

Job

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Job 21



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Vss. 1-6

- Job listened patiently to Zophar's speech in Ch. 20, where he heard all about how judgement surely comes to the wicked and the brilliant description of the wicked Zophar gave. Indeed, Job agrees with much of what Zophar has to say about the wicked. Where Job disagrees is when Zophar basically says, "This is what the wicked looks like and they look like you, so you too MUST be wicked and therefore you need to repent to save yourself from God's wrath."
- So Job begins his reply by simply asking the three friends and Zophar specifically to give him the same courtesy: listen quietly and respectfully and take Job's own words as their words of consolation to him. It is a gentle reminder that the three initially came to console Job, not argue him to death. And after he is through, Job says, they can go back to mocking him if they wish. The word there is singular, so that dig seems to be directed to Zophar specifically.
- Job points out that his argument has never been with them, but with God, so they had no reason to get angry or sarcastic with him. And because his argument has been with God, "...why should I not be impatient?" It is as if he is saying, "My argument is not with you. What can you do? You are just mere mortals. No, my argument is with God, the only One who can actually fix all this for me and He has done nothing as yet and I know He could fix this with the snap of His fingers, so why should I not be impatient?!" "And look at me", Job cries, "and be astonished, and put your hand over your mouth. Even when I remember, I am disturbed, and horror takes hold of my flesh."

Vss. 7-16

- In this section Job somewhat picks apart Zophar's argument that the wicked always suffer because they are wicked. "Why do the wicked still live, continue on, also become very powerful? Their descendants are established with them in their sight and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, and the rod of God is *not* on them." In other words, the wicked often do quite nicely in every way, thank you. His observation and question is similar to that of Jeremiah 12:1-2, "Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?...You are near to their lips (Lord), but far from their mind." If everything is so cut and dried, black and white as the 3 say, how do they account for what is easy for everyone to see? And why, Job wants to know, is the rod of God on him and not on those who are openly wicked? "They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways. Who is the Almighty,

that we should serve Him and what would we gain if we entreat Him (pray to Him)?” Yet Job cries out to God all the time. Like Psalm 25:4, Job pleads “Make me know Your ways, O Lord. Teach me Your paths.”

Vss. 17-26

- In truth, Job says, everyone lives and dies the same in the end; death is the great equalizer.
- In this section, Job is firing back at Bildad’s speech in Ch. 18. In 18:5-6, Bildad said that “the light of the wicked goes out”, but Job asks how often does that really happen? In 18:12-3, Bildad spoke of how, “(the wicked man’s) strength is famished and calamity is ready at his side. His skin is devoured by disease. The firstborn of death devours his limbs.” But here in 21:17, Job wants to know, “...does their calamity fall on them? Does God apportion destruction in His anger? Are they as straw before the wind and like chaff which the storm carries away?” If so, says Job, I haven’t seen it!
- Ultimately, Job says, whether you are good or wicked doesn’t determine how you’re going to live or die. “One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and satisfied. His sides are filled out with fat and the marrow of his bones is moist. While another dies with a bitter soul, never even tasting anything good. Together they lie down in the dust and worms cover them.”

Vss. 27-34

- Job sees through the arguments of the three friends. And he challenges them to go find real life examples of their theory that the wicked always meet a quick judgement and disaster. Vs. 29 – “Have you not asked wayfaring men and do you not recognize their witness?”
- “Nobleman” or “Prince” in verse 28, literally means “tyrant”.
- Verse 31 suggests that no one is going to really confront the wicked about their sins. No, says verses 32-33, the wicked will die in peace, have an elaborate funeral and be placed in a grand tomb.
- Given the truth that cannot be denied by simple observation, that frankly the wicked often do quite well in this world which undermines the three friends naïve and simplistic view of right and wrong, justice and judgement, Job asks his so-called friends, “How then will you vainly comfort me, for your answers remain full of falsehood?”