

Gleanings of Grace

Job 23

Lesson 19

Sometime between the lives of Noah and Moses, lived a man named Job. Job was considered to be the *greatest of all the people of the East* (Job 1:3), when God allowed Satan to strip him of nearly all he had. Job's well-meaning friends vainly attempt to confront him, relying on their own viewpoints rather than the wisdom of God. In the end, God will justify Job. But the chapters in between reveal a man in great pain and grief. Job 23 exposes Job in his attempts to find the God he no longer seems to understand.

OBSERVATION: Job 23

1. Read Job 23 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns/titles that refer to *God* and *Job*.
Key Words: *Job* and *God*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used five times in Job 23. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion *therefore* is used in verse 15. Mark the word. Record the conclusion and what it was based upon.
5. In the opening verses of Job, God challenged Satan with the words, *Have you considered My servant Job?* Here in chapter 23, Job *considers* himself. Scan the chapter and list some of the statements Job made about himself. Underline or highlight the statements that Job may have spoken in his pain, without true wisdom.

6. The first statement that Job made about God can be found in Job 1:21, *the LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*. Scan chapter 23 and list some statements Job made about God. Underline or highlight the statements that Job may have spoken in his pain, without true wisdom.

Background:

1. Using Job 1:1, describe Job.
2. God was pleased with Job. Satan presented his own reasoning as to why Job was *blameless*. What did Satan propose that he believed would change Job's behavior? See Job 1:9-11
 - a. What did Satan say that Job would do?
 - b. What does verse 22 reveal?
3. Not to abandon his goal, Satan asked for permission from God to bring even more pain into Job's life. What was his request? See Job 2:4,5
 - a. What did God grant Satan to do to Job? See Job 2:6
4. Apparently, Satan felt that not taking Job's wife would further his plans rather than limit them. What did she say to Job? See Job 2:9
 - a. The following verse discloses Job's response to this wife. What was it?
5. In Job 2:11-13, Job's three friends appear on the scene. Scan these verses and describe how you initially see them and their intentions.

6. After a while, the pain and grief began to get to Job. He questioned the value of his life and God's intentions for him, reflecting a search for answers no different than we might have. Bildad's words in Job 8:4-6 reflect the thinking of Job's friends who intended to bring comfort. What were they?
 - a. These words may be applicable to some people in some situations. Why were they not true of Job?

Read Job 23:1-7

1. Instead of arguing with his friends, or compromising his integrity by giving in to their appeals to confess sins he had not committed, Job ignores them completely and speaks to and about the Lord. Job knows that his dispute was not with men but with God, and he emphasizes that in this chapter. Note how Job describes his struggle in verse 2. What are some phrases or words you have used to describe a time when relief from your trial or pain seemed hopeless?
 - a. Psalm 77 reflects similar thoughts as the psalmist laments his situation. Summarize his journey in verses 1-6.

1.) What was his remedy? verses 10,11

- a.) How does *remembering the works of the LORD* help in times of pain when our perspective tends to be inaccurate?

2. Job knew that his relief was not going to come from his wife or his friends. He wanted to connect with God. What did Job say he would do if he could *find* God?

3. Take note of the words of verses 5-7. Although Job was fully aware that he was a sinner, he did not fear what God would do if he *came to His seat*. Job confidently announced, *I would know the words which He would answer me*. What is the value of knowing the intentions and the heart of God towards you?
 - a. Rejoice in the words of God to you from Hebrews 4:16. What are your impressions?

4. We find a word of contrast in the last phrase of verse 6. Rather than find God *contending with Job in His great power*, what did Job declare God would do?
 - a. What does that phrase personally mean to you?

Read Job 23:8-10

1. In Job 23:8,9 we see Job's desperateness in his inability to find God. Yet, what truth does he proclaim in the first phrase of verse 10?
 - a. What does Psalm 139:1-3 say that confirms this truth?
 - 1.) How does knowing this minister to you in times when you feel like you can't *find God*?

2. Job's friends were convinced that Job's distress was due to sin in his life. Job knew otherwise. What did he avow God would do?
 - a. Job knows that, if God *tried* him, he would not come forth as pure. He knew that he would come forth as innocent regarding the claims his friends had made against him. How does this minister to you in times when you have been falsely accused?
 - b. What was Peter's goal for believers according to 1 Peter 1:7?
 - 1.) How do you imagine that day in your life?

Read Job 23:11,12

1. In these two verses, Job recounts the choices of his life. Next to each statement, describe what you think each looks like:

My foot has held fast to His steps

I have kept His way and not turned aside

I have not departed from the commandment of His lips

I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food

2. Job stated, *I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food*. Define the word *treasured*.
 - a. What are some signs that a person might not be *treasuring* God's Word?
 - b. What is the effect on the life of someone who *treasures* God's Word?

Challenge: Scan Psalm 119 and list some of the benefits of *treasuring* God's Word.

Read Job 23:13-17

1. Although Job knew God would righteously judge him; although Job knew he had kept God's ways, Job also knew that God could not be manipulated. What did Job profess in verses 13,14 that confirms this?
 - a. What are your thoughts when you consider that *whatever His soul desires, that He does*?

2. Reflect upon the words of verse 14. In light of these words, what comfort does Jeremiah 29:11 afford you?
3. Job's conclusion in verse 15 contains words like *terrified* and *afraid*. The *uniqueness* of God, caused Job to be in awe of Him. Read his real fears as recorded in Job 13:20,21. What is the difference between being *afraid* of God and being in *awe* of Him?
4. In Job 23:17, Job admits that God had taken him to places of *darkness* that he had not expected. His confidence could no longer be in his belief that "bad things do not happen to good people". The book concludes with Job stating that he had *uttered what he did not understand* (Job 42:3). Here, in chapter 23, he is still in the midst of his pain, still in confusion, still baffled. As a New Testament believer, what do you know about God that Job did not?

REVIEW: Job 23

1. Journey with Job through this chapter. What truths did he park on?
2. What did you glean from studying Job 23 that you will apply in your life?

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

- Romans 11:33

Observation Worksheet

Job 23

Then Job answered and said: ² "Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand is listless because of my groaning. ³ Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! ⁴ I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵ I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. ⁶ Would He contend with me in His great power? No! But He would take note of me. ⁷ There the upright could reason with Him, and I would be delivered forever from my Judge. ⁸ "Look, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; ⁹ when He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; when He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him. ¹⁰ But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. ¹¹ My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. ¹² I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. ¹³ "But He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul desires, that He does. ¹⁴ For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him. ¹⁵ Therefore I am terrified at His presence; when I consider this, I am afraid of Him. ¹⁶ For God made my heart weak, and the Almighty terrifies me; ¹⁷ because I was not cut off from the presence of darkness, and He did not hide deep darkness from my face.