

JOB: Man Of God  
July 24, 2005  
Message 4  
Scripture reading Job 23:1-12

INTRO: It was a nice day in the town of Williams Lake, B.C. Ken walked into the store to pick up a few items. His wife, Trudy, was shopping in town. Ken and Trudy were friends of ours. We had influenced their lives spiritually so that after a few years, they were off to Bible school. Ken became a pastor and was presently pastoring a small church not far from the town of Williams Lake. After finding what he wanted in the store, he was standing at the counter to pay. And then, without any warning, he fell to the floor unconscious.

The doctors discovered Ken had a brain tumor. After much testing surgery was planned and then began the extremely unpleasant task of seeking to remove a tumor from Ken's brain that had grown fingers into the brain. The doctors cut the bone of his head from ear to ear and pushed the front plate of the top part of his head over his eyes, and then sought to remove a brain. Ken would undergo this operation twice before he passed away from the same tumor.

If only he had known he had this tumor earlier. But there had been no sign of it. He could not know. If only there had been some way in which he could have found out. But as it was, when he did find out it was too late. What would his family not have given for some device, some way of having known earlier that a tumor was starting.

We are in the book of Job. Job has lost all his possessions including his family. He has lost his health. And now his friends have come to tell him that he is one great sinner. I have suggested to you that Job was growing a spiritual tumor. It was just starting and not yet too late to correct it. And so, God Almighty, who knew what was happening long before Job had noticed any sign of this tumor, is graciously performing spiritual surgery. And He is doing it before it is too late.

I told you in the last message that we are in unpleasant places in Job right now. And it may be that by the time we are done with this book, God will have warned us of some matter before it takes too great a hold of our lives. You see, it may have been that Job would have fallen

spiritually, had God not revealed his tumor to him before it became worse.

Only God can see into the soul and know what is going on. Maybe that is why the Psalmist said, "Search me O God, and know my heart; and see if there is any wicked way in me." Jeremiah's description of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that God's Word is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. It is God's Word that can discover to us lurking sin. If such should be the case in any one of us, may He be gracious and perform surgery.

We have seen God run several spiritual tests on Job, such as losing all his possessions and then his health. And now he is in the test of human relationships. Maybe we could call it the test of peer pressure, for these friends were his peers. We have viewed round one between Job and his friends in a survey fashion. Job's friends have claimed he is a sinner, and Job has claimed he is righteous. The first round is completed but no winner is declared. And so we go to round two in Job's test by his fellow man.

## 2. Round Two (15:1-21:34)

### a. Eliphaz (15:1-35)

A hockey game is over after three periods. In the case of a tie, it sometimes goes into sudden death overtime. A boxing match is over after a set number of rounds or when one of the boxers is knocked down to the count of ten. An argument is over when one has silenced his opponent. Job has taken on three people and he has not yet been silenced, but neither has he yet silenced them. And now, Eliphaz will take a second try at Job (Read 15:1-6).

Job's friends have said that he is suffering because he has sinned. Job has argued that the wicked prosper too, so that one cannot prove that a person is wicked simply because he is suffering. Charles Ryrie says that Eliphaz, in this passage, is debating that it is the wicked who experience pain (v. 20), threat of calamity (v. 21), anguish (vv. 22-24), and premature death (v. 32). And Eliphaz numbers Job among this group of the wicked.

Job answers in 16:1-17:16 (read 16:1-6). I think what Job is saying is, "If I were in your place, I would seek to strengthen you, not tear you down as you are doing to me." (Read 15-17.) Job again maintains that he is suffering though he has done no wrong.

Let me point out something in this 16th chapter that Job speaks of several times throughout the book. In 16:21 he says, "Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor!" Job wishes for someone to plead his case for him or that he might be allowed to plead his own case. In 9:33 he says this, "Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both." Job is sure of his innocence, and he wishes for a court case where his case could be pleaded before God. Job's claim is that he is being treated unjustly. If only he could present his case to God, he could get God to see that all this is not fair.

Many commentators point out that Jesus Christ became that mediator for man that Job wished for. The NT tells us there is one mediator between God and man, and that is the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5. See also 1 John 2:1). Jesus Christ is our mediator. He pleads our case for us before God. And Hebrews clearly teaches us that since He is a man who suffered, He can feel with us. And Job, in 16:19 is confident that if such a court were possible, he would be proved innocent for he says in 16:19, "Surely even now my witness is in heaven, and my evidence is on high."

b. Bildad (18:1-21)

(Read 18:1-5) What Bildad is saying here is, "No Job, you are wrong. Why don't you just be quiet. Go get some understanding and then we will speak again. By now you should well know that the light of the wicked is put out." Bildad then explains further the proof of all this.

