

Job

[Part 3]

Job 12:1-6 [New King James] *“Then Job answered and said: ‘No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you! But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not know such things as these? I am one mocked by his friends, who called on God, and He answered him, the just and blameless who is ridiculed. A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease; it is made ready for those whose feet slip. The tents of robbers prosper, and those who provoke God are secure, in what God provides by His hand.’”*

Job answers Zophar’s argument with great sarcasm, *“will wisdom die with you.”*

Job then went on to say that his three friends did not need to explain God to him, they were saying nothing that he did not know already, [**Job 12:7-9; Job 13:1-2**].

Job continued to maintain that his friends had completely misunderstood the reason for his suffering. Job did not understand it either but he was certain that his friends’ reasons were narrow-minded and incorrect.

If Job had been a successful robber, [**verse 6**] and not a religious man, his position may have commanded greater respect, *“their god in their hands,”* the only god these robbers have is their own power.

Job 12:7-9 [New King James] *“But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this,”*

Job then states his familiarity with everything that they have said about the wisdom and power of the Eternal God. Even the beasts of the field are **not** ignorant of that. **All of nature is united in respect towards their Creator, for they reflect His wisdom and power, [Romans 1:20].**

The life of every living thing is in the hands of the Eternal Creator God, [**verse 10**].

Job 12:11-12 [New King James] *“Does not the ear test words and the mouth taste its food? Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding.”*

God is **not** prepared to swallow down unexamined and undigested opinions of others, however, ancient, if they do not commend themselves to His moral and spiritual palate.

Job then pictures God’s irresistible power at work on the earth, influencing both physical matter and human beings, [**Job 12:13-25**].

Job is also affirming that no leader has any real wisdom apart from what he is, given by the Eternal God.

No research can outweigh the Word of God, the Christian Bible.

No scientific discovery takes God by surprise.

When we look for guidance in our decisions in life, we must recognise the only true wisdom is to be found in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, which is superior to any wisdom that the world can offer, because He is the only source, [James 3:13-18].

All human wisdom is influenced by Satan, the god of this world, until he is silenced by Jesus Christ at His Second Coming, [2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:12; Revelation 20:1-3, 10].

Job 13:1-4 [New King James] *“Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. But you forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians.”*

Job once again appeals to God, liking his three friends to physicians who did not know what they were doing.

Some of Job’s friends’ ideas about God were true, but did not apply to Job, for neither Job or his friends had not heard the conversations between God and Satan, [Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-6].

Job’s friends have made much of God’s constant gaze upon Job, but are they remembering the same gaze is upon them and their motives for what they have said about Job?

How will they fare when they stand before God on their judgement day? [2 Corinthians 5:10-12]

Perhaps silence would have been a better choice for Job’s friends? [verse 5]

We must be very careful and compassionate in how we apply Biblical condemnation to others, for only God knows the motives behind their actions, [Psalms 139:1-4].

Will we *“speak wickedly for God”*? [Job 13:7-12]

Job appeals directly to God well aware that such an appeal is a very risky decision, [Job 13:13-18] and he recklessly calls for someone to challenge his defence [verse 19]. If such a person is found he will become silent.

Job then asks for two things to be removed for him to have a fair hearing, the heavy hand of physical pain and the numbing and frightening sense of the divine majesty, [Job 13:20-22].

Also Job asks God for a clear statement for the reason for the divine hostility, which has brought with it such a harsh sentence, [Job 13:23-28].

Job 14:1-6 [New King James] *“Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue. And do You open Your eyes on such a one, and bring me to judgment with yourself? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass. Look away from him that he may rest, till like a hired man he finishes his day.”*

Job is yearning for an after-life beyond the grave, for this present existence is fleeting, full of troubles and involved in the universal sinfulness of humanity.

Why, Job asks, then must a single individual, who is not a heinous sinner, incur such a weight of divine displeasure?

Cannot the Creator God grant him a day of freedom from trouble?

Job 14:7-12 [New King James] *“For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant. But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he? As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up, so man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep.”*

Job compares his situation and that of other humans to non-human creation.

Job 14:13 [New King James] *“Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!”*

This is a prayer we can all make as we face the future time of great tribulation, the wrath of God, to wake up rebellious human beings to Who He is and what should be their response to Him, [Matthew 24:21-22].

Job 14:14-17 [New King James] *“If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. For now You number my steps, but do not watch over my sin. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and You cover my iniquity.”*

Job was well-aware of the resurrection of human beings to a different life, that will be free from pain and troubles, [Revelation 21:1-8] but also that this life was a time to seek a sin-free life, in preparation for that future.

Job 14:18-21 [New King James] *“But as a mountain falls and crumbles away, and as a rock is moved from its place; as water wears away stones, and as torrents wash away the soil of the earth; so You destroy the hope of man. You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his countenance and send him away. His sons come to honour, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it.”*

At that future time all the hopes of human beings will be destroyed, [2 Peter 3:10-13].

