

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Job 24:1, 9-12, 19-25

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, October 19, 2014

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The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, October 19, 2014**, is from **Job 24:1, 9-12, 19-25**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Job 24:1, 9-12, 19-25

(Job 24:1) “Why are times not kept by the Almighty, and why do those who know him never see his days?”

In response to Eliphaz, who argued that God justly punished the unjust on earth and that Job’s suffering indicated that God was justly punishing him for his sins, Job replied that this was not the case. Job argued that many of the unjust seem to prosper on earth throughout their lives and many just people suffer from injustice. Job wanted God to hold open court on earth so those who knew Him could come before Him during times set by God and plead with Him for justice in an open court so others could hear God’s verdict and vindication of the innocent.

(Job 24:9) “There are those who snatch the orphan child from the breast, and take as a pledge the infant of the poor.”

Job gave Eliphaz many examples of how the wicked, in spite of their extreme evil and the way they made others suffer, continued to benefit on earth from their evil practices. Child abuse and stealing children were common in Job’s day as in our own day. If a needy person borrowed money, an evil lender would often take their children and enslave them until they were repaid by the poor person who had borrowed the money and had given his children as a guarantee that they would repay the wealthy, but evil, lender. The poor could seldom make repayment; therefore, they forfeited their children.

(Job 24:10) They go about naked, without clothing; though hungry, they carry the sheaves;

Job pointed out that the poor often have no clothes to wear, perhaps only rags to cover themselves (if they even have rags). Even though they labored, they were taken unjust advantage of and not given a just wage. They were made to toil in fields while hungry in order to feed oppressive landowners.

(Job 24:11) between their terraces they press out oil; they tread the wine presses, but suffer thirst.

The poor were forced to labor in order to provide oil and wine for others, but they were given little or no water to drink while they toiled and were underpaid for their work. The Bible answers this complaint and tells those who hire others to pay them a living wage and not withhold their wages from them. Jesus told a parable about a generous landowner who gave a day's wage to each one who worked for him no matter how long they worked because he wanted to meet their real daily needs (Matthew 20:1-15). Among other truths, Jesus' parable shows how God treats people, and how God expects His followers to treat others until the great Day of Judgment.

(Job 24:12) From the city the dying groan, and the throat of the wounded cries for help; yet God pays no attention to their prayer.

Based upon his observations alone in the city where he lived (probably before God ever called Abraham to walk by faith and before God gave Moses the 10 Commandments), Job saw how others suffered. Without a compassionate touch from anyone, it seemed that the dying groaned abandoned by God and man, or so it seemed to Job who felt abandoned by God (as Satan intended with his test). It seemed to Job that God did not answer his prayers or the prayers of the most needy. Based upon observation alone, we would be at a loss to understand reality and the nature of the true God; therefore, God has spoken to us truly in the Bible to reveal the truth about God and the world.

(Job 24:19) Drought and heat snatch away the snow waters; so does Sheol those who have sinned.

It seems Eliphaz interrupted Job's reply to him in verses 19 and 20 with his own rebuttal of Job's argument. If so, Eliphaz expressed his belief that Job was wrong. He argued that just as the summer sun quickly melts the snow on the mountain top, so those who have sinned are quickly punished by God and die for their sins. Job argued that this was not what he had observed and concluded based on his observations.

(Job 24:20) The womb forgets them; the worm finds them sweet; they are no longer remembered; so wickedness is broken like a tree.

Eliphaz argued that the mother of sinners quickly forgets their wicked children because they have been punished by God and have died for the evil they have done. She does not want to remember them, and they are soon eaten by worms in the grave and forgotten

by everyone. Eliphaz argued that the wickedness of the wicked is easily and quickly ended by God, as easily as breaking down a tree.

(Job 24:21) “They harm the childless woman, and do no good to the widow.

In response to Eliphaz, Job began his list of injustices again. Not only do the wicked abuse children and steal them from their parents, but they also afflict women – women who have no children to help care for them in their old age and widows who have no husband to help them meet their needs. The New Testament, therefore, teaches the church to especially help the widow and the orphan – which most churches do.

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:27). Through the church, God often hears and answers the prayers of the needy.

(Job 24:22) Yet God prolongs the life of the mighty by his power; they rise up when they despair of life.

Job continued to share his observations and conclusions. It appeared to him that in this life the mighty that oppress others unjustly live long and prosperous lives. If they became ill or if they neared death, Job thought God raised them up to life once again and they continued to do evil on earth without suffering the justice of God.

(Job 24:23) He gives them security, and they are supported; his eyes are upon their ways.

The Bible accurately recorded Job’s observations and conclusions – the theological ideas that he had come to develop based upon his experiences. As Job chapter 1 indicates, Job lived up to all of the light or knowledge of God that he had and God commended him for living by the faith in God that he had (as limited as his knowledge was). We also see from the Book of Job why God needed to correct some of Job’s ideas at the end of the book and why we need both the Old and New Testaments for an accurate and true knowledge of God in the face of evil and sin in the world. Obviously, God does not directly give the wicked security and support in all their ways even though someone might argue that God is unjust based upon their observations alone without the Bible.

(Job 24:24) They are exalted a little while, and then are gone; they wither and fade like the mallow; they are cut off like the heads of grain.

It seems once again that in verse 24 Eliphaz interrupted Job to argue that the wicked are not given security by God but are quickly gone, taken away by God as quickly as a harvester reaps grain. Eliphaz and Job’s other “friends” were trying to show Job that God had quickly cut him off; God was punishing him for all of his unjust ways that had brought him so much wealth; wealth that God had quickly taken away as Job’s punishment for his sins.

(Job 24:25) If it is not so, who will prove me a liar, and show that there is nothing in what I say?”

Either Eliphaz concluded his rebuttal of Job in verse 25, or Job replied to Eliphaz's rebuttal of him. In either case, based upon their observations alone, neither one could prove the other a liar. God was the only one who could decide between Job and his "friends," and God would show everyone the limits of their understanding as the Book of Job concluded. Eliphaz could challenge Job to prove him wrong, and Job could challenge Eliphaz to prove that he was wrong and that there was no element of truth in Job's observations and deductions. Only God could decide the matter and reveal the truth to them.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. According to these verses in the Book of Job, what are some of the bad things that can happen to people?
2. According to these verses in the Book of Job, what are some of the good things that can happen to those who do bad things to people?
3. Do you think Job was right about good things happening to those who do bad things? Give a reason for your answer.
4. What did Eliphaz say happens to those who do bad things? Explain.
5. Who do you think is speaking in verses 24 and 25? Explain your answer.

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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