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

Job 22.

(2015)

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Job 22.

Topics.

- Is it any gain or pleasure to the Almighty if you are right and blameless?
- Is there no end to your abundant evil; you have given no help to the poor.
- Thick clouds veil God, so He does not see; He walks on the vault of heaven.
- The wicked say to God, depart from us, what can the Almighty do to us?
- If you lay silver in the dust, then the Almighty will be your precious silver.
- God delivers the one who is guilty, who will be delivered through you?

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.

Eliphaz speaks

Is it any Gain or Pleasure to the Almighty if you are Right and Blameless?

Job 22:1-3 ----- ¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered (Job) and said: ²"Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself. ³Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are in the right, or is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless?"

Eliphaz implication that everyone who is wise, right and blameless is only profitable to themselves and not to God is right on one level and wrong on another. It is true that being wise, right and blameless is profitable for the individual and for the world as a whole, but it is wrong to say that it is not profitable to God, certainly it does not add anything to His character, nature and power, but it does add to Him in the following way. God loves His creation so much so that He gave His Son up to the cross of Calvary that they maybe saved which means when we do-good to each other God rejoices so in this sense we add to His joy. Added to this the second

most important commandment next to, "Love God with all your heart and mind" is "Love your neighbour as yourself," (Matt. 22:37-40) (Mark 12:28-31). This means do good to others and not harm, which means anyone who does what is right and good brings delight and joy to God's heart and in this way everyone who is wise, right and blameless is profitable to God and do add to Him even more than this it is very likely such people will be added to His global and eternal family in Christ. Eliphaz is basically telling Job that he is utterly wrong in all that he has said in the previous chapter and even if he was right he would still not bring God any pleasure nor would he be profitable or add anything to Him.

Is there No End to Your Abundant Evil; You have Given No Help to the Poor.

Job 22:4-11 ----- ⁴Is it for your (Job's) fear of him that he reproves you and enters into judgment with you? ⁵Is not your evil abundant? There is no end to your iniquities. ⁶For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing and stripped the naked of their clothing. ⁷You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry. ⁸The man with power possessed the land, and the favored man lived in it. ⁹You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed. ¹⁰Therefore snares are all around you, and sudden terror overwhelms you, ¹¹or darkness, so that you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you.

Eliphaz tells Job that is not because he fears God that God is punishing him, but for the following three reasons: -

1. Eliphaz accused Job of being full of abundant evil and iniquities, (v5) this is an extremely false statement, we know this because at the beginning of the story of Job God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

It should be mentioned that the word blameless in this context does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ. If any of us could attain to that glorious state of living a sin free life Christ died for no reason.

2. Eliphaz accused Job of using his power and authority to extort his brothers for no reason, (v6) this most likely means that he was taking possession of their homes, property and land.
3. Eliphaz accused Job of not helping the poor and needy, (v7) this is also a blatant falsehood we know this because in the following verses Job said: -
 - I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him ¹³The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. (Job 29:12-13).
 - I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. ¹⁶I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. (Job 29:15-16).
 - Did not I weep for him whose day was hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? (Job 30:25).
 - If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, ¹⁷or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it ¹⁸(for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow), ¹⁹if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, ²⁰if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, ²¹if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, ²²then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. (Job 31:22).

It is amazing the length Eliphaz will stoop too, to demean and degrade Job and inflict upon him even greater misery than he is already suffering. For some reason Eliphaz appears to have a hostile spirit against Job very much like the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) had against Jesus.

Thick Clouds Veil God, so He does not See; He walks on the Vault of Heaven.

Job 22:12-14 ----- ¹²"Is not God high in the heavens? See the highest stars, how lofty they are! ¹³But you (Job) say, 'What does God know? Can he judge through the deep darkness?' ¹⁴Thick clouds veil him, so that he does not see, and he walks on the vault of heaven.'

The vault of heaven: the simplest way to understand this statement is to imagine standing in the vault of a bank with the door locked, nothing outside the walls of the vault would be seen. This is the picture that Eliphaz is presenting of God. The idea is that God cannot see anything outside of heaven.

Thick clouds are a covering to God: carry the following three ideas: -

1. Thick clouds hide the sun, the moon, and the stars from sight therefore it was reasoned by some ancient pagan faiths that they also hide the inhabitants of earth and their actions from the sight of God.
2. God is surrounded, with such thick clouds that they conceal those on earth from His sight so that He has no knowledge and understanding of what is happening on earth.
3. God is surrounded, with such thick clouds He has no influence upon earth or in the affairs of the inhabitants of earth.

This idea is seen in the following verses, in the book of Isaiah it is written: -

- The LORD said of those who draw near to him with their mouth and honour Him with their lips, while their hearts is far from Him: "Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark," and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" (Isaiah 29:13-15).

In Lamentations it is written: -

- We have transgressed and rebelled, and you have not forgiven. ⁴³"You have wrapped yourself with anger and pursued us, killing without pity; ⁴⁴you have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through. (Lament. 3:42-44).

