

JOB

CHAPTERS 15, 16 & 17

Introduction

Job's three friends begin the second of three cycles of speeches:

▶▶ Eliphaz speaks in chapter fifteen, with Job answering him in chapters sixteen and seventeen.

▶▶ Bildad speaks in chapter eighteen, with Job answering him in chapter nineteen.

▶▶ Zophar speaks in chapter twenty, with Job answering him in chapter twenty-one.

Their perspective is essentially the same as before: They believe that Job has sinned and is being punished by God for his sins. While they don't change their *tune*, they do change their *tone!* In each new round of speeches their words become increasingly hostile.

In chapter fifteen, Eliphaz quits giving Job advice and starts making accusations:

▶▶ In verses four, five and six he says, "... you cast off fear, And restrain prayer before God. For your iniquity teaches your mouth, And you choose the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; Yes, your own lips testify against you."

▶▶ In verses twelve and thirteen he says, “Why does your heart carry you away, And what do your eyes wink at, That you turn your spirit against God, And let such words go out of your mouth?”

Job, feeling attacked by these accusations, declares in verses nine and ten of chapter sixteen, “...My adversary sharpens His gaze on me. They gape at me with their mouth, They strike me reproachfully on the cheek, They gather together against me.”

Accusations... Attacks... Adversaries... How very appropriate that Job sees his predicament in these terms! We know from chapters one and two that, in heaven, he is being accused and attacked by his real adversary, Satan. The speeches of Job’s so-called friends on earth are a reminder to us of the scene in heaven.

The word “Satan” means *adversary*; “devil” means *accuser*. One of Satan’s primary strategies against you is to attack you by accusations at the throne of God. He is described in Revelation 12:10 as the “accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night...”

Like Job, you are being attacked with accusations by your adversary at the throne of God. His accusations can have profound effects on your life..

How should you react to the accuser of the brethren? Satan is not alone at the throne of God! Jesus is there, too, and when the devil accuses you, Jesus takes up your cause as your **advocate**. As you read in First John 2:1, “... we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

We’ll see two things this morning:

#1 You Have An Adversary Who Attacks You With His Accusations

#2 You Have An Advocate Who Absolves You With His Appeals

#1 You Have An Adversary Who Attacks You With His Accusations

Satan's accusations against you at the throne of God reach you in a variety of ways. In Job's case, his friends were unwittingly Satan's agents. Their words were wounds straight from the enemy.

As you read the words of Eliphaz, you're going to get a small sample of the arsenal of accusations Satan can marshal against you.

▶▶ Satan accuses you of being ineffective:

Job 15:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

Job 15:2 "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, And fill himself with the east wind?

Job 15:3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk, Or by speeches with which he can do no good?

The hot, east desert wind was the *sirocco*; it blew hard, but was useless. "Unprofitable talk" is better translated *of no benefit or service*. Job was being accused of being ineffective for God.

Satan is a master at making you feel ineffective. Don't lose sight of your relationship with Jesus by only looking at immediate results...

▶▶ Satan accuses you of being irreverent:

Job 15:4 Yes, you cast off fear, And restrain prayer before God.

Job 15:5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth, And you choose the tongue of the crafty.

Job 15:6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; Yes, your own lips testify against you.

The NIV translates verse four, "But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God." In other words, Job's attitude toward God was flippant or, as we would say, irreverent.

This is an easy accusation! Do you pray as much as you'd like? Do you read your Bible as much as you should? Do you give all that you can? The devil loves to accuse you in these areas, of being irreverent. Try to remember that you were not created for service; you were created for fellowship. These things are responses

- - *not requirements!* Reverence is measured by inward devotion, not by outward commotion.

▶▶ Satan accuses you of being inadequate:

Job 15:7 "Are you the first man who was born? Or were you made before the hills?"

Job 15:8 Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

Job 15:9 What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not in us?

Job 15:10 Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, Much older than your father.

One phrase that I hear constantly from people about their unbelieving friends and relatives is this: "They really know the Word, better than I do!" We can easily feel inadequate when called upon to represent God.

Recognize that your feelings of inadequacy are often nothing more than satanic accusations. The early disciples were unlearned, uneducated, even ignorant men. But the Scripture says that they had been with Jesus!¹ His presence in their lives made up for any lack of education. The indwelling Spirit was their adequacy in every situation.

