

# Job's Response to God – Part 2

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Job responds to God's rebuke by admitting the sovereignty of God and repenting
2. aim – To cause us to respond properly to the sovereignty of God in the face of Christ's offering
3. passage – Job 42:1-9

### b. outline

1. Job's Repentance (Job 42:1-6)
2. God's Rebuke of Job's Friends (Job 42:7-8)
3. Job's Sacrifice For His Friends (Job 42:9)

### c. opening

1. the **response** of Job to the speech of God
  - a. Job responds to God's rebuke by articulating **the core truth of the entire book**: "you can do all things, and no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2)
    1. this is *why* this book appears in Scripture – it is the *core truth* that "jumps out" at us:
      - a. **i.e.** God is free to do *as he wills* (without just "responding" to what *we* do), and everything he purposes to do *will be accomplished*
    2. **IOW**: this is *not* a book about how *Job* will respond to God under pressure
      - a. rather, this is a book *about* the fact that *God* purposed for Job to be righteous
      - b. and, nothing can *change* the fact that *God* purposed for Job to be righteous
        1. neither Satan, nor Job's friends, nor Job's wife, *nor even Job himself* could change what God had purposed to do in him and through him *from the beginning*
        2. **the essence of the book**: God has declared that Job is righteous, and God will see this reality through *whatever comes along*
    3. **typically**: the assumption of **Job** is: how do *we* respond when *we* suffer?
      - a. **i.e.** most people assume this is a book *about us* (as everything *tragically* is in "Christendom")
      - b. however, Job has come to realize that, *in spite of his own failings*, God continues to "hold him fast" to himself, and no plan of the Almighty can be altered
      - c. thus ... the point of the "heavenly councils", the attacks of Satan, the foolish advice of Job's friends, and even Job "questioning" God's faithfulness is: **to get Job to confess this truth**
    4. **principle: the sovereignty of God is not a "theoretical" doctrine – rather, it gives us great comfort in knowing that the God who drew us to himself in Christ will complete what he purposed to do through that drawing**
      - a. the purpose of God in our salvation is to *glorify God* in seeing him *preserve his own* (like the **angels** of the heavenly council did!!)
    5. so ... Job "*repents*" of his foolish thinking that God "might" abandon him – he "*repents*" of putting *himself first* and assuming that all of this was "about him"
  - b. **IMO**: the response of Job *also includes* the response Job **will give for his friends**, and their understanding of God (**i.e. vv. 7-9**)
    1. **IOW**: Job has responded *for himself*, now Job will respond *for his friends*
    2. the rebuke by God of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar *purposes* a response **by Job**, which is *part-and-parcel* of the overall point being made by God in the book (**see above**)

## II. God's Rebuke of Job's Friends (Job 42:7-8)

### Content

#### a. the audience of God's rebuke (v. 7a)

1. **question #1/3**: there is no mention of Elihu anywhere beyond his own speech in **chap. 37** – *why* isn't Elihu mentioned here (for either praise, or rebuke)?
  - a. obviously, he isn't included in the rebuke (Eliphaz's "*two friends*" of **v. 7** are named in **v. 9**)
    1. so, apparently God considered his speech "worthy" of acceptance without rebuke
  - b. **IMO**: it is *likely* that Elihu is "ignored" (yet, not unimportant) because *he is not the main character of the story* – he "disappears" because the focus *is not on him*

