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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Job 24.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Job 24.

Topics.

- Why does God delay judgment and the faithful never see His days?
- The poor are like hungry and helpless donkeys in a wasteland.
- The murderer waits for light of day and the adulterer waits for the dark.
- The wicked are exalted a little while then gathered up like all others.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

Helpful facts: before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9).

The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

Job speaks

Why Does God Delay Judgment and the Faithful Never see His Days?

Job 24:1-4 ----- ¹"Why are not times of judgment kept by the Almighty, and why do those who know him never see his days? ²Some move landmarks; they seize flocks and pasture them. ³They drive away the donkey of the fatherless; they take the widow's ox for a pledge. ⁴They thrust the poor off the road; the poor of the earth all hide themselves.

Why are not times of judgment kept by the Almighty: means why does God delay judgment upon the wicked and not instead instantly punish them?

Why do those who know the Almighty never see his days: means why do the faithful who know God never see blessing? Job is innocent before God, yet everything he treasured has come to ruin and he is in deep depression and grief, and to make matters even worse he is aware that the wicked steal flocks and secretly move the boundaries of other peoples properties to gain more land for themselves, others rob the less fortunate and cast the poor away rather than help them and yet even though the LORD sees all this wickedness He withholds

punishment and the life of the wicked is prolonged by God's power (in the sense that we are all kept alive by the breath and Spirit of God). Seeing this injustice motivates Job to ask the following two questions: -

- Why does the LORD withhold judgment from the wicked and not punish them instantly?
- Why do those who belong to God not see blessing and die before their time?

Job is right in saying that many who deny God live at ease and prosper while many of the faithful suffer troubles, hardships and grief. This is because we are not yet living in the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom of man and man's kingdom is a fallen corrupted kingdom with sin (i.e., ego, pride, greed, immorality, wars, murder, rape and such like things) rampant worldwide and because of this the innocent suffer.

It could be said that we are at this present time living in the long day of death and the long day of grace.

The Poor are like Hungry and Helpless Donkeys in a Wasteland.

Job 24:5-12 ----- ⁵Behold, like wild donkeys in the desert the poor go out to their toil, seeking game; the wasteland yields food for their children. ⁶They gather their fodder in the field, and they glean the vineyard of the wicked man. ⁷They lie all night naked, without clothing, and have no covering in the cold. ⁸They are wet with the rain of the mountains and cling to the rock for lack of shelter. ⁹(There are those who snatch the fatherless child from the breast, and they take a pledge against the poor.) ¹⁰They (the poor) go about naked, without clothing; hungry, they carry the sheaves; ¹¹among the olive rows of the wicked they make oil; they tread the winepresses, but suffer thirst. ¹²From out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded cries for help; yet God charges no one with wrong.

Job presents a very bleak picture of the poor and helpless, he likens them to: -

- Hungry donkeys dwelling in barren wastelands seeking food for their children.
- Men and women working for a wicked master who though they labour all day are left to sleep on the mountains with no warm clothing seeking shelter amongst the rocks from the cold and the rain.
- Solo mothers are having their babies taken from them and then having to pay a ransom to have them returned or moneylenders are taking their new born child as security until they pay a loan back.
- They labour long hours in olive fields making oil and work in vineyards treading out grapes, yet they themselves go hungry and thirsty.
- They are beaten and no one comes to their rescue and lay in the streets of the city wounded and no one helps them.

Job upon observing all this injustice wonders why God charges no one with wrong, meaning why does God not intervene and instantly judge the wicked and deliver the innocent instead of letting the poor and the helpless suffer at the hand of the godless.

This mindset is not limited to Job only, many who know the love and grace of God in Christ upon seeing: -

- The global oppression of the poor in third world countries by multinationals.
- The millions of innocent civilians who suffer because of wars of the Middles East.
- Those who suffer at the hands of global terrorism, human trafficking, drugs and at the hands of murders, thieves, rapist, the violent and such like things.

