

Having considered Eliphaz's second speech last week, we come this morning to begin to consider Job's response. This response is found in chapters 16-17. We will consider chapter 16 this morning and chapter 17 next week. Chapter 16 has three basic parts: a confrontation (vv1-5); a lamentation (vv6-17); a supplication (vv18-22).

I. A Confrontation (vv1-5)

II. A Lamentation (vv6-17)

III. A Supplication (vv18-22)

I. A Confrontation (vv1-5)

1. Job begins by confronting Eliphaz (and his friends) in two ways: (1) they've been miserable comforters to him (vv1-3); (2) he would be a better comforter to them (vv4-5).
2. (1) They've been miserable comforters to him (vv1-3), v2—"I have heard many such things"—the things they've said (especially what Eliphaz just said the latter part of chapter 15).
3. V2—"Miserable comforters are you all"—all that they've been saying, has done nothing to give comfort.
4. In fact, not only did they not provide comfort, but what they said to him actually increased his misery.
5. V3—"Shall words of wind have an end (that is, shall they never end)? Or what provokes you that you answer?"
6. Job is obviously thinking back to Eliphaz's words to him, 15:2—"Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind?"
7. V3b—"Or what provokes you that you answer"—what incites or motivates you to continue answering me.
8. Thus, Job confronts his friends—although they continue to answer him, they provide no true comfort.
9. Now, keep in mind, this was their primary reason in coming to Job—they came to mourn with him and comfort him.
10. Job 2:11—"For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him."
11. (2) He would be a better comforter to them (vv4-5), v4—"I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's place."
12. That is, if the tables were turned, v4b—"I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you."
13. Job is basically saying—it's not that difficult to mistreat and misjudge others as they've done to him.
14. V5—"But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief."
15. In other words, if the shoe was on the other foot, Job would seek to strengthen and encourage them with his words.
16. This of course was the very opposite of what his friends did—they failed to strengthen or comfort him.
17. Observation 1—We must never repay evil with evil—in many things Job is a wonderful example to follow.
18. Now, I'm not willing to say Job is a wonderful example in every way (he's crossed the line on occasion).
19. But Job is a wonderful example of patience and faith in God in the midst of severe affliction and pain.

20. But another way in which Job emerges as a wonderful example to imitate is suggested here in vv1-5.
21. Job refuses to repay evil with evil; he refuses to repay his friends, with the same treatment they paid him.
22. Regardless how people treat us, we must never treat them the same way; it's wrong to get even with others.
23. Rom.12:19-21—"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
24. Nowhere was this more perfectly illustrated than in our Savior—who when He was being crucified said, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Lk.23:34).
25. This was largely for our example, which Stephen literally followed (Acts 7:60—"Lord, do not charge them with this sin').

II. A Lamentation (vv6-17)

1. This section entails a lamentation that can be divided into three things: his affliction; his reproach; his response.
2. (1) His afflictions (vv6-9, 12-14), v6—"Though I speak, my grief is not relieved; and if I remain silent, how am I eased?"
3. In other words, he was between a rock and a hard place—regardless what he did—he found no relief.
4. If he spoke his mind, his grief was not relieved, but if he remained silent, he found no ease or rest for his soul.
5. And then, from vv7-9, and then again in vv12-14, Job describes how God Himself had become his enemy.
6. V7—"But now He has worn me out; You have made desolate all my company"—Job switches from speaking about God and to God (v7a – about God; v7b – to God).
7. Who exactly Job means by "company" we are not told—he's likely referring to extended family and friends.
8. The implication being—Job was shut up to the counsel and comfort of his three friends (who were poor friends).
9. V8—"You have shriveled me up, and it is a witness against me; my leanness rises up against me and bears witness to my face."
10. Job is referring to his actual frame—because of his sickness, Job was likely little more than a skeleton.
11. The fact that he was skeletal and lean (skinny) was a witness against him; a witness of what—of God's displeasure.
12. V9—"He tears me in His wrath, and hates me; He gnashes at me with His teeth; My adversary sharpens His gaze on me."
13. V12—"I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces."
14. Job was at "ease" prior to his afflictions, which he describes as being "shattered" and "shaken to pieces."
15. V12c—"He has set me up for His target, His archers surround me. He pierces my heart and does not pity; He pours out my gall on the ground."
16. By "gall" is likely meant the "gallbladder"—the imagery is that His arrows pierced his body causing his inwards to be poured out.
17. This of course is figurative language—God doesn't have literal archers who literally pierces our heart.

