

JOB

Chapter-By-Chapter Through The Greatest Poem in Literature

Session 14 | Job 16:1-17:6

Job's Response to Eliphaz' Second Speech | Job 16:1-17:16

- A review of Eliphaz' second speech (given in chapter 15)-
 - Job is not wise, and utters vain knowledge.
 - Job is arrogant because he doesn't depend on his friend's "wisdom."
 - Job rejects the "tradition of Noah" that evil men will be punished, and this causes Job to ignore the sacred in his life.
- Verses 16:1-5 – Job chastises his friends
 - Job chastises his friends for being **Miserable comforters** full of **vain words**. Job says that if the roles were reversed he **could heap up words against you And shake mine head at you**, as they were doing to him. Rather, however, he would **strengthen** them and **assuage** [soften - from the same root as the word *suave*] their grief.
- Verses 16:6-14 - No Rest for the Weary
 - Job says that, even though he would comfort others in his situation, his words are unable to comfort himself (v. 6).
 - Verses 7-14 cycle between what God has directly done to Job and what Job's "friends" have done to him.
 - God:
 - Made Job **weary** and **desolate all my company** (family) (v. 7).
 - Has **delivered Job to the ungodly** and into **the hands of the wicked** (presumably a reference to his three friends) (v. 11).
 - Removed Job's **ease** and has **set me up for his mark** (all from Job's perspective) (vv. 12-14).
 - Friends:
 - By their **witness against** Job they have given him **wrinkles** (v. 8)
 - The individual friends **teareth me in his wrath** (v. 9) - this is taken to be one of the friends rather than God because God has *not* poured His wrath on Job nor did Job consider God to be his **enemy**. (Note that NASB and others capitalize the pronoun. This is an interpretive matter than KJV rightly avoids. The capitalization at the initial lines are capitalized by grammar, not interpretation).
 - They have (figuratively, as far as the poem displays) done physical harm to Job (v. 10).

- Verses 16:15-20 - Job's Humble Plea
 - Job has expressed his grief in every possible way: **sackcloth, dust** (the **horn** is symbolic of strength/leadership), **weeping** (vv. 15-16) but not because of **injustice in mine hands**, because Job recognizes that there is no sin that was the cause of his agony (v. 17).
 - His prayer is that the **earth** would not bury his **blood** so that his **cry** would **have no place** (v. 18). He stands with God as his **witness** (v. 19) that he is innocent, though his **friends scorn** him.
 - Job cries out for an intercessor to **plead for a man with God** (v. 21 - where the difficult Hebrew could rather be a reference to Job's scornful friends who talk to God about him just like they would talk about their neighbor to their friends).
- Verses 16:22-17:2 - Death is coming.
 - Job recognizes that death is close and he is counting his days. When he says, **my breath is corrupt** he is making reference to the ruination that his life has come to, not to some sin within him. It could also be translated "my spirit is spent."
 - Note that Job had an understanding of a place beyond life from which no man returns.
 - In the mean time, he bemoaned the fact that he was surrounded by **mockers** and his sight cannot get past their **provocation** (v. 2).
- Verses 17:3-6 - Job seeks an advocate.
 - Job (it appears) turns to God to become a **surety** for him (that is, to post bond to secure his release). To **strike hands** appears to be an expression that means to *join hands together*. (v. 3).
 - Job must turn to God because his friends have turned against him and are blind to the truth. Job's prayer is that God would **not exalt them** (v. 4).
 - In vv. 5-6 he speaks generically of his friends.
 - The one who **speaketh flattery to his friends** is literally "for a reward he denounces his friends."
 - In either translation it speaks to the one who is only a friend while in view but perfectly willing to turn against his friend when he looks away. Job gets more specific when he refers to this friend who **made me also a byword of the people**, giving the impression that a "friend" had taken advantage of Job's situation in order to advance his own reputation by further humiliating Job.
 - Now, by this "friend's" work, Job is a **byword** (an *icon* or a *proverb*, we might say a *poster child*).
 - In earlier days (**aforetime**) or *in front of them* Job was a **tabret** (this word is a reference to a tambourine, and may be a poetic way of saying, "I was a byword, they sang songs of ridicule to my face.") Darby translates as "I became one to be spit on in the face."