



**The Sunday next before Advent**

*The Collect.*

**S**TIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. 2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. 3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. (Job 1:1-3)*

Some have erroneously considered the Book of Job to be an Old Testament parable, but this would be in error for it is a real account of a real man of righteousness with details too explicit to be considered otherwise. The classical and traditional dating of the period described in Job is around 1500 B.C. Fragments discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls confirms the ancient authenticity of Job. Job is filled with lessons that should strengthen our faith and perseverance as we often experience unwarranted challenges of hurt and pain in our walk with the Lord. The language is poetic and psalm-like. The narrative is not written by Job himself, but by a fellow Israelite believer whose descriptive language pays due honor and reverence to the issues at hand.

How often do we hear the refrain, "Poor old Job," but Job was blessed at the

beginning of the story, as well as even more greatly at the end? But the blessings granted Job in the interim of the narrative goes unnoticed by the casual reader and is, instead, labeled as a curse. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every true Christian has undergone unfair and hurtful experiences at the hands of the world. It is not until such a Christian has, as Job, persevered that he comes to a fuller understanding of the cause of pain and suffering for believers everywhere, and of the hidden blessing that the experience grants finally. This is the overarching message of Job – not that he was blessed by God in family, wealth, and health at the beginning, lost it all to the devil, and then regained more of those riches; but the stronger message is in between the outward blessings. Job gives us an insight into the workings and plan of God in the life of a believer. Quite often that which appears to be a great calamity in a Christian's life is proven to be a God-sent blessing of strengthening faith and blessing after the clouds roll by.

There is an age-old question that is usually intended to chide those of faith, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" The Book of Job gives us a sterling response to that faithless inquiry! Solomon spoke truly when he exclaimed: "*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*" (Eccl 3:1) The Christian experiences all of the trials and tribulations the world has to offer just as the unbeliever does, and sometimes in greater portions; however, we are not exempted from hard times or challenges as Christians. The power of God is revealed in the manner in which we confront and address these unfortunate experiences. No infantry inductee loves to crawl in the mud under barbed wire with a fifty-cal machine gun firing a few inches over his head; but he must do so in order to be conditioned for survival in close combat with the enemy that desires his death. The hard experiences are a trial and practice for the Christian as, not only a testimony to the world, but a process whereby we are made stronger in facing the world of evil.

The Christian confronts every trepidation life has to offer. Please remember that, if you have suffered, you have yet to suffer as Job and, more importantly, as your Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was the only One who was truly righteous and pure – without sin; yet He suffered the most violent of wrongs on our behalf. Please consider the great good to us-ward that ensued from the sufferings of Christ. Can it not be so in the life of the dedicated Christian as well? *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* (Matt 10:24-25) Our confession of faith in Christ is no exemption from trials and tribulations, but an invitation to them. A cross is not a beautiful instrument of service, but we must take up our crosses daily and follow Christ. Though the cross is crude and ugly, the results of its carriage are beautiful and blessed.

We learn in Job that righteous works do not entitle us to be free of suffering. We learn that our friends can play the devil's part just as well as the devil himself in giving false and unwholesome counsel. We learn that, regardless the trial and pain, we must keep the Light of our Faith burning warm and bright in the window of our heart. Though the night is dark and foreboding, the light in the window assures a lighted way in any case. The fire is not extinguished until the last cinder grows cold. It may be at the very last spark that God lights such a candle, as said Bishop Latimer to his fellow martyr at the stake: "**Be of good cheer, master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle in England, as I hope, by God's grace, shall never be put out.**" Even at the stake of fire, we may glorify and praise God for His tender mercies – unless we consider only earthly comfort as the ultimate mercy.

The story of Job is actually an opportunity for us to observe an ongoing battle between God and Satan. It has waged since before the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden eastward in Eden. It has raged on every continent and in every minute of man's existence. It rages now as I write. It often seems that the devil gains the high ground, but is there ground higher, or more exalted, than the Heaven upon which the Lord of Glory stands? I will offer one more quote of the good and valiant Bishop of Worcester:

*"And now I would ask a strange question: who is the most diligentest bishop and prelate in all England that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell for I know him who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. **There is one that passeth all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you: it is the devil.** He is the most diligent preacher of all other; he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish; he keepeth residence at all times; ye shall never find him out of the way, call for him when you will he is ever at home; the diligentest preacher in all the realm; he is ever at his plough; no lording nor loitering can hinder him; he is ever applying his business, ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of popery. **He is ready as he can be wished for to set forth his plough; to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory...O that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel.**" **Hugh Latimer***

I hope and pray that in our devotional study of Job, we each will learn to face adversity and suffering with our faces to the front, our sails full of the wind of the Holy Ghost, and our consciences free from the burden of compromise.



**The Sunday next before Advent**  
*The Collect.*

**S**TIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**Book of Job, chapter 1:** (Please read this chapter before our study and, then make notes in the margins as you study)

**Job 1**

King James Version (KJV)

**1** There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

**2** And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

**3** His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

**4** And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

**5** And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of

them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

**6** Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

**7** And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

**8** And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

**9** Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

**10** Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

**11** But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

**12** And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

**13** And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

**14** And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

**15** And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

**16** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

**17** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

**18** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

**19** And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

**20** Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

**21** And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

**22** In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

It seems that being a man greatly blessed of the Lord, in every way, did not immunize Job against the pernicious attacks of the devil; nor did those blessings exempt Job from being tried and proven by the Lord of Heaven. This account of Job and his trials flies in the face of worldly assumptions that success must always be punctuated by ease and comfort. Like the great eagle, God will often stir up our nests exposing the sharp twigs and bones, that underlie the fur and leaves, until we must rouse ourselves and get about the works of the Lord. Unlike our retirement investments, there is no such thing as vested righteousness. We can never rest on our laurels with God. God does not measure our righteousness by our works, but by His Son Jesus and our place in Him; however, the present moment is always a measure of our present security in Christ. We should never consider good works to be works, but those favors of charity and witness that is our delight to do. When all is said and done, Job was a righteous man in the eyes of God. God took pride in the righteousness and faith of Job.

There are three qualities that mark Job in this Book: 1) Job was blameless and upright as every professing Christian should be. This does not mean that Job was sinless, but that Job depended upon the imputed righteousness made available to all through the Lord; 2) Job feared God, not as a destroyer, but as a Father who chastises and corrects; and 3) Job shunned evil. Perhaps ninety percent of the temptations we face daily arise from our failure to shun evil. We expose ourselves needlessly to tempting situation. Job did not!

*And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of*

*oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.* (Job 1:2-3) Please take particular note of the QUANTITIES given for Job's blessings. These are given for our edification and inspiration. Note also that Job was the greatest of all men of the East. He was of no little prominence in the land! . *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.* (Job 1:4) These were apparently birthday feasts (every one his day) and they were joyous and not rowdy feasts. This is implicit in the fact that they invited their loving sisters to attend " a thing no man of the Old Testament would do if immorality were the object. Job was a good father and took every precaution for the spiritual well-being of his sons and daughters. A father never knows what mischief a night may bring in the life of a child. So he offered up burnt offerings to God for them.

Now follows one of the more interesting verses of the Old Testament: *6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.* (Job 1:6) This verse is not nearly as mysterious as so many commentators seem to make it. Who are these sons of God? These are the family of created beings that attend the throne of God in heaven " Angels! If you will recall, Lucifer himself is an angel, though fallen. *Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.* (1 Kings 22:19)

Here begins a battle of cosmic proportion, a battle between God and Satan! As with most battles, the skirmishers are not the sovereigns (God and the Prince of the Air) but their chosen representatives. God has only one man in this fight, Job, and it is all that God needs. Like Gideon, possessed of only 300 warriors against a host of more than 100,000, Job could have been dismayed at the odds. But the faith of Job proved strong in battle and Satan was vanquished from the field in the end. I sometimes almost sympathize with that deceitful old rogue " he never truly wins and is destined to the Lake of Fire " but, as Bishop Latimer of Worcester has said, he never gives up or gives out. He is constant in his effort to undo the invincible works of God. *And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* (Job 1:7) Do you wonder what compels Satan in going to and fro in the earth? Our great friend, Peter, warns us of his intent: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter 5:8) Satan has nothing but unsurpassed animosity for the Creation of God. He will employ every tool to undo the works of God because, more than the Creation, he hates the Creator! His prime target of destruction is the crowning feature of God's Creation " MAN! He will engender murder, robbery, alcoholism, adultery, war, homosexuality, abortion, and every other dark and dirty sin imaginable to rid the Creation of its crown.

*8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* This question of God is rhetorical in nature only for God knows that Satan covets the heart of every righteous man. God is confirming to Satan that He knows that Satan has set his sights on Job to ruin him. *9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?* (Job 1:9) Satan refuses to accept that a man can be obedient to God through a godly love for his Maker. He implies that Job is only righteous because he fears to be otherwise since God has blessed so. *10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.* The devil is a master of misdirection. He even justifies wickedness by deceit.



11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. (Job 1:11) Satan operates on the theory that there are none righteous in their hearts. They may only APPEAR so in order to gain advantage.

12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. The Lord grants leave of Satan to hurt only those things pertaining to Job, but not his person. So, Satan, in order to do evil, always departs from the presence of the LORD just as his minion, Judas, departed from the Supper and it was night "an eternal night for Judas. Now begins a series of tragedies, engineered by Satan and his chosen, to try the heart and faith of poor Job! 13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Please observe the progressively evil works of Satan: first, Job's livestock are taken. Second, His servants are lost. Finally, the beloved sons and daughters of Job are destroyed along with Job's very house. The devil almost never begins with his worst torture, but builds his hurt and pain gradually upon the head of God's chosen.

Now learn a lesson from Job in dealing with adversity: 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. At the news of the loss of his human beloveds, Job grieved greatly without blaming the Lord for his loss. He acknowledges that he came into the world without wealth or kin (for all were gifts of God), and Job blessed the Lord even in his calamity. Do we bless God when we face the loss of a loved one, or at times of great financial loss?

22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. Many professing Christian suffer far less loss than those thus far of Job, yet question why God has allowed them to suffer loss. Once while traveling in my vehicle to our Church Convention, I had a serious accident which disabled my truck. God preserved my body from injury. My wife and I had prayed that God would preserve my body and soul during the trip. When I called my wife and told her about the damage to my truck, she asked, "Were you hurt?" I said, "No, I wasn't, but my truck was nearly totaled!" My wife responded, "Well, God answered our prayers, didn't He? You are safe and only the truck damaged!" I was surprised at that logic, but it exhibited a greater measure of faith than I had at the moment. It is hard to continue strong in faith at moments of adversity, but that is exactly what faith is given to temper. Faith without moments of trial and want is not true faith. Do you have it?





**Saint Andrew, the Apostle**  
*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Sunday next before Advent**  
*The Collect.*

**S**TIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

There is a cross-over lesson between the Book of Job and our Collect for St Andrew the Apostle. Like Job, we must give up self interests in order to take up the interests of God. We subordinate our sinful wills to His Godly Will, and we make His Will our own in obeying His Commandments. This did Job!

## **Job 2**

King James Version (KJV)

**2** Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

**2** And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

**3** And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

**4** And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

**5** But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

**6** And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

**7** So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

**8** And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

**9** Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

**10** But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

**11** Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

**12** And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

**13** So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

**Review:** Job is a man more blessed of God than all in the East. He is a man blameless (as are all sincere Christians), and He shuns evil as do all sincere Christians. Satan has questioned if Job's faith in God is real and persevering. His first weapon against an honorable man is character assassination – something alien to modern politics, right? God allows Satan to take away all that Job owns - except his health. The battle is joined and Satan, with the Lord's grant, deprives Job of his wealth, his servants, his sons and daughters, and his home. But Job does not waver in faith at these losses. There is one point to be made at this time: Satan is dangerous. He is more powerful

than you and I. He has great resources upon which to call. We cannot oppose Satan in frontal attack, but there is One mightier than Satan. There is One who has defeated the armies of Satan and his stragglers left on the field of struggle. That Person is the Lord Jesus Christ! Having Christ as the Captain and Bishop of our souls, we will falter not, nor succumb to the intrigues of Satan. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* (1 John 4:4) We, too, must shun evil as did Job. We do not stop, as did Eve at Eden, before Satan and listen to his discordant voice. If we love righteousness, as did the Personification of Righteousness (Jesus Christ), we will command Satan to get behind us when he tempts, as did Christ. If you refuse the devil's toe into your door, he cannot enter the full house.

**Job, Chap 2:** This chapter opens with the familiar approach of Satan before the Council of Heaven. He always pushes his small advantages to the limit. So, he comes before God a second time to deliver his scandalous accusations against Job. The devil is not an honest player. He is always seeking to change the rules to amend for his losses. In Chap 1, Satan tells God: "...*put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*" (Job 1:11) God granted Satan the warrant to take all that Job had, but this failed to profit the old Serpent. So now, he is back at it only, this time, the terms have changed again: 4. *Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.* 5. *But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* Satan reveals, between the lines, his dark and concealed aim from the beginning – **he wants Job dead!** God does not give Satan the power of life and death over any of His Children; however, God does permit the devil to tempt and try us to demonstrate the strength of faith and true Godliness in the heart of man. So God grants Satan the prerogative to hurt Job in the pains of his body. **Point to Ponder:** Satan has no power except that power expressly granted by God. 6. *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.* Another **Point to Ponder:** Satan takes an **individual interest** in the sons and daughters of God to destroy them! Out of all of the men on earth, Satan's attention is concentrated on this blameless man named Job. There are millions of wicked and evil men for whom Satan shows little attention – they are **already** his, but the blameless, and the professing Christian, is an affront to Satan and his final doom! If he cannot **BUY** you (with the trinkets of Manhattan Island), he wants you **DEAD!**

Satan again "goes out from the presence of the Lord" (for evil is not possible before the Lord) and carries his warrant out to the fullest extent of his privilege. He wastes no time in bringing pain and suffering to bear on those over whom he has been given the power to hurt. Satan strikes Job with painful boils from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. This would prevent Job any position of comfort. Boils are painful even when movement is not made. Satan, in a sense, completely immobilizes Job. He immobilizes all over whom he exercises power and with whom he has any quarrel. Job sits in the midst of ashes possibly because the ancients had learned that communicable disease cannot spread through ashes. The devil was very cunning in leaving Job's wife with him for she was also a devil! When the world seemingly turns against us, we only have those closest to our heart upon which to rely, but Job's wife hurts Job just as much as does the devil: 9 *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.* It is questionable if Job's wife knew that God had limited Satan's power to take his life. In fact, I do not believe it mattered to her. She loathed Job since he had lost all of his wealth – a factor that makes men appealing to some women – and now is afflicted with a disgusting affliction. Her love was definitely not of the heart. It could not survive simple tragedy.

**Job's response:** 10 *But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish*

women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips. Job counsels his wife that all that we receive from God's hand, though at times mysterious, is for our good. We must accept the misery as a blessing in the same sense as the good. As long as life remains, all that comes is a gift. God very pointedly suggests that, even when there may be a doubt in the heart of a believer, vocal expression of that doubt is evil! "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

And now, at his point of need, Job's friends come to mourn with him and to 'comfort' him. Though these three friends – Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar most likely began with the best of human intentions, their comfort and compassion failed as flesh. The devil can use even our closest friends (these three) and family (his wife) to antagonize us. Such become tools of the devil though we may love them truly. Christ loved Peter, yet Satan used Peter to tempt Christ. *21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, **Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*** (Matt 16:21-23) The principle of Satan's work, even in the heart of a good man, is so clearly illustrated in this last passage that further exposition is not profitable.

The study of this Book, and every Book of the Bible, is so chock-full of solid nutrients for the Christian soul that I love to contemplate all of the gems of it. Rather than drudgery, it is both a privilege and a pleasure to allow these Words and works of God to inspire and increase our faith. Are you excited at the study of all of God's Word, Friend?





**The Sunday next before Advent**

*The Collect.*

**S**TIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*14. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. 13. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great. (Job 2:12-13)*

As mentioned in the study of the Second Chapter of Job, his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, came to visit Job when they heard of his suffering. They came with the best of intentions, yet failed to comfort him. In the final analysis, only the Holy Ghost can comfort those whose miseries arise from strong faith tested. They wept in grief of their friend's hurt. Satan, like all times, is responsible for tears. The first tears were shed by the fallen couple in Eden. They still rain down all over the world because of the evil antics of Satan in his cunning deceptions. Only Christ can take our tears upon Himself and keep them in His Bottle. These friends rent their mantle, another sign of deep grieving. The sign is never the ultimate proof, for the hypocritical Pharisees did likewise in making the false claim against Christ of blasphemy. (Matt 26:65) The

ultimate grief was that of God at the death of His Son, Jesus, on the cross that dark and dreadful day at Calvary. The Temple Veil was rent at His grief, but to our great satisfaction. No longer would there be a Veil of Separation between the Father and His people. God initiated the rent, for it was from top to bottom. Job's three friends also threw dust in the air to express their grief. They sat with Job without speaking for seven days (the period of completeness). We are told that Joseph mourned for his father likewise: *he made a mourning for his father seven days.* (Gen 50:10) Job was so disfigured by his disease that he was unrecognizable as one near death. That is the result of Satan's doing to every child that is born. The only remedy is Christ! It was also customary to allow the afflicted to speak first, so the friends sat silent with Job for seven days. The only remedy for such grief, caused by Satan, is Christ!

The concluding words of Job in verse 2:11 is prophetic in its anticipation, for Job would soon cross over the line of keeping his speech free of doubting his Maker's purposes. Job was most likely moved by the presence of his friends, and wanted to openly express his dismay to gain their full sympathy. Job breaks his sin in chapter 3 with an unseemly outburst of doubt which is shocking in view of his previous strength of faith. 3. *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.* (Job 3:3) Though Job does not directly challenge God's Providence, his words are full of implied doubt. Job rejects the gift of his life as a blessing, but rather labels it a curse. Life is a gift of God and never a curse. From Job's perspective, everything is lost; his wealth, his livestock, his servants, his children, his home, and even his wife denies him. Job is looking upon the present circumstances only. He is not unlike many good Christians who view the wickedness of the world and are tempted to believe there can be no remedy. We cannot see what beauty lies just over the horizon. Neither could Job see what wonderful blessings God had in store for him. As we have said before, man judges by the present instant; but God judges by the whole scope of time. Job literally describes Hell as the kind of night for which he was born: 6 *As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.* 7 *Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.* Job asks that the hired mourners deliver his own curse: 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.* Job selfishly hopes for the stars of twilight to give no light. If they do not, look at the beauty and wonder that is lost, not just to Job, but to all the world. (vv 10 & 11)

In verses 11 thru 19, Job bewails his birth. In so doing, he is perhaps unintentionally cursing his very parents. He yearns for the long dark night in which there is no consciousness, either of trouble or of blessing, either of good or of evil, either of God or of the devil. Such is death and such is that outer darkness into which Judas slunk away that fateful night. Job is unfortunately comparing the reward of the righteous to that of the wicked. An eternal night would eternally blot out Job's view of God. This is not at all commendatory of Job's blamelessness before God. **Point to Ponder:** Fault not Job for this human failure for, until we have suffered as did Job, how can we deny that our response would be the same? Job makes one mighty error of judgment in saying the servant is free of his master for the master of Hell is spiritually the devil himself.

Job questions (vv 20-22) why he is given light, being in pain. He rebels against the Light itself which is God for all Light comes from the Father of Lights (James 1:17). The devil is the author of darkness, but darkness cannot abide a single candle. 23 *Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?* 24 *For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.* 25 *For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come*

*unto me. 26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.* A rather irrational question. Light is given to a man lost in the wilderness of pain and suffering so that he might find his way out. How many lives have been brought into the bright Sun of God by the presence of an exceptional moment, a Gideon bible on the night stand, an importunate stranger, or the witness of a little child? Job here seems to deny even the blessings of God of which he was heir BEFORE his illness. Suddenly, Job can see virtue in nothing! His mental faculties are grown stronger to recognize truths that are not truths, informed of a failing faith.

Allow me the license to anticipate the words of Job in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter: *1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. 2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* (Job 14:1-2) These words of Job convey such a mournful spirit that they are incorporated in the Prayer Book Funeral Order. All of these dreadful thoughts are conjured up by the painful loss and sickness of Job and, ultimately, by Satan himself. While in a worldly way, these words bear certain truth, to the Christian, they are meaningless for physical death is only the beginning of life. Hard times and experiences can throw each of us a bit off balance. We, too, would question our core values and beliefs in times of unbearable adversity. But, like Job, we shall examine the treasures of our hearts even when the treasure box itself is in ruins, and find that God is still the Master and Keeper thereof despite the weary soul. There is little doubt that, when this ordeal is over, Job shall emerge stronger and fuller of faith than ever before the devil's meddling.





The First Sunday in Advent  
*The Collect.*

**A**Lmighty 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.

Please read and meditate on the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Book of Job along with your study of this devotion.

#### **Job 4**

King James Version (KJV)

**4** Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

**2** If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

**3** Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

- 4** Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.
- 5** But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.
- 6** Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?
- 7** Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?
- 8** Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.
- 9** By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.
- 10** The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.
- 11** The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.
- 12** Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.
- 13** In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,
- 14** Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.
- 15** Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:
- 16** It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,
- 17** Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?
- 18** Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:
- 19** How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?
- 20** They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.
- 21** Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

Every Commentary and every Devotion is the product of a man's mind hopefully informed of the Holy Ghost. Men are not infallible in their understanding, but God's Word is totally free of error. It is only our interpretation of the Word that may err. We are best advised to confirm all things uttered by a minister or fellow Christian by the Light of that Word.

As stated earlier, the three friends of Job allow him the privilege of speaking first after a seven-day attendance with him. Job speaks, and in the speaking, does that which

he has not done up to the previous time, he questions God and His Providence. He bemoans the life God has given him even though that life, for at least 98% of his existence, has been full of wealth and blessings. Now God has allowed His servant, Job, to be tested for the sake of a testimony to all of us of God's sure Providence; but Job has been spoiled by God's love and provision. He is unable to withstand even a short season of misery without questioning God. Now the senior member of the three, Eliphaz, will utter his 'opinion' of the matter.

A true friend will not omit telling you the whole truth as he sees it, even if that truth is painful to bear. Unfortunately, too often, that truth may be contrived by the imagination and not real. Eliphaz, the Temanite, prefaces his remarks with the rhetorical notice that Job may be grieved by his words, but his friend cannot forestay his advice and counsel which Eliphaz believes to be true and efficacious for the ears of Job. What a friend believes about God and what is true, may not always be in concord. Too often the gentle nudge of a friend is received as a dart of fire by its object. I detest compliments that begin well but are punctuated by a great 'BUT'. **3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. 4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. 5 BUT now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. 6 Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?** (Job 4:3-6) "Yes, Job", Eliphaz says, "though you serve well, you cannot take the same fare when you are served." His friend intimates that the hope, the confidence, and righteousness of Job have not been sufficient to see him through this testing. But the outward appearance is never the full revelation of the heart: **Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.** (John 7:24)

In the mind of the world, bad things come to pass as a result of bad behavior. That world cannot accept the simple grace, and testing of God. All is quite simple to the world. If we suffer, it is because we DESERVE to suffer. If we are wealthy, it is because we are deserving of that wealth. God would seem to have little to do with blessings and trials, all is based upon the accidents of birth and success. That is the great lesson of Job, that our hard times and adversities of life are not a measure of our security in God. Quite often, as with Job, it is just the opposite!

Eliphaz will now make a mixture of truth with presumption: **7 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? 8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.** (Job 4:7-8) Whoever perished being innocent? Has Eliphaz gone through life with his eyes closed? Would he consider the murdered baby from its mother's womb to be guilty? His premise is wrong though a portion of his argument is correct *sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.*" (Hosea 8:7) This is an example that men can argue the same verse of the Bible and arrive at different conclusions due to a lack of deeper understanding of the Word.

Eliphaz further attempts to draw the conclusion that God is ANGRY at Job and, therefore, has sent this trouble upon him. But God is not angry with Job. God considers Job blameless! Eliphaz was not present at the Heavenly Council where Satan was granted his license to pain Job. A good rule for the theologian is to speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible remains silent.

The account of Eliphaz concerning a presumed vision: **12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. 13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, 14 Fear came upon me, and**



*trembling, which made all my bones to shake. 15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: 16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, 17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? 18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: 19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? 20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it. 21 Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.* (Job 4:12-21) IT must be considered that either this vision, though remarkable for its truth, did not come from God; or the understanding of Eliphaz in its application to Job's circumstances is off a bit. The Lord does not deliver visions to every common observer and, when He does, He always identifies Himself or His Angel: *They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. 7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?* (Ezek 13:6-7) Practically all of the vision of Eliphaz can be discovered at some point in Holy Scripture. We must bear in mind that there are too many today who may mix truth with some extra-biblical vision from God to suit their own interests or opinions. Eliphaz is perhaps an innocent example of the devious example of false prophets we see in our day, herein is a great truth: *19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?* We do dwell in houses of clay (bodies of clay) and these houses of clay in the Middle East are easily washed away by the over-flowing waters of the seasonal wadies. Our bodies are easily washed away by the waters of time and fortune; however, the conclusion Eliphaz draws in the 20<sup>th</sup> verse (*They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it*) stands in great error when compared with the death of God's saints. God regards not only the death of His saints, but also their tears. He regards, as well, the tears of Job. What Eliphaz does not recognize, and cannot accept, is that Job is a righteous man. His hurt and pain does not come from God but from Satan. To Eliphaz, any other conclusion would be unjust, but God dispenses His mercies, not in an instant of time, but over the whole scope of time; and then eternity itself. *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.* (Psalms 34:18-19) Please observe the double truth of this Psalm: 1) the righteous may suffer a broken heart and shall surely suffer afflictions. And 2) though the Lord may not shelter us from every affliction, He does surely deliver His people from all of them. Please rest your heart on that promise until the next time.



