

# Job14

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[0:00] Amen. Job 14. We are still in the portion of the discourse of Job's reply to his three friends. Job chapters 12, 13, and 14, if you will. In Job 12, Job turns to his three friends and kind of gives them a general reply to everything that they have taught him.

In a nutshell, he says, you haven't taught me anything new. You're not bringing any wisdom to me that I don't already understand. Nothing that is new to man. You haven't brought any greater revelation than I already possess.

And this is telling because these three are all older than him. And Job essentially says, you're just worthless counselors. You're of no benefit, no help to me whatsoever. Because you're not helping. You're just giving me a boxed answer to the circumstances and situations that I'm experiencing. In Job 13, starting in verse 3, he transitions from looking at his friends and he begins to cry out once again to the Lord God and says, God, I just want to stand before the Almighty. I want to be held accountable to you.

It's kind of this call to go to court, if you will, with the Lord God. And it is, I want you to bring the charges and accusations against me. I want you to show me my guilt.

[1:11] And we saw that as he's really seeking the audience of the Lord God. He longs not for the counsel of his friends, but rather for the verdict of heaven.

And it is here that he cries out and says, you know, he doesn't remove the reality that there may be some sin present in his life that he is unaware of. Because he, in all humbleness, at the end of the 13th chapter says, reveal unto me my sins.

Show me my failures. Make them known so that the reason for my suffering may be aware, may be known to me also. And yet Job is crying out in his own righteousness.

As far as he knows, there's nothing between he and the Lord God. He is crying out with very little revelation. We don't ever want to separate the context from the text.

And I know we do this every time we get into the book of Job. But it is very becoming of us to do so, so that we can understand it as it is. Because if we read the book of Job through our lens of context, then we scratch our heads and say, well, Job should know better.

[2:18] But we are in the fullness of the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are, as the book of Hebrews says in Hebrews chapter 1, in the days of the full and final revelation of God. We know all that God longs for us to know according to his word.

We have Genesis to Revelation. We have the entirety of scripture handed to us. This is the final word of God given to us in preparation for everything in advance.

And yet Job is without any of that. During the day of Job, there was no Pentateuch. There was no, you know, Genesis to Deuteronomy. There was no law. There were no prophets.

There were no minor nor major prophets. There are no spiritual songs. It is really the beginning of the historical writings. Job is the oldest book in scripture. It is contained in the writing of the Jewish scriptures with the book of wisdom.

So like Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes. So it is considered a book of wisdom. But it is also a book of history because it tells us kind of how God is opening up his revelation to man.

[3:27] I believe it's telling because if we're looking at this in its context, and Job is right there at the cusp of the patriarchs. That is when God calls Abram out of the land of the earth, the Chaldeans, is when most people believe he lived.

So either right before him or right after God had called Abram. And so historically what we're looking at, now the Bible, I know I'm throwing a lot at you. We admit does not contain the full history of mankind.

But the word of God contains the full history of man's interaction with mankind. All that God wants us to know in his interactions with man are there. So there are a lot of gaps, if you will, if you're looking at history.

But at about the time God is raising up a nation. A nation that would be a nation of priests, or was supposed to be a nation of priests, to reveal to the world what it looks like to live in a covenant relationship with the Lord God Almighty.

God is also creating a longing in the heart of man to go a little deeper with God because their worldview no longer fits their world circumstances. And that is Job's worldview was the same as his friends.

[4:39] If you do good, you get good. If you do bad, you get bad. But all of a sudden his circumstances were he was getting bad, but he knew he had not done anything bad. And so he needed to know more of God.

He needed to know more about him. Well, God's going to answer that heart cry for the world by raising up the nation of Israel that would point to the coming of the Savior, the Messiah, to point to the coming of Jesus Christ and fulfill every longing and desire of man.

But it's just like we find from the very beginning of the pages of Scripture that God creates a need in the heart of man long before he ever meets that need. And what God is doing is he reveals man his need for something.

We've looked at it in marriage that when God brought every animal before Adam and he told him to name them, God had already made this statement that it is not good for man to be alone. God knew that.

