

Have you ever shouted at God?

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[0 : 0 0] five verses in it and I'm going to read them all and before each one before there are three sections to it and I give you a title so in the first 10 verses it is he removes mountains and they did not know it because it's a kind of psalm-like production then Job answered truly I know that it is so but how can a man be declared to be in the right before God if one wished to contend with him one could not answer him once in a thousand times he is wise in heart and mighty in strength who has hardened himself against him and succeeded he who removes mountains and they know it not when he overturns them in his anger who shakes the earth out of its place and its pillars tremble who commands the sun and it does not rise who seals up the stars who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea who made the bear and the Orion and the Pleiades and the chambers of the south who does great things beyond understanding marvelous things without number now the next portion is from verse 11 to 24 and that have given the title he removes the blameless and the guilty together because here Job is saying something about God he passes me by and I see him not he moves on but I do not perceive him behold he snatches away who can hinder him who will say to him what are you doing God will not turn back his anger beneath him bow the helpers of rehab how then can I answer him choosing my words with him though I am innocent I cannot answer him

I must appeal for my mercy for mercy to my accuser if I summoned him and he answered me I would not believe that he was listening to my voice for he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause he will not let me get my breath but fills me with bitterness if it is a contest of strength behold him if it is a matter of justice who can summon him though I'm innocent my own mouth would condemn me though I am blameless he would prove me perverse I am blameless I regard not myself I loathe my life it is all one therefore I say he destroys both the blameless and the wicked when disaster brings sudden death he mocks at the calamity of the innocent the earth is given into the hand of the wicked he covers the face of its judges if it is not he who then is it the final bit the rest of the chapter there is no umpire between us so job carries on my days are swifter than a runner they flee away they see no good they go by like skiffs of reed like an evil's eagle sweeping on its prey if I say I will forget my complaint I will put off my sad countenance and be of good cheer I become afraid of all my suffering I know you will not hold me innocent I shall be condemned why then do I labor in vain if I wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lie you will plunge me into the pit and my own clothes will abhor me for he is not a man as I am that I might answer him that we should come to trial together there is no umpire between us who might lay his hand upon his both let him take his rod away from me and let not dread of him terrify me then I would speak without fear of him for I am not so in myself amen may the lord bless that reading may be to his praise and glory we'll stand and sing what can we say about the book of job i think we can say this that it is in fact a very honest book it doesn't hide how job feels nor does it hide what he says in fact he says things that are almost blasphemous in nature one of the things he does say in verse 28 i know you will not hold me innocent there are five such statements in the book of job all of them are his confession all of them said after he's been talking about his own lot and next week we'll think of the second of these in chapter 16 i know i have a witness in heaven and finally the week after in chapter 19 i know that my redeemer lives so the book of job is in all probability one of the earliest books in the bible because the setting is that of the patriarchs of abraham's time for example in the book of job you will find no reference to kings prophets or priests you will find a reference to the flood of noah's day you'll also find a reference to the destruction of sodom and gomorrah related in genesis chapter 19 but this is the setting of the book of job now i want to draw your attention to one verse and that's in verse one and two two verses job answered and said truly i know that it is so but how can a man be declared right before god when you read the speeches of

job and those of his friends it seems that they all go around in a circle and come back to the same starting point and this is the reality of the thing is that this scripture that i've read from job nine and verse two how can a man be declared to be in the right before god is his overall passion how can it be that i can be declared in the right having undergone this very dark period because the fact of the life is that there are dark periods in the christian life and all of us will have gone through them that's why i entitled this have you ever shouted at god and since the preacher preaches to himself the question has to be have i ever shouted at god and yes i have i've passed through some very dark experiences when god seemed far away that's only what he seemed he was actually very near so what is happening in the book of job is that he is seeking to enter in to a legal dispute with god in chapter 13 verse 18 he says behold i have prepared my case i would speak to the almighty and i desire to argue my case with god so job thinks he's done been done wrong and he wants to enter in to a discussion with god almighty he's preparing a case in which he hopes to be proved innocent there was a broadcaster many years ago called gerald priestland he and i shared a graduation in 1988 when i was graduating from st andrew's university he produced a series on the radio at the time which was called the case against god and it was all based on the book of job and job is of the view that one day he will be vindicated he says that in chapter 13 i know i shall be vindicated but he thinks that all of this is going to happen at some future date somehow god is not going to deal with this in his lifetime so he utters the expression oh that my words were written down that they were inscribed in a book the words that he speaks he wants them to be there in permanent form so that one day after his death he will be vindicated it will be seen that he was a righteous person and this is what he says in chapter 13 how many are my iniquities and my sins make me know my transgression and my sin why do you hide my face and consider me as your enemy and he carries on in chapter 19 know then that god has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me so what has happened to joe as i said it's a dark experience and in the first two chapters of the book you find that he lost his oxen his sheep and his servants his camels his sons and daughters and finally his health all of this has hidden the almighty from joe it's a dark experience and this is what he says in chapter 16 god gives me up to the ungodly and casts me in the hand of the wicked one of the things that happened as you'll find in chapters one and two is that he lost his health he had a skin condition it's referred to in chapter seven my flesh is clothed with worms and dirt my skin hardens and then breaks out afresh now the result of this skin condition is again detailed later in the book in chapter 19 he says this I am repulsive to my wife loathsome to the sons of my own mother now what's he saying well when you read the Hebrew what it means is that this skin condition was causing his breath to smell I am repulsive to my wife loathsome to the sons of my own mother also not only is it that the case but it's equally the case that all of his friends have deserted him all my intimate friends of horny and those whom I loved have turned against me so God has in his view deeply wronged Job in this dark experience and this is how he describes it the arrows of the almighty are in me my spirit drinks their poison the terrors of God are arrayed against me

