

Job 9.22-24—On the just and the unjust alike, God sends troubles

God afflicts both the righteous & the wicked alike, v.22

- I. It's all one. "I've said it before and I'll say it again."
 - A. This is the great axiom upon which Job builds all his arguments, the Royal Fort in which he takes refuge against all their accusations: that God is no respecter of persons when it comes to temporal afflictions, but sends them on the just and unjust alike.
 - B. Job's not saying there's no difference in God's eyes between the righteous and the wicked (cp. Gen 18.25).
 - C. Instead, his point is that God's temporal afflictions are common to all men, regardless of their standing before Him, Job 14.1-2; cf. 2Sam 11.25—which is why one's temporal condition can't serve as a litmus test for one's spiritual condition.

Two illustrations, vv.23-24

- I. v.23, the righteous are so far from being spared temporal afflictions that God stands by and laughs at their calamity. —Can that be right!?
 - A. God *doesn't ever laugh* at the afflictions of His people as if He found it funny or got joy out of watching them suffer, Isa 63.9; Hos 11.8-9
 - 1. God's heart *breaks* over our pain. His heart *recoils within Him* to take the rod to us. His heart *grows warm and tender* at the sight of our suffering and the sound of our cries.
 - 2. How can the God whose heart bled out on the cross to deliver us from suffering (Isa 53.5) ever laugh at our suffering!?
 - B. Then what does Job mean? It helps to remember that Job's in a real struggle of faith and that he's having a hard time finding a foothold for his faith in God's goodness amidst all his pain.
 - 1. The "laughing" of which Job speaks is the apparent passivity of a God whom Job knows to have covenanted with him to be his God, and to do him good as a fruit of that covenant.
 - 2. Job's not accusing God of enjoying our suffering. He's simply at a loss how to reconcile God's painful providences with his faith in God's goodness and justice.
- II. v.24, the wicked are so far from being made the sure marks of temporal afflictions that God gives them the earth, cf. Ps 73

The Conclusion, v.24

- I. No one else has the sovereignty to order and dispose the things of this world as He pleases, but God. And therefore to Him belongs the glory and mystery of His governance of all things temporal.

Observations for Application

- I. "In His sovereignty God treats all men alike in temporal things."
 - A. While both the people of God and the enemies of God may fall under the same afflictions, they're not really being treated the same way, Ps 56.9; Jer 32.40
 - 1. Towards His enemies the Lord acts in wrath and anger; but towards His people He acts in mercy and grace. While His hand may move against all men in the same way, His meaning and motive behind it is not at all the same because His heart is not the same towards them.
 - B. The trials of the saints are the trying of the saints. They're occasions to exercise our graces and give proof what sort of people we are, Eph 6.10-18
 - 1. So that if God ever appears to stand idly by, let's understand that He's trying us because He wants to grow us, 1Tim 1.18
 - C. Whenever the Lord afflicts you, His heart is set on doing you good by it, Heb 12.10
 - 1. His motive is to make you a greater partaker in His holiness *in order that* you might enjoy a greater measure of His fellowship.
 - 2. So whenever afflictions become necessary to that end, know that there's a "divine reluctance" in His heart, Lam 3.33. His "whole heart isn't in it;" which means, He doesn't enjoy it.
 - 3. Therefore, in all your sufferings, cast yourself onto the lap of Jer 32.41, trusting that there must be some good reason for you to go through that suffering.
 - D. However it may appear that God sometimes stands idly by and just watches us suffer, remember that He's *always* with us in our suffering.
 - 1. Whether by careful oversight (Mal 3.3), unperceived upholding (Dt 33.27), divine intercession (Heb 7.25), or walled protection (Isa 26.1), your God *is* by your side, doing you good. That's His promise and that's His work, Jer 29.11
 - 2. May God therefore enable you to trust His heart when you cannot see His hand, Jn 13.7; Ps 56.9