

....My Record is On High ~

Job 16:1 – 18:2

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~ Our Spiritual Safari will consider Job's second reply to Eliphaz in this report; whose discourse we examined carefully in our previous report. If you haven't kept up in our safari through Job, I urge you to go back and read this series from report one. Remember, Eliphaz is the spiritualist dreamer who thinks he has inside information from the spirit world; because he has had a weird and spooky vision in the night. Eliphaz told us all about a frightening vision in chapter four that kept him awake all night one night. Well, the information revealed in his epiphany didn't amount to much; in fact, it didn't amount to anything at all. Even so, Eliphaz just cannot stop himself from talking. Do you know anyone like Eliphaz?

Job is such a critical book of the Bible to grasp correctly; yet it is rarely taught in light of sound doctrine, mostly misunderstood and, the little bit of teaching that does stem from this exceptional poetical record, is generally botched when handled. Some teachers present this as a debate between Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar – which it is – *BUT* – it should not have been; and shouldn't be taught from that perspective. I think there was a time when these four were truly friends; but that was a time when none of them had a need. Now, one of them — Job — has a need; and the other three are incapable of meeting it. They are agreeing with each other in "*love, love, love*" – but they sure aren't "*loving*" Job. Friends, when you experience a crises in your life you will quickly discover who genuinely loves you. Frankly, these three men should be humiliatingly ashamed of the things they have said. And Job should be, too.

These three friends should have been comforters; but all they have succeeded in doing is frightening Job into thinking they were going to stone him. They are falsely accusing him of being a horrible sinner — why not go all the way? Job didn't have any secret sins; God Himself has already said Job was perfect, upright, a man that hated evil, and did not sin with his lips. Well, even so, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have all tried to force Job into

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confessing his secret sins to them. Candidly, if Job had a sin to confess, these friends and the surrounding crowd would have immediately stoned him right there on the spot in that oriental garbage dump on the edge of town.

So, these three so-called friends aren't meeting the needs of a man who is truly in need — because they cannot meet Job's needs. They don't know God, they don't know Job, and they don't know themselves. They have nothing to offer a man in desperate need. Many sermons are just like that in our modern churches today, too. Unless the Spirit of God uses them, it doesn't even matter how Bible-centered they are; the message will only fall flat. Sometimes, others pick it up and use it as a weapon to slay the pastor. Either way, that type of sermon will be vain and empty; usually self-righteous, defensive, and vindictive — just as Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad are being.

Also, there are a lot of services with a whole bunch of activity; but very little in-depth substance from the Word of God. Ultimately, they're utterly meaningless. When there is no proper, correct and complete expounding from the Word of God, there is no worship; where there is no worship, there is no growth — period — and there never will be unless that's changed. Sometimes the congregation is partially to blame; but the pastor must always be held fully accountable and solely responsible for any and all breakdowns and divisions in a church; but I digress, sort of....

XVI

¹ Then Job answered and said,

² I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.

³ Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

⁴ I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

⁵ But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

⁶ Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased?

⁷ But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.

⁸ And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

⁹ He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

¹⁰ They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

¹¹ God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

¹² I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

¹³ His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

¹⁴ He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

¹⁵ I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

¹⁶ My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

17 Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.

18 O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

19 Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

20 My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

22 When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

~ Job could have replied with the same type of trite, pious, and hypocritical speeches Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have given. After chapter two, all we have is a heap of words that amount to a pile of garbage in the garbage dump landfill this conversation took place in. Paul will later say, “.... brethren, if any of you be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one.” Debating and preaching at people will only work when done in the spirit of meekness. To be an effective teacher of the Word of God, we have to come at others from below; esteeming others better than ourselves and considering the welfare of others above our own. Spiritual foot washers – willing servants.

The Lord Jesus Christ is still washing our feet today when we are truthful and confess our sins to Him in prayer. Only then is Christ just and faithful to forgive us our sins. If Jesus isn't washing your feet daily, then you have no part with Him. That's what Jesus told Simon Peter. A famous politician recently said he was a Christian, but that he had never confessed any sins — because he didn't have any sins that he needed to be forgiven for. That man doesn't realize he isn't a Christian – in fact, he doesn't even think he needs Jesus. He's lost and blind. Professing himself to be wise he became a fool. I think that politician would tell Jesus to scoot over on His throne because he was going to crawl up there and rule with Him. What fools;

what hypocrites. The only effective way to approach another man is in meekness – as a servant.

It's tragic that these three friends couldn't come to Job in a helpful way in his time of need; but they didn't. They honestly believe they are defending God. If any of them had experienced what Job had experienced, then Job could have said all of the same ugly things to them. I don't think Job would have done that — but he could have. I think Job would have honestly wanted to help, comfort, and strengthen his friends — wash their feet — if any of them had been in such trouble.