18. It simply means—his present afflictions brought pain to his soul, just as arrows would bring pain to the body.
19. V14—"He breaks me with wound upon wound; He runs at me like a warrior"—here he switches imagery to say the same thing.
20. It's as if God were a mighty soldier (warrior) who runs at him with his sword, delivering wound after wound.
21. (2) His reproach (vv10-11), v10—"They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek, they gather together against me."
22. Job is referring to his three friends, who have gathered against him, and abused him with their words.
23. The word rendered "gape" means "to open wide" and refers to the way he was verbally abused by his friends.
24. To "reproach" is "to criticize" or "blame"—they were openly blaming him for his present predicament.
25. V11—"God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked"—who is meant by the ungodly and wicked?
26. Well, it's possible they refer to Job's three friends, or else, it's possible they refer to others who heard about his suffering.
27. Personally, I think he's talking about the world (in the general sense)—neighbors, family, and enemies (company, v7).
28. (3) His response (vv15-17), v15—"I have sewn sackcloth over my skin, and laid my head in the dust."
29. Both of these were outward expressions of inward anguish—they indicated deep humility and remorse.
30. Jonah 3:6—"Then the king of Nineveh arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes."
31. Now in the case of the King of Nineveh he likely literally covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.
32. In the case of Job this is figurative—and the reason I say this, is because of the actual language of v15—"I have sewn sackcloth over my skin."
33. He doesn't merely put on sackcloth as a garment, but he sews it over his skin as if it was permanent or lasting.
34. V16—"My face is flushed from weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death"—his face was red with weeping and dark shadows were over his eyes.
35. In other words, his inward turmoil, found expression upon his outward countenance—the spiritual effected the physical.
36. V17—"Although no violence is in my hands, and my prayer is pure"—that is, he's innocent of all crimes.
37. Not that he's sinless, but he's innocent of any crimes leveled at him by his friends—sins against man and God.
38. John Calvin—"Job's intention here is not to declare that his life is completely pure, that he has never committed a sin, but he understands that God is not punishing him with such rigor as though he were a wicked man."
39. Observation 1—Our perception can be contrary to reality—Job thought God was his enemy and hated him.
40. But let me ask you—was it true? Was God really his enemy? Did God really hate him? Of course not!
41. We are masters at distorting reality and tempting ourselves to believe it—in short—we deceive ourselves.

42. Job had convinced himself that God was against him; that He was apposing him; that He was hating him (we often misjudge others because of a word or their countenance).
43. James Durham—"Measure not God's love even by His spiritual dispensations, as if God loved not when He looks angry-like. Our senses are not good judges."
44. Observation 2—Reproach is a cause of great pain and anguish—reproach refers to public blame and shame.
45. This was no small part of Job's suffering; remember, Job was a righteous man who had a good reputation.
46. The more righteous a person is, the more this reproach hurts; it hurts because it strikes at the very heart of who we are.
47. Ps.22:12-13—"Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion."
48. Ps.69:19—"You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; my adversaries are all before You."
49. Matt.20:18-19—"The Son of Man will be delivered to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify."
50. Observation 3—Prayer gives vent to our anguish and lamentation—vv15-16 (great anguish), v17 (humble prayer).

III. A Supplication (vv18-22)

1. This final section is without doubt, one of the most evangelical passages within the entire book of Job.
2. While it's technically not a supplication, it reveals the desires of Job (and remember prayer, in part, is the expression of desire).
3. V18—"O earth, do not cover my blood, and let my cry have no resting place!"—that is, let God see and hear my condition.
4. Let Him see my blood or suffering, and let Him hear my cry or prayers—he's asking that God would hear his heartfelt prayers.
5. Job is likely thinking back to Cain and Able, Gen.4:11—"You are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand (this also matches with v17(no violence is in my hands))."
6. In other words, he's identifying with Able who was a righteous sufferer—Job is asking God to behold his blood (or suffering).
7. The phrase "let my cry have no resting place" means; "let my prayer never cease from working before You."
8. May his prayer have no rest—may it have no break or breather—may it continue until its accomplished its purpose.
9. V19—"Surely even now my witness is in heaven, and my evidence is on high"—the Hebrew words translated "witness" and "evidence" are synonymous.
10. They obviously refer to the same thing—that is, whatever he means by witness it's the same thing as evidence.
11. The ESV has taken liberty to personify the second one—"my witness is in heaven, and he who testifies for me is on high."
12. And this isn't wrong, because this is exactly what Job says—"my witness is in heaven"—he has someone testifying for him in heaven.
13. Job used the first word (witness) earlier in v8—"You have shriveled me up, and it is a witness against me; my leanness rises up against me and bears witness to my face."

