

## Study 3: Job 6-27 – Why me, God?

*On 31 August 1997, Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed in a car accident in. There followed an extraordinary outpouring of emotion around the world. Her funeral was the most watched television event in history, with an estimated worldwide audience of 2.5 billion people.*

*As I sat at home watching all this on television, one particular image stuck in my mind. It was a close up shot of one of the bouquets outside Kensington palace. Pinned to the flowers was a card with just one word on it. "Why?" That one word seemed to capture so many people's sentiments. Why do things like fatal car accidents happen? Why do beloved people die early in life? Why are young children left without a mother? Why are so many people around the world put through such grief?*

*Maybe there have been times of suffering in your life when you have asked the same question. "Why?" it is the question that Job asks God throughout Job 3-27. In this study, we will examine Job's responses to his friends' accusations.*

### **Read Job's first response to Eliphaz in Job 6-7.**

1. How does Job describe his anguish (6:1-7)?
2. What does Job wish would happen to him and why (6:8-13)?
3. How does Job feel about Eliphaz's advice (6:14-30)?
4. How does Job feel towards God (7:11-21)?

*In response to his friends' accusations, Job insists that he has not done anything to warrant his suffering. Job denies that there is some secret sin lurking in his life that has caused his distress. Job is not claiming to be perfect, but simply that he has not done anything bad enough to warrant the degree of suffering he's going through.*

*This actually puts Job in a very frustrating situation. If Job's friends were correct then his suffering could be more easily managed. It would be a matter of confessing and repenting of the sin, and then his good fortune would be restored. This is exactly what Eliphaz predicts could happen (5:17-27). But it's not that simple for Job. Job knows that there is nothing to confess! All that is left for Job is to mourn the extent of his suffering (6:2-3), beg that God might shorten his life (6:8-9) and struggle over why God would do this to him (7:20-21).*

### **Read Job 9:1-20.**

5. What does Job seem to be saying about God here? What is Job's frustration?

### **Read Job 13:20-27.**

6. What does Job ask of God?

### **Read Job 19:23-29.**

7. How does Job express his confidence in God's justice?

### **Read Job 27:1-6.**

8. What does Job accuse God of doing (v. 2)?
9. What is Job's attitude to God in these verses?

10. How does Job respond to Bildad's claim (vv. 5-6)? (See Job 25.)

11. How do Job's responses to his suffering compare with what Satan predicted in 1:11 and 2:5?

12. In study 2, we discovered that Job's friends had too small a view of God. They treated him as an impersonal cause and effect. Are there any signs of this same attitude in Job?

*In his suffering Job, like us, moves through a wide range of emotions. What is very noticeable, however, is Job's frustration at several levels.*

*For starters, Job is in desperate need of a true friend. In 6:14-15, Job says that "he who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. My brothers are treacherous as a torrent-bed, as torrential streams that pass away..." Job's suffering is heightened by his loneliness. He desperately needs a friend who will stick by him rather than the "treacherous", "torrential streams" that he presently has for friends (6:15). Better still, Job needs a friend who can empathize with him, someone who knows what it's like to be in his shoes, to suffer great loss for no apparent reason.*

*As well as a friend, Job admits that he needs an advocate to represent him before God. Job is well aware that God "is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both" (9:32-33). Job is frustrated that God is so different to us. How on earth can we really relate to the God of the universe? Job sees that he needs an arbitrator and mediator to bridge the gap between us and God.*

*Job needs a friend and a mediator: it's not too hard to see that Job needs Jesus.*

*At times, Job is so confident of God's sense of justice that even if a resurrection from the dead is required to vindicate him, Job believes it would happen (19:25-26)! At other times, Job's despair causes him to question whether God would even give him a fair trial to prove himself (9:14-17). As his bitterness grows, Job's language even drifts into disrespect towards God (27:2). We will return to consider this in a later study.*

### **Implications**

*(Choose one or more of the following to discuss in your group.)*

13. Think back to a time when you have suffered. How did you feel towards God? In what ways were you similar and different to Job?

14. How would knowing Jesus have helped Job?

15. How does knowing Jesus help us when we suffer?

### **Give thanks and pray**

- Give thanks that we have the perfect friend and mediator in Jesus.
- Pray that God would help us to be faithful and cling to Jesus when we suffer.
- Pray that we will be a good friend in suffering.