



Job 15-17

Tape #7160
Job 15-17
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to the book of Job, chapter fifteen. As Eliphaz is ready to make his next discourse to Job. They have gone the full cycle. The three fellows have now spoken, in order. So they start now the second round. The first round was a draw. No one was able to convince anybody of anything. So we start now the second round of discourses, as Eliphaz speaks again unto Job. Not very gentle, not very compassionate, not very tender.

Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, Should a wise man utter empty knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind (15:1-2)?

Again, as Job accused them of being a windbag, they throw it back at Job, and say, "You know you're supposed to be a wise man, but your words are empty, and you are the bag of wind".

Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good (15:3)?

So he is seeking to put down the argument that Job has been giving, the arguments of his own innocence. As Job has been more or less destroying their arguments that, "If a man does the right thing, he will be blessed of God. And, when things go wrong, it's because of God's judgement upon your life". Job is saying, "That is not so. You can look around, and you can see ungodly men prospering. You can see godly men suffering. Their whole premise is that whether you are suffering, or whether you are prospering, is totally dependant upon your relationship with God.

This whole false concept has gained new emphasis in these days, in those who are espousing what is commonly called, "prosperity doctrine". That God wants you to prosper. God wants you to be rich, God wants you to drive the most expensive car, live in the most fabulous kind of a house. So you just have to, if you will live a godly life, and follow these practices of faith principles, and so forth, that you can, "name it, and claim it", and you can have whatever you want. It's an interesting thing that to live after the lust of the flesh in a very high style, is to them, a sign of great spirituality. It's a total inconsistency, but it's being revived in the days in which we live.

If you are sick, then surely there is something wrong with you spiritually. You have failed to appropriate all that God has for you, and no one should ever be sick who is a true child of God, no one should suffer, no one should be poor, who is a true child of God, and this whole false philosophy that was espoused by Job's friends, is being espoused in some of the charismatic areas of the church today. Outside of the church, there are some who have gone so far in this, they've gone totally outside of the truth. It's just not so. Yet, when Job is arguing his case, Eliphaz declares that he's trying to reason with unprofitable talk. Very insulting to Job. You wonder how much of a friend he was!

Yea, [he said] you cast off fear, and you restrain prayer before God (15:4).

"From your attitude, you would discourage people to pray. You would restrain them from praying, because of the arguments and the attitude that you take, you cast off the fear of God. You would restrain men from praying to God."

For your mouth utters your iniquity, [In other words, "You don't need anybody to testify against you".] for you have chosen the tongue of the crafty. ["You're speaking with crafty guile."] *For your own mouth [he says] condemns you, not I: yea, it's your own lips that testify against you.* [Now he begins to put Job down. He said,] *Are you the first man that was born? were you made before the hills? Have you heard the secret of God? do you restrain wisdom to yourself?* [He's saying, "Job, where do you, where are you coming from man? Were you the first man that was ever born?", or, "Do you have the wisdom of all the ancients? Do you know the secrets of God?"] *What do you know that we don't know? what understanding do you have, that we don't (15:5-9)?*

In other words, "Job you're no wiser than us, you're in the same position. Your arguments will not stand up".

With us [That is, “with our side, in our argument”] are both the grayheaded and the very aged men, much older than your father (15:10).

The idea, and the philosophy, and it probably was true, with age there is wisdom. When I first started the ministry, actually, I found school very easy. So I graduated early from high school. While I was still in high school I was taking college courses. I graduated from college, by going to two colleges at the same time, and I got all of my units in, and I graduated from college in just about two and a half years, by going to two colleges, doubling up on units, and the whole thing. Because I was anxious to get started in the ministry. Thus, I was ordained for the ministry at a very early age.

In the first few churches that we pastored, we kept my age a great secret. Because, didn’t want the people to know how young I was, because they wouldn’t respect your wisdom, if they think you’re just a, a kid, you know. Twenty one years old, an ordained pastor. “What do you know?” So they were all guessing at my age. They guessed me to be twenty seven, twenty eight, and I just let them guess, because I didn’t want to reveal my age to them. Now I don’t like to reveal my age either! Except that, there is a thing that you respect age and wisdom. In other words, you, you think of a person, and there’s a lot of truth to it.

