

Job Chapter 7

Verses 1-21: After having directed his words at his friends in chapter 6, Job then directed them at God. Throughout this section he used words and arguments that sounded much like Solomon in Ecclesiastes, i.e., “labor, vanity, trouble and breath.”

“Appointed time” has a general meaning here (14:14; Isa. 40:2), but typically refers to military duty or a hired laborer. Job’s service to God now seemed like a repetitive, joyless activity. Nothing comforted him, nothing assured him.

In verses 1-10: “Like the days of a hireling?” He felt like a slave under tyranny of his master, longing for relief and reward (verses 1-2); he was sleepless (verses 3-4); he was loathsome because of worms and scabs, dried filth, and new running sores (verse 5); he was like a weaver’s shuttle, tossed back and forth (verse 6); he was like a breath or cloud that comes and goes on its way to death (verses 7-10). In this discourse, Job attempted to reconcile in his own mind what God was doing.

Job 7:1 "[Is there] not an appointed time to man upon earth? [are not] his days also like the days of a hireling?"

Job now turns to God to continue his lament.

We know that it is God who determines how long each of us lives. He allots the amount of time He gives us to accomplish the things we have been assigned to do as well. A hireling is someone who is hired to do a specific job.

Job 7:2 "As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as a hireling looketh for [the reward of] his work:"

The shadow, i.e. the sun-set, or the night, the time allotted for his rest and repose (Psalm 104:23).

The reward of his work, Hebrew *his work*; which is often put for the reward of it (as Lev. 19:13; Isa. 40:10; 49:4). Or the end of his work.

The servant was waiting until nightfall to rest. The hireling was waiting until payday. He was waiting to be paid for the work that was finished.

Verses 3-4: “Months of vanity”: indicates the length of Job’s suffering. In addition to physical distress, he also suffered with insomnia (Psalm 39:4).

Job 7:3 "So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me."

This so respects not so much the desire and expectation of a hired servant (which is expressed Job 7:2), as the ground and reason of it, which is plainly implied. To wit, his hard toil and service, which makes him thirst after rest.

"I am made to possess": God, by his sovereign power and providence, hath given me this as my lot and inheritance.

"Months": So he calls them rather than days, to note either the irksomeness or tediousness of his affliction, whereby every day seemed a month to him. Or their length and continuance, which, as some infer from here, had now been upon him some months.

"Of vanity": Empty and unsatisfying, or false and deceitful, not giving me that ease and rest which they promised me, and I expected.

"Wearisome nights": He mentions nights, because that is the saddest time for sick and miserable people. The darkness and solitude of the night being of themselves uncomfortable, and giving them more opportunity for solemn and sorrowful thoughts and reflections upon their own miseries.

The months of vanity were speaking of months that accomplished nothing. The wearisome nights were speaking of pain and suffering that seems to be magnified at night.

Job 7:4 "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day."

To get some rest and sleep. The night in Hebrew, the evening; the part put for the whole (as it is Genesis 1:5).

"To and fro": From side to side in the bed, as men in grievous pains of the body or anxiety of mind often do.

"Unto the dawning of the day": So this Hebrew word is used also (1 Sam. 30:17; Psalm 119:147).

Job was speaking of the nights that seemed never to end. He tossed all night long.

Job 7:5 "My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome."

Which were bred out of his corrupted flesh and sores, and which it seems, covered him all over like a garment.

"And clods of dust": The dust of the earth on which he lay.

"My skin is broken": By ulcers breaking out in all parts of it.

His skin was so infected, that worms were in the sores. This was speaking of the disease being so bad that the sores ran with puss. His sores were so terrible that he had begun to hate his own flesh.

Verses 6-10: The metaphors here convey life's transience, paralleling language that is found in the Psalms (Psalms 39:4-6; 62:9; 89:47-48; 144:3-4). While such realities drove the psalmist to God, Job spoke as one without hope.

Job 7:6 "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope."

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle. Which passes in a moment from one side of the web to the other. So the time of my life hastens to a period; and therefore vain are those hopes which you would give me of a restoration to my former prosperity in this world.

"And are spent without hope": Of enjoying any good day here.

