

## Job 18-19

Remember we're in the middle of round 2 in this 3 round knock down drag out of this verbal "rage in the cage" type confrontation between Job and his "friends." And they're just really grappling philosophically, and going at it theologically, but in many respects it's like listening to a broken record. They're just going around in circles of frustration repeating the same things over and over again, "God blesses the righteous, but He *beats down* the wicked." "And Job, since you're getting a divine beat down; you must have some secret sin that you need to repent of. Quit covering it, *confess it* and be restored, refreshed, revitalized by the Lord." It was a man by the name of George Bernard Shaw who said who compared the average conversation to a "phonograph with a ½ dozen records – soon you get tired of them all." Of course today we'd modify that to perhaps a CD player, or an I-pod with only a few MP3's, but the idea is the same. It doesn't take too long to wear out the monotony of the same thing over and over again. And though I'd never apologize for the Word of God because if God saw fit to include it, you can rest assured we need to know it, or be familiar with it or else it wouldn't be there. But in the frailty of our humanity in certain respects that's the way this portion of Job feels to us. In the midst of Job's trial, it's just going on and on and on.

And perhaps that's why we have these things the way that we do. We mentioned before how that in the beginning of a trial we're so often overwhelmed, it just overtakes us, and overwhelms us, so we get on our faces *before* the Lord, seek to cling so desperately *to* the Lord. And of course when we're released from that trial it's just such a sweet release, it's over, we can regroup, and re-establish, pick up the pace, get back on track and all of that. But between the time it starts, till the time it comes to an end, it just seems to drone on and on and on and on. So to with Job, so as we're going through these things if you feel like, "Man, this just seems like the same things over and over again," that's because it is. But just hold on, hang in there, and Lord willing we'll get through it I promise, it's just going to take a little time.

But Job is learning, and hopefully we're learning too. But he's learning a little about the way he *should* deal with people that are hurting, and he's learning a *lot* about how *not* to deal with people that are in pain, who are hurting, on the down and out. And he's learning that when it's all said and done, he's not going to be able to look around for his comfort, he's not going to have his needs met in his friends. But he's going to have to look *up* for comfort, and have his needs met in His Creator. And in turn he himself is being equipped to be a comforter of the downtrodden, those who's world has been turned upside down. He'll be able to comfort others with that with which he himself has been comforted. It's been said that God doesn't comfort us to make us *comfortable*, but to make us *comforters*. It's not comfort given, it's comfort *loaned*, the idea being that God expects us to share it others.

Well, last week we heard once more from Eliphaz, and he just tore into Job while simultaneously informing him that *they were there* as the comfort of God for Job. And of course Job responded, “You’re *miserable* comforters, I’m just waiting for you guys to shut up so I can get some peace and quite.” And he said, “You’re all condescending, if I were in your place I’d be comforting with my words, you’re blaming me for this mess, but God knows the facts, and even now my witness is in heaven, and my evidence is on high.” God knows the truth, I’m innocent of any intentional wrong doing, and I’m going to hold fast to my integrity. I’m just a broken man whose hope is fading fast.

#### Vs1-4

Now as I said, they’re growing frustrated with one another because none of them are willing to give, they all have to be right and none of them are willing to back down. And they’re beginning to feed off of each others statements. Perhaps you recall last week when we drew attention to the fact that when we were in Ch 12 Job sarcastically remarked, “Hey, you guys really have a grip, when you die, wisdom is going to die with you and we’re all going to be in for a heap of trouble.” And then in Ch 15 Eliphaz remarked in response, “*Are you the first man who was born? Or were you made before the hills? Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not in us?*” Job 15:7-9. And in essence he shot back to Job the same medicine that Job had dished out, “Oh I guess then that *you’re the man?*” And then he went on to verbally abuse Job for a while, saying that they were in reality God’s comforters to him, but that he wouldn’t receive it, he then proceeded to describe the fate of the wicked in a way that was radically reminiscent of Job’s own plight, once again accusing Job of being out of line with God in sort of an undercurrent kinda way. Then, (you remember) there in Ch 16 that Job responded to *him*, “Blah blah blah, miserable comforters are you all, when will you ever shut up?” And now here is Bildad saying, “How long till *you* put an end to words, gain understanding, and then we’ll we can reason.” Or to understand that another way, “When will *you* ever shut up, if you would even conceive a clue as to the reality of the *situation*, then we could continue on in reasonable *conversation*.” And so they’re bantering back and forth at each other.

