

Job's Response – Part III

Message #16

Job 14:1-22

Many great men of God have gone through moments of deep depression. It is said that one of the things that really affected Charles Haddon Spurgeon was when a part of Metropolitan Tabernacle collapsed and many people were killed who were attending the service. Mr. Spurgeon went into a deep depression even though many people kept encouraging him that it was not his fault.

G. Campbell Morgan was so depressed near the end of his life that he kept telling his daughter that he was a failure. God had used this man as a great Bible expositor who wrote over 60 books and was a key teacher of the Word of God in both the United States and England. His daughter kept telling Dr. Morgan that he was one of the most influential men of God of the early 1900's. But that did not stop him from having low moments.

Martin Luther, the great Reformer, went through a serious time of depression and his wife was getting him breakfast wearing a black armband. Martin Luther asked his wife "who died?" Katie said "With the way you have been carrying on around here, I thought God had."

In the case of Job, he was in very deep depression because of terrible things that had happened to him which were coming directly from Satan. Instead of his friends rallying around him to encourage him that it was not his fault, they were saying just the opposite, that it was his fault.

All three of Job's friends were trying to convince Job that his troubles were due to some hidden sin in his life from which he needed to repent. Instead of encouraging Job, his friends were depressing him. But the one thing these guys apparently forgot is that God was watching, He was listening and they were accountable for their part in making life miserable for Job.

**JOB IS SO DEPRESSED THAT HE WANTS TO DIE, AND PART OF THE REASON FOR THIS IS BECAUSE OF WHAT THESE MEN HAVE SAID TO HIM AND GOD WILL HOLD THESE MEN HIGHLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE NEGATIVE STATE JOB WAS IN.**

These men all felt as if they must speak. They all felt they had some real counsel to give to this powerful man of God. They were wrong! They should have kept their mouths shut, for their counsel would be used by God to judge them. Let me suggest that if we give untrue or unbiblical counsel to someone and they become more depressed because of our counsel, God will hold us accountable.

Job was totally and completely depressed and these men were a big part of the reason why. There are eight key verbal thoughts that Job communicates when he was in this frame of mind:

**VERBAL THOUGHT #1** – The life of a man is brief and troublesome . **14:1-2**

In pointing out that man is born of a woman, Job is pointing out that everyone has such a frail and sinful origin. As Robert Alden said, “Man born of woman” is a poetic way of saying “everyone.”

Man’s life is brief and filled with many troubles and trials. Man is like a flower that springs forth and looks spectacular for such a brief moment then it is withered and gone. He is also like a shadow that is here one minute and gone the next.

Both the flower and the shadow are used often in the Bible to refer to the brevity of a persons’ life (Jam. 1:10; Ps. 37:2; 90:5-6; Is. 40:6-7; Job 8:9; I Chron. 29:15; Ps. 102:11; 144:4; Eccl. 6:12)

This is the true story of every man and every woman. Knowing we are frail, knowing life will be filled with troubles and trials and knowing our life will be brief, how can we make meaning of it? How can we find real fulfillment in our relationship with God?

**VERBAL THOUGHT #2** – The life of a man will be judged by God . **14:3**

Job asks two questions in **verse 3** that both expect a “yes” answer. In the chronology, man dies in **verse 2** and faces judgment in **verse 3**.

It is certainly true that we are a frail creature before God, but we must not ever forget that we are an accountable creature to God. Job realized that we are all sinners; he was and so were his friends, and that we are all accountable to God. God has His eyes open on every human and every human will face Him in judgment.

Job lived his life with a constant awareness that he would face God.

**VERBAL THOUGHT #3** – The life of every human is one that is unclean . **14:4**

No man can make himself clean. No man can stand before the judgment of God and be clean in and of himself. So the question arises, how is it possible for one to be clean in the sight of the Living God? The answer is by Divine judicial imputation.

Face the judgment of God based on your own merit and you will lose. But if we can face the judgment of God having the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us, we may be clean.

Job believed only God could justify a sinner. Here is a great passage for the doctrine of total depravity. All people are born of a woman and no one is clean. Our depravity is inherited; it is ancestral depravity. If one dares to think differently, then one needs to carefully consider **verse 3**. God’s eye is on every one of us and we all will face him.

Now Job's friends were claiming he had sin in his life and Job is saying we all have sin in our life. No one is righteous before God on his own merit. That is what those animal sacrifices were all about.

**VERBAL THOUGHT #4** – The life and time of a man are determined by God. **14:5**

God sets time limits for every human and no human will go beyond those limits. Notice that the time limits are broken down into days, months and limits. The exact number of days a person lives and the number of months a person lives are determined by God. God, in His sovereignty, completely controls human life spans.

