



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Job

BIBLE TEXT | JOB 34:1-37

1 Then Elihu answered and said: **2** "Hear my words, you wise men, and give ear to me, you who know; **3** for the ear tests words as the palate tastes food. **4** Let us choose what is right; let us know among ourselves what is good. **5** For Job has said, 'I am in the right, and God has taken away my right; **6** in spite of my right I am counted a liar; my wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.' **7** What man is like Job, who drinks up scoffing like water, **8** who travels in company with evildoers and walks with wicked men? **9** For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God.' **10** "Therefore, hear me, you men of understanding: far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should do wrong. **11** For according to the work of a man he will repay him, and according to his ways he will make it befall him. **12** Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice. **13** Who gave him charge over the earth, and who laid on him the whole world? **14** If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, **15** all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. **16** "If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I say. **17** Shall one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty, **18** who says to a king, 'Worthless one,' and to nobles, 'Wicked man,' **19** who shows no partiality to princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands? **20** In a moment they die; at midnight the people are shaken and pass away, and the mighty are taken away by no human hand. **21** "For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. **22** There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves. **23** For God has no need to consider a man further, that he should go before God in judgment. **24** He shatters the mighty without investigation and sets others in their place. **25** Thus, knowing their works, he overturns them in the night, and they are crushed. **26** He strikes them for their wickedness in a place for all to see, **27** because they turned aside from following him and had no regard for any of his ways, **28** so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to him, and he heard the cry of the afflicted— **29** When he is quiet, who can condemn? When he hides his face, who can behold him, whether it be a nation or a man?— **30** that a godless man should not reign, that he should not ensnare the people. **31** "For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne punishment; I will not offend any more; **32** teach me what I do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more'? **33** Will he then make repayment to suit you, because you reject it? For you must choose, and not I; therefore declare what you know.



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34 Men of understanding will say to me, and the wise man who hears me will say: **35** 'Job speaks without knowledge; his words are without insight.' **36** Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men. **37** For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God."

DEVOTIONAL FOR JOB 34:1-37

AUTHOR: BRANDON BACHTEL

Have you ever heard of karma? Karma is the force generated by a person's actions commonly held in Hinduism and Buddhism that brings about ethical consequences or rewards that determine the nature of a person's next existence. The belief in these religions is that each individual is born with karma and the residual from past lives must be resolved. Did you get all that? If you're like me, you'll have to read those first sentences a few more times. To put it more plainly, the idea expressed in karma is that "what goes around, comes around." While this is not a Christian teaching, many people are easily swayed into this type of thinking. Consider the disciples' thought process recorded in John 9:1-3. It says, *"As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"* Jesus answered, *"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."* Did you catch it? Jesus' disciples want to know why things are the way they are in this man's life. Was it his sin or his parent's sin that brought about his infirmity? Jesus' response is not only incredibly helpful, but it blows up the theory of karma! You see, some things happen because God is at work and allows circumstances to reveal His purpose and His results as He reveals His glory. A man born blind can result in a greater dependence than one who can see. One who is lame can result in a greater dependence than one who can walk. In the case of the young man in John 9; his blindness gave way to a divine encounter with Jesus that resulted in the glory of God being revealed.

In Job 34, we hear a second speech from young Elihu, who had watched from a distance long enough. It was time for the young whippersnapper to continue setting the old guys straight. Many commentators disagree on the counsel of Elihu and his series of speeches. Some believe he was a divine voice preparing Job for his upcoming conversation with God; and yet others believe he was just another clanging cymbal set to tell Job off with his blazing fury. Elihu is clearly frustrated with Job and his presumption of God's loving purpose (Chapter 33) and/or His integrity to deal justly with mankind (Chapter 33). Job's earlier claims that it doesn't pay to lead a godly life seem to enrage young Elihu. Regardless of how you view Elihu, he further exacerbates several points. By spreading out some of the elements of this great theme, we can see the following truths in Job's experience:



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1. There are things that occur in our daily lives that fail to communicate what might be going on in eternity. Our best attempts to explain God or understand all of His purposes can be futile at times. Simply put; His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9).
2. Karma is a farce. Bad things happen to good people. Good things often happen to bad people (Matthew 5:45). It is impossible to rightly judge a person's spiritual condition based on their current physical reality. If karma was really a thing, we would only receive death because that's all we really deserve (Romans 3:10; 23; 6:23). Praise be to God that He gives grace!
3. Suffering is not in vain. Regardless of how others perceive the pitfalls in our lives, we can confidently say that God desires to use everything for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). As C.S. Lewis said, "God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."
4. In our pain, hardship, difficult circumstances, temptation, and even when we sense that God is distant, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial" (James 1:12). The suffering may be difficult in this life, but it will lead to great reward in the next life.

Questions:

1. Do you live with the idea of karma? If so, consider what you and I really deserve because of our sin.
2. If you look back over the course of your life, when has God taught you some of your greatest lessons? Has it been in times of hardship and pain, or in ease and comfort?
3. Take a few moments to read Romans 8:28. What does this verse mean? Now, write out a prayer to God thanking Him that He uses all things in our life to bring about His purposes in our life.