

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

The Book of Job, Lesson Five, “Curse the Day”

SABBATH AFTERNOON: “Curse the day” is a strange lesson title, don’t you think? The picture explains it somewhat. That’s Job suffering, right? He cursed the day he was born. So negative, so depressing. The memory text provides a sharp contrast. Read the Memory Text: Rev. 4:11. So positive, so hopeful!

Hit highlights from the first paragraph. If we can put ourselves in Job’s place, we can better understand his confusion, anger, and sorrow. In one sense, that shouldn’t be very hard for us, should it? Not that our suffering compares to Job’s, but most of us have known the loss of a loved one. Losing a grandparent can be huge for a young person. Some have lost a child, parent, or spouse. Some have experienced a painful divorce. These are hard things. A church member living in New York lost 19 family members in the big earthquake in Haiti in 2008. Could she understand Job better than most of us?

SUNDAY: LET THE DAY PERISH

Read the 1st paragraph. How do you explain it? Read the 2nd paragraph. Is that a satisfactory answer to you? But what was the answer? What was the explanation? Job didn’t have one. All he had was grief and questions.

Read Job 3:1-4. *What is the point at which Job’s grief had taken him?* He wished he’d never been born. He even wished that the day of his birth didn’t exist either.

Read Job 3:6. *In what specific way does Job denounce the day of his birth here?* He doesn’t want his birthday to count as one of the days of the year or as one of the days of a month.

Read Job 3:7, 9-10 (comment as needed). Have you ever heard someone say, “I wish I was never born”? But, isn’t life a gift from God? Our very existence is a miracle. But, haven’t many of us in moments of despair wondered if life was worth it?

Read and discuss the last paragraph if desired – a very pessimistic view of life.

Read and discuss the first two questions in the box. The point is that we usually feel better after a while.

Read and discuss the last question in the box.

Illustration: When hearing of an impossibly distressing situation, a certain king would open his pocket watch, stare at it for a moment, close it, and then make a decision and move on.

Everyone wondered about his pocket watch. When he died, one of his counselors opened the watch. Inside were these words: “This too shall pass.”

MONDAY: REST IN THE GRAVE

Read Job 3:11-13. *What is Job saying here?* Job wished that he had died in childbirth (vs. 11). He says if he died at birth he’d have rest (vs. 13). *How did Job describe death?* As sleep or rest.

Read Job 3:16. *What could be an untimely birth?* New King James says “stillborn.”

Read Job 3:17-19. *How does Job see death as beneficial in these verses?* The wicked finally stop troubling others. The weary get rest (vs. 17). The oppressed no longer hear the voice of the

oppressor (v. 18). The servant is free from his master at last (vs. 19).

Read Job 3:20-22, 24-26. *What is Job's basic lament in these verses?* His lament is that he's alive and has no rest from his suffering.

Note the **parallelism** in Hebrew poetry in verses 11 and 13.

Sometimes the parallels help with interpretation.

In verse 16 an infant that doesn't see the light of day is obviously one that was born blind or dead. The context of the whole passage is not about blindness but about death. Therefore, the untimely birth is a stillborn baby.

How does parallelism help interpret verse 20? How does the second line reveal what "light" means in the first line? Light here doesn't mean light from the sun or a lantern but rather life itself.

Job is also rich with imagery known as metaphors, as is typical of poetry. There are images or metaphors for death. We are familiar with sleep as a metaphor for death. We will soon see evaporation also as a metaphor for death.

Hit highlights of the 1st paragraph. Read the 2nd paragraph.

Read Job 14:10-12. Note the parallel in verse 10. *What does giving up the ghost mean?* The first line indicates it means dying. The NKJV says he breathes his last breath.

In verse 11 what does "waters fail" mean? The parallel line says the flood "drieth up." Job is using the imagery of evaporation to describe dying. Does that make it clear?

Notice also the parallels in verse 13.

Cite Eccl. 9:5 (by memory). The dead don't know anything.

Read John 11:11-14. *What did Jesus mean when He said that Lazarus was sleeping?* That Lazarus was dead, right? *What hope is in verse 11?* Jesus was going to wake up Lazarus which means to raise him back to life.

You see, death is not literally sleep. Sleep is used as a metaphor, a symbol for death. It's imagery. Awaking from sleep is a metaphor for resurrection. Death is like sleeping without consciousness of anything. It fits perfectly with what Job said. It's complete rest from thought and activity.

Did Job see death as the end all together? Is it the end, period? No.

Read Job 14:10-14 (commenting as needed). Emphasize "until," "wait," and "change" in verses 13 and 14). The biblical metaphor of death as a sleep implies an awakening. Job knows that it is for the future. Jesus said it plainly.

Read the box asking the question. Answer: We need to cultivate the habit of praising God every day, don't we?

TUESDAY: OTHER PEOPLE'S PAIN

Read the 1st paragraph.

Read Job 6:8-10a. This is just more of Job wishing for death.

Read the question with Job 6:2-3 from the quarterly. For the answer, read the paragraph under the lines. That's how real Job's pain was to him, and it was his alone. No one else could feel it as he did. (The comments on page 66 have some ideas if the teacher wants to dwell more on this.)

WEDNESDAY: THE WEAVER'S SHUTTLE

Hit highlights or read the narrative at the top of the page (all three little paragraphs).

Read James 4:14 (comment if needed).

Read Job 7:1-11 (comment as desired/needed). Note the parallels in verses 1 and 2. After verse 4 ask if they ever had a night's sleep like that. In verse 5 Job describes himself in very graphic parallels. *What is suggested by the weaver's shuttle in verse 6?* Life goes by too fast. Verse 9 is like James 4:14. Verse 10 shows that the dead cannot come back to the home where they had lived or died. There is no such thing as a house haunted by the dead. Evil spirits maybe, but not the returned dead. *What is the overall complaint of Job in Job 7:1-11?* Isn't he saying that life is hard, full of toil and pain, and then we die?

Ask the question in the box at the bottom. Answer: This life isn't all there is. We must remember the big picture of sin and redemption and hope of eternal life – life forever!

THURSDAY: "MAH ENOSH" (WHAT IS MAN?)

Read the narrative at the top. *Do things happen that people don't understand? Haven't you wondered about things?*

Read Job 7: 17-21. *What's Job trying to figure out here?*

In verse 20 he's wondering if he has sinned because it seems as if God is blasting him.

In verse 21 he's wondering if he has sinned, why has he not been forgiven. If he's condemned, he sees no hope in the resurrection morning. He will be as nothing.

In verse 17 he feels confused about the purpose of man. He's wondering why did God bother to make Job a great man at all if it was to end this way?

Everyone has moments when depression envelopes us and when our suffering becomes too much for us to bear. *How do you deal with the reality of negative thoughts and depression?* I take it as a sign that I need to be in prayer. Prayer makes me feel better. It takes the focus off of myself and the problem, and puts it in God's hands – points me to faith in God.

Notice in Psalm 8:4-6 how David takes Job's question several hundred years later, and how he answers it. It's quoted in the quarterly. Let's read it from the quarterly. Maybe Job understood what David explains here, but in his suffering, his own life seemed to have no purpose. Job felt that everything had dominion over him, and he wasn't close to the glory of the angels. He just felt wretched.

"What is man?" is an important question to ask. Who are we? Why are we here? What's the meaning and purpose of our lives?

Cite John 3:16 (by memory). **Read 1 John 3:1.** *How do these texts help us to understand why God interacts with humanity?* Jesus' life as a man and his death on the cross were to save us and make us sons and daughters of God. *What is man?* We are God's own children!

Conclusion: Read the quotation from 4T 563 at the bottom of the page.