

JOB

Lesson 17

Chapter 30, cont'd

- I. Vv. 16-23. For the third time Job emphasizes the contrast between his past and his present existence.
 - a. V. 16. In a final burst of grief Job experiences only days of affliction. His suffering has drained him of all of his zest for life.
 - b. V. 17. The night is more difficult to endure when one has bodily pain. It seems to take no rest and continues to gnaw away more fiercely.
 - c. V. 18-19. Job feels that he is in a “knock-down drag-out” struggle with God. His diseased body is very uncomfortable to say the least. He reaffirms that God causes his pain and suffering.
 - d. V. 20. Job cries out to God, but God does not break his silence. This adds insult to injury. God’s silence is interpreted as indifference and lack of concern. Our fear is that no answer will come. True prayer has at least two parts—crying out and waiting.
 - e. V. 21. God has become cruel. This image suggests falling into enemy hands and being gradually and progressively infected with new and more intense pain.
 - f. V. 22. Job was familiar with storms. His children had died in one. He now “saw” such a wind that would blow him away

until he disappeared. God was treating Job as Job had described God's treatment of the wicked (21:18). [NOTE: There is a great deal of difficulty in this verse. There are various translations. The NEB admits to guessing its way through "unintelligible" Hebrew.]

- g. V. 23. While v. 22 has difficulties, v. 23 is perfectly clear. Death may be personified, but this does not make it god outside of the Lord's sphere. Sheol is vividly called "the house appointed for all living." Whatever happened, he would see Sheol from which none returned in the body (10:21-22). Even so, Job was sustained by the conclusion that his Redeemer lived, and without his flesh he would see him (19:25-26).

II. Vv. 24-31. Job, facing death, cried for help.

- a. Vv. 24-25. This verse makes other difficult verses look easy. Hardly any two versions agree. Delitzsch, a very respected Hebrew scholar, was has four pages of discussion in his commentary on Job, but was described by another commentator as coming out as confused as when he went in. Perhaps the best understanding of it is that of Francis Anderson: "In the light of verse 25 it could present the picture of a person 'in ruins' stretching out his hand for help which no common humanity could deny." Job certainly would not for he wept for the one in trouble and his heart was grieved for the needy.
- b. V. 26. Could he not expect to be requited for his goodness? To the contrary, evil came when he hoped for good and darkness came when he waited for light. His physical pain and mental torture were constant.

- c. Vv. 27-31. The last five verses in the chapter vividly reveal Job's physical and emotional effects of his suffering. Job disputed his friend's views that virtue produces happiness. Job's prosperity did not continue.
- i. V. 27. He seethes (boils) within. His anxiety raged. He had no respite. If faith is always having peace and quiet and confidence in God, where does that leave Job? Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10) and the Canaanite woman (Mt. 15) did not approach Jesus as a lottery ticket, what did they have to lose. They approached him as the only one who could answer their need.
 - ii. Vv. 28-31. These verses enlarge on Job's plight. His skin is blackened but not by the sun. He stands up in the assembly and cries for help but no man hears (v. 28). He is a brother to the jackal and a companion of the ostrich. Only wild animals offer him company (v. 29). His disease, not the sun, blackens his skin and his bones burn with fever (v. 30). His lyre or harp had turned to mourning and his flute to the sound of those who weep. Job had no joy even from an instrument that was used for celebration. Joy turned to mourning could not produce different music any more than a Mozart sonata could be played on a bagpipe (v. 31).

Chapter 31

4.a.iii – Job’s Ultimate Challenge --- 31:1-40. This chapter might be called “Job’s Sermon on the Mount.” It covers everything from lust and adultery to loving one’s neighbor, including alms and social justice, love of money, and other idolatries. It is a priceless testament and is a fitting consummation of the words of Job. It is an oath of clearance in the form of a negative confession, a well-known practice in the ancient jurisprudence. A crime could be disowned by calling down a curse on oneself if he had committed it. It was addressed to God in an appeal against human judgment. Chapter 31 lists specific crimes denying them all. Job evaluates every area of his life leaving no stone unturned.