The fullness of God knew that. Elohim, that's the plurality of God, by the way. So the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit knew that. Adam didn't know that. Adam probably thought, this is pretty cool. I have all this place to myself.

[5:46] I rule over all the creation. It's the cool of the day. I interact with God. This is amazing. And for a short time, it was paradise. And yet God knew there was something else that needed. So he needed to create this longing in Adam's life.

And he did so by having him name all the animals. And it was found that there was something. It was a mate for every animal but Adam. There was no helpmate for him.

And all of a sudden now, Adam became aware of what God was going to do. Then God created from the side of the man Eve and brought her to him. And now he met this need that he had just revealed.

With Job, we have a similar thing going on on the theological side. Man needs to know more of God. He needs to know a God that goes a little deeper than what this worldview is.

Man needs to know in an intimate way this relational God. And God is revealing that need through his servant Job.

[6:51] We need more because our life doesn't always fit the nice box. And so we need to know that there is a God who is bigger and greater. And so he's creating that so that the world will be positioned and ready for his people that would point to that.

I know that's a long introduction, but we always want to keep that in mind. So we see here in Job 14 some really telling things that are beginning to be opened up. Now, I just want you to see in the 14th chapter the desperate state of man.

The desperate state of man. Keep in mind when we begin reading this. This is the pre-patriarchal or patriarchal time when man is living a long, long time according to our estimation.

I mean, we're still looking at, you know, 200-year-old men or more than that. Not that far removed from Methuselah by this time.

Okay? So we understand that. But yet even then, these truths still resonate. 14, starting in verse 1.

[8:00] Man who is born of woman is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower, he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.

You also open your eyes on him and bring him into judgment with yourself. Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one. Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with you, and his limits you have set so that he cannot pass.

Turn your gaze from him that he may rest until he fulfills the day like a hired man. For there is hope for a tree when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail.

Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil, at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant. But a man dies and lies prostrate.

Man expires, and where is he? As water evaporates from the sea and a river becomes parched and dried up, so man lies down and does not rise until the heavens are no longer. He will not awaken, nor be aroused out of his sleep.

[9:04] Oh, that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath returns to you, that you would set a limit for me and remember me. If a man dies, will he live again?

All the days of my struggle I will wait until my change comes. You will call and I will answer you. You will long for the work of your hands. For now you number my steps.

You do not observe my sin. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and you wrap up my iniquity. But the falling mountain crumbles away, and the rock moves from its place.

Water wears away stone. Its torrents wash away the dust of the earth, so you destroy man's hope.

You forever overpower him, and he departs. You change his appearance and send him away.

His sons achieve honor, but he does not know it. Or they become insignificant, but he does not perceive it. But his body pains him, and he mourns only for himself.

[10:01] Notice here the desperate state of man. As Job has sought the audience of God in the 13th chapter, really longing to go to court with the Almighty so that he may stand before him.

And he has said in the 13th chapter, either I will cry out and you respond to me, or you cry out and I will respond to you. But the longing of Job is to stand before God.

Here, he kind of goes back and forth, because in one moment he says, oh God, I want to stand before you. In the very next moment he says, I wish that you would leave me alone. And as we read through Job, we see a progression in even Job's revelation as he's beginning to understand more and more of the Almighty.

When we read this chapter, it seems as if Job doubts the resurrection. That's not really what he's doing. We'll look at it in a little bit more detail here in just a moment.

But if we read a few more chapters ahead, we know that Job really clearly affirms the hope of the resurrection. Because in the midst of his suffering, in the midst of his pain, he becomes to know a little bit more of God, even in spite of the counsel he is giving.

[11:18] For it is there in the valley of his suffering that the great fellowship with the Almighty is taking root and forming as he is beginning to think through matters which he had never thought before.

Because we learn our greatest theology in struggle, not in ease. When things are going well, when things are not trying, there's really no reason to build theology.

Because whatever you're holding on to is holding the ship steady, if you will. But when it calls something, when desperation is the call of the hour, when it is a struggle and it's difficult, it is there that you really begin to work out and flesh out, that this is what I believe.

