

A Lesson From the Book of Job #2

Then Job answered and said: "I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all. Shall windy words have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer? I also could speak as you do, if you were in my place; I could join words together against you and shake my head at you." Job 16:1-4

In chapters 16 and 17, Job answers his accusing friends. He is frustrated that they are not listening to him. He is frustrated that they can't agree on the basics, so they argue. They are sure he is guilty of secret sin and so they press and press. He defends and they press more, considering further evidence to support their theory that God is judging him.

Job's response to his friends are sarcastic words coming from a man who is tortured and angry. His losses and pain have thrust him into a perpetual state of misery. That is the core of all testing, isn't it? The constant misery cries from relief and rescue. Then to have friends that you expect would listen and comfort, now discourage and argue.

You can see from these chapters that Satan, though he has faded from the visible scene, is still there in the background, still there in the thinking and arguments of Job's comforters. Satan uses these friends as channels to beat Job down, to push him to turn away from confidence in the LORD, to become cold to the God he has trusted. The apostle Paul called this kind of Satanic work, "the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16). Flaming arrows are the accusations of the accuser against believers. In Job's case these Satanic accusations are asserted and defended by men he thought would be helpful and comfort his sorrows. Job didn't expect them to heal him, only to comfort him in the midst of his pain. Because they argued a point of their private philosophy of life, they were "miserable comforters." What a warning to believers! Let us be alert. Let us beware of becoming a channel for Satan's accusations against someone who is suffering, as Job is suffering here.

Then Job goes on to state the facts, as he understands them. He says, "All I can conclude from what I am suffering is that God hates me. God assails and tears me in his anger" (Job 16:9a). Job experiences the abandonment of those who should have loved him, those who should have above all else, wanted to relieve his pain. Instead, they have rejected him. They have added to his misery making life unbearable. He falsely ascribes responsibility for those circumstances to God:

“God has turned me over to evil men and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked” (Job 16:11). Perhaps Job is having trouble balancing two doctrines, that of God’s power and ability and His allowing evil. God could change things, but he didn’t. He could have, but He didn’t. Why doesn’t God rescue righteous Job? He has the power to do so. That is Job’s question and it remains unanswered, even to our day.

Job charges God with all that is wrong in his life. Yet God is wonderfully patient. He does not turn against Job, nor does He punish him, even though he has sinned. Job accused God, and in doing so, Job diminished the glory of God. He made God look badly to others, which is a grievous sin. God has great mercy! If you are ready to stop arguing with God, God is ready to be merciful to you. Come to Him. Allow God to be God. Trust His wisdom to care for you.