The weaver's shuttle moves rapidly. This was saying, that looking back over his life seemed like it passed in a hurry. In comparison to his long weary nights, his days were long. One day brought no more hope of a cure for his disease than the day before.

Job 7:7 "O remember that my life [is] wind: mine eye shall no more see good."

Or, "breath"; Man's life is in his breath, and that breath is in his nostrils, and therefore not to be accounted of, or depended on. Man appears by this to be a poor frail creature, whose life, with respect to himself, is very precarious and uncertain. It is but as a "vapor", an air bubble, full of wind, easily broken and dissipated, and soon vanishes away. It is like the "wind", noisy and blusterous, full of stir and tumult, and, like that, swiftly passes and sweeps away, and returns not again.

This is an address to God; and so some supply it, "O God", or "O Lord, remember", etc. Not that forgetfulness is in God, or that he needs to be reminded of anything; but he may seem to forget the frailty of man when he lays his hand heavily on him. And may be said to be mindful of it when he mercifully takes it off. What Job here prays for, the Lord often does, as he did with respect to the Israelites (Psalm 78:39).

"Mine eye shall no more see good": Meaning not spiritual and eternal good, here and hereafter. He knew he should, after this life, see his living Redeemer even with the eyes of his body, when raised again. That he should see him as he is, not through a glass, darkly, but face to face, in all his glory. And that for himself, and not another, and even see and enjoy things he had never seen before. But his sense is, that he should see or enjoy no more temporal good. Either in this world, being without hope of any, or in the grave, whither he was going and would shortly be. And therefore entreats that some mercy might be shown him while he lived; to which sense the following words incline in the next verse.

The wind comes and goes no one knows where. His days were like that also. He did not know when this would all end. He did not know where this was leading. He was full of despair and believed that all of his good times were over.

Job 7:8 "The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no [more]: thine eyes [are] upon me, and I [am] not."

That is, I shall go down to the grave, and be no more seen upon earth. Neither friend nor enemy shall behold me after that.

“Thine eyes”: God's eyes. God still sees him and watches him; this is a certain consolation; but will it last?

“Are upon me, and I am not”: I am on the point of disappearing. Even now I scarcely exist.

Job felt that he was near death. When death came and they put him in the grave, he would not be seen again on the earth.

Job 7:9 "[As] the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no [more]."

Being dissolved by the heat of the sun.

"And vanisheth away": Never to return again.

"So he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more": Never until the general resurrection. When you see a cloud, which looked great, as if it would eclipse the sun, suddenly dispersing and disappearing, say: Just such a thing is the life of man, a vapor that appears for a while and then vanisheth away. He shall return no more to his house. He shall no more be seen and known in his former habitation. It concerns us to secure a better place when we die: for this will own us no more.

Clouds appear for a moment in time, and then suddenly vanish away. Job believed his life was the same way. He had no hope of living again upon this earth.

Job 7:10 "He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

In a literal sense, built or hired by him, or however in which he dwelt. And if a good man, he will have no desire to return to that any more, having a better house, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Or in a figurative sense, either his body, the earthly house of his tabernacle, a house of clay, which has its foundation in the dust. To this he shall not return until the resurrection, when it will be rebuilt, and fitted up for the better reception and accommodation of him. Or else his family, to whom he shall not come back again, to have any concern with them in domestic affairs. Or in part of the business of life, as David said of his child when dead, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).

"Neither shall his place know him any more": The place of his office, or rather of his habitation. His dwelling house, his farms and his fields, his estates and possessions, he shall no more know. They shall not own, and acknowledge him as their master, proprietor, and possessor, these, coming at his death go into other hands, who now are regarded as such. Or the inhabitants of the place, country, city, town, village, or house in which he lived, shall know him any more. No more being seen among them, he will soon be forgotten; out of sight, out of mind.

This is true of all who die upon the earth. The house you lived in will be inhabited by the next generation. You will have no need for it anymore.

Verses 11-21: Job now turned his lament toward God, with questions that centered on his prolonged misery. If Job's life was a breath that would inevitably expire one day (James 4:14), why did God bother guarding him like some monster of the "sea"? Why not train His eye elsewhere and let Job pass away?

