

## Chapter 7

# *Job's Initial Response to Bildad*

### *Job 9*

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

ON the charges of Bildad claiming him to be 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, which all men are at their core, ever be found worthy of a holy and eternal God? Bildad had spoken much of Job's perceived sin but could not provide any actual wisdom on how sinners can be accounted as righteous before God.

*(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:2) I know it is so, to wit, as you say, that God is just in all his ways, that he doth ordinarily bless the righteous, and punish the wicked.*

But how should man be just? Heb. *and how*, &c.? i.e. and I know that no man is absolutely just, or can defend his righteousness, if God be severe to mark what is amiss in him.

The question Job asks is one that those conscious of their fallen nature have

inquired into for ages: how can a man through his flesh and his own innate natural ability transform himself to be found just before a holy God? The truth is that it is beyond his capacity to do so, since to be found acceptable unto the Lord through personal holiness is, as the scripture reveals, completely unattainable.

In man's natural state of being in the flesh, it is impossible to gain divine justification through self-improvement. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God* (Rom. 8:8). This is true even if God's law is used in an attempt to do so. *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin* (Rom. 3:20). In this sinfully born condition even religious education cannot help the sinner be found just before God. Because of this truth, that through themselves sinners cannot make themselves sufficiently righteous before God, another means for gaining righteousness is needed. This path resides not in man but rather through faith in God's Son,<sup>1</sup> simply because no man will be found just before the Lord, except by faith in the One He has provided to make him that way.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Rom. 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Rom. 3:21–22 *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; <sup>22</sup>Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

Gal. 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

***Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:***

It is this *righteousness*, whose source is God, and not man, that allows for sinners to be made righteous, just, and acceptable unto God. Through then faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God's righteousness can be imparted to the sinner. Hence, though Job did not know it at this time in history, it would later be revealed with the coming of Christ, that faith in Him, and not improvement of self, is the only way for sinners to be truly justified and stand righteous before a holy,<sup>2</sup> pure,<sup>3</sup> and eternal<sup>4</sup> God.

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

If a man is sincere and does not deceive himself, he knows that regardless of whatever sin or transgression the Lord charges him with, he will not be able to mount an adequate and proper defense to acquit himself. Job knew that if even one sin in a thousand were brought against him, he could not defend it and would be righteously condemned by God. Job is fully aware of this spiritual reality to the point of discouragement, that sinners on their own can never be found just before a holy God, simply because they could never give an account or defend even one of their sins as acceptable to Him.

(*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.

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

No man can match God's wisdom or His might. Contending with the Lord, Job declares, results only in bringing more pain and suffering upon oneself.

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

Though Job was not aware of how any could be found just before God, he was fully aware that hardening himself against the Lord was not the answer. To harden oneself against God is to go against all the natural and spiritual laws in the universe. To engage in this sinful behavior cannot lead to prosperity, whether it be prosperity of the soul or of the life.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 9:4) Prosperity is not found in opposing God. It is only by falling in with his arrangements and following his designs. A prosperous voyage is made by falling in with winds and currents, and not in opposing them; prosperous agriculture is carried on by coinciding with the favorable seasons of the

2 Lev. 11:44 For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

3 I John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Deut. 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

year, and taking advantage of the dews, and rains, and sunbeams that God sends, and not in opposing them; prosperity in regard to health is found in taking advantage of the means which God gives to secure it, and not in opposing them. And the sinner in his course has no more chance of success and prosperity, than a man would have who should make it a point or principle of life always to sail against tides, and currents, and head winds; or he who should set at defiance all the laws of husbandry, and plant on a rock, or in the dead of winter; or he who should feed himself on poison rather than on nutritious food, and cultivate the nightshade rather than wheat. The great principle is, that if a man desires prosperity, he must fall in with the arrangements of God in his providence and grace; and wisdom is seen

in studying these arrangements, and in yielding to them.