In the book of Ezekiel God said: -

- Then the Lord GOD said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of pictures?" For they say, "The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land." (Ezek. 8:12).

David and Jeremiah in the following verses shine a spotlight upon the truth that nothing is hidden from God and that there is nowhere we can hid from Him: -

- Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," ¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. (Psalm 139:7-12).

In the book of Jeremiah the LORD said: -

- Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. (Jer. 23:24).

Eliphaz is accusing Job of speaking and reasoning in his heart in the same way as those who are inclined to the view that clouds so thick veil God from the sight of their wickedness. This allegation of Eliphaz is of course a totally false accusation Job himself said: -

- God eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. (Job 34:21).

Clearly showing that Job was very aware that there was no darkness thick enough to hide him from God's and that he was very aware that God's eyes piece into the inner most being and see every thought and motive dwelling in the heart and mind.

He walks in the circuit of the heaven: carries the idea that God's delight is in the higher and heavenly world upon the arch of heaven, as it seems to be bent over our heads. The implication is that God only walks through the spacious orb of heaven and only delights Himself in viewing the celestial mansions, but has no regard to anything below them. Eliphaz is implying that Job holds the belief that God is not concerned with things on earth and that the inhabitants of it are unworthy of his notice and of His providential visits and influence. The following Scriptures clearly show the error of this idea and that God not only walks in the circuit of heaven and sits upon the circle of the earth, but is also involved in the affairs of mankind.

- What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? (Psalm 8:4).
- The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (Psalm 14:2).
- The LORD who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them (the nations) in derision. ⁵Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." (Psalm 2:4-6).

Eliphaz false accusation that Job did not believe God was concerned with the affairs of mankind was doing a great injustice to the character and faith of Job, who clearly believed God's influence extended to all things both in heaven and on earth as his following words show: -

- In God's hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind. (Job 12:10).
- God leads counselors away stripped, and judges he makes fools. ¹⁸He looses the bonds of kings and binds a waistcloth on their hips. ¹⁹He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty. (Job 12:17-19).
- God deprives of speech those who are trusted and takes away the discernment of the elders. ²¹He pours contempt on princes and weakens the strong. (Job 12:20-21).
- God makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away. ²⁴He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth and makes them wander in a pathless waste. (Job 12:23-24).

The Wicked say to God, Depart from Us, What can the Almighty do to Us?

Job 22:15-20 ----- ¹⁵Will you (Job) keep to the old way that wicked men have trod? ¹⁶They were snatched away before their time; their foundation was washed away. ¹⁷They said to God, 'Depart from us,' and 'What can the Almighty do to us?' ¹⁸Yet he filled their houses with good things—but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. ¹⁹The righteous see it and are glad; the innocent one mocks at them, ²⁰saying, 'Surely our adversaries are cut off, and what they left the fire has consumed.'

The expression, "the old way that wicked men have trod," refers to those who denied God and believed He would not judge or punish them because He filled their houses with good things and they lived a life of health and ease and therefore

they believed there was no need to acknowledge God. This attitude exists worldwide even today many who deny God live a life of prosperity ease and good health and therefore see no reason to consider God since they see no need of Him or any sign of His judgment in their lives. Eliphaz in these verses is saying the following three things: -

1. Even though God blesses those who say, "Depart from us," and "What can the Almighty do to us?" their lives are taken before their time, meaning before they reach old age.
2. Even though God gives those who deny Him houses and many possessions it does not mean He listens to their counsel or their prayers.
3. Those that are righteous and innocent rejoice because they know God does not listen to the prayers and counsel of the wicked and that their lives will be cut off before their time.

Eliphaz is right in saying that God blesses those who deny Him, even Jesus is in agreement with this statement, in his famous Sermon on the Mount he said: -

- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:44-48).

Though Eliphaz is right in saying that God blesses those who deny Him, he is not right in saying that the lives of those who deny God are cut short, many live to a ripe old age, nor is he right in implying that the reason Job is suffering is because he is following the way of the wicked.

For further information concerning Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount, see: -

- Matthew 5

In, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

If You Lay Silver in the Dust, then the Almighty will be Your Precious Silver.

Job 22:21-28 ----- ²¹"Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you (Job). ²²Receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart. ²³If you return to the Almighty you will be built up; if you remove injustice far from your tents, ²⁴if you lay gold in the dust, and gold of Ophir among the stones of the torrent bed, ²⁵then the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver. ²⁶For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. ²⁷You will make your prayer to him, and he will hear you, and you will pay your vows. ²⁸You will decide on a matter, and it will be established for you, and light will shine on your ways.

In the first half of these verses Eliphaz implies that Job: -

- Was not in harmony with God (v21).
- Was not receiving instruction from God or keeping His words in his heart (v22).
- Had forsaken the Almighty and was treating people unjustly (v23).
- Was setting his heart upon gold and silver rather than God (v24).

