

JOB

Lesson 9

Chapter 10

- I. Vv. 1-7 – Although there is no clear break at this point, Job reverts to direct address to God, and continues in prayer to the end of the speech.
 - A. Many of the ideas have already been expressed.
 1. Among their reiteration emerges a new thought that gives fresh hope.
 2. Job is a sick man; he cannot believe that God made him to end up in such a state.
 3. He must have had something better in mind, even though at present the only outcome Job can imagine is the gloom of death (v. 22).
 - B. Paul wrote that when he was in Asia he was under such pressure that he despaired of life. (2 Cor. 1:8).
 1. He falls far short of the image of the cheerful evangelist whose happy choruses promise believers nothing but peace and joy all the time, and who push the legitimately dejected into deeper depression by their pious disapproval of any downcast mood.
 2. Paul has more honesty and more humanity.
 3. More theology too; he connected such agony with the suffering of his Lord.
 4. He carried about the death of Jesus in his own body (2 Cor. 4:10).

5. The Gospel of Christ has not brought to any man a guarantee of less mercy than Job's.
 - a) It has brought the sharing of Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10), without which a person is but half a Christian.
 - b) God's own son did not hold the anguish of our life at arm's length; He embraced it and lived it and made it glorious as the instrument of man's salvation.
 6. Many, if not all, of the distinguished forerunners of Christ in the O.T. suffered; Job is in this succession.
 - a) He will find out something about God that is much more than protection from harm or rescue from trouble.
 - b) It is much more important for God to be with him in his trouble.
 - c) This is what he is seeking in prayer.
 - (1) In none of his petitions does he make the obvious request for his sickness to be cured.
 - (2) He does not assume that everything will be all right when he is well again.
 - (3) That would not answer the question that is much more urgent than every other concern – *WHY?*
 7. In the present passage Job focuses this question on the discrepancy between the care with which God had fashioned the human body, and the neglect now showing in his own diseased body.
- C. V. 2 – Job seems to concede what the friends have inferred.
1. *Condemn* implies that God has treated him as if he were wicked.

2. His request to be told implies that God has treated him as if he were wicked.
 3. His request to be told *why thou dost contend against me* expresses Job's genuine puzzlement and hurt, not arrogance and defiance.
- D. v. 3 – It is unaccountable that God should despise the work of his hands; this reversal of values is seen in his apparent preference for the designs of the wicked, an idea that Job will enlarge upon in Chapter 21.
- E. Vv. 4-7 – A possible explanation of God's upside-down treatment of a good person like Job as if he were a sinner (v. 6), while apparently smiling on the wicked (v. 3), could be that God sees things differently from men, or that a man's brief life (9:25; 10:20) gives the matter a completely different perspective from God's endless years.
1. Here Job has hit upon a truth that, for the moment, gives pain.
 2. Later, he will find contentment in it, and will say "I loathe myself" in a completely different spirit.
- II. Vv. 8-13 – If some of Job's more frantic outcries have made us afraid that he is in peril of tumbling into unbelief, this poem on creation makes it clear that Job is basically confident that God's intentions were good in making man.
- A. Job uses three or four quite different images, drawn from technology, to tell the story of man's origin.
- B. All such handicrafts have in common the deliberate design and careful construction of articles intended to be useful.
1. Job's undisguised sense of the marvelous carries with it the confidence that God similarly had a purpose altogether intelligent and good.

2. God's very creation of man was a commitment; it was unthinkable that God would now undo his work and *turn Job to dust again*.
3. God treasured in his heart a covenant promise (*steadfast love*) that guarantees life for his creatures.
4. *Life and steadfast love* is hendiadys.
 - a) The affirmation of life by God through creation is all-important for Job.
 - b) Here is an expression of struggling faith, for the thought of death is still powerful, and dominates the end of this speech.
 - c) It will become to clearer expression in the expectation of resurrection after death in Job's later speeches, especially chapters 14 and 19.