**The First Sunday in Advent**

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

Please read and meditate on the Fifth Chapter of the Book of Job along with your study of this devotion.

**Job 5**

King James Version (KJV)

**5** Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

**2** For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

**3** I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

**4** His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

**5** Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

**6** Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

**7** Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

**8** I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

**9** Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

**10** Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

**11** To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

**12** He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot

perform their enterprise.

**13** He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

**14** They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

**15** But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

**16** So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

**17** Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

**18** For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

**19** He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

**20** In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.

**21** Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

**22** At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

**23** For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

**24** And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

**25** Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

**26** Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

**27** Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

This chapter (5) opens with Eliphaz essentially calling Job a fool. **1 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?** No wise man will answer the ranting of a fool, and certainly will no saint of God deal with a fool. This sets Job apart in the mind of Eliphaz from the wise and the saintly. Obviously, to Eliphaz, Job has sinned and brought all of this evil upon himself. As I stated yesterday, the vision of Eliphaz does not seem to have come from God because it has no claim to be from God, and it also concludes that Job is not blameless. Moreover, the Lord Himself renounces the counsel of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar in the last chapter of this Book: *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.* (Job 42:7)

So easy is it to see the blemishes on the face of another for the carnal mind, but our eyes are fleshly and not made for looking inwardly. The eyes must be opened in a spiritual way to clearly perceive, from outside our own selves, those horrible marks and disgusting boils on our own hearts. Eliphaz so very clearly believes that he is above the plight of Job in his own self-righteousness. The accusations and insinuations he levels against Job come as readily to his mind as the bulging waters of the sea at high tide. Eliphaz, like so many judgmental pretenders to the faith, is quite gifted at the improper application of truth to the plight of others. ¶If you are not rich and happy (Osteen), you are definitely out of the will of God,¶ claim the proponents of the wealth-and-health gospel. These ¶miracles' of stupidity and ignorance simply cannot behold the filthy rags and repugnant odors of their own persons. Being built up in pride and silken robes, they fail to see their own utter nakedness before God. But to the world, all unrighteousness is forever OUTWARD and never INWARD! Eliphaz even goes so far as to blame the demise of Job's children on Job's foolishness. Again, this is a subtle implication that God has disarmed Job while, truly, God is on the side of Job in all of his misery. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.* (Psalms 127:5) In actual fact, Job's children are not judged (crushed) in the gate for crime, but died of natural calamity induced by Satan. So the judgment of Eliphaz is directly contrary to the Will of God.

Eliphaz further implies that Job has not sought the solace of God in his affliction which, according to Eliphaz, may have arisen from foolishness and craftiness. His words are wise, but applied improperly like a good medicine for headache applied to heal a rash. Here is a sterling example of the misdiagnosis of Eliphaz of Job's circumstances: *17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.* Job is not suffering as a result of God's **correction** "he is not being **chastened** by the Lord. The rational and non-spiritual mind tries to justify hardship and pain by blaming them on some logical cause such as sin or misconduct. But pain and suffering come upon the righteous as well as the unrighteous. We can see the point clearly because we have the explanation of the cause (Satan) in the first two chapters of Job, but Eliphaz does not have the benefit of that knowledge, so he uses human logic. Do we not do the same in judging others before we know the facts? Though we are commanded of Christ to judge, we are counseled to use an equal balance informed of righteousness: *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* (John 7:24) How do we know what is righteous judgment? It is when we do not use our own judgment, but that of God, in judging a matter. *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.* (John 5:30) If we judge, seeking those merits of Christ which He heard of His Father, it is God that judges the matter and not we ourselves.

Though the judgment of Eliphaz is wrong, his words are full of the wisdom of the Lord. As we can see, Eliphaz takes the ¶appearance¶ of Job's condition to prove unrighteousness and foolishness. So he takes the true teachings of God, but judges by appearance and not with righteous judgment. Whether we admit it or not, we do the same to the hurt of our own souls almost daily. Even in our worship, we attempt to present ourselves as pious and possessed of strong faith. We dress to make a show of our piety. We adopt rituals and practices in worship which are not prescribed by God's Word (Roman Catholicism). We worship the creature (dogs and other animals) more than the Creator. We prefer to bless the animals before we petition to bless the children. But if we simply follow the Godly principles and doctrines of the Reformed Church, we shall be on good ground biblically, and men such as Eliphaz cannot turn God's Word against us. Do we keep holy in the things commanded of God, or do we seek to find



holiness outside His True Word?



### The Second Sunday in Advent

*The Collect.*

**B**LESSED 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

### Job 6

King James Version (KJV)

**1** But Job answered and said,

**2** Oh that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

**3** For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

**4** For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

**5** Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

**6** Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

**7** The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

**8** Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!

**9** Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

**10** Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

**11** What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?

**12** Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?

**13** Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?

**14** To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

**15** My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;

**16** Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid:

**17** What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

**18** The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

**19** The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

**20** They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

- 21** For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.
- 22** Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?
- 23** Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?
- 24** Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
- 25** How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?
- 26** Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?
- 27** Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.
- 28** Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.
- 29** Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.
- 30** Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?

It may seem a bit inconsistent to study Job during the Advent Season with Advent and Christmas carols heralding the promise of the coming of Christ in our dens and living rooms, but is it really? Doesn't the Book of Job illustrate the pain and suffering – the darkness and smothering wretchedness – that Christ came to take away from our hearts? Should we not consider Job to epitomize all that we should hope to have satisfied in Christ? Even the Advent color of Purple – symbolizing not only the Kingship of the coming Savior but also His pain and suffering (and ours) – informs of the prayer and fasting that should attend the season. Please look at this profound Advent statement of Job: *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself.* (Job 19:25-27) This is the Promise of Advent, not only for Job, but for every man, woman and child who hold fast to that grace through faith in Christ! Job spoke of none other than Christ as the One who even lived then, would come to stand physically upon the earth, and, though Job's body would lie moldering in the ground, he would nonetheless see his, and our, Redeemer with his own eyes. That is a truly great expression of faith when account of it is given even before the realization in time.

In the previous chapter, we observed the aloofness toward Job's suffering by his friend, Eliphaz, in finding Job at fault for his suffering. Job now responds with a lament that his friends should consider his suffering more than his supposed shortcomings. We should expect a friend to comfort and not assail, but too often this is not the case. It is almost human nature to more easily find fault for our failures when those failures are not our own. *For the arrows of the*

*Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me* (Job 6:4) Job mistakenly blames God for that pain which Satan has caused. God's wrath, if leveled against Job, would be far more terrible than any Satan could muster. But Job is actually under God's protection in his suffering, and Job does not know it. When one devastating loss after another comes upon us, we will also have trouble in properly attributing these troubles, and all pain and suffering, to their proper source – that old serpent of the Garden who is the author of death and suffering. When our flesh is in pain, our other senses become subordinated to the point of pain. All that we taste is tasteless as the white of an egg, and there is no seasoning that will suffice to restore flavor. Instead of beauty, the sound of the birds of Spring become a noisome bother. Our eyes can penetrate no further than that pile of ashes that has become our place of suffering.

Beginning at verse 8, Job again blames God for his inordinate suffering. He desires death even though it be not God's will that Job see death at present. Job would be thankful for even the pain were it a precursor of his death. He claims that there is no hope in living for him. So why prolong a life of only suffering and more suffering? In verse 14, Job accuses, rightly, his friend of omitting pity to the favor of blame. In doing so, Eliphaz forsakes a proper fear of God. When a friend denies pity to his hurt friend, he also denies truth for they are related. *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:* (Prov 3:3) Truth and mercy are inseparable. There is no commandment of God that is not given for the sake of mercy to the obedient.

His friends are as the sands of the dunes and deserts for their lack of fixed position. Unlike men of substance, they are changeable and inconstant. Seeing the condition of Job, they are fearful of the same fate befalling them. It is true that our small emotions of sympathy are often brooked by the fear of suffering the same.

The following passage is noteworthy of its insight into the heart of man: *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind? Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.* (Job 6:22-27) When problems overwhelm us, we often run to our friends and close confidantes for the purpose of gaining a sympathetic ear. We may not ask for money or other material help, but ONLY sympathy. If truth is told us, we may not like to hear it, but it is helpful. But Job's friends offer no help in truth. They simply judge with an unequal balance. When a friend has fallen into a deep well and cries for help, do we run to the edge and demand his reason for digging the well?

Job pleads with his friends to look upon his need as well as his righteousness, for he is righteous. He asks, essentially: Does the fact that I have

fallen under this pain and suffering suggest that I have forgotten righteousness and wisdom which I had before? Am I not the same Job you knew before my sorrows. If our friends become disabled and unable to visit, do we account them as something less than when we were all happy and active? The human soul does not diminish at pain and disease. It may even grow more acute. Are we fair weather friends, or are we even greater friends in the very midst of a friend's storm? We, alone can answer that question with our hearts, with our feet, and with our hands.



### The Second Sunday in Advent

*The Collect.*

**B**LESSED 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

Please read this entire chapter. Please ask yourself: **1)** the nature of the truth affirmed in verse 1; **2)** What thoughts are conveyed by the 'shadow' in verse 2? **3)** Can you decipher the meanings of verse 7 & 8? Continue with each verse that rings of a peculiar truths and try to draw out the gems of great beauty hidden in the covering vocabulary. They are so many such gems that I lack the talent, or understanding, to fully mine from the text, so allow your mind to fathom the depths for further knowledge and meaning. Then read my wanting attempts to describe the passages.

### **Job 7**

King James Version (KJV)

**1** Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

**2** As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling



looketh for the reward of his work:

**3** So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

**4** When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

**5** My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

**6** My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

**7** O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.

**8** The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.

**9** As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

**10** He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

**11** Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

**12** Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

**13** When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaints;

**14** Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:

**15** So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

**16** I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

**17** What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

**18** And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

**19** How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

**20** I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

**21** And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away

my iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

*Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?* There is a beginning, of a fuller truth, that is continued in the next few verses. The nature of our present pain and suffering began long before the suffering of JOB – these began long ago in the Garden eastward in Eden when our fleshly father was convinced to partake of that forbidden fruit from the tree that was home to Satan. So we now suffer in life, and that brief life results in death. Man labors for his bread by the sweat of his brow while under the sun. The reward of our carnal lives and labors is not a great reward, but only a temporary one. We are like hirelings in our labors. The field which we hoe does not belong to us, neither does the hoe itself, nor the bodies with which we labor. All is borrowed from the Master of the Vineyard. If we become good and faithful servants, our reward shall be more than this existence of pain, suffering, longing and only brief and passing joys. We shall receive our rewards for our worthwhile acts of faith only when the evening shadows lengthen and we are asleep in Christ.

*As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work: So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.* (7:2-3) The **shadow** referenced symbolizes the "end of our day" upon the earth. The righteous of Christ yearn for this day when the reward shall be paid beyond the veil of Heaven. In the period before these permanent shadows lengthen, we are made to suffer and to persevere. We all experience moments of vanity and fruitless toil, but the Keeper of the Book of Life shall read our names at length if we are faithful in this life to our Maker and Redeemer.

*When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.* (7:4-6) Do we have any assurance that we shall return to the bed in evening from which we arose at morning? Should we thank our God at the first glimpse of morning light? These words from my favorite Psalm reveal the morning hope we must have in God: *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalms 63:1-2) We should thank God at our awakening, not only for another day of life, but for another day of service and learning from His Holy Word. If we are safe in His Haven of Rest, we shall not endure nights of tossing and turning and dreading the coming dawn of day. Our lives, even if we are blessed with old-age, is but a brief twinkling of the eye – a desert rose whose petals are blown by the wind, and grass that perishes in the heat of the sun, a vapor in the cool of day, or a fading star on the distant horizon. Our end in this body is all for the worms, but our end for the soul (if that soul belongs to God) is of great joy

and opulence.

O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. (7:7-10) Our lives are like the wind? Do we ever see the wind? Remember the words of Christ to Nicodemus: **The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.** (John 3:8 ) Please regard the importance of being "born of the Spirit". Are you? Though we may be famous and powerful in our brief tenure on earth, not only our countenance, but our names shall be forgotten among men. Those who knew us will, themselves, fade as names written upon the seashore. If our names are not written in a sure place – the Book of Life – they shall cease to be altogether. You may remember, too, Lazarus and the rich man – please observe the profound dispositions of these two at death: **And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried** (Luke 16:22) No name is given for the rich man because a name is of no benefit in the fires of Hell, but Lazarus retains his name because it is written in the Book of Life. Note that the rich man dies "**and was buried**," but Lazarus died and was given an angelic escort to the bosom of Abraham. Which ending would you prefer?

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me? When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity. (7:11-16) JOB seems, in this soliloquy, to lay the blame for all of his trouble upon God. He, at no point, attributes the blame for all suffering to that author of death and pain – Satan! The great lesson in all of this for you and me is this: If a man such as JOB, blameless before God, suffers so at the hands of Satan, how much more likely that those who claim Satan as master shall suffer!

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? (7:17-18) JOB wonders why he has been singled out for torments to fortify the faith of others. Blame not poor JOB for we are all subject to the same lapse of reason, and more, in times of grave troubles. In "**The Fiddler on the Roof**," Tavia (a Jewish peasant) says, just before another pogrom, "Lord, I KNOW that we are your chosen people, but, could you, at least SOMETIMES....choose someone else?" Though obedient to the cross, our Lord cried, rhetorically, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" We often wonder "Why me?" JOB finds no peace even in sleep, for the devil sends dreams and nightmares even then to annoy his rest. How much more those whose consciences are burdened by guilt and sin shall the devil of nightmares disturb? Man is the crowning glory of God's Creation. He has deigned to allow us to become His own sons and

daughters. In a totally different light, the Psalmist also wonders: *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.* (Psalms 8:3-5) Can we imagine the high regard in which soul is set at value before the Lord?

*How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?* (7:19) JOB misidentifies again the source of his antagonism. If God truly departs from JOB, his soul **AND** body are lost. *I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?* (7:20) JOB finally admits that of which his friends have accused him – that he is a sinner like unto every man born of woman – except our Lord Jesus Christ. We are considered 'blameless' before God – not because we have no sin – but because our sins have been redeemed and covered by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. JOB now resorts to the human inclination to judge that all pain and suffering comes as a direct result of sin. Truly, all pain, suffering, and death does inure from that first step in sin of father Adam; but that suffering came upon all mankind – blameless or not – from Adam's sin. Even though sin is forgiven and not remembered by our Lord, its scars often remain as a blemish to our legacies.

*And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.* (7:21) This is a mixture of misconception of a man in misery, and the burning truth whose light burst through the darkest cloud. First of all, God DOES forgive our transgressions, **and** the transgressions of JOB. Suffering in the flesh is not evidence of unforgiven sins. God DOES take away our iniquity if we have duly repented of them, but not always our suffering. JOB shall certainly sleep in the dust, in fact, sleeps now in the dust as we all shall do barring the sooner return of Christ. True, after the shadows have fallen on this life, God shall seek us in the morning, and He knows precisely where we shall be found. We shall be even MORE real in that resurrection morning than we are today. Heed the final testimony in Revelations: *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* (Rev 20:12-15) May all who read these words stand blameless beside our ancient brother, JOB. AMEN.



### The Second Sunday in Advent

*The Collect.*

**B**LESSED 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

### Job 8

King James Version (KJV)

- 1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
- 2 How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?
- 3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
- 4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;
- 5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication

to the Almighty;

**6** If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

**7** Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

**8** For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

**9** (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)

**10** Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

**11** Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

**12** Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

**13** So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

**14** Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.

**15** He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

**16** He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

**17** His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

**18** If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

**19** Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

**20** Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:

**21** Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

**22** They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Eliphaz was gracious in his accusations against Job in comparison with those of Bildad in this chapter. The interchange between Job and his three friends are profitable to us in understanding the failures so apparent in human logic and

reason. In many cases, reason and logic contrasts with the grace and mercy of God. Were we God, I am sure our harsh judgments would have taken care of the alleged overpopulation of the world. We would snuff out lives, left-and right, of those whom WE considered evil and without merit of forgiving or redeeming. Bildad, like Eliphaz, mentions many cardinal points of human logic and wisdom of ancient times, but antiquity does not establish right. Regardless of how remote in antiquity an idea is advanced, if that idea is wrong now, it has been wrong from the beginning. It is not the wisdom of the wisest and most brilliant philosophers of the world that lights our path, but that wisdom only that descends to us from God. If a principle of life is based on God's Word, properly interpreted, then it is our fine gold of purposeful living. (The wisdom of the so-called *Purpose Driven Church* is not God's wisdom, but the wisdom of a corrupt and decadent old man named Rick Warren).

For Bildad, and men like him, the only measure of God's anger finds its expression in sickness, poverty, or depression. He is quite sure of himself in calling to the bar ancient wisdom as well as presumed Godly counsel in condemning Job for his calamity. He does not know, as we know, the ending for this Book, so he rambles on with the energy from the winds of ignorance that fills his sails. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind? Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?* (Job 8:1-3) It is not contrary to reason that those whom we love most, and who know our hearts best, can deliver the most hurtful darts to our souls. Remember the words of Mark Antonius in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar regarding the wound of Brutus delivered to his 'friend' Caesar: "For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel. Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him! This was the most unkindest cut of all; For when the noble Caesar saw him stab, Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms, Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart..."

*Julius Caesar Act 3, scene 2, 181–186*

You will see now how gifted is Bildad in piercing Job's fatherly heart over the death of his sons and daughters: *If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.* (Job 8:4-7) See how God's poetry surpasses that of Shakespeare? Though fully meritorious of beautiful prose, it possesses the added authority of pure truth. The heart of Job grieves more for his sons and daughters than it does for his present misery. Bildad accuses not only Job for past sins, but also his children. He attributes to God the fault that belongs to Satan alone. What blasphemies we may incur out of pride and ignorance of God's truths! One major fact Bildad and Eliphaz have omitted is the precise sins of Job that have led God, according to their presumptions, to send these terrors upon him.

We see, in these next three verses, the attempt of Bildad to establish his point by appealing to the established wisdom of the ancients: *For enquire, I pray*



thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow :) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? (Job 8:8-10) Instead of appealing to the ancient fathers and denouncing the present wisdom, perhaps Bildad would have profited more in appealing to the wisdom of God and not that of man. If antiquity made us wise, surely Adam (the most ancient of all men) would have had better sense than to partake of the forbidden fruit in disobedience to the commandment.

Bildad compares the life of Job to that of the rush plant or the water lily. These are like the wicked that grow up suddenly from the marshes and swamps of Egypt, and perishes even in its greenness before all other (righteous) plants. Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. (Job 8:11-14) This is a clear case of the "pot calling the kettle black." Who is the hypocrite here? It is not Job!

Bildad grasps at the vaporous pillars of the air to blame Job (who is blameless before God). He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones. If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee. Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow. (Job 8:15-19) Again, Bildad speaks without specifics – only eerie gestures of sin. The spider builds by webs that are sinewy and of enough substance to hold himself up, but not enough to hold up Job. He clings desperately, according to Bildad, to his house, yet it falls miserably. He compares Job's tenacious hold to his belongings (perhaps out of Bildad's former envy) to that of a spider whose web is over come by weight of his catch. An old Arab saying goes: "*Time destroys the well-built house, as well as the spider's web.*"

Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers: Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought. (Job 8:20-22) Here closes this episode of Bildad's unwarranted disclamations against Job. Finally, Bildad, perhaps by chance alone, hits upon a true principle of God's Word. Bildad, quite rightly, considers Job to be a righteous man who has fallen into sin from which he has not repented. He is right in the first instant and wrong in the second. All who hate the righteous will come to shame – many even in this life. Those who hate the righteous man also hate his LORD. "...*Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.* (2 Chronicles 19:2) Do you help the ungodly and love those who hate the LORD?

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.*

**B**LESSED 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.





### The First Sunday after Christmas Day.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

*1 My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. 3 Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? 4 Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth? 5 Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days, 6 That thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin? 7 Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. 8 Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. 9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? 10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? 11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. 12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. 13 And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee. 14 If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. 15 If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction; 16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me. 17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me. 18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! 19 I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. 20 Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, 21 Before I go*



*whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; 22 A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness. (Job 10:1-22)*

It is a common desire of human nature to understand the cause of arrest, imprisonment, or punishment. In many countries, the right of citizens to know cause for arrest or punishment is not honored. Thanks to the Godly wisdom of our Founding Fathers, protections of our God-given rights are included in the Bill of Rights of the governing document of our country – The US Constitution. It is not at all unreasonable, or unjust, for Job to petition the Highest Power to determine why he has been singled out for suffering. All too often, faithful Christians live protected lives. But when difficult times come, rather than seek the meaning of the trouble in prayer to God, they blame God, or even the devil, for their predicament in ignorance. These Christians should follow the example of Job in seeking the cause of his discomfort from God Himself. It is altogether meet to inquire of God when troubles rush in like a flood. Remember, all things are known by God, your Maker, and He can turn every misadventure into a blessing to those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose. *My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.* Job, after desperate wonder, decides to reveal all of his innermost thoughts and inquiries to the only One who knows the answers. He petitions for a reason why God has allowed his hardship.

Job's problem in understanding is evident in his inquiry to God found in verses three thru six: *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days, That thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?* Can you determine Job's misunderstanding when you read his words above? He, like thousands of other God-fearing people, blames God for his misfortune when God is not the author of his trouble. When we question our predicament in life, we must not question the motive of god (for it is ALWAYS righteous) but our own. *Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.* Though Job may be righteous comparatively speaking with all others, there is none righteous but God. If we all received our just deserts, we would suffer far more grievously than Job, and for an eternity! Yet, Job, being mortal, cannot grasp what he considers to be great injustice done to his person for no reason. Of course, we know the reason, but Job does not.

*Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?* The clay itself is never destroyed in the hands of the Potter, but may be marred and reshaped into a vessel more pleasing to the purpose of the Potter. Clay is dampened dust that is receptive to being

molded and fashioned according to the will of the Potter. Job reminds God of this, and that it seems that God is allowing the clay, from which Job is created, to dry up and return to the dust of the ground from whence all men come. Job should remember the loving counsel of Psalms 103:14 - *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* As long as the Potter is in business to create, how can His purposes fail even if he knows we are but dust. He loves our souls and not our outward visage.

Next, Job declares the process by which God has Made him in his mother's womb: *Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.* This language is figurative of the process of conception and molding that occurs in the womb as God weaves our fabric of being.

*Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.* Even in torments, Job should realize that he still stands in favor with God. Though we suffer mightily as children of the Most High, we yet stand in His perfect favor and providential protection of soul. Though the body be burned, the soul shall stand with God in Eternity. God has many mysteries, contrary to most professing theologians, that His people do not, and cannot understand with perfection. Hence, the purpose and reason for faith. Faith is not faith when all mystery is revealed.

The lack of full understanding of the nature of God is revealed in Job's next comment: *If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.* Is the word 'IF' really necessary for the meaning here? It is **not**, for with certainty, we all shall sin even if our sins are not imparted to our record. And Job is also wrong in saying that God will not acquit us our our sins. He has done so in Christ. Again, in Psalm 103, we read: *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* (Psalms 103:11-12)

Do not blame Job if he lacks a fuller understanding of the revealed Word of God that we have today. He is speaking before our Redemption was consummated in Christ. *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction* Job is ascribing a law of works of righteousness falsely to the purpose of God. Job is saying that the dealings of God to sinners is a terror, but even while Job (so he thinks) is righteous, he yet suffers the plight of the wicked. This is no purpose or nature of God. Without the imputed righteousness of Christ, all are accounted miserable sinners. Present suffering is not evidence of being out of the favor of God.

Job continues to indict God: *For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me.* If God had intended to crush Job, Job would now be crushed and would have no mind or mouth with which to utter a weak faith.

*Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.* To reject the gift of life is a terrible sin, but even good men often utter ridiculous and reviling thoughts against God when the fire is near the powder. Haven't many of us uttered the thoughtless exclamation, "Oh, why was I ever born?" Conception is a gift of God in fulfillment of His first command given to men: *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth* (Gen 1:28)

Job speaks now out of desperation and not out of knowledge: *Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.* Yes, Mr. Job, your days are few upon this paltry planet upon which God was gracious enough to allow you to set foot; but your days are endless as a soul created for eternity! It is good that we return not from the grave to this dreary life, but proceed to resplendent glory in the Kingdom of our Father. Job allows his imagination to run wild in contemplating the darkness of the grave where there is no darkness to the soul that has received the Light of the World. Yes, true, it is the land of the 'shadow of death' since death is ONLY a shadow not to be feared by those who die in Christ. Do you, friend, fear that shadow? Do you believe that God will leave you and forsake you in the dust of the ground? If you are Christ's, I hope that you do not harbor any such false fears and anxieties!



### The First Sunday after Christmas Day.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

*1 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said, 2 Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified? 3 Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? 4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. 5 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; 6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth. 7 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? 8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? 9 The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. 10 If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? 11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? 12 For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt. 13 If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; 14 If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. 15 For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:*

16 Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:  
17 And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be  
as the morning. 18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig  
about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. 19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none  
shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee. 20 But the eyes of the wicked  
shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.  
(Job 11:1-20)

Enter now the constant example of doubter and human reasoner, Zophar. According to the ancient tradition, Zophar is likely the youngest of the three friends of Job, or the one most junior in position, since he speaks out last. Being perhaps less schooled in learned discourse, Zophar is the harshest of the three in his remarks to Job. The scene is a bit like the growing emotionalism of a mob. The first remarks are not as wild and furious as the latter – so it is with this discourse. Zophar has heard his two colleagues hammer at Job's sensitivities. As he listens, he conjures up even more vile charges against Job in order to impress the others.

