

Job's Advocate
Job #7 | 16:15-22
July 26, 2020

Scripture Reading

Job 16:15-22

PRAYER

Introduction

- 5th grade, accusation by a teacher | I didn't do it
- Wishing for someone to come to my defense!
- **Advocate / Mediator / Defense Attorney**

Let's review:

1. Job - really, really good man
2. Challenger - **Job only serves you for the stuff* | **Prosecuting attorney**
3. Suffering - loss of possessions, kids, health
 - a. Kicker - Job doesn't know why
4. Friends - you did something to deserve this (karma, retribution theology)
5. Job - *I didn't do anything, maybe God is unjust!*
 - a. Accusation and questioning | **Wanting an Advocate!**

No Mediator, I'm On My Own (Cycle 1)

Job 9 ³²For he is not a man like me, that I can answer him, that we can take each other to court. ³³There is no mediator between us, to lay his hand on both of us. ³⁴Let him take his rod away from me so his terror will no longer frighten me. ³⁵Then I would speak and not fear him. But that is not the case; I am on my own.

I Wish for an Advocate (Cycle 2)

Job 16 ¹⁸Earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry for help find no resting place. ¹⁹Even now my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is in the heights! ²⁰My friends scoff at me as I weep before God. ²¹I wish that someone might argue for a man with God just as anyone would for a friend. ²²For only a few years will pass before I go the way of no return.

I'll Be My Own Lawyer (Cycle 3)

Job 23 ²"Today also my complaint is bitter; my hand is heavy on account of my groaning. ³Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! ⁴I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵I would know what he would answer me and understand what he would say to me. ⁶Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; he would pay attention to me. ⁷There an upright man could argue with him, and I would be acquitted forever by my judge.

No Hope From Eliphaz

Job 5 ¹ Call now; is there anyone who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn?

Elihu's Intrusion

Job 32 ¹ So these three men quit answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ² Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite from the family of Ram became angry. He was angry at Job because he had justified himself rather than God. ³ He was also angry at Job's three friends because they had failed to refute him and yet had condemned him. ⁴ Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were all older than he. ⁵ But when he saw that the three men could not answer Job, he became angry. ⁶ So Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite replied: I am young in years, while you are old; therefore I was timid and afraid to tell you what I know. ⁷ I thought that age should speak and maturity should teach wisdom. ⁸ But it is the spirit in a person—the breath from the Almighty—that gives anyone understanding. ⁹ It is not only the old who are wise or the elderly who understand how to judge. ¹⁰ Therefore I say, "Listen to me. I too will declare what I know."

Eli-Who?

1. Unusual intrusion into the story...*how long has he been sitting here listening?*
2. Of all the controversies in Job, the character and nature of Elihu is one of the most

Reasons to Distrust

1. Youth | vs. 6 "I am young in years"
2. Angry | angry at Job, angry at the friends (twice)
3. Theology | quite a bit of similar retribution theology

Reasons to Trust

1. Family lineage | honor, no other people in the book of Job
2. He says he will be gentle | **33:7** Fear of me should not terrify you; no pressure from me should weigh you down.
3. Never interrupted | Six chapters!
 - a. **Robert Alden** Elihu's speeches are longer than twelve other OT books and seventeen of the twenty-seven NT books.
4. He corrects both Job and the friends | in line with God's response
5. He gives credit for wisdom to God | **Job 32** ⁷ I thought that age should speak and maturity should teach wisdom. ⁸ But it is the spirit in a person—the breath from the Almighty—that gives anyone understanding.
6. Not corrected by God | Not addressed by God at all, either positively or negatively
7. His speech flows directly into God's speech | Ch. 37 language of storms and winds
 - a. Elijah or John the Baptizer

Elihu, the Advocate?

Job 33 ³¹ Pay attention, Job, and listen to me. Be quiet, and I will speak. ³² But if you have something to say, answer me; speak, for I would like to justify you.

- Is he the one that Job has been longing for? This prophet of God?

Not What Job Wants

Job 34 ⁵ For Job has declared, “I am righteous, yet God has deprived me of justice...¹⁰ Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding. It is impossible for God to do wrong, and for the Almighty to act unjustly.

- **Walton/Longman** Based on his insight into Job’s situation, Elihu is going to offer advice to Job that he believes will spare Job’s life. In Elihu’s mind, then, Job is not righteous but can take a path that will lead to reconciliation. Elihu anticipates that he can negotiate a settlement suitable to both parties. Consequently we can see that though Elihu projects himself into this role, he is not the sort of mediator that Job wants nor the sort that can provide solutions within the context of the book.

