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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Job 9.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Job 9.

Topics.

- Whoever attempts to contend and argue with God, could not answer Him.
- God made Arcturus, Orion, the Pleiades and does marvellous things.
- God will not turn back his anger; beneath Him bowed the helpers of Rahab.
- Though I am in the right, I cannot answer God; I must appeal for mercy.
- The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.
- Why do I labour in vain when God will not hold me innocent?
- Let God take His rod away from me and let not dread of him terrify me.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

Helpful facts: before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

Job speaks

Whoever Attempts to Contend and Argue with God, could Not Answer Him.

Job 9:1-4 ----- ¹Then Job answered (Bildad) and said: ²"Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God? ³If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times. ⁴He is wise in heart and mighty in strength—who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?

Jobs words, "Truly I know that it is so," refer to the following statements of Bildad in the previous chapter: -

- God does not pervert justice or pervert what is the right. (Job 8:3).

- If a person sins against God He will give them over to their sin. (Job 8:4).
- Whoever is pure and upright and seeks God and pleads for mercy He will restore to their rightful place (Job 8:5-6).
- All mankind is of yesterday and know nothing (concerning the ways of God under the sun), because compared to the eternal God our days on earth are a shadow. (Job 8:9).
- The hope of the godless and those who forget God shall perish. (Job 8:13).
- God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers. (Job 8:20).

Though these statements are all true and Job agrees with them, the implication Bildad draws from them concerning Job is not so. Bildad implies from these statements that Job must have turned from God and been a great sinner and transgressor to be suffering such calamity and affliction and that his only path to healing and prosperity is to plead for God to show him mercy. (Job 8:5-6).

We know this is mistaken reasoning because we are told Job was a righteous man and God Himself considered Job blameless. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

After agreeing with Bildad's statements, Job goes on to ask how is it possible for any of us with a finite and mortal mind regardless of how right we may think we are to even think we can contend, compete and argue with the Almighty since He could ask any one of us a thousand questions that we would have no hope of answering.

At the end of the book God actually does this with Job when He answers Job out of a whirlwind and challenges him to answer a number of questions to see if he can prove Him wrong, and condemn Him and show that he is in the right. (Job 40:6-9).

Since Job had no hope of answering the questions or proving God wrong he of course was utterly humbled and says to God, "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6).

God made Arcturus, Orion, the Pleiades and does Marvellous Things.

Job 9:5-10 ----- ⁵he who removes mountains, and they (those who contend with God) know it not, when he overturns them in his anger, ⁶who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble; ⁷who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars; ⁸who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea; ⁹who made the Bear (Arcturus in KJV) and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south; ¹⁰who does great things beyond searching out, and marvelous things beyond number.

Job goes on to say who can possibly contend and argue with such a powerful God who moves mountains, shakes the earth (most likely referring to earthquakes) controls the oceans, the sun, the stars and the solar system and prove themselves right and Him to be wrong.

Bear: (Arcturus in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*ʿAyish*) and refers to the constellation of the Great Bear (perhaps from its migration through the heavens) it can be seen as a symbol of great strength and power.

Orion: comes from the Hebrew word (*K^eciyl*) and refers to any notable constellation; specifically Orion (as if a burly one). The Zondervan Bible Dictionary says a number of individual stars and constellations are mentioned in the Old Testament Orion (*K^eciyl*) is mentioned in (Isaiah 13:10) (Amos 5:8) (Job 9:9).

Ash (*Ayish*) occurs in (Job 9:9) (Job 38:32) and refers to the Great Bear or possibly the Hyades or Pleiades. Also in (Job 38:32) is found Mazzarot, which may possibly be the Northern Southern Crown.

Pleiades: comes from the Hebrew word (*Kiyamah*) and means a cluster of stars, (i.e. the seven stars of the Pleiades). The Zondervan Bible Dictionary says there is abundant evidence in the Bible that many of the constellations were known to the writers.

It is interesting that the LORD asked Job questions concerning the constellations. One of the constellations named Cygnus, has a special significance to Christians it is, also called the flying swan or the Northern Cross. This is because it has six bright stars that form a huge Roman cross in the summer sky about the size of the Big Dipper. This constellation sinks westward in the sky until at Christmas time it stands upright just above the horizon in the northwest.

It is very beautiful to see in the dark skies having one yellow star and one blue. There is rich symbolism here in the fact that the star, Deneb, at the top of the cross, where the head of the Christ was, is a super-giant, while the one at the bottom, Albireo, where his feet were is a telescopic double. This huge heavenly cross can be seen as a reminder of the words of Luke, "Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28) and seen as the evening's call to worship.

In the last book of the Bible and the last chapter of the book, the Lord Jesus is called, "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev 22:16). It is certain the writer (the apostle John) had frequently risen early and waited on the isle of Patmos for the morning light and watched for the bright morning star, which is usually a planet.

Pleiades beauty had greatly inspired John so it is certain he had this beautiful figure in mind when referring to the Lord Jesus Christ as "the Bright and Morning Star". May Christians watch for Christ's coming as those of old have watched at sunrise and seen, the bright stars of the morning rising and bringing light to the dark sky.