Some of our greatest theology in church have come through moments of struggle, not moments of prosperity. For it is there that man is pushed to think through matters.

Men and women think through matters that they would never think through otherwise. So as Job is struggling and wrestling in his honesty and he's calling out, God is beginning to form this relationship with him where he is revealing more of himself to him.

[12:31] Even in his understanding of the depths and the height of the Almighty. But here as we look at this desperate state of man, we notice that Job refers first to the brevity of man's life.

Look at what it says. And again, in context. At a time where we would consider they were living a long time. We're looking back in hindsight, we're like, man, those people were living a long time. Even in the midst of that, it says, man who is born of woman is short-lived. Because the reality is, is no matter how many days or years a man lives, it is never sufficient.

It is never enough. It is the brevity of life in comparison to eternity that strikes at the heart of man. And causes him to wonder why.

Because if our theology is rooted in this life only. That is, if our understanding of God is rooted in this life only. That is, that we get blessings here and our prosperity is for this time.

[13:38] And our rewards are confined to this life and this world. Then that is but a mere drop in the bucket of eternity. To want and long for the blessings of the Almighty.

If all of our days are spent at ease and comfort. And our days are spent relishing in the blessings of the Lord God. That is still very short. No matter how many there are.

And the great tragedy of man. Is the reality of his lifespan being so brief. It tells us in this word. That like a flower he comes forth and withers. And he also flees like a shadow and does not remain. It is the testimony that Job is crying out saying. Though I am present for a moment. The minute I am gone I will soon be forgotten. Man throughout the ages has wrestled with this reality. That no matter how much we try.

[14 : 37] No matter how much we push against. We cannot deal with this fact. That life is but a passing vapor. He tells us in verse 5.

That since his days are determined. And the number of his months is with you. It is again this ancient testimony. The oldest book in scripture. One of the oldest if not the oldest writings of poetic form.

And all of history declares to us. That God has determined our months. That he has set a limit. That he knows the limitations of our life.

And we cannot go any further than that. And you say oh well. But mankind is progressing. And our understanding of medicine is going so much further. And man is advancing in this.

And the length and the expectation of life is so much longer now than it used to be. But still the reality is. Is that God has determined the months and the days of our lives.

[15 : 38] And no man may pass that date. We do not know when it is. Nor do we want to know when it is.

Some say oh well I would long to know. The extent of my life. But it is not us to know. He tells us over and over again. That this great desperate state of man.

Is that man is not really in control of his life. We dare not try to dictate how long we will live. Though we do not want to be foolish. And hasten the coming day.

By reckless living. We also understand that no matter how well we live. Or how good we try to be. And how much we take care of our bodies.

We are always struck by the reality. That God calls his people to that day. There is a day of appointment. For every man. We know scripture says it.

[16 : 36] We don't like to speak of it. We don't like to dwell on it. Because it is one of the most desperate realities in our life. Something that is beyond our control. And yet it tells us over and over again.

That God knows our days. Tells us that our life. He says in verse 16. For now you number my steps. You know my days.

You know how long they are. So in one moment. Job acknowledges this desperate condition of man. That man's life is but short lived. That man is not the dictator nor determiner of the length of his days.

But yet there is one who is. And he cries out in that desperation. And says oh God. Would you just let me live those days in peace. But the problem.

Is with the second reality. Is not only do we see the brevity of life. We see man's inability to cleanse.

[17 : 41] It's a great verse here. In verse 4. Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one.

Job when he considers the brevity of his life. The reality that his life is but short in comparison to eternity. And he acknowledges that it is God who holds the number of his days.

He understands because he is longing to position himself before the almighty. That to go before the almighty in an unclean condition. Is unwelcome.

That if he longs to be in his presence. He would only be able to run into his presence if he was clean. And yet with this understanding of the length of his life. He cries out to the Lord God and says.

But who could make the clean out of the unclean? This ancient manuscript. Which declares that man in his natural state is unclean. I believe it was Warren Wearsby who says.

[18 : 45] No greater testimony do we have from antiquity. To the thought of original sin. Than the book of Job. That man inherits the unclean nature.

