

Devotion on The Book of Job (Chapter Thirty-Eight – Part One) for Thursday after the First Sunday in Lent - 21 February 2013, Anno Domini



The First Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

O LORD who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

The first day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ This Collect is to be said every day in Lent, after the Collect appointed for the day, until Palm Sunday.

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of

thee, and answer thou me. 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? 9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, 10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, 11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? 12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; 13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? 14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment. 15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken. 16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? (Job 38:1-16)

We begin today perhaps the most beautiful poetic utterings and prosaic writings of all of the Holy Bible. The next five verses contain the DIRECT Word of God. It is a humbling and awesome challenge to even attempt to explain these wonderful words for they speak for themselves in ways that are above the comprehension of any man in fullness of meaning and beauty. Due to the unquestionable import of these remaining chapters, I will divided each chapter into two separate devotions. This devotion will cover verses 1-16.

We were surprised, after hearing the drawn out dialogue between Job , Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar to have suddenly appear a fifth person whom we had not known was present and listening to every word – Elihu. Elihu stands up at the moment of greatest import and prepares the ears of the four (including Job) for another and far greater voice – a Voice we did not expect to hear at all, or even realized was constantly present and listening to all sides of the argument. This formidable Personage is God Himself! Being omnipresent and omniscient, he has heard all of the exchange between Job and his three friends, and then of His servant, Elihu, as he clarifies the reality of God's power and majesty. Elihu serves almost in the role of a court bailiff who prepares the courtroom to stand at the entry of the Judge. God has watched as his righteous man, Job, is assailed by his friends, and He has watched as Job makes claims of his own righteousness that fail the test of a son of God. God has actually wanted Job to answer better, yet He also knows that Job, like us, is mortal and made of the dust of the earth.

We will observe that God's appeal to Job's ignorance of His NATURAL government which is also attributable to his gross ignorance of God's incomprehensible and mysterious MORAL government. In fact, no man is entitled to claim a perfect knowledge of God's ways and means of government in affairs of the heart. God has told us sufficiently in His Word the truths we need to claim our security in Him, but many mysteries remain of which we have little intuition.

We see our first sixteen verses divided into the following heads:

1. Job 1:38:4-7 God's Creation of the Universe.
2. Job 38:8-11 God's Creation and sovereignty over the Sea
3. Job 38:12-15 God's Bringing forth of the dawning Morning

A storm has just arisen on the landscape, and out of the storm a terrible whirlwind. **1. Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said** To most observers, this may have seemed as a really unfortunate omen, but it is not, for God is

in the tornado like wind. Sometimes, we are so slow of heart and ears to hear God's Word and counsel; so much so that He must raise a tornado in our face to draw our attention away from things of pleasure and lust. God is as simple as can be in His approach. If a raised voice does not draw our attention, perhaps the proverbial two-by-four between the eyes will cause us to give attention. Had God simply have spoken from a green tree to Moses, Moses would have rationalized away the presence of God: however, when God spoke from a Burning Bush that was not consumed by fire, Moses was drawn to the Voice, the Fire, and the place of Holy Ground. *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* (Ex 3:2-5) Please note verse 5 of this quote from Exodus. Why do we observe quiet reverence before, during, and after our worship services in the AOC? Because we stand on Holy Ground in the presence of God. "*Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there I am in the midst them.*" (Matt 18:20) He is not standing around the edges of our assembly, but in the very *midst*. Will you dishonor Christ by gossiping to a friend THROUGH His Holy Presence? Will God need to send a Whirlwind to enjoy your silent attention in worship?

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? 3. Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. I will warn you now: God asks no questions for which He does not already have the answers! Who, indeed, darkens counsel without knowledge? You and I, and Job and his friends, and all who presume to speak for God. Rather than speaking **FOR** God, perhaps we should speak **BY** His own **WORD!** Wrap you loins tightly as for battle like a man (God uses man in this instance to refer to both genders (there is NOT a third gender) – man **AND** womb-man). All Christians must have backbones made strong by the steel fabric of the Gospel. We shall ALL answer to God and, if we will hear His voice, we must be courageous in faith.

4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof? 7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Do you remember, friend, where you stood on the day that God laid the foundation of the world? If not, best to rely on God's Genesis account when expounding on it. Darwin thought he knew and spoke his foolish words some six thousand years after the event. An eye witness should have a more timely presence. Does Job, his friends, or you have a first-hand account about the Great Architect that drew the blue prints and measured the dimensions of the world? Maybe not? By the way, by what force is the world held in place. The Hindus claim it was held up by four great elephants. They fail to mention what footing the elephants had in holding up the globe. The ancient Greek mythologists claim it was Atlas who held the world on his apparently very broad shoulders. But only God has told us the truth – that the world is suspended in space upon **NOTHING!** *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.* (Job 26:7) Now when did these things occur?

