

## Read the Bible Through – Week 4

### Sunday, January 28, 2018—Exodus 1-4

In 1973, the United States Supreme Court, in the *Roe v. Wade* decision, made abortion legal in all 50 states. The sexual liberation movement of the 1960s made pregnancy an inconvenience. Life was no longer precious and worthy of protection.

This mindset was nothing new in history. When the Israelites began to increase rapidly in number, the Pharaoh felt threatened. What if they decided to side with an invading enemy? Because the Pharaoh believed he himself was a god, he had authority to do whatever he pleased. He ordered the Hebrew midwives to dispose of baby boys in the Nile, but they feared God rather than Pharaoh (1:17) and disobeyed, blaming their failure to comply on the heartiness of Hebrew women. To them, God was the supreme authority, and life and death were His arena, not theirs.

As a result, baby Moses did not die in the Nile but floated on its surface until Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him. He grew up in the home of Pharaoh yet was conflicted at the hard labor his Hebrew people faced. Taking matters into his own hands, he treated life carelessly and had to flee. The Israelites groaned, and God heard and knew (2:25).

To set His people free, God called Moses, the murderer, to return to Pharaoh and tell them another god, the Great I Am, wanted His people set free. The one drawn out of the Nile would lead out his people from Egypt because Yahweh saw their lives as precious.

Praise God for the sanctity He sees in your life (4:31).

### Saturday, January 27, 2018—Job 38-42

The great desire of God for humanity is they know Him, worship Him, and enjoy Him forever. God reveals Himself in creation. God gave the Scriptures to humanity so they could know Him better (not so they would have every historical fact or scientific answer). He arrived in human form through Jesus the Christ, God the Son. He is the hero of the Story.

Job faced misery completely unique to him, yet what he experienced is something with which all can identify. What is God doing? Why does He allow suffering? Is He able to restore? Is He good? This and countless other questions go through the minds of those who suffer. They want to be faithful to God, but they don't want to suffer. Finding that fine line of faithful obedience and patient endurance is a life-long pursuit.

After Job's friends were silent and Elihu had finished his scorching commentary against them all, God Himself spoke up. "Where were you when I established the earth? Tell me if you

have understanding” (38:4). With these words, He began displaying His magnificent greatness compared to Job’s limited understanding. He was not belittling Job. He was making much of Himself. In doing so, He gave Job far more satisfaction than any answer to his questions would have provided. To be sure, he restored Job’s health, possessions, and family, but His revelation of Himself is what truly led Job to humility and worship. God, the Hero, was Job’s answer.

Praise God for His ability to do what He pleases. Thank Him for His grace and righteousness which mean what He pleases is also good.

#### Friday, January 26, 2018—Job 35-37

Elihu took on the unenviable task of speaking wisdom to older men, explaining the person and ways of God in a tense situation. This was no small matter, but Elihu did not shrink back because of his high view of God. He was convinced of the goodness and majesty of the Almighty.

He said God was affected neither by the wickedness nor by the righteousness of man. Those things were important, to be sure, and made a difference in the lives of people on earth, but God was not more or less powerful or righteous Himself because of it. Elihu said God surely gave justice to the oppressed (36:6) and continually maintained His gaze on the righteous (36:7). This means there will be times people face hardship and need justice. Bad things happen to undeserving people This was one of those times. This hardship does not mean God is unrighteous. This hardship doesn’t mean God has stopped paying attention. Elihu had confidence God remained faithfully aware and able.

The deceitfulness of riches lure many away during periods of trial like this, so Elihu warned against it. God was faithful and demonstrated His power to preserve and redeem repeatedly (36:18-33). What Elihu did was to exalt God, remember His faithfulness, and marvel at His power (37:1-24). Job’s friends had done a poor job of this.

Praise God today for His power to create and sustain. Thank Him for never leaving and never forsaking His own. Pray for increasing awe at His character and increasing trust in His ability.

#### Thursday, January 25, 2018—Job 32-34

Paul told Timothy not to let anyone look down on him because he was young but to set an example for the believers in speech, life, love, faith, and purity (1 Timothy 4:12). Elihu lived out those words. He listened patiently as Job and his friends exchanged words over Job’s condition. Job’s friends finally quieted themselves because they realized they would never change his mind. He was “righteous in his own eyes” (32:1).