And the general idea of Vs 4 being, “Do you think this world is to revolve around you, should God rearrange things just to suit you?” And now he’s going to give us a series of illustrations that he’s *implying* of the wicked, but *applying* to Job.

And the short of it is a fear tactic, if Job won’t “submit to the facts,” perhaps he can be “shaken by fear.” So he’s seeking to terrorize Job that he might come to his senses and repent. And much like when we discussed both positive and negative use of sarcasm, understand that fear can be used, or misused in much the same way. We realize that it’s a normal human emotion, there’s nothing wrong with it in that sense. And we use fear all the time to teach various people on various levels the reasons and reality that they need to do things right. We use the fear of sickness or disease to teach our kids to wash their hands, “You don’t want to get sick do you? Than go wash your hands.”

We use the fear of the dangers that can occur by running out into the road to teach them to look both ways before they cross the street. Fear of financial loss provokes us to have insurance, and fear of otherwise avoidable detrimental health issues cause us to get a check up now and then. So fear in and of itself can be used for good. Even Jesus said, “...do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matt 10:28 So fear of death and the judgment to follow is a legitimate motive for turning *to* and trusting *in* Jesus as your Savior. Of course it doesn’t take long before we realize the love of God, but if it’s the fear of God that initially motivates you to turn to Christ, that’s completely legitimate. Paul said, “*Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;*” 2 Cor 5:11 Many of you may be familiar with that famous sermon written by Jonathon Edwards, “Sinners in the hands of an angry God.” He didn’t violate any psychological or biblical principles when he wrote it, but it gripped the hearts of all kinds of people with fear so that they were saved. So as Jude said, “*And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.*” Jude 22-23. And so if administered compassionately and motivated properly, fear can be utilized in fruitful way. But once again the problem with Bildad’s approach is that A.) His motives aren’t pure, he’s trying to prove a point, and B.) Job isn’t an unbeliever; he loves the Lord and is sold out to the Lord. So Bildad is preaching to the wrong man, this message of repentance.

#### Vs5-6

I mentioned various illustrations regarding the wicked, this is the 1<sup>st</sup>, he’s like a light in a tent that quickly and easily gets snuffed out. We’ll see him mention this tent; he’ll speak of traps, of terrors, and of a dried out, dead and fruitless tree. But the gist here in Vs 5-6 is that life is fragile and the wicked are easily snuffed out. The light and the lamp often times associated with life as to where darkness is so often associated with death. Prov 13:9 “*The light of the righteous rejoices, But the lamp of the wicked will be put out.*”

#### Vs7-8

So from the vulnerability of the tent, to the vicious reality of various traps along life’s journey that are sure to snare the wicked. His own feet carry him into a net and into a snare, and the word “snare” there in Vs 8 speaks of that deep pit covered by branches that an animal falls into. The net in Vs 9 is that noose on the ground that strings you up upside down, and he mentions another kinda a trap there in Vs 10, but the idea is the same in all of it. “Job you’ve walked into God’s trap, that’s why you’re in the pits, entangled in the proverbial net of punishment. And it’s going to be like this until the day you die, or repent which ever comes 1<sup>st</sup>. You’re in a fragile tent, you’re lamp could be snuffed out at any moment, you’re ensnared in the trap due to sin in your life, and terror will continue to surround you.

#### Vs11-15

What a pretty picture... Terror surrounds the wicked on every side; he's pursued, pulled from his home, and paraded before the king of terrors (a reference to death, Job has been feeling like he's been dancing on death's door for a while now) and in the end, fire and brimstone. "Thanks Barnabas I can feel the love." But again with the non-believer there *is no hope*, nothing to look forward to after this life, and in the end *is* fire and brimstone. The problem is 2-fold, 1<sup>st</sup> off this isn't a warning sent out in love and compassion, pleading in tenderness that he be reconciled to God. But 2<sup>ndly</sup> these things don't apply to Job at all, he's a believer, so this fire and brimstone message is non-applicable. Remember we spoke last week of the need to know how we ought to answer each situation, we can't just make assumptions on people based upon what we see with our eyes. And it's also the reason that proper doctrine is so important, because what we believe determines how we behave. Bildad believes that the only reason things go sour in a man's life is because he's sinned against God. Therefore he behaves in such a way (though his motives are wrong) but in the end he's seeking Job's repentance. And that's the natural response from a theology like his, that's why we've go to study to show ourselves approved, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Proper learning = proper living, proper rationale = proper response and reaction.

