

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.

ALMIGHTY 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 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?