

# Responding to False Accusations

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*Job: View From The Ashes*

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*Heavenly Father, this morning as we have had our hearts prepared for the hearing, the preaching, the studying and the doing of your word, God, there are a lot of from our perspective immovable things that are out there. There are a lot of mountains that, God, we've been praying about for years and sometimes decades. God, today we pray as the one spoke in your word, O Lord, help my unbelief. Give us the eyes to see. Give us the ears to hear God as we hear from your word. Lord, may it not fall on deaf ears and cold hearts. God, today may we embrace it with a passion and fervor. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of Job, chapters 12 and 13. Now, for those of you that are guests and visitors with us, I want to welcome you to a journey, a journey that's not just the study of one of the most famous men in all the Bible, a man by the name of Job, but a study of the book of Job and the life of Job. We know him as one who suffered greatly, and that's rightfully so but over the course of time as we begin to kind of peel away the layers, we're discovering, there's more to the story than just gracefully suffering.

As we walk through the book of Job, we know that there are two main series of bad times, shall we say, and suffering that fell upon Job. In the first wave, he lost all 10 of his children, he lost his fortune, his fame, and all of his material blessings. Some days later, the second wave came and he lost his health. The Bible says that he was sore from the top of his head to the bottom of his foot. It was so bad that he took a piece of pottery and he would scrape himself. And beginning at the end of chapter two, Job finds himself, as the Bible describes, it on an ash heap. In today's terminology, think about the local landfill where not only was the trash, the garbage and the waste sent, but it was also burned. As he sat, three friends descended on his position, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. For seven days they mourn, they kept silent, but then they began to speak, and the majority of the book of Job is a dialogue, it's really a debate between these three friends and Job. They all have the same premise, that somehow, somehow, based on his condition, he has sinned against God, and yet they retain their own innocence. Every time they speak, Job pushes back. Today, when we get to chapter 12, he's not just addressing Zophar, who is the last to speak, all three of his "friends" have spoken and he addresses them collectively and the book of Job kind of takes a turn in chapter 12 because you get the feel that the

conversation is no longer private, the conversations have become a public spectacle. So in fact, later on in the book of Job, we're going to meet a man by the name of Elihu who says that he was there to watch and hear every word that was spoken. You and I today in our culture particularly, we are obsessed with public displays of trials, whether they be celebrities, power brokers, politicians, whoever they are. We can't get enough of watching the story played out before us and what is the question? Who do we believe? And that's the question that was before them in Job chapter 12. Do we believe the three friends or do we believe Job?

Now we have some beautiful hindsight, we have chapter 42. We can go to the end of the book of Job, we're a thousand years this side of the ash heap and we know that when God does speak, when God does interject, he declares that Job was right all along and his friends were in error. Today in Chapter 12 and 13 Job is going to speak. He is going to call out those proverbial friends. He's going to call out his culture. He's going to call out everybody around him and say, "All of you are looking at this wrong. You've all been deceived." What Job is gonna do for us today is not just show us his response to these three arguments, he's going to give us a tutorial in how to have discernment, how to navigate in a world that is so filled with deceit, with lies, with misrepresentation and with false witness. Today, we're going to discover who are those bearing false witness. How did they get away with it? What is their strategy and why is it so important.

Today, I want to encourage you to begin with me in chapter 12, verse 1. It says,

1 And Job answered and said, 2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. 3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? 4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.

I want you to focus on that first phrase in verse 2, "But I have understanding as well." When we speak about the "who," what Job is referring to is not just these three individuals, not just Elihu, but the crowd that has gathered around, that we get the understanding that everybody is contrary to him, everybody is pushing back. Does this not sound like our life as a Bible-believing Christian today? As we speak truth, as we live truth it seems that all the voices around us are contrary and in contradiction too.

