

Job's Initial Response to Bildad

Job Chapter 9

Job 9:1–2 *Then Job answered and said, ²I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*

ON the charges of him being a hypocrite, Job utters these memorable and instructive words: *But how should man be just with God?* No greater question has ever been asked, and every truly godly man will seek the Lord for its answer. How, then, can mortal and sinful man ever be found worthy of a holy and eternal God? The wiser a man is to his true condition before the Lord, the more he knows the great gulf that lies between his own unworthiness and the Lord's holiness. For no man can stand just before a just and holy God and approach His divine presence until he learns the secret of what it is to possess a broken and contrite spirit,¹ a spirit that has drained itself of all fleshly pride and is fully aware that to be truly saved, the Lord's mercy must be given, a spirit that is penitent and broken because of sin and humbly seeks the Lord for forgiveness for it, a spirit that knows the unworthiness of man and the critical need for divine mercy in order to be saved.

Job 9:3 *If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 9:3) The word "thousand" here is used to denote the largest number, or all. A man who could not answer

for one charge brought against him out of a thousand, must be held to be guilty; and the expression here is equivalent to saying that he could not answer him at all. It may also be implied that God has many charges against man. His sins are to be reckoned by thousands. They are numerous as his years, his months, his weeks, his days, his hours, his moments; numerous as his privileges, his deeds, and his thoughts. For not one of those sins can he answer. He can give no satisfactory account before an impartial tribunal for any of them. If so, how deeply guilty is man before God! How glorious that plan of justification by which he can be freed from this long list of offences, and treated as though he had not sinned.

If a man is sincere and does not deceive himself, he knows that regardless of whatever sin the Lord charges him with, he will not be able to mount an adequate and proper defense. Job knew, that if even one sin of a thousand were brought against him, he could not defend it before a Holy God. What is observed here is Job's true and godly humility before the Lord. He knows that man on his own can never be just before God and that if even one sin were accounted to him, then no proper defense could ever be properly mounted so that he could be successfully acquitted from it.

Job 9:4a *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength:*

¹ Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Ps. 34:18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* Isa. 66:2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

God's glory lies in His infinite wisdom² and superior strength.³ No one is wiser than God, nor is any other power in creation able to overcome Him. Thus, if God is truly with a man, it matters not what other powers are against him. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* (Rom. 8:31). The power and wisdom of God are more than sufficient to lift His people above any and all weakness on their part. This includes even the sin that binds them from pleasing God. There is no match for the Lord, and if He chooses to join Himself to an individual⁴ or a people,⁵ then certain victory will follow. Therefore, whenever the people of God lack spiritual confidence, they should look toward the Lord's strength and not their own weaknesses and shortcomings. For

it is not by either the holiness or strength of men that true deliverance comes, but solely from Him Who is Himself mighty in strength and greater in might than all other forces in creation.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 9:4) When Job mentions the wisdom and power of God, he forgets his complaints.

Job 9:4b who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Though Job was not aware of how to be just before God, he was aware that hardening himself against the Lord was not the answer. No one, not even one person, has ever hardened himself against God and God's will for his life and won. Pharaoh is a visible example of this,⁶ but he is just one

2 Ps. 147:5 *Great is our LORD, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*

Isa. 40:28 *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

Rom. 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

3 I Chr. 29:11-12 *Thine, O LORD is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. ¹²Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*

II Chr. 20:6 *And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?*

Jer. 10:12-13 *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.¹³When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.*

Rom. 1:20 *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:*

4 Josh. 1:5 *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

5 Isa. 43:1-6 *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. ²When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. ³For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. ⁴Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. ⁵Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; ⁶I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;*

6 Exod. 7:22 *And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exod. 8:15 *But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exod. 8:19 *Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exod. 8:32 *And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.*

of many who have suffered the awful consequences of hardening one's heart against the Lord. The religious leaders in Christ's day also hardened themselves against the Son of God,⁷ and as a result they crucified the very One sent to save them and in the end doomed their own souls to eternal damnation.⁸ Bent on rebellion, those who manifest a hard heart will shut out all other voices, especially God's, to do what they desire. At the base also of the hardening of the heart is stubbornness to do one's own will⁹ and not submit himself to God's will. It is thus a very vain and fruitless thing to harden oneself against the will of the Lord, and none have ever done so and ultimately prospered because of it.

