

Title: In the Courtroom with God (Part 2)

Number: 0820Job9.25-35(13)

Text: Job 9:25-35

Central Idea: *The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God*

Date: August 23, 2020

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{Read Passage / Opening Prayer} / NASB95

{read 9:32-10:3}

**[i] Think about the word “despondent”**

Eng. word comes from t/Latin *despondentem* (“to give up, lose heart”)

A 19th c. Dictionary gives this definition ==>

“Despondency is a loss of hope sufficient to produce a loss of courage and a disposition to relax or relinquish effort, the despondent person tending to sink into spiritless inaction.” [Century Dictionary, 1897]

Have you ever been despondent? Think about those times you have; inevitably they involve loss of some kind.

**[ii] This past week has been a despondency in miniature for me**

I say “in miniature” bc over t/past 4+ yrs I have experienced waves of despair in t/loss of our daughter, t/great tempest of those waves coming t/1st few years after she passed.

I say “this past week” bc I had 2 days in which that despair was aggravated.

1st time was when I was compelled to go into her bedroom . . . I think it was t/1st time I'd been in there all alone since t/crash 4.5 years ago.

Then there was Friday - her 19th Bday. I thot back to t/last time we celebrated a Bday w/her. It was her 14th, just months b4 t/crash that ult. claimed her life.

She wanted an iPhone & we got her one - only for use on wifi.  
I hid t/gift outside our house & we played "hot / cold" . . .

Those were 2 days that were microbursts compared to t/F5 tornados I've been thru.

I try to maintain faith & a biblical perspective knowing that she, as a young believer in JC, is with Him. She's safe. I'll see her again.

### **[iii] As born again believers, Why do we despair?**

Is it true, as one author states, that ==>

“Despair is like irritated children, who when you take away one of their playthings, angrily throw the rest into the fire.” [Charron]

Is being despondent sinful?

Put another way, John Piper asks the ? “Is unbelief the root of that experience of despondency?”

“Unbelief is the root of yielding to despondency.”

He goes on ==>

“It’s unbelief that puts up no resistance. It’s unbelief that doesn’t take the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit and fight. That much I think we can say with clarity from Scripture. “My body is shot, my heart is almost dead, and for whatever reason I will not yield. I will trust in God though my strength is gone.”

Then w/words that apply to Job’s situation ==>

“It’s like a bomb. Satan drops bombs on the peaceful sea of our lives. And if it’s an atomic bomb, there is, as soon as it explodes, a massive shockwave that hits before the deadly rays begin to make their way over people’s lives.”

Take up the shield of faith, he writes, knowing that ==>

“Every cave that you’re in — wandering along, feeling the rocks, stumbling, stepping, bumping your head — every cave that you are in is a tunnel that opens into glory. It opens into a day like today in heaven, with the sun shining, and the grass green, and the waters flowing — as long as you don’t sit down in the cave and blow out the candle of faith.” [desiringgod.org/messages/battling-the-unbelief-of-despondency]

Good news is that when t/candle of our faith is flickering & about to go out, we have a good God who fans it back into a flame.

Matthew in his Gospel sees Jesus in that role fulfilling Isaiah 43:3

“A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT . . .” (Matt 12:20)

**[iv] Jesus Himself - the sinless Son of God - suffered “despair”**

**(I don’t know what else to call it)**

In t/Garden of Gethsemane we read that His soul was deeply grieved, to the point of death. On t/Cross He cried out “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken Me?”

So there’s a despondency that comes short of sinfulness.

**[v] We appreciate Jesus in his perfection, but we identify with other pilgrims in their failures (not moral failures per se, but failures nonetheless)**

I’m talking struggles; losing battles, yet staying in t/war. We don’t admire their sin, but we relate to their struggles.

I think of 18th c. hymn writer, William Cowper who tried to commit suicide multiple times. G. providentially overruled those attempts.

In a letter to John Newton written in 1784 he wrote,

“Loaded as my life is with despair, I have no such comfort as would result from a supposed probability of better things to come, were it once ended ... You will tell me that this cold gloom will be succeeded by a cheerful spring, and endeavor to encourage me to hope for a spiritual change resembling it — but it will be lost labor. . . . God’s ways are mysterious, and He gives no account of His matters . . . There is a mystery in my destruction, & in time it shall be explained.”

He didn’t stay there, however . . . (that’s t/point)

He’s also the author of these words:

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

My heart goes out to him! And to Job . . .

3:20 “Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul?” {Double parallelism}

7:11 “Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.”

**[vi] This is a despondent man**

A man who lost children, livelihood, reputation, health.

A man who felt he was abandoned by his friends & His G.

**[vii] Last time in our study we were in chapter 9**

57 vv. that comprise Job’s 1st reply to Bildad, 1 of Job’s 3 friends who came to minister to Job in his calamity.

***I. In the Courtroom With God: How Can Job Possibly Be Exonerated? (9:1-35)***

We only made it thru v. 25 last time . . . & we will go short again today - finishing up chapt. 9 saving chapt. 10 for next time.