Not because of anything he has done. But because of who he is. Again we're not very far removed from the early pages of the book of Genesis. So surely they would have heard the testimony of the fall of man.

And they would have heard the accounts of how man has been banished from the garden. And Job would have understood his own possession of being unclean. And he cries out to God my life is but brief.

But who could make the clean out of the unclean? And he answers in himself and he says. No one. No one. For Job is not proud here.

Job has declared that he was righteous. God has declared that he was complete. But Job also in the understanding of his nature realizes he is unclean.

[19:47] And really hear his heart cry. God. God. If what it takes to live a peaceful perfect life is that one would be clean.

Who can do it? For I am unclean. And no man can make himself clean. So God would you please just stay your hand. And leave me alone.

Here is a testimony that we receive from scripture. And we receive it very early and very often. And it is something that we try to fool ourselves away from.

Which by the way is why we love retribution theology. You say pastor I don't love retribution theology. We may not love it by namesake. But we love it in practice.

We love when those who do right get good. And those who do wrong get bad. We love that naturally. The reason we love it naturally is because it affirms inwardly to ourselves that we are right.

[20:48] And we are good. And therefore we can fool ourselves in that we are clean. And as long as the blessings are flowing in my life. Then I must be in a right standing with God.

And everything is going well. And now I must be clean. But the problem with that is that you are in position to make yourself clean. Because you are controlling God and his blessings through your activity.

It is only when we realize no matter how much good quote unquote we do. And it still falls apart. That we realize that we are rather unclean individuals. And all of our righteousness as Paul would say later is like filthy rags.

Is that no matter how much we clean our lives up. No matter how much we position ourselves. God is not confined to bless us. Because before his holy, holy, holy eyes we are unclean.

And it is this acknowledgement. That when life hits. And it is something that we don't like to be brought up in public. But we know it internally inside of our own being.

[21:59] We do not need someone to tell us we are unclean. We all know that. We know it.

We know it. We know it. But what we need to be told. Is where can we get clean. Because who can make the clean out of the unclean?

No one. Which means I can't do it. For myself and no one can do it for me. You cannot clean me up. Because you are still standing in your own uncleanness. I cannot clean you up because I stand in my own uncleanness. We need someone other than us to come to be with us who is clean.

Who is perfect. Who is spotless. It is the reality that we all know. Job did not have the answer to.

[23:04] But he knew that he could not make himself clean. In his moments of suffering. He had probably done much self-evaluation. He could probably amen and testify to a number of things in his own life.

That were not right and perfect. Much like we all do. But yet he still had this heart cry. But what can I do about it? Nothing. And that's a desperate state of man.

Which leads us to this third moment of desperation. Because if man's life is a life of brevity. And if man is unclean and he has an inability to cleanse himself.

There cannot help but be the anxiety over death. Job testifies that life is but a moment.

And in this life I am unclean and I have the inability to make myself clean. And so there's anxiety.

Notice what he says. There's hope for a tree.

[24:19] If you were to go to the back of our property. You would find a hickory tree that is standing casting a pretty good amount of shade right now. It's actually a scalybark hickory.

What you wouldn't notice by looking at that scalybark hickory tree. Is that about six years ago.

Ethan and I cut that tree in half. And there was no top to it. And it was actually a fence post.

And I left it in line for the fence. I have taken the fence down now. And now there's a full shade tree there once again. Because I cut every branch. Every leaf. And everything else off of it.

But I didn't put anything on it to kill the stump. So to say. That stump was about four and a half feet high. Because it made a pretty good post. And hickory doesn't really rot. Especially when it's still on the ground with roots. But it also sprouts again.

There's hope for a tree. He said. But what about man? When man lies down. He lies prostrate. He doesn't get back up again.

[25 : 17] There had been no Lazarus. There had been no widow's son from Nain at this time. Job says. Every man I know. When he lays in the ground. He never gets back up.

This world never sees him. Again. But he's like the water that evaporates. And disappears. There's an anxiety building here.

You notice it. He said. Lord. If this is all that I have. If this is all that I've gotten. Please just stay your hand for a moment. For all of my hope.

