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

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## Job 35.

(2015)

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

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Job 35.

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### Topics.

- What, advantage have I? How am I better off than if I had sinned?"
- If your sins are multiplied what do you accomplish against God?
- People cry to God; none say, "where is God?" and He does not answer.
- Job opens his mouth in empty talk; he multiplies words without knowledge.

**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.

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**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.

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Elihu speaks

### What, Advantage Have I? How am I Better Off than if I Had Sinned?"

Job 35:1-3 ----- <sup>1</sup>And Elihu answered and said: <sup>2</sup>"Do you (Job) think this to be just? Do you say, 'It is my right before God,' <sup>3</sup>that you ask, 'What advantage have I? How am I better off than if I had sinned?'"

The previous chapter ended with Elihu saying that Job should be punished even more because he has added rebellion to his sin by speaking like a wicked man who has no knowledge or insight. He told Job that he should be praying that God would show him what his iniquity is and then tell God he will do it no more.

Elihu accusations against Job is stunning since he started his speech in (Job 33:7) by telling Job there is no need to fear him because he is on his side and will not terrify him as Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar did or pressure him with a heavy burden, yet he ends the previous chapter telling Job he is a wicked sinner who has added rebellion to his sin and should be punished even more (Job 34:35-37). Who would want these men for friends and counsellors especially during times of suffering and grief?

Job's question, "What, advantage have I? How am I better off than if I had sinned?" most likely refers to the following four statements of Job: -

1. God destroys both the blameless and the wicked alike. (Job 9:22).
2. If I wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye, yet you will plunge me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me. (Job 9:30-31).
3. Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? (Job 21:7).
4. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him? (Job 21:15).

To discover what Job was actually saying we need to look at the context these four verses are in, there are others similar to them, but four will be ample to highlight what Job was saying.

**The first (Job 9:22) is in the context:** of Job is answering Bildad and saying how can a man contend with God who is wise and who alone stretched out the heavens and does marvellous things beyond number and beyond searching out and then saying, regardless of whether they are good or wicked all humanity is alike. This is spoken in the context of disasters striking and bringing death to the innocent and the wicked alike which is a true observation and statement.

**The second (Job 9:30-31) is in the context:** of Job answering Bildad and saying even if he washes and cleanses himself whiter than snow God may still not heal him, but instead allow him to descend to the grave, because no man can bargain with God by saying, "If I do this God is bound to do such and such." Job is aware that even if he was considered the most righteous man on earth he still would have no power to demand anything from God for God is not a man that He should be bound to our wishes and will.

**The third and fourth (Job 21:7, 15) are in the context:** of Job answering Zophar and saying, look at my flesh and be appalled and dismayed why do those who want nothing to do with God and His ways prosper, have good health, reach old age and see their grandchildren grow. Then Job says, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him?" This is in the context of calamity and sickness falling upon the innocent and the wicked alike.

This is of course also a true statement, Job is not blaspheming God in anyway he is simply stating the sad reality of the fallen and corrupted world we live in. It is this way because we are not yet living in God's Kingdom, but in the kingdom of man and at this present time God's judgment is delayed. It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace until the Lord Jesus Christ return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

This clearly shows that for Elihu to accuse Job of being a scoffer who keeps company with evildoers and wicked men because Job in his speeches said there is no benefit in serving God because even though he is without fault, God has considered him guilty and inflicted him with suffering that even those who deny God and follow the wicked are not troubled with was not only a false assumption, but also completely taken out of context.

Job was saying that in this world there seems to be no benefit in serving God because even though he was without fault it appeared to him and his counsellors that God had considered him guilty and inflicted him with suffering that many who deny God and want nothing to do with His ways are not afflicted or troubled with. Job was not stating a dogmatic doctrine, but simply what appears to be according to the natural thinking of the mortal fallen human mind. To lift a statement out of context and isolate it and then use it against a person to condemn them is a great sin, especially when God Himself considers that person to be His servant and a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and said of him that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). Lifting Scriptures out of their context, isolating them and building doctrines from them, is how the majority of false doctrine and teaching is established.

