

## HOW TO DEAL WITH THE “INCONSISTENCIES” OF GOD’S JUSTICE

**8** Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, <sup>2</sup>How long will you speak such things? The words of your mouth are only a blustering wind! <sup>3</sup>Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert righteousness? <sup>4</sup>If your children sinned against him, he has [merely] delivered them into the hand of their transgression. <sup>5</sup>If you will seek God diligently, and plead with the Almighty for mercy; <sup>6</sup>if you are pure and upright, he will rouse himself on your behalf, and restore your righteous estate. <sup>7</sup>Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be!

<sup>8</sup>Ask the previous generations and find out what their fathers learned, <sup>9</sup>for we were only born yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are only a shadow. <sup>10</sup>Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not utter words from [the depths of their experience]? <sup>11</sup>Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? <sup>12</sup>While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. <sup>13</sup>Such is the fate of all those who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. <sup>14</sup>His confidence will be cut off—that in which he trusts is like a spider’s web. <sup>15</sup>He leans against his web, but it cannot support him; he clings to it, but it does not hold [his weight]. <sup>16</sup>He is like a lush plant thriving in the sunshine; his shoots spread out over the garden. <sup>17</sup>His roots become entwined around a pile of rocks; they grasp a bed of rocks. <sup>18</sup>But when it is ripped from its place, that place disowns it and says, I never knew you. <sup>19</sup>Listen: This is the “joy” that comes from his way of life—and from the soil another plant grows.

<sup>20</sup>Surely God will not reject a blameless man, and neither will he strengthen the hand of evildoers. <sup>21</sup>He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. <sup>22</sup>Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the tents of the wicked will be gone.

**9** Then Job replied, <sup>2</sup>Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can a man be righteous before God? <sup>3</sup>If one plans to dispute with him, that man could not answer God once in a thousand times. <sup>4</sup>His wisdom is profound, his power is vast; who can defy him and succeed? <sup>5</sup>He moves the mountains without their consent, and overturns them in his anger. <sup>6</sup>He shakes the earth out of its place and makes its pillars tremble. <sup>7</sup>He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; and he seals up the stars. <sup>8</sup>He stretches out the heavens by himself, and walks upon the sea’s back. <sup>9</sup>He made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south. <sup>10</sup>He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, and miracles that cannot be counted. <sup>11</sup>He goes by me, but I do not see him; he passes on, but I cannot perceive him. <sup>12</sup>When he seizes the prey, who can restrain him? Who can say to him, What are you doing? <sup>13</sup>God will not restrain his anger; Rahab’s helpers lie prostrate before him.

<sup>14</sup>How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words [to argue] with him? <sup>15</sup>Though I am righteous, I cannot answer him; I can only implore the mercy of my Judge. <sup>16</sup>If I summoned him and he responded, I cannot believe that he would listen [to me; because] <sup>17</sup>he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without just cause. <sup>18</sup>He does not permit my spirit to be restored, but saturates me with bitterness. <sup>19</sup>If it is a matter of strength, he is the Mighty One! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon him? <sup>20</sup>Though I am innocent, my mouth would condemn me; I am

blameless, but it would pronounce me guilty. <sup>21</sup>I am blameless! But I have no regard for myself; I loathe my life!

<sup>22</sup>It is all the same; that is why I say, He destroys both the blameless and the wicked. <sup>23</sup>When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the calamity of the innocent. <sup>24</sup>The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, who then is it?

<sup>25</sup>My days pass swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy. <sup>26</sup>They skim by like sailing vessels made of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey. <sup>27</sup>If I say, "I will forget about my complaint; I will change my expression and be cheerful," <sup>28</sup>I still dread my suffering, because I know that you will not acquit me. <sup>29</sup>Since I am considered wicked, why should I struggle in vain? <sup>30</sup>Even if I washed myself with soap and cleansed my hands with lye, <sup>31</sup>you would plunge me into the filthy ditch so that my very clothes would detest me. <sup>32</sup>A man like me cannot answer him, we cannot confront each other in court. <sup>33</sup>There is no arbitrator between us who can lay his hand on both of us—<sup>34</sup>[some one who could] remove [God's] rod from me and not let his terror dismay me. <sup>35</sup>[If there were such an arbitrator], I would speak, not fearing [God; but as it is], I cannot do so by myself.

