

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For August 29:

Job 31:1-33:33:

After Job's monologues are finished with chapter 31, the cycles of speeches involving Job and his three friends are completed. Chapters 32-37 include a series of monologues by a young man named Elihu. Elihu, unlike Job's three friends, does not accuse Job of wickedness. His rebuke of Job focuses upon the words Job has spoken, which means he has been present as Job and his friends dialogued. It is also noteworthy that Elihu is not mentioned in the Epilogue of chapter 42, for he does not commit the same mistakes as Job's three friends.

In 32:1-5 the narrator explains why Elihu speaks. It is because Job justified himself rather than God (2) and because the friends did not find a legitimate explanation for Job's situation (3). Being younger, he waited until everyone else was finished (4-5).

In 32:6-33:7 Elihu introduces his speech, explaining why he waited (his youth), the fact that true wisdom does not come necessarily with age but graciously from God, the reality they have not really given an explanation for Job's situation, and then he calls Job (unlike the three friends, he calls Job by name) to listen to him.

After expressing his belief Job has been wrong to try and justify himself as opposed to justifying God (33:8-12), the young man rebukes Job for saying that God does not give man answers (33:13), for He speaks to man through prophetic vision or dream (33:14-18) and through suffering (33:19-22). Elihu seems to be saying that the LORD does not leave man in darkness and there is purpose in suffering beyond just punishment.

What is more, Elihu reminds Job that God is merciful and does forgive sin (33:23-30). He is the first of the speakers in this book who very clearly sets forth the reality that man does not stand right before God merely by his own efforts or righteousness. Yes, it may be true that in God's economy man pays a penalty for his sin and is rewarded for righteousness, yet, the reality is that no man can, left to himself, stand as righteous before God, yet God does forgive. This introduction of God's mercy is vital to understanding how we relate to Him, for understanding suffering, and for trusting God in hard times.

With these all-important subjects put out on the table, Elihu calls Job to listen to him and learn wisdom (33:31-33). The reader is beginning to think that he ought to listen to this young man also to make sense of the plight of Job.

2 Corinthians 3:1-18:

As Paul defends his ministry against opponents in Corinth he speaks of spreading the aroma of Christ and of being part of those who are truly commissioned by God to speak the truth of Christ (2:14-17). He knows some readers may take this as self-boasting, trying to commend himself; yet he makes it clear this is not what he is doing (3:1). His opponents most likely had brought misleading letters to commend themselves. Paul clarifies that his letter of commendation consists of the changed lives of the Corinthians wrought by the Spirit of Christ working through the gospel (2-6). No one can

manufacture that kind of change. It must be a New Covenant transforming work of God, not man!

Having raised the issue of being a minister of the new covenant, Paul goes on to teach that this ministry of a new covenant whereby all believers are declared righteous in Jesus Christ and whereby the Spirit so completely transforms a person from the inside out displays even more glory than the old covenant and its giving of the Law through Moses, which could only condemn (7-11).

Paul writes that this new covenant leads to a knowledge of God and His work which transcends what happened previously; it leads to a freedom to know Christ and live for the glory of God, to be transformed into the image of Christ Himself through His Spirit (12-18).

From this third chapter it is apparent that Paul's opponents downplayed the work of Christ and sought, to some degree, to return the Corinthians to an old covenant-type of view which sought to live merely by means of law. Paul displays the utter superiority of true gospel ministry. As we read this section of 2 Corinthians, we should not only see the glory of living in Christ and not merely by Law, we should sense that God cannot be loved, glorified, and/or served apart from Christ! What is more, we should sense the absolute necessity of Christ-centered ministry.

Psalm 43:1-5:

In this psalm (the 3rd stanza of a psalm which originally contained Ps. 42) we learn that the one represented in Psalm 42, the one who is away from the sanctuary in Jerusalem, is facing opposition from enemies. As such, he not only desires to be in Jerusalem again, but also that the LORD would vindicate him. This is a common theme in the Psalms. Praise be to God that the Son became flesh and tabernacled among us (John 1:14) and as such we have His presence with us continually (Matthew 28:20), yes, the presence of our God forever (Revelation 21:3-7). What is more, we have the assurance that someday it will be shown to all who we really are—we will be vindicated (1 John 3:1-2).

Proverbs 22:8-9:

These two proverbs teach a principle Paul reiterates in the New Testament: We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). First, those who seek to get ahead or gain power by injustice will never truly win in the long-run. Second, those who are generous and share with the poor will experience the blessing of God.