

HEMMED IN THE HEDGE

This is the third lesson in a series of lessons on the 'Hedge of God' taken from the Book of Job.

In today's lesson text, Job ask two questions which sparked three debates between Job and his three best friends (chs.4-31).

In both of these questions, Job emphasized the presence of God's light in the Hedge (1 John 1:5; Ps. 97:11-12). David was also aware of it - "*For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, indeed my feet from stumbling, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living.*" (Ps.56: 13, NAS)

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words explains this type of light this way, "*light is an expression of a joyful blessed life in which the quality of life is enhanced.*" (pg.136)

These two questions are found in Job 3:20-22 and 3:23-26.

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of Job's feeling of being HEMMED IN THE HEDGE.

1. Job used a doctrinal concept of light to question why it was given to him while hemmed in suffering inside God's Hedge.

"Often light symbolizes well-being (see Ps.97:11; Job 18:5-6; 22:28; 29:3; Prov.13:9; Lam.3:2) or life and salvation (see Job 8:28; Isa.9:2; 49:6; 58:8; 59:9; Jer.13:16; Amos 5:18-20)." (NIV, Job 27:1)

- "Why is light given to him who suffers, and life to the bitter of soul." (Job 3:20)
- "Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in?" (Job 3:23)

Job feels trapped by God in his suffering.

2. Job is inflicting self-induced misery suffering upon his undeserved suffering. He is piling it on because he has failed to accept his suffering as undeserved and from God because of the angelic conflict.

Prior to Job's suffering Job and his doctrinal friends believed that adversity suffering was due to some unconfessed personal sin - "*Blessed is the man whom God corrects, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.*" (5:17) Eliphaz

Principle: false assumption leads to false interpretation leads to false expectation leads to false application.

However, Job knew that he was innocent of Eliphaz's charge. **But Job questioned how a just and loving God could allow this to happen to him** - "*According to Thy knowledge I am indeed not guilty; yet there is no deliverance from Thy hand.*" (Job 10:7)

3. Out of the frustration of arguing his case, Job demanded God to either answer him or take his life

"*Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.*" (Job.7: 11) (Job10: 1-2; 21:4; 27:1-6; 30:16-23).

"*Oh that my request might come to pass, and that God would grant my longing! Would that God were willing to crush me; that He would loose His hand and cut me off! But it is still my consolation, and I rejoice in unsparing pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.*" (Job 6:6-8; 12:9; 13:22-28)

“Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written.” (31:35)

Are you identifying with Job’s frustration and pain? Then pay close attention to the next two points and the Lord’s response to JOB and YOU.

- 4. The Lord answered Job with a series of rhetorical questions (WHYS) that made him think about the infinite wisdom of the essence and character of God (chs.38-40: 5).**

Sovereignty	Omniscience
Righteousness	Omnipotence
Love	Omnipresence
Eternal Life	Veracity
Holiness	Immutable

Actually God responded to Job’s statement of 31:35 by saying – *“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct me! Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! Tell me, if you have understanding.” (38:2-4)*

Job asked and answered an important question in Job 28 – “Where does wisdom come from (28:20,22)?” “God understands the way to it and He alone knows where it dwells.” (28:23)

God said nothing to Job about his suffering or God’s justice or fairness. Yet God’s word about His essence succeeded in bringing Job to complete faith in God’s will (Job 38-40:5; Rom.12: 2).

- 5. What we learn is that all the (WHYS) associated with undeserved suffering are answered in the essence and character of God.**

The writer of Psalms 119:71 said it best in the Teth section (65-72) – *“It is good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn Your decrees.”*

The Teth section is described in the footnotes of NIV Bible – *“Do good to me in accordance with your goodness, even if that means affliction, because your affliction is good for me; it teaches me knowledge and good judgment from your law.” (NIV, 119:65-72)*

“Consider it all joy (the quicker the better), my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance (perseverance), and let endurance have its perfect results, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4)

“Now Job has seen God with the eyes of faith and spiritual understanding. He can therefore accept God’s plan for his life (seev.2) which includes suffering.” (NIV, 42:5)