Pharaoh is an example of hardening the heart,<sup>5</sup> but he is just one of many who have suffered the awful consequences of resisting divine will. The religious leaders in Jesus' day also hardened themselves against the Lord<sup>6</sup> and as a result crucified the very One sent by God to save them.<sup>7</sup> At the base of a hard heart is the stubborn desire to do one's own will.<sup>8</sup> It is this hardening in pride that God's Word warns believers to avoid at all costs,<sup>9</sup> because if it is engaged in, the Lord has sworn concerning any who do so, *They shall not enter into my rest.*<sup>10</sup> To harden the heart against

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5 *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.*

*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.<sup>35</sup> 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.*

6 *Mark 3:1–5 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.<sup>2</sup> And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.<sup>3</sup> And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.*

7 *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:<sup>2</sup> And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.*

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

*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.*

8 *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.*

9 *Heb. 3:8, 15 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ...*

<sup>15</sup>*While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

10 *Heb. 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

God is to ultimately depart from Him,<sup>11</sup> from which there can be no return.<sup>12</sup> He who willfully hardens his heart against the Lord will receive as divine judgment being eternally cut off from Him.<sup>13</sup> This was true concerning Israel, even as it will prove equally true with us. To harden the heart against submitting to divine will can have no other result than forfeiting any chance of gaining eternal life. This hardening will include being against God and those born of Him. For just as none can truly love the Lord without loving those born of Him,<sup>14</sup> so also cannot they harden themselves against either the children and/or messengers of God and still remain saved in God's sight. This was evidenced in Israel, when they were led by Korah, and both gathered and conspired against Moses and Aaron to overthrow their spiritual leadership.<sup>1</sup>

***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.***

As the scripture reveals, the Lord's power will one day consume the entire earth and prompt it to be dissolved and melt 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). He Who is able to remove mountains from their bases is easily able to remove and vanquish from the earth, all, and any, hardened in pride against His will.

(*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.<sup>15</sup>

***Job 9:7–8 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.***

11 Heb. 3:12 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

12 Dan. 5:20 *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

Jer. 19:25 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.*

13 Rom. 11:20–22 *Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: <sup>21</sup>For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. <sup>22</sup>Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

14 I John 4:20–21 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? <sup>21</sup>And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

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

***<sup>8</sup> Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.***

It is amazing that the very One Who has called us to be His own and allowed us to cry, “Abba, Father,” has such spiritual power over all things.<sup>16</sup> None can claim they truly know the Lord if still ignorant of His ability to either dispose of, or lift up, anything and everything He so wills, including creation itself.<sup>17</sup>

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

Much knowledge has been lost concerning the study of the stars and the role they play in revealing God’s glory,<sup>18</sup> how also the stars foretold the coming of God’s Son<sup>19</sup> as well as display the mercy of God, which endures forever.<sup>20</sup> It has been confirmed by science that the universe extends in all directions equally<sup>21</sup>—no area of the heavens is more densely populated than the other, nor are there large gaps between constellations, since all are spread out equally and fill up the entire heavens in every direction. *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things,*

16 Isa. 45:7–9 *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. <sup>8</sup>Drop 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. <sup>9</sup>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? 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, <sup>10</sup>Declaring 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:*

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

17 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. 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: <sup>23</sup>That bringeth 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:*

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

19 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, <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. <sup>5</sup>And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.*

<sup>8</sup>*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. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

20 Ps. 136:9 *The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

21 “No matter which direction you look in the universe, the view is basically the same if you look far enough. Our local neighborhood is populated with bright nebulae, star clusters and dark clouds of gas and dust. There are more stars toward the center of the Milky Way than there are in other directions. But across millions and billions of light-years, galaxies cluster evenly in all directions, and everything starts to look the same. . . . There is a small chance that galaxies just happened to be more evenly distributed by random chance.” (Koberlein, Brian. “The Universe Is the Same Everywhere We Look—Even More than Cosmologists Predicted.” Phys.org, 5 Aug. 2020, phys.org/news/2020-08-universe-lookeven-cosmologists.html.)

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*that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth* (Isa. 40:26).

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Isa. 40:26)  
Not one faileth, either to appear when he calleth them, or to do the work to which he sends them.