God will Not Turn Back His Anger; Beneath Him Bowed the Helpers of Rahab.

Job 9:11-13 ----- ¹¹Behold, he (God) passes by me (Job), and I see him not; he moves on, but I do not perceive him. ¹²Behold, he snatches away; who can turn him back? Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?' ¹³"God will not turn back his anger; beneath him bowed the helpers of Rahab.

Many believe Rahab to be some type of dragon or mythical monster of the deep, but it becomes clear after a careful look at the following verses that this is not so: -

- God will not turn back his anger; beneath him bowed the helpers of Rahab (the proud helpers do stoop under him in KJV) (Job 9:13).

Rahab in this context refers to prideful mighty and powerful nations and those aligned to them that God has humbled and will humble.

- God divides the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smites through the proud (Rahab in Hebrew). (Job 26:12)

In this context Rahab refers to the proud.

- I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me (Zion and the city of God); behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. (Psalm 87:4).

Rahab in this context refers to powerful nation (most likely Egypt).

- God crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. (Psalm 89:10).

In this context Rahab refers to a powerful nation that is an enemy to God and His people.

- For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength (Rahab in Hebrew) is to sit still. (Isaiah 30:7).

Rahab in this context refers to the strength of Egypt.

- Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon? ¹⁰Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? (Isaiah 51:9-10).

In this context Rahab refers to Egypt at the time of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea.

These verses make it very clear that Rahab is not some dragon or mythical monster of the deep, but refers to prideful powerful nations that are opposed to God and His people (this of course would include the kings of these nations). In the Hebrew language the word (*rahab*) means proud and strength it carries the idea of prideful strength and acting proudly especially against God and His people. The message concerning Rahab is that no one no matter how powerful and mighty a king, a nation or an army maybe no one can stop God from accomplishing His purposes.

Though I am in the Right, I Cannot Answer God; I must Appeal for Mercy.

Job 9:14-20 ----- ¹⁴How then can I (Job) answer him, choosing my words with him? ¹⁵Though I am in the right, I cannot answer him; I must appeal for mercy to my accuser. ¹⁶If I summoned him and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice. ¹⁷For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause; ¹⁸he will not let me get my breath, but fills me with bitterness. ¹⁹If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him? ²⁰Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.

Though Job understood that he had not done anything outwardly wrong or taken any action that would make him worthy of condemnation he also understood that even if he carefully chose his words and thought about what to say it would be futile for him to attempt to debate with God since God's wisdom is far higher than his. With this knowledge he knows that should he attempt such a debate it would not be long before God would shine a brilliant light upon the sin that dwells within him and thereby prove him corrupt. With this understanding he accepts that rather than try to take God on in a debate to prove himself righteous his only course of action is to appeal to Him for mercy.

God crushes and wounds Job: Job refers to God as his accuser and says He crushes him and multiplies his wounds without cause, this would seem to be an incorrect statement, but God Himself in the following verse says that Satan incited Him against Job without cause or reason.

- The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." (Job 2:3).

It is interesting to notice that the Old Testament faithful credited God for everything that came into their lives, good or bad, God was in control. Though they complained they understood that God was so far higher than any human wisdom and from this knowledge they accepted whatever came into their lives as being from God and not an evil spiritual creature called Satan. Hardships, trials and tribulation did not make a difference to their faith, for them; God was God, the invisible, immortal, Holy Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life the, I AM of the Bible and God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod. 3:14-15) and as God He was always worthy of praise regardless of their circumstances good or bad. Their faith in the reality of God soared far above their hardships, their troubles and their suffering.

Who can summon God? no human army or military might can go against God in strength and no one no matter how righteous and good can take the LORD to court and prove themselves just and God unjust. Job realized that even though he was considered blameless according to human standards if he was able to take God to a courtroom it would only be a matter of moments before God would prove him to be perverse.

The truth of this is driven home when we imagine standing before God's pure and perfect Holiness without being clothed in grace, God would not even have to speak since such Holiness would instantly prove us unrighteous and not only utterly humble us, but also crush us.

The Earth, is Given into the Hand of the Wicked.

Job 9:21-24 ----- ²¹I am blameless; I regard not myself; I loathe my life. ²²It is all one; therefore I say, He destroys both the blameless and the wicked. ²³When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent. ²⁴The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges—if it is not he, who then is it?

Even though Job considers himself blameless on a human level he does not consider that it counts for anything, because God strikes the earth with disasters and not only is the wicked destroyed, but the innocent are taken also. Added to this he feels God has veiled the judgment of the judges upon earth. This is because when he looks at the earth he sees so much corruption that he feels it is given over to the wicked.

This perspective is true at a human level, kings and rulers of nations, governments, global financial institutions and politicians worldwide and those with great power and authority almost all rule from pride and self-interest. Added to this drugs violence, wars, rape, murders and theft etc., is rampant upon the earth and because of this the innocent suffer.

This sad state of affairs upon earth is because we are not yet living in God's Kingdom, but the kingdom of man. It could be said that God has leased the earth to mankind to do as he pleases until the cup of iniquity is overflowing and He says, "Enough is enough," and judgment comes.