▶▶ Satan accuses you of being irrational:

Job 15:11 Are the consolations of God too small for you, And the word spoken gently with you?

Job 15:12 Why does your heart carry you away, And what do your eyes wink at,

Job 15:13 That you turn your spirit against God, And let such words go out of your mouth?

Eliphaz described Job as being "carried away" by his emotions. He was accusing him of being irrational.

Since you walk by faith, you are often subject to the accusation that you are being irrational. After all, what if you are wrong in discerning God's will? "Better safe than sorry" is a crippling philosophy.

¹ Acts 4:13

▶▶ Satan accuses you of being impure:

Job 15:14 "What is man, that he could be pure? And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous

Job 15:15 If God puts no trust in His saints, And the heavens are not pure in His sight,

Job 15:16 How much less man, who is abominable and filthy, Who drinks iniquity like water!

This is another easy accusation, one that is often true! You *are* impure compared to a pure and perfect God. But it is also wonderfully true that you are "in" Jesus Christ. You are accepted before God just as much as He accepts His own beloved Son.

▶▶ Satan accuses you of being insecure:

Job 15:17 "I will tell you, hear me; What I have seen I will declare,

Job 15:18 What wise men have told, Not hiding anything received from their fathers,

Job 15:19 To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them:

Job 15:20 The wicked man writhes with pain all his days, And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor.

Job 15:21 Dreadful sounds are in his ears; In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him.

Job 15:22 He does not believe that he will return from darkness, For a sword is waiting for him.

Job 15:23 He wanders about for bread, saying, 'Where is it?' He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.

Job 15:24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid; They overpower him, like a king ready for battle.

Job 15:25 For he stretches out his hand against God, And acts defiantly against the Almighty,

Job 15:26 Running stubbornly against Him With his strong, embossed shield.

Job 15:27 "Though he has covered his face with his fatness, And made his waist heavy with fat,

Job 15:28 He dwells in desolate cities, In houses which no one inhabits, Which are destined to become ruins.

Job 15:29 He will not be rich, Nor will his wealth continue, Nor will his possessions overspread the earth.

Job 15:30 He will not depart from darkness; The flame will dry out his branches, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.

Job 15:31 Let him not trust in futile things, deceiving himself, For futility will be his reward.

Job 15:32 It will be accomplished before his time, And his branch will not be green.

Job 15:33 He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine, And cast off his blossom like an olive tree.

Job 15:34 For the company of hypocrites will be barren, And fire will consume the tents of bribery.

Job 15:35 They conceive trouble and bring forth futility; Their womb prepares deceit."

There is a general sense of insecurity in these descriptions. Suffering is linked to sin and disobedience; thus it is that we often are insecure in our sufferings, thinking we have indeed brought trouble upon ourselves. While you *can* reap what you've sown, often you suffer in the will of God - - as Job was!

Don't be insecure in your suffering. To be sure, you must examine yourself to be certain you are not suffering for your own wrongdoing. But not all suffering is because of your sin.

These are just a few of the accusations in your adversary's arsenal. As Job responds to them, you see the effect of Satan's accusations.

▶▶ Disappointment:

Job 16:1 Then Job answered and said:
Job 16:2 "I have heard many such things; Miserable comforters are you all!
Job 16:3 Shall words of wind have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer?
Job 16:4 I also could speak as you do, If your soul were in my soul's place. I could heap up words against you, And shake my head at you;
Job 16:5 But I would strengthen you with my mouth, And the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief.

Granted, Job had good reason to be disappointed with his so-called friends. As a believer, you ought to rise above disappointment with friends; after all, they're just people - - with their failures and frailties. I'd go as far as saying that some trials are designed to separate you from the supports that normally sustain you so that you can learn that Jesus is your sufficient friend.

▶▶ Desolation:

Job 16:6 "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved; And if I remain silent, how am I eased?
Job 16:7 But now He has worn me out; You have made desolate all my company.
Job 16:8 You have shriveled me up, And it is a witness against me; My leanness rises up against me And bears witness to my face.

Job was desolate of all human companionship. He lived in desolate conditions. He had no hope for improvement on either count.

