

Dr. John Walton, Job, Session 14

Dialogue Series 2 (Job 14-21)

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Walton, Job, Session 14, Dialogue Series 2 (Job 15-21), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. John Walton analyzes chapters 15-21 of the Book of Job, focusing on a cyclical dialogue between Job and his three friends. **Each cycle** involves speeches from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, followed by Job's responses. **The core conflict** centers on the friends' insistence that Job's suffering proves his wickedness (the retribution principle), while Job maintains his righteousness and demands vindication from God. **Walton highlights** the differing perspectives on vindication (proving innocence) versus restoration (regaining former blessings). **The lecture concludes** by setting the stage for a closer examination of a specific passage within this dialogue.

2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Walton's, Job, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Job → Walton).



**Walton_Job_Session
14.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of John Walton's lecture on Job 15-21:

Briefing Document: Job 15-21 (Dialogue Series 2)

Source: Excerpts from "Walton_Job_Session14.pdf"

Overview: This document summarizes John Walton's lecture on the second cycle of dialogues in the Book of Job (chapters 15-21). This cycle features a continuation of the back-and-forth between Job and his three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Walton focuses on the rhetorical strategies employed by each character and the central issues that are further developed in this section.

Key Themes and Ideas:

- **Continuation of the Retribution Principle:** The core premise of the friends' arguments continues to be the retribution principle – the belief that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. They apply this principle to Job's situation, arguing that his suffering is proof of his wickedness. Walton notes that the second cycle focuses on the premise that God judges the wicked, and the associated inference is that those who are apparently under judgment must indeed be wicked.
- **Eliphaz's Argument:** Eliphaz accuses Job of "bluster," suggesting he's digging a deeper hole for himself by not acknowledging his guilt. He believes Job is no better than other corrupt humans and should recognize his place among the wicked due to his suffering. Eliphaz urges Job to "recognize your guilt by comparing how God treats the wicked and how he's treating you match up."
- **Bildad's Argument:** Bildad reinforces the idea that God's judgment is severe for the wicked and suggests that those who suffer, like Job, "do not know God." His advice is for Job to give up the pretense of innocence because "wicked people are doomed. You're among them. You don't know God."
- **Zophar's Argument:** Zophar focuses on Job's perceived self-righteousness, viewing it as a sign of wickedness and arrogance against God. He believes that Job has already been judged and there is nothing left to be said, arguing "your sin is your pride; God has judged who is wicked. Enough said, no more conversation."

- **Job's Rejection of the Retribution Principle:** Job, while maintaining his righteousness, starts to express doubts and question the validity of the retribution principle. He points out that wicked people prosper, suggesting that the world does not always work according to the simple formula of reward for righteousness and punishment for wickedness. He's the closest he's been in the book to "denying the retribution principle. I wonder, couldn't it be that way?" Job is frustrated with his friends' assessment of his condition, and his view of God begins to deteriorate as the dialogue continues.
- **Job's Focus on Vindication vs. Restoration:** A crucial distinction is drawn between Job's desire for vindication and the friends' push for restoration.
- **Vindication:** Job seeks to be declared righteous and innocent of the accusations brought against him. He wants to prove that he does not deserve his suffering and is not among the wicked. He is building his "fort in his corner and being willing to question God." According to Walton, "Vindication is: you are righteous."
- **Restoration:** The friends, on the other hand, believe Job should confess his guilt and seek forgiveness from God. Their goal is to have Job restored to his former state of prosperity. This is an approach focused on external circumstances, which means "give me my stuff back".
- Walton stresses that this distinction highlights the depth of Job's integrity: "Remember, it is this precisely which defines Job's integrity. So, Job insists on vindication rather than restoration."
- **Job's Growing Sense of Abandonment and the Need for an Advocate:** Job feels abandoned by God and that God is actually attacking him, even tormenting him. He expresses the need for an advocate to take up his case, and for someone to stand up for him, because God will not respond to his misery. He declares, "If you can't respond to my misery, I need someone to stand up for me."
- **Job's Continued Steadfastness:** Despite the intense suffering and accusations, Job remains determined to stay the course of righteousness, even though death may be his only reward. "As for me, I'm determined to stay the course of righteousness though death is all I have to look forward to."
- **The Friends' Loss of Confidence:** The friends are becoming increasingly convinced of Job's wickedness as he continues to refuse to acknowledge any guilt. They see him as belonging to the "wicked" group based on his suffering. Walton notes: "Job is being increasingly placed among the wicked by his friends."

