

JOB – Chapters 12-15 – “JOB Answers His Critics; Job’s Despondent Prayer; Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” under “Bible Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION (Chuck Smith)

The book of Job, chapter eleven. Job is a man who has been caught in an interesting situation. Because of the uprightness of this man, God has been bragging on him in the courts of heaven. There, Satan challenges the estimate of God, concerning Job. Satan suggests that Job only is serving God for the benefit, the blessing, the perks. He said, “Let me take away all these things, and he will curse you to your face”. So, God allowed Satan to take away from Job, to strip from him, all of the earthly possessions that he had. Still Job maintained his integrity. In all of these things, he did not curse God, nor charged God foolishly. But having heard the word of the loss of all of his goods, he knelt down and worshiped the Lord, and declared, “Naked I came into the world, naked I will go out. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord”. So as this controversy continued between God and Satan over Job, Satan then suggested that, “Skin for skin, a man will give all that he has for his life. You’ve not let me touch him. Take your hand of protection from him. Let me touch his body, let me afflict him, and he will curse you to your face”. So God let down the hedge, so that Satan could afflict Job’s body. He was covered with boils, he was in a miserable, loathsome state. Job couldn’t understand what was going on in his life, there was no explanation for him, only knew that death was preferable to life, at this point. Three men came to comfort Job in his grief, and in his sorrows, in his loss. When they came and saw the condition of Job, this miserable condition, physically. Covered with boils, smelly, loathsome, horrible, ugly! They sat in astonishment for seven days, after which time, Job opened up his mouth, and he cursed the day that he was born. He wished that he had never existed. Life was intolerable. He expressed his question over why this could happen to him. Thus these three men, began their discourses with Job, as they sought to dispute the words of Job, as they sought to rebuke him. Rather than comforting the man, they were only rebuking Job, so that, he finally declared, “You are all a bunch of miserable comforters! You haven’t helped me one bit!” There comes sarcasm in their exchanges back and forth. For they are living under the premise that no one could suffer as Job was suffering, unless he was exceedingly wicked. Surely, what he is going through has to be some kind of judgment of God upon him, for some hidden sin, or some secret wickedness that he has been practicing. Innocent men don’t suffer, as Job suffers. They did not know the whole story. They were judging from only observation, partial knowledge. It is always dangerous to judge from observation, and partial knowledge, as we see in the case of Job, because they misunderstood the case completely. Their philosophy was wrong. Good people often suffer things, and we don’t know the reasons why. Because a person is going through heavy affliction, heavy trials, because a person has lost everything, does not mean that they were filled with pride, and God is somehow judging them. We do not know the whys of God, or the ways of God. Often times when we are judging another person’s condition, not having all the facts, we are prone to judge wrongly, as did Job’s friends. They accused him of secret wickedness, they accused him of hypocrisy. They make all kinds of accusations against Job, because they reason, “No one would suffer as he is suffering, unless God was really angry with him, and coming down with a heavy hand of judgement”. Through it all, Job knows nothing that he has done that would provoke this kind of judgement upon him. He protests that he is innocent, which only angers them the more, and causes them to be more vehement in their denunciations of him.

CHAPTERS 12—14- *THEME: Job replies to his three friends.*

This lengthy reply that Job makes in this section concludes the first round of discourses. Remember that in Job's day folk enjoyed intellectual competition—men pitting their minds against each other. Today it is not brain but brawn in athletic contests. *And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you [Job 12:1-2]*. Now there is a sarcastic statement and a pretty good one. Job says, “You fellows think you have all the answers. You are *the* people, and wisdom will die with you!” They were talking as if Job were a simpleton and they had all the answers. *But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? [Job 12:3]*. Job knows as much as they know. The problem is that they have not spoken to the situation as it really is. There is something important in these discourses that I want to call to your attention so you can be watching for it. Instead of leading Job to self-judgment, the three friends only minister to a spirit of self-vindication in Job. In other words, they make an attack on Job which forces him to come back with a defense of himself.