Hard to fathom that my orig. intent was to cover both chapt. in 1 sitting. Looks like it’s going to take 3 - not a race.

Over-arching theme for both chapters which encompass Job's reply to Bildad is this ==>

*The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.*

IOW . . .

## **I. In the Courtroom With God: How Can Job Possibly Be Exonerated? (9:1-35)**

### **A. Job's Agreement: I Know This is So! (1-2a)**

1 Then Job answered, 2a "In truth I know that this is so . . .

#### **1. What is Job affirming as being true?**

##### **a. We can take it back to what we called "Bildad's Axiom"**

8:3 "Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?"

Job agrees. But he can't understand how this truth fits his sit.

We go from ==>

### **A. Job's Agreement: I Know This is So! (1-2a)**

To 2d point that covers t/bulk of chapt. 9. ==>

### **B. Job's Argument: How Can Anyone Dispute with God? (2b-24)**

IOW - "I know G. is righteous & sov. But why am I being punished? Job figuratively takes God to court. Job plays t/role of Plaintiff, G. t/defendant. But Job knows that he can't win against God ==>

**2b 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?**

**[He] shakes the earth . . . . (v. 6)**

**“Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? . . . . (v. 12)**

**14 “How then can I answer Him . . .**

**15 . . . I would have to [beg for His] mercy . . .**

**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?”**

*A. Job’s Agreement: I Know This is So! (1-2a)*

{restate}

*B. Job’s Argument: How Can Anyone Dispute with God? (2b-24)*

{restate}

**C. Job’s Affliction: I Am Most Miserable (25-35)**

**1. Hopeless Days (25-26)**

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

**a. Sounds like 7:6**

7:6 “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, And come to an end without hope.

**(1) Every day is like the day before - it comes and goes like the day before with the same unrelenting pain**

Days just flip by like fanning a deck of playing cards. That's what Job was experiencing: Every day just like t/day B4, a dull existence of pain & turmoil that never ends.

Here in chapt. 9 ==>

**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.**

### **b. Three images of speed: land, water and air**

#### **(1) "Runner"**

Like t/professional runners that delivered t/mail of t/day. Or like the men who ran to Job's house to tell him of t/calamities that struck, one of which ultimately took t/life of his 10 children.

#### **(2) "Reed boats"**

ESV "skiffs of reed" - renowned for how quickly they moved over t/water. In sight one moment, gone t/next.

#### **(3) Eagle**

Eagles can reach speeds of 100+ miles an hour. Here pictured swooping down on its victim (Job?)

Images of speed . . .

### ***C. Job's Affliction . . . (25-35)***

#### ***1. Hopeless Days (25-26)***



## **2. Meaningless Existence (27-29)**

### **a. Three difficult verses (27-29)**

**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?”**

*Job seems to be saying, “Even if I forget my misery and put on a happy face, new sufferings will arrive at my feet because G. won’t acquit me. So why bother?”*

### **3. Helpless Cleansing (30-31)**

**30 “If I should wash myself with snow And cleanse my hands with lye,**

#### **a. Some translations have “soap” instead of “snow”**

#### **b. Lye was a strong cleansing agent still in use today**

Point is: I can wash my maggot-infested body clean, but (v. 31) ==>

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

#### **c. There was a custom that may be in view here:**

When a criminal was acquitted, he would be given clean clothes.

Zechariah 3:3–5 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. 4 And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.”5 Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by.

Job may have that in mind: “No matter what I do, my clothes will be dirty; I won’t be declared innocent.”

Jer. 2:22 “Although you wash yourself with lye And use much soap, The stain of your iniquity is before Me,” declares the Lord GOD.

### ***C. Job’s Affliction . . . (25-35)***

#### ***1. Hopeless Days (25-26)***

#### ***2. Meaningless Existence (27-29)***

#### ***3. Helpless Cleansing (30-31)***

#### **4. Nameless Mediator (32-33)**

Job, in t/courtroom w/God, knows that he must have miraculous mediation if he is to find peace. But that mediator, for him, is elusive; He is nameless.

#### **a. Look closely at verses 32 & 33 . . .**

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.

**b. Job turns from speaking to God to addressing his friends**

32 “[God] is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together.

**c. One translation (TEV) has “If God were human”**

**(1) When I read this I thought of the 1995 hit song by Joan Osborne (What if God Was):**

*What if God was one of us?  
Just a slob like one of us  
Just a stranger on the bus  
Tryin' to make his way home?*

While we may consider that blasphemous, it asks a genuine question: What if G. were 1 of us?

**(2) In the words of the old British preacher and prolific author Dr. G. Campbell Morgan:**

[This is] the cry of a man who knew God, and was overwhelmed by the sense of His greatness. . . . Over against that was the sense of his own comparative smallness. He felt he could not get to this God. He was altogether too small.

It is as though Job had said: “There is no umpire, there is no arbiter, there is no one who can stand between us, interpreting each to the other; me to God, and God to me. There is no one to lay his hand upon us. . . .”

Here then was Job crying out for some one who could stand authoritatively between God and himself, and so create way of meeting, a possibility of contact.

