

....Darkness and the Shadow of Death ~

Job 2:4 – 3:12

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~ The Lord Jesus Christ said, *“in this world ye will have trouble.”* God has NOT promised you an easy time in this life, friends – you may want to just write that down. God says He chastens those He loves. You can spot a false teacher a thousand light years away by that simple doctrine alone. Even so, God desires to do something better than we could ever imagine in our lives through our trials, pain, and in our suffering for the cause of Christ. I’m sure that this proper, correct and complete sound doctrine is utterly foreign to some readers. It is extremely difficult for us to bow under the mighty Hand of God, my beloved – let’s not make any mistake about that. In fact, Job, perfect and upright, according to God Himself, came to the place where he wished he had never even been born. However, even when Job wanted to just lay down and die, he didn’t lose his integrity as a man, nor did he lose his reverence for God.

If you cannot accept these basic Biblical tenets of truth then, may I say this kindly? – You do not believe the Word of God, you hate the Lord Jesus Christ, and these reports will have no meaning whatsoever in your life. So, if you disagree with my above paragraph — you might as well stop reading right now, throw your Bible in the garbage can and renounce your *“Christianity”* – because you aren’t a Christian. Further, if you do not accept the Scriptural truth outlined in this safari, then you will be in the company of multitudes who reject Christ while pretending to worship Him.

Alright, our Spiritual Safari is still in Heaven in scene four of this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. In our last report, the Lord had called Satan’s attention back to Job again; and God tells the devil that Job was still serving Him — despite the unspeakable tragedies that have befallen Job at the hands of the devil. Remember, Satan has said that if God allowed all of Job’s earthly possessions to be taken away, then Job would curse God to His Face. Well, that didn’t quite work out for the devil. But, apparently, being wrong never even fazes Satan. Being in error doesn’t even slow the devil down, friends. Make a note of that....

Job 2:4 – 3:12

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II

⁴ And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

~ I have to admit that Satan is accurate about most people in this connection. For most “Christians,” there is a very definite and fatal chink in their armor. Actually, we all have an Achilles Heel of spiritual weakness; and when we boil everything down to the bare bones, we ALL cave in and compromise in certain circumstances. I hear people say all the time that God will not permit anything to happen to us that we are not able to bear; unfortunately, God regularly permits things to happen to us that we cannot bear – because God wants to bear those burdens for us when we trust Him. That’s a fundamental key to repentance; which is what the book of Job is all about, doctrinally.

Oh, dear friends, I know this is almost as impossible to read as it is for me to write; because this convicts my own heart to the degree that I just want to stop and find something else to do. I have been under what I consider the same circumstances as Job – and that’s no exaggeration – and I would have been defeated *COMPLETELY* if the Lord had not held me, carried me, lifted me up, and Personally seen me through. If you haven’t been to that place, then I can only hope and pray it will not happen to you – but it will happen to you. Now, I understand the Lord said He will not allow any temptations to come that will not have a way of escape – but – temptation and suffering just happen to be two totally and completely different things. It is just not credible to say Job could lose everything and his ten children but still be able to bear that by himself – impossible. The only way Job got through this is by remembering the things that God had done for Him in times past.

I don’t know who you are, where you are, or how you are; but what I do know – from personal experience – is that God is able to sustain you. See, friends, I don’t guess at these reports or the things I write in them. This is not my philosophy of life. You just happen to be reading the writings of a man who writes and teaches the Word of God from *EXPERIENCE*. If I could

not look back and see the Lord carrying me many times, then I can promise you one thing: you wouldn't be reading this report. It would be a different report – and that is something else you can write down. I hope this teaching is a great comfort to you.

I have no idea what tomorrow is going to bring. Tomorrow could be more tragedy and misery, or the Lord could give me everything I ever prayed for; but, what I do know is: the Lord has promised to enable me to get through whichever it is — and I just happen to know — from experience — that God is going to do exactly as He has promised IF — IF — IF I trust Him. Trust me, my friends — you have *NO IDEA* how frighteningly accurate this has all worked out in my life. The armor of God stands when we have the whole armor on — even when we fail. This is not a contradiction — it is a paradox — and a beautiful paradox at that. All I know is *BOTH* are true. Satan is dead wrong when he says Job would give anything for his soul; and the devil was wrong to say that about Andrew Hunt, too....

