

PERFECTING GOD'S CHAMPIONS

*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest **war a good warfare**;*
I. Timothy 1:18

*Thou therefore endure hardness, **as a good soldier** of Jesus Christ. No man **that warreth** entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him **who hath chosen him to be a soldier**.*

II. Timothy 2:3-4

I've been talking the last month about doctrines that keep people from becoming the kind of spiritual warriors God desires them to be. There is a war in progress between God and Satan, in the spirit realm, and very few Christians understand what this war is about because they have been taught error upon error. This is not a war of *supremacy*. It's not the kind of battle that's fought to determine who is stronger or who is more powerful. It's not being fought to determine who will control the universe.

That battle already took place, ages ago, when Lucifer rebelled, and it probably only lasted for about 5 minutes. Satan was immediately defeated because he is one of God's creations, just like all the other angelic beings. So there's no question as to who is more powerful, or who rules this universe. Nevertheless, there is still a war going on. It's a battle for the souls and the destinies of men. And because this is a real war, the Scripture talks about being good soldiers and waging a good warfare.

Does Jesus really need soldiers? If so, then *why* would He need them? We all know that according to Scripture, Jesus "spoiled principalities and powers" and "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them..." at the Cross (*Col. 2:15*). We also know that when God raised Him from the dead, He "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet..." (*Eph. 1:20-22*). Jesus has already *personally* defeated every one of His enemies, both natural and spiritual, including the *last* enemy, which is death.

But you see, that was Jesus. We have not defeated God's enemies yet—and if today's preachers have their way, we will never defeat them because today's preachers are convinced we have *already* defeated them "by grace". They will tell you over and over again that if you have been saved, God's enemies can't possibly hurt you or overcome you because *Jesus* defeated all of them for you at Calvary. Just as they transfer the *reward* of Jesus to our account by grace, so they transfer the *victory* of Jesus over Satan to our account by grace.

Of course, this makes a mockery of what Paul said in Ephesians: "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (6:12). Principalities, powers, rulers, all these things are invisible spiritual creatures, and we are supposed to be wrestling against them and overcoming them as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Another thing I often hear, which is just a religious cliché for most people, is that we don't have to worry about Satan as long as we "*abide in Christ*". The idea is that if we can just get to the place where we are continually abiding in Christ, somehow, we won't even have to deal with Satan or his demons. Thus, abiding in Christ becomes a *replacement* for "warring a good warfare". Again, this makes a mockery of what the apostles said because they warned us over and over again to watch, to be on guard, to fight, resist and overcome evil, and be good soldiers of the Lord. Yes, the enemy has invented all kinds of "*Christian*" teachings to hide the truth that we are supposed to be fighting a war!

Jesus didn't defeat God's enemies so we would never have to defeat them ourselves. That's crazy talk! He *paved the way* for us to defeat them. He defeated him first, so He could then *enable* us to defeat them. The Lord's victory over Satan has not, and will never be, "imputed" to anyone. The only people who will be able to say they defeated Satan, are those who have actually defeated him—and this is God's will for all of us. It's His will that we, as good His soldiers, live and walk in the Spirit (or abide in Christ), so we will be able to war a good warfare and *personally* defeat God's enemies, just like Jesus did.

We must defeat the enemy if we want to receive the rewards God has for us. But there is *another* reason God wants us to get the victory over Satan—and it's kind of like the back side of the same coin. Jesus is the King of a very real kingdom; and just as a human king will choose men to be his soldiers, in order to defend the kingdom, and defend the name and the honor of the king, so it is with the Lord. He is calling forth soldiers to defend His name and His honor. He has calling people to be His champions

*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that **by revelation** he [God] made known unto me **the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in **the mystery** of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; **That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel**: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of **the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ: **To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:***

Ephesians 3:1-11

There's a lot of revelation packed into this passage. Paul speaks of two chosen peoples—National Israel and the Church—being made one in Messiah as a "mystery" that was not revealed in other ages, but has now been revealed "by the Spirit" to the apostles. He said this mystery, this spiritual union of Gentile

believers to Messiah, and through Messiah, to Israel, is for the purpose of revealing God's wisdom to the principalities and powers of heaven. Take a few moments and ponder this because it's really quite awesome when you think about it. Part of God's eternal plan is that His wisdom, in all its variety, would be manifested and made known *to* the wicked principalities and powers of the air, *through* the church. In other words, God is making us His *champions*. He is going to use the body of Christ to demonstrate His wisdom to all the angels who rebelled with Lucifer.

Of course, I realize that Satan and his demons have *already* seen the wisdom of God in His creation, and in how He exercises His sovereignty over that creation. They also saw God's wisdom at the Cross. This is why Paul said if the "princes of the world" (ie: the demonic princes of this world) would have known that murdering Jesus would bring their utter defeat, they would have never had Him crucified. (*1. Cor. 2:7-8*) So in this sense, God does not need any one else to show forth His wisdom. Jesus already gave Satan and his demons the *ultimate* demonstration of God's wisdom at the Cross. Nevertheless, according to brother Paul, God intends to use the Church to reveal His wisdom to His enemies.