I wish I had back, a lot of the sermons that I preached when I was young. I did dedicate one of my books to the people who endured my ministry, when I was just such a young man. I took out a lot of frustrations on them, and I appreciate it, their bearing with me, and my frustrations that I felt. But it is true, that through the years, you gain a lot of insight, you gain a lot of wisdom.

Well, now if you lived back in the days of Adam, and on up to Methuselah, think of how much wisdom you could garner in nine hundred and sixty years! Say, you were healthy during that whole period of time, think of the amount of knowledge that you could garner in almost a millennium! If you lived to be almost a thousand years old then. Thus, they are chiding Job, “You’re not that old Job, and here you are coming against the wisdom of these old men! These men who lived so many years, on our side! Our men who have expressed this idea, this philosophy, who lived for, you know, they’re, they’re much older than your father! So the idea is with us is the wisdom of the ages. You are going against what is the common philosophy that has been developed through the years, by these old men, the sages of the history.”

Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee? Why does your heart carry thee away? and what are your eyes winking at (15:13),

“Job you are doing something wrong. You’re allowing it, you’re tolerating it. You’re not admitting to it.” That’s the idea of your “eye winking at it”. “You’re refusing to see the real truth about yourself. You’ve closed your eyes to the real sin that is in your life.” So he’s probing now, “What is it that you’re doing, that you’ve closed your eyes to, that you can protest the fact that you are innocent? What are you winking at? What are you closing your eyes at?”

That you should turn your spirit against God, [Now this is a false accusation. Job really didn’t turn his spirit against God. In all of these things, Job did not curse God, nor did he charge God foolishly. He’s just saying that he doesn’t understand God. Well, move over Job, I don’t understand God either! The friend of his so far just said, “Who by searching, can understand God to perfection?”. God has said, “My ways are not your ways, my ways are beyond your finding out”. There are many things that happen in life that I do not understand. The problems that plagued Job, plague me. I do not know why God allows some of the things that He allows. I don’t know why He allows things to happen to good people, that He sometimes allows to happen to them. I don’t pretend to know the secrets of God. They are just as troubling to me, as they were to Job. But I do know, and I do understand, that God is good. I do know, and I do understand that God loves me. I do know, and do understand that God does control the circumstances that surround my life. Thus, I know that whatever happens to me, God has allowed it to happen to me, and that behind it, God has a plan and a purpose that I may not understand, at this point. But I do know, that in time, when I see the full picture, that I will see that God was good. Even at that point when I was complaining, and was going through such difficulty, I know that one day I will come to the understanding, that God had a good reason for that. That all things do work together for good to those who love God. So though I don’t understand my circumstances, I also am very careful not to murmur about my circumstances, else I would be murmuring against the work of God in my life. There were important things that the children of Israel needed to know

before they came into the land of promise. God allowed them forty years of hardship in the wilderness, that they might learn lessons concerning the faithfulness of God, the power of God. That they might learn things about themselves. Their own unfaithfulness, and their dependency upon God. We, each of us have our own wildernesses that we need to go through, that we might know of ourselves. God said, “For forty years I led thee, that I might prove thee, to show what was in your heart”. Not to show to God, to show to me what was in my heart. God puts us often times in difficult circumstances, that He might reveal what is in our heart. What do I do when I’m under pressure? What do I do when everything seems to be closed in on me? Do I still trust God? Do I commit my ways to the Lord? Or, do I find myself fighting against God, and complaining against God? So, in dealing with Job, he asked him, “What do you know about the secret things of God? Why do you turn your spirit against God,”] *and let out such words that go out of your mouth (15:13)?*

Well, the words of Job were, were words that, “he did not understand, he could not see, he did not know the reasons”.

What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous (15:14)?

He’s got a good argument there. “What is man that he should be clean?” We’re not clean in the sight of God. We are not righteous in the sight of God. We’ve, all of us, sinned and come short. But as we believe, and trust in God, God accounts our faith for righteousness. This was so with Abraham, and no doubt was so also, of Job. Even as God counted Abraham’s faith for righteousness, I am certain that He must’ve accounted Job’s faith for righteousness. When Job remained faithful, and he kept his integrity before the Lord, I’m certain that God was counting that for righteousness, just as much as He did Abraham, and just as much as He does us. Now, Eliphaz says...