[13 : 48] Job as a case and you see the case is summed up in one simple word and that's the word why why has this happened to me now of all times why I was walking before God why why now when we turn to those of his friends they also got a case this is why the thing tends to revolve round and round and the first speech of the friends is contained in Job 4 and 5 and this is Eliphaz the Temanite and he says this can mortal man be righteous before God can a man be pure before his maker so in other words

Eliphaz the Temanite is almost describing the same words that Job had uttered in 9 verse 2 how can a man be declared righteous before God because he wants to get on Job's side he then tells him what you have done you have instructed many and you have strengthened the weak hands your words have upheld him with stumbling and you have made firm the feeble knees so that what he's now saying Eliphaz the Temanite is no one who is innocent ever suffers loss now what happens in chapter 4 of the book of Job is that Eliphaz reveals a vision in chapter 4 verse 12 he says now a word was brought to me stealthily and my ear received the whisper of it if you read the speeches of Eliphaz only in the book of Job these are 4 to 5 15 and 22 you will find there's a great stress on practical experience with God and he goes on and describes this vision a form was before my eyes then there was silence and I heard the voice and the voice says can mortal man be righteous before God can a man be pure before his maker so in other words what you've got to do Job is you've got to listen to me because

I'm a respected teacher in Israel I know about these things I've had this vision surprisingly Job will have none of it he openly rejects what he and the other two say and he says how long will you say these things and the words of your mouth be a great wind in the next line should a multitude of words go unanswered and a man full of talk be vindicated now when we go to chapter 15 which is the next speech of

Eliphaz he's continuing on the same theme but he's not so diplomatic now should a wise man answer windy knowledge and fill himself with the east wind should he argue in profitable talk or in words which he can do no good but you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God in other words because you're not listening to what I'm saying Job your actions are dangerous you're hindering meditation or as the new English Bible puts it you even banish the fear of God from your mind this is the height of Job's bitterness in his speech Job imagines himself challenging the almighty

God in court but immediately he doesn't know what to say and he's quite incapable of forming a reasoned case the fact that he's innocent as far as he's concerned makes no difference Job finds himself having to beg for mercy from the one who has wronged him so in verse 19 we read thus if it is a contest of strength enough is said but if as it is a matter of justice who is going to give me my turn to speak so what's happening in this particular phraseology that's going on here Bildad in chapter 8 asked the question can God twist right into wrong and such is the lowest state of Job's experience

[19:49] Job says yes he can and he does so there are two things happening in the book of Job one is he's got this case against God for dealing with him in this way why and the second is these three friends they've also got a case and their case is that they want to prove that the problem is that Job has sinned now we go to the very end of the book in chapter 42 verse 10 we read the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before now in the conclusion of the book the poetry ceases and it returns to narrating things in prose from verses 7 to 17 the 42nd chapter and here we read this after the

Lord had spoken these words to Job the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite my wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends for you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has when you think of all that he's had to say how is it that Job has spoken right and these others have not the actual Hebrew means that he's spoken that which is trustworthy trustworthy means that he's spoken something of faith in God the others had not and they're told to do this now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering my servant Job shall pray for you and I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly for you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant

Job has this is a bit of new testament christianity is it not in the old testament for Job has to pray for these individuals who had so much to say about him being a sinner so we find that Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shurite and Zophar the Namathite went and did what the lord had told them the lord accepted Job's prayer but something else is happening and this something else is this then the lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends and the lord gave Job twice as much as he had before he restored the fortunes of Job what does that mean it means that he was delivered from this dark experience and brought into a new standing of spirituality of family life of spiritual worship in a place where he was before but now it's better now this idea of restoring fortunes you will also find in psalm 126 when the lord restored the fortunes of

Zion we were like those who dream then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy then they said amongst the nations the lord has done great things for them that psalm undoubtedly refers to the reversal of the exile when the people had been exiled to Babylon for 70 years now they had come back to their own land Jerusalem was rebuilt the temple now stood again as a center of worship for the nation the lord has done great things for them but let us just consider briefly how it was when they were in Babylon how it was when they were in Babylon is found in Psalm 137 made popular a number of years ago by

Abba by the waters of Babylon there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion on the willows there we hang up our liars for there our captors required of us songs in our tormentors myth saying sing us one of the songs of Zion how shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land when this dark experience descends on Job or on the Christian today the last thing that you think about doing is singing but the mood has changed but the dark experience is over our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy then they said among the nations the Lord has

done great things for them it's not recorded that

[25 : 53] Job sang any song but it does say the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before and if you go to the details in chapters 1 and 2 of all the things that he lost and go to the details of the restoration in chapter 42 verses 11 to 15 you will find that he had double what he had before he now has twice the number of sons and daughters it's a moot question if he still had the same wife because in one case she had said curse God and die well the Arabs have an answer to that and what they say is the reason Job is so blessed is that now he has an Arabian wife unfortunately it's not provable but that's what they say this is

Job standing in the right after an experience of darkness which has all but taken away the presence and the ongoing ministry of God it's a dark experience but his example is commended to us by the epistle of James we call those happy who were steadfast you have heard of the steadfastness of Job and you have seen the purpose of the Lord how the Lord is compassionate and merciful in the old version it doesn't use the word steadfastness it uses the word patience now you might conclude that from all of the discussion that goes on in the book of Job that Job was not very patient over this particular issue but if you do have steadfastness perhaps it can be said that you also have patience and what you have to have patience for is the turning away of the clouds of despair and the bringing in of the showers of blessing you've heard of the steadfastness of Job it is commended to you by James 5 verse 11 Amen shall we stand and sing