Job 14:22 [New King James] *“But his flesh will be in pain over it, and his soul will mourn over it.”*

Job’s profound speech illustrates that to have a right set of doctrines is **not** enough. **Truth untested by life’s experience may become static and stagnant. Suffering can bring a dynamic quality to the character of a person.**

Just as drought drives the roots of a tree deeper to find water, so suffering can drive us beyond superficial acceptance of truth to a deeper dependence on the Eternal God for hope of future life.

Job 15:1 [New King James] *“Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:”*

We now enter the second round of discussion between Job and his friends, each friend, in the same order, pressed their argument further.

This time Eliphaz was more rude, more intense and more threatening, but he said nothing new, than Job had lost fear of God and stopped prayer to Him, [**verse 4**].

Eliphaz began by saying that Job’s words were empty and useless, [**verses 2-3**].

According to Eliphaz’s experience and wisdom of their ancestors were more valuable than Job’s individual thoughts, [**verses 7-10**].

Eliphaz in his arrogance assumed his words were as true as God’s, [**verse 11**].

Eliphaz repeats his same statements, [**Job 15:15-16; Job 4:18-19**].

Eliphaz twists the statement Job made, [**Job 12:6**] to falsely saying that the wicked had security, then attacks this misunderstanding, [**Job 15:20-35**].

Job 16:1 [New King James] *“Then Job answered and said:”*

Job's friends were supposed to be comforting him in his grief. Instead, they condemned him for causing his own suffering, so Job calls them "*miserable comforters*," turning their words of accusation "*wind-bags*" towards their own statements.

This to-and-fro argument is really getting out of control, each making accusations of the other.

Job 16:9-12 [New King James] "*He tears me in His wrath, and hates me; He gnashes at me with His teeth; my adversary sharpens His gaze on me. They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek, they gather together against me. God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces; He has set me up for His target,*"

Job sees himself as a helpless prey and that the hostility of God towards him is now reflected in the attitude of those who are supposed to be bringing him comfort in his grief and pain.

The figure changes from wild beast to an archer who is sending a stream of arrows into his body, [verses 13-14].

These divine assaults have condemned Job to habitual mourning and humiliation, [verses 15-16] yet the target of these assaults has been an innocent man, [verse 17].

Job's faith in God again triumphs, once again he rises from the depths to the heights. He is unable to let go his innocence in the face of the insinuations of his friend. No, he cannot let go of his God, even in the face of doubts and fears, [Job 16:18-21].

When he dies the voice of his innocent blood will rise to highest heaven and vouch for his integrity.

This passionate longing for a heavenly Witness on his side points forward to the Christian thought of "*an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*," [1 John 2:1]. Here is faith reaching out for "*a man with God*," that again only Jesus Christ can fulfil, [Hebrews 9:24].

Job 17:1-2 [New King James] "*My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, the grave is ready for me. Are not mockers with me? And does not my eye dwell on their provocation?*"

This appeal [Job 16:21] gains force when Job remembers that the years are rolling him forward inexorably towards the grave.

Away with the mocking words of his friends, when the misery of today will be forgotten, away from the hopes of other human beings.

Job 17:3-5 [New King James] "*Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself. Who is he who will shake hands with me? For You have hidden their heart from understanding; therefore You will not exalt them. He who speaks flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children will fail.*"

Only God can undertake suretyship for Job's future the present lot of Job will be past, no more the butt of moralising and insults, [verses 6-7].

Job 17:8-9 [New King James] "*Upright men are astonished at this, and the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite. Yet the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.*"

Righteous men may be astonished at the suffering that Job was facing, yet it will strengthen them from the hypocritical attacks of other humans.

Making righteous people all the more determined to submit their lives to the Eternal God.

Job 17:10-12 [New King James] *“But please, come back again, all of you, for I shall not find one wise man among you. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. They change the night into day; ‘The light is near,’ they say, in the face of darkness.”*

The gloom deepens, the hope that Job’s night would end and a new day would dawn are swept aside.

Job 17:13-16 [New King James] *“If I wait for the grave as my house, if I make my bed in the darkness, if I say to corruption, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘You are my mother and my sister,’ where then is my hope? As for my hope, who can see it? Will they go down to the gates of Sheol? Shall we have rest together in the dust?”*

Job’s final hope is now in the grave which has become like part of his family.

The rewards that Job’s friends described were all related to this physical life, restoration of family and wealth, they were silent about the possibility of life after death.

We must **not** evaluate life only in terms of this present world because God promises a never-ending wonderful future to those who are faithful to Him, free from pain and tears.

Revelation 21:1-8 [New King James] *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*

The choice is ours to make.