

Job Chapter 6

Verses 6:1 – 7:21: Job's response to Eliphaz was recorded. On top of his physical misery and his tempting wife, he had to respond to ignorance and insensitivity from his friend, by expressing his frustration.

Job replied to Eliphaz that his suffering was without reason: "my righteous is in it": His friends seemed more intent on arguing their point than on trying to understand his situation. Yet in the end, "what doth your arguing reprove?"

Verses 1-13: At first Job does not respond to Eliphaz but only continues his lament. His grief was so great that he could hardly reply.

Job 6:1 "But Job answered and said,"

Though Eliphaz thought his speech was unanswerable, being he and his friends had judged unquestionably true. And the fruit of strict, laborious, and diligent search and inquiry; or, "then Job answered", as the same particle is rendered (Job 4:1). After he had heard Eliphaz out; he waited with patience until he had finished his discourse, without giving him any interruption. Though there were many things that were very provoking, particularly in (Job 4:5). And when he had finished, then he made his reply. And this was no other than what every man has a right, to answer for himself when any charge or accusation is brought against him. When his character is attacked, or his good name, which is better than precious ointment, is taken from him. And is what all reasonable men, and the laws of all civilized nations allow.

Verses 2-3: The heaviness of his burden caused the rashness of his words.

Verses 2-7: Job used several metaphors to describe his suffering:

- (1) The Sand of the sea, which implies a vast amount (Gen. 22:17; 32:12), and profound weight (Prov. 27:3);
- (2) As though shot with "arrows" (Lam. 3:12-13), an Old Testament expression for judgment; and
- (3) Tasteless, like the "white of an egg." Job's point, life had lost all its pleasure.

Anyone who has come to this place in his or her life understands these feelings completely.

Job 6:2 "Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!"

Were fully understood and duly considered! O that I had an impartial judge! That would understand my case, and see whether I have not just cause for such bitter complaints.

"And my calamity laid in the balances": Would that some more equal person than you might lay my complaint and my sufferings one against the other, and judge sincerely which is heaviest!

In this, Job gave his answer to the accusations of Eliphaz. Job felt that he was being unjustly judged by his friends. They had not suffered the great loss that he had, and there was no way for them to understand his grief. The amount of his grief was understandable, if you weighed it against the calamities that had happened.

Job 6:3 "For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up."

Which is much heavier than dry sand.

"Therefore my words are swallowed up": My voice and spirit fail me. I cannot find or utter words sufficient to express my sorrow or misery.

Job said that some of his statements might have been a little rash. His troubles were more than the weight of all the sand of the sea however. His words were but nothing covered by the calamities.

Job 6:4 "For the arrows of the Almighty [are] within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me."

"The arrows of the Almighty ... terrors of God": Here are figures of speech picturing the trials as coming from God, indicating that Job believed these were God's judgments.

His greatest wound in all of this was in his heart. He felt that the Almighty had taken his spirit. He was fully aware that all of this had to be allowed by the Almighty. His heart was broken, because he had loved the Almighty with everything he was.

Verses 5-7: These are all illustrations of the fact that Job complained because he had reason. Even animals expect palatable food.

Job 6:5 "Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?"

Neither wild animals, as the wild ass, nor tame, as the ox, are dissatisfied when well-supplied with food. The braying of the one and the lowing of the other prove distress and want of palatable food. So, Job argues, if he complains, it is not without cause; namely, his pains, which are, as it were, disgusting food, which God feeds him (end of Job 6:7). But he should have remembered a rational being should display a better spirit than the brute.

Now this was an explanation of his complaining. He had never complained before, because he had nothing to complain about. The answer to the question above is no. The wild ass brays when

he is hungry, and there is no food. The ox lows when there is no fodder to eat. Now that everything is taken away from Job, he cried out in pain for what used to be.

Job 6:6 "Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? or is there [any] taste in the white of an egg?"

“Unsavory”: tasteless, insipid. Salt is a chief necessity of life to an Easterner; whose food is mostly vegetable.

"The white": Literally, "spittle" (1 Sam. 21:13), which the white of an egg resembles.