#### Vs16-21

You see, this is an attack on Job's relationship to God, "These are the ways things happen in the life of the one who doesn't know God. Driven from light into darkness, chased out of the world (speaking again of death), no sons or posterity, like a tree dried up from the roots, the whole family is gone, no "Family tree." "These are things that happen to the one who doesn't know God Job." (Now notice)

### Ch 19

#### Vs1-4

Which is to say, "You're acting like I'm some sort of stain on society, that my sin is impacting everybody. But if I've erred, my error remains with me."

In other words Job is saying that if there was some sin in his life, it's been something that was completely unintentional that's *with in him*, not some sort of public or outright rebellion that's impacted and infected everyone *around* him.

But you remember how I told you in the beginning that they sorta seem to be feeding on one another's words? How did Vs 1 start out of Ch 18? "How long till you put an end to words?" Notice how Job responds in Vs 1 of Ch 19, "How long will *you* torment *my soul* and break *me* in pieces with words?" You remember that old adage, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.?" That sounds real good, unfortunately it's a lie, words can wound very deeply, and we can use our words in a helpful, and healing way, or a hurtful wounding way. David in speaking of the treachery and treason of a friend wrote, "*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, But war was in his heart; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.*" Ps 55:21.

In Ps 64:2-3 we read, “*Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend their bows to shoot their arrows -- bitter words,*” The proverbs tell us, “*There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.*” Prov 12:18. And again, “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue,*” Prov 18:21 Paul spoke to the Galatians telling them to be careful biting and devouring one another lest they be consumed by one another. Words can be incredibly wounding, tormenting to the soul, that’s why the bible exhorts us to speak the things that are necessary for the edification, the building up and encouragement of the saints, of our brothers and our sisters. We’re not to tear each other down, but to build each other up.

#### Vs5-6

In Ch 18 Bildad accused Job of being on the run from God but that he’d been caught in his sin. Here Job is saying, “I’m not running from God, God has pursued *me*, and He’s ensnared me in His net, and I don’t know why, I’ve done nothing wrong.”

#### Vs7

Job felt as though his cry of innocence was falling on deaf ears, and over and over again we see his cry for an advocate, he’s crying out for someone to defend his integrity. But what he doesn’t know is that God has already declared him innocent, a man of integrity. And truth be known, this isn’t a matter of God defending Job and *his* innocence, it’s a matter of Job being used to defend *God’s integrity* and *His* innocence, the fact that He’s *not* paying off His worshippers, and that man will love Him and stay committed to Him even if it doesn’t profit him in anyway, but to the contrary it seems to penalize him. But Job wouldn’t have considered that as an option in a million years, that in a certain sense he was exhibit A in *God’s* defense. He was seeking some sort of a resolve as to why this was happening to him with limited information, and a major deficiency of the facts. And so often that’s the way it is with us when something that we don’t understand is taking place. And we scramble in and of our limited understanding to get a grip on the “Why’s” of life when in reality it could be something going down in the chronicles of heaven that we’re absolutely oblivious to. Job thinks this is all about him, and there’s a portion of it that is, but it’s much bigger than Job, and there’s no way he can perceive that. That’s why when we’re up against a circumstance of which we don’t understand that we have to fall back on to the certainties that we *do* understand. That God loves us, sent His Son to die *for* us, and has His eternal glory, and our eternal good in mind at all times. It’s been said that we should never doubt in the darkness, the things that God has taught us in the light.

#### Vs8-9

Remember we learned early on that Job was the greatest man in all the east.

His wealth surpassed anyone in the entire region that he lived, but now he’s been reduced to the lowest state of humiliation fathomable. Reduced to living in the city dump on a hill of ashes with blistering fever, boils covering him, can’t sleep, itches insatiably, he’s lost weight to the point that he just looks like a skeletal figure there, his sores crust over and break out, worms are in them, he’s at the total other end of the spectrum from where he once was.

