

Job's Only Hope (Job 16-17)

I. Job's Suffering Seems Hopeless (16:1-16)

A. Job Desperately Desires Comfort (1-5)

1. Job Receives no comfort from His friends (1-3)

- a. Job has heard all the moralistic arguments before (1-2a)
 - i. They are offering him nothing new
 - ii. They are saying "do good and you get good"
 - iii. Job holds to his innocence
- b. Job's comforters actually bring misery (2b)
 - i. Job calls them miserable comforters
 - ii. They are doing the opposite of what they intended
- c. Job asks them what they desire to accomplish (3)
 - i. Job calls their advice "windy words" in response to Eliphaz saying Job's words were windy
 - ii. Job wonders what provokes them to speak
 - are they really trying to help?
 - are they just trying to win the argument

2. Job Puts Himself in His Friends Position (4-5)

- a. Job Could Speak Worthless Words like them (4)
 - i. He could speak like them if they were in his place
 - ii. He could shame them as they have shamed him
- b. Job Could also Speak Comforting Words to them (5)
 - i. He could strengthen them with helpful words
 - ii. He could ease their pain with his words

B. Job Cannot Overcome the Suffering of God's Assault (6-16)

1. Job Admits He Cannot Ease His Own Pain (6)

- a. Job cannot ease his pain with his own words
- b. Job cannot ease his pain by not speaking
 - i. There is a hopelessness in Job's affirmation
 - ii. With or without his words he cannot change his suffering

2. Job Bemoans God's Assault on Him (7-16)

- a. God has withered Job's strength (7-8)
 - i. Job claims God has worn him out with suffering
 - ii. Job claims God has desolated all he is
 - iii. Job claims God has withered his health
 - Job's plight testifies against him
 - Job's plight proves he has suffered
- b. God has Come against Job personally (9)
 - i. Job claims God has "hated" him
 - ii. Job claims God has gnashed his teeth at him
 - iii. Job claims God as his adversary
 - Job understands God's sovereignty over all things, therefore Job believes that what he is experiencing is God's wrath against him. Only the

reader knows that God is actually using Satan to test Job.

- c. God has turned Job over to the shame of men (10-11)
 - i. Men gasp at Job's plight
 - ii. Men have struck Job with their words of condemnation
 - iii. Men have come together against him in his suffering
 - iv. God has given Job up to these men (11)
 - v. God has given Job into the hands of the wicked
 - Or so Job thinks, He is falling deeper and deeper into despair, thinking that God has turned him over in wrath. Although Job does not know what God's wrath has come against him for.
- d. God's attack on Job is Relentless (12-14)
 - i. Job says he was at ease when God destroyed Him (12-13a)
 - God seized him by the neck and broke him
 - God set him up as a target and shoots at him
 - ii. Job says God has ripped at his insides (13b)
 - He slashes at Job's kidneys – meaning he rips him to pieces
 - He pours out Job's insides on the ground
 - Job is describing his suffering in graphic terms
 - iii. Job says God will not cease in attacking him (14)
 - He just keeps coming – "He breaks me with breach upon breach"
 - He is unstoppable – "He runs upon me like a warrior"
- e. God has brought great suffering upon Job (15-16)
 - i. Job's suffering is inseparable from him (15)
 - not only does Job wear sackcloth (a symbol of suffering and mourning) he says sackcloth is sewn upon his skin. It can't be removed.
 - ii. Job's suffering has changed his appearance (16)
 - his suffering is so great his face is red with continual weeping
 - his suffering has darkened his eyes
 - Job cannot overemphasize the suffering he is enduring under the hand of God.

II. There is Hope For Job's Suffering (16:17-17:16)

A. Job Can Only Hope in A Mediator (16:17-21)

1. Job Still Maintains His Innocence (17)

- a. Job suffers but claims there is no violence he has done
- b. Job suffers but claims that his prayer is pure

2. Job Looks Toward a Divine Mediator (18-21)

- a. Job cries for redemption and rest (18)
 - “earth please do not cover my blood” – as if to let him die without justice
 - don’t let my cry go without a place to rest
 - b. Job calls for his witness in heaven (19)
 - this is a divine testifier to Job’s innocence
 - this is one who brings Job’s case to the throne of God (“on high”)
 - c. Job cries for God’s intercession (20-21)
 - His friends only scorn him as he cries for God
 - He desires God to argue his case
- B. Job’s Only Hope is With God (16:22-17:5)
 - 1. Job Can only anticipate death (16:22-17:1)
 - a. Job is ready to go the way of no return
 - b. Job’s spirit is broken from suffering and his days are coming to an end
 - c. Job sees the grave ready to accept him
 - It seems that this is the only comfort Job is able to look forward to.
 - 2. Job’s Comforters have Only added to his despair (17:2)
 - a. He calls his friends “mockers” who have surrounded him. At the beginning they came to comfort him but now they are increasingly angry that he will not admit his sin and repent before God to ease his suffering
 - b. All Job sees is them trying to provoke him to anguish (“my eye dwells on their provocation”)
 - 3. Job Asks God To Pay His Debt (3)
 - a. Here Job cries to God to lay down a pledge for him for no one else will
 - In this and the section regarding Job’s faith in a mediator foreshadows the coming of Christ and his atonement for sin. Christ sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for the saints and Job understands that his only hope is that God himself would bring his case before God.
 - 4. Job places no faith in his “comforters” (4-5)
 - a. He claims God has closed their hearts to understanding
 - b. He knows God will not allow them to triumph because they have spoken falsely about God
 - c. He knows that they will be punished because they have sought to counsel Job out of a wrong motive – they desire to be proven right and win “a share of property” from Job’s eventual death.
- C. Job Finds No Hope in Man (17:6-16)
 - 1. Job Rejects His Friend’s Advice (6-12)
 - a. Job Admits he has become a shamed invalid (6-7)

- He has become a byword among the people
- He is spit on and rebuked by me because of his situation
- His body (eyes and members) are fading from the terrible suffering and shame

b. Job Understands the Arguments of His friends (8-9)

- They claim to be “upright” because they are not suffering – and they are appalled at him
- They come against him because they believe he is godless and they are innocent
- They believe their hands are clean so they are getting stronger and stronger with their rebuke of him

c. Job Challenges his Friend’s Arguments (10)

- He tells them to “keep it coming”
- He implies that they are all fools – “I shall not find a wise man among you”

d. Job Rebukes his friends for making light of his situation (11-12)

- Job has accepted his situation – “my days are past” and the desires of his heart have come to nothing
- Job claims his friends offer him “light” where there is none
- They give him a solution to his problem that is really no solution at all.

2. Job Anticipates Only Death as a Resolution (13-16)

- a. He has no hope but to make Sheol (the grave) his house
- b. He has no hope but to call the pit and the worm father and mother (14)
- c. He has no hope that these foolish friends can see (15)
- d. He does understand that they, like him, are heading for death eventually.

Job ends this speech on a note of desperate hopelessness. He has called to God to plead his case but in the face of his friend’s advice the only thing that he can really hope for is an end to suffering is death. When he dies his suffering will finally end because he maintains the fact that he is indeed innocent of the crimes these friends are accusing him of. He does not know exactly why God is punishing him but he can find no reason in and of himself.