CHAPTER 15 - *THEME: Second discourse of Eliphaz.*

These men are pitting their minds one against another. Instead of seeing brawn pitted against brawn in athletic events, these folk liked to witness intellectual battles. We have completed one round of discourses. All three of the friends have spoken, and Job has answered each of them. Now we start on the second round of discourses. We could say this is the second inning if we were talking about baseball, or we could call it the second half if we were talking about basketball or football. Remember that Eliphaz is the spiritualist. He has had a dream and a vision. He feels that he has had a remarkable experience and should be heard. Many of the testimonies we hear in our day have little value because they rest truth on experience. First of all we should have *truth*, which is the Word of God; then experience should come out of that. Many experiences do not coincide with God's Word. I have heard testimonies given by so-called Christians who have had a “great experience” that is no more scriptural than the telephone directory. Eliphaz bases his words on experience, and it is mighty hard to deal with a fellow like that.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

JOB – Chapters 12-15 – “JOB Answers His Critics;

Job 12:1 Then Job answered and said:

Job 12:2 "No doubt you are the people, And wisdom will die with you (plural)!"

Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not know such things as these?

Job 12:4 "I am one mocked by his friends, Who called on God, and He answered him, The just and blameless who is ridiculed.

Job 12:5 A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease; It is made ready for those whose feet slip.

Job 12:6 The tents of robbers prosper, And those who provoke God are secure—In what God provides by His hand.

Job 12:7 "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

Job 12:8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

Job 12:9 Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this.

Job 12:10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?

Job 12:11 Does not the ear test words And the mouth taste its food?

Job 12:12 Wisdom is with aged men, And with length of days, understanding.

Job 12:13 "With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding.

Job 12:14 If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt; If He imprisons a man, there can be no release.

Job 12:15 If He withholds the waters, they dry up; If He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.

Job 12:16 With Him are strength and prudence. The deceived and the deceiver are His.

Job 12:17 He leads counselors away plundered, And makes fools of the judges.

Job 12:18 He loosens the bonds of kings, And binds their waist with a belt.

Job 12:19 He leads princes away plundered, And overthrows the mighty.

Job 12:20 He deprives the trusted ones of speech, And takes away the discernment of the elders.

vs.1-3 Job somewhat sarcastically answers Zophar and his other friends, but he speaks plainly about the wisdom and greatness of God. *No doubt you are the people:* We can note the sarcasm and bitterness tone of voice in Job’s voice because his “friends” really had acted as if they were *the people* and if they had all *wisdom*, which were generally proverbs, not really a proof of wisdom and experience in those using them.

vs.4-6 *...mocked by his friends:* Job complained that even though he was a godly man, one *who called on God, and He answered*, was *just and blameless* – even so, he was *mocked and ridiculed*. *A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease:* Job, remembered what his life, when he called on God and received answers. In those days he didn’t need *a lamp*, because his life was *at ease*. But now it is all different. His friends only mock and misunderstand him....*who provoke God are secure:* Now Job’s life seemed all different. Previously everything made sense. The righteous seemed to be blessed and the wicked seemed to be afflicted. Job did not give up on God, but he had to give up on his prior understanding of God.

vs.7-12 Job explains his understanding of God’s ways....*ask the beasts, and they will teach you:* Job says what his friends say about God is so elementary that even the animals know it....*hand of the LORD..* This is the only time the name Yahweh is used for God. *Does not the ear test words:* Job here makes statements that are obviously true, with the idea that as clearly as these things are true, so is the power and majesty of God also easily understood as true. *In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?* **Dan 5:23d***the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.*

vs.13-25 Job describes the God’s great power! *With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding:* For the rest of this chapter, rebuking Zophar’s criticism, Job will show that he did indeed know that God was great in *wisdom and strength*, and that He was mighty in *counsel and understanding* Job is telling his friends not criticize him any more on this point because he does know God and His greatness. *If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt:* This is a most remarkable fact. No power, skill, or cunning of man can completely destroy the smallest particle of matter. While man can change it form, reducing it to nothing belongs to God alone.” Job goes on to show: God’s power over minds; His power over the wise; over rulers; over the eloquent; over darkness; over the nations!

12 vs.1-3 All three friends have now spoken, showing insensitivity, harshness to Job, causing anger. We need to be so careful in comfort giving situations that our behavior and words do not hurt or harm them and cause anger.