The flavor of food is enhanced by the salt on it. The whites of eggs do not have any flavor. His life had lost its pleasantness as well. The loss of his children had taken the joy out of his life. This disease had caused his life to be a dread, and nothing pleasant.

Job 6:7 "The things [that] my soul refused to touch [are] as my sorrowful meat."

To "touch" is contrasted with "meat." My taste refused even to touch it, and yet am I fed with such meat of sickness.

The second clause literally is, "Such is like the sickness of my food." The natural taste abhors even to touch tasteless food, and such forms of nourishment. For my sickness is like such nauseous food. (Psalms 42:3; 80:5; 102:9). No wonder I complain.

We see that Job was explaining his terrible life now, but was also answering Eliphaz who had no right to judge him.

Verses 8-9: “My request”: Job’s request was that God would finish whatever process He began. Death was desirable for no other reason than it would be relief from the inevitable course of events (see Chapter 3).

Job 6:8 "Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant [me] the thing that I long for!"

Baffled in the direction of his fellow creatures, he turns, like many others, to God as his only hope. Although it is rather from God than in God that his hope lies. However exceptional Job’s trials, yet his language is the common language of all sufferers who think that relief, if it comes, must come through change of circumstances rather than in themselves in relation to circumstances. Thus, Job looks forward to death as his only hope; whereas with God and in God there were many years of life and prosperity in store for him.

So strong is this feeling in him that he calls death the thing that he longs for, his hope or expectation. (Compare Job 17), where even the hope that he had in death seems to have passed away and to have issued in blank hopelessness.

Job 6:9 "Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!"

“Cut me off”: This is a metaphor from a weaver, who cuts off the excess thread on the loom (Isa. 38:12).

Eliphaz had spoken of God granting long life to those who loved God. That was the very thing that Job did not want. It would be no life at all without his health and his children to share it.

Job 6:10 "Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."

“The words of the Holy One”: Job had not been avoiding the revelation of God that he had received. The commands of the Holy One were precious to him and he had lived by them. This was confusing to him, as he couldn’t find any sinful source for his suffering. He would rejoice in his pain if he knew it would soon lead to death, but he couldn’t see any hope for death or deliverance in himself (verses 11-13).

Job knew that he would be in heaven with his LORD if he died, because he had not denied Him. It appears that Job had spread the good news of God. He had never hidden his belief in God. Notice the change of the name that Job called God here. The Holy One means that he recognized the holiness of God. He knew there was a reason for everything that was happening, and that as bad as it was, it was the right thing for Job.

Job 6:11 "What [is] my strength, that I should hope? and what [is] mine end, that I should prolong my life?"

For a perfect restoration of health, suggested by Eliphaz. Since it was so sadly weakened by the present affliction, which made death more desirable than life lengthened out in so much weakness, pain, and sorrow. Or "that I should bear", such a weight and heavy load that lay upon him, and crushed him, and to which his strength was not equal; or continue and endure.

"What is mine end, that I should prolong my life?" What end can be answered by living, or desiring a long life? His children were gone, and none left to take care of and provide for. His substance was taken away from him, so that he had nothing to support himself, nor to be useful to others, such as the poor. He had lost all power, authority, and influence, among men, and could be no more serviceable by his counsel and advice. Or by the administration of justice and equity as a civil magistrate. And as to religious matters, he was reckoned a hypocrite and a wicked man by his friends, and had lost his character and interest as a good man. And so for him to live could answer no valuable end. So therefore, he desires to die. For what is here (and in Job 6:12), contain the reasons of his above request.

Job realized that he was very ill. He knew that all of his strength was gone. Why would he want to live in a body filled with sickness?

Job 6:12 "[Is] my strength the strength of stones? or [is] my flesh of brass?"

Is it like such especially which are foundation and corner stones that support a building? Or like a stone pillar, that will bear a prodigious weight? No, it is not.

"Or is my flesh of brass?" Is it made of brass? Or is it like to brass for hardness, or for sustaining any weight laid on it? It is not. Therefore it cannot bear up under the heavy load of afflictions on it, but must sink and fail. It is but flesh and blood, and that flesh like grass, weak and feeble. Therefore, death is better than life laden with such an insupportable burden.

Job could not pretend that his body would be as strong as a rock, or his flesh as brass. He was sick and his flesh was weak.