If you lay gold in the dust (v24) the gold of Ophir was the choicest of all gold which was found in the following two ways: -

1. As it washed down the mountains and over the stones of the rivers of the valleys it mingled amongst the pebbles and sand of the river bed and from these rivers was then sieved and separated from the pebbles and the sand.
2. It was dug out of mine shafts in the dust of the mine.

The sense of what Eliphaz is saying is that Job should let the gold of Ophir wash away on the stones of the rivers and brooks and regard it of no more value than the dust of the earth rather than spend his time chasing after riches and wealth he should set his heart upon the riches of God then the Almighty would be to him as precious as his gold and silver was.

Those of the world make gold their god and are enriched with the temporary wealth and possessions of this world, in contrast to this those who make the Almighty their God are enriched with His favour and grace and all the eternal treasures of heaven.

NOTE: making God the treasure of the heart and mind, does not mean that God is bound to reward those who give Him such value and love in their lives with gold and silver, but that God would grant to them far more happiness, peace and contentment than the gold and silver can ever give.

A personal note: I am confident that I am standing on solid ground when I say that the testimony of those who make God the treasure of their heart and mind would be that they have in abundance the best gold laid up.

Eliphaz in this attack against Job not only assumed that Job had set his heart upon worldly riches and wealth, but also regarded him as being covetous of material possessions and property and because of this he wrongly assumed that Job was not only mourning over his sorrowful condition, but also over the riches and wealth he had lost and is therefore imploring him to cease from grieving on account of the wealth he had lost and to instead set his heart and mind on God and put his trust in Him.

Eliphaz assumption of Job is simply that an assumption, Job's entire passion was to plead his case before God so that he could get some understanding of his sorrowful condition and why he as an innocent man had been afflicted in such a manner especially when he sees that those who don't even acknowledge God are living at ease and in good health. Job is confused and bewildered and simply wants God to explain to him why? It is certain that throughout all generations many of the faithfuls during times of suffering troubles, hardships and grief have felt the same way that Job is feeling at this present time.

In the second half of these verses Eliphaz implies if Job: -

- Agrees with God and makes peace with Him (v21).
- Listens to God's instruction and stores up his words in his heart (v22).
- If he return to the Almighty and removes injustice from his home (v23).
- Sets his heart on God rather than gold and silver (v24).

Then he will have joy in the LORD and the Almighty will not only hear his prayers and establish them, but good will also come his way. It is true that whoever does these and makes them the foundation of their life will have joy in the LORD, but is totally wrong for Eliphaz to assume because Job is suffering he is not right with God.

God Delivers the One who is Guilty, who will be Delivered through You?

Job 22:29-30 ----- ²⁹For when they are humbled you say, 'It is because of pride'; but he saves the lowly (humble)
³⁰He delivers even the one who is not innocent, who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands."

The King James Bible says: -

- When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. ³⁰He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

Elipaz is saying, that Job says: "God humbles the prideful and the wicked and then He lifts them up and saves them." Whereas Elipaz is saying, "God only save the innocent and those who are pure of heart." Based on this belief Elipaz makes the assumption that Job is not saved nor is he pure of heart or innocent and this is why his prayers are not being answered and why he is suffering as he is.

The island of the innocent: (v30) the word island comes from the Hebrew word ('iy) ('ayin) it carries the idea of a query, an inquiry or question such as where; someplace; wherever etc.), and not a literal island. Its root meaning is generally used as a negative (i.e., to be nothing or not exist; a nonentity, be gone, incurable, nowhere and nothing).

Eliphaz in these verses is not only alleging that Job is not saved (see also verse 23) and not right with the LORD, but also implying that Job did not stretch out pure hands to God in prayer, as he appeared to do and because of this his prayers did not prevail before God for the preservation of himself and his children, or for others (i.e., his servants and workers and those who dwelt in his house) or even for his health and his prosperity.

This is another of Eliphaz's attacks on Job, he is basically implying that Job is not saved, and that when he does humble himself, repent and is converted then and only then will God will hear his prayers and answer them, not only for himself, but also for others when he lifts up holy hands from a pure and honest heart and conscience as expressed in the following verse: -

- The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working (avails much in KJV) (James 5:16).

Eliphaz is right in saying God hears the prayers of a righteous and innocent person, but he is wrong in assuming Job's calamities and afflictions were a result of Job not being saved, of not being right before God and of being a great sinner. We know this because God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

NOTE: these last words of Eliphaz are of him accusing Job of not being saved, not being right and not being pure before God with this in mind it is fascinating to notice at the end of the story of Job the LORD says to Eliphaz: -

- Take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer. (Job 42:8-9)

FOOTNOTE: always keep in mind that Eliphaz is not speaking, "Thus saith the LORD," but giving his own personal opinion concerning Job and his suffering and because it is his own viewpoint it should be remembered that even though much of what he says maybe true it does not always mean that his reasoning and suppositions are always according to the word of the LORD or right for Job's particular situation. (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17).

End.