

Job 23:1 ¶ Then Job answered and said,

Job 23:2 Even to day *is* my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! *that* I might come *even* to his seat!

Job 23:4 I would order *my* cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

Job 23:5 I would know the words *which* he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

Job 23:6 Will he plead against me with *his* great power? No; but he would put *strength* in me.

Job 23:7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

Job speaks up once again, noting that God has not eased up on Him despite the depth of his distress. He wishes once again that he could get an audience with God to present his case declaring his innocence. He thinks if he could just talk with God, He could make Job understand why he was inflicted with such suffering. Job is sure that God would give him a fair hearing. He is sure that once he presented his case to God personally, he would be delivered and declared not guilty.

Job is both right and wrong in his assumptions. He is right in assuming that God would deal with him justly. He was wrong in thinking that he needed to present his case before God to inform him of his innocence. He had lost sight of the truth that God knows everything about us—even our thoughts.

Psalms 139:1–4 “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.”

Job 23:8 ¶ Behold, I go forward, but he *is not there*; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

Job 23:9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him*: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him*:

Job feels like God has hidden Himself from him. No matter in what direction he looks, he cannot find God. He admits that though he cannot find God, God knows all about him. There are times that I think many of us can relate with what Job expresses in these verses.

Chuck Smith made an interesting observation: “Why is it that we’re always looking around for God rather than looking up for God? It’s because man has always sought to bring God down to his own level. They call, or they have what they call the anthropomorphic concept of God. That is, viewing God as a man. And this is extremely common because most of the time a man’s god is really a projection of himself.”

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: *when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

Job 23:11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.

Job again expresses confidence that when God has tested him, he will come forth as gold—pure and blameless. I liked this quote from Spurgeon used by Guzik: “It looks very hard to believe that a child of God should be tried by the loss of his Father’s presence, and yet should come forth uninjured by the trial. Yet no gold is ever injured in the fire. Stoke the furnace as much as you may, let the blast be as strong as you will, thrust the ingot into the very center of the white heat, let it lie in the very heart of the flame; pile on more fuel, let another blast torment the coals till they become most vehement with heat, yet the gold is losing nothing, it may even be gaining.”

Job’s confidence is rooted in the fact the he has always lived in obedience before God. Hiding God’s word in his heart has been a priority in his life—even over the food his body needed to stay alive and healthy.

This raises the question—To what commandments of God did Job refer? Was their some sort of written record? It seems so.

How many of us can truly say that we treasure the intake of God’s word more than food? I can honestly say that finally, after six decades of life, this is becoming true about me more and more as time goes on. I treasure the time I get to spend in God’s word and rejoice and take comfort in those portions that are hidden in my heart. Never would I have dreamed that I would be able to leave a legacy of a record of my own personal journey through God’s word.

I agree with this comment in the NIV Commentary: “Job’s words have to be the words either of a terrible hypocrite or of a deeply committed believer.”

Job 23:13 ¶ But he *is* in one *mind*, and who can turn him? and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.

Job 23:14 For he performeth *the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.*

Job 23:15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

Job 23:16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

Job 23:17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, *neither* hath he covered the darkness from my face.

Job recognized that there is no one like God, no one that can stand against Him and thwart His purposes. He does whatever He wants to do. He will act in accordance with His own purposes for Job both now and in the future. It is that truth that is so frightening to Job when he thinks about standing before God.

I liked the CJB translation for verses 16-17: *“God has undermined my courage; Shaddai frightens me. Yet I am not cut off by the darkness; he has protected me from the deepest gloom.”*

Though Job has a healthy fear and reverence of God, he knows that God is still protecting him in the midst of his suffering.

Job’s fear of God testifies to his wisdom.

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom....”