The heavens are in all respects a finished work.<sup>22</sup> They are God's handiwork upon which no part of the canvas has not been touched by the Lord's brush.<sup>23</sup> It is also evident in relationship to the stars that the more artificial light increases on the earth, the more sinners become removed from the Lord's celestial lights, which themselves reveal both the Lord's power and the Godhead.<sup>24</sup>

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:9) Arc-turus 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.*

The wonders the Lord has performed in creation are past finding out. They are too marvelous to comprehend and remain unfathomable to human understanding. Such, then, are the works of the Lord, which remain beyond the ability of any man to either properly count or naturally perceive. Other translations give us a fuller 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.*  
a. Lit until there is no searching out

(AMP) *Who does great things, [beyond understanding,] unfathomable, Yes, marvelous and wondrous things without number.*

**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. By sinners not perceiving God, they falsely assume that He is not highly involved in trying to save them. All

22 Gen. 2:2 *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*

23 Ps. 8:3 *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;*

24 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:*

sinners are naturally blind to the Lord until He chooses to reveal Himself to them. It is also generally true that the Lord will open a man's ears<sup>25</sup> before He opens his eyes—that He will speak to the heart before the eyes are brought to see Him. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee* (Job 42:5).

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 9:11) *And I see him not*—I see the effects, but I cannot understand 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. . . . *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.

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

Job's awareness of God's power is seen here, that if the Lord chooses to take something away, then He can in no way be hindered or questioned in what He has done. God's verdicts are the final ruling, and man has the power neither to change nor appeal them. Sinners also have both individually and collectively, since the beginning of time, sought to overthrow God's sovereignty, reject His will, and despise His commandments, but none have succeeded—each has failed.<sup>26</sup>

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

26 Ps. 2:2–5 *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. <sup>4</sup>He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. <sup>5</sup>Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*

27 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?*

28 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.*

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

(*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.<sup>27</sup> The meaning is plain. God has a right to 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.<sup>28</sup>

In truth, every event in Job's life, whether he was aware of it or not, was according to divine will. The spiritual lessons that Job needed taught were deep and profound, and only an arduous trial purposed by the Lord could help him actually learn them. Sadly, it is often the case that to be brought to true sight of the Lord, the introduction of a spiritual trial is a necessary evil.<sup>29</sup> It is only as men personally experience certain things in their lives, including pain and suffering, that they can be brought to the true meaning of life. Hence, if there is no better way to come to understand our ignorance of the Lord, or the sin in

ourselves, then some level of tragedy may be needed to awaken us.

***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 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 properly approach the Lord and present sufficient spiritual wisdom to reason with Him. No man will feel so small in God's sight than when he is made to mount a credible defense of his sin. Understandably, sinners are spiritually unworthy of addressing the Lord, and their innate natural 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 9:14–21) Job is still righteous in his own eyes, ch. 32:1,<sup>30</sup> 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 sought to maintain a stubborn belief of internal righteousness through remaining silent. Silence therefore can be as much a sign of a man refusing to hear the truth, or submit to divine will, as any other outward and spoken resistance. Silence therefore does not always necessarily prove a man innocent; in fact, it generally proves him quite the opposite.

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

When men are faced with tragedy and believe it to be the Lord's doing, they often lose confidence that they can still be heard by Him. Feeling removed from God's presence, those in pain consistently refuse to believe that God remains open to their prayers and willing to come to their aid. What the afflicted feel, though, is not actually true, as all prayers of faith that are in accordance with divine will shall be both heard and answered by God. Moreover, the broken man's failure to believe he can be healed by the Lord through prayer does not mean he cannot be. There are many things that God can do for a man if approached in prayer that extend far beyond the reason of the one who is offering the prayer.<sup>31</sup>

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

Job believes that the events that had manifested themselves as storms, and which had overwhelmed his life, were without divine cause or reason. He considers that the Lord has acted unjustly toward him, without proper cause, without judicial

<sup>30</sup> Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

<sup>31</sup> Eph. 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Jer. 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

fairness. Job foolishly thinks God an autocrat Who has used His power impetuously and without sufficient spiritual reason. This is a common human opinion of those who have lost their trust in God. Viewing the Lord like the imaginary Greek gods Ares and Poseidon—who were both known and feared for their hot tempers, and who were thought to act and judge impulsively—sinners likewise often believe that God brings judgment upon their lives without either sufficient cause or reasonable excuse.

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

If before Job's contention with the Lord it was not previously obvious, it is now. He blames Him for the torrents of assaults against his life that did not even allow him to catch his breath. He blames the Lord for his sorrow, misery, and bitterness and thus sees no connection to any sin, in any manner, on his part. To blame and accuse the Lord of injustice is a constant refrain of those who do not know the sin in themselves.

