

WHO CAN ARGUE WITH GOD?

(Scripture. Job 9:1-4)

Introduction:

No matter how careful we are, we may all commit sins almost every day. Sometimes, we know it, but most of the time, we may not even realize it! It is a good habit to confess our sins daily, including those possible sins we committed unknowingly! But Job refused to do that because he did not do anything wrong. The tone of Job in this chapter could provoke some of you! He charges boldly that God is unfair. Let us hear what Job had to say here.

Job. 9:1-3.

1 Then Job answered, 2 In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God? 3 If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times. (4 Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?)

Job brings a very interesting question! How can a man argue before God that he is righteous? Why does Job think this way? Because, even if he argues his case, God's chance of replying to Job is only one in thousand, according to Job. In most cases, God may not reply at all! What is the use arguing with God then?

But this is not true, according to the Word of God. According to Jesus, ask and it shall be given! In the book of Isaiah also, we have come across God's invitation to reason out before Him. God wants us to do that before Him, and He does hear every petition, and answer all our prayers! Sometimes, we may not like those answers, but he does answer them all!

Job. 9:4-10.

4 Wise in heart and mighty in strength, who has defied Him without harm?

5 It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overturns them in His anger.

6 Who shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble.

7 Who commands the sun not to shine and sets a seal upon the stars.

8 Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea.

9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south; 10 Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number.

Here Job refers to the right of the King of the universe as well as His might as Almighty God, who is omnipotent, and can do anything He chooses to!

He can turn the mountains upside down in no time!

He can shake the earth hard anytime, anywhere,

He can command the sun not to shine, rebuke the sea, and calm the seas, as Jesus, our Lord did!

Then Job makes a very interesting statement in the field of astronomy: God is the one that makes the constellation of stars, the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south!

Job. 9:11, 12.

11 Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.

12 Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, What are You doing?

Job complains about not able to see God. God is a Spirit, and those who try to see Him, must try to see Him through His Holy Spirit! He always walks beside us, but we don't see Him. We must have His Holy Spirit to see Him, feel Him, and touch Him. Job asks a very pertinent question here! If God were to snatch away anything from us, who can question Him and ask Him, what are you doing? Job used the right word here, 'snatch away'. If you carefully look Job's children's lives were snatched away, his property, wealth was snatched away, and his health was also snatched away! Now his reputation as a righteous man was also snatched away by his friends, and he was condemned by them as horrible sinner! Job is lamenting here, who can question God, and ask Him, what are you doing? We stand as helpless, vulnerable creatures before Him!

But what has Jesus, our Lord taught us about our Heavenly Father? Our God, the Father is a giver. He is not a snatcher. He gives us more than we ask or think! The only time He will snatch is when our Lord Jesus comes back again to snatch away all His believers and transform them in a twinkling of an eye to take them to heaven! (1 Thess. 4). What a glorious God we have! But unfortunately, Job never heard the wisdom of Jesus, our Lord! Do not take Jesus' teaching lightly! He made us wiser than Solomon through His powerful teaching!

Job. 9:13-15.

13 God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab. 14 How then can I answer Him, And choose my words before Him?

15 For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge.

We can see that Job had a very bad knowledge about God! He thought, God's anger can never be quenched, and He will execute His wrath to control the proud helpers of Rahab, the sea monster. Job lamented; how can he communicate with an angry God? Even if he was right, he had to hold his peace. He claimed that he was forced to ask for mercy! There is no other way. This scene is more like a master who has 4 or 5 German Shepherd dogs around him. They are ferocious dogs. If anyone raises their voice before their master, the dogs will come after that person! Keeping quiet and speaking softly before those dogs is the right thing to do! Job's understanding of God was very limited.

Job 9:16-18

*16 If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice.
17 For He bruises me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause.
18 He will not allow me to get my breath But saturates me with bitterness.*

Job says that he will not believe if someone says that God listens to his voice! Because Job felt that God had moved beyond listening. He has moved past the stage of listening, and now Job felt that God bruises him with mighty tempest force, and not allowing Job to get even one breathe breath! This picturesque language reminds us of George Floyd murder video. Sometimes, we totally misunderstand God, and we start viewing Him as a ruthless monster whose knee is on our neck choking us.

Job. 9:19-22

*19 If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him?
20 Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.
21 I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life.
22 It is all one; therefore, I say, He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.*

Job admits that God is the strong one, and He has too much power. If Job files a court case, who is going to summon God to court, and drag Him to appear there? Then Job implies that anything he says may be used against him! In other words, Job seems to say, "Even though I am righteous, I may be so nervous before God, and I may start speaking wrong things!"

Who can judge God? No one can. When He judges, Job predicts that he will be pronounced guilty, (even though Job claims that he is guiltless!). It is interesting. God is here the defendant, but at the same time, He is the Judge also! That was a no-win situation for Job!