Job 9:5–6 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.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:5) *Which removeth the mountains*—In order to show how vain it was to contend with God, Job refers to some exhibitions of his power and greatness. The "removal of the mountains" here denotes the changes which occur in earthquakes and other violent convulsions of nature. This illustration of the power of God is often referred to in the Scriptures; compare Judges 5:5; 1 Kings 19:11; Psalm 65:6; Psalm 114:4; Psalm 144:5; Isaiah 40:12; Jeremiah 4:24.¹⁰ . . .

Exod. 9:7 *And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.*

Exod. 9:12 *And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.*

Exod. 9:34–35 *And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.³⁵ And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.*

Exod. 15:4 *Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.*

7 Mark 3:1–5 *And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.² And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.³ And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.⁴ And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.⁵ And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.⁶ And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.*

Mark 6:52 *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

Mark 8:17 *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?*

8 Matt. 20:18–19 *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,¹⁹ And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

Matt. 26:4 *And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.*

Matt. 27:1–2 *When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:² And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.*

Mark 15:1 *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.*

Luke 22:2 *And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.*

Luke 23:1 *And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.*

John 7:1 *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*

John 11:53 *Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

9 Jer. 18:12 *And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.*

10 Judg. 5:5 *The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.*

1 Kgs. 19:11 *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:*

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Which overturneth them in his anger—As if he were enraged. There could scarcely be any more terrific exhibition of the wrath of God than the sudden and tremendous violence of an earthquake.

As Scripture reveals, the Lord's power is so great, so fierce, and so overwhelming that on the day of the Lord the entire earth will be dissolved with a fervent heat. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (II Pet. 3:10). If men truly knew the Lord's power and His supernatural ability to affect even mountains, which are able to be dissolved at His will, then they would learn how foolish it is to reject His sovereignty. For He Who is able to remove mountains from their bases is easily able to remove the feeble men who trek upon them.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Pet. 3:10) Water, in its component parts, is inflammable in a high degree; and even the diamond has been shown to be combustible.

Job 9:7–8 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.

Though natural laws presently govern creation, the Lord can easily set them aside or even change them.¹¹ The Lord has created both the heavens and earth,¹² and all is under His complete control. Thus, just as He has set the laws of nature, so can He alter them according to His own will. It is also amazing that the very One Who has called us to be His own and to cry to Him, "Abba, Father," has such awesome power over all things. We spiritually cannot say that we know God if we remain ignorant of His power, that we have fully believed in the Lord, if we remain blind to His extensive and supreme authority over all things.¹³

Ps. 65:6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:

Ps. 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.

Ps. 144:5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

Isa. 40:12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Jer. 4:24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

¹¹ *Josh. 10:12–14 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. ¹³And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. ¹⁴And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.*

¹² *Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

¹³ *Isa. 45:7–9 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. ⁸Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. ⁹Woe 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?*

Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Isa. 46:9–10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Ps. 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Ps. 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Isa. 40:22–23 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: ²³That bringeth

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

Much knowledge has been lost of the study of the stars and how they foretold the coming of Christ.¹⁴ Furthermore, as artificial light increases on the earth, men become more and more removed from the Lord's celestial lights, which themselves reveal the glory of God.¹⁵

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:9) *Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south*: these he names as stars or constellations of greatest note and eminency; for so they are both in Scripture and other authors, and such as have, or are thought to have, a special influence in raising storms and tempests; but under them he seems to comprehend all the stars, which as they were created by God, so are under his government. Arcturus is a northern constellation, near that called the Bear, which riseth to us about the beginning of September, and by its rising produceth (as Pliny affirms) horrible storms and tempests. Orion is a more southerly constellation, that ariseth to us in December, and is noted by astronomers for raising fearful winds and tempests, both by sea and land. The Pleiades is a constellation not far from Orion, and near that called the Bull, which we call the Seven Stars: to us it riseth at the beginning of the spring, and by

its rising causeth rains and tempests, and therefore is unwelcome to mariners at sea. *By the chambers* (or *inmost and secret chambers*, as the word signifies) of the south, he seems to understand those stars and constellations which are towards the southern pole, which are fitly called *inward chambers*, because they are for the most part hid and shut up (as chambers commonly are) from these parts of the world, and do not rise or appear to us till the beginning of summer, when they also raise southerly winds and tempests, as astronomers observe.

