

THE VEXATIONS OF JOB, Part 1

Scripture: 12:1-3.

Scripture Reading:

*1 Then Job responded,
2 Truly then you are the people,
And with you wisdom will die!
3 But I have intelligence as well as you.
I am not inferior to you.
And who does not know such things as these?*

Introduction: I will not be lingering too much on Job's friends' comments as they are all almost identical to their previous speeches. I will just summarize their main points and keep focusing on Job's speech!

Let me give a quick summary of Zophar speech from chapter 11

Zophar said, "You talk too much, and we cannot keep quiet. We must reply to you!

Then he charges Job of boasting!"

Zophar wished that God would speak to Job and rebuke him!

He insisted that God's wisdom is higher than the sky, and He knows exactly what He is doing!

Then he accused Job just like other friends! This is what he said in chapter 11 -

Job needs to realize that he suffers because of his sins. He needed to acknowledge, repent, and confess. Then God may show mercy on him. Or else, he may be punished like a wicked person!

Zophar correctly described God as follows! "Who knows God so well? His thoughts and ways are much higher than the sky. We can never understand His ways!

Who can restrain Him? He knows the hearts of people, and He rewards the righteous, and punishes the wicked. But if Job surrenders and confesses his sins, God will forgive him!"

This wisdom was shared by other friends of Job also! You can see Job's replies in the next 3 chapters. I may skip the repetitions of Job's sayings also but will focus on new thoughts!

*Job 12:1-41 Then Job responded,
2 Truly then you are the people,
And with you wisdom will die!
3 But I have intelligence as well as you.
I am not inferior to you.
And who does not know such things as these?
4 I am a joke to my friends,
The one who called on God and He answered him.*

The just and blameless man is a joke.

Job started lashing out at his friends directly! He accused them that they talk like they are the only wisest people, but Job insists that he is no less to them when it comes to wisdom and understanding! Job was alarmed that he became a joke for his own friends despite his righteous living!

Job 12:7-10

7 But now ask the beasts and let them teach you.

And the birds of the heavens and let them tell you.

8 Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you.

And let the fish of the sea declare to you.

9 Who among all these does not know

That the hand of the LORD has done this,

10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing,

And the breath of all mankind?

Now we can clearly see Job's understanding of his own suffering, and the cause of his pain and suffering! He says that it is obvious! He says that the beasts of the forests, the birds of the air, and the fish in the sea know the answer already. The earth can also teach us this lesson. As per Job, the answer is obvious to everyone: he concludes that the cause of his suffering is from the Lord? Is that so?

If the story of God and Satan in chapter one and two is true, God only took His protective hands from Job. The devil had the choice of not attacking Job. It was Satan that attacked him vehemently, and killed his children, and stripped him of all his wealth. Yet, Job passed that test with flying colors! The second time also, it was Satan that attacked Job, not God. God protected his life! Had Job known this part, his prayers and lamentations would have been very different. It would have been like how David lamented in all his psalms. How David's enemies surrounded him like dogs, and how they were hunting him down to kill him! He wanted God to arise and save him.

But Job misunderstood the source of his suffering. He thought that it was God who afflicted him brutally! He held God responsible because, in God's hands, is the life and the breath of everything! In Him, we live, move, and have our being! There is nothing that happens, can happen without God's permission!

But at times God allows fiery tempests and trials to come our way to make us strong. We must take it as an opportunity for our spiritual growth even though it might hurt us a great deal. Job did not give up hope even after his health deteriorated. He said, Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?". In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:10). Job could have elaborated this wonderful wisdom with a reverse psychology. If we receive adversity, then expect much more blessings from the Lord after the adversity! Job failed to see his situation this way. Therefore, he fell into a life of despair and hopelessness!

*Job 12:12,13 12 Wisdom is with aged men,
With long life is understanding.*

Men get their wisdom gradually and painfully by experience over a long stretch of time. As we get older, we learn many things through experience! But.....

*13 With Him (God) are wisdom and might.
To Him belong counsel and understanding.*

God is our wisdom, understanding, righteousness, peace, and strength. He is not wiser or stronger at one time than at another. Time and experience add nothing to the perfection of his attributes, which are unchangeable. Such wisdom, counsel, and understanding comes only through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The more we abide in the Spirit, the wiser we will become!

Job gives various examples of God's wisdom in the following passage:

Job 12:22-25.

