIV, 42:6 vs 30:19)

"Now Job has seen God with the eyes of faith and spiritual understanding. He can therefore accept God's plan for his life (see v.2) which includes suffering." (NIV, 42:5)

"Job gets neither a bill of indictment nor a verdict of innocence. So by implication Job is vindicated, and later his vindication is directly affirmed (see 42:7-8)." (NIV, 38:3)