He shows the process by which we can identify who's telling the truth and who is not. What does he say? He says, "What you have done in," verse 2 through 4, "is you've leveled the proverbial playing field." Now the Bible says to rightly divide the word of God. We live in a culture that likes to take that which is completely contrary to post each other, smash it into one big piece, and claim that it is the same. C. S. Lewis warned us about this 70 years ago. The world was on the backside of what we know as World War II, millions of lives lost, who knows how much property damage. We were celebrating in the streets and we were giving parades to the "victory at hand." Years earlier, he had written a famous work, it was an apologetic work, consider "The Screwtape Letters." It was a book where he gave us the behind the scenes, how does the demonic work? How

does the darkness operate to sway us, to confuse us, and to lie to us? He'd written this book years earlier, but after World War II he added a final chapter. He added an appendix of sorts in which he called it "a toast." In the light of what we know is World War II, here's what he proposed 70 years ago. He said the downfall of man is going to be when they no longer draw distinctions between persons, but they make everybody the same, everybody equal, there are no distinctions, there are no differences, everybody is just the same. And if you don't believe it's come true, then you've never received a participation trophy at your grandchild's banquet. We live in a world today where we've said it doesn't matter how little or how much, how great or how less, it makes no difference, everybody is the same. Well, I got news for you, it's just not true. In fact, some of the greatest wisdom that was ever given to me some years ago, someone said, "Jeff, no matter how smart you think you get, there's always somebody smarter. No matter how dumb you feel, relish the fact there's somebody dumber," that's a good one, isn't it? Sports, no matter how strong you get, there's always somebody stronger. And no matter how much your muscles atrophy, there's always somebody weaker.

And the process by which Job is calling out, he says, "You three 'miserable comforters,' you basically said there's no distinction between what is righteous and what is not righteous, what is holy and what is unholy." And here's what happens, here's the product, it happened in Job on the ash heap and it's happening in our world today: we become a society, hear me clearly, this is one of those Myersisms that you don't want to just write down, you may want to put it on that preferable refrigerator, we have become a culture that rewards the rebellious and we overlook the obedient. If one does as they should not do, we say that's no big deal, you can join us all. But someone strives for godliness, righteousness, holiness, we just overlook it. That's what has been created and that's what he was saying, that there on the ash heap the one person, and God verifies this in chapter 42, who's righteous, you're overlooking him and the ones who are in the wrong, everybody has gathered to celebrate.

So how did they pull it off? How did they find a way to not only communicate this thought, this philosophy, this ideology, but how did they convince everybody around them to agree with them? Notice what it says in verse 7 through 9 of chapter 12. This is Job's response.

7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: 8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. 9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

Now it may not appear at first glance what Job is saying or what the argument he's utilizing, but basically what he's saying is, "The very argument that there is no distinction, that there is no difference, not just between humanity in the flesh, but between holiness and unholiness, righteousness, unrighteousness is the fact that you cannot even observe that which is around you. The beasts of the field, you cannot observe the fish of the sea, you cannot observe the walls of what we know as earth. You cannot push against those." And yet what were they doing? They were flipping the proverbial

script. They were turning it upside down. The process by which humanity, not only in Job's day but in today's day, has succeeded at this. Isaiah, he warned us in Chapter 5, he said, "There will come days where they will declare that that which is up is down, that which down is up, that which is black is white, white is black, that which is of God is vile and that which is vile is celebrated by God." What Job is saying is that because of this lack of distinction, they actually began to propagate and they began to communicate that which is contrary to the very order of creation itself.

Allow me to illustrate the process by which this is undertaken in our culture today. You may or may not be aware of this recent news story, but out on the West Coast, and we know we live in a place that we call the United States of America. If you don't believe me, we have about 50 different countries, we just all happen to be "under the same, I guess agreement together," but we have different laws and different regulations depending on where you live, and on the West Coast, can we all agree, they got a whole set of laws we never even thought of? But nonetheless, out on the West Coast and maybe because they border the ocean, I don't know, but they have a real affinity for protecting animals which they consider endangered or in harm's way. They have a lot of those rules, a lot of those regulations and a lot of them have to do with what we know as fish. I mean obviously, because if they're going extinct or maybe whatever it may be and they've created established principles and regulations, that there are certain fish and certain places they cannot be harvested, they cannot be caught, whatever it may be. On the last recent days, those that are interested in the protection of the animal kingdom have discovered that there is a certain bee that is endangered. There's a certain bee whose habitat they believe is being infringed on upon humanity. Here's the problem: they could not get the legislation passed to protect this certain bee, so they did the famous end around. They actually got a court of law to declare that a bee is a fish so that it'll be protected. I have no words. Just when you thought humanity couldn't get any dumber.

