

DEFIANT FAITHFULNESS / Sunday, October 19, 2014

Unifying Topic: HOPE COMPLAINS

Lesson Text

I. **Job's Complaint** (Job 24:1)

II. **Evil Deeds Of The Wicked** (Job 24:9-12)

III. **The Judgment Of The Wicked** (Job 24:19-25)

Lesson Text: As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. (Psalm 55:16, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Sometimes it seems as though the wicked people in the world get all the breaks and cannot be stopped from doing terrible things. How can this picture be changed? Job 24 complains that God supports the evil ones, but only for a while; however, Job 5 and the psalmist affirm that, even so, God saves the needy and gives the poor hope in the battles they are waging.

Lesson Aim: To remind believers that although the timing of God's justice can be hidden, His justice is certain.

Life Aim: To challenge us to continue trusting in the Lord despite what appears to be inequities and the apparent prosperity of the wicked.

24:1 Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

24:9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

24:10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;

24:11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

24:12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

24:19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

24:20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

24:21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

24:22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.

24:23 Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways.

24:24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

24:25 And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

HISTORY:

Our last lesson was Job 19. As we begin in **Chapter 20**, Zophar is the last one to speak again feeling upset and insulted by Job's reply. He said that Job even tried to make him feel ashamed and disrespected him. He based his argument purely on the idea that Job was an evil hypocrite. Zophar said that while Job had it good for a while, he didn't live righteously, so God took his wealth from him. ¹Zophar wanted to prove that Job was not innocent, so he brings imaginative things that happened to wicked men, and wanted Job to realize that similar things had happened to Job himself. Zophar thought that everybody would agree with him that the happiness of wicked people could not last. But in **Chapter 21** Job could not agree. Job attacks Zophar's assumption and imaginative ideas that the wicked are always punished for their sins in this life. Job described the good lives of some evil people and insists that evil people prosper; they are successful for their whole lives; they have loving families; houses; they die and have beautiful funerals. However, Job respected and loved God. He didn't care if evil people lived better lives than him. He knew the wicked die just like other people, despite their wickedness. By proving that many wicked people have successful lives, Job leaves this question for Eliphaz to think about: "*How can you comfort me with these empty and futile words?*" There is nothing left of Zophar's ranting, but falsehood. In **Chapter 22** when Eliphaz heard this discussion, he wanted to reply to Job because he thought that Job approved of an evil life. While Job spoke of such evil people and gave them a happy ending, Eliphaz responded that they were judged by

¹ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/job-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

God and met a tragic end. Eliphaz couldn't shake his belief that suffering is God's punishment for evil deeds and suggests several possible sins that Job might have committed. But, Eliphaz truly desired for Job to repent; quit quarrelling with God; agree with Him; make peace with Him for all his troubles, so that God can bless him once again. In **Chapter 23** Job's final speech begins here and continues to the end of chapter 31. His response was to Eliphaz, and more directly, to God Himself. His suffering would be more bearable if only he knew why it was happening. If only there was sin for which he could repent, he would! Job longs to find God and plead his case before Him (**vv.1-9**). For God knew every detail about his situation, and would come to his rescue. Job is certain that he would be found innocent after he endures his trials like gold in a refining fire. He treasures and esteems the words of God's mouth more than his necessary food (**vv.10-12**). Job acknowledges that God's decree concerning his life will be carried out regardless, and God will do as He pleases (**vv.13-17**).

LESSON:

Job 24:1 Job's Complaint

24:1 Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?— Even though Job complained, there are appointed times that are not hidden from the Almighty God. For all activities under the sun, are known by God! These are His times of judging the wicked. So His followers; those that know Him could not see His days of judging the wicked. The entire chapter focuses on the seeming injustices that God permits in this world. But Job continues to convey and complain about the actions of evil men and what happens to the suffering poor. His questions are: "*Why the Almighty does not have set times to judge?*" Or "*Why don't His followers see Him intervening?*" Or "*Why are they hidden from us?*"

NOT PART OF THE LESSON

THE ACTIONS OR SINS OF WICKED MEN: **24:2** *People move property lines to get more land; they steal sheep and put them with their own flocks.* **24:3** *They take donkeys that belong to orphans, and keep a widow's ox till she pays her debts.* **24:4** *They prevent the poor from getting their rights and force the needy to run and hide.* **POOR PEOPLE SUFFER** **24:5** *So the poor, like wild donkeys, search for food in the dry wilderness; nowhere else can they find food for their children.* **24:6** *They have to harvest fields they don't own, and gather grapes in vineyards of the wicked.* **24:7** *At night they sleep with nothing to cover them, nothing to keep them from the cold.* **24:8** *They are drenched by the rain that falls on the mountains, and they huddle beside the rocks for shelter* (**Good News Translation GNT**).

