

In coming to chapter 14, we come to the final section of Job's response to Zophar. If you recall, he widened that response to all three of his friends, and then spent the last half speaking to God. I've said that sometimes Job sees clear and at other times unclear, at first appearance Job seems unclear in chapter 14, but as you read it more carefully, it becomes rather evident that Job saw things clearer than we think (Francis Andersen – 'We detect in chapter 14 a movement to a calmer, clearer, and more confident position').

I. Man's Life (vv1-6)

II. Man's Death (vv7-12)

III. Man's Hope (vv13-22)

I. Man's Life (vv1-6)

1. Job's main point in these first 6 verses, is to remind God 3 things about man's life: it's short, sinful, and determined.
2. Just keep in mind, while Job is speaking about man (generically), he no doubt has himself in mind (specifically).
3. (1) It's short (vv1-3), v1—"Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble"—the phrase "man who is born of a woman" really says it all.
4. It refers to man in his fallen and native condition—man as he comes forth from the womb of his mother.
5. Man's life is relatively short and full of trouble—physical trouble, relational trouble, and spiritual trouble.
6. V2—"He comes forth like a flower and fads away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue"—life is short.
7. V3—"And do You open Your eyes on such a one, and bring him to judgment with Yourself?"—here Job refers to the holy gaze of God upon man.
8. To "open the eye" refers to deep scrutiny—God searches the corners of man's dark and depraved heart.
9. This deep gaze results in judgment—He looks upon man so as to bring him into judgement with Himself.
10. (2) It's sinful (v4)—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"—it's almost as if Job is defending man.
11. He's sticking up for man for this obvious reason—he is one—Job is writing these verses from experience.
12. Remember, he's not merely describing man in general, but he's describing a specific man; he's describing himself.
13. Thus, Job not only confesses his life is short and full of trouble, but he (like every other person born of woman), was born sinful.
14. I don't take this to be an excuse but a confession—he's simply admitting that all men are born corrupt.
15. (3) It's determined (vv5-6), v5—"Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass."
16. The exactly length of his life has been predetermined by God, and thus, he's unable to pass beyond this.
17. God has determined the boundaries of a man's habitation (where he lives), as well as his duration (how long he lives).
18. V6—"Look away from him that he may rest, till like a hired man he finishes his day"—this is really his main point in vv1-6.

19. This is why he reminded God of these things about man; to appeal to Him to leave poor miserable man alone.
20. And remember, Job ultimately has himself in mind—he isn't merely thinking of men, but a specific man.
21. Job asks God to "look away from man that he may rest"—that is, that man may rest from God's gaze and scrutiny.
22. Job compares man to a "hired man"—a man who has been given a specific assignment or task to complete.
23. A hired man works hard through the day to finish that task—afterwards, at the end of the day, he rests.
24. Job is basically asking God to give him a break—to allow him to finish his life without God's correction.
25. Remember, Job understood that, ultimately speaking, his troubles came from God as a rebuke and chastisement.
26. Observation 1—Arguments in prayer are not only lawful but necessary—it's easy to forget that these words of Job are a prayer.
27. We are afforded insight into Job's prayer life—he's pouring out his heart to God before his three friends.
28. And in this particular prayer, Job is reminding God of the brevity and difficulty of life; he's building a case before God.
29. Later in 23:4, he said if he could find God—"I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments."
30. Let me clarify—we don't bring arguments with us into prayer because God is forgetful or reluctant (He is neither).
31. Arguments in prayer are not for God but us—they strengthen our faith in God which renders prayer effective.
32. They remind us of our weakness and they remind us of God's strength—this is in part the purpose of prayer.

II. Man's Death (vv7-12)

1. Verses 7-12 contain two illustrations intended to make a single point—death brings a final end to man.
2. (1) An illustration of a tree (vv7-10)—if a tree is cut down it will sprout again (v7); if it dies it will bud again and bring forth branches like a plant (vv8-9).
3. V10—"But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?"—this is in contrast to a tree.
4. When a man dies, he's removed from this world, never to be seen again—he's laid away in the ground.
5. (2) An illustration of water (vv11-12), v11—"As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up."
6. That is, the water evaporates and disappears, never to be seen again—once gone it appears to be ever gone.
7. V12—"So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep."
8. A man's body lies down in the ground and does not rise—"they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep."
9. Job affirms the fact, that the bodies of men, will be laid in the ground and remain there for a specific time.