There are no 'lies' yet entered into evidence – only the weak opinions of men (including Job). Job has not denied God, or disclaimed His Power. Job has only stated unwise opinions about his own plight and the cause for it. *Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?* Zophar claims that he has now heard enough! He will now set Job, the elder, right. Zophar makes the careless and unsubstantiated charge of liar against Job. Are we well blessed with such friends who, at the moment of our greatest need, hurl false charges against us. Satan has charged Job with a lack of strong faith. Now comes Job's friends and side with the greatest enemy of men's souls – the Devil. When a friend expresses confusion in moments of great trial, does God need our efforts to defend His Person? I think not! God knows our frailties, and He knows those of Job under such hard trials. But Job's friends do not.

*For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.* Job does, indeed, say this in Job10:7. It is true that Job is no accounted wicked by God as are none of those who lay claim to Christ. Ignorance is brave, and Zophar is the most valiant of them all for ignorance! Zophar actually tries to enlist the judgment of God on his own side of the argument, rather than striving to insure that he (Zophar) is on God's side. *But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee.* It would greatly please Zophar if God would openly rebuke Job (his so-called friend).

*And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.* God's wisdom is far more than double that which man can comprehend, but Zophar is absolutely correct in his latter statement: God does, indeed, exact less from His children than their obedience deserves. In fact, God's love covers ALL sin. "..... *love covereth all sins.*" (Prov 10:12) When I was in elementary school, I had difficulty understanding this principle, but having come

to a more intimate knowledge of the nature of God in Christ, I do understand that God, like an obsessive parent, does not ascribe our frailties of obedience to our conscious intentions. He has given His only Begotten Son to cover those inadequacies of all who believe unto salvation.

*Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* Though I wish it were not so, this same failing of Zophar in understanding is so very much like the prideful theologian in its latter application. What learned man of Scripture can you ask for an honest interpretation without being bombarded with big, sophisticated-sounding terms? It is quite difficult to find any mysteries between the pages of Holy Scripture that they feel incapable of discovering. They believe that their little pea-sized brains can comprehend the mysteries fully. The first part of Zophar's allegation above is what we here echoed constantly in the public square: "Can you prove God's existence by factual discovery?" To be honest, the existence of God is not a matter of science because God is the Doctor of Science itself. It is interesting that the Bible contains so many scientific facts of which the learned elders of science were oblivious until recent decades and centuries. (the Science of Metereology, for instance).

In the next verses, Zophar utters profound proof to prove a false premise: *It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.* This is immutable Truth. It reminds me that every characteristic of God is just as measureless as Zophar describes. Remember the beautiful old hymn found scribbled on the walls of an insane infirmary? I do not believe there is a more complete human expression for the depth, height, or width of God's love than those recorded in this hymn:

### **The Love of God**

*by Fredrick Lehman*

The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.  
It goes beyond the highest star  
And reaches to the lowest hell.  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,  
God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled  
And pardoned from his sin.

O love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure  
The saints' and angels' song.

When hoary time shall pass away,

And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;  
When men who here refuse to pray,  
On rocks and hills and mountains call;  
God's love, so sure, shall still endure,  
All measureless and strong;  
Redeeming grace to Adam's race—  
The saints' and angels' song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.

*If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?* Zophar has an accurate, if judgmental, view of God here. But it is the very fact that "*He knoweth vain men*" that gives us a means of salvation in Christ. We are weak as water, and coherent as dust; yet, God loves us enough to die for us. Please correct me if I misapply Zophar's next words to Zophar himself: *For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt*. Zophar is the one that appears vain to me in this comment – very much like the wild ass's colt to which he refers.

*If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:* Zophar has just run out of sound theology! No man can prepare his own heart towards Christ! How often have we heard a sinner, under conviction, say, "I cannot profess Christ now. I am not ready yet. I must get my life straight first?" Well, if we could attain righteousness first, we would not have needed Christ to die for us. We are incapable of "preparing our hearts." Let us leave that task to Christ whom we invite into our hearts as Sovereign, Lord, and Savior. If we were able alone to become righteous, we would not need Christ to clean out the cobwebs and sink holes in our hearts. Let us allow God to put our iniquity away for we cannot! *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* (Psalms 103:12)

There is little doubt that Zophar, and his companions, actually believe their counsel will benefit Job; but the counsel of man withers away before the consuming fire of God's Word. *And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.* This is a very true statement, but one which is

apparently totally misunderstood by its speaker. It is true that Job, in time to come, shall be brighter than the noonday sun. His future eternity will be as the morning dawn as it is with all who are born of God. Job shall, as well, be as secure in the Ark of Christ as Noah and his family in the Ark of the Deluge.

*But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.* Another profound truth uttered by Zophar with only half-knowledge. It is very true that the eyes of the wicked shall fail for there is no need of vision in the dark halls of Hell. Their only hope, and it is a false one, is that of death. Even death shall not grant a reprieve to the wicked. The moment of death to them only introduces a nightmare of eternity in the fires of Hell. Best to seek life in Christ rather than death in Hell with Satan and his fallen demons.





### The First Sunday after Christmas Day.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

*1 And Job answered and said, 2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. 3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? 4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn. 5 He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. 6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. 7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: 8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. 9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? 10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. 11 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat? 12 With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. 13 With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. 14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. 15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. 16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his. 17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. 18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. 19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. 20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. 21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. 22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. 23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. 24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. 25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh*

*them to stagger like a drunken man. (Job 12:1-25)*

A great man will not abide foolish words without challenge. Job, though subject to the same human frailties of us all, is a great example to us of perseverance under stress and duress. As the captain of a great Man-of-War would do, Job will now marshal all hands on board, and bring all guns to flank position, and bring them to bear on the target at hand. Though he may not fully comprehend the reasons for his predicament, he nonetheless knows that there is a God in Heaven. Despite his weakness in the face of severe troubles, he has no doubt God has all power and all knowledge. He describes with majestic language the greatness and beauty of God and his Creation. Such beauty of expression is rare in coming from lips oppressed and tortured, and is evidence of greatness of character and faith. Even when hard pressed, if we remember the greatness and compassion of God, we will be strengthened and encouraged. He will not suffer his people to bear pain endlessly and without reason. In spite of his fears and doubts, Job remembers this. He is a fine specimen of the patriot of Heaven.

A wise man will recognize arrogance and pride in others even before its head has been reared. Job's friends, like many modern know-it-alls in science and religion, have gone a bridge too far in their judgmental and unfair indictment of Job. ***No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.*** I love the smooth reference to snidely pride given here by Job to his friends. They are so full of wisdom, and the sole proprietors of it, that they will carry all knowledge and wisdom of man to their graves. I like it!

***But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.*** Here is food for thought for the modern mind: In ancient times, and even the ancient times of my youth, there was a general knowledge, among the population, of God – His righteousness, His justice, His Law, and His nature. These are qualities that Job's friends, though unfairly, have shared with Job. Who today uses such Godly words of counsel in advising a friend? But a friend is one to whom we turn when the whole nation may turn against us. If that friend to whom we turn condemns us as well, to whom do we turn? Why, we turn to that friend that sticketh closer than a brother, right? The author of the renowned historical classic, *History of the Reformation*, M. D'Aubigne, was once reproached by Henri IV of France for continuing his friendship for M. de la Tremouille, who had recently been banished from court. D'Aubigne replied--"As M. de la Tremouille is so unfortunate as to have lost the confidence of his master, he may well be allowed to retain that of his friend." Would it not have been fitting that the friends of Job had considered this principle? It is not only the knowledge of the Holy that is important, but also how it is applied. The devil knows Holy things as well, but he uses them to destroy the Holy people of God. It is true that the righteous, from Noah to John and Betty Stam, missionary martyrs in China, have been laughed to scorn in their humble desires to love and help others. You may count on it: the scornful tongue shall be turned from scorn to wailing.

It is true that those who live in ease have few questions, while those who live in misery have few answers. Job will now turn the words of his accusers back upon them as a herd of deer spotlighted in the open field. He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. Job sets his light to high-beam, and proceeds to reveal the provincial attitudes expressed by his 'friends'. It is no secret that the devil hates light. If he is after you, which he always is, shine the bright Light of God's Word in his face and he will flee. "**Get behind me, Satan!**" is a fine remedy!

The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. The American, and world, landscape are abundantly supplied with "tabernacles of robbers" that prosper more than the tabernacles of the righteous – seemingly. The visible treasures of gold and silver are apparent while the hidden treasures on deposit in Heaven are hidden from eye. God will usually provide us with that for which the heart yearns above all. If it is the dust and dirt of the world, we shall have it in abundance. But gold will enjoy no currency in Hell.

We have many sophisticates of science and social prominence who know less of real science than the beasts of the field. Ironic, is it not? But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. It is an amazing wonder that men believe that they can define the God of natural law through their own worldly experimentations. They question that there is a God, even, when all of the evidence is in them, around them, and in the very air they breathe. *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things* (Romans 1:19-23) The fish of the sea will inform us if we lack an understanding of God and His Creation. So will the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and even the earth itself whose orbit is so perfectly devised as to be precise in its maintenance of life from the Sun. Our SUN is God!

Who is so foolish to believe that man 'evolved' from lower forms such as apes, monkeys, and chimpanzees. The only evidence of this science might be the brazenly ignorant and goateed professor standing before the biology class. They claim that the evolutionary process is continuous. This nails the last plug in their coffin. If ongoing, where are the transition forms today between monkeys and man? Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. The scientist takes breath for granted until his Maker withholds his last breath. At that moment, too late, the scientist remembers the value of life and breath and the God who made it. Job mentions the Hand of God. Do we forget that our

mortal lives are in His Mighty Hand moment by moment? And what a glorious thought. The One whose eye is on the sparrow, values us far above sparrows. It is a comfort to the Elect, unknown to the lost, to know that our final rest will be at God's Hand. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.* (Psalms 31:5)

Can our ears not hear with understanding? Who made this intricate organ for our benefit? Do our mouths not savor the sweet taste of meats? Who made it so that our labors of eating would not be a chore, but an edification? Do not our marvelous minds accumulate large stores of knowledge and wisdom over time? Why does the modern mind resent the wisdom of the elders? It is perhaps so because wisdom comes from God – the source of all righteousness and wisdom – and this reviles the spirit of licentiousness of the modern mind. *Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat? With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.* Is not wisdom stood on its head by the modern mind which venerates youth and despises wisdom of the aged? When events are not as we think they should be, the world seems to us 'turned upside down.' When the combined armies of American and French forces defeated the British under General Cornwallis at Yorktown, General Cornwallis sent General O'Hara in his stead to surrender. Cornwallis feigned illness rather than surrender to an 'inferior' people who had just given him a good switching. O'Hara first appealed to the French Comte de Rochambeau to receive his surrender rather than lose face by surrendering to the 'country-bumpkins' under Washington. Rochambeau refused, so General O'Hara surrendered to General Lincoln (a subordinate of Washington) while the British band played, "The World Turned Upside Down." Of course, among the most ancient is most wisdom, and the Lord is the Ancient of Days – hear ye Him!

Whatever dreams are erased by the Hand of God are erased forever, and whatever dream He creates in the heart of man shall come to fruition – is it not so? *Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.* The puny charms and claims will not free him from the justice of God. He, too, belongs to God as do the beast of the field – without blessed souls.

*He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.* The discordant voices and cacophony of devils cannot withstand His withering fires. Even those dark secrets that linger in the shadows of death, He brings to light. Though the Light Brigade at Balaclava brought great glory to the British colors in their sacrificial attack, they brought light out of darkness to a world that yearned for men of courage in the cause of right. Their rallying cry was to redress the

blood of women and children crying from the dust. That kind of Light Brigade is nothing compared to the True Light Brigade of Christ.

There was a beloved Country and Land of Liberty whose destiny has turned from abundance to ashes. May God shed His Light again in this fair land to restore the hearts and minds of her people to the God of their fathers. America would do well to heed the next words of Job: *He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.* These last sentences strike dismay into my heart – dismay mingled with righteous indignation for the knavery that has taken over our land. The heart of the chief of our people has been taken away and we wander, as drunken men, in darkness. Remember, America, we are the ones whose hands have done evil and exalted the wicked! Shall the Holy Spirit move, once more, upon the face of the waters of our Land and speak the words of restoration: *And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light* (Gen 1:2-3)





**The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ  
to the Gentiles.**

**[January 6.]**

*The Collect.*

**O** GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ This Collect is to be said daily throughout the Octave

*1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. 2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. 3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? 4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. 5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; 6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.*

*7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. 8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; 9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. 10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? 11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: 12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. 13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! 14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*



**16** For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? **17** My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. **18** And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. **19** The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. **20** Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. **21** His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. **22** But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn. (Job 14:1-22)

The Book of Job is possibly the oldest of the Books of the Bible dating back to 1520 BC. Of course, the events of Genesis predate Job, but may have been recorded after Job. In today's lesson from Chapter 14, we begin to expand upon the already wondrously beautiful gems of hope and truth found in this Book. Alfred Lord Tennyson refers to the Book of Job as the greatest poem of ancient or modern times. Victor Hugo praises it as the greatest Masterpiece of the human mind. Of course, Victor Hugo misses the mark in his analysis, for the Book of Job contains the Mind of God and is His inspired Word.

In the Book of Common Prayer, Burial Service for the Dead, the graveside service begins, following the mournful dirge, with the opening words of this Chapter of the Book of Job. The rubric preceding the graveside service reads: *When they come to the Grave, while the Corpse is made ready to be laid into the earth, shall be sung or said* - then follows: **MAN that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.** Following this sentence, and the few following, the body is committed to the earth; *earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.* This is our final tribute to our beloved brother or sister, daughter or son, mother or father or is it? The dreary words of the committal service have likely made a shadow to come over the peace of your heart. Has it? May I say that it should not, for the committal is not for the benefit of the dead, who know nothing, but for the **living**. Death comes to all and, if we are mindful of its true nature, we shall be more likely to leave no tear-stained pillows behind. Dylan Thomas got it wrong when he penned the lines - *And you, my father, there on the sad height, Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.* Perhaps Mr. Thomas was missing that oil in his lamp that the five complacent virgins lacked. I believe that the Rev. John Donne captures the sense much better:

### **DEATH**

*by: John Donne (1573-1631)*

*DEATH, be not proud, though some have callèd thee*

*Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so:*

*For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow*

*Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.*

*From Rest and Sleep, which but thy picture be,*

*Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;*

*And soonest our best men with thee do go--*

*Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!*

*Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,*

*And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well  
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!*

The whole point of the sufferings of righteous Job is not to engender despair, but rather hope for us. When we encounter turbulent days in our lives, and the meaning of our sufferings is unclear to our minds, let us remember that God has a purpose, often unknown to man, for our sufferings that is unrelated to any judgmental consideration of God. Do we not realize, until the shadows lengthen, that this life is fleeting?

When in school, I was privileged with the opportunity to play football. I remember so clearly how fired up my teammates and I were just before each game. We could move mountains! That eager enthusiasm began to wane sometime near the end of the third quarter. Tired, bruised, and (usually) embarrassed at my performance, I began to yearn for the final whistle. I could then shower, relax, and enjoy my friends. Is this not a caricature of life itself? We began with a cry of energy and life. We run to the next level " always upward, until we reach a mid-crest of life when the life juices flow more precariously. We develop sore muscles and joints, our breath is more labored, and our vision is dimmed - much like that twelfth chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes. As our tenement building becomes wracked with plumbing, heating, and cooling problems, and the rent becomes unbearable, do we not yearn for rest at last? Do we count on those promises made to Abraham, and finished in Christ, to be our Sabbath rest at the Twilight of our Days? Job yearns for this rest. This is all summarized in his first two verses above.

3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? 4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Are any free of guilt and sin? What must one do in life to be relegated to the fires of Hell? The answer, of course, is NOTHING! *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* (Psalms 51:5) Of what righteous pedigree can any among us boast? None at all! We must claim that pure and sinless pedigree of Christ. Who are Zophar, Eliphaz, and Bildad to counsel a man more righteous (in the eyes of the Lord) than they? Job's rhetorical inquiry - Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? misses the mark for wisdom, for there is ONE who can bring a clean thing from an unclean thing " the Lord Jesus Christ " else we are all cursed!

5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; 6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. Yes, our days are ordered according to the economy of heaven " even the hairs of our head are entered into God's accounting books. Just as the mighty oceans are limited in their bounds by God's plan, though they rage in tides and tumults, so is every way of man limited in distance, time, and frequency. Job would pray for peace, if only peace to die. There is a great difference in the dying words of men of faith, and those who are faithless.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. 8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; 9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and

*bring forth boughs like a plant.* Are you beginning to taste of the beauty of expression to which Lord Tennyson referred concerning the Book of Job? In the Age of the Patriarchs, the Promise of the prophesied Branch was not fully known. Had Job known that of which Abraham had been assured, perhaps his metaphors would have been different. Man is precisely like that tree cut down that Job pictures here. Though, especially in our age, the Promise of the Fathers in Christ may seem remote (or even dead) the roots of faith, centered in God's Word, remain subject to that Water of Life which Christ is. The Tree may again bud, and more abundantly than ever before. The Promised Seed is the same which shall grow into the Tree of Life so anciently removed from the Garden at Eden.

*11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: 12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.* Job makes reference here to the great wind patterns that move from the Poles to the Sea, and then return to the land bringing their treasures of water. This meteorological cycle is oftentimes interrupted and there no longer comes the nourishing rains. The same is true of life. The great draught of life comes upon all "but draught never lasts forever. We shall lie down in the earth, and awake in heaven, if our souls are in the Ark of Christ.

*13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!* Please, LORD, do not hide ME in the grave for which Job pleads. I want to be carried, as was the poor beggar, Lazarus, by angels into the bosom of Abraham. I do not want my soul to be "buried" as was the soul of the Rich Man. Though Job may not have known it in his day, the Lord has, indeed, appointed a time for Job in the resurrection, and He shall remember him.

*14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.* Job lacked, as we all do, a perfect understanding; but his lack of complete understanding was mitigated by a true faith in the goodness of God. Job says that he will await his appointed time (what choice has he?) when he shall be changed "and so you and I if we are in Christ. *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* (1 Cor 15:51-52)

*16 For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?* It is true that, not only are steps numbered, but our days as well. But in the life to come, God will not number our days for there will be only ONE day of Eternal duration.

*17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. 18 And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. 19 The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. 20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. 21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. 22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.* The ending of this chapter centers on the despondent side. There is one thing about His children that God does not collect or number "our sins. As a matter of fact, God will remember them no more. (see Hebrews 10:17) In 18 & 19

above, Job accurately states the case that nothing on earth is permanent. The mountains, rocks, and streams are constantly subject to erosion and change. Job misses the mark completely with *thou destroyest the hope of man*. God is the hope of man, and God will not destroy Himself! In the last two verses, Job describes the aging process which brings on wrinkles and failing memories. As Solomon says: *man goeth to his long home*. (Eccl 12:5)

So this chapter of Job ends with a mixture of faith, doubt and despondency. But the day shall come when Job will look upon half of his remarks as folly. Will you?



### The First Sunday after The Epiphany.

*The Collect.*

**O** LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*1 My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. 2 Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? 3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me? 4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them. 5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail. 6 He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret. 7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow. 8 Upright men shall be astonied at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. 9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. 10 But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you. 11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. 12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness. 13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. 14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. 15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? 16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust. (Job 17:1-16)*

In correspondence with a Korean minister in California recently, he asked for

prayers for a particular challenge which he faced. I told him that I would pray for his situation and assured him that God would provide. He responded, "Even if God does not provide, He is still God." At first glance, this would seem to be a wholesome statement of truth, but is it really? Is it not true that God will **ALWAYS** provide for His people? The fact that we have the breath to articulate our doubts, and faith, is evidence that He has provided. Perhaps He may not provide what we **ASK**, but He will certainly provide that which we **NEED** even when we are not aware of our great need. The thing we need the most is our Daily Bread, but are we ALWAYS aware of the need? Perhaps paying he light bill seems more urgent than speaking with the **Author of Light**.

The power of the Book of Job is its absolute application in the life of every earnest Christian. It comforts us to know that Job was a righteous man, yet he suffered the slings and arrows of life precisely because he was righteous. Hard times and many misfortunes are not evidence of the lost favor of God, but may, rather, be evidence of His greater and increasing favor. In allowing Satan, and Job's friends, to antagonize Job, God was not trying to teach the devil, or even Job, a lesson – He is teaching us a lesson on life through Job's suffering. When the death knell tolls, God is nearer to His Child than ever. One of the most terrifying experiences for a young child is learning how to swim, but the father's outstretched arms are more present with the child than ever. Do you expect our Heavenly Father to be different-minded? We watch as righteous Job is pained by disease and loss; we watch as he stumbles ever so slightly in faith; we watch as he rallies in faith from time to time; and we watch as in the latter end, Job is restored. To what purpose? To teach His people that wealth and ease of life is not evidence of righteousness. Some in our land eagerly anticipate a pre-tribulation rapture when they shall forego the tortures of the Beast and ascend to Heaven with a free pass! They do not believe that God will allow them to be persecuted, tortured, and beheaded. Really? What of those of Roman days who were fed to the wild beast; or those during the Great English Reformation who suffered the flames of fire? Or those in Muslim countries who suffer their daughters to be raped and kidnapped, their sons to be beheaded for their faith, and their churches burned to the ground? Is this not the same cruel persecution mentioned in many places in Scripture?

Job, like Elijah, feels that he alone is left. ***My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?*** So is the breath of life which God has breathed into Job's nostrils corrupt? Has Job become, as the foolish poet of *Invictus*, Mr. Henley, claims in his faithless and proud work: "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul?" Does Job now determine the length of his days and the destiny of his existence? Yes, his mocking friends are with him, however, do those friends count more than the Friend of his Bosom? God is always present to "strike hands" with us in time of trouble. ***For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*** (Psalms 27:5) and, ***But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. 40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*** (Psalms 37:39-40) For what reason shall God deliver us from the hand of the wicked? It is "***because they trust in him!***"

***4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them. 5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail. 6 He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.*** If our souls rest not in Christ, then are defensive walls shattered, the parapets of truth and



watchfulness fallen down, and the gates to our hearts thrown ajar for every evil spirit and lie to enter therein! When we have rejected God, we have also rejected His provision and protection. He will give us over to a reprobate mind. *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* (2 Thess 2:11-12) Do we not observe the damnable trend in our churches today – those who declare good to be evil, and evil to be good? We often provoke the wrath of wicked-hearted people who scandalize our names and accuse us of the very things we abhor. Job has become a by-word in his day whereas, in times past, he was full of life and jovial – as a tambourine, or tabret.

*7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow. 8 Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.* When our lives are overwhelmed with sorrows, all else – even those things that once made our hearts joyful – seem dark and lusterless. But those who are righteous and innocent will be appalled at the injustice they witness at the hand of the hypocrite. The righteous are, in fact, surrounded by a Great Cloud of Witnesses. Though the oppressed may see them not, they see well the oppressed and are moved to an astonished compassion.

Here follows a pearl in the story: *9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* The mighty ships of the sea are equipped with great anchors for use in keeping them in safe harbor, or in weathering the storm. When the storm is passed, the anchor is weighed and the vessels move in smooth seas again. - the larger the vessel, the greater the anchor. Though we may be small vessels in the Seas of God, there can be no greater Anchor than that which we have in Christ. If we cast anchor in His Heart, we are, indeed, in safe harbor. If we venture forth on the seas of life and encounter the devil's storms, we furl our sails, cast our anchor, and face the storm head-on. If that Anchor is Christ, you may be certain that your Anchor shall hold:

In times like these, we need a Savior  
In times like these, we need an anchor  
Be very sure, be very sure  
Your anchor holds, and grips the Solid Rock

The rock is Jesus, yes He's the One  
This rock is Jesus, the only One  
Be very sure, be very sure  
Your anchor holds, and grips the Solid Rock

*Ruth Caye Jones*

Captain James Cook was a great English explorer of the seas. His ship was the *Resolution*, and the charted port to which he anchored at a time of great danger, he named 'Cape-Hold-with-Hope.' All of our greatest certainty of God is found in an indomitable faith in Him who is always able. We hold that faith in HOPE! *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* (Heb 11:1) What kept Peter afloat upon the sea? It was faith stayed on Christ. What caused Peter to sink into the angry waves? Again, it was a distraction of faith fixed on Christ. It is true that even a great ship, anchored on the rock with its bow into the wind, will doubtless be buffeted by the winds of the storm. It will toss about and twist in directions unintended; however, the Anchor holds, and will bring the great ship back to face the storm and

tempest until the gales subside. Do you have that Anchorage in Christ to face the storm head-on and weather its blasts and damp breath? 10 But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you. There are none wise whose hearts are not fixed on Christ, have you not known? *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.* (Isaiah 26:3)

11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. Poor JOB! Does any man own the day...or is this the province of God? God has numbered our days – not Job. It is a good thing is Job's, and our own, purposes are gone for the purpose of the Christian heart is one with God – our purpose is not our own, but His! Likewise, the thoughts of our hearts are only to evil unless the heart is ruled by the sovereign Maker of it.

Because Job has not cast his anchor into the Bedrock of God, he will be carried out to deeper and more troubled seas. Though his main-sail be tattered and weathered, the Anchor will hold when it strikes the Rock of his Salvation. The terror of the sea is a great teacher. One lesson learned is a lesson learned well. This is why God often allows the storm and tempest to boil up on a glassy sea. 12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness. Job's nights are as day, and he is without rest owing to a restless mind. He has not availed himself to that great rest made available in God. Therefore, he has not presently that "*peace which passeth all understanding.*"

13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. Job's manner of speaking almost persuades me to side with his three friends. Where did Job invent the preposition 'if' in this sentence? He will certainly die, as do all mortals, in the process of God's time. My mother used to say, when I had made a mess of my projects, "You have made your own bed – now sleep in it!" I learned some wholesome lessons from my mother's restraint in helping me out of my every problem. The darkness to which Job refers is of his own creation. It is true for each of us.