BACK TO THE LESSON

Job 24:9-12 Evil Deeds Of The Wicked

24:9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. They pluck; "**they**," are the oppressors; the wicked; the evil men. They snatch the fatherless children from the mother's breasts and take a poor man's baby as a pledge before they will loan him any money or grain. The mothers cannot pay her debt and the fatherless children are robbed of their lands and sold into slavery. These are the deeds of the wicked that continue.

24:10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;— These cruel, hard-hearted oppressors seize their clothing and cause the poor to go around naked. They must go out hungry while harvesting wheat. They struggle to find food and are robbed of their food. "*Sheaf*" is a bundle of cut stalks of grain or similar plants bound with straw or twine.

24:11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst. "**They**," the poor, are forced to press olives for oil and grapes for wine in the shade where two walls meet, without tasting it; they tread the winepress but they themselves go thirsty.

24:12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them. From the city come sounds of pain from those who are near death, and the soul of the wounded is crying out for help; but God does not take note of their prayer. This is a stinging accusation from Job. Human courts prosecuted offenders for most of these social cries. Job, in essence was saying, if human courts punish the wicked, then why doesn't God?

NOT PART OF THE LESSON

PEOPLE WHO OPPOSE EVERY GOOD THING: 24:13 *There are those who reject the light; they don't understand it or go where it leads. 24:14* *At dawn the murderer gets up and goes out to kill the poor, and at night he steals. 24:15* *The adulterer waits for twilight to come; he covers his face so that no one can see him. 24:16* *At night thieves break into houses, but by day they hide and avoid the light. 24:17* *They fear the light of day, but darkness holds no terror for them. 24:18* *The wicked are swept away by floods, and the land they own is under God's curse; they no longer go to work in their vineyards. (Good News Translation GNT).*

BACK TO THE LESSON

Job 24:19-25 The Judgment Of The Wicked

24:19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned. Death consumes sinners as drought and heat consume snow. Therefore, when the weather is dry and warm, snow just disappears. In the same way, these evil people will die. Death is the great leveller.

24:20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree. The womb that shaped the wicked shall forget him. When he dies and go to the grave, the worm will feed sweetly on him. Afterwards, he will not be remembered any more for wickedness and an evil man shall be broken as a fallen tree in a storm, never to grow again.

24:21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow. That happens because they mistreated widows and showed no kindness to childless women. He preyed on the barren who do not bear, and refused to help the needy widows.

24:22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life. God has His timing and removes the strong by His might. No man can feel assured of his life. God acts—and the wicked die.

24:23 Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways. Job is saying that at times it seems like even the most wicked are in safety, and they rest in that safety, it seems that for a time God watches the cruelties of oppressors without interference; in other words, He does not immediately punish their wicked conduct. God grants safety and He might allow them to think that they have security, at rest, but He keeps His eyes on their ways; watching their actions.

24:24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn. For a little while the wicked are exalted; they have had their time of glory; seemly experiencing no interference from God, but are eventually brought low and taken out of the way; dying like everyone else, withering like an ear of corn.

24:25 And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?— Now, Job challenges them by saying, *"If this is not so, who will prove him a liar and make his words of no effect?" "Can anyone deny that this is not so? Can anyone prove that my words are not true?"*

SUMMARY:

Job cannot understand why God allows the unrighteous to go unpunished (24:1).

Evil men oppressed the poor forcing them to live deplorable conditions in and do unthinkable things, yet God had not punished them (24:9-12).

Job admits that when the wicked die, they are not even remembered. No man can be assured of his life, for in a moment the wicked can be taken away by the might of God's power (24:13-25).

APPLICATION:

Maintaining innocence takes faith. Beyond all odds, Job maintained defiant faith! He resisted the views about him and kept believing God by doing what was not expected of him. Close friends does not mean they are for you.

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