

Job 18-19 Judgement or Mercy?

1. Bildad opens with a line that is usually not spoken, but which is implied every day in homes, politics, and the larger culture: **Job 18:2**. “Every reasonable person knows...all right thinking people...anyone with half a brain...”
2. Remember that this all goes back to our original sin. Adam and Eve were given the choice: live with God in a warm and loving relationship, trusting Him to provide or...become judges of good and evil. When we live as judges of right and wrong, we fail to live in love and, if we are living in love, we have no interest in judging.
3. Bildad then goes to another perennial favorite: **Job 18:3,4**. “I understand that scripture allows such and such, but if we do that, we will look like just any other denomination!” The CoC is not alone in this – not at all. Time after time, when the Spirit moves us to greater wisdom and greater love, someone will call out in fear that we are going to lose our old markers, our identity.
4. And here we come to the crux of the matter, to the reason why this entire fight is taking place on earth (we already know about the council of God in chapter one – I am talking here about why Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are being do vicious in their attacks on Job: if he is innocent, their entire theological fails. (the Calvinist at Eastside between worship and classes) A classic response to people when we speak about baptism is “that would mean my parents are in hell!”
5. Bildad then goes into a monologue about the terrors awaiting the sinner. If you’ve ever seen William Blake’s paintings of hell, or Googled the illustrations to Dante’s “Divine Comedy” you will now know where they got their ideas. Bildad is one of the main sources of the medieval Catholic church’s descriptions of hell. And Bildad was in the wrong and had no idea what he was talking about.
6. He talks of darkness, fire, Sulphur, eating away his skin, demonic dogs chasing him...it’s horrible and entirely lacking in grace, love, or hope. If any of you would like to do a Master’s or Doctorate in literature, religion, theology, etc. here is a thesis or dissertation waiting for someone to write it: take the descriptions of destruction

and rejection in Job, entirely given by his friends, and trace the symbols and ideas through the development of the doctrine of hell.

7. Job then goes back at Bildad. I want you to play a game of connect the dots here, too. **Job 19:4,5**. Now look at **Romans 14:1, 10-13, 22; 15:1**)
8. Now, **Job 19:8 and Psalm 139:2-5,7**.
9. In other words, this, the oldest book in our Bible, speaks of themes that are answered over time and not answered at all. We know Jesus and we have the Bible but we, too, fall into the traps Job's friends fell into.
10. Job believes that God Himself is after him, building a siege ramp and towers to come against him. One of the earliest series I did here was called "God at War" for good reason: I took the material from a book of that title by Gregory Boyd. He helped me by giving me a better picture of our reality: we are not alone in the universe and there are things out there that do not like us.
11. Job did not know that a war was going on. He threw the blame on God because he didn't know where else to throw it. But, even then, he had a glimmer of hope. **Job 19:23-27**.
12. His view of what happens after death was confused and changes throughout the book, but the idea of a mediator, a days man, a redeemer WILL come one day. We plan to continue our journey through this book and then into the Book of Revelation and right into Advent to remind us of the answer to Ecclesiastes, Job, and the hope in Revelation.
13. Another theme shows up here, as we begin to close this lesson. **Job 19:28,29** and now **Matthew 7:1-5**.
14. That takes us back to that tree. We refused to settle for life in a lovely garden, taking walks with God in the evening. We wanted to become little gods, judging what is good and evil for ourselves. Job warns his friends – that will always come back against you.

15. James 2:12,13. John 13:35. James 1:25. We've read it. Now we need to live this place and live it.