Job 7:11 "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."

"Therefore": On the basis of all he had said (in verses 1-10), he felt he had a right to express his complaint.

Job had decided that since his life seemed to be so hopeless, he would complain. He had not previously revealed his bitter feelings. Now he would open up and reveal the hurt that he felt.

Job 7:12 "[Am] I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?"

"Sea or a whale": The sea and the whale are two threatening forces that must be watched or curbed due to their destructive force. Job was not like that.

Job is saying, "Is it so needful to watch me as you would watch a threatening sea monster?"

Job was not an animal, or a sea that had no control over their lives. He was a man with feelings. He was restrained as if he had no thoughts or feelings. He felt as if God had forgotten him.

Verses 13-16: The agony Job experienced was constant. He could barely sleep, yet when he did, he was haunted by nightmares he believed came from God. Hence, Job pled with God to "let me alone" so death could bring relief.

Verses 13-14: Even when he slept, he had terrifying dreams so that he longed for death (verses 15-16).

Job 7:13 "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;"

When he thought within himself that he would lie down upon his bed and try to get a little sleep, which might comfort and refresh him, and which he promised himself he should obtain by this means. As he had formerly experienced.

"My couch shall ease my complaint": He concluded, that by lying down upon his couch, and falling asleep, it would give some ease of body and mind. That his body would, at least, for some time be free from pain, and his mind composed and should cease from complaining for a while. Which interval would be a relief to him, and of considerable service.

Job 7:14 "Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:"

This is an address to God. He regarded him as the source of his sorrows, and he expresses his sense of this in language indeed very beautiful, but far from reverence.

"And terrifiest me through visions": (See the notes at Job 4:13). This refers to the visions of the fancy, or to frightful appearances in the night. The belief of such night-visions was common in the early ages, and Job regarded them as under the direction of God, and as being designed to alarm him.

In the past, he had lain down at night and found peace and rest in his own bed. The sickness in his body would not even allow him to rest when he lay down for the night. He had bad dreams that tormented him, even in his sleep. His visions were even of evil things.

Job 7:15 "So that my soul chooseth strangling, [and] death rather than my life."

Not to strangle himself, as Ahithophel did, or to be strangled by others, this being a kind of death inflicted on capital offenders. But rather, as Mr. Broughton renders it, "to be choked to death" by any distemper and disease, as some are of a suffocating nature, as a catarrh, quinsy, etc. and kill in that way. And indeed, death in whatsoever way is the stopping of a man's breath; and it was death that Job chose, let it be in what way it would, whether natural or violent. So weary was he of life through his sore and heavy afflictions.

"And death rather than my life": Or, "than my bones"; which are the more solid parts of the body, and the support of it, and are put for the whole and the life thereof. Or than these bones of his, which were full of strong pain, and which had nothing but skin upon them, and that was broken and covered with worms, rottenness, and dust. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and my bones death". That is, desired and chose death, being so full of pain (see Psalm 35:10).

He did not desire to live in this tormented state. Strangling was thought of as a disgraceful way of dying, but he would have even preferred that to living in this torment.

Job 7:16 "I loathe [it]; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days [are] vanity."

The word for "vanity" is the same word often translated "meaningless" or "futile" in Ecclesiastes. Scripture often used it to depict the transience of life (Eccl. 1:2-4).

Man does not live in this body forever. Job wanted to know why he could not just die now and cut the time short.

Verses 17-19: The language in these verses resembles that of (Psalm 8:4), except that Job associates God's excessive attention with testing. Despite Job's feelings of worthlessness, he felt that even in the trivial things of life, God would not allow him one moment of peace "till I swallow down my spittle":

Verses 17-18: Why is he so important, Job wonders, that God would spend all this attention on him? Why did God cause all this misery to one so insignificant as he?

Job 7:17 "What [is] man, that thou shouldest magnify him? And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?"

What is there in that poor, mean creature called man, miserable man, which can induce thee to take any notice of him, or to make such account of him? Man is not worthy of thy favor, and he is below thy anger. It is too great a condescension in thee, and too great an honor done to man, that thou should contend with him, and draw forth all thy forces against him, as if he were a fit match for thee. Therefore do not, O Lord, dishonor thyself or magnify me.

