

Devotion on the Book of Job (Chapter Nine) - 14 December (Ides of December in Advent Season) 2012, Anno Domini



The Second Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The First Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

¶ This Collect is to be repeated every day, after the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas Day.

If we understand the Book of Job with the same mind of Job's three friends, it will be difficult to understand the truth expressed in the book. It is a common failing of man to judge the works of God by the wisdom of the world and not of Heaven. The arguments of Eliphaz and Bildad have shown that their so-called wisdom is based on worldly wisdom. They declare every pain and suffering of man to come from God and to be attributable to some hidden sin. All pain, suffering, and death is attributable to that Archenemy of our Souls – the Devil, not God! Moreover, do Bildad and Eliphaz consider themselves innocent? *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness (Romans 3:10-14) This well describes the friends of Job. They see the mote in Job's eye, but miss the beam of timber in their own eye. If they will give counsel, why no base that counsel in the Word and Love of God instead of some ancient and worldly knowledge? Do we not do the same? Our speeding on the highway is justified, but the speeding of others is foolishness? Our ills are sent to the blameless as to Job, but the illness of others comes as a result of some hidden sin (or so we think). Sorry, I am an unabashed defender of Job as a man righteous under the mercy and grace of God and not in his own right.*

Job 9

King James Version (KJV)

9 Then Job answered and said,

2 I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.

6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders

without number.

11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

13 If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

16 If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

19 If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?

25 Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

26 They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:

28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

29 If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?

30 If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;

31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

33 Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:

35 Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

Job, in the opening verses of this Chapter, admits that he is not free of sin as charged. None are! The Job asks: "...*how should man be just with God?* (9:2b) Our righteousness is a filthy rags before God, so how are we justified? *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* (Isaiah 64:6) Certainly, it is plain that we are not justified by OUR righteousness – neither Eliphaz, nor Bildad, nor Job, nor YOU! *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Romans 3:23-24) Is it not amazing that our hope is always anchored in Christ even if we be Job? All of the Bible is centered on this One central Figure – the Lord Jesus Christ!

Do we know God's Word, but disagree with what God has clearly said in that Word? Do we believe that we can prevail in an argument against the Almighty, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, God? *If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?* (9:3-4) Job knows that regardless the opinions of men such as Bildad, the wisdom of God is greater. Bildad's wisdom cannot hold a candle to that of God! We may wonder and inquire of God's purpose in all things, but, whether we know it or not, God's purpose is wise, good, and just.

Please see how well Job knows and loves the majesty of God: *Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.* (9:5-10) Even in his torments, Job sees God's great power and beauty. He knows that the tiniest flower is fashioned by God, but also the great expanse of space with its innumerable heavenly bodies. Job knows God better than the men on the Road to

Emmaus that day after the Crucifixion. They knew not that God was with them in Christ, but Job does, indeed, know. *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not* (9:11) He knows God is near to him even if he cannot see Him with his physical eyes – much like the blind Fanny Crosby whose beautiful hymns speak so often of seeing the Face of Christ.

Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? (Job 9:12) Can any question God and His doings? All that we see, know, have, and lose was created by Him. There is not a single breeze the blows that did not come from His gentle blowing.

How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him? Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge (Job 9:14-15) Even if we consider our ways righteous, we must fear the face of the Lord and His Holy righteousness. He is the great Sovereign of all sovereigns whose displeasure we cannot risk by attempts to reason with His purposes. How could a grain of wheat argue with the sower over the depth of its planting? God is NOT our equal – He is our Judge and Maker!

Please read these words of Job to see if you fully agree: *For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.* (Job 9:17-21) Do you believe that God does anything without cause – without purpose? Do you believe we have a helter-skelter God? Nonsense! Do you believe that God will not suffer Job to take a breath? Do you know that every breath Job takes comes by grant of God? Job is correct that he is condemned by the words of his own mouth, if he were condemned at all. But God has not condemned Job. He is allowing the champion of his choice to prove his faith to us. Even human perfection fall so far short of the glory of god that we must despise that perfection when contrasted with the perfection of God.

This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. (Job 9:22-23) God has not ever destroyed a single soul. Souls are created for immortality. They shall never die. The only great difference is the circumstances of their Eternity – either with God in Heaven, or with Satan in Hell. Job would be right if he makes reference to troubles befalling both the righteous and the wicked, for they do indeed. Do you really believe that God laughs at the trials of the innocent? God grieves that man (Adam in the Garden and every other to be born) brings upon himself such destruction of hopes through sin. At bottom of the balances, all have sinned – there is none righteous. Justice is perverted by the wicked, not by God.

Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. If

I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself: I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? (Job 9:25-29) The plain truth is that Job is using the same measurement for the cause of his torments as his two friends have used. His days, like ours, are fleeting as the morning mist. He KNOWS that God will not hold him innocent? He is wrong! God holds him in the imputed righteousness of His Son, Jesus.

If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

(Job 9:30-32) Job, like us, cannot wash his hands of sin – only God can forgive, redeem, and impute righteousness. We do not hold negotiation with God over our sins. He is the sole Sovereign and Judge.

Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me. (Job 9:33-35) Job is wrong here, too, though he will know by faith that there is, indeed, a daysman (mediator) betwixt him and God – the man, Christ Jesus. There is no other who can absolve from sin other than Christ the Lord. It is understandable that Job's faith is shaken and affected by his suffering. This is not abnormal, but normal. The great test comes in overcoming our doubts and fears in persevering in faith and trust toward God. I have had more occasion than Job to quibble over what God's will is for my life, and why God allows certain hard experiences to fall my way. Looking back from the top of the great mountain of years I have traversed, I can clearly see God's perfections, and my shortcomings, at all those points. God taught me through those trials, and He teaches you, too.