We now turn from the elemental cry of Job, and from the Old Testament, to consider the apostolic word concerning Jesus. “There is one Mediator between God and man.” That is the Gospel in brief. That is Christianity fundamentally. [G. Campbell Morgan, cited in Swindoll, 104-05]

**(a) 1 Timothy 2:5**

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

**(b) 1 Peter 3:18**

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God . . .

**(c) That’s the Gospel!**

JC is t/One who can “lay his hands on us both.” As G. He represents t/Godhead; as Man He represents sinful men; as t/sinless God-Man He alone could be t/perfect, eternal, final sacrifice for sin.

**d. What about Job?**

Does this mean there’s no hope for those who lived before X?

The Psalmist could rightly plead:

51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

And that plea was answered by faith.

Paul's point in Rom. 4 - Abraham was justified by faith alone.

“The basis of salvation in every age is the death of Christ. The requirement for salvation in every age is faith; the object of faith in every age is God . . .” [Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 123]

**e. To be accurate, Job was looking past eschatological salvation to temporal acquittal**

IOW - he (wrongly) believed that his suffering was due to God's punishment. He was blind to the events of chapters 1 & 2 - t/challenge of Satan who hoped to prove that t/blameless Job served G. for selfish reasons.

Not having that Mediator in his earthly life, Job was faced with ==>

**5. Relentless Discipline (34-35)**

At least he thought it was discipline.

So he pleads to his 3 friends in v. 34 ==>

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

34 **“Let Him remove His rod from me . . .**

**a. Quite a contrast to Psalm 23 where “the rod” was pictured as a comfort**

**(1) Here it's the “rod of discipline”**

Puritans often spoke of t/X's discipline under God as being subject to t/rod. Cf. Thomas Brooks' Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod.

That kind of discipline is born out of love. Job doesn't see that ==>

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

**b. Then the last verse of the chapter**

35 **“Then [once G. removes his hand of discipline] I would speak and not fear Him . . . [“fear” in the sense of being “terrified” v. 34]**

**(1) Then the last sentence of the verse:**

35b . . . **But I am not like that in myself.**

**(a) Difficult phrase in the Hebrew - see that with how all over the board the various English translations are**

35b . . . **for I am not so in myself.** [ESV]

35b . . . **I am on my own.** [HCSB]

Curiously, the NIV really interprets it for you ==>

35b . . . **but as it now stands with me, I cannot.**

In his detailed exegetical commentary on Job, David Clines writes:

Difficult though v 35b is, the most straightforward reading of “for I am not so in myself” is “I am aware of nothing to make me afraid of Him, if He acts not in might, but in right” . . . What has made Job lose his nerve is not a fading of his conviction of his innocence, but the sheer terror induced by God's anger—of which this chapter has been full. [243-44]

***I. In the Courtroom With God: How Can Job Possibly Be Exonerated? (9:1-35)***

Next time

**II. In the Courtroom With God: Job Resigns Himself to a Sentence of Death (10:1-22)**

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**Lessons from the Despondent Life**

**1. The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.**

That's t/over-arching principle we see in these 2 chapters. Job says some hurtful things in t/face of his God. To put it in N.T. terms, he says things that would grieve the Holy Spirit.

God's big judicial decision stands: For the believer there is no condemnation for those in Christ.

**2. During times of despair we will, like Job, vacillate in our faith.**

Despair breeds doubt. T/seeds of doubt grow wild in t/soil of despair. Distrust t/messages despair sends to your heart & focus on what you know to be objectively true // t/great truths of Scripture // t/promises of G. Meditate on passages of Scripture like ==>

Proverbs 3:5-6 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:38–39 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **3. Fight for faith before you fight for joy.**

IOW - Joy cannot be separated from faith. Joy springs from belief. Fight for that faith, trust in a sov. G. who loves you & has a good purpose for your life. That faith, even if weak & wavering will still endure your fight for joy.

### **4. Let's encourage the fainthearted.**

1 Thess. 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

When hearts grow faint; when souls are weak; come alongside to encourage. G. used your love and care to carry us thru those dark waters that threatened to drown us.

### **5. Be thankful for that Mediator and let's relish in a Savior who suffered for us.**

One of Jesus' titles is "Suffering Servant" Think about that?

Believer: He walked this earth for you // Suffered // Died //

Now lives . . .



We talked about William Cowper earlier.

There were 2 things that brought Cowper to saving faith in 1764.

In reading John 11 he “saw so much benevolence, mercy, goodness, and sympathy with miserable men, in our Savior’s conduct, that I almost shed tears.”

Then, on that decisive day, he said, “I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fullness and completeness of His justification.”

“Christ is the wounded surgeon who operates on people’s hearts.”

[T.S. Elliot, cited in World Magazine, April 24, 2004]

Has He operated on your heart?

Xnty isn’t G. putting a band aid on an old heart; that’s religion.

No, Xnty is G. removing a dead heart, replacing it w/a new one resulting in faith & repentance & eternal life . . .

{{God/Sin/Christ/Faith}}