

....They Were Children of Fools ~

Job Chapter Twenty-Nine and Thirty

* * * * *

~ When we first met Job in our Spiritual Safari, he was living on top of life with honor, affluence and influence. Job had everything it takes to make this life agreeable and comfortable; and to make himself important to the community and world. Unfortunately, Job's life unraveled completely in one brief chapter. His entire existence became a fool's paradise overnight. At this time in which we are studying, Job has lost his businesses, lost his finances, lost his health, family, and his friends have turned against him. Job is sitting in the ashes of a garbage dump landfill in an ancient oriental city named Uz scraping his open sores with a piece of broken pottery; and his so-called friends are dogging him to confess some non-existent hidden sin; so they can stone him to death! This is not a pretty picture we're looking at.

In that awful condition, Job was forced to defend himself against an oral onslaught of false allegations from Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. The friends cannot help Job, and Job doesn't even really understand the condition of his need. This final discourse of Job is one area of the Bible that few have ever read correctly. It isn't popular. Eliphaz has given three replies, Bildad has given three, and Zophar has answered twice. That means Job is in the middle of his eighth rebuttal; and when I say "*answers*" and "*replies*," I mean false allegations – and when I say "*rebuttals*," I mean defenses to said allegations. Job has expressed his faith in God the Creator, and Job has remained strong in the face of this attack being made on him by these "*miserable comforters*."

See, the friends could not help Job because they did not know themselves, they did not know Job, and they certainly didn't know God. They could only conclude, erroneously, that God only sent this type of trouble to the worst of the worst; and that Job was experiencing punishment. They thought Job was a master actor of deceit concealing his secret sin. Eliphaz was the voice of experience; one who used what we would call the psychological approach – also known as the "*power of positive thinking*." Naturally,

Job Chapter Twenty-Nine and Thirty

* * * * *

Eliphaz said all his prose with a cheerful demeanor. Bildad was the traditionalist who employed the philosophical approach. That's the method our modern-day seminaries operate on and teach today. Of course, the philosophical approach never helped anybody – but it does hurt people – seriously hurt them. Zophar was a strict religious dogmatist who claimed to know all about God. He sounds like a lot of fundamentalists do in our present-day church.

In our last report, we read that stunning poetic counter-polemic about God as Creator in chapter twenty-eight; which was a lovely literary formality. I can only suggest highly that you actually read these chapters carefully. In all of that, Job is revealing his problem. He is suffering from a fatal case of "*perpendicular iatus*." That's a condition whereby one can only speak of "me," "myself" and "I." Job is filled with pride to the tenth power. Let's just say Job has "I" trouble; and he cannot see it – to keep this simple. A whole bunch of people suffer from "I" trouble; and, of course, they, likewise, cannot see it. Frankly, this is the hub of the wheel of life for almost all of us. Everything is a spoke that goes out from us in our own minds. Well, there is no brokenness of spirit, no admission or confession, no sense of failure, and no broken or contrite heart in this man named Job.

God told us that Job was a perfect man who was upright, hated evil and sinned not with his lips. Job was no liar, friends. When God says Job was '*perfect*' – that means perfect according to the sacrificial system God had established at the time in which we are studying. I don't think it was before the flood, but likely in the time of the patriarchs – long before the Mosaic Law was given; likely in the days of Isaac or Jacob. Job brought the burnt sacrifices; and those sacrifices spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, to be technical, Job offered sacrifices for his sons and daughters, but he never offered a sacrifice for himself; and that's a big, big problem, friends. Job thought his sons and daughters had sinned but he, apparently, didn't think he needed a sacrifice for his own sins. That's a very particular type of man.