He doesn’t put any trust in his saints; [The word “saints” there in the Hebrew, is “holy ones”, and probably a reference to angels. After Satan’s rebellion, and a third of the angels going, “Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones”. And you can understand why!] yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight (15:15).

Now, of course in those days, what was clearer than the heavens. But you can’t say that anymore, with all of our smog and everything else, you can’t say that the heavens are, well, it is true the heavens are not clean in His sight, is what he was saying. But in those days, they thought of the heavens as being very pure, clear.

How much more abominable and filthy is man, [If He doesn’t trust His angels. If even the heavens are impure in His sight, “how much more abominable and filthy is man”,] which drinks iniquity like water? And now I’ll show you something, I want you to listen to me; and that which I have seen I will declare; Which wise men have told from their fathers, they’ve not hid it: Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them (15:16-19).

That is, the men, and going way back to the beginning, the first men, these are the things that they learned. “When there was no stranger”, that is, when man first inhabited the earth then, it was so vacant, that you know you could move out a little ways, and have a territory all to your own. So going way back to the ancient, to the beginning. So there was that awareness of, not too long ago the earth was not very inhabited. Probably thinking back to the times of Noah, which were not very much before Job. Job probably came in the record not too far after Noah. So this is the, “I want you to listen to what wise men have learned. This is the thing that they have learned.”

The wicked man travaileth with pain all of his days, [“I mean, if you’re wicked, you’re gonna pay for it!” “Travaileth in pain all of his days.” Now they may have been pretty wise, but they were not too astute observers of mankind. The wicked men often prospered. Nimrod, was a mighty man against the Lord, and he prospered tremendously! So it is with many! In fact the question is, “Why do the ungodly prosper? Why does God allow the ungodly to prosper?” That’s the real question! And, “Why do the righteous people so often suffer?” That’s the problem that we have to deal with!] and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor. A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him (15:20-21).

Now he’s going to describe what happened to Job. “Here he was enjoying prosperity, and he was the richest man in the east”, we read. He had all of these luxuries and all of these things, and suddenly it all

came to nothing. It was destroyed. So, he is, he's intimating now that, "You know, this is what our fathers have learned from the beginning. The wicked man travails in pain. Though he may prosper, man it gets wiped out in a moment! The destroyer comes upon him".

He believes not that he shall return out of the darkness, and he waits for the sword. [Job was saying that he was waiting for death. The darkness had overtaken him. He really didn't expect to come out of this calamity. He really thought that he was soon going to die.] *He wandered abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.* [You become destitute. You just know that the end is upon you.] *Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; and they shall prevail against him, as a king ready for the battle (15:22-24).*

Man! Now if you were really going through the miseries of Job, how would you like this kind of comfort? You know, "The wicked man, this is what happens to them. They get cut off. They become beggars, and look for bread, and darkness is ready to envelope them, and they're not gonna make it out of it!"

For he stretched out his hand against God, and strengthened himself against the Almighty. [A false accusation again, against Job.] *He runneth upon him,* [That is, he is rebelling against God.] *he hardens his neck,* [He becomes stiff necked and runs against God.] *pushing against him with [his buckler, or] the thick bosses of his bucklers:* [His shield. He just sort of sets himself, his shield, and he just runs into God.] *Because he covers his face with fatness, and he maketh collops of fat on his flanks.* [That was quite a picturesque speech. So the wealthy and the prosperous, with the fatness and all, bursting out in fatness. But yet, coming against God.] *And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps (15:25-28).*

That is, he becomes an outcast. He dwells in shacks out in the desert, that are ready to collapse.

He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth. He shall not depart out of his darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of God's mouth shall he go away. [In other words, you get just wiped out, until finally God just breathes you out of existence. "By the breath of His mouth, he goes away."] *Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompense (15:29-31).*

This bit of advice, bit of advice by Eliphaz, is really very pertinent, and good. The Bible constantly is warning us, concerning deception. When God placed Eve in the garden, Satan deceived her. Jesus said of Satan, "He is a liar from the beginning". Satan has, and does, deceive man, through the ages.

