



Eternal PERSPECTIVE *Job*

BIBLE TEXT | JOB 16:1-22

1 Then Job answered and said: **2** "I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all. **3** Shall windy words have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer? **4** I also could speak as you do, if you were in my place; I could join words together against you and shake my head at you. **5** I could strengthen you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain. **6** "If I speak, my pain is not assuaged, and if I forbear, how much of it leaves me? **7** Surely now God has worn me out; he has made desolate all my company. **8** And he has shriveled me up, which is a witness against me, and my leanness has risen up against me; it testifies to my face. **9** He has torn me in his wrath and hated me; he has gnashed his teeth at me; my adversary sharpens his eyes against me. **10** Men have gaped at me with their mouth; they have struck me insolently on the cheek; they mass themselves together against me. **11** God gives me up to the ungodly and casts me into the hands of the wicked. **12** I was at ease, and he broke me apart; he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces; he set me up as his target; **13** his archers surround me. He slashes open my kidneys and does not spare; he pours out my gall on the ground. **14** He breaks me with breach upon breach; he runs upon me like a warrior. **15** I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin and have laid my strength in the dust. **16** My face is red with weeping, and on my eyelids is deep darkness, **17** although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure. **18** "O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place. **19** Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he who testifies for me is on high. **20** My friends scorn me; my eye pours out tears to God, **21** that he would argue the case of a man with God, as a son of man does with his neighbor. **22** For when a few years have come I shall go the way from which I shall not return.

DEVOTIONAL FOR JOB 16:1-22

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False accusations have always abounded. Whether by misunderstanding, lack of context, or outright malice, people have spoken against one another for any number of reasons: to shift blame, take the focus off oneself, do justice, do harm. Perhaps one of the most difficult to wrap the mind around is what we find in Job's friends. When we were first introduced to these "friends," we see their love for their friend. We see an attempt to comfort and encourage, but then in a strange twist, we see them begin to falsely accuse their friend of some wickedness or sin that they couldn't even name. "It's got to be your fault." "God doesn't just 'punish' people for nothing; you had to have done something." Then



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through their discourse, they throw back on Job his own arguments, leaving him defenseless and without witness (not even his own) in his behalf.

His friends were not only "miserable comforters" (verse 2) and "worthless physicians" (13:4), but also poor witnesses, false even (13:7) in their scorn (verse 20). Understandably, Job's despair and isolation only deepens as he turns to incorrectly attribute their attacks, not to them, but to God (verse 7), and pleads for justice and his case to be fairly heard (verses 18-19, 21).

The believer in Christ should never find such despair for they have not a witness but an Advocate. A witness testifies to what has been seen, and what has been seen in us all, Job included, is ultimately not righteousness, but unrighteousness. Whenever justice is ever pleaded for, demanded even, we should recall the truth. If God were to impartially enact justice, we would all experience it as nothing other than wrath and judgment for "no one is righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10). But God, in His love sent us not a witness, but an Advocate in Jesus Christ. 1 John 2:1-2 tells us, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." What wonderful truth!

Job desired God to vindicate him before the world and his unwise and critical friends. The believer needs no such vindication for we have been justified, and any weaknesses we exhibit to that truth is forgiven not on the basis of our pleading, but that our Advocate "always lives to make intercession for [us]" (Hebrews 7:25). There is no accusation that can be brought against us that can take from us the peace and comfort that we have received from God (Romans 8:31-39). Warren Wiersbe said, "We come to a throne of grace, not a throne of judgment; and we have confidence that our loving Father will do that which is best for us." Therefore, there is no need to despair. False accusation, if it ever comes, can be dismissed for we know our Heavenly Father is for us, and our Savior, and Advocate Jesus Christ, intercedes on our behalf.

Questions:

1. Have you ever been falsely accused? How did you respond?
2. Have you ever demanded justice? Read 1 John 1:5-2:2. Does understanding that the thing that prompted your demand for justice was paid for at the cross calm your demand? Why or why not?
3. When ridiculed, criticized, slandered, or falsely accused, and knowing that in Christ you have an Advocate in heaven, how *should* you respond? Read 1 Peter 2:19-23.