

# Job

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Job 23

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Vss. 1-7



- At the beginning of his speech in Ch. 22, Eliphaz offers a long description of the qualities and ultimate suffering of a wicked person and here in the beginning Ch. 23 Job does not argue, indeed he agrees. “Even today my complaint is rebellion. His hand is heavy despite my groaning.”
- In his last speech in Ch. 21, Job was dismissive of his three friends. In verse 4 he asked his friends, “As for me, is my complaint to a mortal? Or why should I not be impatient?” Job knew that his argument was not with any person, but with God. So here again Job returns to that position, ignoring Eliphaz’ speech, asking, “Oh that I knew how to find Him, that I might come to His home! I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments.”
- Job is not concerned about where or when he would meet God, only that he could learn the truth of his suffering. But in verse 6, would God take Job’s demand for a meeting as a challenge? “No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him.” In other words, God is glad to hear the case of the truly righteous. The upright man.
- But verse 7 is interesting in its difficulty to translate. An Old Testament scholar who has written extensively on Job, William Irwin, suggests that the “upright/righteous man” here is not Job himself but none other than the Redeemer, from 19:25, and the “witness in heaven” in 16:19-22.
- The second question with vs. 7’s translation is in the last word, translated here as “my Judge”. It may also read as “my justice”. Further, the word here for “escape” is the same word we saw in 21:10, speaking of a cow giving birth. So one commentator has suggested that what Job is saying is similar to Habakkuk 1:4 where justice has been born “perverted”, suggesting that that the outcome of Job’s meeting with God would be a **rebirth** of his just/righteous life.

Vss. 8-17

- But Job's happy thoughts of redemption quickly fade here as he considers his present situation. He is all too aware that he cannot sense the presence of God at all.
- The ancients determined direction based on facing the rising sun. Your right hand is south, your left is north. Front is east and back is west. In other words, Job has looked for God in every direction and cannot find Him.
- Yet Job remains confident, in part due to his belief in God's ever-watching eye and in part due to his own confidence in his righteousness. "He knows the way I take" or "He knows my path."
- "When He has tried me", shows that Job is starting to understand the truth of what has happened. He has been and is being tested and he has come out, to his mind, looking like gold. Despite all the trials, all the pain and suffering, "My foot has held fast to His path. I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of His lips. I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."
- Vss. 13-14 tell us that Job is indeed starting to understand that it has all been a test and that it may not be near over, that "...*what* His soul desires, that He does. For He performs (completes) what is appointed for me..."
- This revelation suddenly terrifies Job. After all that has happened, what could be next? Suddenly this is no longer about meeting God face to face and working things out. Now he falls into "darkness...deep gloom *which* covers me."
- Yet Job is unwilling to fall into the tepid dogma of his friends. He has seen another side of God, a side which is relatable and comprehensible. He had previously come to know God as just and loving; a God you can talk with and know, who is responsive to the cries of His children. Job is coming to understand that there is a side of God that is clouded so that he cannot see or know, but he also knows that there is a side of God that *is* knowable and just and loving and that both sides of God are true and real.