

Sunday – June 11, 2017

Preparation

This week of Daily in the word will be quite the study as we conclude the book of Job and begin the book of Psalms. The forty-two chapters of Job culminate with the Lord speaking to Job through a whirlwind. If the fact that God was literally talking to Job did not shake him up, then the words that the Lord spoke certainly did. God presents a series of rhetorical questions over four chapters of which, of course, Job had no answer. What we find through these chapters is the very distinct difference between God and man. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Job’s response found in Job 40:4-5, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further,” and Job 42:5-6, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”, was quite similar to the response we find from Isaiah in Isaiah 6:5 which reads, “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” We could also compare Job’s response to John’s when faced, eyeball to eyeball, with the glorified Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:17, “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:” Needless to say, when faced with the realization of who the Lord truly is, it provides a sober realization of who we really are. At that very point, we are faced with a crossroads. On one path, we can take the route that Lucifer took in Isaiah 14 and be filled with pride because of God’s “need” for us, or, as these three men, we can fall on our face and submit to the fact that we are no body and that “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Isaiah 64:6) In placing ourselves in Job’s shoes, we can probably all relate to David when he penned Psalm 8:3-4, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

On Day 167 of our reading this week, we will begin the book of Psalms. The book as a whole contains 150 chapters and 43,743 words, of course making it the longest book in our Bible based on the number of chapters. The word “psalms”

means “songs”. While David authored the majority of the Psalms, there are 49 Psalms of which we do not know exactly who the author is, although some have been accredited to Solomon, or Moses to name a couple. The dates of the various Psalms are difficult to nail down considering we are not completely sure who wrote all of them. Although oftentimes written off as just a book of encouragement, the content contained in the book of Psalms is intense to say the least. There are chapters fully dedicated to the crucifixion of Christ, while others are focused on the word of God and our relationship with it. This book deals with repentance, forgiveness, cleanliness, and mercy. There is not a page that we’ll read that the modern day Christian won’t be able to glean from its writings. Psalms is a great book to begin scripture memorization. In fact Psalm 119:11 tells us, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” As we embark on this journey through this incredible book of praise, as always when approaching the word of God, let’s pray as David prayed in Psalm 119:18, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”

TODAY'S READING: JOB 22-28

OVERVIEW:

Eliphaz's scathing accusations against Job; Job's desire to plead his case before God; Bildad's attack on Job; Job's desperate seeking for God.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we continue today in the Book of Job, we find that Job's counselors, called "friends," are increasingly losing control of their emotions in this "discussion" they're having with Job. Up to this point, they have twisted words and circumstances to fit their own ideas and agendas, but in chapter 22, Eliphaz enters into the realm of just blatantly saying things that are not true. Notice that in the list that Colossians 3:8-9 tell us to "put off," that there is a progression: *"But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."* You can follow that progression with Job's friends. They first became angry with Job's refusal to confess his secret sin, and now they have worked themselves up through wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy, communication out of their mouth, and now, through Eliphaz, lying! Take note of this progression the next time you allow anger to move back into your being. Deal with it immediately lest you find yourself in the vortex described in Col. 3:8-9.

As we begin chapter 22, we enter into the third and final round of this bout with Job and his three friends who came with the intention of confronting and counseling him in his time of trial. There is a great overriding lesson to be learned through the "ministry" of Job's counselors. They remind us that even those of us who seek to minister the Word of God to others with the absolute best possible intentions, can be guilty of breaking people to pieces with our words, while we think we're doing what God would have us do, and thinking we're saying what God would have us say. Job's friends had all of their theological i's dotted just right, and all of their doctrinal t's crossed to perfection, they just didn't have a clue about how to apply them. We must allow their negative example to cause us to depend totally on God's grace to help us to learn to listen as we counsel those in need, and to be sure that we understand the biblical meaning of the words than can so easily roll off of our lips.