Job's despondency follows on a failure of faith: 14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. 15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? Is corruption Job's father? Has he forgotten his true Father in heaven? Job's body was born in corruption from the dust of the ground; yet, his spirit is born of God. The spirit of man is of far greater importance than his dust-clad body. If Job cannot find hope, who lost it but Job?

Job's final statement in this chapter is a jewel of faithlessness: 16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust. He claims his final estate with the worms and with corruption – that is ALL! Does Job know that God has given him an immortal soul? We may be a bit understanding for Job's remissions of faith here. He cannot look back on any other man of righteousness who has so suffered – but we are able to do so in JOB. Thanks to Job, we have a basis of knowing that faith in God will overcome every oppression. Even Job's failures teach us that we may fail of faith in trying times, but our bow must be brought back into the winds of the storm.



**The First Sunday after The Epiphany.**

*The Collect.*

**O** LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, 2 How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak. 3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? 4 He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place? 5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. 6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him. 7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down. 8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare. 9 The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him. 10 The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way. 11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet. 12 His strength shall be hungerbitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side. 13 It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength. 14 His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. 15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be*

scattered upon his habitation. **16** His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off. **17** His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. **18** He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. **19** He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings. **20** They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted. **21** Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God. (Job 18:1-21)

Repetition being the strong arm of recall, we are witnessing the principle of full array throughout the Book of Job. *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.* (Isaiah 28:9-10) Trapp explains the necessity of repetition when it is truth: *"Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools; and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang his hammer after it has driven its first nail? I shall never repeat a conversation, but an idea often. I shall use the same types when I like, but not commonly the same stereotypes. A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, and by a new and express train of associations."* The associations which we discover throughout Job, and indeed all of Scripture help to inform us of the beauty, the cohesiveness, and the Scarlet Thread that runs from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. We discover therein that Christ is truly the Alpha and Omega - the complete Word. His presence is found in the first of Genesis and the very last of Revelations - and, of course, ALL in between! That Unleavened Bread of which we partake at Holy Communion is symbolic and effectual of that more sensible Bread which we consume in study and meditation upon the Word that is Christ also.

Because most of us hold such a high regard for ourselves, we often believe that God is always on our side, and not on the side of our rivals. During the War Between the States, there were men and women of great faith and Christian devotion of both sides of the conflict. Each felt that God was on their side. It is perhaps possible that God was on neither side, but on His own side. If both warring factions had sought to be on 'God's side' instead of postulating the principle with their lips, as did Lincoln, perhaps war would not have followed and we would not have the divisions we see today across the landscape of America. God does not move. If we are not by His side, He certainly cannot be by ours - and might does not always point the way to the Godly combatant. But there is always one fact of which we can be certain: There is no greater power than God. If a people and nations stand on the side of God, and prove their faith by action, no other power can enslave them!

In former dialogues involving Bildad, he has exercised a greater care to advise and counsel Job. Now, however, his condemnations are more brutal. This is very much the mob mentality. As he sits and hears his colleagues lambast Job, he sees the seemingly helplessness of Job to prevail, and he grows more jealous to drive his cruel nails into the heart of Job. Bildad is perhaps the 'progenitor' of all rednecks. Perhaps the most cruel of approaches is the mixture of immutable truth with treacherous libel. **2 How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.** Have we not heard the repetition of these same words often from these three unreliable friends? Is there no end of speaking?

**3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? 4 He**

teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place? Though I do not agree with his fact, I do agree with his interpretation here. Job has indeed lowered his own value, and by implication, that of all men to the level of a worm. Will the world turn on its head for the foolish babblings of Job, or the irresponsible accusations of Bildad? No, the earth is a fixed globe in its orbit and station. It will not waver at the rantings of men; however, perhaps Bildad has forgotten that Job figured highly in the eyes of God long before the earth was fixed in its place.

Bildad's next statements follow, not as an error of fact, but of application to Job: 5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. 6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him. 7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down. It is very true that the light (though dim and false) of the wicked shall be extinguished, and his fire will not be a fire of light, but of outer darkness in Hell where the fire burns inwardly in man and not outwardly. The father and patron of wickedness is Satan. Because of his sinfulness, he is also miserable. Misery loves company. If Satan can tempt us into extravagant sins, he can cause us to share his misery and final destruction.

8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare. True. Every bird or beast caught in the net has provided its own way there. A Righteous and loving god sends no man to Hell – we earn Hell when we reject the grace of Heaven.

9 The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him. Just as swallowed hook in the fish's mouth sets itself more solidly with the ensuing struggle, so does sin, as a hook, grow more solidly seated as we struggle to win against it. Of course, we cannot. We need the Fisherman of Heaven to unseat the hook and set us free. 10 The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way. The earth is full of snares. Its ground is cursed since Adam. All of our love of the world sets us at greater and greater distances from God. Sin, as we have spoken before, is a DIRECTION that we walk borne out in Psalm 1. 11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet. Just as the notorious criminal flees light sources and the watchful eye of the law, so does the sinner fear the anger of God and the condemning testimony of the righteous. He will flee to others who are likewise under the condemnation of sin. Again, misery loves company.

The cold, steady eye of death, like a tiger in the moonlight, fixes its gaze upon the sinner. There is no escape from his ultimate fate of darkness and eternal anguish. Death does not hurry, but takes its own time – a time set upon the scales of life by the Maker. After death, there is no time. There is only an eternity of shaking and quivering in the fiery darkness of Hell, or of basking in the joy, comfort, and bliss of our Lord. 12 His strength shall be hungerbitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side. 13 It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength. 14 His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. 15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation. The pride of power will evaporate in the heart of the sinner as his confidence of old is shaken at his dismal prospects. The first born of his father is usually possessed of his father's strength and vigor – even in the inheritance. The firstborn of death differs from the Firstborn of the Dead in that the former is permanence in the state of death, and the latter is a complete liberation of the soul FROM death in Christ! It is true that brimstone and fire shall be the pavement of the

life of the sinner who dies in his sins.

**16 His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.** Just as the scorched earth, left in the wake of a raging prairie fire, burns all plant life above ground, so will it dry and kill the roots of the plants beneath. If our roots are not in God, it matters not about the visible branch. In Christ, we can die a thousand deaths, but our sprouting up to newness of life shall bear hundred-fold fruit. **17 His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.** Very true of the sinner, but not of Job. Have we forgotten Job? Would we even know who Bildad was were it not for the story of Job? It is true that the names of the wicked shall be no longer remembered among the living. And they shall neither have any name in Hell. In the life eternal, those only whose names are recorded in the Book of Life shall have a name.

**18 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.** True of the wicked, but not of Job. The wicked shall truly be driven into even deeper darkness than that in which their hearts dwell on earth – but they shall not be chased out of the world except in the sense of death. They will make their permanent home in the dust of the earth just as the rich man who refused Lazarus the crumbs from his table. Hell will absorb their graves. **19 He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.** So, let us observe the folly of the 'wise' Bildad. He has just stated a perfectly false proposition. How do I know? Because I have read the end of Job's story. The problem with our judging is that we judge the present appearance and not the full spectrum of time and eternity. God judges with far more searching eyes into the future as well as the past. What appears to us to be the end of a man's hope may be just the beginning of an eternal joy in the eyes of the Lord. Job, in the end, regains all of his sons and daughters plus double all of his material possessions. This exposes Bildad as the foolish hypocrite which he is.

**20 They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.** True again, but not in the manner that Bildad suggests. We all have been astonished at the depths of misery to which Job sank, but the heights of joy to which he aspired at the end. The latter is of greater astonishment than the former. Yes, as sorrowful as we were at the devil's torment of Job, our joy was just that much more magnified at his restoration to the joys of life (and of heaven).

**21 Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.** Yes, such they are, Bildad, but the saber falls more surely on your own neck than that of poor Job. Bildad, unlike Job, knows much ABOUT God, but he knows little of God Himself. He is very much like so many hard-core religionists who have studied the Bible with a hard spirit to use in judgment only against their fellow man. Was this not the great shortcoming of the Pharisees of Christ's day?





### The Second Sunday after The Epiphany.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In one of the most notable sculptures of Auguste Roden, the artist portrays, in stone, the hand of God creating and molding the form of man from a large chunk of earth. The man is nearly complete in form, yet much remains of the lump suggesting that our physical bodies alone do not constitute our complete person, and much more remains of man o e perfected than the mere outward form. Much of the mass remains to illustrate the imperfection of man in his fallen state, but is shown to indicate that God intends continually to perfect man after His own Image. This work suggests that we are never a finished product until God has put the finishing touch on our countenance. That is my humble analysis of the work, and I hope Auguste Roden would have agreed with it since he is its creator.

The great debate taking place in Job is between the belief in a works-oriented faith, and that of a faith based upon grace and faith. The three friends are on the side of salvation and prosperity by works, and Job on the side of salvation by grace alone. Which side do you believe to be that of Jesus Christ? *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* (John 9:1-3) The modern day Pharisees and prosperity preachers still profess that sickness comes as a result of sin, and poverty from an unwholesome relationship with God. Just as Roden portrays the Hand of God molding man from a lump of clay, so it is true that we are all clay in the Hands of the Potter and unable to add a single inch to our stature. If it seems good to create a little baby without vision for His own purpose, so be it. The clay cannot dictate to the Potter. There are untold numbers of the young who were born with some disabling defect – either mental or physical – who have come shining through to bless all who know them, and to the glory of God. Had he been conceived in our day, even the sickly Beethoven would have been murdered through abortion ere he saw the light of day, or a single note of music graced his lonely heart.



Job begins his discourse with firm and steady conviction. Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations. Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on. The gift of speech is remarkable blessing. It has great power if the Words originate from on high. Have you thanked God lately for this simple and useful gift that some do not possess? Really? When was the last time? Just how important is this gift? For speech to be profitable there must be ears to hear it: So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17) If faith cometh by hearing, then the tongue that spoke the Words must be very important! Job was not present in the Council of Heaven to hear the challenge between God and Satan. He does not fully understand why he is living in such dire straits; however, he does know God, and the God Job knows is not profited by the trifling works of man. God does not desire our insincere words spoken from pride, or our moldy old church buildings built on the backs of widows and orphans. God desire one, only, sacrifice from us: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Psalms 51:17)

<sup>4</sup> As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled? <sup>5</sup> Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth. <sup>6</sup> Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. I recall to memory so many incidences in which God has ruled in the affairs of individuals who have mightily offended His Holiness. In almost every case, the one who has perverted justice does not realize the unseen Hand that has brought a severe retribution. But the righteous, too, may seldom see the misery that follows in the tracks of sin. We look upon the wealthy that need not labor, but live in opulence – an opulence created by robbing the poor or the unwise. We cannot see the fevered heart beneath the silken robes that are troubled night and day in greed for more – always MORE! If this is not a living hell, I do not know what is! They cannot appreciate the roses by the wayside, or the innocent smile of a little child, for their hearts are set on the filthy lucre and filth of the city refuse. Job knows the Hidden Hand and trembles at the thought. The ungodly know so little of truth, but what they do not know will lead to their doom.

<sup>7</sup> Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? <sup>8</sup> Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. <sup>9</sup> Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. <sup>10</sup> Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. <sup>11</sup> They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. <sup>12</sup> They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. <sup>13</sup> They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Job now takes his strong position of the immutable truths of God which diametrically oppose those of his friends. The wicked do, indeed, often fair very well in this life – more often than the righteous are they blessed with possessions. Why is this so? Why do you suppose honest and good men do not usually run for public office, and when they do, why do they most often lose? It is because the righteous are restrained in their words by truth and honesty. The wicked are not. Slander and libel are the tools of their trade – so they prosper with an unfair advantage. They often live long lives in prosperity of the world, and die suddenly without pain. Must I remind you that their prosperity ends abruptly at graveside? Remember the Rich Man and Lazarus? There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the

*beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.* (Luke 16:19-23) Would we prefer the fires of hell to the escort of angels?

How do the world and her governments view the LORD? They expend constant effort to expunge every vestige of His Name and worship from every public square. They attempt to vanquish his Name from the minds of the young forbidding prayer and Bible reading. They attempt to eradicate every reference to His Divine Hand in their founding as a nation...God forbid! What shall become of such a nation and people who have known His grace, and finally rejected it? <sup>14</sup> *Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* <sup>15</sup> *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?* Job observes, astutely, the exact state of affairs in our modern world. If evil was such as it was 3,500 years ago, then it has had a long spell to hone its ways into greater sophistication. Their ways are in a constant flux, but the man whose heart is stayed upon Christ has a steady focus. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.* (Isaiah 26:3) <sup>17</sup> *How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.*

The wicked truly do become stubble in the path of the Lord. It is always fascinating to me to note that God often leaves out the name of the wicked (as in the Rich Man – no name – and Lazarus – name). The wicked have no names in Hell, but the righteous have a new and spotless name written down in the Book of Life in Heaven. Perhaps the Pharisees who brought the woman taken in adultery to Christ saw, that day, their names written on the earth: *O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.* (Jer 17:13) Job goes on to say: <sup>18</sup> *They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.* <sup>19</sup> *God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.* <sup>20</sup> *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.* The wicked leave a morass of spiritual wickedness and an evil heritage for their children. Only by the grace of God do some overcome the debts owed by the fathers.

<sup>21</sup> *For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?* I read of a wealthy financier who died in New York. A reporter asked the dead man's friend, "How much did he leave, sir?" "He LEFT it all," was the response. How greatly that principle differs from the death of the righteous! When a righteous man or woman dies, what do THEY leave? They leave not a mite! All of their treasure is on deposit in Heaven where they go to reclaim it.

<sup>22</sup> *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.* No, I do not believe any mortal can teach a single thought to God Almighty! But do they not try – especially high-born theologians who have discovered 'errors' in the Bible? The so-called 'Higher Critics' (low as hell itself) attempt to use their presumed intellect to define a different God and Bible than we have known. They know more than Holy Scripture itself about the nature of our God who flung the stars into space and created the earth and all of its habitation; yet, these 'great scholars cannot even create a flea, or define light. They are a dozen marbles short of a ten marble load!

23 One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. 24 His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. 25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. 26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. For the wealthy wicked, their present physical being is all that they have. When their bodies lie, as John Brown's, a moldering in the grave, the only possession they can claim is a rotting carcass and several hundred head of worms. THAT'S IT! But all the dead shall share the common destiny. If that destiny is not heaven, then it is the grave (which shall be cast, along with hell, into the Lake of Fire). But what of the righteous dead? "...*Death is swallowed up in victory.*" (1 Cor 15:54)

27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me. 28 For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked? 29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, Why have they not asked these evil predecessors that go the way of Cain? Because they go into the dark abyss never to speak to man again. 30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. 31 Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done? There comes a day when the King shall call all into His Court for an accounting and a settlement. Burdened with debts of sin and wickedness, where shall the evil heart stand, and what shall be his defense? What terrible debt shall be extracted on the Day of Woe? 32 Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb. 33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him. The greatest 'sweetness' of the grave will not be sugar, but clods of earth. The long black train continues ahead as it has proceeded in the past. Innumerable souls line the path to the grave, and many fill the gaping abyss.

34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood? Can false counsel benefit a man in the throes of misery? Can white lies smooth the long march to the grave? Does a half-hearted friend benefit by always ignoring the sorrowful truth in favor of a pleasant lie?

This Book of Job gets better, and better, with the reviving spirit of Job's faith and love for God.



### The Second Sunday after The Epiphany.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Devotion on Job (Chap 22) 24 January 2013 Anno Domini

I am constantly amazed at the depths to which those of little faith will sink to condemn those who live righteous lives without any citation of specific sins. A favorite here in Alabama of the Baptist and other non-liturgical churches is to accuse our little Church of St Andrews Anglican as being heretical in its teaching. Noteworthy in their charges is the fact that they have never heard a sermon at St Andrews, nor have they cited any specific reason for considering us to be heretical. For example, do we preach false doctrine or unbiblical worship? On these points, they are silent but are satisfied with the simple charge of 'heresy' simply because we are different in our form of worship. We observe a strict reverence before God, and we worship Him in the dignity due His station yet, because we are different, we must be heretical! Yes, best gather the wood and faggots for the fire which all heretics deserve!

Mr. Eliphaz now takes the floor in this chapter to further accuse Job of sundry sins o which Job has never given a single thought. Perhaps the hypocrite is relieved in his conscience by leveling charges against others at their most vulnerable moment – very much like a General Sherman making war on defenseless women and children. The presumptions of Eliphaz are preposterous in both enormity and nature. Please note that Eliphaz, in his prideful arrogance, presumes to be able to read – not only the mind of Job in knowing his sins – but the Mind of God as well in bringing terrible judgment against his righteous soul! Perhaps Eliphaz is born out of time. He would make a great deceiver for our day in rendering "new and more accurate" versions of the Bible which bear little resemblance to the genuine article!

### **Job 22**

King James Version (KJV)

**22** Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

**2** Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

- 3** Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?
- 4** Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?
- 5** Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?
- 6** For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.
- 7** Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.
- 8** But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.
- 9** Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
- 10** Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;
- 11** Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.
- 12** Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!
- 13** And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?
- 14** Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.
- 15** Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?
- 16** Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood:
- 17** Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?
- 18** Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
- 19** The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.
- 20** Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.
- 21** Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.
- 22** Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.
- 23** If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.
- 24** Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones

of the brooks.

**25** Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

**26** For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

**27** Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

**28** Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

**29** When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

**30** He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

We could consider this chapter to consist mainly in four different divisions:

1. **Verses 1-5:** The completely exhaustive numbers of sins of Job of which Eliphaz seems proudly aware.
2. **Verses 6-11:** Eliphaz list specific sins of which Job "must" be guilty in order that God will judge him so.
3. **Verses 12-20:** Job is charged with complacency in his sins believing God will not see them.
4. **Verses 21-30:** Job encouraged to repent and be restored.

*1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, 2 Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? 3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect? 4 Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment? 5 Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?* The premise of Eliphaz is not only wrong, but so is his logic. While it is true that God is not profited by any works we do, He does take pleasure in our righteous faith. "...he taketh not pleasure in the legs (where he goes or what his works are) of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. (Psalms 147:10-11) Furthermore, man cannot "make himself perfect" – that is the role of the Holy Ghost in sanctifying more and more the righteous man whose righteousness is not his own, but the imputed righteousness of Christ. I must remind Eliphaz that his sins are also infinite for even the smallest violation of the law is a violation of all. The difference in Job and Eliphaz might be that Job is accepted of God.

*6 For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. 7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. 8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it. 9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. 10 Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee; 11 Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of*



waters cover thee. Now Eliphaz, at the very least, names specific sins but omits to specify the times, dates, and occasions for such sin. He offers not an iota of material evidence. Instead of clothing the naked, Eliphaz accuses Job stripping them naked. When did Job do this? We are not told but are expected to condemn Job simply for the groundless accusation. Additionally, has Job deprived water from the weary? Could we please have a name and date here? Or has Job withheld bread from the hungry? Please let us have a specific charge and occasion. It is a moral custom of those of the Middle East to treat the stranger with hospitality and kindness (despite the evils of Islam).



When living in Iran, if I landed an aircraft on a sandbar of the river during military training, the farmers would come running with watermelons with which they would continue loading the aircraft until it became over-grossed if not prevented sooner. Somehow that kindness has survived even the imposed ignorance of Islam. The greater number of charges made against Job are the more heinous because Job was a man of wealth (not needing to take from the widow and the poor).

12 Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! 13 And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? 14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven. 15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? 16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: 17 Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them? 18 Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. 19 The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn. 20 Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth. Eliphaz accuses Job of a lapse in faith as if he does not know that God is Almighty. Job is classed with the wicked that lived before the flood. Perhaps Eliphaz has forgotten, or never known through neglect of study, that God has promised to never destroy the earth again with the waters of the Flood, and He has established His rainbow in the heavens as witness of it? Eliphaz now launches out on the "feel-good Gospel" that supposes the righteous will always be rewarded in all walks of life, but the wicked destroyed at each offense. Is this true? Did Mao Tze Tung, Joseph Stalin, or Pol Pot die natural deaths, or no?

21 Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come



unto thee. Is the pot calling the kettle black? It is an unquestionable fact that Job is far more acquainted with the Almighty than is his oppressor. 22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. 23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. 24 Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. 25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. 26 For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. 27 Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Has Job departed from God as Eliphaz claims? I think not! Job stands on the same sure knowledge of God that he possessed BEFORE the onslaught of Satan's darts which, by the way, are presently being supplied by Eliphaz. Have you watched TV evangelism lately? Have you heard the promises of wealth and lucre that they are promising to all who will send one thousand dollars or more of "seed" money to them. Seed money, indeed! Being a child of God does not bring with it a promise of earthly wealth – it never has! True wealth is to be rich in spirit, and poor in the wealth of this world. The Church at Smyrna epitomizes this principle. *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)* (Rev 2:8-9)

Eliphaz next suggests that Job, when he is restored, may decree a thing and it shall be granted. Is this not like the modern evangelical scoundrels who teach that God is bound to grant whatsoever we demand in prayer? The only prayer that God will always grant is a prayer offered out of the Christian who has asked out of the Mind of Christ which he has put upon himself. 28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways. And see in the next verse how Eliphaz presumes man to be endowed with that power that belongs only to God. 29 When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. None can save but God. Even our own acts of kindness and generosity are not ours but proceed from the heart of God. 30 He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands. Here again, none can deliver but the LORD. You can witness all of the old heresies just as alive today as when they were first conceived in the heart of wicked men: Many of the most popular preachers of our time have reinvented these heresies by another name and are reaping great profits from the purses of the deceived. Let us pray that you, friend, are not complicit with them in granting them 'filthy lucre.'

Devotion on the Book of Job (Chapter 23) – 25 January 2013, Anno Domini (Conversion of St Paul)



### The Conversion of St. Paul

*The Collect*

**O** GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

There are moments in our lives when the heavens above seem as hardened brass so that our prayers bounce back upon our own heads. During those moments, we presume that God has turned a deaf ear to our pleadings, but God is never deaf to the prayers of His saints. In a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, he expresses the forlorn despair of the tested soul:

*My prayers must meet a brazen heaven  
And fail and scatter all away.  
Unclean and seeming unforgiven  
My prayers I scarcely call to pray.  
I cannot buoy my heart above;  
Above I cannot entrance win.  
I reckon precedents of love,  
But feel the long success of sin.*

*My heaven is brass and iron my earth:  
Yea, iron is mingled with my clay,  
So harden'd is it in this dearth  
Which praying fails to do away.  
Nor tears, nor tears this clay uncouth  
Could mould, if any tears there were.  
A warfare of my lips in truth,  
Battling with God, is now my prayer.*

(The poet experiences some of the misery of Job, but lacks his faith)

## **Job 23**

King James Version (KJV)

**23** Then Job answered and said,

**2** Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

**3** Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

**4** I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

**5** I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

**6** Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.

**7** There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

**8** Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

**9** On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:

**10** But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

**11** My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

**12** Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

**13** But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

**14** For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

**15** Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

**16** For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

**17** Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

This chapter in Job can be divided into three significant parts:

1. In verses 1-9, we read of Job's searching for God to plead his cause.
2. In verses 10-12, Job recognizes that God is refining him as gold, and he will emerge from his troubles pure.

3. In verses 13-17, Job acknowledges that it will be God's will that is done and not his own.

As I was discussing the previous chapter devotion and our reference to God's rainbow with a dear friend, we talked of how the rainbow covers the canopy of heaven but, yet, touches the earth at some point. My mother, being Irish, would tell me of a 'Pot of God' at the end of the rainbow – but I can assure you that there is far more than a 'Pot of Gold' where the heavens came down to touch the earth. Jesus came down two thousand years ago and opened the floodgates of mercy and love for us. Being the Light of the World, he brought every color of the rainbow with Him and covenanted with us as of old. It is remarkable in my view that Job began with great faith but, hammered mercilessly by his friends, he began to feel deserted by God; however, the more they lambast him, he begins to grow more staunchly fixed in that reviving faith and courage of a righteous man. In our modern world, the true-believing Church is harried from pillar to post, yet a greater and more enduring faith will always arise. The world today is enjoying a drunken orgy, but once the orgy is over, they shall plead with the church for a sanctuary from the justice of their licentious sins.

Even in the opening lines of the chapter (v 1-9); Job again expresses grief at not being able to connect, as in olden days, with the comforting fellowship of God. Knowing God to be just and also full of mercy, Job asserts that, if he could only converse with God, God would be persuaded by his argument and grant a reprieve from his present sufferings. **2. Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.** **3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!** **4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.** **5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.** Much as the fair, Shulamite maiden of Solomon's Song longs for her Lily of the Valleys and her Rose of Sharon to comfort and reassure her, so does Job long for that fellowship of prior days he has enjoyed with the LORD. So, too, does the true Church in our day long for the same Rose of Sharon, and the encouraging Lily of the Valleys to light our way in a sin-darkened world.

Job may not know the Why of God's workings, but he knows well the Nature and Character of God. **6 Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.** **7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.** When we have entrusted our fortunes in a strong and reputable bank, we may not know in what way they will safeguard our funds, but we do know that the bank will take whatever measures are necessary to keep our interests safe and secure. Job knows well that God will not come against him in violence but rather as a loving Father. Is it possible for the righteous to commune with God with questions and arguments? Yes, Abraham dealt with God prior to the destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain. The process did not change the will of God – for He was bent on the destruction of those wicked cities – but it did change Abraham's mind in knowing that God would not destroy Sodom for the sake of ten innocents. But God knew that there were not even ten innocents. Jacob likewise wrestled with God. God was not changed, but Jacob was permanently changed. Job feels that his predicament is based on some presumed evil that God sees in him but the circumstances are just the reverse – God has allowed Job to be tempted because He sees Job as RIGHTEOUS! He knows Job will withstand the storm and become an everlasting encouragement and witness to us who, likewise, suffer unjustly for our faith.