Did you ever hear the expression: "*Don't rub it in*"? When two people have a disagreement over something, and one of them turns out to be right, sometimes the one who was right will "rub it in". He will remind the one who was wrong that he was wrong, and he will do it in such a way that it humiliates the person. Eventually the guy who was wrong will say: "*Come on man, don't rub it in*". In other words, "*Don't keep humiliating me by reminding me of how wrong I was*".

Well, that's what Paul is talking about in Ephesians. God doesn't *need* anything, but He does *want* something. He wants to give Satan and his demons one final humiliation. He wants to use victorious saints to "rub it in" that Satan has been defeated—not by an all-powerful omnipotent God; not even by the God/Man, Jesus of Nazareth; but by vessels of clay; the same kind of vessels Satan once defeated and humiliated in the Garden. God not only wants Satan *defeated* by His soldiers; He wants Satan *humiliated* by them. A divine "rub" is in store for Satan, and God intends to use weak and worthless "dust" like you and me as that rub. He is going raise up vessels of clay to be His champions!

Unfortunately, this kind of thinking doesn't exist in Christianity because today's Christian message has become "*it's-all-about-me*". It's all about what God can do for me, spiritually, naturally, or both. Christians don't think in terms of what they can do for God, and most of them don't pay any attention to God's enemies anyway, since they assume they have already defeated them by grace.

Even in the realm of deliverance, when God's enemies are actually confronted in spiritual battle, many times, the only reason people enter into that battle is because they are being *tormented* by those spirits, either physically, mentally, or emotionally. They want to get free from the thing that's causing them pain or suffering. But far too often, those same people don't have any desire to get free from the spirits that give them things they like, or things that make them feel good. This reveals that their desire for deliverance has nothing to do with the honor and glory of God's name. Their desire is simply to *avoid* pain and torment.

Well, I'm here to tell you that God is looking for a people who will be His champions, who have a desire to *completely* overcome Satan and all his demons, not for their own selfish purposes, but *solely* for the glory and honor of their King. I'm also here to tell you that one of these days, God is going to have a people like that, and when He does, He's going to *use them* to give Satan one final humiliation.

If you want to see an example of God using a vessel of clay to humiliate His spiritual enemy, all you have to do is read the book of Job. Job contains *four* great truths—all of which have been missed by the vast majority of Christians, since they assume (or have been taught) that Job was self righteous, and *that's* why God allowed Satan to attack him. Self righteousness certainly was a problem in the book of Job; but that self righteousness wasn't in Job; it was in his three friends. The book of Job reveals that:

(1) Job was God's champion, and God used him to humiliate Satan.

(2) His ordeal was also meant to *perfect* him. The story of Job is not the story of a self-righteous man who needed to be broken through a Satanic attack, in order to finally repent and seek true righteousness. It's the story of a righteous man being made perfect.

(3) Even though the righteous suffer in this life, they do not *always* suffer because of their own sins. Sometimes they suffer for purposes known only to God.

(4) Job was a type of Christ. Although he certainly wasn't sinless, nevertheless, Job did not suffer for any sins he had committed. Like the Lord Jesus, he suffered *because* he was righteous.

I'm not even going to ask how many of you have been taught Job was self righteous because unless you are a rare exception, I already know the answer. But let me ask how many of you have been taught that *Elihu*, the young man who speaks to Job at the end of the book, was talking for God?

The reason I ask this question is because every sermon I have ever heard on Job, has presented *Elihu* as speaking for God. Many people think Elihu was speaking directly by the Holy Spirit, and some even think he was some kind of manifestation of Christ. But none of this is true. Elihu was more arrogant than all of Job's friends. Though he claimed to be inspired by God, he falsely accused Job of bringing all the disasters he was experiencing upon himself through sin; he misquoted Job several times, accusing him of saying things he didn't even say; and at one point, he said he wished Job would be punished *even more* severely than he was already being punished. Sorry folks, that *wasn't* the Spirit of God talking!

Although Job was a righteous man, he was lacking in some areas. When you read Job, you will notice he *never* considers the possibility that Satan is behind his calamities—not even once. Why didn't it ever occur to Job that Satan could be causing his suffering? Well, for one thing, Job's whole experience had been his relationship with God. Even though he knew Satan existed, Satan was never a real part of his *experience*.

Job had served God faithfully all his life. In return, God rewarded Job, not only by blessing him abundantly and making him wise, but also by protecting him. God placed a supernatural hedge around Job. If some spirit ever tried to hurt or destroy him, God prevented it. So the only kind of relationship Job ever experienced with God was the kind where God blesses and protects his faithful servants. Job had no *frame of reference* for what was happening to him. It simply did not compute. Everything he had ever learned and believed about how God deals with the righteous, was turned on its head in a matter of days.

Another thing Job didn't understand—and this is quite ironic—was the *sovereignty* of God. Job believed God was sovereign over his life, so he assumed that it was *God* who killed his children; that it was *God* who destroyed his wealth and reputation; and that it was *God* who struck him down with an appalling and

painful disease. It's ironic because Job's wrong view of God's sovereignty caused him to do the very thing so many of today's Christians do—blame God for what Satan is doing! When Satan suggested that God *put forth His hand* and touch all that Job possessed, what he was really suggesting was that God *withdraw His hand* of protection from Job, so he himself could bring destruction to Job's property. Allowing something to happen is not the same thing as *causing* something to happen. Satan is the one who causes the actual happenings of accidents, sickness, disease, and calamity. Then he causes men to accuse God of doing all these things, since He is “sovereign over His creation”.