And all in my world view. Is wrapped up in this life. And what would Paul say later on? If in this life. If we have hope in Christ. We are of all men. Most to be pitied.

But that's where Job was at. If the blessings of this life. For our righteousness. If all we get for righteous living. Is blessing in this life.

[26 : 15] It's really vain. It is as the author of Ecclesiastes. Will cry out. Vanity of vanities. Why? Because there comes a day when it ends.

And Job says. What then? And he asks the question. That all people in desperate state ask. Will a man live again?

Who has died? Can the dead man live again? And even at death.

He has anxiety. Because notice what he says. He says. You have got my sins sealed up in a bag. Now we look at that. And we read it as if. Okay. God's got it. He's covered his sins. Now what he is saying is.

You've taken all my sins. The things you know about me. You have not revealed them to me. And you've sealed them in a bag. Until the day of transaction. They have a seal on them. They've been sewn together. That bag is a sewn up purse.

[27 : 16] And you know the weight thereof. It was a very common practice in their time. If you had X amount of poundage. Or ounces of gold in this bag. You would mark that bag. It weighs this much. You would seal it up.

So nobody could add or take from it. And you could do transactions with it. And what Job was saying here is. You know my sin. You have it sealed up. And it's waiting until that day. That I go before you. And I can't do anything about it.

He's anxious. Because man's in a desperate. State of affairs. But we don't read Job.

In that world view. And so what we need. To see. When we study Job. Is we need to see the revelation we possess.

And we need to glory in the revelation. I can't remember who said it. But they penned. What thrill.

[28 : 26] And what rejoicing. Would Job possess. If he just knew the tip. Of what we know. That the dead can live again.

That there is one. Who can indeed pronounce. And make us clean. That there is hope. Beyond the grave. That we will not be held in Sheol. That is the place. Of the departed spirits. Which was considered.

Darkness and despair. We will not go to a place of gloom. But rather. We will be today. With him in paradise. That death is but a doorway. That the blessings.

Of faithfulness. Are not for this life alone. But they're stored up. For eternal life. In his presence.

That the reward of the saints. Is not confined. To what everybody sees around us.

But it's being in the presence. Of his glory. And casting our crowns. And crying out. That he is worthy. That the streets. Are paved with gold. That those who went before us.

[29 : 21] In Christ. We will see again. That we will not have to worry. If our children. Were made significant. Or insignificant. But if they know Christ. We will stand with the ages.

And we will testify together. Of his splendor. And worthiness. Oh what rejoicing. And exaltation. Would rain from Job's mouth. If he just knew. A little bit.

Of what we know. The problem is. Is we forget. The desperation. He knew. But for Christ.

That's us. But for Christ. We cry out. And say. My life is but a vapor. But for Christ.

I cry out. And say. Who can make the clean. Out of the unclean. No one. But for Christ. I say. God. Can the dead man. Live again.

[30 : 17] But in Christ. All those are answered. May we forever. Be mindful. Of our desperate condition. So that we will stand.

At the glory. Of his revelation. See. He shows us. Our desperation. Through the suffering. And the pain. So that we could relish.

In the fact. That he's answered. Every one of them. If all we hope for. Was rewards. In this life. Then when we got them.

That would be the end. But our longing. Is not for this life. At all. Our anticipation. Is not for this world.

Because if recognition. And rewards. And prosperity. Never come in this life. Then so be it. For Christ has shown us. That there is another life.

[31 : 19] Coming. There is eternal life. In his presence. Everlasting. Where there is no tear. No suffering. No mourning. No pain. No injustice.

No longing. And striving. After a reward. For we will know the reward. For Jesus is our reward. We will be forever. In the light of his glory. There is no darkness there.

Look at the revelation. We possess. In light of the desperation. In light of the desperation. In light of the desperation we stand in. And may we ever praise him for it.

For Job shows us man. In his desperation. and the rest of scripture answers that desperation of where we find the answer to these so we're thankful that job is here in the book of wisdom for it really helps us to understand what we have in christ as we consider the desperate state of man from job 14 thank you my brothers thank you