Wonder why the Lord does not return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace and judge the wicked and deliver the innocent. Truly the heart attitude of those who have the love of God dwelling in their heart is come Lord come quickly.

The Murderer waits for Light of Day and the Adulterer waits for the Dark.

Job 24:13-17 ----- ¹³"There are those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways, and do not stay in its paths. ¹⁴The murderer rises before it is light, that he may kill the poor and needy, and in the night he is like a thief. ¹⁵The eye of the adulterer also waits for the twilight, saying, 'No eye will see me'; and he veils his face. ¹⁶In the dark they dig through houses; by day they shut themselves up; they do not know the light. ¹⁷For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.

Job in this chapter is responding to Eliphaz's mistaken theology that the righteous are blessed and live at ease and that it is only those who deny God and the wicked that suffer. Job is showing that Eliphaz idealistic theology is greatly flawed and shinning a light upon the way things actually, are in the real world.

He is pointing out that it is often the innocent, the helpless and the poor who are suffering while the greedy, cunning, deceitful and powerful who deny God prosper and live at ease. Everything Eliphaz has spoken in chapter twenty-two is flawed because all his reasoning is built upon the foundation that the righteous prosper and live at ease and only those who deny God and the wicked suffer.

The expression, "Deep darkness is morning to all of them for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness," (v17), means great wickedness is light to the godless because they prosper by the deeds of wrong doing.

The Wicked are Exalted a Little while, then Gathered up like all Others.

Job 24:18-25 ----- ¹⁸"They (those who rebel against God, the murderer, the thief and the adulterer) (v13-15) are swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth; no treader turns toward their vineyards. ¹⁹Drought and heat snatch away the snow waters; so does Sheol those who have sinned. ²⁰The womb forgets them; the worm finds them sweet; they are no longer remembered, so wickedness is broken like a tree.' ²¹"They wrong the barren childless woman, and do no good to the widow. ²⁴They are exalted a little while, and then are gone; they are brought low and gathered up like all others; they are cut off like the heads of grain. ²⁵If it is not so, who will prove me a liar and show that there is nothing in what I say?"

In these verses Job shines a light on the following five things: -

1. The nature, character and temperament of the wicked.
2. The manner and behaviour of those who are swift to do evil and unstable in their ways as water is.
3. The miserable, woeful, wretched condition of the wicked.
4. The reality that the helpless and the innocent suffer at the hands of the wicked.
5. Once death has taken the wicked corrupt and evil person wickedness is stopped in its path.

Job is pointing out that Eliphaz theology that proclaims the righteous and innocent prosper and are blessed and only those who deny God and the wicked suffer and have their lives cuts short is flawed. Throughout these discussions Job constantly argues against Eliphaz theology by highlighting the reality that many who deny God do prosper and do escape punishment in this life while many of the righteous and innocent do suffer.

Swift as the waters: (v18) the wicked are swift as the waters, most likely carries the following three ideas: -

1. Those who deny God and murderers, thieves and adulterers mentioned in the previous verses (v14-15) are unstable as water and swiftly taken away as swiftly flowing waters of a flood wash away anything in their path.
2. All that the wicked treasure and their riches and wealth that they have acquired are taken as torrential waters of a flood wash away everything in their path.
3. The evil of the wicked quickly covers the face of the earth as do the waters of a river in flood and vast expanse of the oceans.

Their portion is cursed in the land; no treader turns toward their vineyards: (v18) this is an obscure expression that has attracted a variety of interpretations. It most likely carries one of the following four ideas: -

1. A wicked and oppressive master having no regard for the good and righteous servants who worked in their vineyards during their lifetime are looked upon with disdain because of the masters' unjust treatment of his workers. This principle still applies today to all masters and bosses who oppress their workers and pay them unjust wages.
2. Masters who treat their workers with violence and oppression will not enjoy the fruits of their vineyards, or any other pleasant thing or place they have taken by corruption, deceit, oppression, dishonesty and violence.
3. Marauders and plunderers that invade vineyards (or lands and properties) and take possessions and ownership by force, violence or deceit.
4. If the expression, "no treader turns toward their vineyards" is taken to mean that no honest person seeks to work in their vineyards, it would carry the idea that the righteous do not seek to work for masters who have gained their vineyards or land and possessions by corruption, violence and dishonesty.

