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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**“FOR HE PERFORMETH [THE THING THAT IS] APPOINTED FOR ME:”**

**Job 23:1-17**

***Job 23:1-2***

***1 "Then Job answered and said,"***

***2 "Even to day [is] my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning."***

In continuing his third reply to Eliphaz, Job does not dignify Eliphaz’s accusations with a direct denial. Evidently Job had abandoned the approach of trying to persuade his friends of his innocence. He wanted to try his case in the court of God. Even in his extremity Job still believes that if he could meet his divine Adversary, God would recognize his essential uprightness. Job had listened to his opponents complaints about him. He knew in his heart he was not guilty of the things he had been accused of. His complaint was bitter, because he wanted to know what he had done wrong, that he might change it. His suffering had been so great, that he felt he had a right to know why he was suffering so greatly. Job lamented that God’s hand was heavy on him in judgment, despite the intensity of Job’s groaning in pain of body and anguish of soul.

***Job 23:3 "Oh that I knew where I might find him! [that] I might come [even] to his seat!"***

It appears, that Job had sought the LORD, and He had been no where to be found. Had he been able to find the LORD, this trial would have not been complete.

***1 Peter 5:10 “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”***

Job wanted to present his case to God, to make his complaint about the way God was treating him, even though many believe that doing so would be counted as “questioning” and therefore rebellion against God. To question God is not in itself wrong. Scriptures encourage us to ask God, because He is the only on that has all the answers!

***Jeremiah 33:3 ”Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”***

***Matthew 7:7-8***

***7Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:***

***8For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.***

Many godly men in the Bible expressed doubts to God about their ability to serve Him. Moses implored, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” Gideon, Elijah, and Jeremiah were all fraught with uncertainty about their place in God’s plan. Abraham doubted but “staggered not” (never stopped believing) God’s promises. Joshua questioned God’s actions. Even the Lord’s disciples voiced their reservations. Although God does not always answer our questions the way we want or expect, we can conclude from these passages that God welcomes any sincere question from an earnest heart. Insincere questions, or questions from a hypocritical heart, are a different matter. The Pharisees and Jewish leaders often presented their questions to trick or trap Jesus, but He refused to answer them. Unbelief is a failure to trust the Lord and a sign of rebellion and disobedience against God.

***Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”***

I am sure God's heart was breaking, also, to see such great pain suffered by so faithful a servant as Job.

***Hebrews 4:15 “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”***

***Job 23:4 "I would order [my] cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."***

Job was sure, if he could get an audience with God that he could plead his own case successfully. Job’s desire for a hearing before God was so strong that he had already filled his mouth with arguments to present, though he would also be careful to listen to what God had to say to him. "Arguments", in this particular reading, mean reasons why he had not sinned against God.

***Job 23:5 "I would know the words [which] he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me."***

Job knew that God would make it clear to Job in what he had failed God, if he could only talk to Him. God does not speak in words that are not understood. Job knew it would be very clear.

***Job 23:6 "Will he plead against me with [his] great power? No; but he would put [strength] in me."***

Job’s confidence in his innocence and God’s acquittal had grown to the point that instead of worrying about God overwhelming him with the greatness of His power, Job was certain that God would listen to him and he would be delivered from God, his Judge. God would not attack Job with His great power. His power would fill Job with strength to go on. Job had every confidence in God. He knew that God was full of forgiveness and love. He knew that God would understand his great love for Him.

***Hebrews 10:35-37***

***35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.***

***36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.***

***37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.***

***Job 23:7 "There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge."***

Oh! that we could all feel this confidence in standing before the Judge of all the world. We each will stand before Him on Judgement Day, and give an account of our lives on earth. Job wanted his judgement to come now, so that he might give an account of himself to God. Job knew that he could trust the Judge of all the world to do exactly what was right.

***2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”***

***Job 23:8 "Behold, I go forward, but he [is] not [there]; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:"***

Job went back to his original complaint, here. He said, "I seek God, but He is nowhere to be found". He had never left Job, as He never leaves us, but it was difficult for job to comprehend why God was allowing this trouble to overtake him. Job had chosen to walk in the Light of God. Satan had brought this darkness, to see if Job would remain faithful to God in the very worst of circumstances.

***Job 23:9 "On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold [him]: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see [him]:"***

Job had never experienced a time when he could not reach out and touch God. It was almost as if God was hiding from him. We must continue to remember that Job was not aware that these trials had been brought by Satan by permission of God. If Job did not falter, this would be a witness to all of the angels in heaven, to Job's friends and relatives, and to every believer since that time. But Job’s hope for a hearing was futile, because he could not find God no matter which way he turned.