*22 He reveals mysteries from the darkness
And brings the deep darkness into light.
23 He makes the nations great, then destroys them.
He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.
24 He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth's people
And makes them wander in a pathless waste.
25 They grope in darkness with no light,
And He makes them stagger like a drunken man.*

We see all these things in our modern politics. I do not have to go any further! Let me come to the next chapter and continue Job's vexations.

Job. 13:1-5.

*1 Behold, my eye has seen all this,
My ear has heard and understood it.
2 What you know I also know.
I am not inferior to you.
3 But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to argue with God.
4 But you smear with lies.
You are all worthless physicians.
5 O that you would be completely silent,
And that it would become your wisdom!*

Now Job uses strong words to punch back at his friends. He breaks their heart with these fierce words! He claims that God has given him the real wisdom and understanding. What his friends know, he also knows! He claims that he is no inferior to his friends!

He did not want to argue with his friends anymore. He wanted to argue with His almighty God only! He called his friends as losers, liars, and worthless physicians who could not heal his disease or his soul. He did not want anything to do with them anymore, and he commanded them to be silent! If they keep silent, they will look wise! It is only when they start speaking, they reveal their glaring ignorance! What an insult!

Job. 13:6-12.

6 Please hear my argument

And listen to the contentions of my lips.

7 Will you speak what is unjust for God,

And speak what is deceitful for Him?

8 Will you show partiality for Him?

Will you contend for God?

9 Will it be well when He examines you?

Or will you deceive Him as one deceives a man?

10 He will surely reprove you

If you secretly show partiality.

11 Will not His majesty terrify you,

And the dread of Him fall on you?

12 Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes,

Your defenses are defenses of clay.

We should be able to see clearly now the defenses of both Job and his friends! His friends insisted that Job sinned against God and therefore he is being punished by God. But Job insisted that he was innocent, but God is after him! If God is just, then He should not be punishing the righteous. This is where Job is baffled, why is he being punished? If God is righteous and just, what is going on with God? Both Job and his friends had agreed that Job's afflictions are from God, but Job cannot understand why, but his friends boldly blamed that Job suffers because of his wickedness! God hates any false accusations. Job's friends did just that to a righteous person, and Job rightfully points that to them, and warns them of God's wrath upon them, which happened later!

Job 13:13-1613 Be silent before me so that I may speak;

Then let come on me what may.

14 Why should I take my flesh in my teeth

And put my life in my hands?

15 Though He slay me,

I will hope in Him.

Nevertheless, I will argue my ways before Him.

16 This also will be my salvation,

For a godless man may not come before His presence.

The friends were rebuking Job for accusing God for his sufferings. Job just tells them to be silent. He had come to a point; he was willing to face any consequence. He was tired of his friends tearing his dignity apart by constantly accusing him of sins that he had not

committed! He was like a wild animal trying to carry his own flesh (which is his dignity) in his teeth trying to protect it. But other animals (his friends) tried to take even that away from him!

Job was taking his life in his hands! In other words, he was risking everything to defend himself. This phrase is not new to us! compare [Psalm 119:109](#), "My soul is continually in my hand;" [1 Samuel 19:5](#), "For he (Jonathan) did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine;"

On one hand, Job fought for his innocence. On the other hand, he continued to trust in the Lord, even if He would slay him! This is the kind of trust we should have in our Lord. No matter what happens in our life, we must continue to trust in Him. Never try to walk away from the Lord. We must be like Peter and say, where can we go Lord without you? No matter where we go, He will be there waiting for us! Never, never, never run away from the Lord! Even if He slays us in this life, He will redeem us in our next life! Trusting in Jesus always is the only way to ride through all our sufferings! There is no other way!

Nevertheless, Job would continue to argue with Him about his innocence! For Job, his standing with God was more important than anything else, and he knew that God loved him. He also understood that the wicked cannot stand before God like he does and argue with Him. This argument between God and Job is within God's family! The wicked cannot be part of God's family, and they cannot even dream coming close to the Lord!

What can we learn from this portion of Scripture today?

Conclusion:

Put a stop to foolish counseling. It will only make the grieving soul more sorrowful.

We cannot always understand God's ways. We need to see the end game even beyond death before we judge Him.

Though He slays me I will still trust in Him is a faithful saying! Make that a motto. Write it in your heart. Hang those words everywhere in your house.

Our God always blesses His obedient children with goodness and mercy, and not with evil. But He may allow evil to strengthen us!

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