

A Guide To The Reader

Pastor recommends that to obtain maximum benefit from his comments you read in full from the Bible every reference whenever one appears. Otherwise the reading of the comments is simply a skimming over the surface. They are rather designed to make you stop and meditate and even look up further references as the Holy Spirit guides you. Do pray before you read that the Holy Spirit will be your Tutor and that the time you spend will be time spent with Him.

Job 10

10.1. Of course, God hears and answers prayer but it is not certain here whether Job is merely indicating to the comforters what he would say to Him if the opportunity presented itself or whether he is actually addressing the Lord in prayer in their presence. As Zophar answers, the former is probably what is being described.

To be seriously weary of life means that someone feels they are enduring more than they can any longer bear. That being the case, it is all part of the “not being able to bear it” syndrome that Job feels he can contain his complaint no longer and must bring it to the Lord. While it usually thought admirable to present one’s case at law dispassionately, calmly and logically Job resolves to do so before God emotionally, in the bitterness of his soul. He doesn’t seem to mean that this is the bitterness of resentment, but of pain mingled with confusion (15).

10.2. Heartfelt and emotional though his pleading would be, it appears quite logical and reasonable. Though God be God and we cannot say to Him, “What doest Thou?” yet the natural justice over which He reigns as Supreme Judge may plead for an explanation so that the matter may be more understandingly borne. His first request would be a sort of, “Excuse me,” “Do not condemn me” for asking, but show me what the issue is. We know from chapter 1 that the Lord is not contending with him because of something he has done wrong, but is rather contending with Satan. But He cannot reveal this to Job at this stage of the contest.

Pleading with the Lord to fulfil the promises of scripture on our behalf is a key part of a believer’s relationship with the Lord. “I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them” (Ezekiel 36.37) that is, to fulfil the promises outlined in that chapter. Moses pleaded with the Lord and Job is just learning this advanced prayer skill. It is detailed here for us to learn the constituents, even the hesitations, that might be appropriate as a believer in supplication makes his requests known to God (Philippians 4.6).

10.3. Is it any advantage to the Lord? is it morally right even? Both these nuances (and others, too) may well be meant by “Is it good unto thee?” We may well understand Job interpreting the events as oppression and concluding from them that he is despised by the Lord. He may well be of the opinion that the counsel of his friends is wicked counsel

inasmuch as they do not, from his perspective, hold to a sound theology. But he may be meaning the wicked generally for Job may well be reasoning that if God does not openly show Himself on his behalf He is shining upon the wicked and putting him in the shade.

10.4. "God is a Spirit" (John 4.24) and is therefore omniscient. He does not see as a man sees. His vision is unlimited, His perspective eternal. So Job here is really affirming his faith that the Lord does know his heart, his feelings and what he is really thinking, even when his own words are but wind (6.26). And in His understanding of them does not write him off and condemn him.

10.5-6. By the same reasoning Job affirms his faith that because the Lord is unchanging and eternal surely it is not a worthy spending of His time and interest in pursuing the sin, however small and whatever they may be, of such an insignificant creature as Job knows himself to be.

10.7. Seeing that the Lord's understanding issues in a true evaluation he trusts that the Lord has made a true evaluation of him and that Job's estimate of himself in the matter of not being wicked does not vary greatly from His own. Combining this with the certainty of His omnipotence, so that omniscience and omnipotence are coupled together, Job is effectively pleading with the very attributes which God possesses that He would fly to his cause.

10.8-9. These pleading words of Job are quoted in Psalm 119.73 many years later as a plea that the One who created should crown His servant, the psalmist, with understanding and help him to learn, and to obey, His commandments. Job pleads that why should the Lord who has made him, fearfully and wonderfully made as he is (Psalm 139.14), then proceed to destroy him? Certainly, the Lord said to Adam, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3.19) but Job means why should the Lord do that to him so soon, in his prime?

