

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.

ALMIGHTY 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.

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

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

1 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 the judgment of God is less than your own. God will forgive your foolish piety if you will repent of it.

Mr. Job, would 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 their 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 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.