

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Waiting for Justice

The desire for justice is a deep and powerful motivation among humankind, but it is often expressed in terribly destructive ways. Sometimes justice requires that we simply wait on God to act.

“Although you say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him” (Job 35:14).

When quoting from the book of Job, we must be very careful to note the speaker who is being quoted. The three friends of Job—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—believed (incorrectly) that Job’s suffering was due to some hidden sin in his life. Consequently, their speeches throughout the book are riddled with misleading generalizations and outright falsehoods.

But that’s not to say there is nothing of value in their speeches. Buried in this verse, spoken by Eliphaz, is a gem worthy of our consideration.

Other versions render Eliphaz’s words slightly differently, e.g., “your case is before him and you must wait for him” (NIV). Either way, this verse captures a key truth that lies at the heart of the Bible’s message: namely, justice belongs to God, but He will administer it on His own timetable, not ours. In Job’s case, if he believed he was being treated unfairly, he had to wait for God to make it right.

Regardless of the assumptions that motivated Eliphaz’s comment, his basic thought is sound—if difficult to accept. All of us encounter circumstances in our lives in which we believe we have been wronged, and feel a burning desire for something to be done to correct the injustice. Unfortunately, justice doesn’t always come when we think it should. Sometimes it doesn’t come at all, at least not in our lifetimes. It’s easy to conclude that since justice is such a fickle fact of life, then there must not be a God, for if there was, surely He would step in and fix the problem.

Some take this a step further and conclude that since God is either impotent or nonexistent, then justice is left up to us. This is what fuels the endless cycle of conflict that still plagues much of the world today. People believe they have been abused, so they take action to even the score, which triggers more retaliation, ad infinitum. Nobody wins in such a scenario.

Eliphaz points to a preferred alternative: If justice seems far away or even unattainable, then we must wait for God

to act in His own good time. Sometimes the wheels of justice turn very slowly, and it’s difficult to see any hope of a resolution. But it’s there, and it will eventually come.

In some cases, we’ll go to our graves without ever seeing justice done, but that doesn’t mean God’s promise has failed. “Surely there is a hereafter,” Solomon reminds us (Prov. 23:18), a final judgment when all of this world’s wrongs will be addressed. It’s hard to appreciate that fact when the present pain is so deep, so raw. But this is where the character of our faith meets its true test: Do we really believe there is a God, and that He will someday judge the world in righteousness? Or do we not?

Eliphaz applied this truth to Job in the mistaken belief that Job deserved what he got. Despite his faulty premise, he stumbled upon an important truth that all of us should take to heart. Whatever injustices we feel life has dished out to us, we must train ourselves to take the long view, and trust that God will eventually do what is right—if not in this life, for certain in the life to come.

– David King