How many of God's choicest servants came to feel desolation - - that they alone were left to serve the Lord? There can come the sweetest revelations of the presence of God.

▶▶ Desperation:

Job 16:9 He tears me in His wrath, and hates me; He gnashes at me with His teeth; My adversary sharpens His gaze on me.

Job 16:10 They gape at me with their mouth, They strike me reproachfully on the cheek, They gather together against me.

Job 16:11 God has delivered me to the ungodly, And turned me over to the hands of the wicked.

Job 16:12 I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces; He has set me up for His target,

Job 16:13 His archers surround me. He pierces my heart and does not pity; He pours out my gall on the ground.

Job 16:14 He breaks me with wound upon wound; He runs at me like a warrior.

Job felt as if he were being torn apart by a wild beast. His condition seemed desperate - - there was no way out.

I've felt as if there were no way out of my circumstances - - desperate, cornered by God. Yet God remains sovereign.

▶▶ Discouragement:

Job 16:15 "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin, And laid my head in the dust.

Job 16:16 My face is flushed from weeping, And on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

Job 16:17 Although no violence is in my hands, And my prayer is pure.

Job practiced spiritual disciplines - - sackcloth, weeping, lying prone before God. Yet his condition only worsened. It's discouraging when things get worse, despite your efforts to seek the Lord!

▶▶ Defeat:

Job 17:1 "My spirit is broken, My days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me.

Job 17:2 Are not mockers with me? And does not my eye dwell on their provocation?

Job 17:3 "Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself. Who is he who will shake hands with me?

Job 17:4 For You have hidden their heart from understanding; Therefore You will not exalt them.

Job 17:5 He who speaks flattery to his friends, Even the eyes of his children will fail.

Job 17:6 "But He has made me a byword of the people, And I have become one in whose face men spit.

Job 17:7 My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow, And all my members are like shadows.

Job 17:8 Upright men are astonished at this, And the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite.

Job 17:9 Yet the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.

Job 17:10 "But please, come back again, all of you, For I shall not find one wise man among you.

Job 17:11 My days are past, My purposes are broken off, Even the thoughts of my heart.
Job 17:12 They change the night into day; 'The light is near,' they say, in the face of
darkness.
Job 17:13 If I wait for the grave as my house, If I make my bed in the darkness,
Job 17:14 If I say to corruption, 'You are my father,' And to the worm, 'You are my
mother and my sister,'
Job 17:15 Where then is my hope? As for my hope, who can see it?
Job 17:16 Will they go down to the gates of Sheol? Shall we have rest together in the
dust?"

These are the words and woes of a defeated man.

The accusations were affecting him. Satan seemed to be having his way, both in heaven and on earth.

But something Job said at the end of chapter sixteen can break the affect of these accusations. Look at verses eighteen through twenty-two of chapter sixteen and you'll see that,

#2 You Have An Advocate Who Absolves You With His Appeals

Job 16:18 "O earth, do not cover my blood, And let my cry have no resting place!
Job 16:19 Surely even now my witness is in heaven, And my evidence is on high.
Job 16:20 My friends scorn me; My eyes pour out tears to God.
Job 16:21 Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, As a man pleads for his
neighbor!
Job 16:22 For when a few years are finished, I shall go the way of no return.

A "man that pleads for his neighbor," that represented him in court, was called an *advocate*. Job may not have realized the depth of his insight when crying out for an advocate to represent him before the Father in heaven. There **is** such an advocate. As we quoted earlier, from First John, Jesus Christ **is** our Advocate. It is true that Satan accuses you; but it is *also* true that Jesus stands as your Advocate.

He absolves you of Satan's accusations. Many of Satan's accusations against you are indeed true! That's why they sting so bad. You are guilty of many things. But Jesus absolves you of your guilt; He frees you from the penalty and consequences of your sin by virtue of having taken your place on the Cross. He need only appeal to the Father on the basis of His shed blood to overcome the accusations of the devil against you.

And God the Father is all too willing to rule on your behalf! He provided Jesus to be your Advocate, to save you. Jesus is always praying for you, interceding for you. Don't let Satan's accusations affect you.

Conclusion

Are some of Satan's accusations affecting you today? You can't stop his accusations; but you *can* stand against them, by faith in the Son of God, your Advocate in heaven.