Job 6:13 "[Is] not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?"

This would be better rendered in an affirmative manner, or as an exclamation. The interrogative form of the previous verses need not be continued in this. The sense is, "alas, there is no help in me!" That is, "I have no strength; I must give up under these sorrows in despair." So it is rendered by Jerome, Rosenmuller, Good, Noyes, and others.

"And is wisdom quite driven from me?" This also, should be read as an affirmation, "deliverance is driven from me." The word rendered wisdom means properly a setting upright; then help, deliverance; and then purpose, enterprise (see the notes at Job 5:12). Here it means that all hope of deliverance had fled, and that he was sinking in despair.

Job 6:14 "To him that is afflicted pity [should be showed] from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty."

Job does not really answer Eliphaz's contention but simply pleads for "Pity" from his friends. He seems to answer the tone of Eliphaz's speech rather than the specific charges.

"Afflicted pity ... from his friend": Job rebuked his friends with sage words. Even if a man has forsaken God (which he hadn't), should not his friends still show kindness to him? How can Eliphaz be so unkind as to continually indict him?

Here is a good reminder to those who long to comfort the wounded: "Pity should be showed" by anyone who is a "friend" to the "afflicted".

He had received no help from his friends. They wanted him to help himself. True friends should be comforters, not accusers. True friends would have known Job well enough, to know that he was not involved in sin. They should have believed in Job. They did not. They brought railing accusations against him. We say they because Eliphaz was speaking for all three of them. Job had not forsaken the fear of the Almighty, but if he had, they still could have shown him some trust and love instead of joining the crowd who criticized him.

Verses 15-23: Job described his friends as being about as useful with their counsel as a dry river bed in summer. "You are no help," he said (verse 21), "although all I asked for was a little sympathy, not some great gift or deliverance" (verses 22-23).

Job 6:15 "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, [and] as the stream of brooks they pass away;"

I.e. my kinsmen or three friends. For though Eliphaz only had spoken, the other two showed their approbation of his discourse, or at least of that part of it which contained his censure of Job's person and state.

"Have dealt deceitfully": Under a pretense of friendship and kindness dealing in an unrighteous manner and unmercifully with me. And adding to these afflictions which they said they came to remove.

"As the stream of brooks": Which quickly vanish, and deceive the hopes of the thirsty traveler.

Their friendship for him had left like the water in a brook flows to a lower place. It was not stable, but went away.

Job 6:16 "Which are blackish by reason of the ice, [and] wherein the snow is hid:"

Literally, "Go as a mourner in black clothing" (Psalm 34:14). A vivid and poetic image to picture the stream turbid and black with melted ice and snow, descending from the mountains into the valley.

"And wherein the snow is hid": In this, the snow dissolved is, in the poet's view, "hid" in the flood.

Job 6:17 "What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place."

The ice and the snow, which when the weather becomes warm, they melt away and disappear. In like manner, he suggests his friends ceased to be friends to him in a time of adversity. The sun of affliction having looked upon him, they deserted him, at least did not administer comfort to him.

"When it is hot they are consumed out of their place": When it is hot weather, and the sun has great strength then the waters, which swelled through the floods and fall of rain and snow, and which when frozen, looked black and big as if they had great depth in them. They were quickly dried up, and no more to be seen in the place where they were. Which still expresses the short duration of friendship among men, which Job had a sorrowful experience of.

This was another way of expressing their transient loyalty to him. When the ice is frozen it stays right there. When trouble comes (it waxes warm), it melts and runs off. Their friendship could not stand the heat of this time.

Job 6:18 "The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish."

That is, the waters when melted by the heat of the sun, and the warmth of the weather, run. Some one way, and some another in little streams and windings. Till they are quite lost and the tracks of them are no more to be seen. Denoting that all appearance of friendship was quite gone, and no traces of it to be found.

"They go to nothing, and perish": Some of them are lost in little meanders and windings about. Others are exhiled by the heat of the sun, and go into "Tohu", as the word is, into empty air. So vain and empty, and perishing, were all the comforts he hoped for from his friends. Though some understand this of the paths of travelers in the deserts being covered in the sand, and not to be seen and found.

