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Job 23

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Job 23.

Topics.

- Would God contend with me? No He would pay attention to me.
- I do not see God, but; when He has tried me, I shall come out as gold.
- I held fast the LORD'S way; who can turn Him back?
- The Almighty has terrified me, but I am not silenced by the darkness.

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.

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JOB SPEAKS

JOB 23:1-7

Would God Contend with Me? No He would Pay Attention to Me.

- **Job 23:1-7:** Then Job answered (Eliphaz) and said: ²Today also my complaint is bitter; my hand is heavy on account of my groaning. ³Oh, that I knew where I might find him (the LORD), that I might come even to his seat! ⁴I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵I would know what he would answer me and understand what he would say to me. ⁶Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; he would pay attention to me. ⁷There an upright man could argue with him, and I would be acquitted forever by my judge.

In the previous chapter Eliphaz accused Job of:

- Being abundantly evil and full of iniquities. (Job 22:5).
- Cheating his brothers out of what was rightfully theirs. (Job 22:6).

- Not helping the poor and needy and crushing widows and the fatherless. (Job 22:5-9).
- Turning away from the Almighty and being full of injustice. (Job 22:23).
- Making worldly riches and wealth (gold and silver) more important than God. (Job 22:24-25).

Eliphaz Then told Job if he returns to the Almighty God would favour him and answer his prayers and establish them. (Job 22:26-28). Job in this chapter answers Eliphaz statements by firstly saying that he is aware that his complaint is coming from a bitter spirit because of his great suffering and because of this he does wish he knew how he could find the LORD so that he could come before him and plead his case and contend with Him because he knows that the LORD would acquit him of any guilt.

Complaint: (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*siyach*) and means to ponder, converse (with oneself or aloud) to utter, commune, complain, declare, meditate, pray, speak and talk with.

Arguments: (v4) comes from the Hebrew word (*towkechah*) and means to be chastened or corrected, to prove or disprove, to defend, rebuke or correct by words and by reasoning. It also comes from the Hebrew word (*yakach*) which means to be right and correct, to argue, decide, justify, reprove, convict, dispute and judge by reasoning together and being prepared to give and take. Job is not saying he wants to find the LORD and stand before Him to complain and argue as we normally think of the words complain and argue to mean, but that he wants the opportunity to present his case before the LORD to reason with Him so that he can prove that he is innocent of the allegations his three friends accuse him of and try to get some understanding from God as to why he is suffering as he is. Jobs words, "The LORD would pay attention to me and acquit me forever," (v6-7) shines a spotlight upon his great faith, his children have been taken; his wife curses him; all he has worked for has been brought to ruin; his friends accuse him of being a wicked man who has turned away from God rather than show him comfort and he is suffering horrific illness and because of all of this he is confused, bewildered and feels that God is hidden Himself from him, but his statement, "the LORD would pay attention to me and acquit me forever," shows that his faith in God is not dented or weak, supporting this truth are his following words:

- God has granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. ¹³Yet these things you hid in your heart. (Job 10:12-13).

These two verses give us a beautiful insight into Jobs great faith, even in all his suffering he is able to say, "God has preserved his spirit and given him steadfast love, yet He has kept His steadfast love hidden from him." This is a fascinating insight into Jobs faith, he credits God for all his loss, agonising suffering, and his despair and does not feel God's love in his inner most being, but despite this he knows God loves him and is keeping his spirit (meaning keeping him alive).

This shines a brilliant spotlight upon Jobs great faith and that it soars far beyond his emotions and troubling circumstances.

Added to this in chapter nineteen Job said:

- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).

Job was not a man of weak faith, but of great faith, many would have forsaken their faith and turned from God by now, but Job holds fast his faith and endures to the end knowing that his redeemer lives, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth and even after worms have destroyed Job's skin and his body, he knows in his flesh he will see God. (Job 19:25-26).

