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## Job 34

(2019)

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## Job 34.

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### Topics.

- It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God.
- The Almighty does no wrong, but repays man according to their ways.
- If God gathered His breath all mankind would perish and return to dust.
- Will you condemn God who shows no partiality for all are his work.
- God sees mankind's ways there is no need to judge before Him.
- When God gives quietness, who can make trouble?
- Job speaks words without insight like a wicked man.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone. In the depths of agony, he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38-41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

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**HELPFUL FACTS:** before reading Job, it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

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### ELIHU SPEAKS

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#### JOB 34:1-9

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#### It Profits a Man Nothing that He should Take Delight in God.

- **Job 34:1-9:** Then Elihu answered and said: <sup>2</sup>"Hear my words, you wise men (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar), and give ear to me, you who know; <sup>3</sup>for the ear tests words as the palate tastes food. <sup>4</sup>Let us choose what is right; let us know among ourselves what is good. <sup>5</sup>For Job has said, 'I am in the right, and God has taken away my right; <sup>6</sup>in spite of my right I am counted a liar; my wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.' <sup>7</sup>What man is like Job, who drinks up scoffing like water, <sup>8</sup>who travels in company with evildoers and walks with wicked men? <sup>9</sup>For he (Job) has said, 'It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God.'

In the previous chapter Elihu directs his speech toward Job telling him not to fear him because unlike Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar he is not going to lay a heavy burden on him and then challenges Job to listen to him and then prove him wrong in what he is about to say. Now in this chapter he directs his speech Job's three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

**The ear tests words as the palate tastes food:** (v3) this is the surest safeguard against being deceived by false prophets and false teachers, the apostle John in his letter said the same thing, but in different words: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." The advice of Elihu and John, "not to believe every spirit and test the words," carry the same idea. It means listen to everyone's teaching and opinion but don't be intimidated by their authority, their ministry or their knowledge, search out what they say for yourself, talk to others about it, listen to opposing views and then make up your own mind. It is only by doing this that our faith truly becomes our own and not the copy of others. Elihu says Job had made the following three statements:

1. I am in the right, but God has taken away my right (this would refer to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar's refusal to listen to Job and believe him).
2. Though I am without transgression I am counted a liar and my wound is incurable (this would refer to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar's accusation against him).
3. It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God.

Based upon Job's statement, "It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God," (Job 34:9) Elihu then goes on to accuse him of being a scoffer who keeps company with evildoers and wicked men? But is this a right assumption? Elihu's accusation most likely refers to the following four statements of Job:

1. God destroys both the blameless and the wicked alike. (Job 9:22).
2. If I wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye, yet God will plunge me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me. (Job 9:30-31).
3. Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? (Job 21:7).
4. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him? (Job 21:15).

To discover if Elihu's assumption that Job was a scoffer who keeps company with evildoers and wicked men was right we need to look at the context these four verses are in since it is upon these statements of Job that Elihu is making these assumptions. (There are others similar to them, but four will be ample to highlight what Job was saying).

**The first (Job 9:22) is in the context:** of Job is answering Bildad and saying how can a man contend with God who is wise and who alone stretched out the heavens and does marvellous things beyond number and beyond searching out and then saying, regardless of whether they are good or wicked all humanity is alike. This is spoken in the context of disasters striking and bringing death to the innocent and the wicked alike which is a true observation and statement.

**The second (Job 9:30-31) is in the context:** of Job answering Bildad and saying even if he washes and cleanses himself whiter than snow God may still not heal him, but instead allow him to descend to the grave, because no man can bargain with God by saying, "If I do this God is bound to do such and such." Job is aware that even if he was considered the most righteous man on earth, he still would have no power to demand anything from God for God is not a man that He should be bound to our wishes and will.

**The third and fourth (Job 21:7, 15) are in the context:** of Job answering Zophar and saying, look at my flesh and be appalled and dismayed why do those who want nothing to do with God and His ways prosper, have good health, reach old age and see their grandchildren grow. Then Job says, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him?" This is in the context of calamity and sickness falling upon the innocent and the wicked alike. This is of course also a true statement; Job is not blaspheming God in any way he is simply stating the sad reality of the fallen and corrupted world we live in. It is this way because we are not yet living in God's Kingdom, but in the kingdom of man and at this present time God's judgment is delayed. It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace until the Lord Jesus Christ return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. This clearly shows that for Elihu to accuse Job of being a scoffer who keeps company with evildoers and wicked men because Job in his speeches said there is no benefit in serving God because even though he is without fault, God has considered him guilty and inflicted him with suffering that even those who deny God and follow the wicked are not troubled with was not only a false assumption, but also completely taken out of context.

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### **JOB 34:10-11**

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#### **The Almighty does No Wrong, But Repays Man Accordingly.**

- **Job 34:10-11:** "Therefore, hear me (Elihu) you men (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) of understanding: far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should do wrong.<sup>11</sup>For according to the work of a man he will repay him, and according to his ways he will make it befall him.

