

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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BIBLE STUDY

JOB

Bible Study Strategies: Prayer of Preparation

1. **Reading** the Scripture accurately
2. **Interpreting** the Scripture which is read
3. **Obeying** the Scripture as it is understood

Aims of Bible Study:

1. Increased Bible knowledge
2. Improvement as a student of the
Scripture
3. Spiritual growth as a believer in Christ

THE DEBATE BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS (Chaps. 3 – 31)

Job Responds to Zophar's First Speech (Chaps. 12-14)

12:1-6 In biting (and now famous) sarcasm, Job accuses his friends of intellectual conceit:

No doubt you are the people, And wisdom will die with you!

Anyone knows that God is wise and powerful, but how do they explain the excruciating sufferings of a man who once received answers to his prayers, and the contrasting prosperity of the ungodly? "You have no troubles, and yet you make fun of me; you hit a man who is about to fall" (v. 5 TEV).

12:7-12 Even the world of nature – the beasts and the birds and the fish – shows God's arbitrariness in destroying some and protecting others. If Job's critics tested words as carefully as they tasted food, they would agree with the ancients, who uniformly agreed with what Job had said.

12:13-35 Now Job launches into a majestic recital of the Lord's sovereignty, wisdom, and strength, and how they often produce inexplicable and paradoxical results.

13:1-19 Job scolds his critics. They have not said anything new. He wants to plead his case with God, not with these forgers of lies and worthless physicians. If they kept silent, people would think they were wise. Their explanation of God's action was not true; they would be accountable to Him for it. Their arguments were weak and useless. If they would just be quiet, he would plead his case . . . before God and commit his life to Him. He is confident he will be vindicated, but even if God were to slay him he will still trust the Lord.

13:20-28 From 13:20 through 14:22, Job addresses God directly. He begs relief from suffering and demands an explanation of why God is treating him so severely. He washes away like a rotten thing, a moth-eaten garment – scarcely worthy of such notice by God.

Francis Anderson evaluates Job's words as follows:

Here Job shows himself to be a more honest observer, a more exuberant thinker, than the friends. The mind reels at the immensity of his conception of God. The little deity in the theology of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar is easily thought and easily believed. But a faith like Job's puts the human spirit to strenuous work.

14:1-6 Job continues to ask why God is so unrelenting with one who is so fleeting, frail, and faulty. Verse 1 is very widely quoted, perhaps because it seems to fit so many occasions:

Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Why not let him live out the rest of his short life with some measure of peace?

14:7-12 There is more hope for a tree that has been cut down than there is for him. There is a terrible finality about human death; a dead person is like a dried-up river.

14:13-17 Job wishes that God would hide him in the grave . . . until His anger subsides. Then if the Almighty calls him forth, he will vindicate himself. In the meantime, God takes note of his every sin.

Job does four things in this section: (1) He asks for a revelation of what his sins are; (2) He describes the transitoriness of human life; (3) HE despairs over the finality of death (longing for a mediator and grasping at the hope of life beyond); (4) He complains of his present plight.

Verse 14a asks a most important question: If a man dies, shall he live again? Our Lord answers the question in John 11:25-26:

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

Harold St John comments on verses 14 and 15:

In 14:14, 15 light dawns on a silent sea, light breaks in, and in a passage of almost incredible daring, Job declares that man is more than matter, that though the heavens will pass and decay; the everlasting hills will crumble, he himself may lie in the grasp of the grave for millennia, yet a day must break when God will feel a hunger round His heart for His friend and will have a desire for the work of His hands.

Then from the deeps of the underworld, Job will answer and, more abiding than the hills, more permanent than the heavens, he will be reunited with the God who had become homesick for His servant.

14:18-22 As inevitable as erosion in nature is man's decay under trials. His body returns to dust and his soul goes to a place of sadness.

This ends the first round of speeches. The logic of Job's friends has been: God is righteous; He punishes the wicked; if Job is being punished it proves he is wicked. But Job has steadily maintained that he is not a wicked person at all.