

Shayla: What does Job 6:29-30 mean? Is Job asking God to return these things?

Job 6:29-30 HCSB *Reconsider; don't be unjust. Reconsider; my righteousness is still the issue. 30 Am I lying, or can I not recognize lies?*

Midrash:

First you need to know who is speaking. That's easy because at the beginning of the chapter, it says:

- Job 6:1 HCSB Then Job answered:

Job was a man who held the position of elder. If you consider the New Covenant characteristics of an elder¹ and compare them to Job's life you quickly determine that the man was supremely qualified!²

Then you must determine the person Job was answering. Because that person was long-winded, you must turn back several pages until at last you find:

- Job 4:1 HCSB Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

So Elder Job was answering some guy by the name of Eliphaz the Temanite. However, there were two other guys present; one named Bildad and another named Zophar.³

It's interesting that only three showed up. Examine the passages that refer to Job's righteous life spent serving others and then ask yourself, where were all those people he had helped? Why only these three "friends"?

In the biblical culture (and in our church), at least three elders must be assembled before making any major decision. We do this simply because the Lord told us to.⁴ When two or three elders have gathered together to render a judgment on a matter we call this a *beit din*. I believe that was what was happening here. Job referred to them as "witnesses" that God was bringing against him;⁵ as "worthless doctors", implying their role as spiritual healers.

Unfortunately, though, God Himself repeatedly described Job as unique in his status as a man of perfect integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil,⁶ this *beit din* looked at Job's circumstances and judged him to be a sinner under the wrath of God.

This is a common error. The disciples made the same mistake when they thought that a man who had been born blind must have been under God's judgment for either his own or his parent's sin. They were quickly disabused of this error by the Master who said that the handicapped man had been designed for the glory of God just like the rest of us.⁷

So Job was defending himself against the erroneous criticism of three friends who were judging a matter based solely on circumstantial evidence and a shallow understanding of a God who said,

- Isaiah 45:7 HCSB I form light and create darkness, I make success and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

What should we learn from this? Among many possible lessons, we should understand that we must not judge matters quickly,⁸ that just because we are righteous does not mean that we can have "Your Best Life Now", and that Kadosh Yisra'el, the Holy One of Israel,⁹ will always do what's right.

¹ 1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3

² Job 1:1, 4-5; 4:1-4; 23:11-12; 29:7-8, 12-17, 21; 30:25; 31:1, 24-34

³ Job 2:11

⁴ Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1

⁵ Job 10:17

⁶ Job 1:1, 8; 2:3

⁷ John 9:1-3

⁸ Proverbs 18:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Timothy 5:22

⁹ 2 Kings 19:22; Psalm 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Isaiah 1:4; 5:19; 5:24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11-12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 48:17