Most people think themselves so high and mighty. Most think they can somehow control their own destiny and time frame of existence. Truth is it is all controlled by God. God ordains the date of birth and the date of death.

In view of the fact that God sovereignly controls this, we should be people focused on our relationship with Him, since we do not know when our lives will end. We come into this world by Divine Decree and we leave this world by Divine Decree.

**VERBAL THOUGHT #5** – The troubles and trials of a man are determined by God. **14:6**

In this verse, Job pleads with God to give him just a brief moment of enjoyment. In this verse Job views himself as a hired man who is under the dominant control of God. He simply asks God for some relief.

If God would turn His gaze from a man, man could live out his life in some supposed form of tranquility. In the book of Job, the gaze of God is viewed as all of the negatives that God is sending to Job's life (7:19; 10:20). Job believed God sovereignly controlled every negative in his world and if God would just back off for a time, Job could enjoy a little life. Job is not asking to escape death; he is just asking for a little relief.

Life for one right with God is not a tranquil pursuit of serenity in happy land. Life for one right with God is war. It is a war coming directly from Satan.

**VERBAL THOUGHT #6** – The death of a man ends the potential for growth. **14:7-12**

In these verses Job is going to use two illustrations from nature to make a point that when human life is over, it is over. He compares human life to a tree (**14:7-10**) and to water vapor (**14:11-12**).

When a tree is cut down, sometimes life comes out of it. An old stump can be refreshed by just the scent of water and life can begin. But when a man dies, his potential for life production is over. He is like water that evaporates; it is gone forever.

Job's point was in view of this; God should permit him to enjoy some life for a while. God should give him a scent of refreshment. God should pull the plug of his suffering so that he could enjoy life and live it in a way that is somewhat enjoyable.

Once life is over, it is over. Man does not get another opportunity to come back to life and live it and enjoy it all over again. That is why it is so important that we make our life count for God, here and now.

**VERBAL THOUGHT #7** – The death of Job was something he desired. **14:13-17**

Job wanted God to hide him in Sheol; he wanted to die (**14:13**). In death, Job would be concealed from God's wrath and he believed he was experiencing God's wrath on this earth. Job was patiently waiting for God to call him into eternity.

In fact he "longed" for this moment (**14:14-15**). Job knew that once he was in eternity his sin was gone. His iniquity would not be remembered and all of his trouble would be over. Job knew of the justifying work of God. He knew that God declares a person righteous and remembers their sin no more. Death was not something he feared, it was something for which he longed.

Part of the reason why he wanted to die was because of his friends. The people who surrounded Job offered nothing positive for him. They were tools of Satan and their words were crushing Job's spirit.

Steven Lawson tells the story of a chaplain of a penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, who was walking down a street in Atlanta feeling totally depressed and worried about circumstances in life and he walked by a funeral home that had these words on the widow: "Why walk around half-dead? We can bury you for \$69.50. P.S. We give green stamps." He said when he saw that sign, he thought, why walk around half-dead and depressed. He should try to live his life to the fullest and this only happens when one is focused on the glory and grace of God (*Job*, p. 129).

**VERBAL THOUGHT #8** – Job had lost all hope of deliverance. **14:18-22**

Job was worn down. His hope was gone. His life had crumbled. Once he was a strong stone, but that strength had been washed away. God had overpowered Job and what he once was, was now gone. His strength and his stamina were gone. He was so distraught that he didn't even hurt over what had happened to his own family members.

Perhaps he had a breakdown and didn't remember they had all died. His body was in so much pain that he could only mourn for himself.

Job was helpless, hopeless and hurting and instead of his friends being a comfort to him, they were a thorn. Job had been brought from the summit of prosperity to the depths of despair.

One of his friends could have said, “Look Job, we need you. You are a wonderful and rare man of God and we need you. You stay faithful and wait on God and He will deliver you and raise you up.”

But instead of saying anything like that, they tried to convince Job that everything was his fault. They tried to tell Job that he had secretly sinned and he needed to repent. This had worn Job down and his hope was gone.

There is nothing funny about this text. It is tragic. But in the end, the ultimate tragedy is not what will happen to Job, but what will happen to Job’s friends. They have done him a real wrong and they will face an angry God.

**The real victory here is in the fact that as depressed as Job was, he had not cursed God. Satan did not win! Truth is, Job thought much about God and His sovereignty than before any of this happened.**

**Lessons to learn:**

1. We must be very careful and cautious as to our counsel to a hurting brother or sister, because we can destroy them and anger God.
2. Terrible tragedies may come directly from Satan.
3. When a person loses hope, theology and thinking can become distorted.
4. When going through unexplainable things, we can always cling to the sovereignty of God.