The apostle Peter wrote: -

- The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9).

It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace until the Lord descends from heaven with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ are raised and those who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to be forever with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Why do I Labour in Vain when God will not hold Me Innocent?

Job 9:25-30 ----- ²⁵"My (Jobs) days are swifter than a runner; they flee away; they see no good. ²⁶They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle swooping on the prey. ²⁷If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face, and be of good cheer,' ²⁸I become afraid of all my suffering, for I know you (God) will not hold me innocent. ²⁹I shall be condemned; why then do I labor in vain? ³⁰If I (Job) wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye, ³¹yet you will plunge me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me.

Swifter than a runner: (v25) in contrast to those who walk, those who run arrive at their destination very quickly the implication is that Job still a young man is heading toward the grave far quicker than he should be.

As swift ships: (v26) ships leave no trace of where they have been, the implication here is that all that Job had achieved has come to ruin so once death takes him there will be no trace of him left upon the earth or that he even walked upon it.

Like an eagle swooping on the prey: (v26) there are few things that can be used as a more striking emblem of rapidity than the swiftness of the eagle as it darts upon its victim, especially when its prey is in its sight, the implication here of course is that Job feels life is speedily passing him by.

Job uses the speed of a runner, the ships on the ocean and the eagle seeking its prey to highlight how fleeting his days of prosperity were, and how quickly his life is passing him by. It should be mentioned that the idea is not so much that Job feels time is passing by quickly since all who have laid on a sick bed day after day know that time seems to pass by very slowly, the focus is that time is being wasted in that time to achieve something is swiftly passing him by as he lays day after day unable to do and achieve anything because of his afflictions.

When people are in deep despair and depression their mind is filled with darkness and negativity, this is exactly how Job feels. Everything around him is doom. He knows he has not committed any criminal activity or done anything that is wrong and has always helped the poor and the needy, but despite all his good efforts to do what is right he is overwhelmed with afflictions.

Instead of being blessed he feels that God has judged and condemned him to suffering and to death and therefore wonders what is the point of doing good or trying to make himself clean like snow when it appears to him that God is still going to disown him and cast him down to the grave (especially when he sees that many who do not even believe in God are at ease and prospering). This logic is course not true since there is great reward for remaining faithful regardless of what we might suffer in this life because at the end of it immortality and everlasting happiness is awaiting the faithful whereas whatever those who deny God have in this life is their lot since all that awaits them is the darkness of the grave.

Let God take His Rod away from Me and Let not Dread of Him Terrify Me.

Job 9:32-35 ----- ³²For he (God) is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. ³³There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both. ³⁴Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me. ³⁵Then I would speak without fear of him, for I am not so in myself.

In these two verses Job is basically saying the following two things: -

1. Even if he and God did go to court there would be no judge that could stand before them since there is no one higher than God that could stand as a judge between either of them.
2. If God would take his hand of discipline off Job and stop terrifying him with night visions then he could speak before God without any fear.

For I am not so in myself: (v35) can carry the following ideas: -

- I am not the wicked, corrupt and guilty hypocritical man you suppose, but innocent and good at heart.
- I am not the wicked, corrupt and guilty hypocritical man that I appear to be, according to your judgment of me because of my afflictions and calamities.
- I am not conscious within myself that I am the wicked hypocritical person you judged me to be and if I had a fair opportunity for trial, I could show that I was innocent.

We are told that Job was a righteous man (Job 1:1) and even God Himself said he was blameless (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3) which means that he was clear of any outward crime and wrong doing, but this does not mean that he had a righteousness that would justify him before the Holiness of God.

In chapter nineteen Job says, "I know that my redeemer lives," (Job 19:25) so it is clear Job understood that he was not saved by his own self-effort and righteousness, but by God's mercy and grace. It would seem that it was from the platform of grace that Job desired to contend with the Most High God and vindicate himself. He believed if he had a fair opportunity of trial and he was not suffering and crushed beneath a flood of calamities and afflictions he could state his case and show himself to be a man that has only done what is good and right and certainly nothing deserving of what he has suffered.

This idea is supported by God's statement that there is none like Job on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil and who holds fast his integrity even though I have moved against him without reason. (Job 2:3). The reason Job was able to boldly speak to God without slavish fear was because he was conscious of his own integrity and therefore had a good conscience within himself.

Providing God did not deal with him according to strict justice, but upon the terms of grace and mercy he knew he need not speak with the fear of a slave, but with reverence and godly fear (i.e., awesome wonder and respect) and from this respect defend himself, and make his case appear to be just. Perhaps God refers to these bold and daring expressions of Job (at the end of the book) when He answers him out of the whirlwind (Job 40:6-9) and said: -

- Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. (Job 38:3).

Since Job had no hope of answering the questions or proving God wrong he of course was utterly humbled and says to God: -

- I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6).

FOOTNOTE: always keep in mind that Job is not speaking, "thus saith the LORD," but giving his own personal opinion concerning suffering and because it is his own viewpoint it should be remembered that even though much of what he says maybe true it does not always mean that his reasoning and suppositions are always according to the word of the LORD.

End.