Now what is Job saying? "Look at the beasts of the field. Look at the fish." When's the last time you saw a bumblebee underwater for five minutes? When's the last time you saw a fish in a tree making honey? But is that not what our world has done today? And I know this may push against the grain for some folks, particularly those that may be watching online, but can I make a declarative based on Job's statement: if you don't know the difference between a bee and a fish, how dare you tell me what you think about the genders? [applause] If you don't know the difference between a bee and a fish, why would I listen to you on your philosophy of how to live my life? And that's exactly what is happening. It's almost like Job has gone from scratching his sores to scratching his head going, "Have y'all lost your mind? How dare you come to this conclusion? How dare you state what you're stating? It's as if the fish are flying and the birds are swimming. That's what it looks like."

So what's the product? What have we produced? It wasn't just in Job's day, it was in ours. Confusion. Chaos. 1 Corinthians, chapter 14, verse 33 says, "God is not the author of confusion." And listen to me, when you walk into a classroom today and you don't know what pronoun to use based on how they identify that day, that is confusion. And guess what? The birds know that they're birds and the fish know that they're fish, but we've

been told we don't even know what we are today. We have created confusion. We have created chaos.

Now I know particularly here, this is the "proverbial preaching to the choir," but what we see is who is making these declarations, the lack of distinctions. We see the "how," they turn the creation to order upside down. They have to make opposites to be the same. They have to take that which is in contrary to each other and and classify them as equal too. So the next question is: what did they do to somehow convince the crowd that they were right? Because there's no evidence that anybody came to Job's side. There's no evidence that anybody came and sat with Job and said, "You know what? I I think you're the one who's speaking truth."

I want you to go to chapter 13, verse 4. Job is continuing his response. It's a short verse, but man is it powerful. He says,

4 But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.

What a statement. You are forgers of lies. Well, we've already established the fact that they're speaking untruth, we've already established the fact that they're speaking that which is contrary to creation, the Creator, etc. But notice the process by which he describes it: you're forgers of lies.

Now the forging process that is the means by which oftentimes knives and swords and golf clubs and other items are fabricated and made, and when it comes to the forging particularly of a metal property, there are two main elements that have to be present, heat and time. Allow me to illustrate. Anytime you're going to take a chunk of metal and fabricate it into something that we would deem useful, you have to heat it up so that becomes malleable and you heat it up and you bring it out and you shape it just a little bit. But then it cools off. So what do you do? You put it back in the heat and it gets a little bit hotter and you shape it a little bit more and this process goes oftentimes hundreds, sometimes thousands of times. You say, "Well, how does this work in our culture?" It works in our culture because the very day a child is born, we put him in the heat and say, "Well, wait till you're a teenager to decide what you are." We put him in the heat and we pull it out and we shape them a little bit when they're young. We put them back in the heat, we shape them a little bit when they're in middle school. We put them back in the heat, we shape them a little bit when they're in high school. We put them in the heat again in college and pretty soon, by the time they're a full-fledged adult, they've been heated up and bent so much they can't see the up from the down. They've been completely twisted, they've been completely turned.

He says, "You have forged a lie." If you tell a lie enough and convincingly enough for a long enough time, everybody will begin to believe it. He says, "You have forged lies," this repetitive, consistent molding shaping. So what's the product? He says, "You're a physician of no value." You know how you can identify with this? Because every single person, at least in this culture that's listening or watching, has gone to a medical professional and then sought out a second opinion because you didn't like what they said.

You weren't in the frame of mind to continue or to stop or whatever the diagnosis may be. When you go to see a medical professional and you walk out to get a second opinion, deep down inside you're saying, "You know what, he or she is unable to help where I am. Right now they're of no value."

So today I'm gonna ask a very important yet rhetorical question. All the lies that our culture is propagating, all the misrepresentations, all the upside down, inside out rhetoric and philosophy, can I ask you: how does it really bring value to us? How does it really help us in times of trouble and in distress? I mean, seriously, all the things that are being proverbially pushed down our throats about our feelings, our motions, our identification, all these things, do they really bring value? Do they add to our life? Of course not. Here's what he's saying, "Guys, what you're saying sounds good, and everybody around me is cheering today, but at the end of the day, it doesn't help anybody get where they want to be." And neither do the lives of our culture today.