Elihu could stay silent no longer. He was angry with the friends because they never refuted Job’s claims yet repeatedly condemned him (32:3). Elihu was also angry with Job because in his quest for answers and his expression of emotion, Job “justified himself rather than God” (32:2). With an uncommon boldness, Elihu spoke up and magnified God.

He knew that the old were not the only ones with wisdom (32:9), so he was compelled to share the wisdom God had granted him. Elihu heard Job say he was pure and without iniquity (33:9), yet they all knew there were countless times God had spoken to Job and others like he

through dreams and other avenues to turn them from sin and rescue them from the Pit. He will come to realize, "I have sinned and perverted what was right; yet I did not get what I deserved" (3:27).

God does not pervert justice (34:12). His grace allows us to take our next breath (34:14). Praise Him for His grace in life and the boldness which comes from walking in His truth.

### Wednesday, January 24, 2018—Job 28-31

While Job suffered, he remained able to consider and share deep insight. He did not know the cause or purpose of his suffering, but he certainly wanted to know. This was not simple information. This was a search for deep wisdom. He described the effort required to mine precious metals, stones, and gems (28:1-11) and then asks, "But where can wisdom be found" (28:12). No amount of effort can mine it. No amount of money can buy it. God created it, so God knows its location. "To fear the LORD—that is wisdom. And to turn from evil is understanding" (28:28).

Job longs for the days before this suffering began and, in doing so, points out a true dilemma. In days gone by, the people of the city had great respect for Job. He was able to help the needy and provide wise counsel. His words quieted disagreement and gave direction. In addition, his personal life was marked by comfort and abundance (29:1-25). Now, the people mocked him and scorned him, and the people were living unrestrainedly (30:11). The village was suffering along with Job.

Wisdom is deeper, wider, higher, and longer than mere information. Job was in search of the fullness of what God was doing and allowing. Job describes his great respect for God and the integrity with which he lives as a result. "For disaster from God terrifies me, and because of his majesty, I could not do these things" (31:23).

Pray for a life of integrity and wisdom.

### Tuesday, January 23, 2018—Job 25-27

When a conversation grows testy concerning a moral issue, one party may resort to the King James version of Matthew 7:1: Judge not lest ye be judged. Few people use the King's English today, but quoting from it seems to retain a sense of dignity and authority. The one sharing Jesus' words often does say to say, "Stop discussing my moral failure. You have big issues of your own."

In Matthew 7, Jesus used the picture of man with a beam in his eye trying to remove a splinter from a brother's. Jesus wanted all to consider their imperfection, but he did not want them to refrain from calling one another to accountability. We cannot allow sin to propagate unchecked in our homes, churches, and communities, but we also cannot confront while acting as if we have no sin of our own. Humility is foundational.

Bildad confronted Job about his claims by magnifying God. He was the Almighty, and no man could stand justified before Him (25:1-6). One wonders whether Bildad realized this included him himself. Was he trying to remove a splinter while have a beam of his own? Job

had no disagreement with Bildad's assessment of God's status (26:1-14). He simply found no comfort in it (26:2-3). Job knew there was no hope for the godless (27:1-23). He wondered how the humble could find hope.

Ask God to make you like Jesus with the woman in John 8, able to acknowledge sin, give grace and mercy, and spur on to repentance.

#### Monday, January 22, 2018—Job 21-24

Job's odyssey has him asking one of the most fundamental questions of life: why do good things happen to bad people? He looks around and sees the wicked prospering, openly telling God, "We don't want to know your ways" (21:14). Why does God allow this? Is He powerless? Uncaring? This leads to the parallel question: why do bad things happen to good people? Job cannot process why he is experiencing such struggle when he has such righteous fear of God.

The questioning process leads some to become skeptical about God altogether. Job begins to lean even further beyond skepticism to despair as he thinks through the realities of life. The ones at ease and the ones who suffer both arrive at the same end—in the dust (21:26). Does any of this matter? Does God really care? His soul is weary.

Eliphaz responds with truth about God. Man is not righteous before him. There is nothing he can do to deserve his blessing. Eliphaz also tells Job he has not treated people with complete kindness through his life, so he cannot possibly say God is mistreating him. Eliphaz comes to the conclusion that Job simply needs to repent and turn to God (22:21-23). Job, however, says he cannot sense God's presence and has no idea where to find him. Job doesn't even have the energy to address the claims Eliphaz made about his conduct. He simply wants to find God and can't (23:3).

Thank God that darkness cannot destroy you (23:13). Pray for a powerful sense of His presence in dark days.