

JOB

Chapter-By-Chapter Through The Greatest Poem in Literature

Session 19 | Job 23

Job's Lament | Job 23

- Verse 1 – In this section, Job does not so much respond to Eliphaz (taking an "in one ear and out the other" approach to his accusations) but rather laments that he is unable to present his case to God.
- Verses 2-5 - Lament #1
 - As Job laments, it is clear that his ultimate desire is to stand before God and plead his case. This has been consistent with Job. As a picture of Israel in the tribulation, this brings us hope: The nation of Israel will desire to see God, and will search diligently for Him until they find Him.
 - Job laments that **even to day**, in spite of all that has happened, he still must say **my complaint is bitter** and **My stroke** (presumably a reference to his suffering, the word literally means "hand" or "forearm") **is heavier than my groaning** (that is, none of my complaints have done any good).
 - Job (foreshadowing Israel in the tribulation) longs to find God, but is in dismay. Considering the future, Israel will be perplexed, having thought they found the Messiah, but he turns out to be the false one (Jn. 5:43).
 - If Job could find God, he would **order his cause before him** with a "mouthful" of arguments. He would do this confidently because he **would know the words which he would answer me and understand what he would say unto me.**
 - We should not take this as arrogant speech because we (the reader) have the benefit of knowing God's view on Job, from chapters 1-2.
 - Note that some translations (NASB, NIV, HCSB, etc.) have changed the words to say, "I would learn how He would answer me" rather than trust the confidence of Job that is in the text.
 - Rather than chastise Job for his arrogance, we should applaud him for his insight.
 - By the time the nation of Israel gets this far in the tribulation, the nation has been filtered and the "righteous remnant" is in search of their Messiah, thus they will also stand confidently in search of Him. Furthermore, Matthew 23:39 and other passages speak clearly about how He will receive them when they search for Him.
- Verses 6-7 - Encouragement #1
 - If Job were able to stand before God, he knows that God would put His power *in* him rather than use that power *against* him.
 - Job is so confident in his righteousness that he knows he would **be delivered for ever from my judge.**
 - Notice that Job is not found righteous "by grace through faith" but by his self-righteousness before God (Job 1:8, 2:3).
 - As hard as it is for us to recognize this, the same will be true of the Jewish remnant. They will be living righteously according to the Law, and the Judge will cause them all to be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" so that they can inherit their Kingdom (as foreshadowed in Job).
 - The time of the Jewish remnant is not a time of salvation by grace through faith, but a time of living the Law. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law, and the Jewish remnant will be

led to Him by the Law, and they will call upon Him alone for salvation, as Job is doing here.

- Verses 8-9 - Lament #2
 - Job states that he has gone **forward** and **backward** (literally *east* and *west*) and **on the left hand** and **on the right hand** but is unable to find God.
 - Once again, this will be the experience of the Jewish remnant in the days of the Tribulation.
- Verses 10-12 - Encouragement #2
 - Whereas Job cannot **perceive Him** (v. 8) nor **behold him** or **see him** (v. 9) he is confident that God **knoweth the way that I take** (v. 10), and even with this Job will **come forth as gold** when he is finally able to stand before God.
 - This tremendous confidence (as in vv. 6-7) is not *by grace through faith* but rather because **my foot hat held his steps, His ways have I kept** (v. 11) and Job has not **gone back from the commandment of his lips** (v. 12).
 - The message of the Gospel under which you and I live could not have been preached before it was accomplished. (Note that this statement goes against common evangelical “dogma” so strongly that many will consider it to be heresy. They will not, however, argue legitimately against it save for an illegitimate reference to Genesis 15:6).
- Verses 13-17 - Lament #3
 - The first two verses could be taken positively or negatively, but since Job is in a time of *tribulation* and since vv. 15 and following take a negative tone, negative is probably the best approach.
 - Job, in his tribulation, therefore, laments that no one **can turn him** (God) from **what his soul desireth for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me**, and will do so for **many such things**.
 - Here Job is likely recognizing that God has given him the *lot* of suffering, and will not change from his path. For the Jews during the tribulation, the *appointment* is for the "day of Jacob's trouble," and all God's prophesies will be fulfilled.
 - Because of the *immediate* suffering under which Job (foreshadowing the remnant) has been sentenced, there is a **troubled fear at his presence** (v. 15).
 - Job was, immediately preceding these verses, very confident to see God, but now is **afraid of him** (v. 15) because **God maketh my heart soft** (v. 16) through the current suffering. Thus, it could be interpreted to say, "I want to appear before God to prove my case (which I know will be acceptable) but God has put me under such pain as to make me afraid to be before Him."
 - In v. 17 Job speaks about not being **cut off before the darkness** nor **hath he** (God) **covered the darkness from my face**.
 - That is, Job was (in type) not *spared* the tribulation, but forced to see it.
 - The Jewish remnant, having been unbelievers at the time of the rapture, may see that the church was **cut off** before the time of **darkness** (note that in Job 6:17 the same Hebrew word is translated **vanish**).