Which brings us to the "why," why does Job go to such great lengths? Why does he expose them? And why do the forgers of lies, why do they do 'what they do'? Continuing chapter 13, verse 7. Listen to what Job says to them.

7 Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him? 8 Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? 9 Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?

Let me tell you what Job's saying the process is. He says the reason that they dismiss the lines of distinction, the reason they turn the creation inside out, the reason that they go through the process of forging lies, hear me clearly, according to Job is because they want to be God in their life. They do not want to surrender to, they do not want to submit to, they do not want to be subject to anybody, much less God for how they should live their life, how they should respond to life and how they should navigate life. The process of all of this is eventually getting humanity, getting his friends to a point where they become their own God and that's exactly what we've done in our culture today. We have become a people who say that, "Truth is my truth. I will determine my path. I will determine my identity. I will determine this for myself." And notice what he says the product is, he says, "You're a bunch of hypocrites because you don't even subject yourself to the very rules that you're embracing."

You know, one of the favorite verses of the forgers of lies is Matthew, chapter 7, verse 1. If you're not familiar with it, it says, "Do not judge." Woo, our world loves that, don't they? It's probably the one Bible verse they quote all the time. "Do not judge. Who are you to judge me? The Bible says do not judge." Here's the problem: you've got to keep reading that passage. From the mouth of Jesus, he said, "Do not judge for with judgment you judge it shall be meet unto you. How dare you see a splinter in your brother's eye and you don't pull the log out of your own?" Jesus' harshest words were for hypocrites, people that were holding others to a standard that they didn't even hold themselves to. And basically what Job is saying, he's saying, "Guys, you understand all these things you're preaching, all these things you're propagating, if you were to take your own life and allow

it to be examined by what you're holding me to, it wouldn't even hold up to your very standard that you're preaching to me." In other words, the deceitful communication is built on a mound, a hill and a pile of deceitful thought, philosophy, expression, etc.

I want you to notice though, beginning in verse 15 that Job draws the proverbial line in the sand. This is a statement, not just three friends, that's a statement not just to the crowd that has gathered. You almost get the feeling this is a statement not only to the throne of God himself but the whole creative order.

15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. 16 He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.

What Job is basically saying he's like, "Alright guys, none of us knows the appointed time," he's gone through that several times, "none of us knows when we're gonna breathe our last breath, but who's willing right now to draw a line in the sand, take a step back and say, okay, let's allow God to decide?" It's one of the reasons the friends didn't want to, they wanted to determine the outcome before the vote was taken, they wanted to determine the establishment before their own opinions. Basically, what Job is saying is, "You know what? Let's allow God to speak." Yet we've become a culture today that says, "You know what? We want the voice of anybody and everybody but God."

Today I want to close with a story from the state of Kentucky. Those of you here in person behind me, you're gonna be seeing a video without the music of the mission trip that our students, our high school students, went on this past week to an area that was greatly poverty stricken in what we know is the state of Kentucky and, yes, you're going to see some humorous fun activity, but you're also going to see some very serious ministry. In the midst of the projects that we're doing on behalf of those that we were serving alongside of, kind of the goal of the week or the highlight was to be a block party. What we were to do is on a certain day at a certain time we were gonna cook all this food, we were going to go to a disclosed location. We had sent teams out in advance that were advertising. We'd gotten the word out every way we knew how, on this day and on that time, we would be gathered in this place, we're going to give you physical food, we're going to play games with the kids, and then we're going to share the gospel. Well, you know, if you've ever been on a mission trip, it never goes as planned and guess who did not cooperate? That would be the weather. That's correct. We found ourselves in a position where a decision had to be made and what we know as the block party was canceled.