**10** My soul loathes life; I will freely vent my complaint; I will speak from the bitterness of my soul. <sup>2</sup>I will say to God, Do not condemn me! Tell me what charges you have against me! <sup>3</sup>Do you derive a benefit from oppressing me and rejecting the work your hands have made, while you smile upon the schemes of the wicked? <sup>4</sup>Do you have eyes like a mortal? Do you see like a man sees? <sup>5</sup>Are your days like those of a mortal or your years like those of a man, <sup>6</sup>that you must search out my faults and probe after my sin—<sup>7</sup>even though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand?

<sup>8</sup>Your hands shaped me and assembled me; now you are destroying me! <sup>9</sup>Remember that you have made me out of clay; will you now turn me back to dust? <sup>10</sup>Did you not pour me out like milk, and curdle me like cheese? <sup>11</sup>Did you not clothe me with skin and flesh, [did you not] knit me together with bones and sinews? <sup>12</sup>You granted me life and showed me kindness, and by your providence you watched over my spirit. <sup>13</sup>But you have [now] hidden these things in your heart; I know that they are still with you.

<sup>14</sup>If I sin, you take note and you will not allow my offense to go unpunished. <sup>15</sup>If I am guilty, woe to me! But even if I am innocent, I cannot lift up my head. I am filled with disgrace and very much aware of my misery. <sup>16</sup>If I hold [my head] high [in defiance], you would stalk me like a lion and display your awesome power against me. <sup>17</sup>You keep bringing new witnesses against me; your anger builds against me; you continually send reinforcements of troops against me. <sup>18</sup>Why did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me! <sup>19</sup>I wish I had been as though I had never lived; I wish I had been taken [directly] from the womb to the grave. <sup>20</sup>Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so that I may smile for a moment, <sup>21</sup>before I go—never to return—to the land of darkness and shadows, <sup>22</sup>to the land of gloom and darkness, [to the place] of deep shadows and the dissolution [of the body], where [even] the light is like darkness. (Job 8:1-10:22)

## Introduction

There may be times when we find it difficult to reconcile God's action (or inaction) with God's justice.

One such case is that of that pious warrior and servant of God, Uriah. Uriah served David as a faithful soldier who demonstrated unwavering commitment to his commander and fellow-soldiers. When he was called to return home from the battlefield, he refused to sleep with his wife, knowing that his fellow-soldiers were enduring the dangers and deprivations of war. What earthly reward did this faithful soldier receive? He was assigned to the front line of combat (and certain death), so that his wife might be taken from him (becoming David's wife) (2 Sam. 11.)

Another such case is that of that pious citizen of Israel, Naboth. In accordance with the law of the LORD, Naboth stood up against the unrighteous demand of king Ahab, refusing to sell his family inheritance, (which Ahab greatly coveted as a choice vineyard.) What earthly reward did this devout and courageous man of God receive? He was slandered and, by means of the false testimony of worthless men, he was unjustly executed—and his vineyard was then confiscated by the king (1 Kgs. 21.)

There may be times in our own lives when as Christians we find God's dealings with us hard to reconcile with God's justice. Job certainly experienced this in his life. His friend, Bildad, assures Job that God's actions are in accordance with justice (8:20): God, in His justice, makes a distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous. But Job responds by asserting that he has a hard time reconciling that truth with his present experience and what he sees in the world (9:22.) Job maintains that there are times when he does not see God making any distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous—this appears to be inconsistent with God's justice.

How are we as Christians to deal with the “inconsistencies” of God's justice?

### I. We Must Affirm God's Absolute Justice

Bildad rhetorically asks the question, *“Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert righteousness?”* (8:3.) The answer he anticipates and which he affirms is a resounding “No! God certainly does not pervert justice!” To support the truth that God does not pervert justice and to defend God's present actions with regard to Job and his family, Bildad implies that Job's children have sinned and thus deserve the calamity that has befallen them (8:4.) Furthermore, Bildad implies that Job himself has committed sin; but if Job will acknowledge his guilt, the LORD will forgive and restore him (8:5-7.)