Many people wrongly use Job as an example of God's sovereignty. They say that because this is the way it happened with Job, this is the way it happens with everyone who belongs to God. They say this because they don't understand what kind of man Job really was, and they don't understand what God was doing *with* Job. They view Job as a man with a sin problem, and this is how God had to get to his sin and deliver him—by letting Satan destroy him. They don't understand that Job was a man who had *already* proven himself a worthy soldier. He wasn't the equivalent of a New Testament “baby” Christian or “carnal” Christian who walks in sin half the time. He was the equivalent of a New Testament man like Paul.

The reason Satan had to get permission from God to attack Job was because Job was living a righteous life. Satan had no *legal right* to attack him. This is not always the case with God's people. When we sin, *that sin* gives Satan the legal right to attack. He doesn't have to go before the Throne every time we sin and ask God's permission to attack us. The *sin we commit* grants him that permission. This is one of the reasons so many Christians live under continual demonic attack. They are walking in some kind of iniquity, and it's *that iniquity* that gives Satan the legal right to attack them.

God is still sovereign over all this, but not in the way most people assume. He's sovereign in the sense that He always has His eye on His children. He's sovereign in the sense that He knows exactly what we are going through and *why* we are going through it. He's sovereign in the sense that He will not let Satan go any further than is *legally* permissible, according to the situation and according to the choices we are currently making. He's sovereign in the sense that He is always involved in our lives, even when we sin or go astray; and He constantly tries to speak to us and show us how to *get back* under His divine protection. But in the end, it will be *our choices* that determine how much damage Satan can do to us.

But you see, Job *was* under the divine protection of God—this is clearly stated. That's how we know he was *not* walking in self righteousness, but in true righteousness. Self righteousness is sin because it is rooted in religious pride. Had Job been self righteous (like everyone accuse him of), he would *not* have been enjoying the Lord's blessing and protection. Job shunned evil in truth; he feared God in truth. His life was pleasing to the Lord and it brought him divine protection. If Job would have been self righteous, Satan wouldn't have needed to get permission to attack him. That self righteousness *itself* would have provided the legal right he needed. The whole reason Satan had no legal authority to attack Job was because Job walked in righteousness. He wasn't self righteous; he wasn't proud; and he wasn't a *secret* sinner.

The book of Job is a very interesting book. Except for the first eleven chapters of Genesis, it's the oldest book in the Bible. It contains more references to creation, the flood, and primeval events than any other book (except Genesis), and it provides more insight into the age-long conflict between God and Satan than almost any other book. Also, it contains more modern scientific insights than any other book. Most scholars believe Job lived around the time of Abraham because there is no mention of the Levitical priesthood, the

Tabernacle, the Temple, or the Law of Moses. And, unlike Israelite law, where the family inheritance was passed to daughters only in the absence of sons (*Num. 27:1-11; 36:1-13*), Job gave his daughters “an inheritance among their brothers” (*Job 42:15*).

Other clues show that Job lived during the time of the patriarchs. Like other patriarchs of that period (*Gen. 8:20; 12:7-8; 31:54*), Job, as the head of his family, offered sacrifices to God (*Job 1:5*). His wealth was measured in livestock, not money (*Job 1:3; 42:12*), which is more characteristic of patriarchal times. His life-span was also more comparable to the lives of the patriarchs. He lived long enough to marry, have 10 children who were old enough to have their own homes when they were killed, and also become the greatest of all the men in the east *before* his ordeal began. Then, after losing all his children, Job lived 140 more years. So he probably lived into his 200's.

The Septuagint says he died at the age of 240, which is an age more comparable to the *ancestors* of Abraham. Serug, Abraham's great grand-father, lived to be 230 years old (*Gen. 11:22-23*). So I tend to think Job lived *before* Abraham because Abraham was very great; yet God said Job was the greatest man on earth. That would make him greater than Abraham, if they had lived at the same time.

The book of Job begins with the author's description of Job, his family, his wealth, and his spiritual condition, of which he says: “*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil*” (*Job 1:1*).

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Job 1:6-8

Please notice that God says the same thing about Job as the author of the book: Job is a perfect and upright man who fears God and escheweth (shuns) evil. But God added one more description of Job: “*There is none like him in the earth*”. None like him in the earth!

Now, do you really think God would hold up a *self righteous* man as an example of a the most upright person on the earth? And have you ever stopped to consider what it would mean if Job was self righteous? If the most upright man on the planet (according to God) was self righteous, what does that say about the *rest* of the inhabitants of the earth at that time? It says that *nobody* on the planet was walking in actual righteousness. Moreover, if Job was self righteous, don't you think God would have been aware of that fact? And don't you think Satan would also know it? Do you really think God would put Job out there as His champion, knowing that he had such a major flaw?

We all know that Satan's name means “accuser”, right? Accusing God's people is his specialty. So when God asked him if he had ever considered the life of Job, if Job would have had a problem with self

righteousness, you can be sure this would have been the *first thing* Satan would have accused him of before God. But Satan didn't say anything about Job's self righteousness.

*Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, **Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

Job 1:9-12

When God asked Satan if he had considered Job, Satan didn't say: "Yes, but you and I both know he is self righteous; so you better pick yourself a better champion or this won't even be a contest". The fact is, Job was righteous, and Satan knew it. Job was upright, and Satan knew it. He knew that he could not accuse Job of any wrong doing or even secret sin before God. If he could have, you better believe he would have! The only thing Satan could accuse Job of before God was having a wrong motive for serving Him—that of personal gain. And of course, God knew better than that because he knew Job's heart. So he gave Satan permission to take Job's possessions and his wealth.

*And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **While he was yet speaking**, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **While he was yet speaking**, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **While he was yet speaking**, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.***

Job 1:13-22

Notice that Satan tried to completely overwhelm Job by destroying everything he had in a matter of hours. Indeed, in *less* than an hour, Job found out that he had gone from being the richest man in the East, to one who had nothing. Then, *while* he was being told that all his wealth had just been taken from him, the news of the death of all his children came.

Remember that Job's wealth wasn't a pile of cash in a bank that could go "poof" through an economic crash. It was his livestock and his crops; and he had livestock all over the place. The chances of having all his livestock stolen or wiped out at the same time was astronomical. Again, the chances of *all* his children being killed at the same time, and by a freak wind storm to boot, was astronomical. Job had to realize that something *supernatural* was happening to him.

If Job was really self righteous, I guarantee you it would have come to the surface right then and there. I don't know many Christians who would have been as faithful as Job was at this point. Think about it. What if the same thing that happened to *you*? We get all bent out of shape if something *small* happens to us, like losing fifty dollars, or having to pay an extra bill at the end of the month, or getting a little head cold. What if someone came and told you that you just lost your career, all you money, and that all your children had just been killed in a freak accident. How would *you* react?

The Scripture says in all this Job "sinned not, nor charged God foolishly". Wow! Could *we* go through what Job did and *not* charge God with foolishness? Could we go through something like that, knowing that it had to be supernatural, without even questioning God? I'll tell you, Job's words must have sounded like music in God's ears. When he fell down and worshiped, that prayer must have smelled like sweet incense before the Throne. Listen to it again: "*Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*". God's champion had won the first round!

*Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, **Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.***

Job 2:1-3

After being beaten by Job in round #1, Satan is even more determined to defeat him. So he comes to God again, wanting a second shot at Job. God knows why Satan has come back, so He asks him a second time if he has considered His servant Job. (*You know by now, Satan's not only "considering" Job, he's obsessed with his defeat because Job has just humiliated him!*) And God says of Job, a second time: "...there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil". Then, as if to rub it in, He added: "...and still he holdeth fast his integrity". In other words, he was saying: "*You lost round one, Satan: my servant Job is has remained loyal to me*".

It should be obvious that the term, “holdeth fast his integrity” is a *complement*. Job holding fast to his integrity does *not* equal walking in self righteousness. If it did, God would never have commended Job for doing it. Neither would He have used Job’s integrity to humiliate Satan. You can’t humiliate the king of pride with some the pride of some one else. That doesn’t work, folks!

Also, notice that God said Satan moved Him to destroy Job “*without cause*”. That means, for no reason. In other words, Job didn’t *do* anything to deserve what was happening to him. This statement *alone* should make people understand that there was no secret sin—including self righteousness, which is certainly a sin!—in Job’s life.

*And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. **But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. 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.** And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*

Job 2:4-8

You have to understand that Satan hated Job with a *supernatural* hatred. So you can be sure that once he got permission to attack Job’s body, he put the most painful and disgusting disease on him that was humanly possible, in order to *overwhelm him* and get him to curse God. The scene of Job, losing all his wealth and his children, and then being stricken with such a horrible plague, sitting alone on the ash heap outside the city, defies description. Job was grief-stricken to a degree that probably no one else in the human family has ever experienced, except for the Lord Jesus. His physical appearance was so foul, he was no longer welcome in the city where he had formerly been its chief citizen. He had become so deformed, his friends didn’t even recognize him when they arrived at the city dump to comfort him (2:12). To everyone around him, it looked as if the God Job had served for so long, had utterly forsaken and cursed him. Here is a short description of his situation:

- ~ *He had sore boils over his entire body (2:7)*
- ~ *He was in such misery, he cursed the day he was born (3:1-13, 20)*
- ~ *He was bitter in soul (3:20; 7:11; 10:1)*
- ~ *He longed for death (3:21-23; 7:15)*
- ~ *He poured out sighing and roaring like waters (3:24)*
- ~ *His grief and calamity were heavier than the sands of the sea (6:1-3)*
- ~ *He longed for God to destroy him*
- ~ *He couldn’t sleep at night (7:4)*
- ~ *His flesh was clothed with worms and clods of dust (7:5)*
- ~ *His flesh was broken and loathsome*
- ~ *He was terrified by dreams and visions (7:14)*
- ~ *He would choose strangling and death over life (7:15)*
- ~ *He was a burden to himself (7:16)*
- ~ *It was hard for him to breath*