Today, Satan continues to deceive people. He deceives them concerning the nature of God, concerning the word of God, concerning the truth of God. He would cause Eve to believe that God was not fair, in restricting her from that tree. That the law of God was abusive. That God was trying to keep her back from something that was desirable, and advantageous to her. She believed his lie, and Eve was deceived, and she disobeyed God. She believed that she would not die.

When God gave the law, He warned against deception. He said, "Don't be deceived, and begin to turn to other gods, thinking that you can better yourself". In the new testament, Jesus warned against deception. "In the last days", He said, "there would be deceivers that would come. Pointing men after themselves, rather than after the Lord". Paul said, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap". Paul warns the Thessalonians, that in the last days, the Antichrist, the man of sin will come, who will deceive the world. Because people did not have the love for the truth in their hearts, God will give them over to this strong delusion, that they will believe a lie, rather than the truth.

Deception is something that we must be constantly guarding against. Satan is always challenging the word of God, in his deception. He would seek to deceive you by challenging the word of God. Saying that it is not true, or it will not come to pass, or, it doesn't apply to you, or to your condition. Don't be deceived! If you trust in emptiness, that is in a false hope, if you trust in a false religion, then emptiness will be your reward. Nothing will come of it. Nothing can come of it.

So many people are being deceived today, by Satan, as far as where they can find fulfillment in life. He sought to deceive Jesus. Jesus came to redeem this world, back to God. It was God's originally, because He created it, but God gave it to man. Man in turn, forfeited it over to Satan, so that this world belongs to Satan

at the present time. The purpose of Jesus was to redeem the world back to God, that's why He came. Satan knowing this, took Jesus up into a high mountain, and showed to Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and he said, "All of these will I give to you, if you will bow down and worship me, for they are mine, and I can give them to whoever I wish". What Satan is saying is, "I know why you've come. That you might get the world back for God. And I know the price, the cross. But I'll tell you what, you don't have to come to the cross to receive fulfillment. If you do it my way, you can have immediate fulfillment, and you can escape the cross. Just bow down and worship me, and I'll give it all to you now. God's path of the cross is not necessary".

He is saying the same thing to people today. "God's path of the cross is not necessary." Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me". Satan says, "Oh no, no, no, no. That's not necessary". He said, "If you seek to save your life, you will lose it. But if you will lose your life for my sake, you'll find it". "What would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Now Satan is saying, "No, no, that's not quite right. You can have immediate fulfillment. Joy, happiness, oh, it's, it's right here! Don't take the path of the cross, self-denial. God's path isn't necessary, actually if you will just, you know, snort a little coke, or if you'll just get involved with this little gal", and all. He's always saying, "Here's immediate fulfillment! It isn't in denying self, it isn't in the cross, but it's by following me. I can lead you immediately into the fulfillment!" But they are lies! He causes people to trust in emptiness, in vanities, in lying vanities. Emptiness is the result. When you have gone into that experience, suddenly you realize the emptiness of the whole thing.

He says, "Hey it lies in the glory of sports, excelling, in the cheers, and the shout of the crowd. Therein is fulfillment!" I followed that life for awhile. I sought, through the glory of sports to achieve a name, and heard the cries and the shouts of the crowd. But that was some of the emptiest time of my life. When you get home, away from the crowd, when you be in the loneliness of your own bed, lying there upon the pillow. Especially those nights when I didn't get that hit that was needed to bring victory to the team. Whenever we would lose, I would, I would not sleep all night long. I would relive every pitch. I would see it coming, all night long, those pitches were coming. I would try to adjust my swing or whatever, because I was counted on for clean up batter and all. Whenever we'd lose, I couldn't sleep. I would, I would relive every pass that I threw, every run that I made. "Had I just turned this way, perhaps I could've avoided the tackle, and could've gone all the way, you know." You relive the thing, over and over. We'd win, I'd sleep like a baby. But, the emptiness, the emptiness. Especially after my injury, and twisted my knee, and tore all the ligaments and cartilage. That night, I couldn't sleep for pain! My knee was swollen up like a balloon. Every time I would move, it was excruciatingly painful. When they took me off the field, they all, you know, gave the, "Rah, rah, rah! Fifteen for Chuck!", but man! I was pretty empty at this point. Those that trust in vanity, vanity is their reward. Emptiness is the reward of it.

