

Bible Study Questions  
*Love Amid the Ashes*  
By Mesu Andrews

1. Though the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived centuries before the written law of Moses came to be, many of the rules of sacrifice and worship were already being practiced. Why were the first animals killed in Genesis 3:21? Why did Job offer sacrifices for his children in Job 1:5?
2. Though God chose Abraham's seed (and specifically those in Isaac and Jacob's line) to become the covenant bearers, we see others in Scripture who worship God Most High. Job and his three friends were thought to be among these God fearers from a lineage other than Jacob's. Can you fit together the puzzle of their genealogies?
  - Who is Bildad the Shuhite's father, listed in Genesis 25:1–2?
  - Who is Job's father, listed in Genesis 36:33?
  - In 1 Chronicles 1:35–36, we see Esau's legacy, with two of Job's friends listed. One name is easily distinguishable—Eliphaz. How is Eliphaz's third son, Job's friend Zophar, listed?

Why do you think God included Job's story in Scripture, even though Job and his friends weren't of the "chosen" line?
3. Job 2:13 says that Job's friends sat on the ground with him in silence for seven days and seven nights, "because they saw how great his suffering was." How does Scripture tell us to comfort one another (see Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 1:4; 2:7; 8:13–14)?
4. Eliphaz values the mystical world and gives advice based on spiritual revelation (Job 4:12–17). Bildad values the wisdom of his elders and the proven success of tradition (8:8–19). Zophar leans on his intellect to govern life decisions (11:5–9). But none of Job's friends address God directly. Only Job, in his desperation, speaks *to* God, while the three friends speak *about* God. Read Job 13:15–21 and try to decipher Job's reasoning for pouring out his heart to God.
5. The young disciple Elihu sits quietly until the older men have finished speaking. Why does he wait to speak, and what realization finally gives him the courage to break his silence (see Job 32:6–9)?

6. Elihu addresses Job's complaint that God *does* speak to mere human beings. Elihu emphatically states that God *does* speak, but humans may not hear Him. What are the three ways Elihu mentions in Job 33:14–28 in which God may speak but we are slow to recognize His voice?
  - vs. 15–18
  - vs. 19–22
  - vs. 23–28
  
7. Elihu seeks to answer Job's question, "Why do we suffer?" What are some of the reasons he gives in the following verses?
  - 33:29–30
  - 34:12–15
  - 35:9–15
  - 36:13–15
  
8. God interrupts Elihu's discourse with a thunderous voice from the storm. Instead of making statements or declarations, God answers with questions. In these other instances in which God answers with a question, contemplate why He might choose to do so.
  - Jacob—Genesis 32:22–29
  - Moses—Exodus 4:1–2
  - Mary Magdalene—John 20:11–16
  
9. In Job 40:8, God asks Job, "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?" Yet in Job 42:7–8, when God rebukes Job's friends, He says, "You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." Though Job had tried to justify himself again and again, the Lord still declares that Job spoke rightly of Him. See Romans 3:3–4 and Psalm 51:4 to form your right opinion of God.
  
10. When God speaks of the behemoth in Job 40:15–24, He may be offering Job an illustration of the right way to respond to adversity. Hardships arise in our lives from two sources:
  - as discipline from a loving heavenly Father (v. 19)
  - as a natural consequence of living in a sin-sick world (v. 23)
 In the New Testament, we have been promised that our present suffering—whether due to discipline or the fallenness of this world—will someday come to an end (see Rom. 8:18–22; Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19). How does God's illustration of the behemoth and our eventual freedom from suffering change the way you approach a current difficult issue?

11. Job asks “Why?” repeatedly during his affliction, and his friends seek to answer that question. However, none of their lengthy discourses satisfy Job. Reread God’s reply in Job 38–41. Does God ever answer Job’s question of “Why?” Is Job satisfied with God’s answer? Why or why not?
12. As we discovered in Job 36:16, one of God’s purposes for suffering is to woo us into a deeper, more personal relationship with Him. Does that happen for Job (see 42:5–6)?
13. Job learns three important concepts that he recites back to God. What are they?
- 42:2—God can . . .
  - 42:3—“Surely I spoke . . .”
  - 42:4—“You said . . .”
14. Job 42 tells us that after Job prays for his friends, the Lord makes him prosperous again and blesses Job with ten more children. It does not, however, specifically state that Job’s health was completely restored. Why does God allow some people to continue to endure physical suffering, or bear the scars of past suffering, when He could heal them (see Gen. 32:22–32; Jonah 4:5–8; John 20:24–31; 2 Cor. 12:7)?