Job answers Bildad and we read 19:1-6 to get the gist of it (read). Job's answer to Bildad is, "If

I have actually sinned, which I haven't, yet my error would remain with me." Job then explains what he is going through, and begs for pity not judgment from his friends (21-22).

Then in Job 19:23-27 we have some tremendous revelations (read)! Argument is given by scholars in two ways on this passage. 1 Job is speaking of his restoration to physical health at that time, or 2 this passage speaks prophetically of the resurrection of mankind. I believe the latter is in view.

Now note the word "Redeemer" (v. 25). The Hebrew word for redeemer here is *goal*. I will not take time to expand on this topic here but you may wish to do so. In the book of Ruth, Boaz was Ruth's kinsman redeemer. He was her *goal*. And Job is saying that he knows that his *goal* is alive, and that in the end He will come to earth. And not only that, but after his death he will see God. Job was not without hope for the hereafter. It was the "now" that was the difficulty for Job. Is it not so for us as well. How many times in the here and now test us to the limits?

c. Zophar (20:1-29)

Zophar will now make his second argument. We may sum up his argument by reading 20:1-4 (read). "Job, you should know from your own life that the triumphing of the wicked is short. You have had your short time, but now, because of your wickedness, it is over."

Job does not yet understand what God is doing. But what he is undergoing now, is something we might well call "peer pressure". (Liken it to high school or something here.) Will Job fall under the influence of his friends? Or will he continue to trust God? Again and again they come at him. Again and again he answers them.

And now, in 21:1-24, he will answer Zophar in a very strong fashion (read 21:1-13). Here are the ungodly. Some of them live very wickedly and yet nothing seems to go wrong for them. They spend

their days in wealth, and when death comes, it comes in a moment without a period of suffering.

And, in all their luxury, what do they do? Do they turn to God and give him thanks? Well, let us read 14-15 to find out (read). And so, Mr. Zophar, your theology goes up in smoke! Life itself bears witness against you.

3. Round Three (22:1-31:40)

a. Eliphaz (22:1-30)

Eliphaz will now make his last argument (Read 1-5). Eliphaz asks, "Is it any pleasure to God that you are righteous?" His meaning is it is no pleasure to God because you are not righteous but wicked. Then he asks, "Is it gain to Him that you make your ways blameless?" And the answer he looks for is, "No, because you are not blameless. You argue you are. You make your way blameless, but in actual fact, you are very wicked. We find this in verse 5 which says, "Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquity without end?" Of course it is Job. You are a very wicked sinner!

And now Eliphaz will foolishly clearly reveal his own wicked thoughts of Job (read 6-9). And in his concluding words, Eliphaz will once more urge Job to repent and humble himself and then God will deliver him.

Then Job answers again that he wishes he could talk to God instead of these worthless comforters (23:1-7). Then in 10-12 he again pleads his innocence and his righteousness. In chapter 24, Job then bemoans how God allows the wicked to go unpunished. It is not like his friends have said. We see this as true in our own day. How wickedly do many not live and they seem to flourish in their wickedness. Our own country has approved of gay marriages, and it would seem as if God is sleeping.

b. Bildad (25:1-6)

We note now that the fight is going out of Job's miserable comforters. Job has silenced Eliphaz. Eliphaz will speak no more. And now Bildad will give a mere 6 verses, and he will fall silent. And when we come to Zophar we will find he has nothing more to say. Bildad's final message is simply, "How can a man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of woman (v. 6)?"

Job will answer Bildad and will silence his self-appointed counselors once for all. We will look at that answer in another message.

CONCL: Job has been tested by loss of possessions and he passed. Then he was tested by loss of health and he is maintaining his commitment to God. Then began his test by man, and Job, in answering Bildad will silence his three friends, but he has still one more friend to listen to.

I wonder what you are going through? Are you being tested by God in some way? Years ago when I heard Jack Taylor speak on this book he asked these three questions: 1 Will a man trust God when he is immersed in troubles of all kinds? 2 Will a man trust God when his friends turn against him? 3 Will a man trust God when God says nothing. It seems as if there are times in the Christian's life when heaven is brass, the Bible is dry, and prayer seems useless. It seems as if God has left. What do you do in those times when your feelings seem to be against you and God seems to be silent? It is here that our faith is tested to its limits. It is here, when nothing seems stable and God seems to be gone, that we cling by faith. We say, "I know God is there. I know He cares and I will trust Him."

I have wondered how many times we may experience problems in life; maybe we do not get something we worked hard for or we lose something we had, and we never know in this life that in that loss God spared us from some spiritual harm. Surely we cannot do better than to commit the keeping of our souls to Him. Listen to 1 Peter 4:19, "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to *Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator." We will learn much more about that faithful Creator later in Job.