It shall be accomplished before his time, his branch shall not be green. [That is, "You will, you will die before your appointed time. You get cut off. Your branch will be dry."] *He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,* [And he's referring here to Job's children being cut off, his fruit being cut off.] *and they shall cast off his flower as the olive.* [So a reference to the fact that Job's children, were all of them, killed.] *For the congregation of the hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tents of bribery.* [So he is accusing Job of being a hypocrite, accusing Job of receiving bribery. "These things have come upon you because of your sin."] *They conceive mischief, and they bring forth emptiness, and their belly prepareth deceit (15:32-35).*

Chapter 16

I can understand why...

Job answered and said, I have heard many such things: and miserable comforters are you all (16:1-2).

That's a miserable way to try and comfort a guy. You only place more misery upon him. I might say that, in earlier reference to the, "Everybody should be healed. If you just had enough faith, or if you just

were living right, you wouldn't have any physical problems". I have had too many people come to me, who have had deaths in the family, and people who have been twisted in these weird heresies, come to them and say, "Your child died because you did not make the positive confession, and you let them go! You didn't hold on in faith!". They make the people feel guilty because their child died! I can't think of any more miserable way to try and comfort someone, who has suffered a loss! I think that, that is not only unscriptural, but totally insensitive and cruel! I've had people come up fearing that they were responsible, they were guilty, because their husband died. Someone told them, "If they had just held on in faith, their husband would still be alive".

It is cruel, it, it's inhumane to lay some kind of a trip upon a person, because there are, when a person dies, there are always those things that go through our minds, how we may have been able to avoid it, if we had just done this, or done that, or said this, or said that, maybe. If we'd just said, "Don't go out", and we'd insisted that they stay home, maybe they would not have been hit by the car, and all. There's always that, trying to go back and relive it, and change it. You know, change the history. When death comes, I'd always like to somehow go back and rewrite the story. There's always that sort of sense of guilt, "Had I done this, or maybe if I'd only said that", or "maybe I could've averted it, had this...", or whatever. There's always that kind of a feeling, and for someone to come along and say, "It's your fault. You didn't hold on in faith. You let them go, you let them down when they...". Oh man! That's miserable! That's pretty much what they were doing with Job. "You know, it's your fault your kids are all dead. You're a hypocrite man, you've received bribery! Something sinful in your life, and you're hiding it, and trying to keep it from others. But God's gonna expose it! Your children died because of you!" He said, "Miserable comforters are you all".

Shall empty words have no end? ["Can't you guys learn to shut up!"] what made you so bold as to answer? ["Look man!"] I could speak as you are speaking: if you were in my shoes and I were in yours, ["If things were reversed. If you were going through the same problems, I could come and I could make the same accusations to you, that you're making to me. However, I wouldn't."] I would seek to strengthen you with my mouth, ["I would seek to speak words of true comfort."] and the moving of my lips would assuage your grief. ["I would seek to speak the words that would bring strength, and help, and comfort."] And though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and even if I don't speak, what am I eased (16:3-6)?

"I mean, if I speak, you jump on me, and if I don't speak, you'll jump on me. You're no help to me."

But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company. [That is, "my children". He is speaking now, of God. "God has made me weary. He's taken from me all of my children."] And God has filled me with wrinkles, [That is, "He has caused me to age through this whole experience".] these wrinkles which are a witness against me: and my leanness [He had no doubt lost a lot of weight, because of this sickness. Just so miserable, and he was just sort of pining away, dying. "And my leanness",] rising up in me beareth witness to my face. ["I mean, I can look at my body, I'm becoming old, wrinkled, my leanness testifies, a witness to my face."] He tears me in his wrath who hates me: he gnashes upon me with his teeth; and like an enemy he sharpens his eyes upon me. They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me. God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked (16:7-11).