- ~ *He could not hold his tongue from crying out in pain (13:19)*
- ~ *His flesh was as a rotten thing, consumed as a moth-eaten garment (13:28)*
- ~ *He was filled with wrinkles (16:8)*
- ~ *His gall was poured out on the ground (16:13)*
- ~ *His face is foul with weeping (16:16)*
- ~ *The shadow of death was on his eye lids (16:18)*
- ~ *His breath was corrupt (17:1)*
- ~ *His bones cleaved to his skin (19:20)*
- ~ *His bowels boiled and rested not (30:27)*
- ~ *His skin was black upon me (30:30)*
- ~ *His bones were burned with heat*

To this description of his physical situation must be added all the emotional pain that resulted from his friends and family abandoning him. Listen to what Job says of his friends and family:

- ~ *I have no pity from my friends (6 :14)*
- ~ *My brethren have deceived me (6:15)*
- ~ *My friends have reproached me 10 times (19:3)*
- ~ *My brethren and acquaintances are estranged from me (19:13)*
- ~ *My kinfolk have failed me (19:14)*
- ~ *My close friends have forgotten me*
- ~ *My household maids and servants count me a stranger (19:15-16)*
- ~ *My wife is a stranger (19:17)*
- ~ *Children despise me (19:18)*
- ~ *My inward friends and those who loved me have turned against me (19:19)*
- ~ *No man has pity on me (19:21)*
- ~ *My friends persecute me (19:22)*

God gave Satan permission to take all of Job's wealth, to kill all his children, to plague his body mercilessly, to destroy his reputation, and to make what was left of his family, and all of his friends, abandon him. But Job remained faithful to God through all these attacks. Listen to what the Scripture says about this incredible servant of God:

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

Job 2:9-10

Job didn't even realize he was in a contest with Satan, but he beat him any way because in all that he had suffered up to that point, he retained his integrity and did *not* turn on God. He didn't "sin with his lips". He didn't question God and he did not accuse God. Instead, he trusted God and was faithful to Him. Job's attitude towards everything he was going through was this: "...*shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil*"?

Friends, Job was *not* a self righteous man—and arrogant American Christians need to *repent* for all the things they have spoken against him because they have no idea how strong this man’s faith was. They have no idea how much he loved and feared God. Job’s loyalty to God puts the whole worthless lot of American Christians to shame. It is *we* who are self righteous. It is *we* who read his story and never understand the truths it was meant to teach us.

In Job 7:3, Job is speaking about his suffering and he says: “*So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me*”. In other words, Job had lost everything, had been struck down with boils, and had been sleeping at the city dump for *months* without a word of complaint towards God. Satan had done everything he and God had agreed upon, in order to test Job’s loyalty, and Job had remained *loyal* to God. Satan said if Job lost all his wealth, his possessions, and his family, he would curse God—but he didn’t. Satan said if Job was struck down with a horrible plague, he would curse God—but he didn’t. In all his humiliation, pain, and misery, Job remained loyal to God! He won the contest and that should have been the end of the story.

But you see, Satan’s not only the biggest liar in the universe, he’s also the biggest ego-maniac; and that makes for a really bad loser! Instead of admitting that Job had beaten him, Satan started cheating. It’s kind of like one of those old cowboy flicks, where the good guy and the bad guy square off and duke it out. The good guy thrashes the bad guy, fair and square, and then turns to walk away. But as he does, the bad guy starts playing dirty. He gets up off the floor, grabs a chair, and hits the good guy over the head with it, from behind, without any warning. That’s what Satan did to Job. Job had already won the contest *months* ago. But Satan just couldn’t stand being defeated and humiliated by a vessel of clay, so he started cheating. Since there was no *time limit* agreed upon between Satan and God regarding Job’s test, instead of acknowledging that Job had won, he just keeps on throwing stuff at him—and the stuff he throws at him next, comes in the form of cruel and false accusations from those who claimed to be his friends.

Try to imagine the pain and frustration Job has gone through up to this point. As far as he knows, the God who had always protected and blessed him has suddenly turned on him for no apparent reason. He asks God to show him what he has done so he can make it right, but there is no answer. God has destroyed him and forsaken him, but He refuses to finish him off. Instead, He keeps Job alive to suffer unimaginable pain and grief. Everyone else has forsaken him too. For months he has been living at the city dump. Night after night he is in mental, emotional and physical anguish. He lives in continual fear and has frequent nightmares. He is going through a humiliating and terrifying experience *all alone*.

The only thing Job desires at this point (besides death) is to have someone, *anyone*, listen to him and understand what he is going through, and maybe give him a word of encouragement or comfort. Job is at his weakest state, spiritually, when finally, it looks like someone is actually going to come and *comfort* him. But alas, instead of comforting Job, they begin to accuse him of all kinds of wickedness and they tell him he *deserves* all the things that are happening to him.

Can anyone recognize the hand of Satan here? When Job’s faith was at it weakest, three self righteous clowns come to torment him mercilessly. They keep telling him to confess the truth and repent. But what *truth* is he supposed to admit? What *wickedness* is he supposed to confess? He doesn’t know of a any specific sins he has committed. He acknowledges that his is not sinless, but as far as he knows, he has been walking uprightly. There is nothing to repent of; yet he is being told again and again to repent!!

