

Job Chapters 3-14

The Futility of Inappropriate Counselling

Intro- duction

- * Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, Job's three friends, each address him three times, and he replies to each one
- * Their message, delivered with different degrees of graciousness, is simply that the cause of Job's suffering is secret sin, so he should repent of it, and he is a hypocrite because he doesn't
- * They have almost no understanding of the spirit world, and do not know that Job's suffering is related to the great angelic conflict behind the scenes
- * Job rejects the counsel that he suffers because of sin, rebukes the friends for their failure to help him, pleads with Jehovah to tell him what is happening, and maintains his faith that Jehovah may choose to vindicate him
- * Job's trauma is standard loss-grief; modern counsellors advise giving free rein to grief, but that doesn't work for Job

Key Themes and Verses

- * Job I (Ch. 3) - lament for suffering, full of self-pity (3: 25)
- * Eliphaz I (Chs 4-5) - he patronises Job (4: 5), claims the authority of spiritual experience (4: 16-17), affirms "original sin" (5: 7), offers divine forgiveness (5: 17) and urges Job to receive it (5: 27)
- * Job II (Chs. 6-7) - he reaffirms his grief, innocence, yearning for divine affirmation, or at least some encouragement from the friends (Ch. 6: 23-24); without this, he reverts to self-pity (Ch. 7: 16)
- * Bildad I (Ch. 8) - he reaffirms Eliphaz' morality, adding the suggestion that Job's children suffered for sin (Ch. 8: 4), and holding out hope of final reward (Ch. 8: 5-7)
- * Job III (Chs. 9-10) - he admits what his friends say, but seeks divine explanation (Ch. 9: 15); for who else but Jehovah can explain (Ch. 9: 32-33)? Failing this, Job in his self-pity judges our Lord harshly (Ch. 10: 20-22)
- * Zophar I (Ch. 11) - he reaffirms the others' morality: if Job will confess and forsake sin, then all will be well (Ch. 11: 14-15)
- * Job IV (Chs. 12-14) - anyone can see that Jehovah has brought him down (Ch. 12: 13-14); Job feels that his friends are useless (Ch. 13: 4-5), and wants to talk to Jehovah, whatever the result may be (Ch. 13: 13-16), for our Lord must count his creation worthy of notice no matter what he may once have done (Ch. 14: 14-17)