This is an interesting little section here, because you see in this that Job becomes an interesting type of Christ in these things. These very things are spoken in the Psalms, of things that should happen to the Messiah. "Gaped upon me with their mouths". Jeremiah speaks about, "Smiting me on the cheek reproachfully", speaks about, "Gathering themselves against the Lord, against His anointed", and that, "God would turn His son over into the hands of the ungodly, into the hands of the wicked". So these things that Job said, were done to Him, by God, or actually allowed by God, to happen to His own Son. Which, should bring up an interesting point. If these things that were transpiring in Job's life were a sign of wickedness and sin, then how is it that God allowed His own Son to go through similar experiences? Job said...

I was at ease, but he hath broken me in two: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and he has set me up as his target. [I mean, Job really sees himself in a bad, "God's taken me by the neck, and He's shaking me to pieces, and now He's made me a target! And all of the archers are shooting at me, I'm their target!"] His archers encircle me, and they have shot through my kidneys [Actually just,] cleave

them asunder, and they do not spare; poured out my gall upon the ground (16:12-13).

"I'm just, you know, I'm wiped out!"

He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant. I have sewed sackcloth [sackcloth] upon my sin, [Now when Job got these boils, he put this sackcloth, and he sat in these ashes. But with these running sores, the boils, and the constant running, you can imagine how that the sackcloth, as it dried, just became almost like a part of his skin. I mean, horrible, smelly, ugly mess! This guy, you think you have it bad! Oh man! Job really went through it! So, "This sackcloth is attached like my skin". He probably couldn't remove it, without just pulling everything open.] he has defiled my strength in the dust. My face is foul with weeping, and my eyelids is the shadow of death (16:14-16);

"On my eyelids. I mean, I'm just about gone fellas. You can just see it. It's almost over." So he cries out for death.

O earth, cover not [Not for, in a while), he goes in and maintains his innocence. Not for any injustice in my hands, also my prayer is pure. I really don't know why this is happening. "O earth, cover not",] thou my blood, [Now in the olden days, they believed that if innocent blood was shed on the ground that, that blood on the ground would actually cry out for vengeance against whoever had shed the innocent blood. You remember when Cain bludgeoned his brother Abel to death, and God came to Cain and He said, "Where is your brother?", and he said, "Why are you asking me? I'm I my brother's keeper?" God said, "His blood crieth unto me from the ground". So from that, there came this belief that innocent blood shed on the ground, cried out for vengeance. He is saying, "When my blood is shed on the ground, don't cover it. Let it cry!"] and let my cry have no end (16:18).

"Until there is some kind of a justification."

Also now, [And here he comes from this, this place of just giving up, hopelessness, and then he comes to these statements that just blow you over! "And now,"] behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high (16:19).

The revised version is a little better here. "He that vouches for me is on high." So Job comes out with this marvelous statement. "My witness, the one who witnesses for me is in heaven. He is vouching for me is on high." Christ, the mediator, "my witness in heaven, the one who vouches for me". Jesus Christ, is on high. Amazing, that out of the depths of all of his misery, he comes out with this kind of thing. In the next lesson, when we get into chapter nineteen, same kind of thing. Job is at the very bottom of the pit, and then he cries out this hope, this cry, that just is so totally victorious, before he plunges down into the pit again. But he seems to come up, and sees the light, and then, boom, back down. That I guess is typical of a person who's going through a lot of suffering. You have those moments where there's encouragement and strength, and then reality of what's going on.

My friends scorn me: but my eyes will pour out their tears unto God. O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor! When a few years are come, then I shall go the way from whence I shall not return (16:20-22).

"It's almost over. But oh if I could only plead with God, like I plead with men. If I could only plead my case before God, like you plead your case before men!"

Chapter 17

Job says...

My breath is corrupt, [That is a characteristic of a person who is dying. The breath becomes quite corrupt.] my days are extinct, ["I'm about over. The grave is ready for me. Graves, plural. But that's because they would bury people in these caves that had all of these little niches, side by side, you'd just put, you'd be put in a niche. So,] the graves are ready for me. Are there not mockers with me? ["These three friends of mine."] and doth not my eye continue in their provocations? ["They continue to make their accusations, and provoke."] Lay down now, put me in surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me (17:1-3)?