- c. **IOW:** like **John the Baptist** before Jesus, Elihu is an important “introduction” to the main character (ITC: God himself), but not the focus of the story – so, he goes unheeded
    - 1. **note:** except for a few *oblique* references to John in **Acts**, he is never mentioned beyond that book in the NT; Jesus is the *myopic* main character “beyond” John
  - d. thus ... Elihu is only the “curtain” that rises before God steps onto the stage ...
  - 2. **question #2/3:** God does not *directly* name Bildad and Zophar when speaking to Eliphaz – *why* does God direct his ire *specifically* at Eliphaz, and not at the others (per se)?
    - a. obviously, they are a *part* of the rebuke, although indirectly (**again**, they are named in **v. 9**)
    - b. **IMO:** it is *likely* that God speaks primarily to Eliphaz because he was the *first to speak* after Job, and because his speeches “set the tone” for how the others spoke
      - 1. **i.e.** God treats him as the “ringleader” ...
      - 2. Eliphaz asserts *from the outset* that Job’s problem is one of “displeasing” the deity, and that a man *cannot* be righteous in the eyes of God (**read Job 4:12-17**)
        - a. **e.g.** Eliphaz claimed to have seen a “spirit” who asked this “rhetorical” question: “*can a mortal man be in the right before God?*” (another attack by Satan?)
      - 3. this is *exactly contrary* to what God *eventually reveals* through Job: that God *can* make a man right before him, and *if* he purposes to do so, *nothing can thwart that plan* (including that spirit)
    - c. thus ... Eliphaz “takes the heat” for his assertions, which the other friends had copied to “pile on”
- b. the substance of God’s rebuke (v. 7b)**
- 1. God’s “*anger burns*” against the three men, because they “*have not spoken of me what is right*”
    - a. **note:** this observation is repeated in **v. 8b**, implying it is at the *heart* of the matter
    - b. the issue is these men *not speaking right about God* – the issue is how they have *perceived* the nature of God (**i.e.** his character, his purposes, his works, etc.)
      - 1. **IOW:** their *problem* is their *incorrect understanding of God himself* – **i.e.** not a misunderstanding of the *circumstances re: Job*, but a misunderstanding of *God himself*, esp. as it relates to Job
      - 2. **i.e.** even though they *did* speak many good things about God (as we saw in their speeches), they are still *missing something* about the nature of God himself
  - 2. **question #3/3:** God declares that Job’s friends have not spoken “*as my servant Job has*” yet Job was *rebuked* by God (**in chaps. 38-41**) for *his failure to speak of God properly* – so *how* have these men failed to speak like Job (given that *his* “speeches” were *rebuffed*)?
    - a. **IOW:** how can these men speak “like” Job if *Job himself* has spoken improperly?
    - b. **assumption:** we *assume* that God is speaking of *their speeches* – but what if he’s *not*?
      - 1. **i.e.** what if their “speaking” is *how they have responded to God’s rebuke of Job*?
      - 2. **query:** did Job’s friends *hear* God rebuke Job? **answer:** probably!
        - a. just as Elihu sat and listened to Job and his friends, and *only* responded when he realized he must (**32:1-5**)
        - b. implying that Job’s friends heard Elihu’s speech, *just as they undoubtedly heard God’s*
      - 3. thus, the *rebuke here* is probably more related to how these men responded *to God* when *he* spoke, rather than to what they had said originally (though not *completely* forgotten)
    - c. so ... it is *very possible* that God is *actually* rebuking Eliphaz et. al. **for their failure to repent**, for their failure to respond to a holy God **as is required whenever he speaks**
    - d. **note:** this will become more obvious as God makes a demand upon them (**see below**)
  - 3. **principle: the one obvious difference between the regenerate and the reprobate is in how they respond to God when he makes himself known to them**
    - a. men reborn by the Spirit hear the gospel and respond positively – men still in reprobation hear the gospel and reject it – the regenerate *repent*; the reprobate *continue in rebellion*
    - b. **IOW:** Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar stand *in judgment* under God’s wrath for *their* failure to repent
- c. the solution for God’s rebuke (v. 8)**
- 1. God instructs Eliphaz et. al. to take *to Job* seven male cattle (bulls) and seven male sheep (rams)
    - a. **note:** it is difficult to say if this is *per man* or for the *whole group* (not overly important)
    - b. they are to take them to Job for *him* to sacrifice the animals *on their behalf* (in their stead)
      - 1. similar to Job’s actions in **1:5** on behalf of his (former!) children – offering a sacrifice *on behalf of the (possible) sin of another*
    - c. **IOW:** Job is to act *as their priest* – he is to act as the “intermediary” between them and God, offering to God what is prescribed for their sin (**see below**)
    - d. **note:** if the dating of Job puts it c. Abraham (2000BC), the concept is not unknown: just as Abram offered a tithe to the Lord *through Melchizedek* (**Genesis 14:17-24**), so Job acts here also as a pre-Levitical priest (**i.e.** about 600 years before Aaron’s line)

