

Message #11**Job 9:1-24**

Many years ago I came home one day from the office and it appeared that one of our boys had done something very wrong. I came unglued. I confronted him, verbally chastised him and even spanked him. I learned later he hadn't done it. I felt like a total loser and failure as a father. But it did teach me a valuable lesson—get all of the facts before you react. I went to my son and apologized for the terrible wrong I had inflicted and asked for his forgiveness and life went on. He never seemed to hold this against me, and in fact I am not so sure he even remembers it, but I do. The fact is even though he had suffered without just cause, he still maintained his trust and confidence in me as his father. That is the way it was for Job. No matter what hit Job he never stopped trusting in the sovereignty of God.

Job had three friends show up when he was hurting—Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. These three friends were real pieces of work. Job's friends were all making assumptions that Job had done something wrong and in making these assumptions they all decided to lecture Job on his need to repent. At this point, Job has suffered enough calamity that would have crushed most of us and now he has to listen to his friends make false accusations against him and kick him even harder when he was down.

These two chapters of Job 9-10 give Job's response to Bildad. They are tough chapters to interpret. Some believe Job is responding very sarcastically to Bildad. Others suggest that Job is so fed up with his friends that he just starts saying things about God which aren't necessarily true. Something I do not agree with because at the end of the book, God, Himself, says that Job spoke of God what was right (42:7). What I see in these chapters is this:

EVEN THOUGH JOB HAD SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND A SERIOUS DISCUSSION WITH GOD ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING, HE STILL MAINTAINED FAITH IN HIS OWN INNOCENCE AND IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY .

I love this about Job. He was not about to admit he was guilty just because everyone else said he was. Job was not afraid to admit he was a sinner and he was not afraid to die. But he would not admit that all of this was happening to him because of some secret sin or evil that was in his life. He was not about to admit he had done something to bring this all on. He had not committed some evil that deserved this.

There is an old saying, "It takes a real man to admit you are wrong." In view of this text we would say "It takes a rare man of God not to admit you're wrong when everyone else says you are wrong."

Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego were asked to simply admit they were wrong in not falling down to worship the idol. Daniel was asked to simply admit he was wrong in praying to God three times a day. They would not admit they were wrong, because they were not wrong.

Job would not admit he had done wrong, because he had not done wrong. Now in these verses there are two main responses. Both responses are theological and both deal with the sovereignty of God:

THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE #1 – God is a God of awesome sovereignty. 9:1-13

In spite of all that had happened to Job, he still had a high, lofty view of the sovereignty of God. Bildad had made many wrong assumptions about Job. He assumed that Job was in sin and if he would turn to God, God would deliver him. He also assumed that Job was suffering the brunt of the wrath of God.

In **Job 9:1**, Job says I know this truth about God. The truth is nobody knew more truth about God than Job did. He had a deeper understanding and better understanding of God than all of these people combined. **He did not become the most righteous man on earth by God’s classification by being ignorant of truth about God.**

But Job decides in **verse 1** to take the theological discussion to a whole new dimension by posing a question to Bildad, “What man on this earth could dispute with God if God wanted to base any treatment of anyone solely on the basis of what was right before Him?” God could destroy any man justly and you could not dispute the point. God is so Holy that if God questioned any man on the matter of being right with God, a man could not even answer one time in a thousand times.

In other words, God could list off 1000 ways to be truly right with Him and no man could measure up to 1 of the 1000 ways. Now Job gives eleven descriptions of the sovereignty of God:

Description #1 - God is so sovereign, man cannot answer Him. 9:3b

Bildad had suggested that Job go to God and Job says so what if I do go to God. What chance does puny man have against the Holy Sovereign God? God’s purposes and plans are so far beyond man that he cannot even figure out what God is doing one out of a thousand times. Job says even if a person wanted to debate with God about anything, he couldn’t do it. He would have absolutely no idea what God is doing.

Description #2 - God is so sovereign, man cannot defy Him. 9:4

Any person who has tried to defy God has ultimately discovered he is the one who is hurt or harmed. That word “defy” is a verb in the Hiphil stem which means to purposely make hard or to be obstinate or stubborn (Gesenius, p. 746). Job’s point is that no man, no matter how wise or mighty, has ever obstinately stood against God and walked away unscathed. Any who have a confrontation with Almighty God never come out on top. They never end up prosperous or at peace.

Job's point is that God is infinitely wise and infinitely strong and He does what He wants to do and no man can stop Him or defy Him. Here is Job suffering all of these things and He still maintains this majestic view of the Sovereignty of God. He still realizes this even when he is hurting.

Some people want to quibble about the sovereignty of God. Job held tight to this doctrine, especially when he was undergoing severe trials and troubles.