Drought and heat snatch away the snow waters; so does Sheol those who have sinned: (v19) carries the idea that in the same way that heat melts snow and it washes away forever never again to be snow, likewise death will take the wicked to the darkness of the grave never to see the light of day again.

The womb forgets them; (v20) the mother who gave birth to those who deny God and the wicked forgets them.

The worm finds them sweet; (v20) the worms of their grave will feed off their decaying and rotting corpses.

Wickedness is broken like a tree: (v20) when death takes them their wickedness will be broken in the same way that the growth of a tree instantly stops when it is cut down or broken.

They are exalted a little while, and then are gone; they are brought low and gathered up like all others: (v24) those who prosper and deny God are exalted for a short moment (compared to eternity), but are soon humbled by old age and death and gathered to the grave as all others are.

They are cut off like the heads of grain: (v24) those who prosper and deny God are exalted and flourish for a time in the same way that the grain of the fields flourish for a time until harvest comes and their heads are cut off

If it is not so, who will prove me a liar and show that there is nothing in what I say? (v25) this challenge embraces all that Job has said in this chapter and all his previous speeches that he has spoken to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and not just the last few verses of this chapter.

It carries refers to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar main argument which is that the righteous prosper and live to old age and only the wicked suffer and die before their time. Based upon this foundational belief and the fact Job was suffering extreme afflictions they attempted to prove in their speeches that Job must be a gross transgressor or have some great hidden and secret sin.

Job had attacked their main position by highlighting the reality that many of the wicked not only prosper and often lived to old age, but also died a peaceful death without any direct demonstration of God's displeasure toward them. His position was that all things fall alike to all mankind in this world. Though he does acknowledge that God will certainly punish them on the Day of Judgment and the innocent will be rewarded.

He is now boldly issuing a challenge to Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and anyone else to show him to be a liar by proving that he is wrong in claiming that he has been unjustly accused and wrongly condemned and that what he is saying is in error. Job was willing to have what he had said tried by whoever was willing to take up his invitation to prove that his theology that innocent and good people are afflicted in this life and the wicked do prosper was wrong.

Clearly this would be an impossible task one only has to look with open eyes at the condition of the global world today and they will see many examples of the innocent suffering and those who deny God prospering. Job had experienced great aggravation in his sufferings from the arguments which his three friends used to prove that his sufferings were proof that he was a hypocrite.

It seems Job's three friends based their theology on the following verse: -

- The LORD'S curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. (Proverbs 3:33).

This proverb is true in the sense that those who do good and do what is right will certainly live a far more peaceful and trouble free life than those who live a life of wrong-doing and crime, but it cannot be used as a dogmatic statement to say that the righteous and the innocent will never suffer affliction or sorrow. Many things are spoken as the general rule of the whole matter, but in this fallen and corrupted world there are always exceptions to the general rule of everything.

NOTE: perhaps one of the reasons God inspired the translators of the Scriptures to put these forty-two chapters of Job in the Canon of the Bible was to shine a brilliant spotlight upon the following five truths: -

1. Calamity, affliction and grief, is not proof of God's displeasure.
2. Important ends may be accomplished by means of trials and afflictions
3. Those who are healthy, prosperous and at ease cannot look upon those who are suffering afflictions as greater sinners or lesser Christians.
4. Faithful believers do not worship God simply because their life is charmed and blessed.
5. True worshippers will hold fast their faith in God regardless of whether circumstances are good or bad.

The following chapter: (Job 25:1-6) begins with Bildad saying at this present moment heaven is filled with peace, but God is not making peace on earth and then goes on to utter a few good statements about the Holiness of God and the lack of it in mankind, but he does not touch upon Job's questions in this chapter that Job had challenged his friends to answer.

End.