14. In other words—Job's physical condition bore witness to him, of God's displeasure against him—it testified against him.
15. His physical condition testified to his face—it bore witness against him—it prosecuted him—it accused him.
16. Well, here Job uses the same term and idea, only in an opposite way—he had a witness in heaven before God.
17. And this witness did not testify against him but for him—this witness did not accuse him, but acquitted him.
18. This witness testified of Job's innocence and righteousness—this witness was an advocate for Job in heaven.
19. In contrast to heaven, Job found no witness or advocate on earth, v20—"My friends scorn me; My eyes pour out tears to God."
20. That is, his three friends have no concern for him; they scorn him—to scorn is "to mock, scoff, or ridicule."
21. V21—"Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor"—he's saying the same thing as in v20.
22. A man is willing to testify for his neighbor, but how many are willing to intercede for a man before God.
23. The point being—instead of pleading with God for him, they mocked, despised, scorned, and ridiculed him.
24. Though a man is willing to intercede for a man in the courts of men, they are unwilling to intercede for a man in the courts of heaven.
25. V22—"For when a few years are finished, I shall go the way of no return"—Job knew life was short.
26. He desired to have a friend on earth, who would plead his cause before God, as long as his life lasted.
27. Thus, in the time we have remaining, I want to suggest three closing considerations about Christ's intercession.
28. There are largely two dominant themes in this chapter—Job felt alone on earth, and yet had a Friend in heaven.
29. Though there was no one to please his cause on earth, there was One who testified on his behalf in heaven.
30. But before I come to the topic of Christ's intercession, let me address an objection that might be here raised.
31. Some might object to the notion, that Job had any understanding of a Mediator who interceded for him.
32. But this would be seriously wrong: first, he saw his need for a Mediator in the sacrificial system; second, he spoke of a Redeemer who would one day return to this earth (19:25-27; Gen.3:15); third, he speaks of a witness or advocate in heaven (because, he had nobody on earth who would plead his case before God).
33. Closing consideration 1—The nature of Christ's intercession—the nature of Christ intercession is found in the terms: "witness" "evidence" and "plead."
34. Christ's intercession is a part of His mediation—Christ mediates for His people as prophet, priest, and king.
35. He fundamentally, witnesses (or testifies) two things about His people—they are forgiven and righteous.
36. In other words, He pleads the merit of His blood and righteousness—He bears witness of His people.

37. Rom.8:33-34—"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."
38. 1Jn.2:1—"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
39. (a) It's present, v19—"Surely even now my witness is in heaven"—at the very moment Job was speaking.
40. Thus, every person ever saved, was saved by the mediation of Christ—by virtue of Christ's intercession.
41. (b) It's personal, v19—"Surely even now my witness is in heaven"—not every person has a witness in heaven.
42. (c) It's perpetual, v19—"Surely even now my witness is in heaven"—his witness was in heaven to stay.
43. But the question might be asked—"How could Christ mediate for Job if He had yet to become incarnate."
44. Well, remember what we learned a few weeks ago in SS class—Christ always served as Mediator of His people.
45. He was ordained from eternity to be Mediator, and He formally assumed that office following the fall (furthermore, remember, His blood, though it would not be shed until the NT, was efficacious to save OT saints).
46. Closing consideration 2—The benefits of Christ's intercession—there are many benefits to Jesus' intercession.
47. But I want to limit our consideration to this chapter, and suggest, by way of inference, there's two benefits.
48. If Job was unable to have strength or comfort from the help of his friends, then he found strength and comfort from the help of his Friend (or the one who pled for his cause before God; his witness and advocate).
49. Here I need to remind you how Christ witness in heaven, relates to the Holy Spirit's witness on earth.
50. We actually have two advocates who work together—one bears witness in the courtroom of heaven and the other in the courtroom of our conscience.
51. Do you remember what our Savior said as He left earth—"I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever (the Spirit of Truth" (Jn.14:16).
52. The Greek word rendered "Helper" is the word for "advocate"—a person who comes along to help or plead the case of another.
53. This is how Christ's witness in heaven produces strength and comfort on earth; through the witness of the Holy Spirit.
54. Rom.8:16—"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God"—this gives strength and comfort.
55. The witness of Christ in heaven gives peace with God, and the witness of the Spirit on earth gives peace of God.
56. Closing consideration 3—The imitation of Christ's intercession—I want to end by returning to a dominant theme of this chapter—loneliness.
57. Job was unable to find a man on earth who would plead his case before God—he found no true friend.
58. Now, if you remember, the book began with Job offering sacrifices for his children—he was a priest in his home.
59. Furthermore, the book ends with God telling the three friends to bring sacrifices to Job—"My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him" (42:8).