## Vs10-17

Now I'm not sure why the translators opted to translate this Vs as saying, "Children of my own body." We know that all Job's children have been killed, another version renders it, "The children of my own mother," and another mentions his brothers. So the idea here is that even his closest of family has come to despise him, his own wife has distanced herself from him.

## Vs18-22

"Look at me, don't you think I've gone through enough, you have to add insult to my injury?" And he calls upon them to pity him, one of the evidences of the Lord's compassion while here on the earth was how He identified with the outcasts of society. He touched the lepers, ate and drank with the tax collectors, received gifts from prostitutes, even died between thieves. He knew what it was like to be despised and rejected by man, and how important that as His disciples we emulate that same sense of compassion and care for the down trodden.

Now there in Vs 21 I just want to refocus us to the fact that God has not struck Job, he feels in many respects that God is against him. But we need to remember when we want to cross examine God because of the way things are going down in our lives that we do just that. We examine Him through the cross, God's hand hasn't struck me, the hand of God was pierced *for* me, He was smitten on behalf *of* me, I serve a God who loves me and has given Himself for me. So when we feel as though we're getting a raw deal somehow, that God is for some reason doing us wrong, remember "cross" examination is key. God demonstrates His love in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

## Vs23-29

Remember Bildad spoke of the need to fear death, and judgment and all of that. Well Job is saying, "You need to be the ones in fear, you're going to give an account for all these things you're saying to me and they couldn't be farther from the truth."

Now before we close we have to draw attention to Vs 25 and 26, look at them (read). This is amazing, at one of the lowest ebbs of Job's plight, he rose to one of the highest peaks and statements of faith of the entire book, and one of the greatest statements of faith throughout the entirety of the Word of God when you consider the context.

"I know that My Redeemer lives" That word "Redeemer" speaks of the "Kinsman Redeemer" perhaps you remember that powerful portrait display by Boaz in the book of Ruth. The kinsman redeemer. Of course Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all that that foreshadows, becoming a man that He might defend us, and redeem us of the debt that we've acquired through sin.

But then in Vs 26 he says that even after his skin is destroyed, “This I know, that in my flesh I shall see God,” What does that mean? Listen, in the midst of this incredible tribulation, Job received an amazing revelation; the resurrection. The resurrection of the body, though this skin may be destroyed, in my flesh I shall see God. Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body, this mortal putting on immortality. Job, in the midst of this trying time, and tribulation, received incredible revelation.

And so often it works just that way, in the fire, dross being swept away, through tribulation comes incredible personal revelation. And you find it that way all throughout the scriptures. It was through the tribulation that Joseph received the revelation, “What you meant for evil, God meant for good to save many people alive.” Joseph was abused and misused, suffered incredible tribulation, but through that God gave him personal revelation as to His heart, His character, His purpose and plan.

It was in the fire that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego got up close and personal with the pre-incarnate Christ. It happened over and over again for Moses out there in the wilderness. We have an entire book called the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” And it came from what? John being exiled on what seemed to be a God forsaken rock of an island called Patmos, and there he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and he heard a voice behind him as of a trumpet. And when he turned around what did he see? The glorified, magnified, and exalted Jesus Christ and there on the isle of tribulation (he even calls himself there in the beginning of that book their brother and companion in the tribulation) but out of that birthed incredible revelation.

Did Job have it all together? No, wrong perspectives? Yep, was he perfect? No, but he loved God, wanted to *know* God, had a heart to follow *after* God, and in the midst of his tribulation, in his darkest hour. God blessed him with this radical revelation, the resurrection. “This body is going to decay away, but I know that in my flesh I shall see God.” I don’t know if you’re going through anything currently, but take heart. God is there *with* you, and He wants to speak *to* you, reveal *Himself* to you in a very personal, profound, and powerful way, be it His purpose, His plan, His person, or all the above, God hasn’t forsaken you, He hasn’t struck you. He was smitten *for* you, pierced on behalf *of* you, we may not always understand God’s *logic*, but we can lean on and draw strength *from* His love.

#### Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your love, for Your grace, and for Your mercy. Thank You that even when we’re down, going through turbulent times or tribulation, that You’re faithful to minister to us, and *reveal* Yourself to us in intimate and personal ways. Lord help us to be mindful of our words one to another. That we would build up and not tear down, comfort and not condescend, heal and not hurt. Unify Your body here; give us one heart, one mind, for Your name’s sake and for Your glory.