Have you ever been falsely accused? Have you ever been falsely accused by someone who should know better? Have you ever had someone you love, turn on you because they believed some *lie* they were told about you? Try to put yourself in Job's place for a minute. Try to imagine how galling, how utterly outrageous, all these accusations would sound to a person who was *truly* righteous? It would feel like someone was ripping your guts out! Having to listen to the false accusations of these idiots was probably a worse trial than all of Job's other sufferings combined! At one point he cries out: "*How long will you torment me, and crush me with words*"? (Job 19:2).

From chapter four of the book of Job, till God starts speaking in chapter thirty-eight, Job is attacked and falsely accused of many things by his three friends, and also by young Elihu. And although many of the things these four men say about how God deals with the wicked and the righteous are true, when it comes to *the reason* for Job's suffering, none of what they said is true because Job was *not* a wicked man. So every accusation they threw at him was false. Below are some of the things they accused him of:

- ~ *he was reaping what he had sowed (4:5-11)*
- ~ *he was not innocent (4:7)*
- ~ *he was not righteous (4:8)*
- ~ *he had been sowing iniquity (4:8)*
- ~ *he was being corrected by God (5:17)*
- ~ *he had committed more than 7 sins or he would not be judged (5:19)*
- ~ *his words were like strong winds (8:2)*
- ~ *he was being judged by God (8:3)*
- ~ *his children were killed because of their sin (8:4)*
- ~ *he was not pure, or else God would hear his prayers and prosper him (8:6-7)*
- ~ *he had forgotten God (8:13)*
- ~ *he was a hypocrite, or else his hope would not have perished*
- ~ *he was an evil doer, that's why God had cast him away (8:20)*
- ~ *he sought to justify himself (11:2)*
- ~ *he was a liar (11:3)*
- ~ *he was a mocker*
- ~ *he was reaping less than he deserved (11:6)*
- ~ *he uttered vain knowledge (15:2)*
- ~ *his mouth uttered iniquity (15:5)*
- ~ *he had a crafty tongue*
- ~ *he used wisdom to cover sin (8:15)*
- ~ *he winked at sin and turned his spirit against God (15:12-13)*
- ~ *he drank iniquity like water (15:16)*
- ~ *he was suffering the doom of the wicked, so he must be wicked (18:5-21)*
- ~ *he thought his claim to righteousness and perfection would profit God (22:3)*
- ~ *his wickedness was great (22:5)*
- ~ *his iniquities are infinite*
- ~ *he had taken pledges and stripped the naked of his clothing (22:6)*
- ~ *he had withheld drink from the thirsty (22:7)*
- ~ *he had kept food from the hungry*
- ~ *he had sent widows away empty (22:9)*

- ~ *he had broken the arms of the fatherless*
- ~ *he tried to hide his sins from God (22:13)*
- ~ *he had not taken a lesson from the ways of the wicked (22:15-16)*
- ~ *he drank scorning like water (34:7)*
- ~ *he kept company with workers of iniquity and walk with the wicked (34:8)*
- ~ *he added rebellion to sin (34:37)*
- ~ *he claimed his righteousness to be more than God's (35:2)*
- ~ *he had refused to cleanse himself of sin (35:3)*
- ~ *he was wicked (35:8)*

As they would take turns falsely accusing Job of all these sins, he would respond by declaring his innocence. He never said he was sinless; he never said he was more righteous than God. All he said was that he had not committed any of the sins he was being accused of. His continual plea was that he had not committed the kind of wickedness that would bring *this kind* of disaster upon him—and he was speaking the truth. But his friends could not hear the truth because of the *theological views* they held. Those views convinced them that God would never let something this terrible happen to a righteous man.

Since that was their fundamental view, they were totally convinced that God was judging some secret sin or wickedness of Job—and this is the thing they kept pounding him with, over and over again, in various ways, for 34 chapters. The gist of what they all said was: “*Job, God only does this sort of thing to people who are wicked. Since this is has happening to you, it’s proof that you are wicked. We don’t care how righteous you think you are; we don’t care how innocent you say you are; we don’t care how many good works you have done; we don’t care how pious your life appears to be on the outside; we know (because our theology can’t possibly be wrong!)* that you are guilty of some hidden wickedness because of what is happening to you. So the quicker you admit the truth and repent before God for your secret sins, the quicker He will forgive you and heal you”.

Finally, Job passes the breaking point and he begins to snap. He starts accusing God of treating *him* unjustly. He doesn’t curse God, but he does begin to sin with his lips. He did this partially out of the need to defend his life, which was one of shunning evil, but which was being viciously slandered by these three fools. It was also partially due to the fact it was the logical outcome of his view of the whole situation. He was convinced that *God* was doing all this to him because God is sovereign. But he was also convinced that he did not deserve what was happening to him, and in this he was correct. The only answer to the dilemma he faced was that God had *wrongly* turned on him for some reason.

The fact that Job finally did sin with his lips does not mean he was *always* self righteous. And I wonder how many of today’s Christians, who have the benefit of the Scripture and hind sight, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, would react in that same situation? I wonder how many of us would have performed any better than Job? Quite frankly, I think a lot of today’s Christians would have cursed God after round #1; and the vast majority of them would certainly have cursed Him after round #2. Job’s problem was not self righteousness. Nor was it that he was serving God out of self interest. His problem was that he did not understand God’s sovereignty; and he did understand God’s desire to have a champion who could humiliate His enemy. If Job would have ever thought for a second that Satan was responsible for what was happening to him, or that he was actually a good spiritual soldier who was being used to humiliate God’s enemy, he would have *never* said any of the things he did about God treating him unjustly.