It should be mentioned that this is not about inward sin (as many assume), but about outward behaviour. Job didn't trust in his own self-effort or good works to be counted righteous by God and saved to eternal life, but upon his Redeemer, we know this because in chapter nineteen Job said: -

- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).

The only reason anyone trusts in a Redeemer is because they are fully aware that they cannot save themselves or attain to the perfect demands of the law and the pure Holiness of God. These words of Job clearly show that his faith was not set upon his own righteousness, but upon his redeemer and Saviour the Messiah the Christ. Though Job knew he had not committed any outward sin worthy of such harsh suffering he was aware that if God did examine him inwardly he would not be counted as a man that was blameless or righteous. In chapter nine Job said: -

- Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, God would prove me perverse. (Job 9:20).

These words shine a brilliant spotlight upon the fact that Job was aware that sin dwelt within his fallen corrupt body. Though I am in the right refers to him being right in saying that outwardly and in his behaviour he was not the wicked and corrupt man Eliphaz and Bildad accused him of being, but even though he knew this to be true he was also fully aware (as are all the faithful) that should he stand before the Holiness of God and be judged he would not be able to justify himself. If Job (or any of us) could attain to the glorious state of living a sin free life Christ died for no reason.

When God referred to Job as being blameless He was not saying he was without sin, but that he was a decent man of integrity who did no harm to others and who helped the poor and did what was right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ. There would have been no need for God to sacrifice His only Son so that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16) if we could attain to a sin free life by our own efforts and good works. Christ did not die so that we could attain to the perfect standard of the law and the perfection of God's Holiness, but because it is impossible for us to do so.

### **If Your Sins are Multiplied what Do you Accomplish Against God?**

Job 35:4-8 ----- <sup>4</sup>I (Elihu) will answer you (Job) and your friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) with you. <sup>5</sup>Look at the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds, which are higher than you. <sup>6</sup>If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against him? And if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to him? <sup>7</sup>If you are righteous, what do you give to him? Or what does he receive from your hand? <sup>8</sup>Your wickedness concerns a man like yourself, and your righteousness a son of man.

Elihu tells Job that his sins and his righteousness do not affect or add anything to God. The only person they affect is another human being. This is why Jesus said the Ten Commandments can be summed up in the following two statements: -

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. (Mark 12:30).
2. You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Mark 12:31).

These two commandments are not only the greatest commandments in the entire Bible but also the greatest commandments under sun, the moon, the stars and all the heavenly hosts. Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ there is no other commandment more important than these two commandments. After loving God with all our heart, mind and strength the thing that delights Him the most is when those who belong to Christ are obeying his command to, "love your neighbour as yourself," (Matt. 22:39).

To, "Love your neighbour as yourself," means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself.

James the brother of Jesus said: -

- If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well. (James 2:8).

James calls Jesus command, "Love your neighbour as yourself," the royal law and says if we are keeping this one law we are doing well. The thing God hates the most is when we deliberately do harm to another person, physically, verbally, financially sexually, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah not only show the law is about doing-good to others and protecting them from harm and hurt, but also clearly show that the spirit under-pinning the Ten Commandments, is love because each law protects another human from harm.

Paul in his letter to the Romans wrote: -

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

Paul shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the spirit underpinning the law is love, because the spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from all types of harm and hurt, whoever keeps the law will do no wrong to a neighbour (neighbour embraces all mankind not just those in God's Kingdom). Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because it honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith and because it is the right and loving thing to do.

The faithful in Christ's global Kingdom not only understand that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort, but also know that from the love of God dwelling within their heart and displayed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary they are called to live a lifestyle that honours the King and Saviour they worship and follow and called to treat others with decency, respect and honest justice.

**Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount:** the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing right to those in the church and those outside of it.

This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians, but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). Based on the commandment, love your neighbour as yourself and the law it could be said that a wicked and evil person is one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and deliberately does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: "Matthew 5" in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Those who do all they can to love God with all their heart, mind and strength and love their neighbour as themselves. (Mark 12:30-31) will hear the words of their Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." (Matt. 25:21).