There is a growing faith in Job's present doubt. He readily admits that, though he cannot find God, God is present and hiding His visage from him.<sup>8</sup> *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.* Since God is present everywhere and at all times (omnipresent), Job knows that God is present even if Job cannot see Him.

It is a continual worry to the saints that they are unworthy of the grace of God and deserve their tortures of the world; but, though they certainly do not deserve the grace of God, it would no longer be grace if it were deserved. And, yes, we do deserve the tortures of earth and Hell, but God has called by grace through faith, into the heart of His Beloved Son, Jesus. Please observe how Job's compass bounces, at times, from true north, but at last always returns to its proper reading. He doubts, and his doubts actually FEED his faith. The first nine verses depict a weakness in faith, but see how the faith is confirmed in the next three verses: *10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. 11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. 12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.* Job knows, despite his sometime doubts, that God is good, and that whatever God brings into his life will be a refinement of his character and virtue. Can we all recognize this? See how in verse 12 that Job treasures the Bread of Heaven more than the bread made from the fruit of the earth?

Finally, Job acknowledges that, in spite of his own reasoning and logic, that of God Almighty is always sure and true. The will of God is always based on best wisdom and knowledge of the facts above those of any mortal. God, knowing the best in the long outcome, will not change His will for He does not vacillate between two opinions as does man. *13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.* Truly, God is of One Mind. When we have taken God's will into our lives to the out-casting of our own frail wills, we will always ask those things that are convenient to God to grant. Divisions in Church and society itself will disappear for those individuals and nations whose direction is dictated by that Bright and Morning Star.*14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.* Have we not read this in remarkable places of the Holy Scriptures? *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* (Heb 13:8)

Should we fear God as Christians? Yes, but not with the mortal fear a convicted murderer has for the guillotine; the fear of a Christian for the Father should be the fear a good son has for his Father whom he never wishes to disgrace or make ashamed. *15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him. 16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:* Job says that God has melted his heart to be without courage. Did not Christ suffer more greatly all of our afflictions? Read His words from the cross: *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.* (Psalms 22:14)

Job claims that he has been spared the comfort of death before the pitch darkness that has arisen and that, instead of covering Himself with a cloud of darkness, God has covered Job's face with that darkness. *17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.* The eyes of God are never blinded to our present circumstances, only our understanding is clouded from knowing the perfect will of God; therefore, we often linger in pointless doubt.



### The Second Sunday after The Epiphany.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Though the incorrigibly wicked go about their works of evil and ruin oblivious to the righteous laws of God, they seem to be spared any measure of divine retribution. Why is this the case? God is patient and all-wise in dispensing justice to the wicked. Today's wicked may be tomorrow's righteous in the eyes of God. Who among us would not relegate to Hell a man who goes about destroying the Church of God - murdering men, women and children by stoning who fall into his wicked snares? Perhaps we all, being human, would condemn such a man on the spot. Thankfully, God does not "condemn on the spot." He rather gives every opportunity for repentance of the wicked perchance after the eyes of their heart have been opened to Him. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* (2 Peter 3:9) If their remains the spark and promise of salvation in a soul, according to the predestined will of God, He will withhold His hand of Judgment. So David, the King, did not suffer immediate destruction at God's hand at the occasion of his committing adultery and murder. So God spared Saul (Paul) who went about persecuting the Church of God and stoning its people until he had experienced an encounter on the Road to Damascus with the blinding Light of Christ! So God's thoughts are not our thoughts. He knows, not only the instant present, but the eternity past and future. Though we may today ride the express train to Hell, He knows that, at some future point, we may transfer passage to the "Straight and Narrow" Highway of our God. Job responds further today that God's judgment is not `if' but `when'. It is not the certainty of God's judgment that Job questions, but His reluctance to act with sudden dispatch at the transgressions of the wicked.

Today's chapter devotion may be divided into three headings:

1. The wicked often seem to go unpunished during their `visible' existence. (24:1-12)
2. The wicked, as the snail, despise the Light. (24:13-17)
3. The wicked will endure a final and certain judgment. (24:18-25)

## **Job 24**

King James Version (KJV)

**24** Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

**2** Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

**3** They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

**4** They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

**5** Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.

**6** They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

**7** They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.

**8** They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

**9** They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

**10** They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;

**11** Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

**12** Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

**13** They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

**14** The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

**15** The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.

**16** In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.

**17** For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

**18** He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he



beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

**19** Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

**20** The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

**21** He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

**22** He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.

**23** Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways.

**24** They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

**25** And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

Job first of all wonders at the mindless logic of the wicked. If they know history, why do they believe a disregard for God's Laws to be a better way? When a nation has known the joys and securities of the Godly Way, why do they ultimately turn to the meaner and lesser gods - power, money, bondage, promiscuous sex, poisons of body and soul - of old time? Are they blind? Yes, certainly, they are more blind than blind Bartemeus on the Jericho Road: **1 Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?** Man cannot create himself. He cannot bring new life into being - even of a lowly flea! Neither can he cause himself to be able to see absent the Holy Ghost working in his heart to create a new man. The new birth, just like the old, must come from the Creative nature of God. Yet men consciously oppose the works of God at every turn. Even men who function under the pretense of the ministry are often the greatest enemies of truth and Gospel promise. They do attempt great damage to righteousness because they pose as its adherents. They are traitors to the cause in every sense. The principle laid down by that great proponent of republican government describes the rule that applies to governments in this way: **A nation can survive its fools... ..and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and he carries his banners openly. But the traitor moves amongst those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the galleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears not a traitor; he speaks in the accents familiar to his victims, and wears their face and their garment, and he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation, he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of a city, he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. A murderer is less to fear.** *Marcus Tullius Cicero* Circa 42 B.C. The same principle holds true to the deceit of compromising and ungodly ministers.

The traitors to the Gospel are far more plentiful than those without who oppose it without knowledge. In what ways do they do damage?

1) **2 Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.**

What is a landmark? It is a true starting point from which all property lines are drawn. Move the landmark and all property lines will be in question. What is the Landmark of the believing Christian? It is the sure Word that has been preserved incorruptible from ancient time until now. Men claiming to be more enlightened and knowledgeable than the men who copied the ancient manuscripts; who profess a greater devotion than those reformers who laid down their lives at the stake for truth; who insist on a greater knowledge of ancient language though far removed from the source – these are those who corrupt the truth and attempt to remove the Landmark of truth. *Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.* (Deut 19:14) Moses refers to landmarks in general here. This they attempt to move by theft of their neighbor. But the greater and enduring Landmark is that Landmark of truth mentioned earlier: *Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.* (Prov 22:28) This is the Landmark of our Fathers set in the Rock of our Salvation from time immemorial. As men tamper with question of the Canon of Scripture, and even the very words and content of Scripture itself, they are attempting to move the Ancient Landmark of Truth.

2) They do damage by making the Temple of God a house of commerce and not a House of Prayer: *3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge. 4 They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.* The birds nesting in the branches of the Mustard Tree have come, as demons, to corrupt the Word and to steal from the people. One of the Bible verses that the modern revisers are adamant to remove is Matthew 23:14 which reads: *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.* Do you wonder why this particular verse would offend the greedy sellers in the House of God (Church)?

3) They are tireless, more so than the righteous, in doing their works of robbery and deceit: *5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children. 6 They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked. 7 They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. 8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter. 9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. 10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry; 11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst. 12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.* Contrary to the popular little ditty, the "lion does NOT sleep tonight." The hours of darkness are his choice time of seeking out victims to devour them. It is a well-known fact that, unlike ministers, "the devil never takes a holiday."

4) Just as the lion hates the Light for his hunting, so does the sinner, as a snail, hate the Light for exposure. *13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. 14 The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.* The wicked sinner LOVES darkness. He cannot abide the Light for his evil deeds. He hides the rocks and caverns in the day, and rises at night to offend the innocent. He is as the snail: *As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.* (Psalms 58:8) When the Sun of Righteousness arises, the snail will scurry for the shelter of darkness beneath the nearest stone. So do the wicked hide their

guilt and run from the Light of Truth. 15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. 16 In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light. 17 For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

But do the wicked, at last, escape any judgment for their deeds? Certainly, they do NOT! The Prodigal Son had a gay old time as long as his ill-gotten wealth remain (more ill-spent than ill-gotten), but when his treasure was gone, he at last came to be a tender in the pig sty. 18 He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. 19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned. 20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree. 21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow. 22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life. 23 Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways. 24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn. 25 And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth? The ultimate judgment against the wicked is a sorrowful and final judgment. Hope being past for salvation, they are left only a barren estate of nakedness in the fires of Hell. Having led a life of compromising appeasement and ingratiation to the political powers of society and government, he no longer has ability to bribe and influence. His co-conspirators share the bed of flames with him. There is no one to bribe or to seduce in Hell, and the Father will no longer hear their prayers. They are "in outer darkness". Verse 19 makes the summary complete: 19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned. The languishing in the grave without power even to resist the relentless worm that devours the greatest worth of the sinner – his physical heritage, is his demise. There is no escort of his soul to the "bosom of Abraham" as poor Lazarus enjoyed. The snows of Kilimanjaro cannot resist the heat of the African sun no more than the darkness can abide the power of light, but must disperse a far distance from it. Let me ask a personal question, friend: Do you love light greater than darkness?



The first day of Lent, commonly called  
Ash Wednesday.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. 2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth. 3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly. 4 The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. 5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. 6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay. 7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee. 8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, 9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. 10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy, 11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths. 12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. 13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. 14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. 15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; 16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, 17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. 18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. 19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: 20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. 21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. 22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. 23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: 24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.*

25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: 26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. 27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; 28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. 29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, 30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. 31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak. 32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee. 33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom. (Job 33:1-33)

The surprise arrival of Elihu on the scene changes the whole nature and direction of the Book of Job. It also serves to awaken Job to his own vain babblings about his own righteousness and the implied injustice of God. This Book only gets better and more glorious now until the end. Elihu, in his righteous council and sudden appearing serves as a Type of Christ. That which we all must long for is a man to stand between our weakened persons and that Holy Presence of God. We dare not even look upon the Visage of God and His Heaven just as the Publican would not do who came to the Temple with the Pharisee. But another man of like nature to us will not do, for he stands in no better stead to address God the Father than we do. No, we need a DIFFERENT kind of man – a man without sin whose countenance in righteousness can withstand the blinding and perfect Light of God and His holiness. Where do we find such a man? We find Him in our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether in righteousness or not, Elihu seems to stand, as a minister of God, in the stead of Job to mediate his plight with God. None, however, can truly stand in the stead of God – only God can feel such a place, and that Person who stands in the stead of God the Father is God the Son. But we have a clear foreshadowing at least in Elihu of the role to be played by our Lord Jesus Christ in being our sole Mediator between God and man. There is none other – priest, magistrate or potentate!

Due to length of the chapter I will summarize as much as possible without sacrificing intrinsic meaning.

First, in his attempt to justify his own righteousness, Job has claimed he is innocent. **8. Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,** **9. I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.** Is there any shadow of possibility to Job's claim? Of course, there is not! ***As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*** (Romans 3:10) ***For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*** (Romans 3:23) So we immediately see here that Job is not standing on solid ground by his claims of righteousness. It is very true that every man, woman, and child born into the world needs to do nothing at all in order to deserve hell for we are even conceived in sin. ***Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*** (Psalms 51:5) So we are all deserving of hell, and if God relegated us, one and all, to the fires of hell, his justice would be unquestionable. But He has not chosen to do so. Instead, He has sent a Redeemer to release us from the penalty of the law, and open the floodgates of mercy and grace to those who know Him and receive Him in Christ.

Second, Job's implication that God's persecution of Job is unjust. **10. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy,** **11. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.** Does God need to SEEK an occasion against us? Are our sins so few that He must seek out a reason to condemn us? If only the sins we have committed, or omitted, today would be sufficient to cast us into hell. If God



considered Job and enemy, would he have been allowed to go on his verbal rampage against God and His justice? Though God does, indeed, mark our path and light our feet, He does not put our feet in stocks. Au contraire, He sets us at perfect liberty in Christ. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised* (Luke 4:18)

He bore the penalty of our sin so that we might enjoy the liberty whereby He set us free from the bondage of sin. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all* (Isaiah 53:5-6)

Third, Job's claim of the indifference of God to his suffering is unfounded on the face of it. 12. Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. 13. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. True, God is greater than man; but in what sense? If you have trouble with that one, I will give you the answer "in all ways God is so much greater than man that His greatness cannot be measured! Men sit on church councils and boards trying to determine what direction the church should take in worship as if it were their own prerogative to do so. They do not base their arguments (any more seemingly) on Scriptural imperative, but upon traditions and opinions of mere men. They opt for the flashy and gimmicky, but God will have none of that. He deplores the ostentatious in worship and commands reverence, truth, and spirit. *"the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24) *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear For our God is a consuming fire.* (Heb 12:28-29) Believe me, God is omniscient and knows all that not only we do, but every creature and every plant. He has an account of every atom in the Universe and hair upon your head. Can you claim Him to be INDIFFERENT? That is not something even God is able to be.

Elihu addresses the claims of Job in a convicting and spiritual manner, unlike Job's three friends. *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"* (John 16:8). We are not always to comfort our erring friends in their errors, but give them convincing arguments from God's Word that will place them in a position to be comforted in truth. Elihu claims to speak with the 'Breath of the Almighty.' Is it possible for us to correct others with that Breath? Yes, the Word of God is life "it is living. If we speak the Mind of God we speak with that breath. But in our convincing endeavor for truth, we must not omit that other ingredient essential to the Spirit: *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.* (Eph 4:15)

In addressing Job's (third) claim of God's indifference and failure to speak, Elihu teaches the manner of God's speech to Job. He speaks in whispers, in small still voices, in the wind and thunder. Yet, man often is dull of hearing the counsel of God because he is too occupied with the noises of the world. 14. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. 15. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; 16. Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, 17. That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide

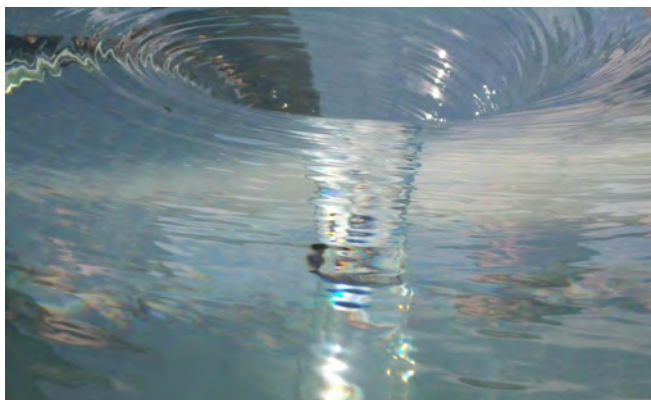
*pride from man* Now, suppose the man to whom God speaks does not hear the gentle voice or the thunder? God will speak twice, but in a different nature. 19. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: 20. So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. 21. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. 22. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers God is a gentleman in the sense of a General MacArthur: He will treat with tender words unless the party becomes belligerent; then he strikes with sudden force. Afterwards, he reverts to a tender concern for the heart He has chastened just as the considerate treatment of MacArthur towards the Empire of Japan at the close of hostilities. God is like that, only in a perfect Way. We best attune our ears to hear clearly at first, for the second voice may bring great misery.

Elihu now addresses Job's (second) claim of God's unjust persecution. 23. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness 24. Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. 25. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: 26. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. God always seeks to keep us from error and His Counsel and Chastening is always bent toward our good. Elihu truly speaks prophetically here, because in the end, Job truly does receive multiple blessings. But first, he must awaken to his own depravity in the face of God's righteousness.

When I grow too old to recognize that I am a condemned sinner apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that God will send a young Elihu to open my eyes to truth. Turning to Job's first claim of innocence in the faith of God's wrath. Elihu states the obvious:

*27. He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; 28. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. 29. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, 30. To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. 31. Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak. 32. If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee. 33. If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.* Elihu points out, in beautiful tones, the mercy of God. If we admit our sins and are grievously sorry, He is anxious to forgive them and restore His erring child. God will endow us with the Light of the Living. Sometimes, it is best just to cease speaking altogether if all we can do, as in the case of Job, is to make pitiful excuses and expressions of self-righteousness. If we listen to the voice of wisdom, we have done well in our reconciliation with our God.





The first day of Lent, commonly called  
Ash Wednesday.  
*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

### **Job 34**

King James Version (KJV)

**34** Furthermore Elihu answered and said,

**2** Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

**3** For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.

**4** Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.

**5** For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

**6** Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.

**7** What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?

**8** Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

**9** For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

**10** Therefore hearken unto me ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.

**11** For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to

find according to his ways.

**12** Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

**13** Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

**14** If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

**15** All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

**16** If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.

**17** Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?

**18** Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?

**19** How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.

**20** In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

**21** For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

**22** There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

**23** For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

**24** He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.

**25** Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.

**26** He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;

**27** Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

**28** So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

**29** When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:

**30** That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

**31** Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:

**32** That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

**33** Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou

refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

**34** Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

**35** Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.

**36** My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.

**37** For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

The present discourse of Elihu takes a decided turn from defense of Job to his guilt under the protocols of law and obedience there under. It may seem like a betrayal for Elihu to turn from a defense to a prosecution, but we shall see, I believe, that Elihu's prosecution will result in an acquittal of Job at the bar of mercy and grace. But before mercy and grace may be extended from those Everlasting Arms, we each must confess up to being guilty as charged. It is my opinion that the approach of Elihu centers on this principle. The same old struggle continues today between man's own "presumed" righteousness and His utter depravity before God. If Job was as righteous as he considered himself to be, there would have been no reason for his redemption by Christ. But the blood of Christ was not shed in vain – either for Job, or for you and me! Do you recall the admonition of Elihu in yesterday's devotion in which Elihu stated *For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.* (Job 33:14) The great objective of God in allowing our trials and tribulations is not to punish, but to convict us. He desires to save our souls, but He cannot receive a soul whose heart is convinced of self-righteousness. He will speak in low and whispering tones to convince us at first. If we remain steadfast in our self-righteousness, He will send manifold means of conviction, many of which may be quite painful, until we ARE convinced of our lack of righteousness and of our great need for a Savior in the Person of His only Begotten Son. To claim that we are already righteous and need no Savior is to offend God the Father under the most calamitous terms.

It would be such an easier and less shameful experience if we would simply judge ourselves rather than having our convicting sins brought out in public forum, but God may find it necessary to speak TWICE if we hear not His soft voice the first time. Any who have had a caring mother in childhood will remember that mother's voice was always less harsh on the first reprimand than the second.

Elihu will first, verses 5-9, prefer charges against Job for demeaning the justice of God almighty: *5 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. 6 Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression. 7 What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water? 8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men. 9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.* It appears very unseemly to me for any man to defame the justice, or any other virtue of God, in any way. *Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?* (Isaiah 45:9)

Elihu, with immediate dispatch, proceeds to utter vindication for the pure character and justice of the omnipotent God in verses 10-30. God *"rewardeth every man according to his work."* So states Elihu in his case against the claims of Job. *11. For the*

*work of a man shall he render unto him.* In words of power Elihu charges that our lives are sustained moment by moment by the sustaining Hand of God. If He recalls our breath which He has given, and our spirits, we shall return to the dust of the ground (not ashes). *14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; 15. All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.* Has Job offended the dignity of God? Yes, even if in his ignorant ramblings! *18. Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly? 19. How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.*

Elihu continues to say that God is not only all powerful, but all knowing as well. Those who oppose Him or offend His dignity shall perish without a hand being raised against them, and He knows all things about the heart. *20. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand. 21. For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. 22. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.*

God's judgment, unlike man's, cannot be perverted for it is always RIGHT judgment. *23 For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God. 24 He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead. 25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. 26 He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others; 27 Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways: 28 So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted. 29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only: 30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.* Man must humble himself unto God

Rather than making puny excuses and feeble arguments, it is best to admit to our deserving of God's chastisement: *31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:* True repentance carries with it the resolve to never repeat the offence.

Where and how shall we learn the right way and the way that is Holy? Have we not prayed with a believing heart? Have we not read the Words and Counsel of the Lord? Have we not sought Him out in quiet fields and in the crevice of the Rock? *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed* (James 1:5-6) *32 That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. 33. Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.* If we ask aright, and in true faith and repentance, God will restore any loss though we deserve loss.

*34. Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. 35. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. 36 My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men. 37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.* Elihu is not being ungenerous here – he speaks the truth for the benefit of Job's soul. Have we failed to speak so forthrightly to a close friend whose soul

is in danger because he is oblivious to some great and damning sin? If necessary for Job to be reconciled in righteous truth, Elihu would desire that his trials last until the end that he may at last be redeemed in soul if not body.

Friend, have you given thought to the great difference in the judgment of God and our futile attempts to judge rightly? One characteristic of God's judgment disqualifies us from all personal judgment (except by the Word of God). What is that characteristic? God does not judge us until we close our eyes in death. He is patient and long-suffering. He withholds a final condemnation until there is no hope or spark of life remaining. However, man judges by the spur of the moment and is unable to judge a man in death for that man is beyond the reach of the living. I hope, while the spark of life remains, that we shall do all in our power to comfort and convince others of the redeeming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ this St. Valentine's Day.



The first day of Lent, commonly called  
Ash Wednesday.  
*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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 Elihu spake moreover, and said, 2 Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? 3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin? 4 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. 5 Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. 6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? 7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? 8 Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man. 9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. 10 But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night; 11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven? 12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men. 13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. 14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him. 15 But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity: 16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge. (Job 35:1-16)*

The whole kernel of truth being shown in this, and related, chapters is this: If we are righteous in the eyes of God (and Job has been), that righteousness is not our own righteousness but is that which is imputed through the propitious sacrifice of Christ. When we, as Job does, boast of our own righteousness, we have just lost that



righteousness for we have no innate righteousness. So in our boasting, we have rejected that righteousness we had in the eyes of God. Before God can deal with our sin, He must shed us of our pride and self-righteousness. Thus we often suffer needless trials because we refuse to surrender that golden wedge of Achan (Joshua 7:20), but thanks be to God, He is long-suffering and patient for those whom He has claimed from before the foundation of the world. If we surrender at the very beginning of hostilities, the battering rams and siege engines of God will take a far less toll on our walls and ramparts than if we hopelessly wage war with the powers of heaven and it's Omnipotent Sovereign. An early surrender may preclude the destruction of our entire city walls. If we will pause to hear the gentle voice of God in the heart-born winds of our conscience, perhaps we will forego a further skirmish. But if we stubbornly hold to our own merits, and deny in the very face of God our guilt before Him, what choice can His sense of justice provide but a devastating war of attrition until we are brought to the terms of unconditional surrender, though our defense lie in ruins? This has been Job's problem and Elihu has charged Job, not for a permanent indictment, but a temporary adjudication of Job's boastful pride. Until Job realizes his shortcoming, he cannot set his sails for true course. If we encounter a man such as Elihu in our lives, it will be for our own profit and not for our eternal condemnation.

This chapter might be divided into three parts: 1) (verses 1-8) Elihu addresses Job's complaints that his living righteously have resulted in no corresponding blessings from God; 2) (verses 9-14) Elihu reveals to Job that unanswered prayers are the result of asking amiss, or for the wrong things; and 3) (verses 15-16) Elihu condemns – not Job, but – Job's arrogance and presumption in his "multitudes of words without knowledge." It is the epitome of ignorance and brashness to disagree with, or argue with, God. Job learns this, as do all who undertake the same course, the hard way.

1 Elihu spake moreover, and said, 2 Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? The very thought of such arrogance drives chill bumps up my neck. Yet, it is almost a certainty that both you and I have done the same perhaps to a less overt manner. But the consequences can cause us to sit on the ash pile scrapping our sores with potsherds (like Job). 3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin? It is difficult to believe that a learned man such as Job speaks these words; however, we must remember that Job lacks the truth and revelation of the Gospels and Apostles from which to learn that we have benefit of. It is still a very offensive remark for a man to speak against his Creator, for Job KNEW that God was His Maker! The profit of being washed from our sins is all profit and no loss. The loss of NOT being cleansed of our sins is all loss and no profit!

4 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. 5 Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. The clouds are so very low compared to the height of God's Heaven, yet they are far above the heads of men - including Job; so God is so very far above our heads that the distance cannot be measured. Elihu now asked questions of Job regarding his importance compared to the Power and Might of God. The foregone conclusion is this: God does not NEED man; neither can man lift a finger against God. But it is God's love for us, not our ability to help or hinder, that makes us of great worth to God. 6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? 7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? 8 Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man. But our wickedness can do no dent on the Person of God. Though our

righteousness may help our fellow man, it does not increase the storehouse of wealth in heaven except in this wise: God loves His Creation (including every man, woman, and child; every beast of the field and fowl of the air; and every daisy, edelweiss and tree.) When we treat our fellow man and God's Creation with righteous responsibility, God is made to be pleased with us. God observes an ancient Arab principle in relations: "If you are the friend of God's friends, you are a friend of God; but if you are a friend of God's enemies, so are you an enemy of God."