Job 9:10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Other Bible translations give us a better sense of this passage.

(NIV) *He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.*

(NLT) *He does great things too marvelous to understand. He performs countless miracles.*

(NASB) *It is He who does great things,^[a] the unfathomable, And wondrous works without number. Lit until there is no searching out*

the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

Isa. 14:24 *The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:*

14 Num. 24:17 *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.* Matt. 2:1–10 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.³ When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.⁵ And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,⁶ And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.⁷ Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.⁹ When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

15 Ps. 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

Ps. 50:6 *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

Ps. 97:6 *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*

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(AMP) *Who does great things, [beyond understanding,] unfathomable,*

Yes, marvelous and wondrous things without number.

What God has done in His creation is past finding out. The wonders in His creation are without number. Such, then, is the power and majesty of the Lord, which both are beyond human comprehension.

Job 9:11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

Here Job confesses how blind he is to God's presence. He knows God exists, but he cannot see God's face or perceive how

He is working for him, whether blessing him or as at this time in his life allowing things to be taken from him. Ultimately it was also Job's spiritual blindness that caused him to unrighteously make false claims against the Lord. This is because what Job did not realize or truly know was that the Lord was working quietly to bring about all the good that He had always purposed for Job's life. Indeed, the Lord is invisible to the human eye,¹⁶ but through the Spirit of God, given to us by God,¹⁷ the reality of His supernatural being is made known.¹⁸

(Benson Commentary, Job 9:11) Lo he goeth by me—Or besides, or before me, in my presence; that is, he worketh by his providence in ways of mercy or judgment. And I see him not—I see the effects, but I cannot under-

¹⁶ Heb. 11:27 *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

I Tim. 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

I Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Rom. 1:20 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:

¹⁷ *I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

I John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

I Thess. 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

¹⁸ *I Cor. 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

I Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Prov. 1:23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Neh. 9:20 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

I John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Matt. 10:19–20 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. ²⁰For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Luke 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

stand the causes or grounds of his actions, for they are incomprehensible to me, or any other man: for though Job speaks only in his own person, yet he means to affirm it of all men, that such is the weakness of their understandings that they cannot search out God's counsels and ways. The operations of second causes are commonly obvious to our senses; but, though God works by those causes, we see him not, nor can our finite minds fathom his counsels, apprehend his motions, or comprehend the measures he takes. *He passeth on also*—He goeth from place to place; from one action to another. *But I perceive him not*—He passes and acts invisibly and undiscerned.

All men are innately blind to the Lord and His movements upon the earth until He chooses to reveal Himself to them.¹⁹ It is also the voice of God that awakens men to the call of God. Hence, it is generally true that the Lord will open a man's ears before his eyes.²⁰ *And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me* (Ezek. 2:2). Through then exposure to the Lord's Word and His Spirit, He enters and prompts men to obey His will.²¹ It is a beautiful reality in both Scripture and life that the Lord of creation so humbles Himself to reveal His presence to men²²

19 Eph. 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

20 Job 33:16–17 *Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, ¹⁷That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

Job 42:5 *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*

21 Num. 11:25 *And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*

I Sam. 16:13 *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.*

I Sam. 19:23 *And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.*

I Chr. 12:18 *Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.*

II Chr. 15:1–2 *And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: ²And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

II Chr. 24:20 *And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.*

Ezek. 3:24 *Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.*

Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 19:6 *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

22 Gen. 7:1 *And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.*

Gen. 9:12 *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:*

Gen. 28:13–15 *And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whither thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; ¹⁴And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

Gen. 35:9–12 *And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.*

¹⁰And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. ¹¹And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; ¹²And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

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so that through heavenly communication sinners can be stirred to do His will and carry out His commandments.²³

Job 9:12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Job's fear of God is seen here through his knowing that if God chooses to take something away, then it can never be recovered, and that there is no man, nor any other heavenly being, who is able to question what the Lord purposes to do,

nor stand up against Him to prevent its being done.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:12) Behold, he taketh away—property, friends, or life.