Job was calling them good-time friends. Their friendship dissolved at the very first sign of trouble.

Job 6:19 "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them."

"Tema ... Sheba": Tema in the north, named for the son of Ishmael (Gen. 25:15; Isa. 21:14), and Sheba in the south (Jer. 6:20) were part of the Arabian Desert, where water was precious.

The troops of Tema were speaking of Arabs descended from Ishmael. They were nomads. They were here today and gone tomorrow. The troops did not all go in at once. Sheba waited behind.

Job 6:20 "They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed."

When they came to the places where they hoped to find water. Finding none were ashamed of their vain hope, and reflected upon themselves for being so foolish as to raise their expectations upon such a groundless conjecture.

"They came thither, and were ashamed": Which is the same thing expressed in different words; and aptly enough describes Job's disappointment in not meeting with that relief and comfort he expected from his friends. To whom he makes application of all this in the following words of (Job 6:21).

Job had looked for friends who loved him, and would stand beside him. He was ashamed of his friends when they did not stand beside him in his sorrow. These caravans came to sell, and were disappointed when their benefactor was no more.

Job 6:21 "For now ye are nothing; ye see [my] casting down, and are afraid."

As the dried-up brook is to the caravan, so are ye to me, namely, a nothing. Ye might as well not be in existence.

“Ye see ... and are afraid”: Ye are struck aghast at the sight of my misery, and ye lose presence of mind. Job puts this mild construction on their failing to relieve him with affectionate consolation.

As far as Job was concerned these so-called friends were nothing in his eyes. They stood against Job for fear they might be incriminated.

Job 6:22 "Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?"

"Or, is it because I said? Is this, or what else is the reason why you are afraid of me, or alienated from me?"

"Bring unto me": Give me something for my support or relief. Did either my former covetousness or my present necessity make me troublesome or chargeable to you?

“Give a reward for me”: Either to the judge before whom I am brought and accused, that he may give a favorable sentence in my behalf; or to the enemy who hath taken me captive. "Or, give a gift for me": I.e. for my use or need. Did I send for you to come and visit me for this end? Nay, did you not come of your own accords? Why then are you thus unmerciful to me? You might at least have given me good and comfortable words, which is the easiest and cheapest part of a friend’s work, when I desired and expected nothing else from you.

Job 6:23 "Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?"

At no time have I called on you to rescue me from a foe.

"Or, Redeem me?" That is, rescue me from the hand of robbers. The meaning is, that he was in no way beholden to them. He had never called on them for assistance; and there was therefore no claim which they could now have to afflict him further by their reflections. There seems to be something peevish in these remarks; and we need not attempt to justify the spirit which dictated them.

The answer to all of this was no. He had not asked for any help at all from them, even though everything had been taken from him. He did not even ask for them to intervene with the Almighty for him. They had come of their own freewill with no comfort for Job in the physical, or in the spiritual sense.

Verses 24-30: “Teach me ... cause me to understand wherein I have erred”: Job was not admitting to having sinned. Rather he said to his accusers, “If I’ve sinned, show me where.” The sufferer indicted his friends for insensitivity, and while not claiming sinlessness, he was convinced there was no sin in his life that led directly to such suffering.

Job 6:24 "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred."

“Wherein I have erred” is a call for specific sins to be cited by the friends, perhaps with a note of sarcasm.

Now Job told them if he was wrong about them, he would say no more. He could not understand what he had done to cause their friendship to not mean more to them.

Job 6:25 "How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?"

How weighty and impressive are words of truth! Job means that he was accustomed to feel their power, and to admit it on his soul. If their words were such, he would listen to them with profound attention, and in silence. The expression has a proverbial cast.

"But what doth your arguing reprove?" Or rather, what doth the reproof from you reprove? Or what do your reproaches prove? Job professes a readiness to listen to words of truth and wisdom. He complains that the language of reproach used by them was not adapted to instruct his understanding or to benefit his heart. As it was, he did not feel himself convinced, and was likely to derive no advantage from what they said.

Had they spoken truth, he would have gladly listened. They had done nothing to help. They had just given him less hope than he had before they came.

Job 6:26 "Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, [which are] as wind?"