⁵ But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

⁶ And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

⁷ So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

⁸ And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

~ Alright, we're back on earth for scene five in Job. Satan didn't get to Job by taking away all of his possessions and killing his children; so, he attacks Job's personal health. Of course, Job is being tested in every aspect of his existence. Naturally, what Satan is attempting to do is break Job down to the lowest common denominator. The children are gone, and they aren't coming back. The finances are gone; like water poured out on the ground. Now his physical body is in tremendous pain – and *ALL* of that trouble has no seemingly good human explanation whatsoever!

This is, however, *NOT* punishment for sin, friends! Job was perfect and upright. The devil never made an accusation against Job. We must get hold of a proper insight to this facet of Scriptural truth, or all we will experience is senseless and meaningless suffering. That's why God allowed us to look into Heaven – so that *WE* can understand these things. When we have all the facts, we know that this has a lofty and worthy purpose. Because we have the Word of God, and we study to show ourselves approved, we know there is good and sufficient reason for suffering in the eternal councils of Almighty God. Only when we have all the facts and consider *all* facets correctly can we understand God has a purpose in all this. That purpose is to glorify Himself. Remember, God's ways are not our ways. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. Unfortunately, Job doesn't see that, understand that, or even recognize anything good could possibly come out of this experience he is having – but good will come of it.

Ultimately, this will be for Job's good; and we can say that because we know the end of the story. However, at this point in the account, God's character has been impugned. I'm sure all of God's created intelligences – the sons of God – utterly recoiled and shuddered when they heard Satan say God wasn't worthy to be loved; and that Job was just a paid lover. Well, my friends, that is exactly what the devil is saying here. Satan is implying that the only lovers God has are paid to do so. Further, the devil is saying that God has to bribe people to love Him because God isn't worthy of being loved in and of Himself. If that doesn't shake *YOU* to your shoestrings, then I don't know what would. How about it, friends? Why do you serve God?

It's easy to rejoice and sing songs about God's goodness when everything is going the way we want it to go; but, what about the dark days of trials and terrors when we cannot see the way? Well, that's when we reveal our true virtue. The fires always burn out the dross and testing always reveals what is genuine and what is not. You and I are to be lights in this world; and light is specifically designed to combat darkness. There's no other reason for light. God places us in darkness many times so our light can shine. Paul said, "*.... knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.*" What we see is Job out in the dump of an ancient oriental city scraping his wounds with a piece

of broken pottery. That's not a pretty picture — and it is very hard to express. The picture we are looking at is terrible – period.

There has been much speculation about what the “boils” were. Dr. Cedric Harvey suggests Job was the victim of “*psychosomatic dermatitis*.” That sounds professional and learned; however, the Word of God says Job had “boils.” That reveals what becoming a doctor will do to you!

“*Psychosomatic dermatitis*” is a skin disease brought about by acute high anxiety. Personally, I doubt that is an accurate diagnosis and, since the good doctor didn't examine Job in person, I have no problem contradicting him with my second opinion.

Dr. Harvey goes on to say that a study of the Old Testament points up Job's insomnia due to terrifying dreams producing a general state of unwellness. Naturally, that is a generally accepted symptom of “*psychosomatic dermatitis*.” Dr. Charles J. Brimm, a New York heart specialist, diagnosed Job's condition as pellagra, a vitamin deficiency disease. And there are others. You can take your choice – all we really know is that Job had “boils” – and I think it was skin cancer, personally; but, whatever it was, Job is in deep trouble at the time in which we are studying....

⁹ Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

~ So, we are briefly introduced to Job's wife; and she questions Job's integrity on every level. We know Job retained his ethic, because God told us he did. Satan is beating this man to a pulp from every perspective now. I doubt Job even saw himself as a man any longer. Every ounce of dignity Job had has been decimated. Interestingly, Satan removed everything in Job's life, but he didn't destroy Ms. Job; and the reason he didn't destroy her is because she isn't any help to Job — and she was apparently willing to do the devil's bidding for him. She said, “*curse God and die!*” Apparently, Ms. Job had no problem becoming a widow. Did she want Job dead? Did she want out of the marriage? This might have even been a tender suggestion in her eyes; I don't know. Friends, turn that all over in your mind a few times and see what you come up with....