***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. Yea, according to Job, the Lord had produced his misery, and then, to compound the injustice, He had not even given him a chance to stand trial and/or defend himself. He had been unjustly wronged, Job foolishly surmised, and the Lord had compounded His sin by withholding the opportunity for him to plead 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 view even his carnal and sinful condition as a reason for victimization.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:20)* Did a man ever yet undertake to repel the charges of guilt brought against him by his Maker, and to prove that he was innocent, in which he did not himself show the truth of what he was denying?

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

Other translations help us to more properly understand this verse.

*(NLT)* "I am innocent, but it makes no difference to me— I despise my life.

*(Christian Standard Bible)* *Though I am blameless, I no longer care about myself; I renounce my life.*

*(Contemporary English Version)* *I am not guilty, but I no longer care what happens to me.*

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:21)* *Yet would I not know my soul— . . .* 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 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.***

In an attempt to justify himself, Job lays the charge against God, that *He destroyeth both the perfect and the wicked*, that the Lord destroys good men, just as He does the bad. Consequently, why should any man seek to walk uprightly before Him?

## Job's Initial Response to Bildad

Believing this distortion to be true is the only way Job can reason the absence of sin in himself.

**Job 9:23** *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.*

How harsh, false, and in error are Job's words, that God allegedly laughs and disregards the cries of the innocent—when in fact harming the innocent is one of the things the Lord declares He hates.<sup>32</sup>

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 9:23) ...He laughs at (disregards; not derides) the pining away of the innocent." The only difference, says Job, between the innocent and guilty is, the latter are slain by a sudden stroke...*

Such is often the case with the afflicted, who because they deem themselves as wholly innocent, subsequently blame the Lord for committing violent crimes against them. Sinners will regularly do this in order to maintain a righteous belief in self. *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?* (Job 40:8) So stubborn is man's desire to remain righteous in his own eyes that he will very quickly and with asperous judgment regularly condemn the Lord to maintain belief in personal innocence. Ultimately, those who view themselves as without sin will inevitably view God as greatly evil and unfair. None will lay malicious and treacherous claims against the Lord more readily than those who believe themselves pure in their own eyes<sup>33</sup> and righ-

teous in their own sight.<sup>34</sup> Job's continued belief that he was *innocent* and was destroyed like the *wicked* reveals that he undoubtedly viewed himself as without any sin, like also the Pharisee in Luke 18, who unrealistically prayed, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are* (v. 11). To the self-righteous man, though others may sin, he undoubtedly cannot. He thinks himself superior to others and as such views them as having need of mercy, when he does not.

**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 accuses the Lord for the wicked ruling the earth, as if the rise of sin in man and its continued spread somehow are God's fault. Again, viciously and erringly blaming the Lord for sin is a common practice for those blind to the sin in themselves.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 9:24) If God be not the cause of these anomalies, where is the cause to be found, and who is he?*

**Job 9:25–26** *Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no goal.<sup>26</sup> They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.*

*(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Job 9:26) Job as usual heaps images together to picture out the brevity of his life, cf. ch. Job 7:6 seq.<sup>35</sup> Here the images are new, a runner, a skiff of reed, an eagle swooping on his prey.*

32 Prov. 6:16–19 *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: <sup>17</sup>A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, <sup>18</sup>An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, <sup>19</sup>A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

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

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

Prov. 21:2 *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.*

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

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

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Job 9:27) Job represents himself as sometimes, for a moment, imagining that he might put aside his load of sorrow by not thinking of it. He tries, and says to himself, “I will forget,” etc.; but in vain.

If men could actually forget their tragedies, then they would also falsely presume that they will not need to give account to God for their sin. The Lord has made man as such, that he cannot distance himself from a burdened and troubled heart, since its real purpose is often intended to bring the sinner’s thoughts back to God. Hence sin, tragedy, and pain cannot be forgotten, nor can any comfort themselves sufficiently to calm their burdened hearts, because if they could, then this would not cause them to flee sin but rather only embrace it even more. Hence, if men could forget their troubles, they also would forget what caused them in the first place. Remembrance of both pain and error is therefore intended to encourage the broken to turn to the Lord, from Whom all true healing originates.<sup>36</sup> *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds* (Ps. 147:3). If men could forget their sin and the troubling consequences it produces, then they would see no need to return to the Lord and seek forgiveness for it.

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

Fear and guilt are common human emotions, which when sin is present and being walked in, will only intensify.