After Eliphaz delivers his scathing address in chapter 22, Job is so incredibly low that he has no where else to look but up. All he can do, is seek desperately for God. As tough as that is, it's not a bad place to be in the light of Deuteronomy

4:29, the theme verse of our 365 Days of Pursuit. In chapters 23 and 24, Job does just that – he desperately seeks God.

In chapter 25, Bildad re-enters the ring. He opens his final remarks by declaring an indisputable truth, followed by a leading question, which leads to a series of questions that form his conclusion. In response, Job will ask some questions of his own in chapter 26. He fires back six questions that Job's friends cannot answer. It is interesting to consider these same questions as questions that could and may be asked of each of us at the Judgment Seat of Christ! After firing out these questions in 26:1-4, the remainder of the chapter is an unbelievable cosmological discourse that has proven to be several years ahead of "modern" science.

As we move into chapters 27 and 28, we are able to get a glimpse of Job's incredible spirit. As you read through his "speech," ask yourself whether you could maintain the integrity of your heart the way Job has. It is sobering to think that everyone of us makes the choice of absolute surrender to Christ, every single day of our life. Let's all make the surrender this day.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through JOB'S faithfulness to God through his suffering – Job 23:1-12 (Christ's faithfulness to the Father is seen as He prayed for the Father's will to be done – Luke 22:42)

TODAY'S READING: JOB 29-33

OVERVIEW:

Job's recollection of days gone by; Job's proclamation of his righteousness and integrity; Elihu's accusations.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we enter Job 29, we find Job looking back over his shoulder, reflecting on how good life used to be. We call them "the good ole days." (For most of us, it's not really that "the good ole days" were really that good, it's just that our memory is so bad, and/or so selective, that we don't remember all of the things that made life difficult during those times!) Job's case, however, is different. He really did have a better life in days gone by.

Job 29:1 reminds us that this is the continuation of a parable. Biblically, a parable is something that is used to give instruction to believers, but hide truth from the skeptic (See Matt. 13:11).

After walking back through "the good ole days" in chapter 29, in chapter 30, Job is brought back to the reality of his present condition. He describes the misery of his terrible state. While they tell the tale of Job's horror historically, they once again, paint an unbelievable picture of Christ's plight on the cross, the Jew in the Tribulation, and the lost man in hell. Job 30 gives the same "feel" as Isaiah 53.

In chapter 31, the tone changes rather abruptly. Job somehow digs himself up out of the depths of despair mentally, and causes us to stand in awe of this incredible man's ability to hold tenaciously to his integrity after being pulverized relentlessly both physically (from the devil), and psychologically (from his friends). Beginning in verse 5 of chapter 31, Job fires off a series of questions regarding his personal testimony. Each is marked by the word "if," which is found 20 times in the passage. (Gives new meaning to "playing 20 questions" :->) In effect, Job is saying, "If I'm guilty of any of the things you guys have accused me of, I'm ready to receive the judgment of God for it." Job ends his argument in 31:40, and no one has won. Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have all simply become more entrenched in their own position. It teaches us a great lesson about debating "spiritual" matters. No one really wins. Everybody simply holds firm to their own convictions, while no communication is really taking place, because no one is listening. The next person is just waiting for their turn to talk.

As chapter 32 begins, all four men have run out of steam, and now, no one is talking. But there has been one other person present throughout this whole episode with Job and his three friends. He has listened intently to everything that has been said. Because he was younger than the other men, he's kept his mouth shut out of respect. But he's been brought to his boiling point. He feels he's got to open his mouth and "defend God." Elihu is his name. Like Job's three friends, he thinks he is speaking for God, out of a pure heart and pure motives. Once again, you would never be able to convince him otherwise. What he says proves that he is very knowledgeable. Knowing what we know about why Job has encountered these trials, reveals that while Elihu has knowledge, he lacks wisdom and understanding. Everything Elihu says in chapter 32 and 33 is completely accurate in terms of truthfulness, and is right smack dab on the bull's eye. The only problem is, the bull's eye is on the wrong target! As we have said throughout our overview of Job, we must allow the Lord to teach us through the negative examples of Job's friends, lest we demoralize, discourage, and defeat our brothers and sisters with knowledge, but no wisdom and understanding.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through Job's compassion for others – Job 29:15-17, 21-25 (Matt. 4:14; 15:30-39). Through the ridicule and affliction which Job endured – Job 30:10-11 (Mark 15:15-20; Isa. 50:6; 53:2-5; Matt. 27:26-30; John 19:1-3)