"And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" Should concern thyself so much about him, as though he were a creature of great dignity and worth, or were near and dear to thee.

At this point, Job did not have much regard for his own self. He could not imagine why God would love so wretched a creature as himself. Job was saying that man was so useless that he could not imagine why God would elevate him to be made in the image of God.

Job 7:18 "And [that] thou shouldest visit him every morning, [and] try him every moment?"

That is, for the purpose of inflicting pain. This language Job intends undoubtedly to be applicable to himself, and he asks with impatience why God should take a pleasure in visiting with suffering each returning day a creature like him?

"Every morning": Why is there no intermission even for a day? Why does not God allow one morning, or one moment, to pass without inflicting pain on a creature so feeble and so frail?

"And try him": Or, prove him; to wit, by afflictions.

"Every moment": Constantly; without intermission.

Job was feeling that he had fallen short of the expectations of God. Job was saying that man was under the eye of God every moment of every day. It seems that any weakness in man is tried. It is as if man is under inspection constantly. I think the problem is, that Job had examined his past

actions and could not find what he had done wrong. He actually thought that he had forgotten some sin he had committed, and that God was holding him responsible for that sin.

Job 7:19 "How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?"

“Till I swallow down my spittle”: This strange statement was an Arabic proverb, indicating a brief moment. Job was asking for a moment “to catch his breath,” or in the case of the proverb, “swallow my spittle.”

Job was asking God not to examine him every moment of every day. He did not want God to leave him. He just wanted God to not examine him quite as closely.

Job 7:20 "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?"

“I have sinned” is better as, “If I have sinned.”

Job realized that he had been singled out to mark. God had not revealed to him the challenge Satan had put before Him pertaining to Job. Notice Job did not say what his sin was, because he did not know what the sin was. It is as if he was saying, "If I have sinned, I am sorry". I cannot go back and change the past. He was a burden to himself.

Job 7:21 "And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I [shall] not [be]."

Seeing thou art so gracious to others, so ready to preserve and forgive them. Why may not I hope for the same favor from thee?

"For now shall I sleep in the dust": If thou dost not speedily help me it will be too late, I shall be dead. And so incapable of receiving those blessings which thou art accustomed to give to men in the land of the living;

"And thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be": When thou shalt diligently seek for me that thou mayest show favor to me, thou wilt find that I am dead and gone, and so will lose the opportunity of doing it. Help therefore speedily. The consideration of this, that we must shortly die, and perhaps may die suddenly, should make us all very solicitous to get our sins pardoned, and our iniquities taken away.

Job was sure death was near. He wanted God to forgive him so that he could rest in peace when he died. Job knew that if he did sin, which he was not sure he did, God is a forgiving God. Job was saying that God would stop this chastisement sometime, but he would probably, already be dead when He did stop it. This was a man in great despair.

Job Chapter 7 Questions

1. The days of man on earth are _____.
2. His days are like the days of a _____.
3. What is a hireling?
4. What does a hireling look for?
5. What were the months of vanity speaking of?
6. Why were the nights wearisome for Job?
7. In verse 5, we see that his flesh was clothed with _____.
8. His disease had become so terrible, that he hated his _____.
9. When Job looked back over his life, it seemed to have passed in a _____.
10. Why was his life compared to the wind?
11. In verse 8, Job felt as if he was near _____.
12. How is he compared to a cloud?
13. In verse 10, we see that the house he used to live in, would now be inhabited by the _____.
14. How had Job found peace in his past life?
15. Why had Job decided to complain?
16. Job did not desire to live in this _____ state.
17. Why was strangling mentioned?
18. What questions did Job ask God in verse 17?
19. Job felt that he had fallen short of the _____ of God.
20. What was Job asking for in verse 19?
21. What had God not revealed to Job?
22. Why did Job not say what his sin was?
23. Why did Job want God to pardon his transgressions?

24. If Job had sinned, Job knew God is a _____ God.

25. Job knew God would stop the chastisement sometime, but believe he would be _____
by that time.