So what did we do? We had all this food. We had a desire to reach the lost in the community. So as you have and will see on this video, we decided to take the food to their house. We decided to go out in the streets and go to the residences, the neighborhoods. We knew if we found one, there would be more that would come out. On every one of the boxes was not only food inside, but those who ran the ministry we partnered with, wrote a scripture on the outside, a variety of them, some of which I'm sure you'd be very familiar with, some maybe not so much. There was one individual I

had the privilege of giving a box to. He looked a whole lot like Job to me. He was significantly older than me, greatly physically impaired. Have you ever met somebody who you just know that life's giving him a raw deal? This was this man. I went and I handed him the box. I had not looked in advance of the writing on the box, but the scripture was Isaiah 61:1-3. I handed him the box. He looked at it somewhat curiously and he pointed he said, "Sir. Do you know what this verse is?" Now, for those of you who do not know in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, I have the spiritual gift of sarcasm, okay? I looked at this man, I said, "Sir," now you understand I'm in one of those, I said, "You mean to tell me you don't know what Isaiah 61 says?" I was just messing around joking with him. He got real serious, he said, "It doesn't matter what it says, it's true." I want that to sit heavy this morning. Here's a man who financially, economically, physically rivaled who we know as Job. Do you know what he said? "Doesn't matter what it says. It's true." He said, "By the way, do you know what it says?" I said, "I do," and I quote it for him, it's actually the same passage that Jesus utilized in his first sermon in Luke 4. Do you know what that passage says? "He came to set the captives free. He came to heal the broken-hearted." He came, as we heard, to move the immovable and to do the impossible.

Today we live in a world with so much communication, so much information, misinformation, disinformation, maybe we need to learn the lesson of a contemporary Job. Doesn't matter what it says. It's true. The only way that we are going to be the light in this dark world is to say, "God, I may not understand it, I may not comprehend it, but whatever you've said, it's true."

Let's pray with their heads bowed, her eyes closed. Maybe this morning, the Spirit of God took the word of God in your life and began to do a forging, so to speak. Maybe today you're one of those either in person or online, who've spent years, maybe even decades, pushing back against what the Bible says, pushing back against who God is, forging your own opinions, your own philosophies, listening to the pundits of this world, and not your Creator. Maybe today is the day, much like that man in Kentucky where you say, "You know what, it doesn't matter what it says, it's true." The Bible says that for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The Bible says that the wages of our sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is simply said, it just means that we have a sin problem that only Jesus can fix. Can I share with you what the Bible says in Romans chapter 10? It says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Maybe today's that day where you confess and repent of your sin problem and you call on the Lord to save you. If today's that day, can I encourage you to do so? It's not about repeating what somebody else tells you to repeat. It's not about taking a course or passing a test. The Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord. This is your heart's cry to the Lord, maybe it would go a little something like this, "God, today I'm finally coming clean. I'm finally gonna confess. I've got a problem. God, I've been places I shouldn't have been. God, I've done things I shouldn't have done. I've said things I shouldn't have said. God, I've thought things I shouldn't have thought. God, today I realize the consequences of my sin according to Scripture is death. But you said that Jesus Christ came to give me life. So God, today I want you to know I believe. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he was willing to come on my behalf. God, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was willing to live a sinless life on my behalf. God,



today I believe that Jesus Christ loves me so much that he was willing to take the pain, the punishment of his cross that was actually for my sin. And God, today I believe that three days later, when he rose from the grave, he made it possible for my sin to be forgiven, he made it feasible for my soul to be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to the issues, the struggles and the problems of this world and my own life, but there's one thing I do know: I've got a sin problem that only Jesus can fix. So the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me. I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed, our eyes still closed, in a moment, I'm gonna pray for us afterwards we're going to stand and sing together and you have the opportunity just to step out and step forward. We've got a team set aside, we've got a room set aside, we'd love to hear your story, to pray with you, to pray for you. Maybe today you say, "Well, I'm already a believer, but never followed in believers baptism. Maybe I'm a believer, I I've been baptized, but I've never been officially a part of this incredible family of faith." Whatever the decision, we just want to welcome you and celebrate. Maybe today you say, "You know what, there's really no decision in my life that requires me to step out and step forward." The question for you is what decision needs to be rendered when you step out of this place in a moment when you turn off the broadcasts, the decision about the voices to hear and to heed and how to respond to being a light in a very dark world? Are you willing to walk out of here and say it doesn't matter what it says, it's true?

*Lord Jesus, as we come to this time decision, thank you. Thank you that you're still in the saving business, the healing business, the forgiving business, the reconciliation business, the redemption business and the restoration business, God, today, whatever it is you've laid upon our heart, may we simply respond appropriately? It is in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.*