

# CHAPTER 25

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 25

This chapter contains Bildad's reply to Job, such an one as it is; in which, declining the controversy between them, he endeavours to dissuade him from attempting to lay his cause before God, and think to justify himself before him, from the consideration of the majesty of God, described by the dominion he is possessed of; the fear creatures stand in of him; the peace he makes in his high places; the number of his armies, and the vast extent of his light, (~~Job~~ Job 25:1-3); and from the impossibility of man's being justified with him, or clean before him, argued from thence, (~~Job~~ Job 25:4); and which is further illustrated by a comparison of the celestial bodies with men, and by an argument from the greater to the less, that if they lose their lustre and purity in his sight, much more man, a mean despicable worm, (~~Job~~ Job 25:5,6).

**Ver. 1.** *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite*, etc.] Not to what Job had just now delivered, in order to disprove that, that men, guilty of the grossest crimes, often go unpunished in this life, and prosper and succeed, and die in peace and quietness, as other men; either because he was convinced of the truth of what he had said, or else because he thought he was an obstinate man, and that it was best to let him alone, and say no more to him, since there was no likelihood of working any conviction on him; wherefore he only tries to possess his mind of the greatness and majesty of God, in order to deter him from applying to God in a judicial way, and expecting redress and relief from him;

*and said*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Dominion and fear [are] with him*, etc.] Not with man, as Saphorno interprets it, as that with him is power to rule over the imagination (the evil figment of his heart) to choose the good, and refuse the evil; and with him is fear of punishment, and also the fear of God to restrain him from evil; but with God, as may easily be perceived from the whole context, though his name is not expressed in this clause, and not till (~~Job~~ Job 25:4); this dominion he is possessed of is universal; his kingdom

rules over all, over all the angels, good and bad; over all men, over all the nations of the world, and the great men in it, the kings and princes of it; and over all, of every age, sex, and condition; and it is absolute and uncontrollable; he governs according to his will, and is not to be controlled in his ways; nor is he accountable to any for what he does, and his kingdom is an everlasting one, and his dominion for ever and ever: and by the fear that is with him is not meant actively, with which he fears; for he is afraid of none, be they ever so great and mighty, (~~1822H~~ Job 22:4); but passively, with which he is feared; for holy and reverend is his name, and so his nature, and all that belong to him; he is feared by the angels in heaven, who cover their faces before him, and cast their crowns at his feet; and by the saints on earth, in whose assemblies he is served with reverence and godly fear; and should be stood in awe of by all the inhabitants of the world, because of the glory of his nature, the greatness of his works, and the goodness of his providence:

*he maketh peace in his high places*; in the high places of his earth, and among the great men of it, creating and commanding peace, and causing war among them to cease, whenever it is his pleasure; and in the regions of the air, where, though there are often thunder and lightning, storms and tempests of wind, hail, and rain, yet, when he says, Peace, be still, all is serene and quiet; and in the orbs of the heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, which know their appointed times and seasons, and keep their place or course, and do their work and office in the most easy and cheerful manner; and among the angels in the highest heaven, which are properly his high places, who, though their numbers are so great, and they themselves thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and have various offices and different work assigned them, readily do his will, and are in the utmost harmony and concord among themselves, show no reluctance to him, nor any discord to each other: now Bildad would have Job consider whether he could think himself so significant, that cognizance would be taken of him and his cause by so great, glorious, and majestic a thing; or that he would suffer his high places, where peace reigned, to be disturbed by his noise and brawl.

**Ver. 3.** *Is there any number of his armies?* etc.] His armies in heaven, the heavenly host of angels, which are innumerable; there are more than twelve legions of them, thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand, employed in a military way, for the safety and preservation of the saints; (see ~~1831E~~ Genesis 32:1,2 ~~1841E~~ Psalm 34:7); and the sun, moon, and stars, often

called the host of heaven, the latter of which cannot be numbered, and which fought in their courses against Sisera, (<sup><818D></sup>Judges 5:20); and his armies on earth, all the inhabitants of it; yea, every creature, even the smallest insect in it, which are without number: thus, frogs, lice, flies, and locusts, were the armies of God, with which he fought against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, (see <sup><821E></sup>Joel 2:11,20);

*and upon whom doth not his light arise?* either natural light, that grand luminary the sun, which rises on all, the evil and the good, nor is anything hid from the light and heat of it; or moral light, the light of nature, with which everyone that comes into the world is enlightened by him; or the light of providential goodness, which is unto all, and over all his creatures; the whole earth is full of it, and all the inhabitants have a share in it; nor is anything hid from his all piercing, all penetrating, all seeing eye, who is light itself, and dwells in light inaccessible, and from which light nothing can be hid.