Who can hinder him?—Margin, turn him away. Or, rather, “who shall cause him to restore?” that is, who can bring back what he takes away? He is so mighty, that what he removes, it is impossible for us to recover.

Who will say unto him, What doest thou?—A similar expression occurs in Daniel 4:35.²⁴ The meaning is plain. God has a right to

Exod. 29:42 This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.

I Sam. 23:2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

I Sam. 23:4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

I Sam. 30:8 And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

II Sam. 5:19 And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

II Sam. 5:23–24 And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. ²⁴And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

I Kgs. 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

Jnh. 1:1–2 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

Ps. 99:7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them. Ezek. 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

Ezek. 43:2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

Zech. 1:16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

Luke 3:21–22 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, ²²And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased.

Acts 18:9–10 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁰For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

23 Acts 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Acts 11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

Acts 13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 16:6–7 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Acts 19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

24 Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto

remove any thing which we possess. Our friends, property, health, and lives, are his gift, and he has a right to them all. When he takes them away, he is but taking that which is his own, and which has been lent to us for a little time, and which he has a right to remove when it seems good to him. This truth Job fully admits, and in the calm contemplation of all his losses and his sorrows, he acknowledges that God had a right to do as he had done; see note, Job 1:21.²⁵

In truth, every event in Job's life, whether he or his companions knew it or not, was according to divine will. None can stop the Lord's will from being accomplished, and none can change its desired end.²⁶ If we do not accept this truth, then we will forever play the victim. In truth, Job was never a victim, overcome with tragedy beyond God's divine control; rather, he was a God-fearing man who, though under severe spiritual trial purposed by God, was ultimately brought through it to see God's good, generous, and benevolent end for his life. The spiritual lesson that Job needed taught was deep and profound, and only an arduous trial and clear heavenly instruction could help him learn it.²⁷

Job 9:13 If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:13) So Dr. Good renders it, "the supports of the

him, What doest thou?

25 Job 1:21 *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.*

26 Isa. 46:9–11 *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ¹¹Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*

Isa. 14:24 *The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:*

Isa. 14:27 *For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?*

Ps. 135:6 *Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

Isa. 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

27 Job 42:5–6 *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. ⁶Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

28 Job 32:1 *So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.*

proud." The meaning is, probably, that all those things which contribute to the support of pride, or all those persons who are allied together to maintain the dominion of pride on the earth, must sink under the wrath of God.

Job 9:14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

Job inwardly knew of his inferiority to speak to God and carry sufficient wisdom to properly reason with Him. No man also will feel so small in God's sight than when he is asked to mount a credible defense of his sin, his life, and his actions. Ultimately, man is unworthy of addressing the Lord, and his spiritual timidity before Him proves this.

Job 9:15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 9:15) Job is still righteous in his own eyes, ch. 32:1,²⁸ and this answer, though it sets forth the power and majesty of God, implies that the question between the afflicted and the Lord of providence, is a question of might, and not of right; and we begin to discover the evil fruits of pride and of a self-righteous spirit. Job begins to manifest a disposition to condemn God, that he may justify himself, for which he is afterwards reproved.

Many a man has maintained a stubborn belief in his internal righteousness with quietness, lacking the courage to bring his case to God yet still self-righteously believing himself to be innocent. Silence also can be as much a sign of a man justifying himself as any outward words spoken to the Lord. What this also teaches us is that mere silence does not prove a man humble. In fact, sometimes it proves the complete opposite. No man is as stubborn as the one who inwardly believes himself righteous before the Lord yet lacks the courage to bring his case into the open, where it may be impartially judged by Him.

Job 9:16 If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:16) If I had called, and he had answered me—It is remarked by Schultens, that the expressions in these verses are all taken from courts of justice. If so, the meaning is, that even if Job should call the Almighty to a judicial action, and he should respond to him, and consent to submit the great question about his innocence, and about the justice of the divine dealings with him, to trial, yet that such was the distance between God and him, that he could not hope successfully to contend with him in the argument. . . .