Elihu now condemns the arrogance and false pride of Job. You may say: "Wait, Elihu is judging, and that is wrong." No, it is NOT wrong. God gave us faculties of mind and judgment to compare behaviors with His Holy word. Those sins of arrogance and self-righteousness which we condemn with our mouths have already been condemned by God in His Holy word. That which God has pronounced sin we only echo when we judge with righteous judgment. ***Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*** (John 7:24) ***9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.*** It has ever been the common characteristic of the powerful to oppress the poor and weak. It is often done with such a sense of arrogance that the offending party believes they are just in treating the poor with contempt because they feel them to be less worthy. Invariably, the opposite is true. It may be that Job has been guilty of this very thing, but has never had it brought to his realization until now. ***10 But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;*** Tragically, the oppressed often omit the appeal to God when they are caused to suffer unjustly. Lack of faith, either rich or poor, renders BOTH as poor. ***11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?*** It is truly amazing in my thinking, that God, having created man in His own image and with faculties far above those of every other member of Creation, is the only member of Creation that is able to fathom the existence of God and His moral laws; however, it is mostly man who violates those laws with seeming impunity and seeks the dark corridors more than the highways of Light. ***12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.*** "They cry proudly against God, rather than humbly to God. So, as the design of affliction is to humble the sufferer, there can be no answer until "pride" gives place to humble, penitent prayer (Psalms 10:4 & Jeremiah 13:17).—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

The long, sophisticated prayer publicly uttered in pride does not reach the ears of God, but settle only on those low ears of the same nature. ***13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*** ***14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.*** Truly what man says does not matter an iota with God. But what God says matters supremely to man whether he is willing to admit it or not. In this last verse, Elihu clenches the very missing element in Job's argument – Trust of the Lord. Our National Motto is "In God We Trust." How many untrusting souls have uttered those words in vanity, or repeated the Pledge of Allegiance with vanity where "Under God" is stated? How many times have we recited to the Lord's Prayer without giving a thought to the Sovereign Lord to whom it is addressed, or the petition for His Will to be done without truly proving our words by our living five minutes later? Let it be so in the lives and hearts of our readers that they believe in God and earnestly seek to serve Him in every way.

Devotion on the Book of Job (Chapter Thirty-Six) - Saturday after Ash Wednesday - 16 February 2013, Anno Domini - (Forty-Sixth Anniversary of death of Kenneth Wayne Ogles, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Div, KIA, Ia Drang Valley, Vietnam – 16 February 1967)



The first day of Lent, commonly called  
Ash Wednesday.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

I grow more and more excited in anticipating the final five chapters upcoming of Job. It may be my imagination, but I do believe that there is a pattern which may fit the Job experience. First of all, Job is accused before God by the Adversary of every man's soul – Satan (Job Chapter 2). God gives Satan limited powers to try Job for the benefit of a witness to all of us. Then, the friends of Job join in with the devil against Job to accuse him. If this does not ring any bells, just remember the times in which you were either justly, or unjustly, accused. Remember the suspicious looks of many of those whom you considered your friends? Did they, too, join in on the questioning of your character? Then comes Elihu to mediate your case between You and God the Father. Does he not stand in as a suitable type of Christ? The difference between the claims of Elihu and those of Job and his friends is this: Elihu speaks with great reverence always for God – His mercy, His power, and His justice. He speaks well the Mind of God, I believe. Has anyone else you know done this very thing? Did Christ come preaching the will and mind of God the Father? Did He assert that He and the Father were ONE? Did He come as a Mediator between God and man? *For there is one God, and one mediator between*

*God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Tim 2:5) Job has been conducting both mind and argument as if God were imperfect and Job himself was perfect. In spite of all arguments and facts to the contrary, Job has persisted even more staunchly in the conviction of his righteousness and unfair justice at the hands of God. Now comes Elihu, much like John the Baptist, to prepare the way for the very Voice of God later in this Book. God will always provide a voice to His erring people – and He is patient in the provision thereof. God places people and experiences before the lost whom He will call so that they will know His voice when He speaks to them.

This chapter (36) and the following (37) constitute Elihu's final appeal to JOB. Apparently, Elihu does his job well, for his discourse is followed by that Voice above every other voice – the Voice of God beginning in chapter 38. As a God Commander, God often sends His artillerymen to soften the target area of the heart prior to His full-scale invasion. The issue has already been decided that God will be the victor, and the sinner whom He has targeted the one to capitulate without conditions. So we shall see with Job. This chapter can be divided in the following divisions: 1) Elihu's establishment of his credibility in counseling Job (verses 1-4); 2) He establishes God's justice in His dealing with Job (verses 5-16); 3) His warning to Job that his pride and petulance could lead to his complete destruction (verses 17-25); and 4) An illustration of God's terrible power and mystery through the means of a thunderstorm.

*1) 1 Elihu also proceeded, and said, 2 Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. 3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. 4 For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.* Whatever righteousness may be attributable to Elihu's arguments, he attributes to God. Surely every Gospel message to man on earth has its origins from afar beyond the Ivory Palaces. The god of Elihu is the same God of Job and is ever present with His chosen ones.

*2) 5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.* God is without hate. He looks upon all with a design for mercy, but our hearts often bar that mercy. *6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.* It is the power of God that gives life, and sustains life, moment by moment. He will not hold a wicked and unclean thing in His grip forever, but will release the incorrigible sinner from His grip to fall into the only place that exists apart from Heaven – HELL! *7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.* Truly, as with parents of dear children, the eyes of the Lord are always on His people. He equates their standing to kings for they are sons and daughters of the King of Kings. *8 And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;* In other words, if we become entangled in our old sins, He stands at the ready to bring us into a hard realization of the fact for purposes of our freedom. *9 Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. 10 He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* This is precisely the process we observe taking place with Job in this Book. God is providing the means whereby Job will be shown his errors and will hear correction. He will hear God's voice calling him back to the right way. *11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.* We shall see, after Job has awakened to the righteousness of God, and returned to a spirit of humility and obedience, the precise fulfillment of this principle in chapter 42. *12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.* Why do God's people often perish needlessly? *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected*

*knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* (Hosea 4:6) **13 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.** Even when his error is revealed to his heart, the hypocrite will not acknowledge it and will remain without confession of guilt. **14 They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.** **15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.** God will cut off the youth of the wicked, but He will deliver the oppressed who recognize their depravity and turn from it. **16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.** If Job will also hear good counsel, he, too, will be delivered from his misery.

3) **17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.** **18 Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.** Is it ever wise to be wrathful toward a king who holds the power of life or death over you? How much more foolish to be wrathful towards one's Maker who holds the power of Eternal damnation over your head? **19 Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.** Since all Creation belongs to God, including your tired, little soul, God cannot be bought with bribes or threats of violence. **20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.** How dare you, Job, desire the long night of death over the promises of God! **21 Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.** Be careful, Job, to avoid iniquity of pride for you only add to your guilt by railing against God! **22 Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?** God is exalted by His wisdom. No one can teach with the power of God. In fact, all true teaching originates from God. **23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?** No man can bring an accusation against God. *Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.* **25 Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.** We often look through the wrong end of the telescope so that we are made big and God caused to appear small. If we magnify God as we should, men will be convinced of Him from a great distance.

4) **26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.** Can an ant fathom the mystery of the mind of man? Can mortal man fathom the Mind of God that created every atom and causes them to adhere in substance? **27 For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:** Man cannot yet cause it to rain upon the earth. He cannot control meteorological movements of air masses that bring wind and rain cycles. **28 Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.** **29 Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?** I am almost amused at my wife's constant desire to check the weather forecast for weekends. The weatherman gets it right almost as often as he gets it wrong. Can man, at his command, dictate to the thunder? **30 Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.** Man has not even made voyage yet to the very depths of the sea. But god is there and has covered the ocean floors. He has made lights to brighten the day and to give a glow in the darkness. **31 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.** God judges us by the great deep, and also provides food for man as well as the beasts of the field and jungle. **32 With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.** With lightnings, God covers His Hands and assails His enemies, and with the Light of Life He blesses the righteous. **33 The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.** To His righteous, God reveals His water of life, and even to the cattle of the field.

If you are overtaken by sorrows and distress, fear not for God is in the cloud, the lightning, and the rain for blessing. If we have lost our way in rebellion, His thunders will bring us back to a humble and obedient nature. But all sorrows are not a result of unrighteousness, but to show forth the glory of God in the heart of His faithful people.



Devotion on The Book of Job (Chapter Thirty-Seven) for Wednesday after the First Sunday in Lent - 17 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place. 2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. 3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. 4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

6 For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. 7 He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work. 8 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places. 9 Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north. 10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. 11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud: 12 And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. 13 He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. 14 Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. 15 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine? 16 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? 17 How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind? 18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass? 19 Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. 20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up. 21 And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them. 22 Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty. 23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. 24 Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart. (Job 37:1-24)

There is always cause for trembling and fear at the Voice of God – not because the Christian is fearful of personal peril – but because of the presence of the awesome power and majesty exhibited thereby. We are in awe at the mighty waters of Niagara, the depth and beauty of the Grand Canyon, but far more so at the Voice of God who made these – and us. So we may easily understand the opening remark in this chapter of the young man, Elihu: *At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.* I do not know if Elihu's is aware that the next voice that we shall hear following this discourse of Elihu will be the Voice of the Almighty? But Elihu seems to have aptly prepared the ground of Job's heart, and that of his friends, to hear that very Voice. Though a righteous man in the eyes of the Lord, it is doubtful that Job has ever heard the Voice of the Lord speak with the power and grandeur for which he is being prepared. I believe it is also true that many Christians at first birth will know the voice of the Lord as clearly as they may later hear it after trials and tribulations have made their ears keen to the sound. Elihu prepares Job to listen intently to the same Voice that emanates from the gathering whirlwind as was spoken from the Burning Bush to Moses. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

Beginning in the next chapter (38), Friends, we are about to hear and read the most beautiful and meaningful prose in all of the Bible. We will see the very words of God spoken in prose that surpasses our finest poets (including Shakespeare), yet simple and pregnant with meaning. So we must also, with Job, prepare our hearts to hear, digest, and assimilate those Pristine Words of the Lord in the next four chapters. This 37<sup>th</sup> chapter is a run-on to the previous chapter : *The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.* (Job 36:33) In the last verse of the last chapter (36) Elihu demonstrates the effect of the gathering storm on even cattle. *Now he turns to its effect on man! Have we not known that God makes His Voice heard even through the natural things made by His artful hands? Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse* (Romans 1:19-20) All the beauty, all the solitudes, all the storms and tumults of nature – all speak

of His Majesty and Power. He is in the peaceful pastures, the still waters, the myriad-colored sunsets; but He is also in the rocky and snow clad heights of Kilimanjaro, the chaos of Niagara Falls, and the blinding sandstorms of the Sahara.

Today's watered-down gospel often omits the great power and force of God's Holy Word. What God has spoken is almost reduced to the decisions of a denominational committee. How sad and tragic. Millions suffer for famine of the Word while it is being withheld by the very ministers whose responsibility it is to serve them the whole and nutritious Word of God untainted by the filthy hands of men! *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.* (Amos 8:11-12) It is becoming more and more difficult to purchase the untainted Word of God in Christian bookstores. The classical devotions and theologies are re-written to provide the new-speak of the NIV, NASB, ESV, and Jehovah Witness Bibles. The Received Text (King James Version, Geneva Bible, etc) is becoming more and more rare with the passing days. Is this not a famine of the Word? *3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. 4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.* The problem facing those who take such a light view of God's Word will be CONFRONTED by it, if need be, via the Thunders of Lightning's of God's own sent-storm. His voice excels the Thunder, and more piercing than the lightning. The Voice of God is not literally the thunder, but of far greater force.

Elihu now turns to other great evidences of God's power and creativity. *6. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength* The approach of God is peaceful and gentle, but grows in its intensity until we acknowledge that voice. As the silent flakes of snow fall imperceptibly in the winter night, so God whispers to those asleep. But if we ignore the Voice of God, he will come next in stronger measure as the "small rain." If we continue in our deafness, He will bring on the great floods of rain until we either HEAR, or are washed away thereby. *7. He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work. 8. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.* Whether men acknowledge Him or not, He binds their hands in seasons. When the blizzards assail across the central plains, man must close himself into shelters or perish. The great snows of the northern plains imprison men indoors. Even the domestic and wild beast is prevented by His force to remain immovable in shelters. When we have known Him and turn away, He may bring our hands into a forced idleness until we respond to His Voice.

*9. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.* How well do I know that the whirlwinds (tornadoes) come from the south where I live in southern Alabama? The warm (from south) and cold (from north) air masses collide and form whirlwinds that destroy lives and property. "...As whirlwinds in the south pass through..." (Isaiah 21:1) Who needs the meteorology manual when the Bible has already described weather patterns and the origin of air masses? *10. By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.* Does any see the forming of the frost out of thin air? No, it comes softly, silently as the dew dispelling in the quiet of the dawn. Great waters are indeed straightened by His continual breath. The forces God has placed in nature itself causes the meandering streams to be straightened in their plunge to the valleys below. Nature itself is God's handmaiden. .

The words of Elihu, like a good minister, come as a foreshadow to that beauty in the fuller Words of God to follow. A minister can never achieve the beauty of expression in God's Word without a total reliance and resort to that Word itself! That is why the Reformers insisted on Expository Preaching – not some silly use of acronyms or other cheap tools of modern sermonizing. **11. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud: 12. And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. 13. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.** God, through the process of evaporation on sea and land, draws millions of tons of water into the air by invisible means. He literally FILLS the clouds with water so that they cannot hold a teacup more. They send their waters cascading down on the parched and dry earth. He also disperses the sun-lined clouds and they vanish. He sends the cloud, and turns it about at His leisure, to accomplish His purpose of blessing or curse.

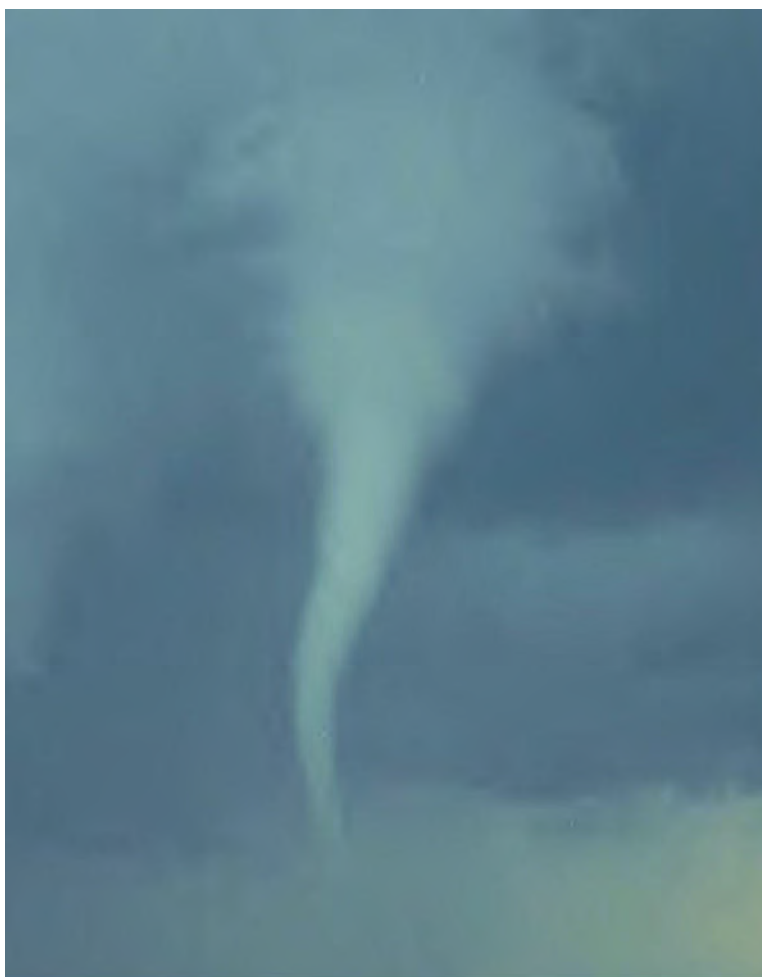
**14. *Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.*** Do you desire to hear the beauty of the meadowlark? Be perfectly still in the morning mist – then you may hear clearly. Before we can hear the works of God, we must first stop the rustling of our own feet and works. We cannot consider the wondrous works of God while our hands are busy performing the works of the flesh. ***Be still, and know that I am God*** (Psalms 46:10) His Voice is as the Underground River at Shechem that fed into the waters of Jacob's Well. During the busy day of commerce, the course and trickle of the river could not be heard beneath the streets of Shechem, but when the busy noise of commerce, and men's feet, were stopped, then one can hear the faint flowing of the waters. We are too occupied with the racket of the world to hear the beautiful, small, still voice of God. **15. *Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?*** Of course, Job and his friends do not know when and how God disposed His works. God was the only eye witness to Creation. Can Job, or you, determine when the lightning will strike from the cloud and where? Could you set a rainbow in the eastern sky?

Now Elihu asks more searching questions without a whispering retort from his listeners. That is the power of God's Word when spoken by His minister. **16. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? 17. How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind? 18. Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass? 19. Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.** Who can set a balance between rain and sunshine? What of the warming season of the southern tropical winds that bring such warm and pleasant climate? What words can we utter that are ours? He has given us speech, intelligence, and knowledge. But without the light of God in our hearts, there can be nothing but darkness.

**20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.** Here, Elihu tactfully restates the earlier comment of Job in asking that God would "hear him and answer him." Can we demand an answer from God? Can a mouse consume a tiger? **21. And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.** The clouds are as raiment or curtain that blocks out the sun or moon. Though we cannot see those lights, they are there nonetheless. God sends a wind from some quarter and cleanses, or disperses, the clouds as a woman cleanses a kitchen window. **22. Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.** Not until very recent decades did man know of the science they called 'meteorology.' They had no clue about polar air masses and the atmospheric cycle of

movement of those air masses. But man could have known millennia before if they had resorted to scripture, and understood it. The high pressure air masses descend from the polar air coming from the north and create fair and beautiful weather. **23. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.** No man knows the mysteries of God though there are many would-be theologians that will not admit of any ignorance of God and His Word. We cannot find God in His glorious form, and we look in the wrong places. Perhaps the devout can always find Him if they search out the deep chambers of His Temple – the Heart! **24. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.** If a man is wise of heart, he is claiming wisdom for himself. Only God is truly wise, and the wise heart will be filled with the wisdom that belongs to God and not man... Have you claimed that wisdom by having a heart devoted to God as a Temple?

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.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

Devotion on The Book of Job (Chapter Thirty-Eight – Part Two) for Ember Friday 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast 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.

*17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? 18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all. 19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, 20 That thou shouldst take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldst know the paths to the house thereof? 21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great? 22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, 23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? 24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? 25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; 26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; 27 To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? 28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? 29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? 30 The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. 31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? 32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth*

*in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? 33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? 34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? 35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? 36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? 37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven, 38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together? 39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, 40 When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? 41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat. (Job 38:17-41)*

Have you tasted the growing savor of this Book from our early chapters weeks ago? Throughout the narrative, we can see, feel, and hear the Word of God preparing our hearts for the wondrous revelations of beauty which we now, and shortly shall, savor. With God, the best wine is always reserved to the last, and we see this is the case with Job. Slowly, a great and mighty truth is being revealed to our minds as a long sought out, and labored over, gem of delight. Job's imperfection along the way only adds to the comfort of God's love for us in spite of our failures and shortcomings. We, today, can boast of no stronger faith than Job. We still fail of the righteousness of God in our normal day to day endeavors. Like Job, we are often blind to our own blindness; but God will bring to our realization that it is He who is perfect in justice and righteousness, and it is He who has offered a reconciliation for us through the sacrifice of His only Begotten Son at a Hill called Golgotha. God's vision is far-looking while ours is very shortsighted. He looks down the eternity of ages and time, beyond the millennia, through the centuries of struggle, and His eye settles on insignificant little YOU. He has known you from Eternity Past, and He knows you in your present years. But He also knows you in your future ears. This is why God's judgment is righteous and just. He allows the court proceedings of your life to run until after the last witness is heard, and the last breath given, before rendering a verdict of justice. The **DOOR** spoken of in John 10:1-18 is not closed until all life is extinguished. Does this not give us cause for joy and hope?

Many beauties of Creation are gradually revealed to us, as a proud Jeweler slowly uncovers His stones of brilliance, in the remaining verses of this chapter.

1. God reveals the mystery of the Death Gate and Shoal of which He alone is Keeper. Further the formulation of snow, the rains o seasons, the silent dew, the clamorous thunders, and of the cold frost and icy blast. (verses 17-30)
2. God's government of the natural formation of stars and clouds. (verses 31-38)
3. Finally, the innate instincts instilled by God, into the natures of the beasts and fowl of the air – how the generous Hand of God feeds them in their wanderings.

Though the Words of God, conveyed by His prophets to us, bear that same authority and power as the words before us now, I am still made to wonder as a child does at his first glimpse of a multi-lighted Christmas Tree, when I survey these very Words of God presented to us here. How can our souls not be moistened with the silent Dews of Heaven as we read them?

Despite all popular acclaim to the contrary, no person has entered into the gates of death and returned to us for a visit – except the Lord Jesus Christ who rose eternally, and those whom He raised from a temporary tomb. **17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?**

Death continues a mystery to us. We may only enter its gates once, but we shall never depart the gate until that Eternity-Piercing Voice of Christ shouts, "**Arise! Come up Here!**" No the 'shadow of death' has no doors! *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.....* (Psalms 23:4a) Death is only a shadow, and not real, to the child of God who forever has the Presence of God with Him. Where God is, there is no death. Do not forget, either, God's Rod and Staff. The Shepherd's staff has a crook on one end to save the lost or trapped sheep; but it has a sharp point on the other end to keep the sheep in line. God is using both ends in the life of Job – and in your life as well. "...*thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" (Psalms 23:4b)

**18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.** Have you, Job, beheld the globe of the earth in its fullness, and yet pretend to know the ways of God its Maker? Every bucket we draw from the Well of the Water of Life becomes more amazing and more edifying as we go, as evidenced by the next verse: **19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, 20 That thou shouldst take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldst know the paths to the house thereof?** Do we KNOW the origin and home of Light, Mr. Scientist? We claim to see light, but we do not – we see only its effect on the material objects it touches. Do we know that darkness is no force at all – only the absence of light? A tiny candle can dispel a room full of darkness at an instant. Do we know the limits of light's travel? I dare say we do not know, but God knows who placed the light ray in space and bound the constellations in their arrayed grandeur. At the final line, all Light comes from God – both spiritual and physical. And, just like the Holy Spirit and its nourishing Manna, light cannot be stored in jars and flasks.

**21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?** God is making jest of our short experience compared to that of the Ancient of Days who has existed from before the foundation of the world, the Creation of the Universe, and of all terrestrial life. God has been eye-witness to every detail of His Creation, for it was His own Artful Hands that shaped the hallowed scenes of morning dawning and evening sunset. Next comes one of the most beautiful half-verses of the Bible: **22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?** Were you present at the forming of the perfect ice crystals that form the snowflake? These form as ice crystals are produced from moisture condensation in clouds. These droplets adhere around a speck of dust or other particle in the atmosphere. As these small droplets are carried higher by the winds of God, they begin to freeze into crystals. As they gather more ice, they become heavier and may fall as snow. But snow crystals cannot become white until they are carried into the heights of heaven – much like the purity of a Christian witness. As we are drawn higher and higher in the turbulence of God's Winds, we are made purer and whiter. Is a snowflake perfect in its whiteness? No, it is not. I call to the bar the Psalmist: **Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.** (Psalms 51:7) Though a snowflake appears very white, at its core is a particle of impurity around which the ice crystals have formed. God first cleanses us inside with the purgative figuratively called hyssop, and then he washes our appearance as well so that we now can be even whiter than snow. The Holy Spirit making its abode in the Heart-Temple of God cleans house of all demons, then God makes our appearance vibrant and alive in purity of walk.

"...**or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, 23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?**" Hail was considered an expression of God's vengeance. During the heat of battle, a driving hailstorm may fall

full face upon belligerents on the far side of the battle line and the backs of those on the near side. It could very easily decide the outcome of battle. 24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Are we not struck speechless by these wonderful questions? God has divided the light evenly through all continents of the world even though they are at times on opposite sides of the light. The variations in landmass and sea water temperatures create the winds that blow landward. But this can only be observed by man and not created by him.

25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; 26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; 27 To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? What great Architect was it that designed the course of the Nile and the Amazon Rivers, or directed the course a bolt of lightning takes from cloud to cloud, and cloud to ground? God supplies His nourishing rains equally on the many people of the plains as well as the few in remote regions. Even that tender flower of beauty in the Desert Wilderness comes at the beckoning Voice of God. Man cannot yet create even a bud of Edelweiss. I am struck by the near-immortal words of Thomas Gray in elegy Written in a Country Churchyard:

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

So God distributes His riches in random places without regard to the merits of the city.

28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? I hope the reader can see the great beauty of this allegorical language of God. Who has fostered the rain? Can a man command rain to fall, or cause the meadows to be covered with sparkling dew? Dew forms silently and unnoticed in the hours of darkness. The moisture-laden air baths the green plants and their waters condensate around the tender plants so that they are gradually covered with the morning dew. That dew is not unlike the operation of the Holy Spirit in bringing love into our hearts, and forming the Waters of Life in our heart's chambers. Much more could be written to describe this wonderful phenomenon, but space does not permit. 29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? 30 The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. There is only one compound that behaves in the manner of a molecule of water. All substances contract with declining temperatures all the way to absolute cold; however, water contracts until it reaches four degrees above freezing, then it mysteriously begins to EXPAND!. This allows ice to cover lakes and streams with an insulating layer so that the waters beneath do not freeze solid. If this phenomenon did not occur, all of the fish in our lakes and streams would be frozen solid. God has designed everything well, and in a manner beyond our ability to comprehend. The hardness between water and the stone cannot be differentiated when the water is hard-frozen. Ice covers the deep of lakes and ponds to the mystery of man.

31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? 32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Before the natural composition of the great constellations was better known to astronomers, God named them and described their natures. God has flung the myriad formations of stars and constellations into space and appointed their permanent abodes. 33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Well, with all our Hubble Telescopes and satellite probes, we are still trying to determine what those ordinances are; yet, we do not even know the limits



of the Universe, or the population figures of stars and other heavenly bodies. We are not so very smart after all.

