

## Job: Righteousness Purified Under Pressure

Ezekiel 14:20-22; Job 26-31

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**Introduction:** This is our third week starting in Ezekiel 14. This chapter reveals God's awesome righteous judgment against wicked pagan lands as well as His righteous judgment of His covenant people. Three men were contrasted by their righteousness with the people of Ezekiel's time: Noah, Daniel (Ezekiel's contemporary), and Job. These three men were God's trophies of righteousness. Noah, who found grace in God's sight and built an ark by faith to deliver his family; Daniel, who committed not to defile himself by eating the king's food or failing to pray; and Job, a man whose righteousness was tested by fire, tragedy, loss and man's accusations.

I need not tell you of God's evaluation of the man. In the first two chapters of Job, God puts Job on parade as a righteous man. Twice God declares to the devil that Job is righteous; there is none other as righteous as he in all the earth. The devil dared God to remove His blessings upon Job's life, to take away protections of property and health. God took the dare and won the contest. Even when Job's wife offered wicked counsel and his friends declared he was utterly depraved, Job chose to retain His trust that the Almighty God is both just and wise. Job trusted and so maintained his righteousness, even when it did not seem "to pay off." True righteousness remains, even when the righteous person must suffer as their Righteous Savior suffered for His righteousness.

Tonight, we're looking at Job's last words. These are Job's final argument to his friends. He has cut off Bildad's chapter 25 rebuttal after a few short verses. In this last exposition, Job speaks of God, the value of wisdom, his righteousness, and his longing for past blessings. In all these things, he steadfastly trusts God's power, justice, and wisdom, though he does not understand God's ways with **himself**. **Tonight, we are briefly looking at Job 26-31.**

### 1. Righteousness trusts God's greatness when counselors don't help (26)

Bildad spoke of God's mighty armies and His peace (25:1-3). He doubted people could be made right with God (25:4). Like John Newton, he declared man but worm (25:6).

**Job scorned the hopeless help of Bildad.** He noted his own lack of power and strength (26:2). He sarcastically said Bildad (and the others!) had offered no help with their "advice" (26:3). God sees even the dead; hell is an open book to God (26:6). Yet God's omnipotence controls weather (8), lunar events (Seollal) (9), Heaven itself trembles under the power of God (11); the sea stills (12). Both Bildad and Job see God's power.... *Yet they know so little of God (26:14)!*

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### 2. Righteousness trusts God's judgment when men misjudges it (27)

Righteousness maintains its integrity when God seems unjust (27:2-5).

Righteousness is determined to do right until the stars fall (BJ Sr.)-- **Job declares he will hold onto his righteousness and his clear conscience even if he loses everything (27:6)!**

Notice, Job still accepts that his life, bitter and hard as it is, is given by God who has put His "spirit in my nostrils" (27:3). Job's life is hard. It is bitter.

Nevertheless, **Job is sure God will ultimately judge the wicked (27:7-23)**. God cuts off the godless without hope (27:8). Job offers to teach his teachers about God (27:11-12). The wicked will lose their children to sword, famine, and disease (27:14-15). They will be unlamented— even by their widows (27:15)! Riches will be lost (27:16-19). The wicked end up terrorized and disappear (27:20-23).

### 3. Righteousness trusts God's wisdom when it lacks understanding (28)

Miners find treasure in the earth that birds and beasts do not find (28:1-11).

The treasure of wisdom is found only by God who hides it from birds, beasts— death (22) and men (28:12-28). Men find wisdom by fearing the Lord and turning from evil (28:28); God knows wisdom inside and out (28:23-27).

### 4. Righteousness remembers God's past favor when present circumstances are hard (29)

4.1 God's favor in relation to Himself (29:1-5)

4.2 God's favor in relation with others (29:5-13)

4.3 God's favor in revealing Job's righteousness (29:14-20).

4.4 Job's wisdom seen by his righteous words (29:21-25).

### 5. Righteousness trusts that God uses man's injustice for His purposes (30)

In this chapter, Job laments the men he scorned for their wickedness who had lost all by their poor character, now scorned him.

Truly, Job's affliction is great (30:16). It is made worse by wicked taunting. He feels abandoned by both God and man (30:24). **His hopes were dashed, unlike his own righteous response to others' suffering (30:25-31)**.

Job recognizes **God's control of his situation (30:19)**. He laments **unanswered prayer (30:20)**. God seems to be his persecutor (30:21). He **knows he will die in God's time (30:23)**.

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### 6. Righteousness acts righteously when God does not appear to reward it (31) This is Job's "If" chapter. He names a sin, a just consequence, and asks this to happen "if" he did the sin.

6.1 **Falsehood**→ receive a just balance in judgment (31:5-6)

6.2 **Straying** from righteousness by **coveting** or **stealing**→ poverty (31:7-8)

6.3 **Lusting** after a woman→ wife's adultery (31:9-12)

6.4 **Oppression** of servants→ answer to God (31:13-15)

6.5 Miserly toward poor→ shoulder blade fall from socket/ arm broken (31:16-23)

6.6 **Trusted in wealth/ idolatry** of sun/moon→ judged by judges for falsity to God (24-28)

6.7 **Rejoiced in others' ruin/ lack of generosity/ hidden sins/ kept silent at injustice**→ give account to God (29-37)

6.8 Lack of tithing?--? Thorns & weeds (38-40)

### 7. Righteousness knows when to stop proclaiming itself (31:40c; 40:1-5) "The words of Job are ended."

**Conclusion:** Job sought a Mediator to go for him before God. God *did* vindicate Job. Job's trials not only vindicated God's confidence in Job's righteous response to suffering, it also gave Job the chance to encounter God (38-41). At last, *God did speak to Job!* This was what he had wanted most. *Job's suffering transformed him from a righteous man to a righteous patient man (James 5:11).* God had Job intercede for his tormenters and once again blessed Job (42).

#### Prayer Requests

**Remember all those with special plans for *Seollal*. Pray for safety, blessing with family and friends, refreshed spirits, and renewed energy.**

**Seoul Bible Church:** Sunday Services. Budget meeting this Sunday. Missionaries. Spiritual and numeric growth. Pastor Bright & Pastor Tchu. Deacons. Teachers. Monthly community outreach.

**Seoul Christian School:** Remember former administrators, teachers, and students. Some have health, financial, or spiritual needs. Pray for Open House February 1. Pray for Winter Students. Pray for Pastor and Mrs. Bright as they lead the school. Pray for teachers and students.

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**BJS Seminary:** Pray for the ordination of a graduate on Saturday, January 25. Pray for alumni as they serve the Lord. Pray for Pastor Tchu as he leads this ministry. Teachers and students also need your prayers.

**Health needs:** Pray for both health and grace in these situations (3 John 2). Those who are homebound. Those whose loved ones are in nursing homes. Parents with medical needs. Those with chronic health needs.

**Relationships:** Husbands/ wives; Parents/ children; employer/ employee; coworkers; church unity; all of us to grow spiritually in our relationship with the Lord.

**Financial needs:** Successful conclusion of business endeavors. Employment needs. Direction for the future. God's will.

**Spiritual needs:** Unsaved loved ones. That all of us would grow in grace and knowledge of Christ. That we who know Christ as Savior would abide in Christ as He abides in us. For opportunities to witness in our families, among friends, and in our neighborhoods.

### Specific Requests:

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