- e. **IOW:** what is needed for the remission of sin is the shedding of blood – just as it was in the Garden (with God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins), so all sin *of all generations* requires the “transference” of life through the shedding of blood
  - 1. **i.e.** these animals are offered as *atonement* for the sins of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar
- 2. **but:** God indicates that these sacrifices *will not be the means of their restoration*
  - a. God says: “*Job shall pray for you*” (**i.e.** intercede for you *directly before me*) and “*I will accept his prayer*” (**i.e.** I will heed *his words* and “withdraw” my hand of wrath [destruction] from you)
  - b. **irony:** it will be the *words* of Job that will save his friends – the sacrifices are “essential” (in that they represent a *tangible act of contrition*), but it will be the *words* of Job *in prayer* that will save
    - 1. **they have not spoken rightly, but Job will** – because, God has made him such (righteous) that his prayers will *have the power to avert the wrath they rightly deserve*
    - 2. **IOW:** the sacrifices cannot change *who these men truly are*, but God has ordained for Job’s *words* to be powerful enough to save them from their sin
    - 3. **maybe:** the purpose of Job’s sufferings – for him to see *God rightly* and to *save his friends??*

### III. Job's Sacrifice For His Friends (Job 42:9)

#### Content

##### a. Job becomes the priest of his friends

- 1. **as above:** Job becomes the *priest* of his friends – he offers *on their behalf* a sacrifice to God
  - a. and he offers up a *prayer* for them, seeking God to be merciful and forgive them of their sin
- 2. Job’s work here stands with the Levitical priesthood (and the priesthood of Melchizedek) as a **foreshadowing of the work of Jesus:** the ultimate “go-between” before God
  - a. by nature, unholy men cannot approach the holiness of God – they are *automatically* “shunned” from God’s presence due their *sinful nature* (not just behaviors)
    - 1. **e.g.** in **Isaiah 6**, Isaiah is *frightened* to be even in the presence of God **in a vision**
  - b. thus, someone must stand “between” a holy God and unholy men to bring them together
    - 1. **e.g.** in the Old Covenant, the Aaronic priests were *set aside* (sanctified) by God himself to act as the priests of the people, where *they* could “approach” God on behalf of others
    - 2. **e.g.** the High Priest was designated to come *for the whole people* into the Holy of Holies (on the Day of Atonement) to offer a *universal* sacrifice for any “remaining” sin in them
  - c. unfortunately, there is *no one* in this sinful world that can *himself* approach God
    - 1. **i.e.** even the priests are tainted by their own sin, thus they needed to atone for themselves *first*
    - 2. implying *why* the sacrifice of Job’s friends *was insufficient* (**i.e.** prayer was needed)
  - d. but ... God *has* provided a Great High Priest who is able to satisfy all of the requirements of a perfect “go-between” – a **mediator** between the elect and God: Jesus, the perfect High priest:
    - 1. he has no sin to “restrict” his access into the presence of a holy God
    - 2. he offers his *own* sinless life (and flesh) as a singular, perfect sacrifice
    - 3. he enters *directly* into the presence of God (as God himself) to offer this sacrifice
    - 4. he lives *continually* (as the Risen One) to mediate his sacrifice on behalf of his own
    - 5. he makes *perfect justification* in those for whom he draws to himself in faith
    - 6. he sends *his Spirit* to produce *actual* living righteousness in those he saves
    - 7. he *raises from the dead* those that belong to him, such that they might live forever
- 3. **Job makes atonement for his friends as a foreshadowing of the work of Christ – like so much else in the OT, Job stands as a stark reminder that men need a mediator, and God has provided One – one that he has declared to be all that is needed by sinful men**
  - a. **the prayers of Job for his friends prefigure the prayers of Jesus for us (read Heb. 5:5-10)**