TODAY'S READING: JOB 34-38 OVERVIEW:

Elihu's continued accusations against Job; God's questions to Job.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we pick up in today's reading, youthful, knowledgeable, well-meaning Elihu is still running his mouth. (Somebody please pass me the muzzle!) And he still has a lot more to say to Job, "in the name of the Lord," of course. He has even convinced himself, and is trying to convince Job that he has received his insight by inspiration of God. While Job's other "counselors" continuously pointed to some secret sin in Job's life as the source of his heartache and suffering, Elihu claims that he even knows what the specific sin is! Hello, Holy Spirit! He says that Job's problem is the fact that he hasn't really submitted himself to the sovereignty of God, and is bumping himself up against God's working in his life. Compare this "godly insight and inspiration" with God's own words concerning Job in chapter 1, verse 8: *"There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil."* So much for Elihu's insight and inspiration! Oh, how careful we must be about throwing God's name over the top of our own opinions and conclusions in dealing with people! We must be certain that we have a chapter and verse to support our counsel, and we must be certain that the verse means what we are passing it off to mean in its context. Job's counselors show us how easily we can deceive, and be deceived.

It is interesting that throughout Elihu's entire rampage, it would be impossible to fault the correctness of what he says. The problem, however, is that he is operating under a basic assumption that is false. When your basic conclusion is off base, it doesn't matter how many correct facts are hung on it to make it look and or sound "godly" – it's still just flat out wrong. Sadly, this is the problem with many discussions about spiritual matters and religion in these dark last days.

Finally, Elihu has gotten what he felt he "had to say" off of his chest, and can now shut his mouth. Hallelujah! These men have all had their shots at Job. Now it's God's turn. Job has had all kinds of questions for God. It is interesting, that when God finally speaks, He does so by declaring nothing. He rather "answers," by asking questions Himself. He asks a series of at least 35 questions, depending on how you divide them. They are all designed to show man that he really knows nothing about anything.

The breakdown of chapter 38 is as follows:

Questions about words without knowledge. (38:1-3)

Questions about creation. (38:4-7)

Questions about the waters. (38:8-11)

Questions about the sun's light. (38:12-15)

Questions about strange places. (38:16-21)

Questions about the weather. (38:22-30)

Questions about the heavens. (38:31-33)

Questions in general. (38:34-41)

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the One Who watches how we live and all we do – Job 34:21. (The Lord keeps His eyes on the righteous – I Pet. 3:12)

TODAY'S READING: JOB 39-42

OVERVIEW:

The continuation of God's questions to Job; God's great power reviewed; Job's submission to God; Job's prayer for his friends; God's double blessing upon Job.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we completed chapter 38 yesterday, God was in the midst of answering Job's questions with a series of questions that brought Job's questions to a screeching halt. God's questions had to do with creationism, and appear to be totally unrelated and disconnected from Job's situation, until you realize that Job had gotten to the place that his focus had become directed solely onto his personal problems. God redirected his focus to see the big picture, to show Job, 1) his problems aren't as big as he thought, and 2) his problems aren't the center of the universe, God is!

Having laid down a series of cosmological and natural questions in chapter 38, God now asks questions about animals. In fact, from Job 38 to 41, God mentions 14 animals. Jeff Adams reminds us, "Seven is God's number of completion, the number associated with his perfect works, just as in the seven days of creation. Two is the number of witness, or confirmation. We are considering a list of 14 animals for whatever reason. Could it be that God wants to confirm the perfection of His work to Job? Is there valuable truth to be learned from God's zoo?"