**Ver. 4.** *How then can man be justified with God?*] Since he sees all his ways and works, his secret as well as open sins; either be more just than he, as Eliphaz expresses it, (<sup><884F></sup>Job 4:17); which no man in his senses will say; or just as he is, and upon a level with him, or in comparison of him, or before him, and in his sight: and this is what Job himself denies, (<sup><889D></sup>Job 9:2); for however righteous a man may be in his own sight, or in the sight of others, he cannot of himself be justified in the sight of God; nor can any be justified with him by his own righteousness, because the best righteousness of man is imperfect; and, if Bildad thought this was the sentiment of Job, he mistook him; for, what he meant by coming to the seat of God, and ordering his cause before him, (<sup><882E></sup>Job 23:2,3); to which Bildad seems to refer, and being judged by him, when he doubted not but he should be acquitted, was no other than the justification of his cause, and not of his person before God; or that he should be cleared of the imputation of hypocrisy, and of being the sinner and wicked man, and guilty of very bad things, though secret and private, for which he was afflicted; for otherwise Job knew full well that he could not be justified with God by his own personal righteousness, for he knew himself to be a sinner, and owns it; nor did he think himself perfect, and his righteousness a complete one; and therefore he expected not to be justified by it; he knew his living Redeemer, and believed in him for righteousness, and expected the justification of his person, and his acceptance with God, only by him; and in this way there are many that are justified with God secretly, “in foro

Dei”, in the court of God, and in his sight, who always beholds his people as righteous in Christ, and openly, “in foro conscientiae”, in the court of conscience, when they believe in him; and who will be publicly justified, and declared righteous, at the day of judgment:

*or how can he be clean [that is] born of a woman?* which suggests a doctrine that Job as firmly believed as Bildad did, that all men are unclean by natural generation, or as they are born into the world; their ancestors being such, the more immediate, and the more remote, which may be traced back to the first man and woman, (<sup><1814></sup>Job 14:4); so that as no man is clean and pure as God is, or in comparison of him, or in his sight; they can neither be naturally clean, nor so of themselves, by any means or methods they can make use of; but then they may be, as many are, clean by the blood of Christ, and grace of God, through which his people are cleansed from all their sins, and all their iniquities, and are without spot before the throne and in the sight of God.

**Ver. 5.** *Behold, even to the moon*, etc.] If all things that are glorious and illustrious in the lower world, and which are between that and the region of the moon, are beheld; or all from the seat of the Divine Majesty, down to that glorious luminary, are viewed, they lose all their lustre and brightness, when compared with the Divine Being;

*and it*, even that itself

*shineth not*; it is darkened, confounded, and ashamed; it hides its beautiful face, and draws in its borrowed and useful light, at the approach of him, who is light itself, and in whom is no darkness at all: or it tabernacles not <sup>f922</sup>; has no tabernacle to abide in, as is said of the sun, (<sup><1804></sup>Psalms 19:4); or does not expand and spread its light, as a tent <sup>f923</sup> or tabernacle is spread; it does not diffuse, but contracts it. No mention is made of the sun, not because that shines in its own light, which the moon does not; but perhaps because the controversy between Job and his friends was held in the night, when the moon and the stars were only seen, and therefore only mentioned; otherwise, what is here observed equally holds good of the sun as of the moon; (see <sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 24:23);

*yea, the stars are not pure in his sight*; as there are spots in the sun and in the moon, seen by the eye of man, aided and assisted, so such may be seen by God in the stars also, and in these, both in a natural and in a mystical sense; as by them may be meant the angels of heaven, even those are not

pure in the sight of God, and in comparison of him, the most perfectly pure and holy Being; (see <sup><1848></sup>Job 4:18 15:15).

**Ver. 6.** *How much less man, [that is] a worm?* etc.] Whose original is of the earth, dwells in it, and is supported by it, and creeps into it again; who is impure by nature and by practice, weak and impotent to do anything that is spiritually good, or to defend himself from his spiritual enemies; and is mean and despicable, as even the best of men are, in their own eyes, and in the eyes of the world: and, if the best of men are comparable to such creatures, and our Lord himself, in human nature, was content to be called a worm, and no man; what must the worst of men be, or man be in and of himself, without the grace of God and righteousness of Christ, by which he can be only clean and righteous? (see <sup><2414></sup>Isaiah 41:14 <sup><1216></sup>Psalms 22:6); and, if the celestial bodies above mentioned are eclipsed of all their brightness and glory, in the presence of God; what a contemptible figure must man make in the court of heaven, who, in comparison of them, is but a worm, and much more so, as appearing before God?

*and the son of man, [which is] a worm;* which is repeated with a little variation for the confirmation of it; or it may signify, that even the first man was no other than of the earth, earthy, and so are all his sons. The Targum is,

“how much more man, who in his life is a reptile, and the son of man, who in his death is a worm?”

to which may be added, that he is in his grave a companion for the worms; and indeed it appears by the observations made through microscopes, that man, in his first state of generation, is really a worm <sup>f924</sup>; so that, as Pliny says <sup>f925</sup>, one that is a judge of things may pity and be ashamed of the sorry original of the proudest of animals. By this short reply of Bildad, and which contains little more than what had been before said, it is plain that he was tired of the controversy, and glad to give out.