

**March 21**

**Scriptures:** Read Job 7 & 8

**Key Verse:** “What is man, that You should magnify him, that You should set Your heart on him, that You should visit him every morning, and test him every moment?” (Job 7:17, 18)

## **Overview**

Job continued his lament in chapter seven, expounding upon the miseries of life and the hardship that is the common lot for mankind. His skin disease (possibly elephantiasis, 7:5) is such that he can get no rest. His days of futility drag on with sleepless nights, and yet he feels his hopeless life is swiftly passing, as he is on the verge of death. Since he has nothing to lose, Job speaks his mind, which is full of bitterness and complaints to God.

The ancients attributed everything that happened as being from God. Therefore, Job sees his continuing misery as coming directly from God, who carefully watches over him and tests him (7:17-18); but unlike the similar words in Psalm 8:4, which give the positive side of God’s watchful care, Job can see only the negative side because of his recent experiences. He questions God about His interest in him; after all, he is only an insignificant creature. He wonders why God is afflicting him, guarding him as though he were an uncontrollable monster (7:12), and giving him bad dreams. Job wished that God would leave him alone, and thus he believed he would be relieved from suffering, and if this was not to come, he desired death. Let us not be too quick to judge Job’s words, as did his three insensitive friends who really could not identify with Job or what he was going through. God, however, understood Job very well, as He does with all His children. Job uttered his honest and innermost feelings, and who best to tell them to than the Lord.

Job, like his companions, had a limited knowledge of God. At that early period in history, there were no Holy Scriptures to help them understand, and thus Job was in a great dilemma. His conscience told him he was innocent, but his circumstances told him he must be a terrible sinner. He asked the Great Watcher of men, “Have I sinned?” (7:20). Job repented in case he had sinned unknowingly. As Job reasoned, if God had pardoned him, then God would have restored him, but why then was he still suffering so much?

The reader understands that Job’s suffering was a matter of trial and testimony. It was a test of God’s authority and redemptive power among mankind. If Satan could get Job, God’s prime example of a righteous man, to curse God, then he could bring chaos to God’s orderly world (like Leviathan), and jeopardize God’s plan of redemption for mankind. Even though Job was considering himself the most miserable man, he was a prince in God’s eyes, because he did not curse God but held fast to his faith. Job proved that God’s redemption is indeed effective, and the “seed of the woman” could then crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). Job triumphed over the enemy, just as the Lord Jesus will one day bring about the ultimate triumph, dealing the final crushing blow to the serpent’s head.

Job's second friend, Bildad, does not use as much tact in his speech as had Eliphaz. Rather, he immediately strikes out to criticize Job. His basic assumptions are the same as those of Eliphaz, and he asserts that the death of his children was God's judgment upon them for their sin. Since Job was still alive, however, Bildad believed there was yet hope for him, if he would only "earnestly seek God" and make supplication to the Almighty (8:5). Like Eliphaz's words, these also were wise words of counsel, but they did not apply to Job's situation. Bildad insinuated that Job was not pure and upright (8:6), for if he were, he would not be in this situation. They all were later to learn more about God through Job's trials.

Eliphaz, as an elder, based his assertions on experience, but Bildad, who was most likely younger, based his assertions on traditions and the wisdom of past sages, which he believed were authoritative. By using traditional proverbs, which were similes drawn from nature (8:11, 16-19), Bildad expresses the law of sowing and reaping; if one sows sin, he shall reap suffering. Bildad goes so far as to imply that Job is a hypocrite whose confidence, hope, and trust have been put in something other than God, and whatever it may be it is as flimsy as a spider's web (8:13-15). Bildad's words are strong and would be great for a real hypocrite to hear, but these warnings for the ungodly do not help Job, who is a truly godly man.

Bildad suddenly changed his tone and went back to the notion that there was still hope for Job. He possibly did this in an attempt to encourage and comfort Job before his discourse was finished. However, the general tone of Bildad's speech was one of condemnation, which would not serve to comfort Job but rather to confuse him.

## **Prayer**

Lord, we pray the questions of Job today as found in Job 7:17, 18. Thank You for Your answers to these questions. Thank You that we are the objects of Your love, and thank You that You do visit us every morning!