Jas 1:20 *for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

Pro 12:18 *There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.*

12 vs.4-6 Note the reaction of Job now resisting their premise that the righteous always prosper and the wicked suffer. Their behavior is producing just the opposite of what they want and what is needed – producing angry reaction and response, not comfort!

vs.7-12 This is an amazing revelation from Job during such a time. How likely would we think of this when he accused as Job was? **Vs. 9-10** Job uses “Yahweh” the only time in the book, demonstrating that he knows that God is the all-knowing, giver and sustainer of life.

12 vs.13-25 Job's speaks of the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God, in ordering and disposing of the affairs of men, according to His own counsel. If only wise and good men, differing in minor things, would see it to be for their honor and comfort, and the edification of others, to dwell most upon those great things in which they are agreed. Here Job speaks like himself. There are no passionate complaints, no unhappy reflections, but everything masculine and great! **Job’s character is a good example for us!**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Job 12:21 He pours contempt on princes, And disarms the mighty.

Job 12:22 He uncovers deep things out of darkness, And brings the shadow of death to light.

Job 12:23 He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them.

Job 12:24 He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth, And makes them wander in a pathless wilderness.

Job 12:25 They grope in the dark without light, And He makes them stagger like a drunken man.

Job Continues: Still I Will Hope in God

Job 13:1 "Behold, my eye has seen all this, My ear has heard and understood it.

Job 13:2 What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.

Job 13:3 But I would speak to the Almighty, And I desire to reason with God.

Job 13:4 But you forgers of lies, You are all worthless physicians.

Job 13:5 Oh, that you would be silent, And it would be your wisdom!

Job 13:6 Now hear my reasoning, And heed the pleadings of my lips.

Job 13:7 Will you speak wickedly for God, And talk deceitfully for Him?

Job 13:8 Will you show partiality for Him? Will you contend for God?

Job 13:9 Will it be well when He searches you out? Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man?

Job 13:10 He will surely rebuke you If you secretly show partiality.

Job 13:11 Will not His excellence make you afraid, And the dread of Him fall upon you?

Job 13:12 Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes, Your defenses are defenses of clay.

Job 13:13 "Hold your peace with me, and let me speak, Then let come on me what may!

Job 13:14 Why do I take my flesh in my teeth, And put my life in my hands?

Job 13:15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

vs.13-25 (cont'd) He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth: Job extends God’s power to His ability to take *away the understanding* of even great men. When He does this, *they grope in the dark without light*

vs.1-12 Job’s challenge and rebuke to his critics. *Behold, my eye has seen all this . . . What you know, I also know:* Job here complained against the claim of superior knowledge on the part of his friends. To them – especially perhaps to Zophar – the situation seemed so simple; therefore Job must be somewhat ignorant to see what they believed was so easy to see. *I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God:* Job here developed a theme that would end with a virtual demand that God make sense of his suffering. God’s response to Job’s demand and Job’s response to God’s response makes up the last few chapters of the book. We sense the deep frustration in Job that prompted this plea, *“I desire to reason with God.”* It was bad enough when he could make no sense of his situation; but it was worse when his friends persistently insisted on their own wrong answer to Job’s crisis. As much as anything, it was their insistence that prompted Job to demand an answer and vindication from God. *You forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians:* The same devastating frustration that led Job to wish he were dead now leads him in bitter response to his friends’ accusations. *Will you speak wickedly for God . . . Will you contend for God?* Job’s friends were very confident in their ability to speak for God; but since what they said was not true, they actually misrepresented them. They acted like lawyers on God’s behalf; but since they did not truly represent Him. *He will surely rebuke you if you secretly show partiality:* The *partiality* Job’s friends showed was toward *themselves*. Job knew they would never want to be treated the way they were treating Job. *Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes:* The friends of Job claimed to know wisdom and speak wisely; Job dismissed their supposed guidance as mere *platitudes* having no wisdom, leaving the impression of *proverbs of ashes*.

vs.13-19 Job’s confidence in God and confidence in his own integrity. *Hold your peace with me, and let me speak:* Job demanded the right to finish his statement. *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him:* This is the attitude that will see Job through his past and present crises. He did not understand any of his situation and felt that God was against him, not for him. At the same time, he could still exclaim: *yet I will trust Him*. Job is saying he has no dependence or reliance on anyone but God, that he trusts in Him alone. Even if He destroys me by this suffering affliction, I will hope than when He tries me, I shall come forth as gold. It is interesting that in these words Job answered both the accusations of Satan and of his friends. *Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. . . . I know that I shall be vindicated:* Before this suffering crisis, Job believed himself to be a blameless and upright man. He clung to this belief all through this experience, including the protests and arguments of his friends. Even *before* God, he would *defend* his *own ways* – not in prideful conceit, but in connection with reality.

