

Job

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Job 16 & 17



Job 16 – 17

16:1-5

- This is a key speech of Job's mental reasoning. He begins by firing back at his friends, but then shifts to a more hopeful position, yet ends with gloomy questions on the inevitability of death.
- Job here is continuing to trade insults with his friends. Recall back to 15:2 when Eliphaz opens his second speech accusing Job of being full of empty hot air: "Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge and fill himself with the east wind?" So Job turns it around saying, "I have heard many such things. Sorry comforters are you all. Is there no limit to **your** windy words?" But in vss. 4-5 Job says that he too could be just as bad a friend as they are, but that if the roles were reversed "I could strengthen you with my mouth and the solace of my lips could lessen your pain."

16:6-17

- In these verses Job returns to his previous complaint that God is the culprit who has caused him so much pain and his suffering seems to have no end. God has exhausted him, his friends and enemies are all the same and in vs. 8 even his own body testifies against him.
- Vs. 9 is a bit frightening. In looking at a variety of scholars, it is interesting in how many of them shy away from what seems to be obvious given the context. Here is the unnamed image of Job's adversary in the form of wild beasts hunting him, tearing at him with claws and gnashing at him with terrifying teeth. Some have said it's a picture of his friends, others point to Satan, others demons, all the while avoiding the simple truth that Job only sees God as the source of his pain. So often when people are in pain this is the only conclusion they can see. Job drives home this point in vss. 12-14: "I was at ease, but He shattered me and He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces. He has also set me up as His target. His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open. He pours out my gall on the ground. He breaks through me with breach after breach. He runs at me like a warrior." God is killing him through slow torture, death by 1000 cuts, yet he declares his innocence in vs. 17: "...there is no violence in my hands and my prayer is pure."

16:18- 17:2

- Job has come to believe that he is dying and dying unjustly. His blood cries out for justice. But then he speaks vs. 19: "Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven and my advocate is on high." As we

said in the introduction, intentionally or unintentionally, Job is pointing to Jesus. None of his friends can save him, so he keeps his teary eyes on God. The grave is ready for him. He sees the lack of sympathy from his wife and friends and everyone around him. He knows that if he has one hope then surely that hope is in Heaven.

17:3-5

- Yet Job is not quite ready to die. He again asks God for a time out. Here specifically he is asking for someone to bail him out of this prison of pain. But who **on earth** would do so? Who would put up the bail bond for him? Certainly not his friends who do not believe in his innocence and who he cannot trust.

17:6-16

- So without someone on earth to pay the price for his freedom, Job falls back into despair. Looking around he knows that “The upright will be appalled at this and the innocent will stir up himself against the godless”, but where are “the upright”? No, he is alone and left to rely on his own strength. “...the righteous will hold to his way and he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger.”
- Looking around and seeing no one but his 3 friends, Job speaks to them and falls deeper into despair. “But come again all of you now, for I do not find a wise man among you...If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness...I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’, to the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’. Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?”