*34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? 35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?* Will the clouds of the sky hear and obey your voice, O mortal man? Can you order the clouds to give up their water in times of draught? NO! You cannot! Elijah prayed for rain, and God sent it; but this is a far cry from man himself ordering the rain at will. We have a great Power upon which to call in times of draught. He can send the rain according to His express will. What of the lightning? Will it report to you, feeble man?

*36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?* What tremendous oceans of truth could we wring from this verse! God has placed His wisdom in the heart of all of His nature. He has informed the human body through His DNA blueprint how **much** to grow, **how** to grow, what to favor, how to think, feel, and act. The heart knows to supply more blood when the activity of the body is greater, and the life-blood knows to send agents to encounter invading organism that might harm the body. Can medical science design such an intricate balance in nature? Who taught the newborn colt to stand? Or the tiny fish to swim?

*37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven, 38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?* By the way, Mister or Misses Reader: how many clouds are there in the skies of the world today? **I'll wait for your answer.** Can you release the water upon parched earth by opening the bottles of heaven? Maybe not?

*39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, 40 When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? 41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.* God, through His natural laws initiated at Creation, provides for the tiny lion cub as well as the high borne eagle. When these little ones lift their cries to God for want of food, He supplies through His natural agencies.

Here ends one of the most beautiful and meaningful chapters of the Bible. It is obvious to me that the mere words of man are no match for those Divine and Heavenly Words of God. It seems almost presumptuous on my part to attempt a commentary of these gems of truth and eloquence. I apologize for the length of this devotion, but which parts would you have me omit? I commend to your heart the pure Words of God contained in this, and following chapters, of Job.

Devotion on The Book of Job (Chapter Thirty-Nine) for Ember Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent - 23 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.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who 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 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? 2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? 3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows. 4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them. 5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? 6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. 7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. 8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. 9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? 10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? 11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? 12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn? 13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? 14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, 15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. 16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; 17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. 18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider. 19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? 20 Canst thou*

make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. 21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. 22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. 23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. 24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. 25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. 26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? 27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? 28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. 29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. 30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she. (Job 39:1-30)

God continues to bombard Job and his fellows with questions that cannot be fathomed by man. The point is not to ridicule Job and his friends, but to awaken them to the mystery and might of the God by whom they are being addressed. All of these questions are not addressed to Job and his fellows alone, but to every person who seeks to know God – past, present, and future. If we think deeply on these questions of God, perhaps we will come away knowing ourselves better "as a many looking into a mirror – the mirror of God's Word." If we cannot know how infinitely great God is we cannot know how infinitely small we are.

Beginning at Job 38:39, God begins to survey by question the characteristics of wildlife and living nature, and He continues this line in this chapter. (vers 1-12) God then changes the subject to include the mysteries of the remarkable ostrich. (vers 13-18). He then proceeds to the royal breed of creature – the horse. (vers 19-15) In conclusion, God reverts to the subject of fowl of the air. (vers 26-30).

1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Do you have a presence, Job, in the cleft of the rock, or on the lonely defile, where and when the wild goats conceive and bare young? Do you, Reader? 2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? 3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows. 4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them. 5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? 6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. 7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. 8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. 9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? 10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? 11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? 12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn? Pick out just one question above and give an answer.... The question is not of the biological clock, but of the MOMENT of these events. Who placed the wisdom of in the heart of the young hind to search for food the day it is born and to know its way from forage back to parents? Can man endow that beast with such innate wisdom, or is man the recipient of the same blessings as the hind? The hind does not find populated areas appealing. Perhaps we would be better advised to remain separate from the larger part of society as well. The hind, unlike man, cannot be made a slave by the driver. The only wisdom he has is that given by God in his inward parts. But man attempts to develop his own wisdom – and woefully fails in the attempt. What of the unicorn (perhaps, Hippodromes)? Can you place this strong

creature in a holding crib? If you try, please let me know ahead of time.... Will you domesticate the unicorn to become your slave as a mule? I think not. The law of liberty is written in the hearts of these brute beasts. Man might take a simple lesson from them in freedom.

13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? 14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, 15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. 16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; 17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. 18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider. Can you attire a creature with the beauty of the peacock (not referring to Anglo-Romans here) Are we more intelligent than the ostrich of very low intellect? She labors very little, yet accomplishes her life's purpose. She leaves her eggs, and her young, in the keeping of the Lord and worries not over them. Who taught her to be so? She does not care for her young (let many modern Americans) yet they survive under the Lord's care. She is deprived of the wisdom God has given higher creatures, yet, she survives well because God creates nothing for which He does not provide a way. Compared to the wisdom of God, we stand in no better stead than the ostrich. Even the ostrich can hold its head above the mounted rider, and run just as fast.

19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? 20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. 21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. 22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. 23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. 24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. 25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. What of the untarnished valor of the war horse? Have you the courage to run into the heat of battle without your own personal arms? The horse has a great spirit, given by God, which suits him for battle or travel. He is strong – so strong that we measure power in Horsepower. He is not easily shunned when his ears are perked for battle. He shuns both saber and cannonade. Though hundreds of swords are raised ahead, he charges on undaunted with his warrior mount. The war horse goes into battle with heated passion. The greater the threat of the battle line, the faster and more fiercely he charges into battle. Even the bugler's call to Retreat will not convince him to quit the battle field. He seeks the contest rather than shrinking from it. Perhaps we need Christians of the same caliber for our perilous times.

26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? 27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? 28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. 29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. 30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she. What beautiful and descriptive language here! True the wisdom of the hawk knows direction of flight to surprise her prey. Unless on the equator, the sun generally shines from the north. The hawk flies down-light so that her prey cannot distinguish her in the sun. Now, the eagle is mentioned – a very inspiring and wonderful creature of the heavens, indeed. If there is a sovereign of the skies, it would be the eagle! Who told the eagle to make her nest on the high places and the rock of the mountain? The eagle can see for many miles. Its vision is far superior to man. The great wings of the eagle enable it to fly above the

storm. The wings of the Holy Spirit enable us to do the same without effort. The eagle rides upon the winds and updrafts of God without flapping their wings continually. So can we if we let our labors be God's instead of our own. The eagle will only eat the prey that it kills, not another's. Would this not be a good rule for a free society? She is on the wing daily to provide for her young unlike the oyster that lies at the bottom of the murky waters to consume whatever, with open mouth, falls down to her. Are we a nation of eagles, or of oysters? The eagle is sacrificial on behalf of her young. If she finds no prey, she will cut her own flesh to feed her young (*Her young ones also suck up blood*). I am so pleased that our Founding Fathers chose the great Bald Eagle as our national symbol and not the lazy and immovable oyster. Would it not be edifying if parents today were as sacrificial for their children as the great Eagle?

Devotion on The Book of Job (Chapter Forty) for Wednesday after the Second Sunday in Lent - 27 February 2013, Anno Domini



## The Second Sunday in Lent.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## The first day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, 2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. 6 Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? 9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? 10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. 11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. 12 Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. 13 Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. 14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee. 15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. 16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. 17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. 18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. 19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. 20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. 21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. 22 The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. 23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. 24 He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares. (Job 40:1-24)*

It may appear to the casual observer that all of the misery of this account of Job is

on Job's part; however, what of His Lord who has watched Job fall pitifully short in his arguments with Satan, and Satan's vicegerents, after being a close friend of God? God has chosen His choicest gladiator to go against Satan, but Job has taken the field with a broken Sword. He has acknowledged the greatness of God and His Power, but he has also alluded to his own righteousness implying that God is not just. He was correct in the first instant, but miserably amiss in the second. Job and his friends have been claiming the high truths of God without acknowledging His perfect righteousness and justice. In fact, they have denied it. God has now, in the last two chapters, levied a barrage of unanswerable questions from the Coastal Batteries of Heaven. The four men remain absolutely silent to these questions for they are not equipped to answer even ONE. They are beginning to feel as the fools which they are in making such claims against God. Isaiah describes the Being of God in God's own Words: *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.* (Isaiah 45:5-6 ) Please note that there are NONE other gods. Allah is NOT God. The Being of God is defined in terms that transcend His Name – He is exclusive. He has an only Begotten Son. He has a Holy Spirit. He has a Holy Book called the Bible – not the Koran! If Allah lacks any of these, obviously Allah is not God – period! End of statement, end of argument!

We see in the first two verses that God asks Job a direct question? It is not a question of one slip of the tongue of Job, but of Job's whole attitude and argument in previous chapters: 1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, 2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. God has made Job and his three friends to appear as the fools that they are in trying to speak for God and even in demeaning His mercy, grace, justice, and righteousness. None of those questions asked in chapter 38-39 can be answered by any man. So Job is thrown off-balance by such questions, but there is yet a glimmer of prideful presumption not confessed in his present response to God. 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. This answer falls short of a full repudiation of his former presumptiveness. Job is saying, "Look, Lord, I made a mistake and overstepped my bounds" and "I said SOME things that weren't quite consistent with your character." Job does realize how vile he has been. That is a starting point, but not the finish line. He is so over-awed by God's questions that he places his hand over his mouth. But silence is not the response God seeks when He speaks to us. He desires a broken and a contrite heart when we have presumed against His Divine Majesty. At a later, point; Job will come to a better and fuller answer to God in chapter 42:1-5. This is the response God attempts to evoke in the heart of Job now, but Job is short of a full realization of his need to repent.

6 Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. A true man will recognize when he is in the wrong. God demands this of every man and woman. God is telling Job, "I want more than a puny acknowledgment that you were wrong, Job. I want a confession and the evidence of repentance. You do not disagree with the Almighty and simply say, 'I was wrong.'" God answers, moreover, again from the Whirlwind. God always answers from a place of power – even from the flames of fire if need be. 8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Mr. Job, you are a man conceived in sin, and God fashioned every detail of your person in the darkness of the womb; yet you presume to cancel out the character



and nature of God in your foolish babblings? Do you, Mr. Job, have the temerity to claim a higher stake in righteousness than the Almighty? Does any man condemn God when he cannot even condemn another man? Have you ever disagreed with God? If so, you are saying that<sup>6</sup> the judgment of God is less than your own. God will forgive your foolish piety if you will repent of it.

Mr. Job, would like you like to join the Lord in the tornado-like whirlwind to see if your frail voice can be heard over the thunder? **9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?** Can your strong and outstretched arm part the waters of the sea, Mr. Job, or command the fountains of the great deep to be broken up by the power of your word? Or, is that a function that only God can satisfy? Can you whisper in Eternity Past and have that whisper manifested as a thundering Voice in Eternity future? Maybe not? Then keep silence before Him and pay Him reverence due His sovereignty and Might.

God issues a heavy challenge to Job: **10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. 11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. 12 Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. 13 Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.** Can you claim a high royalty for your namesake; can you prove your perfection in all things...never a mistake, never a misstep? Can you paint the beauty of a morning sunrise, or the glorious solitude of the evening sunset? Can you wear the robes of the wind, and array yourself with the heavenly constellations? Maybe not? Can you cause your petty rage to be broadcasts across the expanse of space and time? Can you cause to fade in fear the contempt and pride of kings, rulers, and even brute beasts? Can you destroy, with a whisper, the wicked that hurt men, women, and small children? Can you cause the proud to be covered with the desert dust of time and cause there only memories to be by-words and not proud memories? Maybe not? Then heed the Voice of the Lord and dispute it not! If you were able to do those things, Mr. Job and Mr./Mrs. Reader, then God will grant you the claim of your own righteousness to salvation. **14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.** But every reader of this devotion knows full well that he lacks the merit, the righteousness, the perfection to save himself and that he, therefore, needs to lay claim upon the righteousness of Christ in order to be saved.

Now, the Lord God will describe some one of the beasts of His Creation which is beyond the power of man to subdue. I will not speculate on what this creature is except to say that its particular of its characteristics are shared by some creatures existent today: **15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. 16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. 17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. 18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. 19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. 20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. 21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. 22 The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. 23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. 24 He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.** The extinct dinosaur may answer to this description, but I do not know if the dinosaur was extant after the flood. This creature, in some respects is like a rhinoceros, or a crocodile, or a hippopotamus. Many have speculated on the exact identity of this creature, but none

have spoken with specific proof. So let us just conclude that this is a creature of incomparable strength and character among the beasts of the field. God is stating the nature of the beast in order to draw a conclusion from Job in the next chapter. Of course, the exact nature is not necessary for us to completely fathom for this beast is far greater than the great guerrilla, the lion, the tiger, the grizzly bear, etc. none of which can man subdue much less create as God has done. The example of this creature puts Job, and you and me, in a better perspective to the power of God who made it. If you now feel small compared to God and His wisdom, we shall proceed tomorrow to chapter 41.

Devotion on The Book of Job (Chapter Forty-Two Final) for Friday after the Second Sunday in Lent – 1 March 2013, Anno Domini



### The Second Sunday in Lent.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### The first day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday.

*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast 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 Job answered the LORD, and said, 2 I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. 3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. 4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6 Wherefore I*

*abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. 7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. 8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. 10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. 12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. 13 He had also seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. 15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. 16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. 17 So Job died, being old and full of days.* (Job 42:1-17)

Needless to say, we close our study of Job with some reluctance for it is always probable that we have not gleaned as much bread from the table it provides as we should have done. I develop a particular love for every Book of the Bible that I study and, so, always dread completing the work. Of course, our studies are never complete of any book of the Bible for our wisdom and knowledge increases and our understanding matures as we continue to read the other works of God. We may return to Job after two years and discover that we understand much more of it than we did two years past. May God forgive us for any omission of meaning which He would have us to know of Job, and may He forgive, as well, any commission of error plainly stated in our interpretation of it. There is one salient truth that stands out starkly in all of Scripture to our eyes – every Word of it is as much intended for our own souls as it was for Job, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Paul. The Bread of Life in God's Word does not grow stale, but is ever fresh and nourishing to all who partake thereof.

We have seen how Job was considered a righteous man in the eyes of the Lord. How Satan desired to tempt Job, and God consented with the stipulation that, first, Job's body would not be hurt and, then, that his body might be tormented but not unto death. Under the duress of loss, pain, and the unfair criticism of his friends, Job begins to surrender to his fleshly and carnal nature in claiming himself to be more righteous and just than God. It is at such a moment that God cannot view us as righteous before Him – that is, the moment we rely upon our own righteousness - for we have none – only that imputed righteousness of Christ can be our own righteousness. We cannot blame Job for any lapse of faith under the tribulation he has faced. If we can overcome our pride, we will realize that we have committed at least the sins of Job and, perhaps far greater ones. In the final analysis, we, too, are Job absent the torment and loss that he suffered. Though the ordeal of Job begins with the devil's counsel and continues to reveal weaknesses in Job's righteousness, it ends with a God's revelation to Job of his admission of himself and the sin that he abhors. That is a function of the Word of God as a mirror to our souls. We hold up the Word and look into it. In the David we see our own incredible sinfulness. We see our treachery in Absalom and Judas. We see our

adultery – both physical and spiritual – in the woman taken in adultery. We see our thirst for Christ in the Woman at the Well; and we see our false self-righteousness in Job.

The final result of Job's trials is a better-oriented Job. In the end, he sees himself with a keener spiritual eye than before, and he sees God in a clearer vision than ever before. His growing wisdom results in confession: 1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 2 I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. 3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. It seems to me that Job's greatest failure in wisdom has resulted from his miscalculation of the GREATNESS of God. With his puny brain (the same with which we are equipped), Job knows of God's PHYSICAL power, but he has misjudged the knowledge and wisdom of God. He has learned that the knowledge of God so far exceeds that of man that man's knowledge is simply negligible in comparison. **GOD IS OMNISCIENT!** Our mouths are not like God's. We speak before we know. He knows before He speaks.

Now Job's increased understanding results in Job's prayer. 4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. How does a man's perspective change once he has both heard and seen God? We **SEE** God in Jesus Christ – we **HEAR** Him in the Word – the whole Word which is Christ! We realize that we are silenced before Him...just as silenced as the woman taken in adultery. There is no justification we can offer. Like Job, we **ABHOR** ourselves. 6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Our repentance will not be a little, neat daub of ashes on our foreheads by which we boast of our righteousness; nor will our cross be a shiny golden one around the neck; but our repentance will be a dirty pile of ashes (our sins) in which we know we sit in misery (for all are in misery who are sitting in their sins). Our cross will be a heavy and rough-hewn one which bears into the flesh of our shoulders, for this is the kind of cross Jesus bore. The only difference is that we will not need to carry our cross the distance He did, or hang upon it as He hung upon His. Only when we abhor ourselves and our sins are we ready to be received of God. When is God most near to us? 18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit (Psalms 34:18) Though she was with Him often, when was Christ closest to Mary Magdalena? It was when her tears of sorrow flowed most prodigiously that He approached her by the open tomb and called her name – **MARY!**

Once God has gotten the attention of His favored man or woman, He will gather the attention of those nearby: 7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite I am reminded in tenderness the woman at the Well of Jacob. She had no reputation of honor to commend her words to others. She was, essentially, a harlot, yet the men and women of the village **BELIEVED** her when she told them about Jesus. Why did they believe a woman who cheated on her men, and caroused in the night? It was because she had found the Water of Life! That Water had changed the woman in stark contrast to her previous self. She now spoke with the authority of one who **KNOWS!** So God now turns to the village Samaritans (Job's friends). See, He will not abandon us, either, in our ignorance if we will hear His Voice! He is nearby us and He speaks! We have pointed fingers at the **JOB's** of this life, yet, He turns to us to correct us – not for hurt, but for our good! My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath The whole issue here, I believe, boils down to **MOTIVE**. Though Job spoke amiss of his own righteousness, yet he **KNEW**

God and believed he spoke truth. The friends spoke only with condescending stance ABOUT God and not His true nature. God will take the side of His favored man and will reveal to those around the truth they need to know – like it, or not!

What is the result of bearing up under hardship and tribulation? 8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. Those who have ridiculed you for groundless reasons will be forced to repent and repay, and the Lord will accept you back to the favored place.

Now we see an astonishing truth regarding Job's losses and gains. 10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. This is not to be construed to mean that the result of our prayers will always be greater material wealth, and this is NOT the result for which JOB prayed. He repented and prayed even for those who had been accusing him. Let us look at the riches of Job at the beginning: *And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.* (Job 1:2-3) Now observe the final and restored riches of Job: 11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. All from which he had been parted, and not actually lost, was restored to him.

12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep (he had seven thousand before), and six thousand camels (he had three thousand before), and a thousand yoke of oxen (he had five hundred before), and a thousand she asses (again, he had five hundred before). 13 He had also seven sons (he had seven before) and three daughters (he had three before). But wait; did JOB not have the same number of daughters and sons as before his troubles? Yes he did, so how can this be double the previous number? It is because those sons and daughters JOB had before, he still has in heaven. He shall go to them even though they cannot presently come to him.

The lesson of Job is OUR lesson, too.

1) We learn PATIENCE: 10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (James 5:10-11) We learn to have the PATIENCE of Job from his experiences. (Job 1:21, 2:9,10)

2) We learn that the wisdom of the world availeth nothing, but the wisdom of God is all in all. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. (1 Cor 3:19) Compare Job 5:12-13.



3) We learn to **despise not chastening** (see Job 5:17): *5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: (Heb 12:5 )*

4) We learn the loss of **hypocrisy** (see JOB 27:8): *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt 16:26)*

5) We learn from Job **God's deliverance**: *He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. (Job 5:19) Confirmed in 1 Corinthians 10:13 - There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

6) We learn **assurance**: *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: (Job 19:25) Compare - For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (2 Tim 1:12)*

7) We learn our **LIFE** comes from God: *In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. (Job 12:10) Compare: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. (Acts 17:28)*

And many more points innumerable do we learn from Job. If you think deeply as you read, you will discover many not covered here. So, we now say a temporary adieu to Job and leave him there in the joy of a redeemed heart on the slopes of the Land of Uz. But we do not leave him forever for Jordan Waters loom ahead for each of us, and after our crossing that turbulent river, we shall learn perfectly all that is shrouded in mystery at present. We shall fellowship with Job, with each other, and the One who brought us over the Flood.





The Sunday called Septuagesima, or the  
third Sunday before Lent.

*The Collect.*

**O** LORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

*1 But Job answered and said, 2 How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength? 3 How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? 4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee? 5 Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. 6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. 7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. 8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. 9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it. 10 He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. 11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. 12 He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud. 13 By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. 14 Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand? (Job 26:1-14)*

The long discourse of Job begins in this chapter and extends through chapter 31.

Job has had enough of the nonsensical ramblings of Bildad and his two cohorts, and launches out in words and expressions that reveal his developing sense of God and His purposes. In a court of law, an eyewitness is the very best of all witnesses; but, if an eyewitness cannot be found, then a material witness whose knowledge of the matter supports the case would be highly desirable. Neither Bildad, Zophar, and or Eliphaz are eyewitnesses, nor are they material witnesses since they have no intimate knowledge of God as Job has. Allow me to use an illustration from a source of great reliability in response to God's question to Job in Chap 38:4 – *"Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Two men – Joe and Charlie – were arguing about Genesis 1:1. Joe said he believed the record of creation just as it was written. Charlie, on the other hand, was an infidel, and went to great length in giving his own theory of how the world began and then developed from a primordial cell through reptiles, monkeys, and up to man. When he was all through, Joe looked at him and asked, "Were you there, Charlie?" It was a good question! "Of course, I was not there," said Charlie. Joe had the answer. He said, "Well, God was there. He was the only One there and I'll take the word of an 'eye-witness' rather than the guesses of those who go only by "they say."" "Were you there?" What presumption for the creature to question the Word of the Creator! (Dr. M.R. DeHaan, *BREAD FOR EACH DAY*).*

There meaningful gems of great beauty in this Chapter of Job, and perhaps far more than we, at present, can understand; but those clear gems stand out as diamonds on black velvet. Job interrupts Bildad with this longer discourse. It is easy to understand how Job feels if we will only remember the times when we have known beyond doubt the truth of an issue, but have listened to a friend ramble on with inaccuracies and misstatements. After a time, our silence cannot be maintained. or, perhaps, we have tried to explain to a child why some greatly desired sweet will not be good for him or her just before bedtime. The evidence of our faith is manifested in our actions of love. *2 How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?* Job asks Mr. Bildad, "If you are so strong in your convictions, let us have evidence in the things you have done to help the widow, the orphan, or the beggar by the way?" *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* (James 1:27) What we see missing most from the aggressive counsels of the three friends is that ONE proof of loving God – LOVE itself! *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* (John 13:34-35) I do not believe Christ introduces this 'new' commandment as a new corollary to godliness, but felt the necessity to more forcefully affirm it. If lack love, we must make effort to love – even the unlovely. When we perform the requisites of love toward others, it is often discovered that the love becomes real and not affected.

Job wonders if Bildad has truly counseled others weak in wisdom. If arguments of right are uttered out of a hateful heart, it ceases to be counseling and becomes nagging. *3 How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? 4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?* Did you know that words are uttered with certain spirit? Holy Words have the credibility of the Holy Spirit; yet, wicked words of cursing and profanity carry in their bosom the spirit of the wicked one. Even seemingly righteous words may carry a wrong connotation if uttered in malice.

*5 Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. 6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.* Do you believe that God is

not present in Hell? Do you know that God is 'omnipresent' every place and at every time. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.* (Psalms 139:8) It is true that God is fully aware of all the sufferings of Hell and its inhabitants, but the eyes of men are blind to this place. We do not even need to be in Hell to stand naked before God for all who are not clothed in the righteousness of Christ stand naked in the sins before Him.

Next follows one of the most powerful verses, in my view, of the whole Book of Job: **7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.** Several years ago, I was teaching this chapter in a youth Bible study. When we read this verse, I asked (really referring to the latter part of the verse), "What does this mean?" A young football player said, "Does it refer to the North Polar cap that is not supported by a landmass?" I had never considered that possibility, but perhaps it does mean that. The second part of the verse is a proven scientific fact even though there remains some on the fringe who may still consider that the earth is flat! For the first 5,500 years of man's existence, he did not know what God has clearly stated – that He "**hangeth the earth upon nothing.**" We have all seen moonshots of the beautiful blue planet (earth) that hangs in space upon nothing. God told us 3,500 years ago in this verse what science could not know until "*Columbus sailed the ocean blue.*"

Water is heavier than air, isn't it? Yet, God is able to cause millions of tons of water to be held in the air by clouds. **8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.** The cloud that holds so many tons of water stays aloft and is not ruptured in losing all of its moisture before the time of God's choosing. The intricate meteorological balance required to maintain water in clouds is based on forces unknown to man until very recent days, but devised by God in eternity past. What did Caesar, Archbishop Cranmer, or Napoleon know of the "*adiabatic lapse rate*?" (*The rate of decrease of atmospheric temperature with increase in altitude*). Since warm air is able to contain more moisture than cold air, as the air mass cools with altitude, the moisture begins to condense and fall from the clouds as rain. God, who developed laws of nature and science is truly a greater scientist than those queer little men wearing white frock coats and boasting that they know more than God. Of course, they are forced to retract their little theories not long after that propound them if they differ from God's account in Holy Scripture.

God hides His Throne with thick clouds though He remains, Himself, invisible to man. Do you ever feel uncomfortable in knowing that God is ALWAYS present and aware of our thoughts, words, and deeds? That would fall into the "food for thought" category! **9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.**

**10 He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.** That word, compassed, means to describe a circle, or sphere, about the waters. Remember that photo, again, of the bright blue planet. See how the waters of the sea conform to that compass which the Lord has placed upon it? His tides obey the limits that God has placed upon them as well.

