

Job 13 • End of Round 1, The True Goal of Restoration

Introduction

Job's escalating remarks attempt to narrow the focus and attention of not just his friends' perspectives, but his personal understanding as well. Like his friends, Job attributes what he is going through to God but for completely different reasons. He even uses the language of a formal court proceeding to assign the final authority to God for what he is experiencing. But it's particularly interesting to note that Job never asks for a physical healing, miracle, or restoration of the prosperity he has lost, but seeks to know why God is doing this, and what specific adjustment Job needs to effect if there is a deficiency in his spiritual relationship. Job is the example of always being more concerned about heavenly things than earthly things.

⁶Please hear my argument
And listen to the contentions of my lips.
⁷Will you speak what is unjust for God,
And speak what is deceitful for Him?
⁸Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
⁹Will it be well when He examines you?
Or will you deceive Him as one
deceives a man?
¹⁰He will surely reprove you
If you secretly show partiality.
¹¹Will not His majesty terrify you,
And the dread of Him fall on you?
¹²Your memorable sayings are
proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay.

¹³“Be silent before me so that I may
speak;
Then let come on me what may.
¹⁴Why should I take my flesh in my
teeth
And put my life in my hands?
¹⁵Though He slay me,
I will hope in Him.
Nevertheless I will argue my ways
before Him.
¹⁶This also will be my salvation,
For a godless man may not come before
His presence.
¹⁷Listen carefully to my speech,
And let my declaration fill your ears.
¹⁸Behold now, I have prepared my case;
I know that I will be vindicated.
¹⁹Who will contend with me?

Read verses 6-12

Q: How would you summarize Job's main point in this passage?

A: Job is basically saying, “Why do you presume to speak for God?”

Q: If we have read and were familiar with the whole book of Job, what would we probably find ironic about Job's observation that his friends may be mis-speaking on behalf of God?

A: This is exactly what God will state concerning Job's friends.

It came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.

Job 42:7

Q: How do Job's points sort of turn the tables on the arguments his friends have been making?

A: They have been warning that God will visit Job for his sins, and here Job warns that God will visit them for their own aberrant behavior.

Q: What does it mean in that Job characterizes their words as “ashes” and “clay”?

A: “Ashes” is a biblical metaphor for nothingness or worthlessness; “clay” characterizes their words as something unsubstantial that can be repeatedly molded into alternative forms, a way of stating that one's arguments are constantly changing to suit one's self.

Application: *Even though we may be in possession of A **truth**, we must be sure that this is the **message** God wants us to **communicate** in that particular situation.*

Read verses 13-19

Q: What is the main difference between Job's approach to God versus that of his friends?

A: Whereas Job's friends presume to talk for God, Job intends to go to God to present his case.

Q: In v.14, what is the meaning of, “Why should I take my flesh in my teeth”?

A: It is a Hebrew idiom which is explained in the second line of the verse, “And put my life in my hands”.

Q: What do v.14-15 say about Job's spiritual character?

A: He will take his case to God and trust Him for the outcome, even if it means death.

Q: What does v.16 say about Job's spiritual character?

A: His confidence in coming before God is rooted in his faithfulness to God's Word and ways, not fearing that he is in the same spiritual state as a “godless man” who has no standing before Him at all.

For then I would be silent and die.

²⁰“Only two things do not do to me,
Then I will not hide from Your face:
²¹Remove Your hand from me,
And let not the dread of You terrify me.
²²Then call, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, then reply to me.
²³How many are my iniquities and sins?
Make known to me my rebellion and
my sin.
²⁴Why do You hide Your face
And consider me Your enemy?
²⁵Will You cause a driven leaf to
tremble?
Or will You pursue the dry chaff?
²⁶For You write bitter things against me
And make me to inherit the iniquities
of my youth.
²⁷You put my feet in the stocks
And watch all my paths;
You set a limit for the soles of my feet,
²⁸While I am decaying like a rotten
thing,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten.

Q: How is v.17 reinforcing v.13?

A: Job’s command to “Be silent before me” in v.13 is expanded in v.17 to, “Listen carefully”.

Q: In v.18-19, is Job saying that God cannot refute the case Job has prepared?

A: “Who will contend with me?” in v.19 refers to his friends. As to God, Job previously stated, “Then let come on me what may” (v.17).

Application: Just as those attempting to **minister** must seek God’s **mind** and will for the situation, so must those to which they are **ministering**. All sides need to seek God’s **counsel**.

Read verses 20-28

Q: What is significant about the two things Job requests in v.20?

A: In spite of all that has and is happening to him, Job recognizes that he is in God’s will (“...do not...remove Your hand from me...”), and while Job’s fear of the Lord is a healthy spiritual indicator, he does not want to experience “dread of You”, which would indicate the presence of unresolved sin and fear of the coming punishment for it.

Q: What does Job earnestly seek in v.22?

A: A response from God.

Q: Does Job request healing or a miracle?

A: The first thing Job seeks is to know whether there is unresolved sin in his life.

Point: Again we see that Job provides the example of being more concerned about spiritual issues regardless of the circumstances, especially sin.

Q: According to v. 24, what seems to plague Job the most?

A: God’s continued silence. He feels like he is being treated as an enemy.

Q: But how does Job describe himself in contrast to an enemy of God in v. 25?

A: “...a driven leaf” and “dry chaff”.

Q: What does that mean?

A: Such are two of the weakest things found in nature, a withered leaf and a morsel of dry stubble. Job cannot believe God would pursue something so insignificant.

Point: This is particularly interesting when juxtaposed against the fact that God holds Job up as the ideal servant, (Job 1-2) and yet Job thinks of himself in the most humble of terms.

Point: While Job’s friends seek to elevate themselves and even to be speaking for God, Job maintains his authentically humble spiritual character who understands the full weight of, “He is God..I am not”.

Q: What are the seven possibilities which Job puts forth from his perspective in v. 26-28?

1. “...You write bitter things against me...” (v.26) This seems to allude to the practice then and even to the present of a formal, written document which criminal courts draw up to specify the charges, which from Job’s point of view are “bitter things”.
2. “...make me to inherit the iniquities of my youth.” (v.26) This seems to indicate Job’s belief that it is God’s prerogative to justly charge Job with sin from his distant past.
3. “You put my feet in the stocks...” (v.27) This was a punishment that is made visible to the public and as the result of a court’s judgment for guilt of a

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crime. Job feels he has been put on public display for his past sins by the divine court of God's judgment.

4. "...watch all my paths..." (v.27) Job feels he is under intense divine scrutiny.
5. "...set a limit for the soles of my feet..." (v.27) At the same time, Job believes God has limited how far he can go, seeing the severity of this trial as an impasse.
6. "...I am decaying like a rotten thing..." (v.28) As a result, Job sees himself as giving away as the length of the trials continue.
7. "Like a garment that is moth-eaten..." (v.28) This alludes to something no longer useful, having been slowly and silently eaten by the moth, an illustration of how Job sees what is happening to him overall.

Point: Like his friends, Job sees the cause of what is happening to him as coming from God, but for different reasons. Job never blames God, but desperately seeks to know the reasons why.

Application: Having lived a life as "a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job 2:3) in times of **peace** and **prosperity**, Job's spiritual character does not change in times of **trial** and **hardship**.

Overall Application

- What is the confidence we have that we are speaking **THE** truth which God wants communicated rather than **A** truth which we want to speak? How do we ensure we're on the right side of the process?
- How do we ensure we're on the right side of the divine will and process even when we are going through trials and hardship? How well do we recognize that even in such times we are a witness of God?
- Do we tend to blame God or seek to know His will in times of trial? Is our initial instinct to examine ourselves first or to lay the blame elsewhere?