Now what is interesting about this is that Job lists some things that God has the sovereign power to do that He will do during the Tribulation. So those people who defy God are destined to experience the anger and wrath of God. Bildad assumes that Job is experiencing the judgment and wrath of God, so Job launches into a discussion about God's anger and wrath:

Description #3 - God is so sovereign that He can collapse mountains . **9:5**

Now what is amazing to me is that Job refers to what God can do when He gets angry, specifically in regard to mountains. The only thing Job would have known about at this time would have been the flood and as far as we may determine, God did not move the mountains during the flood, but He covered them with water (Gen. 7:19).

So what we have here is a prophetic prediction of what God will sovereignly do when He pours out His anger and wrath which will occur in the Great Tribulation. What Job prophetically describes here is exactly what God will do with the mountains. When God's anger reaches its peak level He will literally overturn mountains. During the Great Tribulation, which is a time that will reveal the full wrath and anger of God, God will move mountains (Rev. 6:24), collapse mountains (6:16) and throw mountains around (8:8). In fact, during the Tribulation God will cause mountains to disappear (Rev. 16:20). God will do with mountains what you and I can do with a "nerf ball."

Description #4 - God is so sovereign that He can cause earthquakes . **9:6**

God can shake the earth anytime and any way He wants. God can twist the earth, turn it, cause portions of it to cave in and other portions to break. When God starts shaking the earth, little humans run around like scared rabbits, weeping, wailing, and whining. God is a sovereign God. He can bend, break, shake, rattle and roll this earth around like nothing. That is the grasp Job had of God's sovereignty.

Now we again know that during the Tribulation God is going to cause a great, worldwide earthquake to hit the whole world (Rev. 16:18).

Description #5 - God is so sovereign that He commands light . **9:7**

God determines when the sun and stars will shine and when they won't. God controls eclipses, sunny days, cloudy days, overcast days, dark nights and light-filled nights.

We don't control that, He does. God controls times of light and times of darkness. This is not just cosmological truth pertaining to the heavens; this is personal truth pertaining to people. God can have times when things shine bright on a person or times when things go dark. He is still God.

During the Tribulation when God pours out His wrath, He will do strange things with light and darkness (Rev. 6:12; 8:12).

Description #6 - God is so sovereign that He controls the heavens and seas . **9:8**

Notice God alone is the only one who determines the size of the heavens and the size of the waves. No one but God can trample down a wave in the sea. This becomes very significant when we read a passage concerning Jesus Christ such as Matt. 8:23-27, Mark 4:36-41, or Luke 8:22-25. These passages clearly prove Jesus Christ is God.

During the Tribulation God will do powerful things with the heavens and the seas (Rev. 8:8-12).

Description #7 - God is so sovereign that He controls the constellations . **9:9**

There are three constellations named in Hebrew in this verse:

1. Ash-bright northern constellations, which is Arabic, is closely related to the word "bear" (Gesenius, p. 659).
2. Kisil- giant constellations of the heavens which also form the Arabic Orion (*Ibid.*, p. 408).
3. Keymah-multitude or plenty of stars such as a heap or cluster, which comes from the Arabic "pleiades" (*Ibid.*, p. 395).

Cox says Bear are typically constellations of the north, Orion of the south, and Pleiades of the east (Cox, p. 123). **Regardless, Job's point is, all of the bright, vast, large, shining constellations which we see in the sky are made and placed and controlled by the awesome, Sovereign God of the Bible. God made them and does what He wants with them.**

During the Tribulation God is going to cause stars to literally fall out of the sky (Rev. 6:13).

Description #8 - God is so sovereign that He does innumerable, unfathomable and wonderful things. **9:10**

God's works cannot be counted or comprehended. We may remember that Eliphaz had used these words to describe the judgment things God does against those who do evil (5:9) and Job is using these words to describe the majestic things God does at all times. Job's grasp of God is way above and beyond anything Eliphaz or Bildad can grasp.

Description #9 - God is so sovereign that He is invisible . **9:11**

Eliphaz claimed he had seen a vision of God (4:15-16). Here was Job, the most godly man on earth, saying that if God passed by him, he would not see Him nor perceive Him. Job had a powerful faith in God. Even though he could not personally see God, he did know God was there and he could see tremendous evidences of God's awesome power everywhere he looked. As Robert Alden said, Job believed God was "invisible, intangible and evasive" (*Job*, p. 126). Job's friends were claiming they got visions and revelations from God and Job says I trust in God when I do not see Him.

Description #10 - God is so sovereign that He is unstoppable . **9:12**

No one can stop God from doing what He wants to do. He is all-powerful, He is all-present, and He can do whatever He wants with whomever He wants. He does what He pleases even if we don't like it or get it.

Job's point to Bildad is "I am innocent, but who can talk back to God, question God or challenge God when He is the Awesome God who does what He wants to do."

We need this high and holy view of God today. We need to have a reverence for God and His sovereignty.