He is now turning to now, what was in those days, legal terms. It's uh, in a sense it's, "who will put me in a surety with thee", who will go ahead and post bail for me, that we might have this case come before the judge. "Who is he that will strike hands, make an agreement with me?" Now even to the present day this

practice of striking hands is, is common in the Arab culture.

One of the interesting things that we like to do when we're in Jerusalem, on Friday morning, is go to the sheep gate, which is across from the Rockefeller Museum. It is at the, sort of northeast corner of Jerusalem, the old city. There the Bedouins bring on Friday morning, their sheep to the sheep market to sell. People go down there and buy sheep. It's quite a sight, it's a fascinating sight! You'll see them driving the sheep up the street, and they'll, they'll drive them right on into the sheep market there. Then you'll see others drive up in Mercedes and open up the back door, and all these sheep, you know they push em out of the back seat of the Mercedes! It's really quite a cultural kind of thing, a mixture of cultures to be sure!

But then, you'll see them, as they're starting to dicker over the sheep, over the price of the sheep. You'll see them, and as they get to establishing the price, they get louder, and louder. They start yelling at each other. They start waving their hands, they start shaking their heads. You think, "Oh, call the police, we're gonna have a riot right here". You know these guys are gonna be at it in just any minute! When they get to shouting at the top of their voices, just really shouting at each other.

Then suddenly, they'll go, "bang", it's sort of a high five, strike hands. And the guy will reach into his pocket, pull out the money, and pay, take the sheep and leave. I mean, it's just a part of the whole process of their dickering over the price of the sheep. It's fascinating to watch! But the striking of the hands means, "we've got the deal", so they strike hands. Job is saying, "Who will make the deal with me? Who will strike hands with me?"

For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: ["These fellows that have come God, somehow you've hidden their heart from understanding."] *therefore you will not exalt them. He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail. He hath made me also a by- word of the people;* ["The name Job became synonymous with a man who was suffering for his wickedness. "As a man, he's going through the things of Job." Interesting though, that the name Job is also a by-word for us. But it's the by-word for a man of extreme patience. "He has the patience of Job." So the name is still a by-word, but for a far different reason than it was in Job's day. In his day, his name became the by-word of a man suffering the judgement, and the consequences of God, for some evil that he had done. "He's also made me a by-word of the people",] *where before times I was [looked up to, I was,] a tabret (17:4-6).*

"I was a instrument of pleasure and pleasantness."

My eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, ["I've wept so much, my eyes are blurred."] *and all of my members [That is, "the members of my body".] are as a shadow.* ["I'm a shadow of my former self."] *Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do you return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you (17:7-10).*

Job is still maintaining that in the end, things are gonna work out. "That in the end, the righteous holds on to his way, and he who has clean hands will become stronger and stronger. But for you fellas, I cannot find one wise man among you."

My days are past, my purposes are broken off, ["It's over. The purpose for my existence has ceased."] *even the thoughts of my heart. They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness. If I wait, the grave will be my house: I have made my bed in darkness (17:11-13).*

He's talking now just of the total despair. "Darkness is soon to overtake me. I'm soon to enter into that shadow of darkness, into that land from which a person does not return."

I have said to corruption, You are my father: and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister. [He's talking about his body now decaying in the grave. The body beginning to corrupt, and the worms beginning to do their job. You know, "You're my father, you're my mother, you're my brother, you're, I'm a, you know, you're related to me."] *Where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of Sheol, [of the grave] when our rest together is in the dust (17:14-16).*

So, "My hope has failed. I'll soon be going into the grave, and it's over." Well, this excited Bildad, and he now answers Job. We'll get that next week, as we're gonna take Bildad's second discourse, and Job is running out of steam, he answers him very shortly. But then, Zophar takes another lick, and Job answers him. So we'll go four chapters next week, to get both Zophar, and Bildad's second discourse, and Job's

response.

May the Lord bless and keep you this week in His love. May He fill you with His Spirit and a resolve to serve Him. May our hearts, and our lives, become instruments through which God can accomplish His purposes. May our faith be increased. Even in those days when we do not understand and do not know, may we maintain that trust and confidence in God, knowing that all things work together for good, to those who love God. So may you go forth in His love, being a witness for Jesus Christ, in His name.