13 vs.1-12 Job now is bitter and sarcastic. His friends are saying to him that if you walk with God, He will prosper you. If you deny God, He will judge you. This prosperity gospel, still goes on today. His friends are not helping him at all, and he longs to appeal to God directly. **In instances of disagreements with other in our lives, how often and when do we speak and reason with God about it?**

13 vs.13-19 In the midst of his immense suffering, Job demonstrates an attitude that has seen him steadfast in not cursing God in the past, and, as we will see, will be successful in the future! In *verse 15*, he makes this amazing statement, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him”*. **How likely would it be for us in such as situation to say we have no dependence or reliance on anyone but God and that we trust in Him and in Him alone?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Job 13:16 He also shall be my salvation, For a hypocrite could not come before Him.

Job 13:17 Listen carefully to my speech, And to my declaration with your ears.

Job 13:18 See now, I have prepared my case, I know that I shall be vindicated.

Job 13:19 Who is he who will contend with me? If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

Job’s Despondent Prayer:

Job 13:20 "Only two things do not do to me, Then I will not hide myself from You:

Job 13:21 Withdraw Your hand far from me, And let not the dread of You make me afraid.

Job 13:22 Then call, and I will answer; Or let me speak, then You respond to me.

Job 13:23 How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin.

Job 13:24 Why do You hide Your face, And regard me as Your enemy?

Job 13:25 Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro? And will You pursue dry stubble?

Job 13:26 For You write bitter things against me, And make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.

Job 13:27 You put my feet in the stocks, And watch closely all my paths. You set a limit for the soles of my feet.

If now I hold my tongue, I perish: In a sense, Job felt that this determined connection to truth and reality was all he had. He had lost everything, including his sense of spiritual well-being. All he had was the truth, and he felt that if he let go of that to simply stop the argument or to please his friends, he would *perish*.

vs.20-27 Job appeals to God, asking Him if sin is indeed the cause of his suffering.

Do not . . . Withdraw Your hand far from me: Earlier Job told God that he just wanted to be left alone. Now he shows that this was just a feeling, and that really he didn’t want God to *withdraw His hand far from* him. Job understood that God’s hand was sustaining him, at least in part, in the midst of this great trial.

Then I will not hide myself from You: Job has never hidden from God and apparently has no intention of doing so, but it is the hiddenness of God that is horrifying him that God would expel Job from His presence. *Let not the dread of*

You make me afraid: We see here the value that Job placed upon his personal connection with God and concerned that this present season would destroy it. Job wanted restored communication with God (*Then call, and I will answer*). *Make me know my transgression and my sin:* Job has held to his own innocence, that there was no special or severe sin that prompted his recent period of suffering, and despite the eloquent pleas of his friends. At the same time, he will allow for the possibility that he is wrong. Therefore, he prayed this wonderful prayer, asking God to show him his *iniquities and sins*. *Why do You hide Your face, and regard me as Your enemy:* Notice Job’s agony. He longed for restored communication and communion with God, but he thought God regarded him as an **enemy** and was hiding from him. *Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?* Like swirling leaves Job likens himself-a helpless, hopeless, worthless, weak, despised, perishing thing.

You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth: Again showing that Job did not believe himself to be without sin. Instead, he recognized the *iniquities of my youth* and feared that God was now charging these sins against him. *For You write bitter things against me:* Sort of like a doctor writing a prescription for bitter medicine; or a judge, prescribing bitter punishment; or recording Job’s bitter crimes. *You put my feet in the stocks:* Because he thought that God was against him, Job felt hedged in by God. He felt as if his feet were limited and his paths were closely watched. *You set a limit for the soles of my feet:* This is actually inscribing a print on my feet , so that it may be known and traced.