Description #11 - God is so sovereign that His anger is immutable . **9:13**

Once God has become angry, no one will change the pouring out of His anger nor stop it. At God's disposal are the "helpers of Rahab." Rahab was the name of a mythological monster in mythology; Rahab is the name of a real person, who, at this point in history, was not even born and it is also a metaphorical name for Egypt (Is. 30:7; Ps. 87:4; 89:10). It seems that we may also metaphorically apply it to Satan (Is. 51:9; Job 26:12).

I understand Job to be saying that when God gets angry, He can use any person, male or female, any nation, such as Egypt, or any agent, such as Satan, to pour out His anger and no one can stop it.

THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE #2 – God is a God of arbitrary sovereignty. **9:14-24**

Notice carefully starting at verse 14 to verse 21 the first person pronoun "I" dominates the next several verses. This grasp of God's sovereignty was very personal to Job.

Job says to Bildad in **verse 14**, "How can I dare answer God? If all major powers of Rahab that are against God, crouch at the feet of the sovereignty of God, what chance would I have for any argument."

Job says in **verse 15**, I don't even know what words to use or say to Him. Even if my cause were right, He is so far above and beyond me in His plan that I would have to call out for His mercy; for He has a right to do whatever He wants (**9:15**) and we don't have a right to question Him.

This is a man who has lost everything. He has lost his business and possessions and his livestock and his money. His children are dead. He is suffering an incurable and inhumane disease. He is sitting in a dried manure pile outside the city and his friends are lecturing him, and look at the grasp Job has of the sovereignty of God. It is a high and holy grasp that he clings to.

When a spiritual man of God is at his lowest, his perspective of the sovereignty of God will be at its highest. We will not look up until we have been down. But when we are down and we look up to God's sovereignty, we will find help in our dark time of trouble.

There are four judicial points Job makes about God.

Judicial Point #1 - Even if I am right and have not done anything to deserve this, I still need God's mercy. **9:15**

Job said no matter how right I may be in that I have not done anything to deserve this, if I were to appeal this case to God, I would have to do so based on the fact I am a sinner and I do need God's mercy. God is Judge and He knows we are all sinners and we all need His mercy. It is one thing to be a sinner, as we all are; it is quite another to experience what Job experienced as a result of sin. But Job said even appealing my case, I must do so as a sinner.

Real spirituality starts here. God is the Sovereign Judge. He sees all and knows all and no matter what our condition, we all need the mercy of God because we are all sinners.

Judicial Point #2 - Even if Job called to God, he could not believe God would listen to him. **9:16-18**

One of the things Bildad has said to Job was that he needed to appeal to God (i.e. 8:5). Job's point is if I appealed my case to God and He answered me, I would not believe He would even listen to me because who am I that God would listen to my voice. Job said what right do I even have to approach the Sovereign God of the universe.

I understand the word "for" of **verse 17** to explain why Job didn't think God would listen to him, because God had seen fit to bruise him and multiply wounds against him without a cause. From Job's perspective he did not think God would listen to his defense of innocence when he knew he was a sinner in need of the mercy of God. God had seen fit in His sovereignty to hit Job with a string of negative things in such rapid fire that Job could not even catch his breath (**verse 18**). Job saw himself as a sinner who had been judged by God. **What Job did not know here is that this had nothing to do with Job's sinfulness, but with his righteousness.**

Judicial Point #3 - If my suffering is a question of power or justice, God is the winner.
9:19-21

Nothing could stop or overtake the powerful work of God. God will always do what is just and no one can question what God does.

Job saw a great chasm between himself and God. Even though Job was a righteous man and a guiltless man, he still knew that he was not perfect when compared to the Holy God (**9:20**).

Job refused to admit to his skeptic friends that he had done something to deserve this. In fact he tells them he is “guiltless” (**9:21**).

Judicial Point #4 - God is the one in total, sovereign control. **9:22-24**

The pronoun “I” mostly disappears from these verses because Job is just reflecting on what God sovereignly does at times.

God destroys those guilty and those innocent. God is sovereign and He does what He wants to do. God also causes the sun to shine on both the evil and the good and rain to fall on the evil and the good (Matt. 5:45).

God is the Sovereign God who does all these things and He has absolute right to even mock the innocent (9:23). According to **verse 23**, death hits the wicked and death hits the innocent.

God is the One who allows the earth to be governed by wicked people (**9:24**). God is the One who permits judges to rule, some of whom are corrupt.

Job says at the end of **verse 24** that if God is not sovereign then who is.

The fact is if Satan and evil are beyond God’s control, then God is not sovereign. Job believed that God was still sovereign even when Satan appeared to win.

When you are going through dark times in your life, one of the most precious doctrines that will become very personal to you, if you are spiritually-minded, will be the doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

No matter what you see or what you feel or what you experience, you may always cling to this precious doctrine.