Key Quotes from the Lecture:

- "Eliphaz's advice, recognize your guilt by comparing how God treats the wicked and how he's treating you match up. You've nullified piety."
- "Bildad's general advice, give up the pretense; wicked people are doomed. You're among them. You don't know God."
- "Zophar's assessment, your sin is your pride; God has judged who is wicked. Enough said, no more conversation."
- "Job's reply, the system's broken."
- "The second cycle as a whole, has focused on the premise of the retribution principle that God judges the wicked. The associated inferences insinuate that those who are apparently under judgment must indeed be wicked."
- "Vindication is: you are righteous. Restoration means: give me my stuff back."
- "Remember, it is this precisely which defines Job's integrity. So, Job insists on vindication rather than restoration."

Conclusion:

Cycle two intensifies the conflict between Job and his friends, moving from a discussion about sin and suffering to a deeper exploration of divine justice and human integrity. The friends continue to uphold the traditional wisdom of the retribution principle, while Job begins to question that very system, moving closer to a denial of it altogether. The emphasis on Job's desire for vindication as opposed to mere restoration highlights the core issue of his righteousness and his unwavering commitment to his integrity. The stage is now set for more intense debate as Job's friends further solidify their position on his wickedness, while Job's questions grow stronger.

4. Job Study Guide: Session 14, Dialogue Series 2 (Job 15-21)

The Book of Job: Dialogue Series 2 (Job 15-21) Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided source.

1. How does Eliphaz characterize Job's behavior in his second speech?
2. According to Eliphaz, what should Job do considering his current suffering?
3. What is Job's primary demand in his response to Eliphaz?
4. What does Bildad imply about Job's understanding of God in his second speech?
5. How does Job respond to Bildad's accusations and insinuations?
6. What is Zophar's central argument against Job in his second speech?
7. How does Job react to Zophar's accusations, and what does he question?
8. What is the central theme of the second dialogue cycle as a whole?
9. What is the crucial distinction between "vindication" and "restoration" according to the lecture?
10. Why do Job's friends consider his desire for vindication unrealistic?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Eliphaz characterizes Job's behavior as blustering and a disgrace, suggesting that Job is digging himself deeper into trouble with his complaints. Eliphaz also implies that Job's suffering results from a corruption shared by all humanity.
2. Eliphaz suggests that Job should recognize his guilt and how much he has in common with the wicked, given that God's treatment of the wicked matches Job's experience. He should stop railing against his circumstances.
3. Job demands protection from God's attacks and an advocate to take up his case. He feels abandoned by God and is seeking someone to stand up for him.
4. Bildad implies that Job does not know God and is among the wicked, which is why God is severely judging him. He believes Job's suffering is proof of his wickedness.

5. Job responds to Bildad by declaring his innocence, despite God's inexplicable anger and the mess that has been made of his life. Job asserts he will be vindicated, and that his friends are in more jeopardy than he is.
6. Zophar argues that Job's self-righteousness is a sign of his pride, which characterizes the wicked and is an obvious sin to Zophar. Zophar believes Job's pride betrays him, and Job is clearly in the wrong.
7. Job ignores Zophar and questions the system, pressing his legal case against God. He wonders if God does not consistently punish the wicked, if He can consistently protect the righteous.
8. The central theme of the second cycle revolves around the retribution principle, that God judges the wicked, implying those suffering must be wicked. Job increasingly questions the validity of this principle.
9. Vindication, in this context, means that Job is proven righteous, while restoration implies Job gets his former possessions and status back, which his friends favor. Job insists on the righteousness aspect.
10. Job's friends believe vindication is unrealistic because they think that his current suffering places him indisputably among the wicked. They think he should just admit that he is wicked and ask for forgiveness.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer the following questions in essay format, drawing on material from the provided source.

1. Analyze the rhetorical strategies used by Job's friends in the second cycle of dialogues. How do their arguments differ from their approaches in the first cycle, if at all?
2. Explore the concept of the "retribution principle" as it is presented in the second dialogue cycle. How do Job's responses challenge this principle, and what is the significance of his challenge?
3. Compare and contrast Job's desire for vindication with his friends' push for restoration. Why is this distinction so important to understanding the core conflicts in the Book of Job?

