

Charging God Foolishly

Job, a man “*that feared God, and eschewed evil,*” was the father of “*seven sons and three daughters,*” and the possessor of great wealth. In fact, “*this man was the greatest of all the men of the east,*” Job 1:1-3. Satan, the greatest adversary of truth, right, and righteous people, sought to cast reflection upon Job, suggesting that his uprightness was based, not upon inward consecration, but rather because God had “*blessed the work of his hands,*” Job 1:10. God, therefore, allowed Satan to oppress Job that his faith might be tried, as well as to prove that his apparent uprightness was **real** instead of circumstantial. Job was then severely oppressed; his oxen and donkeys were slain by the Sabeans, fire from heaven “*burned up the sheep,*” his camels were carried away, his servants were slain “*with the edge of the sword,*” and his ten children all lost their lives on the same day! In addition, Satan “*smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown,*” and even his own wife urged him to “*curse God and die,*” Job. 2:7. Notwithstanding all this, the record says that “*Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly,*” Job 1:22.

How unlike so many today! I once heard a man curse God because his car wouldn’t start! Many blame every war on God as if the Lord were the cause of such carnage among men. Others, in sickness, openly ask “why does **God** bring these illnesses upon us.” A plane crashes; many lose their lives, and their grieving loved one may ask “why did **God** let this happen.” Calamities occur; people suffer, and many ask, “why does **God** do these things.” A child dies and a distraught father then exclaims, “I guess this is **God’s** way of punishing me for the many sins I have committed.” Indeed, how often have mere men been guilty of charging “*God foolishly?*”

Let’s get a few things straight! God is not to be blamed for every tragedy, evil, illness, or every case of poverty or “bad luck.” **The devil** (not God!) was responsible for Job’s woes. **The devil** (not God) is our “*adversary,*” I Peter 5:8. Wars occur—not because God wants people slain, wives made widows, and children fatherless — but because of the greedy lust of men who “*kill, and desire to have.*” cf. Jas 4:2.

Furthermore, it is well to remember that from the beginning God placed certain immutable laws in existence, and when these laws are violated, people suffer. When a man falls from a high building and is killed, God is not “picking on” him. Rather the force of gravity pulls him down, but consider this: where would we be were it not for the gravitational pull that holds us to the earth? In other words, laws which were designed for the good of people en masse causes those who violate them to suffer. It’s also a fact that when my resistance gets too low and I come into contact with certain germs, illness will result. Should I then blame God because the immutable law of sowing and reaping has adversely affected me? Certain not! One should no more blame **God** for every bad thing which happens to him than he should credit **Satan** for every good thing he enjoys!

Many are shaken in their faith when they compare their earthly lot with that of others who are wicked. To some, it seems inconceivable that the sun should rise on both “*the evil and on the good,*” Matt. 5:45. Even Job asked, “*wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power,*” Job 21:7? Further, he commented upon the fact that of many wicked people, “*their houses are safe,*” and “*they spend their days in wealth,*” Job 21:9,13. However, Job further spoke of the candle of the wicked” being “*put out,*” declaring that “*they are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carries away,*” Job. 21:17,18. You see, Job realized that the wicked only receive their “good things” in this life, and he doubtlessly knew the same truth that

the Psalmist later learned; namely, that the wicked are set “*in slippery places*” and will be cast “*down into destruction*,” Ps. 73:18.

Let us never “*fret*” ourselves “*because of evildoers*,” nor be “*envious against the workers of iniquity*,” Ps. 37:1. Let us not view every misfortune as God-caused and heaven-sent. If per chance we are chastened and think that such chastening is of the Lord, then **rejoice!** Know ye not that “*whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth*,” knowing that chastening, which momentarily seems “*grievous*,” afterwards yields “*the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*,” Heb. 12:6,11. Even Jesus learned “*obedience by the things which He suffered*,” Heb. 5:8.

Blindness produced a Milton. A stutterer became a Churchill. Poverty produced an Abraham Lincoln. And who has not heard of Helen Keller? And what about Jesus Christ? “He was born in poverty and reared in obscurity,” but He provided the means of salvation for all who will obey Him. We are so hedged about by the present and our immediate feelings that we are hardly in a position to always instantly and correctly assess a given situation as being “good” or “bad.”

There will be times when we ask “**why**,” and we will be unable to know why. In some situations we need to “cheer up,” knowing that “farther along, we’ll understand why.” But by all means, let us not be a people who must broadcast weak faith by charging “*God foolishly*.” Instead, it is much better to “*trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding*,” Prov. 3:5.

**** -Bobby Witherington

Ants, Conies, Locusts, and Spiders

“There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; The spider taketh hold with her hand, and is in kings’ places,” Prov. 30:24-28.

Little things can teach big lessons — especially little things which God made. How tragic it is that we so often just view ants as victims to be stepped on, conies as creatures we know very little about, locusts as objects to dread, and spiders as web-spinning critters to be killed. Solomon said these “*four things...are exceeding wise*.” Most of us view these creatures as varmints to be destroyed, but an inspired writer described them as “*wise!*” In what ways are they “*wise?*”

Ants, by example, teach the much needed lesson of tireless industry and diligent preparation. “*Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest*,” Prov. 6:6-8. Who ever heard of an ant that was “born tired?” In the summer of life, we, too, must plan for the future by serving God and laying up treasure in heaven.

Conies, found in the mountains of Lebanon, the valley of the Jordan, and around the Dead Sea, are said to have very little natural protection. Being “*a feeble folk*,” they make “*their houses in the rocks*.” However, forget not that “*it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*,” Jer. 10:23, and that he, too, must seek a place of refuge. We should thus conclude, as did the Psalmist; “*the Lord is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge*,” Psa. 94:22.

“**Locusts** have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands.” They, by their example, teach the value of unity and cooperation. If they, having “*no king*,” can unite and cooperate, then

surely those who serve “**the King** of kings,” I Tim. 6:15, should be able to truly be “*laborers together with God*,” I Cor. 3:9!

Spiders are known for their fearless labor and persistent perseverance. Consequently, the spider is found even “*in kings’ palaces*.” Should we not, from the spider, learn the value of persistence in pursuing the work of God and patience amid our trials? Should we not also learn to take “*hold*” and do the Lord’s work so that the web of truth will contain multitudes and that we might abide eternally in **the** “*King’s palace*,” heaven itself?

Let us not despise little things. They teach us some mighty big lessons if we will but take the time to learn!

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