Elihu's statement that our sins do not take anything away from God and that our goodness does not add to Him are true on one level, but not true on another since those who love Him and do what is right add to His delight and joy and will make up His treasured possession. At the moment faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these three is love (1 Cor. 13:4-7, 13). Against love there is no law or judgment because if we live by love we can only bring life and good to others.

- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23).

Indirectly our wicked or good behaviour does affect God in the following way, those who belong to Him and confess His name are representatives of His character and nature on earth, therefore if our behaviour toward people is uncaring and we do harm to others God's character will be perceived to be cruel, but if our behaviour is one of doing good to others then God will be reflected as a loving and caring Father.

### **People Cry to God; None Say, "Where is God?" And He does Not Answer.**

Job 35:9-12 ----- <sup>9</sup>"Because of the multitude of oppressions people cry out; they call for help because of the arm of the mighty. <sup>10</sup>But none says, 'Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night, <sup>11</sup>who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the heavens?' <sup>12</sup>There they cry out, but he does not answer, because of the pride of evil men.

How often does this happen? Every day I suspect. People who give God no thought suddenly pray when disaster strikes, sadly they are only praying to be delivered from their trouble and not because they want to know God and acknowledge He is their maker. The underlying and often unconscious reason for this is because whatever is created is lesser and subject to whoever created it, but once the created thing acknowledges its creator it is then forced to acknowledge that the creator is superior, but as soon as the created thing acknowledges this it must surrender its authority to its creator and human pride does not want to surrender or bow down to anyone.

### **Job opens His Mouth in Empty Talk; He Multiplies Words without Knowledge.**

Job 35:13-16 ----- <sup>13</sup>Surely God does not hear an empty cry, nor does the Almighty regard it. <sup>14</sup>How much less when you (Job) say that you do not see him, that the case is before him, and you are waiting for him! <sup>15</sup>And now, because his (God's) anger does not punish, and he does not take much note of transgression, <sup>16</sup>Job opens his mouth in empty talk; he multiplies words without knowledge."

Elihu tells Job God does not answer the prayer of a prideful man so how much less will the LORD hear Job's prayer when he says he cannot see God and has concluded that God does not take much notice of transgressions because the LORD does not punish the wicked.

Elihu is right in saying that Job said that God does not punish the wicked, and does not take much note of transgression, but it is totally wrong to lift it out of context as Elihu has and use it against Job to condemn him. Elihu is right in saying God takes notice of transgressions and will punish accordingly, but Job is also right in saying at the present time God is not punishing the wicked. This is because God's judgment and punishment is at this present time delayed, it could be said we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace until the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to judge the antichrist system and all who belong to it and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

The context Job made the statement: God does not punish the wicked, and does not take much note of transgression, was in the context of him being an innocent man suffering calamities, afflictions, sorrows and grief while men around him who wanted nothing to do with God and His ways prospered and lived at ease. This is the reality of the mortal and fallen world we live in today many of the faithful lack, struggle and suffer while many unbelievers prosper and live at ease such is the world we live in.

King David in the Psalms and the author of Ecclesiastes express this same thought that Job had during his time of great grief. Added to this it is certain many of the faithful have had the same thoughts when suffering painful sickness or extreme hardships and troubles day after day. Relief came to the Old Testament faithful when they looked into the sanctuary of God and saw that the end of those who denied God was the darkness of the grave never to see light again and that this was the lot God had given them, whereas the faithful will be raised to eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory.

This is why Paul said encourage one another with the following words: -

- We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

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**FOOTNOTE:** always keep in mind that Elihu is not speaking, "Thus saith the LORD," but giving his own personal opinion concerning Job and his suffering and because it is his own viewpoint it should be remembered that even though some of what he says maybe true it does not mean that his reasoning and suppositions are according to the word of the LORD or right for Job's particular situation. (Job 32:6) (Job 32:10) (Job 32:17).

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End.