- I. Vv. 1-4. An eastern prince could do as he pleased to anyone he pleased. What will God who sees all think of this? Job’s conduct is different. . He speaks of his “thought” life. He looks into the inner recesses of his heart. Have we examined the inner man? Only we can.
- II. Vv. 5-8. Job turns to his ethical life, his professional life at the office. God is a witness to his integrity (v. 6; 2:3). V. 7 is a good definition of covetousness.
- III. Vv. 9-12. Job’s home life is laid out. He has been faithful. When we are not with the one we love, do we love the one we are with??? Adultery is a sin punished by both God and man in this life and in the next.
- IV. Vv. 13-15. Job’s work life.

- V. Vv. 16-23. Job's community life.
- VI. Vv. 24-25. Job's financial life.
- VII. Vv. 26-28. Job's spiritual life.
- VIII. Vv. 29-32. Job's social life.
- IX. Vv. 33-34. Job has not hypocritically covered sin.
- X. Vv. 35-37. Job endorses every word as true. Job's response to his friends is over. His final challenge to God has been made. He has had his say, spent all his breath. He has learned at least this much – the process of becoming a true individual involves dying to oneself. One must exhaust all energy of the flesh and disappear.

Chapter 32

4.b. – Elihu – 32:1-33:24. Questions: 1) How well did Elihu know Job and his friends? 2) How did Elihu find out about Job and his losses and sickness? 3) How long had Elihu been sitting there? 4) Did any of the previous speakers pay any attention to him as he was waiting his turn to speak? 5) Why is he mentioned only in these 6 chapters (32-37), and not in the beginning or the end? 6) Were his words ignored or were they so profound that they ended the discussion? While these questions have no answer in the text, we can learn some things about Elihu by listening to his words. He appears to be impulsive, cocksure, a know it all who claims to have all of the answers. He recklessly charges against his elders without adding any substance to the conversation. He doesn't appear to be any more sensitive to Job's problems than others, or add a new and fresh dimension, or

offer a solution that the others had failed to offer.

- I. Vv. 1-5. Elihu is angry with Job and his three friends. While we don't know how long Elihu had been sitting there, but by the time they finished he was churning inside. He was angry with Job because Job justified himself before God and refused to admit sin. The inference was that Job was not justified in that statement. He was angry with the three friends because they condemned Job without making a case against him. Of course the friends had a difficult time because no one can find a solution when both God and Job were right. Elihu had at least waited to speak in deference to the friends' age, but was ready when his turn came. His youthful modesty was excelled only by youthful assurance and exuberance.
- II. Vv. 6-28. An apology for his intervention.
 - a. Vv. 6-10. Could Elihu's first words be false humility? His humility doesn't go well with his anger. The only words missing at the end of verse seven are, "...but I was wrong." He clearly did not think that the three friends knew what they were doing and had no wisdom to speak. However, he had "knowledge" (NASB margin: ESV and ESV translate "opinion") and was anxious to share it. He apparently believes that his knowledge came from "the breath of the Almighty." Wisdom belongs to God's spirit and not to age. Though young, he apparently thought that he had the experience of age. "I," "me," and "my" dominate his early speech, occurring more than

50 times. He was convinced he had a message and urged them to listen. Excitement was apparent in his language. He told the friends they had miserably failed to convince Job that he was wrong.

b. Vv. 11-22.

i. Vv. 11-14. Elihu waited for the friends' words, listened to their reasonings, gave them his attention, but heard nothing that refuted Job or answered his words (11-12). Job is not the place to find wisdom. God who has wisdom may vanquish Job, but man will not and cannot (v. 13). Job has not directed his words against me and I can't answer his arguments with your speeches (14).

ii. Vv. 15-22.

1. Vv. 15-17. We have more bombast from Elihu. We expect something impressive after such a buildup.

2. V. 18. "I am full of words." No one questions this by now. The spirit within him doesn't seem able to constrain very much.

3. Vv. 19-20. A figurative description of his impulse to speak. There is certainly a lot of vinegar in Elihu's wine. Elihu doesn't seem to understand that God's gifts are not for individuals as much as for the church. His gifts are given not so much to an individual as through an individual.

4. Vv. 21-22. He will speak plainly without flattery (except flattery for himself) lest God should take

him away.

Chapter 33

- III. **Vv. 1-7.** A mortal himself, formed by God's spirit, yet he will answer Job. He is the ultimate expression of sincerity (v. 3). He assures Job that he is human and belongs to God. Thus Job need not fear him and his pressure should not weight heavily on Job (vv. 6-7 – note the admission of pressure).