

# Job 7: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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[ 0 : 00 ] Job chapter 7. Has not man a hard service on earth, and are not his days like the days of a hired hand, like a slave who longs for the shadow, and like a hired hand who looks for his wages?

So I am allotted months of emptiness, and nights of misery are apportioned to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise? But the night is long, and I am full of tossing till the dawn.

My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt. My skin hardens, then breaks out afresh. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and come to their end without hope.

Remember that my life is a breath. My eye will never again see good. The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more. While your eyes are on me, I shall be gone.

As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up. He returns no more to his house, nor does his place know him any more. Therefore I will not restrain my mouth. I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.

[ 1 : 02 ] I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I the sea, or a sea monster, that you set a guard over me? When I say, My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint, then you scare me with dreams, and terrify me with visions, so that I would choose strangling and death, rather than my bones.

I loathe my life. I would not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath. What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him? Visit him every morning, and test him every moment.

How long will you not look away from me, nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit? If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of mankind? Why have you made me your mark? Why have I become a burden to you?

Why do you not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? For now I shall lie in the earth. You will seek me, but I shall not be. In Job chapter 7, Job concludes his first response to one of the speeches of his friends, to the speech of Eliphaz the Temanite, in chapters 4 to 5.

However, whereas most of chapter 6 was addressed to Eliphaz and the friends, this chapter is mostly addressed to the Lord. Job's suffering has become so all-consuming, that it gives him a perspective upon humanity as a whole.

[ 2 : 19 ] He presents humanity's situation as akin to that of a slave doing hard labour, or a hired hand waiting in vain for his wages. Like such figures, the days are agonisingly long for Job.

The slave longs for the shadow, for relief from his labour, and the hired hand waits for his wages at the end of the day, and Job describes his months of emptiness. However, whereas these figures may find some relief at the end of their labours, Job's toils of the day are succeeded by even more toilsome nights.

He tosses and turns and gets no rest. He longs for the day to come and the night to end, even though his days are so extremely bitter. His suffering is Sisyphean. It is futile and meaningless, a cycle that repeats day after day, night after night, and there is no relief to be had.

His flesh is clothed with worms and dirt, as if he were already anticipating his burial. His wounds start to scab over, and then his foul boils break open again.

In verses 6-10 he expresses the fleetingness of his life. His days move like a swift weaver's shuttle through the fabric, and the thread is removed. His life has the brevity of a breath that is soon expired.

[ 3 : 32 ] While the Lord watches him, he will soon vanish away. He has nothing left to look forward to in this life. His life is as insubstantial and transitory as a cloud. It will soon pass away and leave nothing behind it.