Elihu says that God rewards and rebukes people according to their actions this is the same theology as Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had. When speaking generally of the collective human population as a whole it is correct, but to take such a broad overview of God's dealing with the human population and apply it to every individual person is not correct, we know this because the following verse shows that God acted against Job without a cause.

- The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." (Job 2:3).

It seems Job's three friends based there theology on the following verse:

- The LORD'S curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. (Proverbs 3:33).

This proverb is true in the sense that those who do good and do what is right will certainly live a far more peaceful and trouble free life than those who live a life of wrong-doing and crime, but it cannot be used as a dogmatic statement to say that the righteous and the innocent will never suffer affliction or sorrow. Many things are spoken as the general rule of the whole matter, but in this fallen and corrupted world there are always exceptions to the general rule of everything.

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### **JOB 34:12-15**

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#### **If God Gathered His Breath all Mankind would Return to Dust.**

- **Job 34:12-15:** Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice. <sup>13</sup>Who gave him charge over the earth, and who laid on him the whole world? <sup>14</sup>If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, <sup>15</sup>all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.

The statement, "God would never pervert justice or act wickedly," is of course a true statement, but Elihu's reasoning is not, he is implying that Job must be a wicked man otherwise God would be perverting justice and thereby acting wickedly if Job was an innocent man. This shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that someone may make a statement that is true yet their application of the statement to real life is totally wrong. Job was blameless, upright, feared God and turned away from evil. God Himself confirms Job's righteousness, by saying, "there is none like Job a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). Blameless in this context does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps one of the reasons the book of Job has been placed in the Bible is to show that it is impossible for our human mind with its limited mortal abilities to work out God's ways on the earth and His dealings with an individual man or woman. This truth becomes clear to the reader as they travel through the book of Job they eventually arrive at the same conclusion as Isaiah and David came to in the following verses:

- My (God's) thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9).
- God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup>For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. (Psalm 103:9-14).

The following verses show that man cannot find out God's works upon earth:

- God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes. 3:11).
- Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However, much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. (Eccles. 8:17).
- The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. <sup>12</sup>For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them. (Eccles. 9:11-12)

This means that no man can find out the works of God upon the earth. The LORD has designed the universe this way so that no human whether righteous or wicked can find out their future or know what will happen to them tomorrow.

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## **JOB 34:16-20**

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### **Will You Condemn God who shows No Partiality for all are His.**

- **Job 34:16-20:** "If you (Job) have understanding, hear this; listen to what I (Elihu) say. <sup>17</sup>Shall one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty, <sup>18</sup>who says to a king, 'Worthless one,' and to nobles, 'Wicked man,' <sup>19</sup>who shows no partiality to princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands? <sup>20</sup>In a moment they die; at midnight the people are shaken and pass away, and the mighty are taken away by no human hand.

Elihu is saying that God is a perfectly just God since He shows no partiality to anyone regardless of status all die the same death, regardless of whether they are mighty kings or paupers. Regarding mortal human life this is a true statement death eventually takes us all to the grave, but

regarding eternal life it is not a true statement. God will be a respecter of persons on the Day of Judgment those who have denied God and the wicked will not be counted worthy of life everlasting whereas the righteous will. Elihu is rightly defending God as being an honest Judge, but is wrongly implying that Job is condemning God by saying that the righteous and the wicked die alike and because of this there appears to be no advantage for the righteous over wicked.

**Two different levels of focus:** it is almost as though Elihu, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are speaking on one spiritual level and Job is speaking on another. This is because almost everything Elihu, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar say concerning Scripture is true if applied to the Day of Judgment and eternal life, but the principles though basically true in a general sense cannot be applied to life in this mortal, corrupt and fallen world as an absolute truth to every individual man and woman dwelling on earth. In contrast to this almost everything Job says is true when applied to mortal human life on earth and though some of what he says maybe true when applied to the Day of Judgment and eternal life most of what he says only applies to life in this fallen corrupted world. For further information concerning the Day of Judgment, see the title:

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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### **JOB 34:21-28**

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#### **God sees Mankind's ways there is No Need to Judge before Him.**

- **Job 34:21-28:** "For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. <sup>22</sup>There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves. <sup>23</sup>For God has no need to consider a man further, that he should go before God in judgment. <sup>24</sup>He shatters the mighty without investigation and sets others in their place. <sup>25</sup>Thus, knowing their works, he overturns them in the night, and they are crushed. <sup>26</sup>He strikes them for their wickedness in a place for all to see, <sup>27</sup>because they turned aside from following him and had no regard for any of his ways, <sup>28</sup>so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to him, and he heard the cry of the afflicted.

In this group of verses Elihu highlights the following six things:

1. God sees the evil works of all the wicked, no-one can hide from Him
2. God does not need to bring the wicked before Him in judgment, because He already knows their works.
3. Knowing the works of the mighty He shatters them and sets others up in their place.
4. God destroys the wicked in their sleep with terrifying dreams (i.e., nightmares).
5. God afflicts the life of those who have turned from Him so that all who look upon them can see their afflictions.
6. God strikes those who have no regard for the poor and the afflicted when they hear their cry for help.