10. V12—"until the heavens are no more"—that is, they will remain in the ground until the general resurrection.
11. There's coming a time when the heavens will be no more—that is, this world as we presently know it will end.
12. The Scripture speaks of a new heaven and earth, that will replace this present heaven and earth at Christ's return.
13. Rev.21:1—"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."
14. Thus, it's in connection to Christ's return at the consummation, that every dead body will rise from death.
15. Death is prolonged night and resurrection is the morning; it's then every corpse will be aroused from their sleep.
16. Now, it's important to keep this point in mind—Job had a clear understanding of the universal resurrection (I say that because he elaborates on this in vv13-22).
17. Observation 1—Life as we know it on earth ends with death—this is true for all men without exception.
18. Verses 7-12 underscore the finality of death—death in one important sense, brings a final end to man.
19. Now, this of course doesn't mean man ceases to exist after death; man will exist forever in heaven or hell.
20. But death closes the door to this world as we know it; when men die, they are removed from this earth (and that means two things).
21. (a) No more offers of life from God—death ends all opportunity given to man to be reconciled to God.
22. Death shuts the door to every gospel offer; here upon earth everything invited man to make peace with God.
23. Christian testified to the power and divinity of its Maker; Christian friends and neighbors shined as lights.
24. But there's no creation to bear witness for God in the grave; there's no gospel invitations offered from God in the grave.
25. Rev.22:11—"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."
26. (b) No more opportunities to serve God—this is the main reason Christians are hesitant to meet death.
27. Paul said he was torn between two options: dying and being with Christ and living and be useful for Christ.
28. Thus, the Psalm writer, again and again, pleads with God for deliverance from the grave, so that he can remain on earth to praise and glorify God.
29. Ps.6:5—"Return, O LORD, deliver me! For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will give You thanks?"
30. Ps.30:9—"What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me."
31. Ps.88:11-12—"Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"
32. Ps.115:17-18—"The dead do not praise the LORD, nor any who go down into silence. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore."
33. While we will praise and glorify God in heaven for all eternity, we only have one life to do that on this earth.

34. Ecc.9:10—"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."
35. Jn.9:4—"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work (purpose, priority, privilege)."

III. Man's Hope (vv13-22)

1. Verses 13-22 are a contrast between two kinds of hope; in many ways hope is an important theme to this chapter.
2. While the actual word "hope" is only found three times (in v7, v14 (wait), v19), its theme is found throughout the chapter.
3. As many of you know, the Bible uses the concept of hope in two related ways, as confident expectation.
4. Sometimes hope is used almost synonymously with trust or confidence—my hope is founded upon Christ.
5. At other times, Scripture uses the term hope to refer to something expected—our hope is that we will see Christ.
6. Thus, our hope is built upon Christ and is focused on Christ—He is both our confidence and expectation.
7. (1) Gospel hope (vv13-17)—believe it or not, these verses are some of the most debated verses in the book.
8. The difficulty isn't so much understanding them (the words are relatively clear), but applying them to Job.
9. That is, the biggest problem is that they are too positive for some commentators to apply them to Job.
10. But I want to suggest that rightly understood these are some of the most encouraging words Job uttered.
11. If you remember, in chapter 19 Job affirms his belief in a personal and bodily resurrection of the dead (he was going to see his Redeemer with his own eyes).
12. This is largely what he affirms here (though admittedly, less clear in ways); let's consider it under 3 words (waiting, answering, and sealing).
13. (a) Waiting (vv13-14)—in these verses Job expresses desire to wait in the grave until this troubled life ends.
14. V13—"Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that you would appoint a set time, and remember me."
15. On previous occasions, Job expressed a desire to die (a desire that he repeats here again in a moderate way).
16. He desired to escape God's wrath or fatherly anger, that was manifested toward Job by way of affliction.
17. V14—"If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes."
18. The first phrase "if a man dies, shall he live again" doesn't deny a future resurrection; it merely affirms the finality of death.
19. When a man dies, he can no longer return to earth, but his body will wait in the ground until his change.
20. Thus, by "change" is meant that glorious change that accompanies our resurrection called glorification.