A personal note: Job's attitude is not limited to Job only, I feel I am standing on safe ground when I say that it is certain many faithful believers throughout all generations during moments of extreme sorrow, hardship, troubles sufferings and days of crisis's have wanted to stand before God and ask why? Job's faith was such that he trusted that the LORD would declare him innocent, he had this confidence for the following two reasons:

1. He knew he had not committed any outward wicked sins and had always done what was right and helped the poor, we know this is true 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).

2. His faith for righteousness and salvation was not in his own righteousness or self-effort or in adhering to ceremonial rights, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions, but in his Redeemer the Messiah the Christ (Job 19:25-26). The very word redeemer means savior and rescuer and when applied to Christ it means Saviour and rescuer from sin.

JOB 23:8-10

I do Not See God, when He has Tried Me, I shall come out as Gold.

- **Job 23:8-10:** "Behold, I (Job) go forward, but he (the LORD) is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; ⁹on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him. ¹⁰But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

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Here again a brilliant spotlight shines upon Job's beautiful faith, as he moves forward in life meaning as he grows older. He cannot touch or see God and feels that He is not with him and when he goes backward in life meaning when he is suffering hardships, troubles and grief as he is at this present time he does not perceive God to be with him, but despite him not seeing, touching, feeling and perceiving God he is confident God knows exactly what is happening to him and when God has finished molding him he will come out as gold.

A personal note: today in some modern churches those who are successful or famous are presented before the congregation to give their testimony, very rarely do we hear the testimony of a faithful believer who is in total ruin or in the middle of suffering some terrible sickness, yet God by His Spirit has inspired the translators of the Scriptures to place forty-three chapters in the Canon of the Bible of such a testimony.

James the brother of Jesus wrote:

- Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12).

The apostle Peter wrote:

- In this (salvation) you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9).

This faith that James and Peter speak of is not a new type of faith that came with the New Testament covenant of grace it is the faith Job and many of the faithful fathers like him had dwelling within their hearts and mind, and lived before God with.

JOB 23:11-13

I Held Fast the LORD'S Way, who can Turn Him Back?

- **Job 23:11-13:** My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept his way and have not turned aside. ¹²I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food. ¹³But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does.

Job believes he will come out as gold because he has:

- Held fast his faith and kept the LORD'S way.
- Not departed from Gods commandments and treasured His words.

Job knows that there is nothing he or anyone else can do to stop God achieving His plans and purposes on earth and that once God has put His plan in place no individual, no nation and no government or, army no matter how great, mighty or powerful can turn Him back. This should be of great encouragement to those who have faith in Christ and trust in God's grace for their righteousness and salvation since God before time began planned and purposed that those in Christ would be saved to eternal life not by their righteousness, but by his and no one in heaven or on earth can stop God from saving all those who have been born again into His global and eternal family who faithfully trust in the King and Saviour who ascended from the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

JOB 23:14-17

The Almighty has Terrified Me, but I am Not Silenced by Darkness.

- **Job 23:14-17:** For he (the LORD) will complete what he appoints for me, and many such things are in his mind. ¹⁵Therefore I am terrified at his presence; when I consider, I am in dread of him. ¹⁶God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me; ¹⁷yet I am not silenced because of the darkness, nor because thick darkness covers my face.

Thick darkness covers my face: means that confusion, bewilderment and fear have filled his mind, Job knows he is innocent before God and because of this cannot understand why such extreme calamity has brought him to ruin and why he is suffering such a painful sickness. He is terrified of the Almighty because he knows God has the power to deliver him from all his troubles, but for some unknown reason to him chooses not to and therefore wonders what other terrors the LORD might pour out upon him.

Despite this lack of understanding and fear Job is not only confident God will complete the plans and purposes that He has in His mind for him, but is also not going to allow his fear and confusion prevent him from honestly speaking the thoughts and the feelings of his heart and mind before the LORD.

This attitude would of course delight the heart of God since He is a God of truth; to go before God and pretend we are OK when we are not is foolishness since God already knows our heart and the thoughts of our mind. Added to this to pretend to be something we are not or to say something that is not true to ourselves or our thoughts is hypocrisy before God which is an abomination to Him and from ourselves either blatant lies or self-deception which will never win God's favour or blessing.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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