But the fact is, he didn't understand these things and as a result, he eventually did sin with his lips. Of course, this gave his friends something *concrete* to charge him with. So they bombarded him *even harder* with the charge of sinning and deserving what had happened to him. But even though Job was blaming God for the work of Satan, and even though he was saying God was treating him unjustly—both of which were wrong—he still was not turning on God or cursing Him as Satan had predicted he would. Moreover, Job knew that he was innocent of all the things his three friends had *originally* charged him with. It was still true that Job did nothing to deserve what was happening to him.

But nothing Job said could persuade his friends to believe that he was not wicked. In their self righteous pride, they just kept taking turns, accusing him over and over again until finally, Job gives his last response and defense. It begins in chapter 27 and goes to the end of chapter 31. Job begins his final answer to all the accusations he has been charged with by saying: “*As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made my life bitter, for while my spirit is still in me, and the breath from God is in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will whisper no deceit. I will never declare that you three are in the right; until I die, I will not set aside my integrity! I will maintain my righteousness and never let it go; my conscience will not reproach me for as long as I live*” (27: 2-6). After some more speaking, in chapter 31, he attempts one last time to vindicate himself by calling curses down upon himself if he was guilty of the things he was being accused of.

Now, there are two possible ways you can view this chapter. You can see it as the attempt of a very stubborn and proud man to protect his own (self) righteousness; or you can view it a desperate plea of an upright man who has been completely crushed and abandoned, and who is in deep sorrow and anguish, to convince his tormentors that he is not guilty of all the things they are accusing him of. Personally, I believe the latter is the case. Moreover, I believe it is the self righteousness of *Christians*, and the ignorance of *Christians* regarding the subject of righteousness, which makes them see in this chapter, a self righteous man seeking to justify his self righteousness! But be that as it may, this response of Job silenced his three friends once and for all. After he was done, they have nothing more to say.

It is at this point that young Elihu speaks. Elihu was considerably younger than Job and his three friends (*vrs.* 32:4,6). No one knows where he came from, but some scholars speculate that he heard of what had happened to Job, and he came to observe the situation because of its *theological* interest.

Apparently he came from a pious family, for his name seems to mean “Jehovah is God”, and His father's name, “Barachel”, means, “Blessed be God”. This would also make sense considering that from very start of his speech, he claimed that his words were *divinely* inspired. His wordy exposition of the whole situation, aside from boasting about how right and perfect he was, was simply a rehash of the same charges made by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Since these accusation and arguments were clearly wrong, it was absurd for Elihu to claim that his charges were inspired by God. And it's just as absurd that religious leaders have accepted his boast as fact.

In order to understand Elihu, you need to understand a little bit about the *culture* of Job's day. That culture had some very strict social rules; and one of those rules was that the oldest or the greatest would speak first. If you'll look closely at what happens in the book of Job, that's the social custom or rule that is being followed. The three friends who came to Job sat in silence for seven days with him, partly because of the seriousness of the situation, but partly because of established cultural norms. Nobody would dare to speak

before Job because he was the greatest man in the East. Nobody would speak before Job because it was Job's right to speak first. Then, after the greatest speaks, the others take their turn according to custom. Since Eliphaz is the eldest, he goes first. Then Job is given a chance to reply. Then, because he's the next in line, according to age or greatness, Bildad takes his turn. Then Job is given a chance to reply. Then, the last guy to speak is Zophar. Now Zophar doesn't go last because his name starts with a "Z", okay. He goes last because he's the youngest of the ones who came to speak to Job. Then Job is given a chance to reply. Then the cycle begins all over again. This cycle repeats itself three times. Job speaks, then Eliphaz; then Job, then Bildad; then Job, then Zophar—except the last time around, Zophar runs out of steam. He doesn't take his turn.

These are four "chiefs" sitting around, talking. They are four of the greatest men of the East. And the thing they are discussing is "theology". They are talking about how God deals with the righteous and the wicked. And Job has been saying that all these calamities should not be happening to him because he has not done anything so wicked as to deserve them. At one point he actually takes what's called an "oath of innocence". He calls down curses upon himself if he is guilty of any of the things he is being accused of. It's his final declaration of, "*I am innocent*". He now waits for God to answer.

But God doesn't have a chance to answer because Elihu jumps in and starts talking. He starts talking because he doesn't expect God to answer Job because in his view, Job had not yet *repented!* Job is still being stubborn. Job is still holding on to his integrity. So in Elihu's mind, Job *doesn't deserve* to have God speak to him—and he was sure God would not speak to him, since he refused to renounce his sin.

