

PROVERBS OF ASHES - DEFENCES OF CLAY

Text: Job 13:1-19

Key Word: Declaration

Key Thought: A Declaration Keeps Our Destiny in Proper Perspective

This is the second chapter of Job's rebuttal to his "**comforters.**" It's important to understand how a godly person needs to stand against those that are completely untrustworthy. Three words caught my attention when Job referred to their words as "**Proverbs of Ashes.**"

This Evil World Is Escalating Its False Accusations Against Those Who Choose to Follow the Scriptures and Set Their Actions As a Proper Example Against Satan's Deception.

I. JOB'S DECLARATION OF HIS DESIRE (Job 13:1-5)

II. JOB'S DECLARATION OF THEIR DECEPTION (Job 13:6-12)

III. JOB'S DECLARATION OF GOD'S DEFENCE (Job 13:13-19)

I. JOB'S DECLARATION OF HIS DESIRE (Job 13:1-5)

There is no doubt in my mind that the enemy of our soul is intensifying his plan to kill, steal and destroy anything and anyone who are desiring to follow after God. That is why it is so important to follow a Biblical account of how to stand strong as we clearly see the end of this age approaching quickly by the signs of the times.

"My eyes have seen all this, my ears have heard and understood it.

2. What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.

*3. **But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God.***

4. You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you!

5. If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom."

Job 13:1-5

Job was able to counteract these verbal attacks of his character by making a declaration that he wanted to present his case to Almighty God. But before doing that he needed to understand what his "friends" were up to. He was determined to stand his ground upon what he knew to be truth. He wouldn't accept their constant attacks to bring him down.

I. JOB'S DECLARATION OF HIS DESIRE (Job 13:1-5) (Contd.)

*** A Fox that had been caught in a trap, succeeded at last, after much painful tugging, in getting away. But he had to leave his beautiful bushy tail behind him.

For a long time he kept away from the other Foxes, for he knew well enough that they would all make fun of him and crack jokes and laugh behind his back. But it was hard for him to live alone, and at last he thought of a plan that would perhaps help him out of his trouble.

He called a meeting of all the Foxes, saying that he had something of great importance to tell the tribe.

When they were all gathered together, **the Fox Without a Tail** got up and made a long speech about those Foxes who had come to harm because of their tails.

This one had been caught by hounds when his tail had become entangled in the hedge. That one had not been able to run fast enough because of the weight of his brush. Besides, it was well known, he said, that men hunt Foxes simply for their tails, which they cut off as prizes of the hunt. With such proof of the danger and uselessness of having a tail, said Master Fox, he would advise every Fox to cut it off, if he valued life and safety.

When he had finished talking, an old Fox arose, and said, smiling: "Master Fox, kindly turn around for a moment, and you shall have your answer."

When the poor Fox Without a Tail turned around, there arose such a storm of jeers and hooting, that he saw how useless it was to try any longer to persuade the Foxes to part with their tails.

Do not listen to the advice of him who seeks to lower you to his own level.

Aesop (c. 620–564 B.C.) was a Greek storyteller

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Our world is full of an unjust judiciary. We hear of their "**decisions of deception**" on a daily basis. They are workers of iniquity. They refuse to seek after God and His wisdom. If we can present our case before The Righteous Judge of all the earth (Genesis 18:25) and find a secure footing, THEN we don't have to worry. We are standing not only on **holy ground** but also **solid ground** that won't be washed away by even a flood of accusations.

Job's accusers would have shown that not only is silence Golden it is also shown to be the basis of wisdom (Job 13:5). Their words needed to be seasoned with salt.

II. JOB'S DECLARATION OF THEIR DECEPTION (Job 13:6-12)

“Hear now my argument; listen to the pleas of my lips.

7. Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf? Will you speak deceitfully for him?

8. Will you show him partiality? Will you argue the case for God?

9. Would it turn out well if he examined you? Could you deceive him as you might deceive a mortal?

10. He would surely call you to account if you secretly showed partiality.

11. Would not his splendor terrify you? Would not the dread of him fall on you?

*12. Your maxims (a short statement expressing a general truth or rule of conduct) are **proverbs of ashes**; your defenses are **defenses of clay**.*

Job 13:6-12

How do you respond to those who lie about you? Job's confidence in Almighty God grew in proportion to his distrust of his judgmental friends decreased. Anyone who uses deceit is mocking God and they will reap what they sow (Galatians 6:7). I find it disturbing that the time of their reaping is not closer to the time of sowing when it is carnal seed that is sown. My timing never seems to line up with God's timing. He is much more graceful and patient because he wants as many people as possible to repent before He brings judgement (II Peter 3:9).