Of particular interest are the two animals mentioned in chapters 40 and 41, "Behemoth" and "Leviathan," respectively. A few things to consider, first of all, concerning "Behemoth". The word "behemoth" is not a translation, but actually a transliteration. In other words, because the word has no English equivalent, it cannot be translated. The Hebrew word was simply given an English spelling and pronunciation. While some speculate that behemoth is an elephant, hippopotamus, or a water ox, the word simply means "beast" or "animal." What is interesting, however, is that it is a plural form of the word, and yet all of the pronouns in the passage concerning this animal are singular. Either God uses real bad grammar, or there's something else going on here! Can you think of any other place in the Bible where a single "animal," is really a composite of different "animals"? How about the "beast" (i.e. animal) in Rev. 13:1-2 (the Antichrist), who is a composite of several beasts: the leopard, the bear, and the lion. When we see who "behemoth" actually is, we find that God is, in a sense, answering the

question of Job's suffering by pointing him to the source. The same spiritual power that was behind Job's "tribulation," will be the mastermind behind the worldwide "Tribulation" in the very near future.

Leviathan (chapter 41), is likewise intriguing. He, too, is speculated by "scholars" to be a whale, crocodile, sea monster, or perhaps even a mythological beast. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, however, reveals a very interesting description.

Psalm 74:14 lets us know that whatever "leviathan" is, it has more than one head! Isaiah 27:1 calls "leviathan" a serpent and a dragon. Can you think of anything in the Bible that has more than one head, and is identified as a serpent and a dragon? Revelation 12:3 talks about a great DRAGON, "having seven heads," and verse 9 of that same chapter says, "*And the great dragon was cast out, that old SERPENT, called the Devil, and Satan*" !!! Once again, God is pointing Job to the one who was responsible for his "tribulation." Wow! What a Book! And, what a God!

To summarize our study of Job, allow me to "borrow" from Jeff Adams' summary in his commentary on this Book, which I have already mentioned, I highly recommend:

1. Some questions will never be answered in this life, if ever, God owes us no explanations.
2. Some believers suffer for no reason of their own making.
3. We are but a small part of an immense spiritual war that has been raging since the fall of Lucifer, a war of which we have little understanding.
4. Unless we exercise great caution and discernment, even our best intentions to minister to those who suffer can be easily seized by the enemy to use to his advantage in this spiritual war.
5. An abundance of facts about God does not necessarily qualify anyone to understand God's purposes, especially to diagnose His workings in the life of another.
6. Our need is not just for more information about God; our need is to know God.
7. When baffled and overwhelmed by trials that are not of our own creation, we should lift up our eyes to see the big picture of God's plan for the universe. We

should simply stand in awe of God's great power, and simply let Him be God.

8. All trials for righteousness' sake ultimately lead to new beginnings.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through Job's praying for his friends – Job 42:10 (Christ instructed us to pray for those who falsely accuse us – Luke 6:28).

TODAY'S READING: PSALM 1-11

OVERVIEW:

The contrast between the blessed man and the ungodly man; a prophecy of Christ and his request for the heathen as his inheritance; David cries out to God for help and deliverance from his enemies; The Lord's name is magnified and David wonders with amazement why God is even mindful of sinful man.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The word Psalms means "hymns" or "praise". This Old Testament book was the national hymn book for the Israelites. The Psalms reveal many varied emotions and experiences of God's people: adoration, joy, faith, grace, mercy, suffering, hope, etc. In just the eleven Psalms we read today, we see David writing about his emotions and experiences during his son Absalom's rebellion (Psalms 3-6), while he was persecuted by King Saul (Psalm 7), during his time as a shepherd (Psalm 8), and while he was reigning as King of Israel (Psalms 9 and 11).