Would I not believe—I cannot believe that he would enter into my complaint. He deals with me in a manner so severe; he acts toward me so much as a sovereign, that I have no reason to suppose that he would not continue to act toward me in the same way still.

When men are faced with tragedy and believe it to be the Lord's doing, they lose confidence that their voice will be heard by Him. Feeling removed from God's presence, sinners often refuse to believe that God remains open to their prayers and is willing to come to their aid. What the sinner feels, though, is not necessarily true, as all prayers of faith

asked according to divine will will be both heard and granted by God. Hence, if a man maintains confidence in the Lord and disregards feelings of his own unworthiness, then all requests made according to divine will are promised to be granted. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us* (I John 5:14).

Job 9:17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

Job believes that the storms that overwhelmed his life and brought tragedy to it were without divine cause or reason. He considered that God acted arbitrarily in his life, without proper justification or through a rightful system of judicial law. Job thinks of God as an autocrat who has used His power unjustly and impetuously. Skeptics of the Lord hold this same improper belief, that the Lord is not ruled by strict judicial fairness but rather by some sort of temporal emotionalism, as if man is a pawn of God and the Lord delights in playing whatever games with man He desires.

Job 9:18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

According to Job, God was to blame for the torrents of assaults aimed directly at him that did not even allow him to catch his breath. They had come one by one, and with such rapid succession that the continual pain Job felt quickly transformed into internal bitterness.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:18) My pains and miseries are continual, and I have not so much as a breathing time free from them.

Job's true belief was that the Lord was unjust in dealing with him and that he was merely a helpless victim. The fault was the Lord's, and Job could see no jus-

tifiable reason why He was dealing so unfairly with him. He thus blames God for his inability to catch his breath and for filling his life with nothing but bitterness.

Job 9:19 *If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?*

Not only had God afflicted him, reasoned Job, but He had also been unfair in not allowing him to plead his case. According to Job, the Lord had produced his misery, and then, to compound the injustice, He had not even given Job a chance to stand trial and defend himself. The Lord had wronged him, or so he thought, and was continuing to do so by withholding from him the opportunity to present a fair defense.

Job 9:20 *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*

When a man views himself as a victim, he will see even his own sinful condition as a reason for victimization. Job believed not only that he could not defend himself against the Lord but also that he was a victim of his own conscience. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Lord demanded that Job gird up his loins like a man and stand before Him. It is not until men stand and are prepared to give an account of their lives and therefore confess their sin that God can deliver them.²⁹

Job 9:21 *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:21) *Yet would I not know my soul—Or, "I could not know my soul. If I should advance such a claim, it must be from my ignorance of myself." Is not this true of all the claims to*

perfection which have ever been set up by man? Do they not demonstrate that he is ignorant of his own nature and character? So clear does this seem to me, that I have no doubt that Job expressed more than three thousand years ago what will be found true to the end of time—that if a man advances the claim to absolute perfection, it is conclusive proof that he does not know his own heart. A superficial view of ourselves, mingled with pride and vanity, may lead us to think that we are wholly free from sin.

Job 9:22–23 *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.*

The harshness of Job's complaints reveals the unsoundness of his thoughts. There is no true and sincere faith in the Lord here but only rash and harsh judgments against His providence. Such is the case with an afflicted man, as he will often harshly blame the Lord for injustice in order to maintain internal belief of his own innocence. *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?* (Job 40:8). So great is man's desire to be righteous in his own eyes that he will condemn God in order to remain so. If men do not think themselves corrupt in any other way, they should be able to detect their corruptness by how blame is consistently directed toward God, away from themselves—teaching us that those who view themselves as innocent will inevitably view God as evil, for none will lay stronger claims against the Lord than those who believe themselves pure in their own eyes.³⁰ And none will lay charges against the Lord more than those righteous in their own sight.³¹ It is thus those who think that they walk purely upon the earth who cast the greatest accusations against heaven and its dealings with them.

²⁹ Job 38:3 *Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

³⁰ Prov. 30:12 *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

³¹ Prov. 26:12 *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

Job 9:24 *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?*

Job now blames the Lord for the wicked ruling the earth, as if the rise of sin in man was the fault of God. Lost in the equation is the role men's own sin plays in the brokenness of their lives.