13 vs.20-27 Previously Job had told God that he just wanted to be left alone. Now he shows that this was just an emotion and that really he didn’t want God to *withdraw His hand far from* him. Job understood that God’s hand was sustaining him, at least partially in the midst of this great trial. Job has never hidden from God and seemingly has no intention of doing so, but it is the hiddenness of God that is horrifying him that God would expel Job from His presence. **Would we place such a high value as Job did on our personal connection with God and be as concerned that such a season of suffering and pain would destroy it?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Job 13:28 "Man decays like a rotten thing, Like a garment that is moth-eaten.

Job Continues: Death Comes Soon to All
Job 14:1 "Man who is born of woman Is of few days and full of trouble.

Job 14:2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue.

Job 14:3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one, And bring me to judgment with Yourself?

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!

Job 14:5 Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.

Job 14:6 Look away from him that he may rest, Till like a hired man he finishes his day.

Job 14:7 "For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, And that its tender shoots will not cease.

Job 14:8 Though its root may grow old in the earth, And its stump may die in the ground,

Job 14:9 Yet at the scent of water it will bud And bring forth branches like a plant.

Job 14:10 But man dies and is laid away; Indeed he breathes his last And where is he?

Job 14:11 As water disappears from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dries up,

Job 14:12 So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep.

v. 28 Job lamenting the frailty of man says *Man decays like a rotten thing*: Job’s eloquent meditation on the greatness of God appropriately elevated God. But it also made man, by comparison, seem *like a rotten thing*. He is agreeing somewhat with Zophar’s understanding of the depravity of man, however, Job disagreeing with Zophar’s applying that to Job’s circumstance. *Like a garment that is moth-eaten*: Job is describing more than a description of the depravity of man in general; it was a sigh of discouragement over his own condition. Job was the one decaying *like a rotten thing*; He was like *a garment that is moth-eaten*. Zophar could talk about it, but Job was living and experiencing it.

vs.1-2 *Few of days and full of trouble*: Having mentioned the idea of the frailty of men in general and his own frailty in particular, Job here expands on the idea. He considers that the days of man on this earth are short and often *full of trouble*. *He flees like a shadow and does not continue*: Considering the life of man – fleeting and frail – Job also speculated on what happened to man after this fading, shadow-like life; considering that perhaps it *does not continue*. He may have been thinking that God could hide Job in Sheol till his anger passed and then raise him.

vs. 3-6 Job’s prayer: *Do You open Your eyes on such a one*: Job here applied his previous thoughts on the fleeting and frail nature of humanity to prayer over *his own* situation. “God, You see that I am the rotting one; the moth-eaten garment; the fading flower and the fleeing shadow. Look upon me in mercy!” *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!* Job despairs that perhaps God demands something of him that he is unable to be or do. If God demands perfect cleanness before He will relieve Job’s affliction, then Job knew he could never meet that standard. *You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass. Look away from him that he may rest*: Job continued to paint the picture of God fencing man in, restricting his movements. Under such an idea, it would be better if God would just **look away** so the afflicted one could **rest**.

vs.7-12 Job considers the idea that man does not live beyond the grave. *There is hope for a tree*: Job here observed that there is a sort of resurrection in the world of trees and plants; new life can sprout out of an old stump. *But a man dies and is laid away*: As far as Job could see, death ends the existence of man and after death a man simply disappears (And where is **he**?) As Job thought about it, it all seemed so unfair. Why should a tree have a better hope of resurrection than a man? *So man lies down and does not rise. . . . They will not awake nor be roused from their sleep*: We come to another place in the Book of Job reflecting the shadowy and uncertain understanding of the afterlife. We can simply say that Job was wrong in his understanding of the afterlife. Later, near and at the end of the book, God challenged and corrected Job’s presumptuous assertions regarding the afterlife, reminding Job that he did not in fact know that life after death was like.

13 v. 28 Have we ever elevated God to an appropriately high place, that by comparison we sense ourselves to be like a moth-eaten garment? What an example of humility for us!