These men are literally wasting Job's time at this point. Job says they've made an old man out of him in verse eight. When your friends and family make you their enemy, you're going to discover you suddenly feel about a hundred years older than you are. Most of you know that Christian friends can be more hurtful than any unsaved person in the world. There's nothing meaner than a mean Christian.

God allowed Satan to take Job by the neck like a lion shaking a baby antelope. God allows that to happen to you and me sometimes, too. Job says the devil's archers have surrounded him and arrows are sticking out of intestines. This isn't a pretty picture in the Word of God. I know the natural man *HATES* this type of teaching; because they hate the Lord Jesus Christ. They don't hate me; because I'm just recounting what God is saying in the Book of Job. Job's bitterness is breaking him now. There isn't a more vivid or accurate description of what God is trying to say here; and the superb language in this passage is something so beautiful that great writers, essayists, poets, and novelists of the past, have all aspired to emulate it.

It's interesting how close Job was to the threshold of death. On the one hand, he was wishing for it; on the other hand, he was carefully avoiding it. Job is so confused and frustrated at this point that he probably feels his stress is going to kill him; if his friends don't stone him first. We're looking at one very sick and troubled man. Job is beginning to reach the place where he will finally be able to judge himself; but he isn't there yet — and his friends haven't helped in leading him there – not by any means. Job is

being forced to defend himself; but the problem with that is: the moment we are forced to defend ourselves, we have lost all opportunity to glorify God – because it would literally be impossible to do both. So many people feel that if they justify themselves, their mission is accomplished. Well, Job justified himself instead of justifying God, and that incessantly fueled the fire of his friends who are now mercilessly condemning him.

See, the moment we start defending ourselves, what we are really saying is that we have no sins; which means we are liars. By de facto, that attempts to bring God down from His place as our Judge to being the One Who is guilty! I seriously doubt that very many understand this. I hope you do. There are a whole lot of people sitting in judgment on God who are going to get a *BIG* surprise in their life. Unfortunately, all of this is exactly what Job is doing at this point in our account by saying God was wrong for allowing these things to happen to him. He's blaming God. How many of you think your prayer is pure? Well, I doubt that *ANY* of us have ever prayed a pure prayer in our lives. If Jesus isn't our Intercessor, then we aren't getting through to the Father – you can just write that down. Job thought he would get through – and he was as wrong as wrong can possibly be.

That is a spectacular ending to chapter sixteen. The Word of God teaches throughout that God keeps a record of us. Every thought and deed you have ever conceived of in your life is documented. Each and every one of the created intelligences of God has a supercomputer – and they're a bit smarter than we are at using them. It's impossible to talk back to them, too. The record they make stands as is – we can bet our life on it! That should be literally terrifying; I know I don't want to see my record. Thank God most of my record will be redacted when my works are judged – blotted out by the Blood of Christ. Unfortunately, there isn't going to be very much left of my record; just a whole bunch of empty space, perhaps. Does that truth even faze you? Does it even register in your mind? It disturbs me greatly ~

XVII

¹ My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

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2 Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?

3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.

5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.

6 He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.

7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.

8 Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.

9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

10 But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you.

11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.

15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.

XVIII

1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari leaves Job lingering in the land-fill garbage dump in an ancient city named Uz as we complete this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. Job admits a little mouthwash at this point would be a good thing – but he doesn't have any. When Job says his breath is corrupt, that means he is sick, my beloved. He's ready to die and his friends are only taunting and mocking him. What a terrible picture this really is. It's very easy – *VERY EASY* – to become a hard-boiled Christian, friends. It takes no effort whatsoever to be totally useless to poor sinners in this world. Let's ask God to forgive us of our coldness and indifference. Let's ask God to reveal how we can avoid being as Zophar, Bildad and Eliphaz.

As our safari continues, God is going to be very harsh with Job; but God is going to help, comfort, and restore Job before it's all over with, too. God is a God of judgment; but He is also a God of grace and mercy. All we have to do is come to Him – but we must come His way. Job didn't want to be flattered or buttered-up anymore; I'm sure Job had a whole lot of flattery when things were good in his life — in days gone by. Now, Job doesn't expect to even leave this dump alive. This is when Bildad the Shuhite chimes in again for his second attack. He's not going to say anything new, either. Remember, Bildad is the traditionalist who has a whole library of old

sayings and ancient proverbs that he clicks off like beads on a rosary; and he'll continue to count them off nervously in our next report.

Bildad insults Job telling him to shut up and listen so he can speak. This discourse has degenerated into near chaos at this point. Quite frankly, they would have all done well to allow their silence to be their wisdom; but that would mean they would have had to listen to the voice of God – and they're not even close to being prepared for that. Even so, God is preparing Job to hear His Voice. I urge you to read the Book of Job in prayer. I know it's unfamiliar to most of us; but it is worth a whole lot more sincere and thoughtful consideration than it is given today ~

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