Job feared God. I don't think Job put up a false pretense in his life. His earthly cup of bliss was filled and running over profusely when the suffering came to him. Job was no hypocrite, either – not by any means. Job was a

quicken soul and a genuine saint of God. The false charges against him were cruel and malicious. Actually, Job's suffering was incidental, but Job would never have agreed with that. Frankly, Job's suffering is almost as insignificant as the fish is in the Book of Jonah. In Jonah, the problem was with God and Jonah; here, in the Book of Job, the problem is with Job and God. Even Satan is a secondary — perhaps a fourth or fifth ranked character — but the problem is Job. Job didn't know himself — and Job didn't know God.

Socrates said, "know yourself." That's wise — and all-important if you desire satisfaction and contentment in this life, friends. Job was self-righteous, self-sufficient; and he received all kinds of compliments from everyone around him in his life. That led to the self-adulation, egoism and spiritual arrogance that we see in his life. God has brought Job to this place to work on Job. Chapter twenty-nine could be labeled, "this is your life." So, let's read that review and go from there....

XXIX

¹ ***Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,***

² ***Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;***

³ ***When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;***

⁴ ***As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;***

⁵ ***When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me;***

⁶ ***When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;***

⁷ ***When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!***

⁸ The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.

⁹ The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

¹⁰ The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

¹¹ When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:

¹² Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

¹³ The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

¹⁶ I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.

¹⁷ And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

¹⁸ Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.

¹⁹ My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

²⁰ My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

21 Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

22 After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

23 And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

24 If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

~ Well, Job thought himself to be outstanding. For Job, everything is all about “me” in chapter twenty-nine. I’m surprised Job didn’t recite the poem that goes something like this: I had a little tea party and there were three very important people present - me, myself and I! Well, that enabled Job to go back in his mind to the good old days. Things just aren’t like they were in those days gone by. Verse two are those days when Job thought he walked in the light of the Lord, and nothing could ever possibly darken his path. Job served God from his youth; I mean, Job was just alright from day one, if you know what I mean? He helped take care of widows! How much better could one get? Job is thoughtful and outstanding – no question. We need citizens like that.

Naturally, Job proceeds to tell us about all of his outstanding accomplishments; of his prosperity, benevolence, tycoon successes and abundant influence, and affluence - and all of that. Unfortunately, Job lived in a fool’s paradise. In a fairy tale world of make-believe. In a hollow sham snuggled complacently against false illusions; and at midnight - his chariot turned into a pumpkin for real! There was a false sense of security residing in Job when a tsunami of problems crashed down on his house. Job never dreamed his entire substance could be wiped out in a flash of lightning. But that’s what happened, and he had nothing to fall back on; and his friends

weren't even offering Job meals anymore. In fact, they dropped him with a resounding thud. See, Job was so wrapped up in himself and his self righteousness that he forgot what he just said just a few chapters ago; when he recognized his need for a Savior! It's pretty easy to forget about the Lord Jesus Christ, isn't it, friends? Let's move on....

XXX

¹ But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

² Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?

³ For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

⁴ Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

⁵ They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

⁶ To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

⁷ Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

⁸ They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

⁹ And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

¹⁰ They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

¹¹ Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.

23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari concludes this leg of our expedition with Job back at square one; complaining and in bitterness of suffering. Then, it gets really ugly, as Job plays upon the sympathy of unsympathetic friends. Job is saying, “... look at me and how great I was.” But he’s nothing now; and Job makes it seem as if God were to blame for allowing this to happen to him. Interestingly, God *WAS* and *IS* responsible. You see friends, there comes a time when you will have to decide if you really believe the Bible is the Word of God — or not. There are *MANY* Christians today in the same pious position as Job was at this time in which we are studying. They’re justifying themselves instead of glorifying God. Their problem is the same problem that caused Satan to fall: *PRIDE*.

Pride eats like a cancer in the human heart. We all have the disease. See, when man fell in the Garden of Eden, he didn’t just skin his knee and get healed by the Great Physician - Jehovah Rapha; no, friends, man was

devastated with an illness so bad that the symptoms are almost unspeakable. We're going to talk about some extremely deep topics in our next several reports. Anyone who has bothered reading this far, I hope you can continue with us ~

* * * * *