21. Phil.3:21—"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body."
22. 1Cor.15:52—"For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
23. (b) Answering, v15—"You shall call, and I will answer You, You shall desire the works of Your hands."
24. This refers to the future resurrection, when the dead shall hear Christ's voice and come forth from the grave.
25. Jn.5:28-29—"The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."
26. Notice, Job describes his future resurrected and glorified body "as the works of Your hands (a work of God)."
27. V15—"You shall desire the work of Your hands"—this phrase should specifically be applied to Christ, for two reasons: first, He desires to see the final product of His work; second, He desires to openly wed His bride.
28. (c) Sealing, vv16-17—"For now You number my steps, but do not watch over my sin"—that is, for now as I am above ground.
29. Having expressed his desire to die and be hidden in the ground, Job now accepts the fact that he's still alive.
30. V16—"For now You number my steps"—that is, God is counting how many steps I take, and when I take the last one appointed for me, I will die and be hidden in the grave.
31. The last part of v16 has been debated—the biggest difficulty is determining whether it's a statement or question.
32. Every major translation (except the KJV), has it as a statement of fact and not a question—"Though you number my steps You do not number my sin."
33. Though God knows everything about me (He watches over my steps), He has chosen not to watch over my sins.
34. V17—"My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and You cover my iniquity (notice how job refers to his sin, transgression, and iniquity)."
35. These are the three primary ways Scripture describes sin—sin (to miss the mark), transgression (to deviate from the path), iniquity (to pervert or distort).
36. Job says three things about his sin—God doesn't observe it (v16b), has sealed it in a bag (17a), and covered it (v17b).
37. Each of these imageries underscore the same basic point—Job's sins, transgression, and iniquity were forgiven.
38. These are three common ways Scriptures describes forgiveness—God doesn't impute it, has sealed it up, and covered it.
39. In fact, Daniel prophesied in 9:24, that Christ would "finish transgression, seal up sins, make reconciliation for iniquity (transgression, sins, iniquity)."
40. (2) Carnal hope (vv18-22)—here Job ends things on a negative note, as he describes the hope of foolish men.
41. (a) An illustration of carnal hope (vv18-19)—Job uses the imagery of an eroding mountainside to illustrate carnal hope.
42. Just as water washes away the rocks and soil of a mountainside, v19—"so You destroy the hope of man."
43. God destroys the carnal hopes of man; He proves them empty and foolish; He proves they are empty and useless (how He does that is found in vv20-22).

44. (b) The consequence of carnal hope (vv20-22), v20—"You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his countenance and send him away."
45. This imagery here is of rejection and disappointment—his countenance will be changed when his hope is exposed.
46. The results of this are found in v21—he will have no knowledge of what takes place on earth among his sons (neither their successes or distresses).
47. V22—"But his flesh will be in pain over it, and his soul will mourn over it"—over the fact that his hope proved groundless.
48. He will mourn and be in pain about his hope being destroyed by God—this will happen when he dies.
49. His flesh will be in pain as it decays in the ground, and his soul will mourn over it as it awaits the judgment.
50. Closing observation 1—All men have a hope—that is, all men have a native desire for something better.
51. Ecc.3:11—"God has put eternity in their hearts"—that is, there's a hope in man to live beyond the grave.
52. Even the strongest and loudest atheist, in the deepest part of his heart, hopes there's more than this life.
53. This life is short and filled with trouble—it's in man by nature, to hope for more, after or beyond the grave.
54. That man has a hope for something better after death isn't wrong, the problem concerns the basis of this hope.
55. What are you hopping for and why? Because Job teaches us—not every person's hope comes to pass.
56. Job 8:13—"The hope of the hypocrite shall perish" Job 27:8—"For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life."
57. Thus, regardless how wicked a person was, when they die, someone will say—"They're in a better place now."
58. How tragic is v20 in this light—"You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his countenance and send him away."
59. Closing observation 2—Some men have a good hope—while everyone has a hope, not everyone has a good hope.
60. Thus, Paul said to the Thessalonians, 2Thess.2:16—"He loved us and has given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace."
61. (a) It's understood—that is, it's not a blind hope without understanding; it can be intelligently explained.
62. 1Pet.3:15—"Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."
63. This doesn't mean you can explain every truth of Scripture, but you can explain where (or in whom) your hope lies.
64. (b) It rests on Christ—that is, our hope of heaven is built upon the blood and righteousness of Christ.
65. Hymn (582)—"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand."
66. (c) It's felt in the soul—by this I mean, a good hope is more than a mere truth or doctrine in the mind.
67. But it's a true or doctrine believed in our hearts, and thus it effects or impacts the way we think and live.

68. Rom.5:5—"Now hope does not disappoint (it will not disappoint us), because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."
69. That is, the love of God that's been poured out in our hearts, is an earnest or down payment of what awaits.
70. Closing observation 3—A good hope is practically beneficial—here I want to close by answering a single question.
71. Why did Job speak of hope in the way he did? Why did he give over ½ of this 14 chapter to the subject?
72. Remember Job's predicament—he's lost everything—he's suffering intense physical and mental pain.
73. What was the thing that got him through? That kept him afloat? That kept a measure of wind in his sails?
74. It was this—and I can summarize this entire chapter with it—he knew life was short, full of trouble, and death certain, but he also had hope of a future bodily resurrection (and he knew, to some degree, that his beloved Redeemer desired to see and be with him – and that for all eternity).