**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?*

Those who view themselves as victims of sin will often take the position that any labor to seek to overcome it is vain. This is hardly a strong argument for choosing to remain in sin, but it is commonly employed when unbelievers have chosen not to exert the necessary spiritual energy to remain trusting and holding strong confidence in God.<sup>37</sup>

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

The labor Job referred to in verse 29 is that of cleansing himself, but to truly be cleansed of sin is God’s work;<sup>38</sup> it is not man’s. How false are Job’s thoughts when

36 Ps. 107:19–20 *Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*

<sup>20</sup>*He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

Luke 6:19 *And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.*

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

38 Ezek. 36:25 *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*

Jer. 33:8 *And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.*

Ezek. 37:23 *Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.*

Ezek. 36:33 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.*

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he states that even if he were clean, the Lord would still plunge him into a ditch!

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:30) *If I wash myself with snow water—If I should make myself as pure as possible, and should become, in my view, perfectly holy. . . . The expression used here by Job, also is imitated by the Psalmist, to denote his innocence:*

*I will wash mine hands in innocency:*

*So will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*  
Psalm 26:6.

*Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain,*

*And washed my hands in innocency.*

**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.*

<sup>33</sup>*Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*

Job again makes an appeal for his day in court, but now he adds his need for a *daysman*, or “an umpire or arbiter, a mediator.”<sup>39</sup> Little does Job know at this point in his trial that Elihu would become exactly this. Elihu’s ministry, though, would not help Job plead his case before God;

rather, he would bring God’s case against Job. In the end, the Lord would answer Job’s prayer for a *daysman*, but he would not function in the manner Job actually hoped he would, since Elihu’s ministry did not plead that there was no sin on Job’s part but rather pleaded for Job to hear him<sup>40</sup> on how Job had sinned against God.<sup>41</sup>

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

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 9:34) *Let him take his rod away from me; . . . Job means that it would be a part of the duty of the “daysman” to see that God’s rod was removed from him before he was called upon to plead, so that he might not labour under so erect a disadvantage as his sufferings would place him under.*

Seldom do those sent by God conduct themselves in the manner sinners think they should. Hence, just as sinners do not know God, they also do not know the real purpose of those sent in the Lord’s name. The Jews thought that Jesus as the Messiah, the King of Israel, should overthrow Rome to install His own government in

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*I Cor. 6:11* *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

*Tit. 3:5* *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

<sup>39</sup> *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:33*

<sup>40</sup> *Job 36:2* *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*

<sup>41</sup> *Job 33:8–12* *Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, <sup>9</sup>I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. <sup>10</sup>Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy, <sup>11</sup>He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths. <sup>12</sup>Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*

*Job 34:5–9* *For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. <sup>6</sup>Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression. <sup>7</sup>What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water? <sup>8</sup>Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men. <sup>9</sup>For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*

*Job 34:35–37* *Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. <sup>36</sup>My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men. <sup>37</sup>For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.*

*Job 35:2–3* *Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? <sup>3</sup>For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

*Job 35:16* *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.*

its place.<sup>42</sup> Yet instead, Christ died so that the whole world, including Rome, could be forgiven for their sin—teaching us that when the Lord does send a mediator and/or arbitrator on His behalf, seldom does he conduct himself the way that transgressors of divine think he should. Such was the case with Christ, and such also will be the same result concerning Elihu, Job's future *daysman*.

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<sup>42</sup> Acts 1:6 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

Endnote

i Num. 16:1–35 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: <sup>2</sup>And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: <sup>3</sup>And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? <sup>4</sup>And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: <sup>5</sup>And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. <sup>6</sup>This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; <sup>7</sup>And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. <sup>8</sup>And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: <sup>9</sup>Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? <sup>10</sup>And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? <sup>11</sup>For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? <sup>12</sup>And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: <sup>13</sup>Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? <sup>14</sup>Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. <sup>15</sup>And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. <sup>16</sup>And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow: <sup>17</sup>And take every man his censer,

and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer. <sup>18</sup>And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. <sup>19</sup>And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, <sup>21</sup>Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. <sup>22</sup>And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? <sup>23</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup>Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. <sup>25</sup>And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. <sup>26</sup>And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. <sup>27</sup>So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. <sup>28</sup>And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. <sup>29</sup>If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. <sup>30</sup>But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. <sup>31</sup>And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: <sup>32</sup>And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. <sup>33</sup>They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. <sup>34</sup>And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. <sup>35</sup>And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.