***Job 23:10 "But he knoweth the way that I take: [when] he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."***

Job was saying that God appeared to be avoiding him or hiding from him. However, he also expressed confidence that God knew every detail about his journey and would come to his rescue. Sometimes our experience of God in this life leads us to doubt his constant presence or that he cares for us. We need to realize that sometimes our feelings lead us astray; we can always count on God’s help and presence, even when we can’t feel it. Job was aware this was some sort of test, or trial, in his life. The statement "when he hath tried me" leaves no doubt that Job had become aware this was a trial. Though Job was put in the fire of problems, these problems will only make him come to the top as pure gold. Job said, God knows me and knows I will come through this without sinning. Eliphaz had tried to condemn Job by identifying some secret sin that he may have committed. Here Job declares his confidence in his integrity and God’s justice. We are always likely to have hidden sin in our lives, sin we don’t even know about because God’s standards are so high and as fallen humans we cannot attain them on our own. If we are true believers, however, all our sins are forgiven because of what Christ did on the cross on our behalf.

***Romans 5:1-5***

***1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***

***2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

***3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;***

***4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:***

***5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

***Romans 8:1”There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”***

The Bible also teaches that even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings. His forgiveness and cleansing are sufficient; they override our nagging doubts. The Holy Spirit in us proves that we are forgiven in God’s eyes even though we may feel guilty. If we, like Job, are truly seeking God, we can stand up to others’ accusations as well as our own nagging doubts. God has forgiven and accepted us, so we are forgiven indeed.

***1 John 3:20 “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.”***

***Job 23:11 "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined."***

Job was expressing the fact that he had walked on the straight and narrow path. He had not wandered into the wide path that leads to destruction. Christians, we must look for the footprints that Jesus made on this earth, and we must step into those tracks, and make them deeper with every step we take. Jesus is our example. We must follow him. A Christian is a believer in and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

***Job 23:12 "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary [food]."***

Job had fed upon every Word of God. He had based everything he believed on the Word of God. He like Jesus did not regard physical food as much as He did the Word of God. That was obvious, because he began to fast when the problem he now had started.

***John 4:34 “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”***

***Job 23:13 "But he [is] in one [mind], and who can turn him? And [what] his soul desireth, even [that] he doeth."***

Job knew that the moment God spoke, it was absolute truth and could not be changed. Job knew that there was no changing in the LORD. But Job’s confidence faded when he lamented that God is a Sovereign who acts according to His own desires, despite whatever evidence Job might present of his innocence.

***Job 23:14 "For he performeth [the thing that is] appointed for me: and many such [things are] with him."***

This was as if Job was saying that his fate was predestined of God, and there was no use trying to change it. He had come to the sad conclusion that what was happening to him, was his fate in life.

***Psalm 57:1-2***

***1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.***

***2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.***

***Romans 4:21 “And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”***

***Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”***

***Job 23:15 "Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him."***

Fear of the Lord that brings reverence is a good thing. Terror of the Lord, which means we do not trust His actions toward us, is not a good thing. Faith and fear are opposites. Job was saying that he does not understand God's actions, and therefore, was afraid of Him.

***Job 23:16 "For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:"***

This was just saying that Job had lost his assurance that all was well with him and God. Job was no longer feeling that he could come boldly before the LORD. He had lost his boldness. Job's heart was weak, and he was frightened of the Almighty, not knowing what He might do.

***Job 23:17 "Because I was not cut off before the darkness, [neither] hath he covered the darkness from my face."***

Job was complaining that God had not removed him from the earth, before the darkness fell. We hear this many times from a parent, when their child dies before them. They say, why did I not die instead? His other complaint was that the Light of God had not protected him from this horrible darkness that Satan had brought to him.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Why was Job's complaint bitter?
2. Who did it appear Job was seeking?
3. If he had been able to find Him, the trial would not have been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a failure to trust the Lord and a sign of rebellion and disobedience against God.
5. What was "arguments", in verse 4, speaking of?
6. In verse 6, God, would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Job.
7. Why did Job want his judgement to come now?
8. What was Job's original complaint?
9. What was difficult for Job to comprehend?
10. Job believed when God tried him, he would come out as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
11. Job had walked on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ path.
12. A Christian is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in and a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.
13. Fear of the Lord that brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a good thing.
14. In verse 14, it was as if Job was saying what?
15. Job was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that God had not removed him from the earth, before the darkness fell.