But, Elihu does disagree with Eliphaz and the friends...there CAN be a heavenly mediator

Elihu’s Message of Grace

Job 33 ¹⁹ A person may be disciplined on his bed with pain and constant distress in his bones, ²⁰ so that he detests bread, and his soul despises his favorite food. ²¹ His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his unseen bones stick out. ²² He draws near to the Pit, and his life to the executioners. ²³ If there is an angel on his side, one mediator out of a thousand, to tell a person what is right for him ²⁴ and to be gracious to him and say, “Spare him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom,” ²⁵ then his flesh will be healthier than in his youth, and he will return to the days of his youthful vigor. ²⁶ He will pray to God, and God will delight in him. That person will see his face with a shout of joy, and God will restore his righteousness to him. ²⁷ He will look at men and say, “I have sinned and perverted what was right; yet I did not get what I deserved. ²⁸ He redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit, and I will continue to see the light.” ²⁹ God certainly does all these things two or three times to a person ³⁰ in order to turn him back from the Pit, so he may shine with the light of life.

1. A true mediator is hard to find | vs. 23 “one out of a thousand”
2. A true mediator brings redemption from death | vs. 24,
3. A true mediator brings joyful relationship with God | not fear and dread!
 - a. vs. 26 That person will see his face with a shout of joy, and God will restore his righteousness to him.
4. A true mediator brings the ransom himself | vs. “I have found a ransom” – Mediator

Pointing Toward Jesus

Job wanted one type of mediator, but Jesus is even better!

1. Job wanted an angel, but Jesus is the Son of God and greater than the angels (Hebrews).
2. Job wanted someone to prove his righteousness, Jesus asks us to trust *his* righteousness.
3. Job depended on his efforts to get him out of the mess, but Jesus provides the ultimate ransom to pull us out of our mess.
4. Job wanted someone to keep him from dying, but Jesus died and rose again to conquer death itself.

Big idea: Jesus is the ultimate mediator, the advocate who is better than we could ever imagine.

What Kind of Advocate Do You Want? | “Who/what will represent me and show that I’m OK?”

1. Government as advocate | *If we just had the right people in congress, if my guy/gal would be president, if we just had the right supreme court justices...then life would be OK*
 - a. Both sides of the aisle, gaining steam every day right now
 - b. Not wrong to have political opinions
 - c. At its root, political idolatry is failure to trust Jesus as our advocate
2. Expert as advocate | *ideology, expert, study, article*
 - a. Brene Brown, Joe Rogan, Neil Degrasse Tyson, Bill Nye, Jordan Peterson,
 - b. This will represent me and my right-ness!
 - c. Not wrong to listen/learn, but become substitute advocate easily
3. Friend as advocate |
 - a. Anne of Green Gables “bosom friend,” this one will finally understand me
 - b. Friendship is not wrong, super important. Spouse is a good thing.
4. Self as advocate | *I’ll just do good deeds, get more degrees, succeed in business...I’ll just represent myself!*
 - a. Caveat: not wrong to advocate for yourself | **Misuse in abuse**
 - i. Encouraged and commanded to cry out for help
 - ii. Abuse is categorically different from our topic today, but I just want to say that so it’s not misunderstood
 - b. In the context of “what will make me feel justified, what will make me OK,” you can’t fully advocate for yourself.

My party will represent me and show how I’m right, this expert will represent me and show how I’m right, my friend or romantic partner will make me *feel* like I’m right, or I’ll just represent me and prove myself right!

Now, one last interesting observation...

Advocating For Others

Job 42⁷ After the Lord had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.⁸ Now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. Then my servant Job will pray for you. I will surely accept his prayer and not deal with you as your folly deserves. For you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.”⁹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job’s prayer.

If we could really let go of the other advocates and truly encounter Christ’s advocacy for us, we would be far better advocates for those around us who are in need.

Benediction

Job 19 ²⁵ But I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will stand on the dust. ²⁶ Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh. ²⁷ I will see him myself; my eyes will look at him, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me.

Sermon Description

Throughout the Book of Job, Job expresses his desire to meet with God and work out whatever the problem is. In multiple places, he cries out for an advocate, somebody to mediate between him and God. For a moment, it looks like the surprise character of Elihu might be that mediator. But in the end we see that the advocate that Job longs for is surpassed in every way by Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Job want to take God to court; what does he hope to accomplish? What role does he want this “advocate/mediator” to play?
2. Have you ever had an experience where you needed a lawyer or an advocate? How does that experience inform you about our need for Jesus as an advocate?
3. What substitute advocates are you prone to turn to? Why does that particular person/thing grab your heart in particular?
4. How does the gospel transform us to be better advocates for those in our world who are hurting, abused, oppressed, and downtrodden?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would put our ultimate trust in Jesus as our mediator and advocate. Pray that we would not seek for other people or entities to give our lives “right-ness.”
2. Pray that the gospel would deeply compel us to advocate for those in positions of vulnerability with the advocacy and love of King Jesus himself.