Jobs asks an important question in 13:9 as to how would they feel if they stood before God and He examined them? No one can fool God. No play of words with catch Him off guard. He IS TRUTH so He also KNOWS TRUTH from lies. Don't ever take pride in being a liar. Jesus made it clear in Revelation 22:15 that those who are habitual liars (those who love and practise falsehood) will not make it through the gates of heaven. They will be kept out for eternity.

Job goes on to say their words are like **“Proverbs of ashes”** as a way of describing **worthless words** that can be **easily scattered** by the wind. He also uses the term **“Defences of clay”** as another way of saying not to depend upon **towers of mud** as opposed to those built with solid stone that are not easily cast down. The Bible makes it clear that every idle word that we speak will be judged if we don't repent of that ongoing sin. Jesus said,

“I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken”

Matthew 12:36

II. JOB'S DECLARATION OF THEIR DECEPTION (Job 13:6-12)(Contd.)

The KJV translates “*every empty word*” as “*every idle word*”; the ESV says, “*every careless word.*” The Greek phrase is *rema argos*, meaning “*careless or inactive or unprofitable words.*”

In context, Jesus is contrasting the “**good things**” within a good person with the “**evil things**” in the heart of an evil person. We are admonished to make the best use of our words, because words express what is in our hearts:

“The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

Matthew 12:34

Don't ever be ashamed of standing for truth. Why would a person need to lie if they are following the truth that God teaches us? No one can lie their way out of a lie! We must confess it as sin and turn from it. One of the best ways I find to keep from repeating it is to confess it to someone who trust who won't condemn you but will pray that God will give you daily strength to overcome it. No one is strong enough to defeat it without God's endurance.

III. JOB'S DECLARATION OF GOD'S DEFENCE (Job 13:13-19)

The best defence system in the world can never compete with God. Job knew without any question that he was on God's side even though he was going through and intensive trial. He lived with the truth that Paul noted thousands of years later.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Romans 8:31

One of the most quoted verses of the Book of Job is verse 15.

*“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.
16. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before him!
17. Listen carefully to what I say; let my words ring in your ears.
18. Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated.
19. Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die.”*

Job 13:15-19

How would any of us respond if we were in Job's sandals?

III. JOB'S DECLARATION OF GOD'S DEFENCE (Job 13:13-19)(Contd.)

“for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.”

Philippians 1:19

I love reading scriptures of the great men and women of the Bible as well as modern day conquerors. None of them got to their destination without going through times of trials and temptations. If they can depend upon God to defend them through troubles far beyond anything I have faced, why should I question whether I will be delivered and vindicated?

God has a way of turning our **Setbacks into Comebacks!** We are not finished until God, as the official watching over our lives, says our game of life is over.

Job is the best example I know of in the Bible of someone who mastered the majority of his words through tremendous pain and struggles. He stood out in great contrast to those who attacked him with **PROVERBS OF ASHES and DEFENCES OF CLAY. I hope you’re learning by now that suffering has nothing to do with the level of our sinfulness. If Job doesn’t convince you, then maybe Jesus does?**

*** When walking through an elephant camp, a man noticed that the elephants were only secured with a small rope that was tied around one ankle. He wondered why the elephants didn’t break free from the rope, as the elephants were certainly strong enough to do so.

He asked a trainer why the elephants didn’t try to break free, and the trainer responded by saying that they use the same size rope for baby elephants all the way up to adulthood. Because they’re too small when they’re babies to break free from the rope, they grow up being conditioned that the rope is stronger than they are.

As adult elephants, they think the rope can still hold them, so they don’t try to fight it. Does this final thought catch your attention? **Is it possible that you have been conditioned in such a way that you will allow your past pain, to overcome your opportunity to escape a life entangled by a rope of bondage?**

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Date: July 23/23

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: IN YOUR HANDS (I'm so Secure, You're Here with Me) - F or G

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Galatians 6:7; II Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:15; Matthew 12:36

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