

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For August 31:

Job 37:1-39:30:

As the young man, Elihu, continues his speeches, he expounds upon the greatness of God (37:1-13); examines Job with questions about God's working Job cannot understand (37:14-20); and concludes his speeches by giving a reminder of God's power, stating God will not violate righteousness, and asserting men must fear God, for the LORD will not look favorably on any who are self-reliant and/or conceited (37:21-24). We know Elihu is moving the discussion in the right direction for what he says in chapter 37 (and how he says it) is very much like what the LORD says to Job in chapters 38-41. Simply-put, Elihu tells Job that God is powerful and we cannot always understand what He does or why He does what He does, yet, we do know He will always act righteously and is always worthy of our trust and reverence.

With chapter 38 the book takes a major turn from the dialogue with the friends and the speeches of Elihu to the LORD answering Job (chapters 38-41). Here the divine name, Yahweh (which most translations render as LORD) is used for only the second time since the prologue (it is used also in 12:9). This is God's greatest name, a name which reveals He is the self-existent God who does what He pleases and who has committed Himself always to be for His people and present with them to fulfill His covenant promises to them. The lack of use in the dialogue and speech parts of the book suggests that Job and his friends were not Israelites. Since Elihu is a Hebrew name, he may be an Israelite.

In chapters 38-39 the LORD asks Job a number of questions about how things work in creation, i.e. how God exercises His providence. Some of these questions are asked in such a way to make it clear that Job cannot do the things God does. All of the questions are designed to remind Job that he is not God and does not fully comprehend the ways of the LORD. In all of God's answers to Job, He never does tell Job why he is suffering. He focuses instead on the reality Job cannot fully comprehend God's ways, yet must believe God works righteously and so must trust Him. This type of answer is not only more helpful for Job as he faces later trials in life, it also is much more helpful for the readers of Job through the centuries who face trials and yet never receive a specific explanation from God as to why they are going through suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10:

As Paul continues to explain the glory of true gospel ministry, he makes it clear he does not shrink back from suffering for the sake of the gospel since he knows God will resurrect him and bring him (along with all true believers) into His presence, so he is willing to suffer for their sake that God might be glorified (13-15). Behind what Paul is writing is an assertion by his opponents that since he and other apostles suffer so much, they must not be the true teachers. Paul is explaining how his suffering is in line with the glory of God through the gospel.

Because Paul has brought up the issue of suffering, he goes on to explain that the suffering does not cause him and true gospel ministers to lose heart (16-18). After all, the light momentary affliction they are experiencing (as their bodies waste away and their

inner being is transformed) is preparing them for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. Paul is not judging ministry or life by the things seen, which are transient, but by the things unseen, the things which are eternal.

Based upon what he has just written, Paul goes on to explain that all believers will receive a heavenly dwelling, a glorified body (5:1-10). This is our hope, our certainty in Christ, guaranteed by the Holy Spirit's work in us and our resultant desire to please God. We know that though we all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ (5:10), nevertheless, we all take courage (5:6a). The apostle's point is that this future reward is part of what drives him to suffer for the sake of the gospel and for God's glory in this life. This is what true gospel ministers do. So, suffering is in line with the true gospel, not somehow contrary to it.

What Paul is teaching in this section of 2 Corinthians is much like what he taught in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5. True change which results in God's glory comes through preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and people trusting in Him as Savior. It comes through Christians trusting in the ongoing resources of Jesus Christ through the Spirit as we focus upon Christ and the effect of His gospel in us. It comes by lifting Him up, not us, by focusing upon the gospel, not man's methods.

Psalm 44:9-26:

After the psalmist reminded himself of just how faithful God has been (1-8), he poured out His heart to God in prayer (9-26). He is open and honest with God about how things feel and he also cries out to God for help (26). Again, this is a wonderful prayer model for us (see also Psalm 62:8).

Proverbs 22:13:

Those who are lazy come up with interesting excuses for not working. Here, the proverb states that a sluggard will go so far as to say, "I can't work, it's dangerous out there, there might be a lion!" The point of the saying is to show how silly this sounds and to teach the young person and the young believer just how important it is to work diligently. The repetition of work and laziness-related proverbs not only shows how much work is part of God's design for us, but also how prone young people are to laziness. We must be taught to work well.