14 vs.1-6 We see here the great contrast between the Old Testament saints and the New! Jesus has brought us the truthful answers to the assumptions Job is making here that death comes soon and there is little hope. the common lot of every man. **How thankful are we for our “living hope in Christ Jesus”?**

14 vs.7-12 Our days are determined God. He has appointed our days. He knows exactly when and how we’re are going to. He’s appointed my boundaries, and I can’t pass over them. When the time comes for Him to take each of us home, we’re going to go! Job contrasts us to hope that is in trees. You can cut down a tree. Often new branches will spring up from the roots The moment, they receive water, new branches will come on up out of the roots. Job is thinking there is more hope for a tree to have life after death than **he** *Indeed he breathes his last And where is he?* **A great question for all unbelievers!** How often have you wondered the same thing?

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Job 14:13 *"Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!"*

Job 14:14 *If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes.*

Job 14:15 *You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.*

Job 14:16 *For now You number my steps, But do not watch over my sin.*

Job 14:17 *My transgression is sealed up in a bag, And You cover my iniquity.*

Job 14:18 *"But as a mountain falls and crumbles away, And as a rock is moved from its place;*

Job 14:19 *As water wears away stones, And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth; So You destroy the hope of man.*

Job 14:20 *You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his countenance and send him away.*

Job 14:21 *His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; They are brought low, and he does not perceive it.*

Job 14:22 *But his flesh will be in pain over it, And his soul will mourn over it."*

vs. 13-17 Job longs for the grave and hopes for something beyond. *Oh, that You would hide me in the grave:* Job didn't know much about the afterlife, but he supposed or hoped that it was better than his present misery. His general uncertainty is reflected in his question, *"If a man dies, shall he live again?"* There is no answer to this tremendous question except that which came to us through Jesus Christ and His Gospel. *'Who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel' (2Ti 1:10).* Job's question was answered by Jesus, and that so completely as to leave no room for doubt. *All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes:* Job looked for the *change* he hoped death to bring, that at least it would relieve him from his present agony. *You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands:* Job here hoped for a restoration of relationship with God after death, since he no longer really hoped for a restoration during this life. We see some confusion in Job regarding the afterlife. He now says something much more positive: *"You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands"*. Nothing less than the strongest call upon his justice could have induced him thus to destroy the work of his hands. No wonder that he has an earnest desire towards it. *But do not watch over my sin. . . . You cover my iniquity:* Job prayed these words not only because he desperately wanted God to not judge him according to the full measure of his sins, but also because he wanted Zophar and the others to hear that Job did in fact know that he was a sinner, and not perfect. *My transgression is sealed up in a bag:* Job's transgressions were all numbered and sealed up so that none of them could be lost.

vs. 18-22 Job considers the unlimited power of God and despairs. *So You destroy the hope of man:* Thinking of a great mountain crumbling away or a flood sweeping away large areas of earth; Job illustrated the way that God sweeps away the *hope of man*. When God sets Himself against a man, there is nothing the man can do; God will *prevail forever against him, and he passes on. His sons come to honor, and he does not know it:* The man swept away by God does not know the good or bad things that happen to his family after he passes from this life. Job considered how fundamentally unfair all of this seemed; that somehow, even this swept away one's *flesh will be in pain over it* – over the not knowing as much as anything else. *And his soul will mourn over it:* These words fittingly conclude this section recording Job's speech to his friends and his prayers to God. His *soul* is genuinely in mourning, and much of what we read is the agonized outpouring of his feelings.

14 vs. 13-17 What a great question Job and we all ask! *If a man dies, shall he live again? No event other than the death of Jesus Christ for our sins according to the Scriptures and His resurrection, victorious over sin and death has or could occur to answer this question!!* How committed are you and I to getting this message of the gospel out to everyone possible?

14 vs. 18-22 Coming to the close of this section of Job's speech to his friends, he compares the power and might of God in crumbling away great mountains and floods sweeping away the earth to the way God takes away the hope of man. Job is thinking it's unfair for man not to be able to do anything to stop this. We can easily see his deep mourning and agonizing in his situation. Again we see the position Job's three friends have helped put him in by their constantly wrongful accusations to just get right with God!