4. Trace the deterioration of Job's view of God throughout the second dialogue cycle. How does his questioning evolve, and what does this reveal about Job's personal struggle?
5. Evaluate the roles of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar in the second cycle. How do their individual perspectives and arguments contribute to the central themes and tensions in the text?

Glossary of Key Terms

Retribution Principle: The theological idea that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, often understood as a direct correlation between moral behavior and life circumstances.

Vindication: The act of proving someone to be right, just, or free from blame or wrongdoing; in this context, Job seeks to be declared righteous in the eyes of God.

Restoration: The act of returning something to its original state or condition; in this context, Job's friends believe he should focus on getting his former wealth and status back.

Rhetorical Strategy: The techniques or methods used in speaking or writing to persuade or influence an audience; the friends each use specific methods to attempt to convince Job of their point of view.

Advocate: A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy; in Job's case, he is seeking someone to defend him against God's attacks.

5. FAQs on Walton, Job, Session 14, Dialogue Series 2 (Job 15-21) Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Book of Job (Dialogue Series 2, Job 15-21)

1. What is the central focus of the second cycle of dialogues in the Book of Job (chapters 15-21)?

The second cycle of dialogues focuses on the friends' repeated assertion of the retribution principle – that God judges the wicked, and therefore, anyone suffering severely must be wicked. They use Job's suffering as proof of his wickedness. This leads to the associated inference that since Job is suffering so greatly, he must be wicked. This perspective is what they argue, and Job struggles to grapple with.

2. How does Eliphaz frame his argument to Job in his second speech?

Eliphaz accuses Job of being arrogant and self-righteous, claiming Job's suffering is a result of the corruption shared by all humanity. He essentially tells Job to stop complaining and accept his guilt by comparing his situation with how God treats the wicked, suggesting that they are one and the same. Eliphaz believes Job's bluster is a disgrace that makes his situation worse, and that he ought to recognize his inherent guilt.

3. How does Job respond to Eliphaz's accusations in this cycle?

Job counters that his friends' words are not encouraging. He feels that God is attacking and abandoning him to be tormented, and even joining in on the attacks himself. Job's central response is his need for an advocate or a defender to help him against God's perceived injustices, while maintaining his integrity and righteousness. He is not asking for restoration but for vindication.

4. What is Bildad's main argument in his second speech, and what is Job's reaction?

Bildad reiterates that God's judgment of the wicked is severe, and that Job's suffering classifies him as one who does not know God and is therefore wicked. Job responds by asserting his innocence, claiming God has messed up his life and made him an outcast. Job declares that he is confident someone will come to his defense, and vindicate him against the accusations of his friends.

5. How does Zophar's argument in the second cycle differ from the other friends, and how does Job respond?

Zophar, as usual, accuses Job of self-righteousness, framing his pride as a sign of his wickedness. Job completely ignores Zophar's argument by raising the question, "why do the wicked prosper?" He presses against God and the apparent lack of consistent punishment of the wicked. He even suggests that if God does not punish the wicked consistently, maybe he doesn't consistently protect the righteous. Job considers that he might be in a world that does not operate according to the principle of retribution, and the implications of this possibility.

6. What is the difference between "vindication" and "restoration" in the context of Job's struggle?

Vindication means Job seeks to have it proven that he is righteous. It is a claim to truth and innocence. Restoration, on the other hand, is focused on getting back what has been lost, a focus on stuff. Job is insistent that what he wants is to be declared righteous. He is not willing to be appeased. His friends are pushing for restoration, where they seem to think Job will confess and be restored. This difference is essential to understanding Job's position.

7. What does Job's unwavering insistence on his own righteousness suggest about his view of God during this dialogue cycle?

Job's insistence on his righteousness demonstrates a continued deterioration in his view of God. While he does not abandon his faith, he questions God's justice and fairness. He is confused as to why God allows the wicked to prosper and torments the righteous. Job's stance in these chapters demonstrates a willingness to question and stand against the accepted order, something his friends reject.

8. How does the second cycle of dialogues escalate the conflict in the Book of Job?

The second cycle intensifies the conflict by further cementing the friends' conviction that Job is wicked, creating an even more difficult position for Job, who is increasingly isolated. Additionally, Job starts to question God and the system of the retribution principle, a path he has not gone down previously. This escalation sets the stage for deeper explorations of faith and justice in the subsequent chapters.