**11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.** The "pillars of heaven" is a poetic reference to the great mountains that tremble at the rebuke of God. Earthquakes and ground-slides are subject to His command. Job uses a sophisticated and modern technique of personification to say that the pillars of heaven are astonished at His reproof. Surely, they seem so when they are shaken by great movements of the earth.

Job continues with his praise of the Mighty God in whom he has trusted. The poetry of Job may be the most beautiful ever written. ***12 He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.*** How is the sea divided? Just as counties and cities by great highways. Do you remember that there are 'paths' in the sea? Matthew Fontaine Maury, Pathfinder of the Sea, has plotted and mapped these paths in the sea (Gulfstream and other tropical streams) that prevent Great Britain from becoming another Iceland. Aquatic life exists in these "rivers of the sea" which cannot exist fifty feet away outside these streams in the sea. The temperature may vary as much as 70 degrees Fahrenheit from the inside to the outside of these streams. The computations Naval Charts of Maury reduced shipping time by days and weeks, and are still used by naval ships at sea. He was the proponent and first Director of the US Naval Observatory and the father of the US Naval Academy at Annapolis. He was inspired in his research by the 8<sup>th</sup> Psalm: "*.....whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*" (Psalms 8:8)

Captain Edward J. Smith, Captain of the Titanic, felt his vessel to be unsinkable, but it surely was not for it sank to the bottom of the North Atlantic in the early morning hours of April 15, 1912. "*...by his understanding he smiteth through the proud*)

***13 By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*** God is the Master Artist. He has many Masterpieces to His credit. You are one of those Masterpieces – unique, beautiful, intricate, and designed to live with Him forever if you have received Him in your heart. He painted the sunrise, and will paint the sunset at day's end. I once read of a mother who took her little daughter out to the garden one beautiful spring day. The sun was just rising with a myriad of gold's, purples, and greys. The mother said to her daughter, "Suzie, look at beautiful sunrise – isn't God a wonderful artist?" Why, yes, He is, mother," answered Suzie, "and just to think, He did it with His left hand." "Why, Suzie," responded the mother, "why would you know He did it with His left hand?" "Because," said Suzie, "Jesus is sitting on His right hand just as we say in church every Sunday!" Have you ever considered that there are more than seven billion human beings on earth today and that there have been untold billions who have lived upon the planet in the centuries and millennia past? Yet, each person is completely unique and different from every other. If DaVinci or Michelangelo were called upon to paint only three hundred different faces, it is unlikely that either of these great artists could accomplish the challenge. But God has painted, presently, more than seven billion such faces; and, not only faces, but each with different DNA, mental facilities, and other personal characteristics. This, alone, is enough to convince of the certainty of God and His great Power. And, yes, God made the dragon constellation crooked, but I believe He made the serpent of the Garden crooked as well once he was found guilty of his great temptation of Eve.

***14 Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?*** We only have a faint and rudimentary knowledge of the fullness of God's Person, yet we are told enough to know our responsibility and duty to Him. We only know the fringe elements of God's power, and we hear only the portion of Him that we can digest. The power behind the thunder is lightning, yet the thunder is an expression of the release of that great power. God thunders in nature and in our spirits, yet do we hear Him? Just as the old black spiritual goes: *My Lord he calls me, he calls me by the thunder; the trumpet sounds within-a my soul.*" (Steal Away to Jesus) How is the foolish heart able to deny that Thunder? *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are*

*clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. (Romans 1:19-22)*



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the  
second Sunday before Lent.

*The Collect.*

**O** LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Job 29**

King James Version (KJV)

**29** Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

**2** Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;

**3** When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;

**4** As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;

**5** When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me;

**6** When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;

**7** When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!

**8** The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.

**9** The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

**10** The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

**11** When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:

**12** Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that



had none to help him.

**13** The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

**14** I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

**15** I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

**16** I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.

**17** And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

**18** Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.

**19** My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

**20** My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

**21** Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

**22** After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

**23** And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

**24** If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

**25** I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

This chapter expresses the painful sentiments of one who has been to the mountain of God and now finds himself in the shadow of death. During such moments, it is not easy to remember that God was with you on the mountain, but that He is also with you just as surely in the shadow of death. The memory of bygone days of joy and prosperity no longer comfort, but pain our hearts to consider the depths to which, and from which, we have fallen. I am reminded of that old black spiritual by Stephen Foster which reflects the pining of an old black field hand as his years draw toward the winter of his days:

*1 Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay,  
2 Gone are my friends from the cotton fields away,  
3 Gone from the earth to a better land I know,  
4 I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe.'*

*5 [Chorus] I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low:  
6 I hear those gentle voices calling, 'Old Black Joe.'*

*7 [Solo] Why do I weep when my heart should feel no pain  
8 Why do I sigh that my friends come not again,  
9 Grieving for forms Now departed long ago?  
10 I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe.'*



11 [*Chorus*]

13 [*Solo*] *Where are the hearts once so happy and so free?*

14 *The children so dear that I held upon my knee,*

15 *Gone to the shore where my soul has longed to go.*

16 *I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe.*

'17 [*Chorus*]

Unless we have been to the Valley of the Shadow of Death, it is difficult to fully appreciate the view that is enjoyed from the Mountain of God. But once we have known the majesty of God, and His many splendored palaces, it a vision we can never forget. We carry that vision to the grave and beyond. The Christian, once embarked on the Narrow Way that leads up, will never desire to leave that upward climb until the gate is reached.

On unspoken, but salient, point in this chapter of Job is that we must learn to value of memories – good and bad. Every journey must have a starting point from which way-points are calculated. Without a starting point, there can be no destination point. We should not gloomily focus on past sins forgiven, but we neither should forget the great mercy of God that has forgiven such a miserable sinner as you and me. If we do not remember how low we have been, we shall not fully appreciate how high God has lifted us.

Job's memories in this chapter are keen in the things he has lost, but color-blind to the blessings he has received at God's hand instead of so much regretting his present spell of troubles. Of course, I can understand his pain and dismay of losing his dear children, but should he not thank God for the gift of children in the first place – even if for a brief time? God gives us family in our temporary existence on earth. Children are a gift from the Lord. We should not regret the gift whether it is for many decades, or only a span of months or years.

Job recapitulates in six areas his past years: 1) **His days of religious joy.** 2) **His days of domestic felicity.** 3) **His past prosperity.** 4) **His time of public and civic honor.** 5) **His philanthropy towards needy.** And, 6) **His days of unexpected evil.**

When we are sad, it is good to remember the glimmering years of past joy. God has blessed Job with abundance of everything. If anything, God has spoiled Job as a doting father spoils his favored son.

**His days of religious bliss:** 2 *Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;* Has God forsaken Job to preserve him? Not at all. God is watching Job with greater interest now than before the trials and tribulations that Satan has wrought. 3 *When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;* Does god not provide a CONTINUAL Light to His people? The light shines more brilliantly in the dark canyon than on the starlit mountain. *For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.* (Psalms 18:28) 4 *As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;* The Temple of God is the Heart. Has God really left Job's heart? No, and the remainder of this Book bears that truth out!

**His days of domestic felicity:** 5 *When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me;* Has Job forgotten that God is a constant companion of

those who love Him? Though He keeps His silence, He is right beside.

**His past prosperity:** *6 When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;* Material prosperity is no more a sign of God's favor than silken robes inlaid with gold.

**His time of public honor and service:** *7 When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!* Such blessing often leads us to believe that we DESERVE them, but DO we? He remembers these blessings seemingly more than his communion with God. *8. The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. 9 The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. 10 The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. 11 When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me*

**He remembers his own good works and philanthropy:** *12 Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. 13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. 14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. 15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. 16 I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. 17 And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.* This is unbecoming a man of Job's faith – to brag, even to his own heart, of his righteous deeds. These are not acts of supererogation, but the minimum expected of a child of God. These are past blessings upon which we can all lay our heads in a peaceful rest.

**Job now launches out in self-pity at his unexpected hardship:** *18 Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.* Has Job's expectations been denied? Will he not, at last, die in his nest (comfort of home)? Will his days not be multiplied far beyond this present day? He shall live to gather riches and sons and daughters. He will rest at last in greater blessing than he has ever had. We cannot count God as finished with us until we close our eyes in the sleep of the just. *19 My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.* Has Job forgotten that his root is still spread out in the heart of God? Does he foolishly believe that God cannot be his friend in trouble as well as blessing? God is always more abundantly present with us in our trials than in our prosperity. *20 My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. 21 Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.* Ah, yes! This is perhaps what Job misses most – the admiration of men, and the audience of the crowds. He would be better advised to take joy in having the ear of the Lord to hear him. *22 After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.* See how Job considers himself to be above other men (as the Pharisee and the publican)? Men were moved to silence at his commanding voice which he “dropped” down upon them. He must have been much better than them if his words must be dropped upon them. *23 And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.* Tribulation brings out the weaker demons of our spirits rather than our better angels. We have not seen this prideful side of Job heretofore. *24 If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.* Job is simply carried away with his boasting as an old soldier relating his landing on the beaches of Normandy. He says that even when he spoke in jest, his listeners understood and did not discredit his character. *25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.* Unwittingly, Job is describing the character of Christ. Though Job falls far short, we can never fall short in our praise for the works of Christ! Even on His last

entry into Jerusalem, Christ entered as a King and a Commander of Armies. But that entry will appear far less glorious compared to His entry into New Jerusalem as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Man is unable to possess the perfection of Christ, and neither could Job. Job will come to know that. Have you come to know that, my Friend?



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the  
second Sunday before Lent.

*The Collect.*

**O** LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Job 30**

King James Version (KJV)

**30** But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

**2** Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?

**3** For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

**4** Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

**5** They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

**6** To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

**7** Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

**8** They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

**9** And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

**10** They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

**11** Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

**12** Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

**13** They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

**14** They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation

they rolled themselves upon me.

**15** Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

**16** And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

**17** My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

**18** By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

**19** He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

**20** I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

**21** Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

**22** Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.

**23** For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

**24** Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

**25** Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

**26** When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

**27** My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

**28** I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

**29** I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

**30** My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

**31** My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

Job now draws a finished contrast between the Job of wealth and comfort with the present Job of suffering, childless, and afflicted of God. But does the essence of a man of god change in character because of externals? I think not for to be a child of God, we must be God-like – unchanging in our inner man as God is unchanging in His immutable Word and Person. I do not criticize Job for his doubts; for it is common to all who are favored by God and who, suddenly, find that they have lost all that they hold dear. In actual fact, this is a time of growing for Job for God is teaching him that, regardless the outward conditions and associations, the inner soul that belongs to God is unscathed by those externals.

This chapter has too many verses to address each individually in devotion,

however, I will summarize as best I am able. There are two major divisions in Job's lamentations for this chapter:

1. Rather than being held in high esteem, that former honor has turned to extreme contempt. (verses 1-14)
2. His former good fortune is turned on its head to calamity. (verses 15-31)

*1 But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. 2 Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished? 3 For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. 4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat. 5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;) 6 To dwell in the clefts of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. 7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together. 8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth. 9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. 10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. 11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me. 12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. 13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper. 14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.*

We see in the first verse that the young deride and hold Job in contempt. It would seem that the evils of the so-called "generation-gap" infected the youthful mind even that long ago. Of course, such attitudes are inherited honestly for their fathers were a worthless lot as well. If we will raise decent children, we must comport ourselves as decent parents. Such youth, corrupted in morals, are of no profit to anyone. They will be fortunate if they attain an age of adulthood since they are so undernourished physically and morally. I wonder if Job read the New York Times, for our day is even worse perhaps than his own. *8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth* In other words, they were worse than DIRT. It is usually true that the child of a fool will inherit his father's traits just as a child of God will possess a character of wisdom and love. Whose child are YOU?

The disrespect for the aged, even if in bad fettle, is a growing trait among youth in America today – indeed, our modern wonders of gluttony have respect for no one. *10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.* They are born with a seemingly insatiable appetite for benefits and a total disdain for sacrifice or labor. Was Solomon not right in telling us, "*....there is no new thing under the sun.*" (Eccl 1:9)?

*15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.*

Once we have tasted the honey of the Lord, the bland flavor of dry bread will not suffice. In times past Job sat respected and renowned in the gate of his city, but now he has come to what he considers the lowest point of life. How can anything ever be worse? He is insecure in his condition. His imagination creates ghosts and goblins out of thin air – a typical experience of the elderly without God. But Job has no excuse, for Job KNOWS God and he knows better than what he expresses. Here, he is complaining more in the hopes that God is eavesdropping than to his three friends. Prior to reading the remainder of this devotion, I encourage you to read the experience of Christ on the

cross in Psalms 22:1-21. Then read and compare the illustrative expressions of Job's grief.

*16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. 17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest. 18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat. 19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. 20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not. 21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposeth thyself against me. 22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.* Do you see how Job is compelled to bear his cross daily just as the Lord has commanded you and me to do? The cause of Job's suffering is unknown to him. It is commonplace for a sufferer to blame God when his understanding of suffering is lacking. But the suffering of Job is not because of any sin Job has committed, per se', but a means whereby God is being glorified. God will not lose face before Satan who has tormented Job as a result of his initial challenge to God regarding Job. We are so far below God that we must always know that He is merciful, righteous and just. If we do not understand the terms of our troubles and trials, blame not God, but carry on in your Christian spirit as a good soldier in the Army of God. What field soldier at the Alamo would have understood the strategic importance of delaying the forces of Santa Anna at the Alamo, yet he stood his ground and died to the last man. God desires you to be the same caliber of Christian man or woman as those who chose to shed their blood rather than shackles and chains.

*23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* Please read this verse carefully again. What is Job speaking here? Do you see the remarkable power and beauty of this verse? Job knows that he shall taste death just as do all men, but he will not swallow it whole. He will close his eyes in the sleep of death and open them again in a greater House of the Living. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:* (Heb 9:27) This verse comports nicely with that of Job of 19:25-27 - *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.* (Job 19:25-27)

*24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.* Death and the grave is the end of suffering in this life. God will not allow the righteous to be offended in the long home to which he goes. *25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor? 26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. 27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me. 28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.* Job is appealing for fairness here since he has had mercy and compassion on others of like condition; but the Christian can never expect fairness from a world that plays by other rules. All the days of the sufferer are as the night – full of darkness. Darkness, spiritually, is the absence of God.

*29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.* This compares Job's condition with the desolation of the desert. The plaintive words of the Psalmist comes to mind – *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalms 63:1-2)



The strange screech of the owl and the scream of the jackal are here noted. It is much like the resulting ruins of Babylon when God had judged them: *And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions' whelps* (Jer 51:37-38)

*30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. 31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.* Job is skin and bones. His skin sticks to his bones because there is not intervening muscle. The appearance of his skin is the dark color of disease. His days of joy, he mistakenly believes, are ended. When the music dies, as in American Pie, the delightful country is ended. The harp represents the happy music of life. The organ could be translated as 'pipe' which is used to convey a joyful march. *Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.* (Isaiah 30:29) Perhaps the dismal prospects of Job are best summarized in the following: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.* (Psalms 137:1-2) The dread and captivity of the soul is not to be lightly taken. Have you ever had occasion to hang your "hanged your harps by the rivers of Babylon, Friend?



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the  
second Sunday before Lent.

*The Collect.*

**O** LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter 31 is one of the longest to this point and cannot sensibly be covered in a brief devotion verse by verse; so I will attempt to distill the sense of the whole in summaries of the salient points therein.

**Job 31**

King James Version (KJV)

**31** I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

**2** For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

**3** Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?

**4** Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

**5** If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit;

- 6** Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity.
- 7** If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;
- 8** Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.
- 9** If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;
- 10** Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.
- 11** For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.
- 12** For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.
- 13** If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;
- 14** What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?
- 15** Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?
- 16** If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
- 17** Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;
- 18** (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;)
- 19** If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;
- 20** If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
- 21** If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:
- 22** Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.
- 23** For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.
- 24** If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence;
- 25** If I rejoice because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much;
- 26** If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;
- 27** And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:
- 28** This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have

denied the God that is above.

**29** If I rejoice at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

**30** Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.

**31** If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

**32** The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller.

**33** If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

**34** Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

**35** Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.

**36** Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.

**37** I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

**38** If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

**39** If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

**40** Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

The very first verse introduces us to the theme of this chapter: *1. I made a covenant with mine eyes* (Job 31:1a) Here Job states the covenant that he made in his youth to avoid sins that his eyes and senses might induce. "...*why then should I think upon a maid.*" (Job 31:1b) Sensual sins are the most besetting and most powerful. If our eyes are blind to the chocolate cake, we shall never over indulge it. Our eyes make us more aware of the opportunity to sin. All that we see we may believe can be ours, but there are some things that are unprofitable and even sinful for us to behold in hunger and envy. Forget not that it was the EYE that most led Eve to sin before the Ill-Natured Tree at Eden. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat* (Gen 3:6) Of course, she was led to the temptation of sight first by the lesser sense of hearing, but it was the appearance of the fruit that settle the sordid affair. So Job is saying that we must, in making a covenant with our senses, set walls and ramparts about our physical senses for these are the gateways to our spiritual fortresses.

Job provides us a glimpse of his moral method of living in the past. Of course he runs off a laundry list all the laws and regulations for morality that he has set upon his life. It was a sad description of legalism in some sense though moral righteousness is never to be condemned; yet our righteous living is not righteous in the eyes of God for it cannot be. So Job, in a sense, is saying: Look, Lord, I have done everything right – kept your laws, kept from sins of passion, kept from greed, etc. Why should I experience this terrible tribulation? Job has developed a set of "New Year's" resolutions

that he considers comprehensive, but no set of resolutions can cover ever eventuality or opportunity for sin. Even in a sense of absent-mindedness, our minds may be distracted by the passing of a beautiful lady, or handsome young gentleman. It is for this reason that our Prayer of General Confession includes sins of omission as well as sins of commission. Man simply cannot be "good enough" to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Only in swearing an oath of allegiance and dependency upon the King of that Kingdom (Jesus Christ) can we gain admittance.

Next Job asks a question of profound implications, in my humble interpretation. *What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?* (Job 31:14-15) Before delving into the deeper and prophetic meaning, let us first observe that, first of all, we shall all answer to God at some point of His own choosing. The same whop fashion and began a life in the womb is the same who fashioned our own substance unseen. He is the Same who fashioned every body and soul that has ever lived. Where shall we stand at that Day of the Lord if we have destroyed in the womb that which the Lord has commenced to create? Shall the abortionist not be relegated to the hottest dens of Hell? But may I ask you, Friend, what will you do when God rises in judgment of all your hidden and secret sins? Will they be covered by the Risen Lord? The promise of the coming Seed had already been made when Job spoke these words; but now we have an even greater certainty in the accomplished fact. We shall have less reason to complain of our straights than Job had for he had less certain knowledge of the Risen Christ – he saw with eyes of faith. Job wonders what account he shall give at that great moment. What account will YOU render? There is one Creator and He offers the same miracle and opportunity to life that all receive. Will you be guilty of terminating that miracle of God? By the way, since we all have the same Creator, we also share a common nature. Because of the Adamic Fall, we have a SIN nature whether we like to hear that or not.

At verse 16, Job initiates a series of questions that prove the timeless principles of true religion expressed by James: *16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; 17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; 18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) 19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; 20 If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; 21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:*

(Job 31:16-21) Compare these entreaties with what James describes as true religion: *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* (James 1:26-27) These are sins of omission mentioned by Job and they bear the same penalty as sins of commission.

In verse 24 through 28, Job denies the love of money as his love. *24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; 25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; 26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: 28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.* (Job 31:24-28) I need not remind the readers of these lengthy devotions that money, in and of itself,

is not evil. But the LOVE of money is the root of all evil. (see 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:10) Job also addresses, not only the idolatry of money, gold, and silver; but idolatry of beauty itself as a god. To be tempted at the beauty of a glorious sunrise without knowing it is God's beauty, or the blessing of a bright moon at night, to worship these creatures instead of their Creator, is idolatry. *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.* (Job 31:30) Modern preachers are known to claim to put a curse on those who refuse to follow the desires of the so-called "anointed of God." Such ministers will occupy the lowest rent district of Hell itself.

Job undertakes now to address 'hidden sins.' But wait! Are there any sins hidden from God who knows all, sees all, and hears all? To hide sin is yet another sin multiplying sin on sin. Remember the old adage that you must tell a hundred lies to cover the first one? *If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom* (Job 31:33) Was Adam able to cover his sin in the Garden with a flimsy fig leaf? So are our attempts to hide our sins from God as flimsy as fig leaves.

*Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.* (Job 31:40) Job says that if he has failed in any of the failures to look after the neighbor, the widow, the orphan, or to clothe the naked, then let the same curse that God levied on Adam come to bear upon him. Guess what – it DID! "...*cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.* (Gen 3:17-18) Is Job too blind to see that the curse he mentioned has fallen around his own neck? Are you, as well, too blind to see that your perfections are miserable failures in the eyes of the Lord?



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the  
second Sunday before Lent.

The Collect.

**O** LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. 3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. 4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. 5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled. 6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. 7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. 8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. 9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. 10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion. 11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. 12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words: 13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man. 14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches. 15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking. 16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;) 17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion. 18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. 19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. 20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. 21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. 22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away. (Job 32:1-22)*

An interesting new personality comes into the picture though he seemingly was present to hear the arguments of Job and his three friends. Though he has listened



patiently to all discussion, he can no longer remain silent. The meaning of the name, ELIHU, is "God is Jehovah" and he is the son of Barachel (meaning God has blessed). He seems to suggest a prefigure of Christ as an intermediary for Job. This is hinted at in the next chapter: *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.* (Job 33:23-26 KJV) He is young in years (as was Christ), he speaks true theology (Christ was its Author), and he comes into the scene after the debate has reached a failure to resolve the matter of Job. So Christ came in the fullness of time to redeem those who had proven their failure to be righteous.

The three friends stopped their arguments against Job, not because they felt defeated by Job's words, but because they failed to convince Job of his unrighteousness. Jesus could not convince the Pharisees of truth for the same reason. They were righteous in their own eyes. *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: **Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*** (Luke 18:9-14)

Wisdom knows no parents. Whether uttered by a five year old, or an elderly lady or gentleman, it still wears the same uniform of truth and reason. Out of customary respect, Elihu has held his tongue during the exchange but having heard not even a single answer to Job's argument from his three friends, he can remain silent no more. When you know a sure truth but do not hear it applied when it should be, don't we all break the silence with our declarations of it?

In verses 1-5, Elihu is introduced and the reasons for his silence given. This entire chapter is truly introductory only to a longer discourse by Elihu. After stating his reasons for remaining silent thus far, Elihu launches into the three friends for not answering Job's arguments point by point. It should be pointed out that Job admits that none are righteous before God, but his insistence upon his own righteousness in the cardinal points of the law does not give evidence of humility. We are all the same. We will all agree that all men fall short in righteousness, but we then embark to show how we are somehow righteous anyway. What nonsense! Please read again the parable above of the Pharisee and the publican. In his personal works, the Pharisee may have had more outward signs of righteousness than the publican. The publican was admittedly a gross sinner, **but he KNEW it!** He appealed to God out of humility while the Pharisee made no appeal at all, but boasted out of his prideful presumed righteousness.

*7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. 8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. 9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.* It would normally be expected that gray hairs speak greater wisdom than youth, so Elihu has maintained his silence, but he now articulates a great truth: Age does not hold a monopoly on wisdom and is often devoid of it. Even great men are often woefully

lacking of it. In such a case, age becomes irrelevant to the point that the God-given wisdom of youth must speak. Wisdom needs no parchment of certification to prove itself. It bears its own authority and credibility. A Doctorate of Divinity, or of Law, simply means that the printing press has been a benefit in the making. Its only worth is the wisdom that perchance was gained in the earning of it. I have known Christians with very little formal education whose knowledge of Holy Scripture, and the wisdom to apply it, exceed greatly the biblical knowledge and wisdom of those who stand as professors of Divinity in seminaries. How can this be? It is because God gives the wisdom, and He always has. Have you ever been taught wisdom from the lips of a child? I have – over and over again.

**12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words: 13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.** The wisdom of man is no match for that of God; or, a more accurate way to declare it is: there is NO WISDOM apart from that which comes from God. No man can thrust another down – that role belongs to the Lord his God. Elihu claims his wisdom on the authority of God and not his own. *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.... Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay* (Job 33:4, 6) Jesus, too, was formed of clay in his Body, but He stood in the stead of the Father, and was God. Elihu begins this dialogue with a spirit of humility armed with the courage of Godly wisdom. Such wisdom is recognized even by fools and will often still their words in their mouths: **14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches. 15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.** Elihu will not answer the arguments Job mad to his friends since their words lacked wisdom and would not be used by Elihu in response to Job.

Though youthful, Elihu is full of the confidence of that which wisdom instills. He has waited and been just 'busting' to speak truth where none other have spoken it though they have used many words empty of meaning. **16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;) 17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion. 18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. 19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles**

Oppression of free speech is a debilitating force. We grow desperate to speak a word of wisdom where only words of foolishness have been spoken. It is even refreshing to share deep and life-changing truths of the Gospel to those who have heard only error preached from America's pulpits. **20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.** Elihu will not have his speech suppressed.

**21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.** Wisdom needs not flowery window dressing. It does not respect one person over another – just like the effects of gravity pull on the Emperor in the same way as the vassal. **22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.** If we are respecters of persons, we lose the credibility of wisdom and honor. It may tickle our ears to be called 'Guvenuh' by the doorman, but are we any more the Governor than before we were addressed. Actually we become less so if we have not corrected the error on the spot. Rather than correct the title, the doorman, no doubt, got a handsome tip.

This concludes Elihu's introduction to his following clams in wisdom. But we have learned that self-righteousness, even in a good man, creates unrighteousness. Any well articulated arguments that do not lift up the truth of God, no matter how well meaning, are not wise.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN.