

Devotional Thoughts :: The suffering of Job and Resurrection

The suffering of Job and Resurrection - posted by Areadymind (), on: 2011/2/25 14:41

In the midst of ash and accusation, boils and belligerent philosophy, a spark of trouble flew upward, beyond the lowly crags of mountain heights, into the deep blue etherium of divine contemplation. His name was Job, which means "hated, or persecuted." According to his accusers, he must have done something to offend the Almighty. His suffering dictated that it must be so. It is no wonder that the oldest book of Hebrew lore deals with the deepest questions humans have tried to apprehend. In the midst of extreme suffering, we have all inevitably questioned the point of life. Job's bitter query did not proceed until after seven days and seven nights of silence amidst the conjoining of dust, ash, rending, and "friends."

There he sat in silence so long...I am sure the day of visitation was fresh in his mind...being replayed like a video again and again and again. No doubt his silence was one of agonizing mental anguish. Once the silence is broken, Job basically says that the day of his birth ought to be cursed into eternal blackness. (Job 3) His deep pondering begs the question. WHY LIVE??? Why live if suffering is our bread, if misery is our drink?

Once Job finally broke his silence...Eliphaz was quick to speak the abundance of his heart and accusation against Job. He starts off with a few quick words of flattery, probably out of cultural respect, then promptly begins to develop a thread of thought that Job must not be innocent, of course his suffering must be the result of sin because, "Who ever perish ed, being innocent?" Or, "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." (Job 4:7-8)

Like so many councilors that lack any form of humility, Eliphaz completely ignores the questions Job raises, and displays the true motive behind why he sat seven days and nights on Job's pile of ash. His motive was to bring accusation against his friend. Job had asked why it was that he did not just die when he was born. Then he would have moved on to the indomitable vault of equalization...the grave. Where the, "Prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master." (Job 3:17-18) Job was concerned with the deeply subterranean questions of his soul. Eliphaz was concerned with emanating his own religious pomposity via his theology.

The temptation to give a ringside, blow by blow account is difficult for me to withstand; however, for succinctness sake we must jump forward numerous arguments later, after Job has received jabs, hooks, uppercuts and below-the-belt accusations from his "friends." In the midst of his suffering and incrimination Job raises one of the single most important questions that suffering must force someone to ask. Keep in mind this is probably the oldest book of the Bible, if not one of the oldest written manuscripts ever. In Job 14:14, he laments, "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." God had not yet been fully manifest and in the Son, so total revelation about life and death had not yet occurred to humanity. Job did not know yet that eternal life was knowing the Father, and the one whom he would send.

Eliphaz proves his religious ignorance once again by calling Job's questions an, "uttering of vain knowledge and a filling of his belly with the east wind." Why think deeply about your pain Job? Just repent for your ox-dumb pride.

Job then responds to this indictment and receives one more from Bildad. It is at this point in chapter nineteen where Job reaches a crescendo of angst. He points out that his miserable councilors have accused him ten times, and he begins to lament that he has been forsaken by every last person whom he valued. He first laments deeply of God forsaking him, and how God had stripped him of his glory and crown. (Job 19:9) Job was destroyed on every side...troops had been raised against him, his brethren were put far from him, every acquaintance of his had become completely estranged from him. His kinsfolk failed him, and his familiar friends forgot him. Those most intimate with him, his maids and dwellers of his home, now viewed him as an alien and a stranger in their sight. His breath even became strange to his own wife. The word strange in the Hebrew is metonymous with the word for adultery. So it could be said that his very breath was as the breath of an adulterer to his own spouse. This gives us a sense of just how disgusting Job's suffering was to his kin. His own children also rose up and despised him and spoke against him. All this would be bad enough but the dagger in his back is twisted a little bit more when he says that even his "inward friends" have turned on him as the hand of God touched him.

It is as if the veil of fellowship had been drawn and stitched. It was woven from the fabric of solitude, and the stitches we

re the condescending glances of accusation he received. No man is more forsaken in the midst of people than this man. He was so alone that his bones clove to his skin and flesh. This was likely due to malnutrition from prolonged fasting. Eating no longer meant anything to him.

Finally, it is within this broad context that Job laments, “Why do you persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Oh that my words were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever. For I know that my redeemer liveth, 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: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

Was it not Christ our Lord, whom upon the cross asked from the bottom of the deepest well of trepidation ever probed, “My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Did not all of Christ’s sheep scatter into hiding? Did not Jesus become as an adulterer to them? Were they not completely ashamed of His suffering? Was Peter not in the valley of the shadow of death?

By now, I hope you have noticed the parallel between Job being forsaken by all, and Christ being forsaken by all, even His Father. These continuities are absolutely staggering. I will let your imagination continue to connect these concepts. It is at this point, of Job’s deep suffering, where deep calls unto deep. Some divine tremendous light has perforated the subterranean expanse of his tragedy, and he concludes the only thing an open mind, a humble heart, and a suffering soul can conclude...there must be, there has to be, I know there will be...a resurrection from the dead! My Savior will stand upon the earth someday and I will stand with him. So it was that He (our Lord), for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The broadest depths of human suffering when contemplated with a view of God in mind, require resurrection to be true. Were it not, sanity would become pointless...