- III. Vv. 14-17 – There seems to be an abrupt transition from the tranquility of verse 13 to the agitation of the next section.
- A. Job's hope, which had risen to trust in the faithfulness of God, seems to sink back exhausted.
 - B. He seems to be saying that it makes no difference to God whether he be good or bad.
 1. The first part of v. 15 indicates that if Job is wrong, he will be ashamed; but if he is right he will not be proud.
 2. In the Masoretic Text the verbs are imperative –*satiate my shame! And look at my affliction!* -- as if he were once more appealing to God's compassion.
 - C. The real reason is given in vv. 16ff – In spite of difficulty in sorting out the picture in verse 16, verse 17 shows that Job is still in terror at God's apparent hostility (cf. 9:34; the idea finds even more horrifying expression in 16:9-14).
 1. Job is assailed by accusers and, apparently, the army of God.

2. The last line of verse 17 is another of those disconcerting places, so frequent in Job, where clear statements are followed by jumbled words that yield sense only in a loose translation guided by the drift of the passage.
 3. It is literally *changes and a host are with me*; if the first phrase means *relieving troops* or *fresh forces*, then this resembles and illustrates the statement in v. 16b that God is full of surprises and His resources are limitless.
- IV. Vv. 18-22 – Job now has stated the issues more incisively than his detached comforters.
- A. The two great things he knows about God intersect and clash.
 1. God is powerful; God is good.
 2. In creation first, and now in Job's recent disasters, the might of God is seen.
 - a) That God did it all is indisputable.
 - b) Job does not question God's right to do it, but God's reasons for his actions Job cannot detect.
 - c) Why should he create only to destroy?
 3. His craftsmanship in a man's body is a supreme token of His commitment to life.
 4. But for Job it has become a burden and a horror (10:1a).
 - B. The baffled sufferer retreats to his first position, the lament of chapter 3, which is resumed in the closing lines of this speech.
 1. The wishes have been expressed before.
 - a) Wishes he had never been born (18a),
 - b) Or had died in the womb (19a).
 - c) Since he did come to birth he wishes he had died immediately (19b), or at least that his life had been cut short.

2. In his first lament Job had expressed envy of the dead, because they could relax.
 - a) Here, however, he draws little cheer from the prospect of death; he piles up a heap of gloomy terms, including four different words for *darkness* to indicate how dreary sheol is.
 - b) His preference for *a little comfort* in this life points back to bodily existence in historical circumstances as the proper locus of the vindication of God and the fulfillment of man.

Chapter 11

- II.b.v. Zophar's First Speech – 11:1-20.
- A. Zophar was the least engaging of Job's three friends.
1. He had not a breath of compassion.
 2. His cold disapproval showed how little he had heard of Job's heart.
 3. His censorious chiding showed how little he had sensed Job's hurt.
 4. (vv. 1-2) Zophar detaches the words from the man and hears them only as babble or mockery.
 5. Zophar's wisdom is a bloodless retreat into theory.
- B. (v. 3) Job has challenged God, but he has not mocked Him.
1. He has expressed disappointment with his friends, but he has not ridiculed them.
 2. (v. 4) Zophar is blunt – he drives home the arrow that the others have only painted.
 3. (v. 5) Zophar thinks he knows what God will say; so much for his complaint that Job is arrogant!
 4. (v. 6) Zophar knows the secret of wisdom; God is not nearly as hard on Job as he deserves.
- C. VV.7-12 expound Zophar's statement in v. 6a.
1. vv. 7-9 assert that the depths and limits of God exceed the bounds of the four major realms of the universe.
 2. v. 10 – His power is irresistible, His decisions are irreversible.

3. vv. 11-12 – Humans may not be able to find any wrong with Job, but God can; there appears to be hope for Job when pigs fly.
- D. VV 13-20 -- the future is over; the preacher begins.
1. (v. 13-15) Get your thinking straight and say your prayers.
 - a. Zophar falls into the common error of applying the categories of guilt and pardon to every human problem.
 - b. Clearly, this is not what Job needs!
 2. VV. 16-19 Are a beautiful portrait of the tranquil life of the forgiven person.
 3. (v. 20) However, Job is in the place of the wicked.
 - a. Friends have had the first round.
 - i. All the issues are on the table and Job still stands where he is submissive to God but strained in faith of the goodness of God.
 - ii. He refuses to repent of fictitious sin to establish the justice of God.
 - b. His friends regard this as pride and hypocrisy. They cannot see Job's anguish as he strives to see the smiling face hidden behind God's frowning providence.

