

# The Book of Job: Blessed Be the Name of the Lord

## Lesson Eight

There was a spiteful battle of words over an empty lot in New York City. The year was 1882. The empty lot was extremely narrow and long like an alley: 5 feet wide and 104 feet long. But it was a corner lot and its length ran along a beautiful avenue. The lot next to it was owned by Hyman Sarner. He wanted to build an apartment building with windows overlooking that beautiful avenue. So, he offered to buy the corner lot for \$1,000. Its owner Joseph Richardson, demanded \$5,000 for his practically unusable, narrow lot. Sarner refused. Suspecting that nothing could be built on the narrow lot, Sarner built on his lot, including windows providing a view of the avenue. Out of spite, Richardson built his own apartment building on the narrow lot, 4 stories high in order to block the view from Sarner's building. Richardson's building was so narrow that only one person at a time could go up its staircase. The largest table in any room was only 18 inches wide. It came to be known as Spite House.

Did Sarner bring that spite upon himself? The point could be argued from either side. But when we think of Jesus as the target of spite, we just don't get it. Read Matthew 26:57-67, 27:27-31, 38-44. Why would Jesus be the target of spite, of hate? It was one thing for the religious leaders to seek to get Jesus out of the way. It was perhaps politically expedient to get rid of Jesus. But how do you explain the spitting and the slapping at the trial before the high priest Caiaphas? How do you explain the mockery Jesus received from the chief priests and rulers of the people even in public as Jesus hung on the cross?

Job also was the target of spite. No, Job's friends did not spit on him or mock him. But there are more subtle ways of expressing spite or hate. Job 4:1-7, 8:1-4. Both of those were ways of saying to Job that he got exactly what he deserved. Then, there is good old Bildad. Bildad told Job that the tragic deaths of his children were because they had sinned against God. Again, what was being said was that in regards to his losses and misery

Job was getting what he deserved. Job was the one who was suffering, but his friends said that he was to blame for it.

More subtle forms of spite and hate: In Nazi Germany, while Jewish storefronts were being belted with rocks and while Jews were being herded into ghettos, the propagandists were saying that the Jews had brought this suffering on themselves. And when African-Americans and poor people are separated into their own ghettos in this country, the propagandists have used the same argument: "They brought it on themselves. They're getting what they deserve." I don't know how much of a stigma it is anymore, but it used to be the same case when a husband hit his wife. How many times did husbands get away with saying, "She got what she deserved, she brought it on herself"? A lot of the public attitude towards that has changed due to the educating of the public on domestic violence. Yet, despite the same being done in regards to rape, the same old public opinions and stigma remain today. Repeated even by our own media. They bemoan and get us to bemoan "these poor boys going to prison for rape." "Their lives are ruined." "They'll be haunted by these felony sentences for the rest of their lives." The media may not come right out and say it, but what they're essentially saying and getting us to think is that in most cases the girl was asking for it. She brought it on herself. She got what she...

Either Jesus got what He deserved or we deserve what He got. Spite and hate does not have to come out of us in the form of spitting, slapping, or mocking others. It can come out of our hearts in far more subtle, publicly acceptable ways in just the things we say or fail to say, as in the case of Job's friends. After all, Job's friends were his friends. These men were fine, upstanding citizens of their community, like us, who fell into the ancient trap of blaming those who suffer for their own suffering.

When God confronted Job's friends, "You will now get what you deserve" are not the words they heard from Him. Read what God said instead. Job 42:7-9.

What was Job to pray?