JOB – Chapters 12-15 – “JOB Answers His Critics; Job’s Despondent Prayer; Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly”

OBSERVATION

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly”

Job 15:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

Job 15:2 "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, And fill himself with the east wind?

Job 15:3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk, Or by speeches with which he can do no good?

Job 15:4 Yes, you cast off fear, And restrain prayer before God.

Job 15:5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth, And you choose the tongue of the crafty.

Job 15:6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; Yes, your own lips testify against you.

Job 15:7 "Are you the first man who was born? Or were you made before the hills?

Job 15:8 Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

Job 15:9 What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not in us?

Job 15:10 Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, Much older than your father.

Job 15:11 Are the consolations of God too small for you, And the word spoken gently with you?

Job 15:12 Why does your heart carry you away, And what do your eyes wink at,

Job 15:13 That you turn your spirit against God, And let such words go out of your mouth?

Job 15:14 "What is man, that he could be pure? And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous?

Job 15:15 If God puts no trust in His saints, And the heavens are not pure in His sight,

Job 15:16 How much less man, who is abominable and filthy, Who drinks iniquity like water!

vs.1-6 Eliphaz criticizes Job a second time. *Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge:* Unimpressed by Job’s former statements of his dependence on God replied with a sharp rebuke of Job, accusing him of *empty knowledge*, of *unprofitable talk*, and of having *cast off fear*. *Or by speeches with which he can do no good:* Eliphaz sought to discourage Job from his self-defense. “It isn’t doing any good, Job. We aren’t listening to you. You are not persuading us.” *And restrain prayer before God:* Eliphaz was wrong in his judgment of Job; though Eliphaz could not see Job’s secret prayer life, he was a man of piety and prayer as told in *Job 1. Your own mouth condemns you, and not I:* Eliphaz insisted that Job was also condemning himself more every time he spoke. From Eliphaz’s and his friends standpoint, Job should speak only words of humble repentance for the sin that put him in this place.

vs.7-13 Eliphaz accuses Job of a lack of understanding. *Were you made before the hills?* Eliphaz argued similarly as God later did with Job. They both appealed to Job to consider that he did not know as much as he thought he did. What Eliphaz thought Job didn’t know was entirely different than what God knew Job didn’t know. *What do you know that we do not know?* Job could not claim to be the *first man who was born*, or could not claim he was *made before the hills*, or claim that he had *heard the counsel of God*. Yet Job could rightly claim to *know* more than his friends did in his situation. *Are the consolations of God too small for you?* Eliphaz considered the *consolations of God* to be the advice of he and his friends. He assumed that if Job rejected their advice, he was rejecting God’s *consolations*. Therefore, he thought that Job had turned his *spirit against God*. Although Eliphaz was wrong in reference to Job and his remarks were grossly unjust, yet many of them are correct in themselves, and may usefully be applied to us.

vs.14-16. Eliphaz is coupling Job with the wicked deserving of and receiving judgment, says *What is man, that he could be pure?* Job and friends have already argued over this point, with Zophar (among others) accusing Job of claiming to be pure and clean. Job’s own admissions of sin have meant nothing to persuade his friends that not only is he a sinner in a general sense, but he must also be one in a wicked sense. *How much less man, who is abominable and filthy:* Eliphaz seems to have the angels in mind with the reference to *saints*. If God *puts no trust in His saints*, then it is entirely logical that He has even less confidence in man, *who drinks iniquity like water*.

15 vs.1-6 As Eliphaz speaks the second time following the speeches of Bildad and Zophar, he continues on with his wrongful position that Job’s problems are simply because there is sin in his life and he must get right with God. **How sad! They came to comfort, but now are continuing in a wrongful solution. No comfort whatsoever is being given Job! A great lesson for us!**

vs.7-13 Job’s “friends knew” he was a particular and notorious sinner who needed to repent; *Job knew* that he was not, and that there must be some other reason for his crisis. **However wrong Eliphaz may have been in reference to Job and in reference to him, his remarks were grossly unjust, yet many of them are correct in themselves, and could be usefully applied to our own hearts.**