So Elihu sets himself up as God's representative. He steps in to speak *on God's behalf*. The only problem is, he doesn't really speak for God at all. He speaks for himself. Actually, he speaks for Satan because he is speaking from same self righteous "*spirit of accusation*" that Job's three friends spoke from. The only difference is, he was more arrogant and more self righteous (ie: angry) than them. The first thing he does is charge Job of sinning. Some of Elihu's false charges against Job were:

- ~ *he drinks us scorning (blasphemy) like water (34:7)*
- ~ *he goes in company with workers of iniquity and walks with wicked men (34:8)*
- ~ *he says, it profits nothing that I should delight in God (34:9)*
- ~ *he adds rebellion to his sin (34:37)*
- ~ *he claims that his righteousness is more than God's (35:2)*
- ~ *he has said, what profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin (35:3)*
- ~ *he multiplies words without knowledge (35:16)*
- ~ *he has chosen the way of iniquity, rather than affliction (36:21)*

Remember now, this guy is supposed to be talking *for* God. At one point he makes a statement that should show everyone what kind of "spirit" he was actually operating in. He says: "*Job speaks without knowledge, His words are without wisdom. Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost, Because his answers are like those of wicked men! For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God*" (Job 34:35-37). You see, since Elihu presumed to be speaking for God, and since Job didn't fall down and repent at his feet when he falsely accused him, he became even

more furious. His attitude was: “how dare you refuse to submit to my counsel”! He becomes so enraged he can’t contain himself and he wishes out loud that God would “try” Job “to the uttermost”. When Elihu said he wanted God to try Job to the uttermost, what he was saying was that he wished God *punish* Job even more than he was already being punished!

The religious pride that caused Elihu to look at poor Job, and instead of having compassion on him, wish even more evil upon him, is incredible! In Job 35:2-3, Elihu proceeds to mis-quote Job. He said: “*Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*”? But Job had said no such thing. In another place, Elihu attributes what Job said the wicked say about God, to Job himself. Speaking of the wicked, back in chapter 21, Job said the following:

***Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?
Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before
their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon
them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth
not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children
dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the
organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the
grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the
knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?***

Job 21:7-15

Job was clearly describing the wicked in this passage; but Elihu ascribes these words to Job himself. He says of Job: “*What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water? Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men. For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God*” (vrs. 34:7-9).

Now why would Elihu ascribe Job’s description of the wicked to Job? Did Elihu not hear Job correctly when he made the original statement? Not likely. The reason was, in his heart, Elihu believed Job was also wicked because of all the calamity he was experiencing. So he just naturally included Job in the group Job was referring to back in chapter 21. Finally, after Elihu is done, God Himself comes on the scene. You all know the story. He asks Job a ton of questions that Job could never answer in a thousand years. After seeing the majesty of the Lord, and hearing His voice, Jobs repents of the sin he has committed with his lips. Then God turns to Job’s friends and rebukes them:

***And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the
LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and
against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is
right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks
and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a
burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept:***

lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

Job 42:7-8

I want to call your attention to something that many people overlook in the final chapters of Job. When God comes on the scene and talks to Job, He rebukes him and challenges him, but He never says He is *angry* with him. Do you know why? Because God is simply *correcting* His champion. He is expanding His champion's understanding of Himself. Job didn't go through the test with flying colors, but he did make it through. Don't think that God wasn't aware of everything Job had been through. God couldn't look at Job and say, "*Well done my good and faithful servant*" because Job did sin with his lips. But He didn't tell Job he was angry at him, and He didn't say that Job failed the test either. As a matter of fact, He said Job had "spoken of me the thing which is right"! Listen to it again: Job had spoken of Me "*the thing which is right*"! That was God's view of this soldier who had been through such a *fierce* spiritual battle.

Now compare the way God talks to Job with the way He talks to Job's three friends. He says: "*My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath...for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly*".

You see, Job was God's man. And even though he faltered a bit during the hottest part of the battle; he didn't fail. He didn't lose the fight. Overall, he defended the honor of God's name. His three friends, however, were *agents of Satan*. They were Job's ACCUSERS. They were a functioning arm of the "accuser of the brethren". Satan used them to torment Job to death, after he had already been crushed beyond all human imagination. Because they accused God's man without mercy, they had to repent and *submit to his righteousness*, as he prayed for them. That was the *perfect justice* of God, my friends, for they were forced to acknowledge that Job was righteous after all!

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Revelation 12:10

In one of John's visions, he said he heard "*a loud voice saying in heaven. . .the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night*". Who do you think the voice in heaven is referring to when it says, "our brethren"? And who do you think it is that's speaking in heaven?

Well, I believe the term "our brethren" refers to the saints of God who are living on earth. If this be true, then the voice in heaven is the voice of *other* saints (angels wouldn't call humans "our brethren"). What you have then is a picture of *the saints in heaven* watching Satan come before God to accuse their fellow *saints on earth*.

In the last days, God will have soldiers who will completely overcome Satan, and when that day arrives, he the enemy will be cast out of heaven, once and for all. Then, all the saints who are in heaven, who have had to watch him accuse their earthly brethren day and night, will rejoice. And I believe that one of the

saints who will be rejoicing *the most* on that day will be brother Job. For you see, Satan is *still* speaking through the lips of ignorant Christians and accusing him of sin! The Church is *filled* with people like Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu, who continue to accuse Job of self-righteousness.

Well, I will *never* be one of those kinds of Christians. In my view, Job was a spiritual giant. He was a vessel of clay that God knew He could send into battle to defeat and humiliate His enemies. Job was a man whom God knew would defend His honor and His name—and I pray that I will be as faithful in the coming days as he was to our Lord. I want to be a good soldier of my King, so He can use me to defeat and humiliate His enemies.

God bless you, brother Job.