

Passage 14:1-6



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Book of Job - 14 6 The Book of Job is arguably one of the most beautiful and emotive segments of the Bible. It centers round God's test of Job's virtue through suffering, and Job's vindication. Using sweeping poetic imagery, it debates the significance of suffering in God's plan for man. Job is a man of virtue and faith. At Satan's instigation, God tests his faith through manifold afflictions and losses. Although Job bemoans his painful lot, he desists from blaspheming God, and remains steadfast in his belief in God. Chapter 14: 1-6 is in the form of a monologue in which Job addresses himself to God. Job reacts to the preceding exhortations of his three friends, stresses the frailty and transience of man's life, and pleads for God's mercy, with striking examples.

On hearing of Job's afflictions, his friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, come to offer their condolences. When Job laments his sorry plight, his friends censure him for failing to accept that his suffering is only a just punishment from God for his transgressions: whatever they may be. Job, confident in the strength of his piety and adherence to God's laws, is indignant at this unjustified criticism. He excoriates his friends for the injustice of their attitude, holds fast to his innocence, and commands them to be silent. He firmly asserts that the circumstances of his ordeal are to be debated between himself and God alone, and addresses himself to God. He tenaciously asserts that he has done nothing to merit God's punishment.

Job's plea to God in Chapter 14 is a moving admission of his weakness and need for God's indulgence. Job draws God's attention to man's weakness, inherited from the frailty of women. Man's life is short and filled with tribulation. His life is as transient as that of a flower, which blooms but for a

short while before it dies. His life is but an evanescent shadow, which lasts momentarily, before melting into the night. Does such a frail being merit the strict scrutiny of the Almighty God? Will God subject such a weak mortal to harsh judgment? Job, referring to every man's inheritance of the original sin, points out to God that no son of Adam and Eve can escape the taint of impurity. The period of man's lifetime is irrevocably determined, and absolutely controlled, by God. In this context of the shortness, uncertainty and calamitousness of life, Job pleads with God to cease dealing harshly with him. He asks God to leave him to deal with his predetermined lot in life to his best ability, until he has earned his wage of eternal rest. Job reasons that man's frailty, his impurity, his mortality, and the afflictions of his life justify his call for a compassionate judgment from God and God's indulgence and sympathy.

Job's language is replete with examples and imagery. He uses the examples of the short-lived blossom, and the fleeting shadow, to describe the transience of life. Again, he uses the example of a hired laborer, whose nature and terms of employment are rigidly fixed by his employer, to illustrate that his lot in life is predetermined by God and cannot be altered by any action of Job's. Job's reasoning cannot but strike a chord in our lives today. In a world afflicted by the scourge of terrorism, economic upheaval and poverty, and pandemic diseases, we cannot but follow Job's example. Acknowledging the weakness and mortality of mankind, and the unavoidable troubles of life, one can but accept that every circumstance of our lives is part of God's plan for us. One can but live one's life to the best of one's ability and trust to God's mercy and compassion when He passes his judgment on our lives. Job holds to his contention that he has not merited

the suffering meted out to him by God. However, he accepts his lot and pleads for God's compassion. The Book of Job is a lesson in accepting God's will and ultimate faith in the appropriateness of God's plan for each individual.

Works Cited.

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