15 vs.14-16 Eliphaz seems to have the angels in mind with the reference to *saints*. If God *puts no trust in His saints*, then it seems logical that He has even less confidence in man, *who drinks iniquity like water*. **Again no comfort being offered to Job at all!**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Job 15:17 "I will tell you, hear me; What I have seen I will declare,
Job 15:18 What wise men have told, Not hiding anything received from their fathers,
Job 15:19 To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them:
Job 15:20 The wicked man writhes with pain all his days, And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor.
Job 15:21 Dreadful sounds are in his ears; In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him.
Job 15:22 He does not believe that he will return from darkness, For a sword is waiting for him.
Job 15:23 He wanders about for bread, saying, 'Where is it?' He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.
Job 15:24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid; They overpower him, like a king ready for battle.
Job 15:25 For he stretches out his hand against God, And acts defiantly against the Almighty,
Job 15:26 Running stubbornly against Him With his strong, embossed shield.*

*Job 15:27 "Though he has covered his face with his fatness, And made his waist heavy with fat,
Job 15:28 He dwells in desolate cities, In houses which no one inhabits, Which are destined to become ruins.
Job 15:29 He will not be rich, Nor will his wealth continue, Nor will his possessions overspread the earth.
Job 15:30 He will not depart from darkness; The flame will dry out his branches, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.
Job 15:31 Let him not trust in futile things, deceiving himself, For futility will be his reward.
Job 15:32 It will be accomplished before his time, And his branch will not be green.
Job 15:33 He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine, And cast off his blossom like an olive tree.
Job 15:34 For the company of hypocrites will be barren, And fire will consume the tents of bribery.
Job 15:35 They conceive trouble and bring forth futility; Their womb prepares deceit."*

vs.17-26 The suffering that comes upon the wicked. *What I have seen I will declare, what wise men have told:* Once again, speaking in terms of cause and effect between wickedness and judgment, Job’s friends are appealing to the idea of tradition and “all the wise people know this.” They assume that this principle is always true and especially in the case of Job. *The wicked man writhes in pain all his days:* Job, only the *wicked* suffer as you do. You are suffering in great *pain*; therefore you must be one of the *wicked*. The sooner you confess this and repent of it, the better it will be for you. *He stretches out his hand against God, and acts defiantly against the Almighty:* By association, Eliphaz unwisely, without any tenderness accuses Job of this arrogance and defiance; of virtually attacking God (*running stubbornly against Him with his strong, embossed shield*).

vs.27-35 Certainty of God’s judgment against the wicked. *Though he as covered his face with fatness . . . He dwells in desolate cities:* Eliphaz explained that the wicked may seem to succeed for a while as Job did, but their success is only an illusion. They actually are lonely, poor, and in *darkness*, which describes Job’s present state. *They conceive trouble and bring forth futility:* Indirectly, Eliphaz accuses Job of all kinds of sin including hypocrisy, bribery, trouble-making, and lying. As the discussion deepens we see all three of the friends becoming more and more convinced that Job is his own worst enemy and that his trials are entirely of his own making.

Grace Greater Than Our Sin – Julia Johnson – sung Bob Kauflin

1. *Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt! Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.*

Refrain: Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within; grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!

2. *Dark is the stain that we cannot hide. What can avail to wash it away? Look! There is flowing a crimson tide, brighter than snow you may be today. (Refrain)*

3. *Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, freely bestowed on all who believe! All who are longing to see his face, will you this moment his grace? (Refrain)*

15 vs.17-26 Job’s friends are relentless! They won’t get off their position that it’s sin in Job’s life. They claim their position is from the wise. Job, you’re really suffering, you must be wicked! You’re being defiant against the Lord! **How terrible are his “friends” counsel – inflicting pain rather than comfort!**

15 vs.27-35 Poor Job! What a fight of affliction had he to contend with! Eliphaz accuses Job of all kinds of things, including hypocrisy! What a comfort to Job in his condition!! His body wasted and tortured with sore disease, his mind harassed by Satan; and his heart wrung with the unkindness, and false accusations of his friends. No wonder he was greatly agitated, often distracted, and sometimes even thrown off his guard. However, all his enemies were chained; and beyond that chain they could not go. God was his unseen Protector, and did not suffer his faithful servant to be greatly moved. **May we never forget the lessons for us here and not be “miserable comforters” these visitors were!**

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