“It cannot be your intent to reprove mere words, as mine confessedly are (Job 6:3). And as you seem to count them (Job 6:13). If so, they are hardly worth the trouble bestowed upon them, but might be left to answer themselves.”

He wanted to know just exactly what he had done that they knew of, that would have given the impression he was a sinning man. It seems they were not blaming him for his actions, but for his words.

Job 6:27 "Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig [a pit] for your friend."

“Fatherless” was both a personal lament and a reminder to Job’s friends that all of his children had died.

This was a way Job had of expressing their lack of feeling for those in need. They had given him no way out. They had already dug his grave in their thoughts.

Job 6:28 "Now therefore be content, look upon me; for [it is] evident unto you if I lie."

Be pleased either:

1. To look upon my countenance, if it betrays any fear or guilt, as if I spoke contrary to my own conscience. Or rather;
2. To consider me and my cause further and better than you have done. That you may give a more true and righteous judgment concerning it.

"Is evident unto you": You will plainly discover it. A little further consideration and discourse will make it manifest, and I shall readily acknowledge it.

Job was saying they should know in their own hearts that he was telling them the truth.

Job 6:29 "Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness [is] in it."

From the ill opinion you have of me, and from your hard censures, and entertain other sentiments concerning me. Or it may be, upon these words of Job, his friends might be rising up as usual to take their leave of him, and break off conversation with him. And therefore, he entreats they would return to their seats, and resume the debate, and give a friendly hearing of his case.

"Let it not be iniquity": Either let it not be reckoned an iniquity to return and go on hearing his case. Or he entreats that they would take care not to sin in their anger and resentment against him, nor go on to charge him with iniquity. Or it may be rendered, "there is no iniquity"; that is, it should be found that there was no such iniquity in him as he was charged with. Not that he was free from all sin, which no man is, but from that which his friends judged he was guilty of, hypocrisy.

"Yea, return again": He most earnestly implores them to return and patiently hear him out.

"My righteousness is in it": In the whole of this affair before them, and which was the matter of controversy between them. Meaning, not his justifying righteousness before God, but the righteousness of his cause before men. He doubted not, but when things were thoroughly searched into, that his righteousness would be as clear as the light, and his judgment as the noonday. That he should appear to be a righteous man, and his cause a just one; and should stand acquitted and free from all charges and imputations.

It is as if Job was telling them to start all over again and examine this. They would find that this was not because of any iniquity in Job's life. Job reminded them that he had lived righteously before the LORD. If they had taken the time to check all of this out before they started their criticism, they would have known he had done nothing to deserve this.

Job 6:30 "Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern perverse things?"

Consider, if there be any iniquity or untruth in what I have already said, or shall further speak? Have I hereto uttered anything that is faulty?

"Cannot my taste discern perverse things": That is, my understanding which judges of words and actions, as the palate does of meats. I hope it is not so corrupted but that I can discern what is bad, even though spoken by myself.

Job Chapter 6 Questions

1. Oh that my grief were _____ weighed?
2. What was Job doing in this chapter?
3. Why could his friends not understand his grief?
4. How could you understand his great grief?
5. He compared the weight of his grief with what?
6. The arrows of the _____ were within him.
7. What was his greatest wound?
8. Doth the wild ass _____ when he hath grass?
9. What is verse 5 explaining?
10. The flavor of food is enhanced by _____.
11. What had taken the joy of Job's life away?
12. What was the desire of Job, in verse 9?
13. It would be no life for Job without what two things?
14. When did Job feel he would have comfort?
15. What question did he ask in verse 11?
16. What strong things did he compare his strength to in verse 12?
17. Where did his friends expect him to get help from?
18. True friends should be _____.
19. Eliphaz was speaking for whom?
20. What did Job compare the friend's deceit with in verse 15?
21. What were verses 16 and 17 describing?

22. What was Job calling his friends in verse 18?
23. Who were the troops of Tema?
24. What did he call them in verse 21?
25. What questions did he ask them in verses 22 and 23?
26. What was the answer to those questions?
27. What did Job say he would do, if he was wrong about them?
28. Had they spoken truth, he would have gladly _____.
29. What specific sin could they accuse him of?
30. What should these friends have done, before they started their criticism?