At the morning of Creation, there was a great and glorious shaking throughout all the newborn Universe. The stars shedding their first light from light-years distant

across the tremendous stretches of space actually vibrated in awe as they settled into their spatial orbits. They inanimate, they appeared in their pristine shining to be as a heavenly chorus. These heavenly and shining bodies were not primary, but secondary creations for the benefit of God's Bright, Blue Earth. They celebrated the Creation of that Earth. Joining these Creation echoes were the very Angels of God singing in joyful exultation at the moment of the birth of all things that had never been until this moment. What a chorus that must have been! Since we were not there to see it, we are privileged to have God's description of the event!

8. Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? 9. When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, 10. And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, 11. And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? If you, Mr. Scientist, have now learned all of the secrets of God, please answer these questions along with Job and others. Both Newton and Copernicus would gladly confess that they have no answer to these questions. If Einstein were still living, he would be even more bewildered since he did not believe in God as described in Holy Writ. What engineer could devise locks and valves to regulate the tides of the sea, and to confine the sea to its designated home? What meteorologist could develop a system for creating and regulating clouds so that they cover the whole earth? I listen to the weather forecast almost daily and have come to the conclusion that those who forecast the weather must not be the ones who MAKE it! God has, in this section of verses, gone from the dry earth of Job's knowledge to the sea and its mysteries. It would take quite a tremendous wall to hold the sea tides back to a certain limit, but God does so at the simple Utterance of His Voice. The proud and boiling sea is subject to His command, and will never defy that Voice. Next time a hurricane strikes the southern coast, go early and stand in the sea up to your knees and order the waves back. We will be reading of your foolish failure in the evening news.

12. Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; 13. That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? 14. It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment. 15. And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken. 16. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Job seems to be minding his manners in remaining silent. First of all, who can speak in the face of the presence of God? Secondly, what answer can Job give to these grave questions? Job seemed at one point to have all the answers – even suggesting that God was oblivious to him and just treatment. Please, never challenge God on any point! The beauty of these lines of God parallel, or, in my assessment, exceed the beauty of Genesis 1 though I find those early verses of rich beauty and majesty, remember? *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the*

light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Gen 1:1-5) Who can call the sunrise up on time, or the dawning into the glorious colors and beauty of that sunrise? Man cannot create even a living flea, nor define light – but only describe its known behavior. The wicked shun the rising sun because their deeds are evil and they fear, as the snail, exposure to the light of the sun. (Psalms 58:8). The snail neither labors nor plants, but lives on the labors of others which

he devours during the hours of darkness; but at the rising of the sun, the snail seeks the covert of the rock or some other shelter of darkness for it will melt in the light of the sun. Two things a sinner hates – salt and light. ***It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment*** The seals of the ancient Persians were composed of formless clay until the artisan turned the clay into a cylinder with intricate design features that could be rolled on the parchment or wax to mark the king's seal. So the rotating earth is turned as a cylinder to reveal the King's Seal thereon. ***And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.*** The 'light' of the wicked is darkness, but God's brilliant sunlight breaks upon them and expose their evil with the coming of God's Daystar. The proud wicked are revealed and their power in darkness broken by the dawn. ***16. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?*** Geologists still seek to know, no MAKE, the springs of the sea. We know now that there are indeed great springs that feed into the sea at great depths. But man cannot fathom these great springs for their depth and origin are past our finding out. Man cannot walk upon the greatest depths of the sea at its extreme point, more than six miles in depth.

Such questions from the mysteries of God's fact book cannot be answered by man. We are stricken with silence in the face of such questions. Why are we so slow to realize the wonders and mysteries of God one moment, and challenge His wisdom and justice the second. I once read of a bunch of grubs that lived in the mud and slime of the bottom of the swamp. They were actually happy and comfortable in the slime. From time to time, one of their fellows would climb a reed up into the waters above and disappear forever. He never returned. So they at the bottom felt sorry for their 'departed' friend. One day the wind blew the shallow waters from their slimy mud. The air above exposed many beautiful dragonflies darting about with a freedom and beauty the slime dwellers had never known. One of the slime-bound grubs garnered the courage to inquire of one dragonfly of his origin and how he came to have such beautiful wings to which the dragonfly responded, "*Oh, my friend, I was once a mud-grub just as you are now, but God called me to a higher existence and I climbed to the sunlight and grew wonderful wings and flew away to a wider and more beautiful world.*" We grow in spirit and wisdom as we respond to the Voice of God, but we shall never attain to the full mysteries of His Being. Do not ever presume upon the wisdom or purpose of God – only obey and follow.