For the sake of space and time, we will focus our attention today on Psalm 1. In this Psalm God contrasts for us the blessed man (vs. 1-3) and the ungodly man (vs. 4-6). The blessed man is one that is separated from the world (vs. 1). Our Christian life is compared to a walk in the Bible (see Eph. 4:1, 5:2). It starts with trusting Christ alone for your salvation and continues with faithfully obeying God's Word. The man that God blesses makes progress in His walk by being mindful of who he listens to (not "the counsel of the ungodly"), what he considers doing (not "the way of sinners"), and finally what he actually does (not "sitting down and agreeing with the scornful"). It doesn't take much for any of us to imagine how this works. You first start to walk near sin, then you stand to consider it, then you finally sit down to "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). Just remember that sin will always take you farther than you want to go, and the price will always be higher than you want to pay! The man that is blessed also delights in the Word of God. It is love for, and obedience to the Bible that brings blessings to our lives. Meditation is to the soul what digestion is to the body (see Jer. 15:16). A man that meditates on the Bible allows his mind to be controlled by the Word of God. Thirdly, the blessed man is like a tree planted by water. He brings forth much fruit every season because of the plentiful water taken in through the roots. Note the perfect example of this godly man is Jesus Christ (John 14:6). He is the Way (vs. 1), the Truth (vs. 2), and the Life (vs. 3).

Psalm 1:4-6 describes for us the ungodly man. In contrast to the blessed man, the first thing we find is that they “are not so”. While the godly man is compared to a tree that is strong, beautiful, and fruitful; the ungodly is compared to chaff that the wind blows away because it has no roots! Verse 5 clearly teaches that there is a coming judgment that is prepared for the ungodly at which they will fall on their knees (“they shall not stand”) and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11). Verse 6 describes the “two ways” that are set before each of us (Matt. 7:13-14). The ungodly have chosen the wide gate that leads to destruction because they prefer the counsel of the ungodly, as opposed to the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). He prefers the friendship of godless men, rather than the congregation of the righteous. He also spends his days thinking upon sin, and not upon the Word of God!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE SON – Psalm 2:12. We are told in Psalm 2:10-12 to “be wise now” and “kiss the Son” because “blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Eph. 1:12-14).

Saturday – June 17, 2017

Reflection

Looking over the week of Daily in the word, may we be reminded of how incredible the design of our Bible truly is. May we be more compelled to spend more time in the Book, thereby, allowing the Book to spend more time in us, because of the lessons learned through the book of Job, and furthermore the potential blessings we find in the book of Psalms.

The culmination of the book of Job was found in Job 38 through 41 as we see God speaking to Job via a whirlwind. God's response to Job provided not only Job, but us as well, with the realization of who we really are when compared to God Himself. As we've discussed, it should truly resonate within our hearts as it did David, in Psalm 8, when he penned the following: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." To answer the question, we turn to Hebrews 2, where the question is again asked, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." (Hebrews 2:6-8) The answer to the question of both passages is found in verse 9 of Hebrews 2, which begins by saying, "But we see Jesus..." In looking at Job 38-41, it's safe to say that God is not necessarily as mindful of man to the extent that we (along with Job) may think He should be. However, when the Lord Jesus Christ enters the picture as the sacrifice for our sins, it allows God to, perhaps, look at man in a different light. Because when God looks on us, He no longer sees us, but rather His Son Jesus Christ, Who is now "our life" (Colossians 3:4).

This brings us to the book of Psalms. As we mentioned in our devotional from yesterday, it is important to note the contrast found in the book of Psalms between the "righteous" and the "wicked". Although, living in a different dispensation (Colossians 1:25), or age, David, as well as Job, seemingly cared much more for righteousness than we in this day and age tend to care. Yes, we trust in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation, however, the sanctity of our lives after salvation should be of the utmost

importance because of the weight it holds in living lives as testimonies to a world that desperately needs to see a change in those that claim to have been changed (2 Corinthians 5:17). Again, in Psalm 11:7 we read, “For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.” As we look back over the first eleven Psalms we’ve read, and even more, as we look into the passages we’ll read in the future, may we be inclined to consider the state of our “holiness” (1 Peter 1:15-16), because the conversation of our lives may very well be the difference in eternity for someone in our lives.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Job 23:10 “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

Job 31:1 “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid.”

Job 37:14 “Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.”

Job 42:2-3 “I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.”

Psalms 1:1 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”