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

~ Well, Job maintained his integrity and composure up to this point; and verse eleven is, actually, where the account of Job begins. Now, Job's morals and motives will be severely attacked by three so called "friends" who have come to visit him in his difficult time. Job is ultimately going to lose his composure; and he sure isn't patient with his judgmental, pious and miserable "comforters." Eliphaz the Temanite is a grandson of Esau; see Genesis chapter thirty-six verses ten and eleven. Bildad the Shuhite was from Shuah who was a son of Abraham; see Genesis chapter twenty-five verse two. That dates this account to the time of the patriarchs, also, by the way. Zophar the Naamathite was from northern Arabia. None of that is particularly earth shattering in terms of geographical placement, but it does narrow it down for us a bit....

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

~ So, here come these three to mourn with their friend. As we move along in our Spiritual Safari, we are going to learn extremely ugly truths about these men; so, let's say all the good things about them that we can now. They were Job's friends, to be sure – until this calamity happened. This experience alienated them from Job — because they did not know God, they did not know Job, and they did not know themselves. They are totally ignorant of why God does certain things; and that should be a three-alarm

warning to us today; cautioning us about trying to explain why bad things happen to other people. None of us have any right under the sun to say that God allowed this or that to happen for such and such a reason. Of course, most of us do that, and we usually tell others the reason, too – and it’s never good, of course. Well, you don’t know the reason; and these men didn’t know the reason — because there was no reason they knew of — but they were utterly sure and convinced in their own minds why this was all happening to Job. Unfortunately, they are entirely wrong and completely off base in their self-righteous indignation.

These three had heard their friend Job was in trouble; but they never dreamed it was this severe. The last time they had seen Job, he had been in a beautiful home, with a beautiful wife, prosperous business, surrounded by loyal employees and wonderful children. I’m sure they thought Job would, at least, be in his luxurious house; but, they find Job at the garbage dump on the edge of town scraping his open wounds — and they are shocked by the reality. Job has nothing now – it’s all gone. It doesn’t get any worse than this. Of course, they’re trying to be friendly to Job; but, interestingly, they don’t seem to be in a position to comfort him. They do not understand God, they do not understand Job – and they don’t understand themselves. I can only picture them sitting there shaking their heads in a pretentiously knowing manner for seven full days of mourning.

Well, the head shaking was the result of condescension by an unjustly critical eye. These men are not stupid; in fact, they’re all brilliant philosophers. Men did a great deal of thinking in the day in which we are studying; and they’re sure thinking right now. They all come to one conclusion, albeit from three different perspectives of opinion, and that conclusion is: Job must be an awful sinner for these things to have happened to him; and this is surely the punishment and judgment of God; and that Job needs to get his life straightened out. Well, Job could handle the problems caused by Satan, but he isn’t about to stand for the smirking gawking of these so-called friends any longer....

III

¹ After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

² And Job spake, and said,

***³ Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said,
There is a man child conceived.***

***⁴ Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let
the light shine upon it.***

***⁵ Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it;
let the blackness of the day terrify it.***

***⁶ As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the
days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.***

⁷ Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

***⁸ Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their
mourning.***

***⁹ Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have
none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:***

***¹⁰ Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow
from mine eyes.***

***¹¹ Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I
came out of the belly?***

¹² Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

~ So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition with the first discourse being initiated by Job. This is beautiful speech and flowery language, to be sure; however, when we boil it down and strain it out, what we have is Job wishing he had never been born. Have you ever felt that way, my beloved readers? I have – many times – and some of those times for me have even been quite recently. Fortunately, or unfortunately, no

one has ever died by wishing they were dead. Asking God to take our life never solves our problems. Thankfully, no one is ever really hurt by complaining. Alright, these friends won't be very friendly as we continue on in our safari. I hope you can continue along with us; I also sincerely hope my reports to God and to *YOU* — from the Book of Job — give you something to think about today, friends ~

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