Job 9:25–26 *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.*

Job presumptuously believed that whatever good he had hoped to receive in this life was behind him. His mortal life was quickly passing by, and he envisioned that no good would ever come in the future. Despair and unbelief had prompted such false conclusions, but they would later be proven untrue.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Job 9:26) *the swift ships*] the ships of reed. These skiffs, constructed of a wooden keel and the rest of reeds, are the “vessels of bulrushes” of Isaiah 18:2.³² They carried but one or two persons, and being light were extremely swift. The ancients were familiar with them; Plin. xiii. 11, *ex ipso quidem papyro navigia texunt*; and Lucan, Phars, iv. 36,

conseritur bibula Memphitis cymba papyro,

(quoted in Gesenius, *Com. on Is. i. p. 577*).

Job as usual heaps images together to picture out the brevity of his life, cf. ch. Job 7:6 seq.³³ Here the images are new, a runner, a skiff of reed, an eagle swooping on his prey.

Job 9:27 *If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:*

It is ultimately the Lord only, Who is the true Healer of a broken heart, so that although a man may try ceasing his complaints and forget his troubles, the truth is that none can truly forget their complaints or leave their own sorrow, nor bring any lasting comfort to themselves. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds* (Ps. 147:3). Practically, it would require the Lord to end Job's captivity³⁴ and restore joy to his soul.

Job 9:28 *I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.*

Job knew that forgiveness was the key to his deliverance, but he lacked confidence that God would provide it. Even self-righteous men know that for suffering to cease, God must grant forgiveness. In the end, Job was at least partially aware that the Lord would have to pardon him and proclaim him innocent, simply because his personal claims of innocence were doing nothing to remove his suffering.

Job 9:29 *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?*

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Job 9:29) *I shall be wicked, or guilty, to wit, before thee. Whether I be holy or wicked, if I dispute with thee, I shall be found guilty. . . . Why should I trouble myself with clearing mine innocency, seeing God will still hold me guilty?*

Sinners will often take the stance that since they are sinners, why should they labor to be anything different? This is hardly a strong argument for choosing to remain in sin, but it is commonly employed when

³² *Isa. 18:2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!*

³³ *Job 7:6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.*

³⁴ *Job 42:10 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.*

men have chosen not to exert the spiritual effort and labor necessary to gain true and sincere faith in God.³⁵

Job 9:30–31 *If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; ³¹Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*

No doubt, the labor Job refers to in verse 29 is that of cleansing himself. Job's view of God has become so twisted that he believes that even if he washed himself, God would still plunge him into a ditch. What is missing is the divine revelation that man cannot cleanse himself, that for a man to be clean before God, the Lord must make him that way since men through their own power can do nothing to truly sanctify their souls or remove the strong stain of sin from them.

Job 9:32–33 *For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. ³³Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*

Job again makes an appeal for his day in court. He hopes for a *daysman*, or “an umpire or arbiter, a mediator.”³⁶ Little does Job know that Elihu will become exactly this. Elihu's ministry, though, will not help Job plead his case to God. Instead, Elihu will bring God's case to Job. The Lord will indeed answer Job's prayers, just

not in the way he might think it should be. In this Job demonstrates some awareness: of his need for another greater than himself, to plead on his behalf. Job's own efforts had failed and he knew enough to realize that another was needed to plead on his behalf.

Job 9:34 *Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: ³⁵Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.*

How important and how needed is this lesson today—that fear of God and fear of His judgment can be removed only if a man has a sincere and genuine belief in the One Who is able to make true mediation for his sin, that every man needs a mediator between him and God and that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is this mediator. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (I Tim. 2:5).

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I Tim. 2:5) one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. When the sin of man had provoked Divine justice, and the guilt could not be expiated without satisfaction, God appointed his Son incarnate to mediate between his offended Majesty and his rebellious subjects.

Because of time constraints, only Job's initial response is addressed here.

³⁵ Heb. 4:9–11 *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.* ¹⁰*For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* ¹¹*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

³⁶ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:33