10.10-13. "Pouring out" is vivid picture language for the emptying of all Job's resources, those external to his person and likewise the internal. "Curdling" goes a step further and declares the spoiling, the causing particularly of his bodily health to go bad. This is a good place to note that while Job thinks that the Lord has been directly responsible, the Lord does accept that ultimate responsibility as First Cause and Satan's role, though contrary to God's, is secondary and limited and merely permitted temporarily.

It is a marvellous act of creation to clothe with skin and flesh, bones and sinews; to give life and favour (which may well here contain its full Biblical significance of grace as in predestination (Romans 8.28-29; Ephesians 1.4-5)) and to have personally sustained him in life. Why the Lord having created Job so wonderfully should now apparently be so obviously destroying him in all of these same attributes is hidden with God; for Job cannot fathom what is happening but has the faith to say, "I know this is with thee," that is, that the Lord knows what He is doing.

10.14-17. Our heavenly Father has ordained it as His method sometimes for dealing with His own that He brings them to an impasse, which they may think (as Job does) confusing. Whatever way they turn there is no escape. God's aim is to make His people give up on themselves and cast themselves utterly and entirely upon Him. When He reveals His will then we may carry on "normally" again. These are life-changing, life-defining, life-directing moments. When God intends them there is no escaping them. Job pursues this theme particularly in chapters 23 -24 (which it would be good to read now) and you will notice that at that point he has made some progress in his readiness to await the Lord's instruction:- "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23.10).

Job is trying to come to terms with these thoughts, as we, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have to come to terms with conflicting desires within ourselves or confusing providences. If I sin, I am a marked man; woe unto me, if I am deliberately wicked. Yet, if I do what is good I cannot be so sure that my good is not contaminated, perhaps by pride or self-interest, so that I cannot lift up my head in God's presence.

The situation is worsening by the hour. Not only am I afflicted, I am confused as to why, and my plea for help is urgent. The King of kings has made the lion the king of beasts and like a lion inexorably gaining upon his tiring prey with a splendid rippling of the muscles and leanness of form Job asks why am I so pursued, what pleasure is to Thee in the hunt?

What these "witnesses" are is revealed in 16.8. Job means his bodily distresses testify of God's continuing contending with him which are getting worse and worse. He can feel the changes causing disintegration within his own body, warring against his very existence. "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psalm 73.14).

10.18-22. So the question remains. Why was I made to live? Now there had, of course, been much enjoyment, much profit indeed, in earlier days. But that has faded into insignificance because of the present distress. It is quite understandable, and we gather from verse 12 that he did appreciate these former things, but the present affliction was so distressing him as to drive away that which was not immediate.

It is one thing to "have been as though I had not been;" it is quite another to think, as many do, that after death they will be peacefully asleep as if they had not been, and had no account to give to God of their lives.

"Let me alone." It seems clear to Job, mistakenly, that there's not much time left and so he just wants to bury his head and pretend it isn't happening, or, rather that God would just leave him to decline without further intervention. But that intervention will prove to be a kind one, so it is not good thinking on his part.

There is no return to this life from death. It is a "long home" (Ecclesiastes 12.5), for a long time and a long way away from this world's events. But Job does not yet understand what later comes to be revealed to him, and is still more fully revealed in the New Testament. The

Lord Jesus Christ taught (John 14.2) “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” – that is, His disciples. He then subsequently prays, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me” (John 17.24). After death there is the reward of being with Christ, and seeing His glory and sharing that glory (1 Peter 5.1).

But he has, at this stage, no hope of anything beyond the grave. The darkness which begins with death continues unabated, as he understands it, and is characteristic of a disordered, dysfunctional place “without any order.” It seems to him that it will be “a horror of great darkness” (Genesis 15.12), a “darkness which may be felt” (Exodus 10.21). The very “light” of that place is unrelieved darkness. How different his understanding will turn out to be by the conclusion of chapter 19!