In previous chapters we are told:

- Job was an abundantly rich and wealthy man of such renown throughout the land that even princes and nobles looked up to him.
- When his family and friends saw the calamity that came upon him and looked upon the afflictions on his body, they were ashamed of him.

- We are also told that Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar accused him of being a wicked and corrupt man.
- Job himself said God slays him with terrifying dreams during the night.

Though Elihu appears to be speaking generally his focus is toward Job. He is basically accusing Job of all the six things he has just mentioned above.

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## **JOB 34:29-30**

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### **When God gives Quietness who, can Make Trouble?**

- **Job 34:29-30:** When he (God) gives quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hides his face, who then can behold him? Whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only: <sup>30</sup>That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

**When God gives quietness who then can make trouble?** The word trouble come from the Hebrew word (*rasha`*) it literally means, to be wrong, to do wrong, or to declare wrong and by implication to condemn; to disturb, to violate, to vex or make trouble. The sense of what Elihu is saying is who can condemn or hold guilty a man or woman when God's favour is toward them. The answer is of course no one and no creature can hinder God's design, plans, purposes and work. The idea which Elihu is conveying is that God has all things under His control, He can bring peace or adversity upon an individual or a nation according to His own sovereign will. Spiritually the sense is, when God forgives a sinner and gives peace to their heart and mind and they by faith are fully aware that they are forgiven, there is no one who can convict them or fill their mind with guilt, or take away the comfort and peace that God gives. When God purposes to treat those, who have faith in Him as His friend and imparts to them evidences of His favour there is no one who can hinder Him.

**When God hides his face:** to hide the face, is a common expression in the Scriptures to denote calamity, distress, and the lack of spiritual comfort, as the expression to lift up the light of the countenance is a common expression to denote the opposite. To hide His face carries the idea of withdrawing His favour and thereby exposes individuals or nations to oppressions and calamities. The sense is that when God purposes to withdraw His favour from an individual or nation then there is no finding Him, no looking to Him for comfort and confidence, His works and ways and the causes of His dealings are out of sight

**Who then can behold God?** Who can enjoy the light of God's countenance, or look up to Him with rejoicing and confidence or expect His help when He determines to hide His face from an individual or a nation? Should God purpose to hide His face no one can have a clear understanding of his plans and purposes

**Whether it is done against a nation, or against a man only:** carries the following ideas:

- The same laws concerning the foundations of peace and happiness apply to individuals and nations alike.
- Neither individuals nor nations can secure permanent peace and prosperity without God both are dependent on Him.
- God can carry on his work of mercy or justice upon a whole nation of people as easily as upon one particular person.
- God judges' nations as He judges individuals and individuals as He does nations, His law, favour and judgments are the same for both.

The same truth applies to nations as it does to individuals is a great truth that should never be forgotten. Neither individuals nor nations have the power to originate the means of perpetual happiness and peace both are dependent on God for such blessings.

**That the hypocrite reign not:** the same laws of God apply to an individual and a nation alike so that those who pretend to be righteous and are not do not stay in power amongst His people longer than they should. God has purposed His laws this way so that the poor and helpless would not be oppressed by ungodly and wicked rulers.

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## JOB 34:31-37

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### **Job speaks Words without Insight like a Wicked Man.**

- **Job 34:31-37:** Surely it should be said to God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: <sup>32</sup>Teach me what I do not see: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. <sup>33</sup>Should it be according to God's mind he will recompense it, for you must choose, and not I (Elihu); therefore declare what you know. <sup>34</sup>Let men of understanding say to me, and let a wise man who hears me say: <sup>35</sup>'Job speaks without knowledge; his words are without insight.' <sup>36</sup>Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men. <sup>37</sup>For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us.

The King James Bible states verse thirty-five to thirty-six in the following way:

- Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. <sup>36</sup>My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men. <sup>37</sup>For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

**Tried to the end:** carries the idea that Job should be punished to the end of his life, or until he confesses his wickedness, repents and turns to the LORD. Elihu in this group of verses is saying that Job should be punished even more because he has added rebellion to his sin by speaking like a wicked man who has no knowledge or insight. He tells Job that he should be praying that God would show him what his iniquity is and then tell God he will do it no more. This is shockingly amazing, so far Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar who are supposed to be Job's friends have not offered him one word of comfort. Their entire conversations have been filled with accusations that he is a wicked and corrupt man. What is even more amazing is Elihu accusations against Job since he started his speech by telling Job there is no need to fear him because he is on his side and will not terrify him as Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar did or pressure him with a heavy burden, yet he is now telling Job he is a wicked sinner who has added rebellion to his sin and should be punished even more (Job 33:7). Who would want these men for friends and counsellors especially during times of suffering and grief?

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## FOOTNOTE

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Always keep in mind that Elihu is not speaking, "Thus saith the LORD," but giving his own personal opinion concerning Job and his suffering and because it is his own viewpoint it should be remembered that even though some of what he says maybe true it does not mean that his reasoning and suppositions are according to the word of the LORD or right for Job's particular situation. (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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