But vs 21 and 22 are very ambiguous. I understand it the following way:
I am guiltless, yet I cannot prove myself and convince God! I hate this life. Same fate happens to both the wicked and guiltless. They all eventually die! He destroys both the guilty and the wicked the same manner! So why bother being righteous!

Job. 9:23,24

*23 If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not, He, then who is it?*

The scourge here means the plague, pestilence, famine, war, etc. Here, Job reveals his ignorance concerning God's holy nature. God never mocks at the despair of the innocent, but He does laugh when calamity hits the wicked! (Proverbs).

The earth seems to be given in the hands of the wicked. How? Wicked kings come and appoint wicked people everywhere to carry out his agenda, the world is under wickedness. Who is ruling the world? God or the devil! Our Lord Jesus Christ has a clear answer concerning this issue. In John 14:30, Jesus calls the devil, the prince or ruler of this world. We see the devil's power in the temptation of Jesus story also! The devil tried to offer the riches of this world if Jesus would only worship him. So, the answer to Job's question is obvious. The earth is indeed ruled by the wicked! So, let us not be surprised when systemic evil and injustice takes place everywhere. It is not going to get better. The wickedness will increase, and love will grow cold! (As per Jesus - Mat. 24)

Job. 9:25, 26.

25 Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away, they see no good.

26 They slip by like reed boats, Like an eagle that swoops on its prey.

Job says that his days flee away like a swift runner! When we become sick, we may forget what day it is, what month it is. Every day flies away like a speed boat!

Job. 9:27-31.

27 Though I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful,

28 I am afraid of all my pains; I know that You will not acquit me.

29 I am accounted wicked,

Why then should I toil in vain?

30 If I should wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye,

31 Yet You would plunge me into the pit, and my own clothes would abhor me.

Sometimes, we forget the reality. We try to psyche ourselves that there is no pain, and we fool ourselves. We cannot deny the reality. We try to implement positive thinking and try to cheat ourselves from reality. Even if we succeed in numbing ourselves from the physical pain, the spiritual pain still affects us. Job insists that God will not acquit him, and he speculates that he will be still branded as wicked? So Job asks a valid question here! "If I am already judged, condemned, and branded as wicked, why should I work hard to be righteous? Even if I wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye (lye or potash is the active ingredient of any soap), yet God will throw me into the pit?"

This is where Job goes so wrong in his thinking, and his friends were absolutely right. Job is not seeing the path of crying unto God, pleading for mercy, and asking for forgiveness, in case he had committed any grievous sin unknowingly!

But on the other hand, Job felt that there was no need for repentance because he did not commit any sin at all! Also, he acknowledges that nothing is going to wash away his sins and make him righteous! Neither snow, nor lye will make him righteous! Too bad, Job did not know anything about the power of the blood of our Lord Jesus! Had he known that he would have come running to Him. How blessed are we, we have a provision of the lamb of God, and through whom we can have fellowship with God! Christ, our hope

of glory! True, our righteousness is like filthy rags, and none of our works will make us righteous before God! But the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ has the power to wash us and cleanse us from ALL sins! What a glorious Gospel! I wish Job had known that!

Job. 9:32-35.

32 For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together.

33 There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both.

34 Let Him remove His rod from me, And let not dread of Him terrify me.

35 Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself.

Again, Job paints the true picture of Yehovah. God is not man that we could argue our case against Him. There is no umpire between us!

I can really understand Job's feelings here! State of Maryland has a weird law! "The appointing authority decision is final! So, in the Dept of public safety, or in division of correction, the appointing authority is the commissioner. If you challenge somebody's hiring based upon nepotism or false merit, if the commissioner rules against your claim, that stands final. So, if you take the commissioner to court, you can never win because he is the appointing authority, and his decision is final. You may have a clear case of favoritism, yet it will not stand. But the problem is if the commissioner does something wrong against you, you cannot win against him because he is the judge and he is the perpetrator also! Remember, the appointing authority decision is final in Maryland!

Here Job is saying that God's verdict is final, and there is no mediator, arbitrator, or an umpire between him and God! It is true in Job's case, God is the defendant, at the same time, He is the judge also, but what Job failed to understand is that, God is absolutely fair, just, and righteous, and He will not harm the innocent. Job was barking at the wrong person. He should have rebuked the devil instead.

Job did not have an advocate, a mediator, and so he was very frustrated! How fortunate we are! We have an advocate, our mediator, and our high priest who offered Himself as an offering for our sins! What a savior!

Conclusion:

1. Let us not try to judge God with our limited brain!
2. Believe by faith, God is always righteous, holy, just, and merciful! Never doubt it in your life!
3. Never speak evil of God.
4. No one is perfect. We are all sinners and have fallen short of glory!

5. Since we are never perfect in this world, beware of those sins that we are unaware of!
Ask for forgiveness every day for those sins that we may commit unknowingly!

Question to ponder! Job offered sacrifices on behalf of his children regularly for their possible sins. What makes Job think that he had no possibility of sin?

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