Bildad appeals to the fact that the justice of God is the sure and unanimous testimony handed down from the ancients (8:8-10.) Job may not be inclined to listen to Bildad, but he surely cannot refute the testimony of the ancients (8:8-9.) Bildad assures Job, they will instruct you and tell you (8:10)—he implies that

they are in full agreement with his position: God does not pervert justice. He invites Job to listen and receive the teaching they impart from the depths of their experience (8:10b)—their teaching on this subject comes with the conviction of personal observation and experience.

Bildad now supplies examples, or illustrations, from the natural world in support of the truth that God does not pervert justice and does not undermine righteousness (8:11-19.) Just as surely as the tall stately papyrus (growing to a height of 8 to 10 feet) quickly withers when the marsh dries up, just as surely does the hope of the ungodly perish (8:11-13.) That is to say, their anticipated success and the peaceful enjoyment of their prosperity does not come to fulfillment; rather, they perish and are deprived of their wealth, in accordance with Psalm 55:23b, *"Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you."* Note: The ungodly are defined as *"those who forget God"* (8:13;) i.e.; they choose to live their lives without any reference to God or any regard for God. Rather than being God-centered in their thinking, they are man-centered and oriented only to this present world—the Hebrew word translated *"godless"* [אֱלֹהִים] means "profane," or "secular."

The ungodly man's confidence is as fragile and flimsy as a spider's web (8:14-15.) His confidence that he can violate God's moral law with impunity and not encounter God's just retribution, his confidence that he can live without accountability to God, is an illusion.

The godless man is compared to a vine that flourishes in the sun (8:16) and appears to be firmly rooted among the rocks (8:17.) Yet, this vine is ripped out of the earth and replaced by another plant (8:18-19.) According to Bildad, this is how the LORD in His justice deal with the ungodly. Even though they may prosper for a little while and even though they may appear to be firmly "rooted" without possibility of removal; nevertheless, they shall encounter the sure and unavoidable judgment of God.

Bildad concludes his speech with a final confident assertion of God's justice: *"Surely God will not reject a blameless man"* (i.e.; a man who is morally upright, as Job himself is described in 1:1,) *"and neither will he strengthen the hand of evildoers"* (8:20.) If Job heeds Bildad's counsel to submit to God, (acknowledging whatever wrong he has committed,) he will yet enjoy blessings from the Almighty (8:21-22a.) But (the Hebrew וְ is here better translated as the adversative, "but," rather than its usual use as the conjunctive, "and"), let Job be warned that if he does not repent he will experience the full judgment of God: *"the tents of the wicked will be gone"* (8:22b.) In other words, every last remnant of the ungodly man's transient life will be swept away before the judgment of the Almighty.

In responding to Bildad's speech, Job begins by affirming the truth of his claim that God is just (9:1-2a.) When Bildad has concluded his speech, Job begins his own speech by giving his "Amen" to Bildad's main point; namely, that God does not pervert justice—to this Job declares, *"Indeed, I know that this is true"* (9:2a.)

Likewise—especially at those times in life when we find God's dealings with us hard to reconcile with His justice—we must affirm God's absolute justice. We must give our "Amen" to Moses' testimony, *"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he"* (Deut. 32:4,) doing so by faith in His Word and in His character and in reliance upon His grace.

## II. We Must Admit Our Own Sinfulness

Job raises the question, *"But how can a man be righteous before God?"* (9:2b.) In raising this question Job is acknowledging both the righteousness/justice of God as well as his own sinfulness as a man who belongs to the fallen human race. If a man were to be interrogated by God with regard to that man's life and conduct, *"that man could not answer [God] once in a thousand times"* (9:3,) i.e.; that man could give no answer that would justify himself before God.

Job acknowledges that it is inconceivable for a mortal, sinful man to set himself in opposition to God and emerge victorious (9:4-12.) To the LORD must be ascribed infinite wisdom, as well as the infinite strength to accomplish what His wisdom conceives (9:4a.) Therefore, no one can defy God and succeed (9:4b.)

Job now proceeds to list examples of the majestic strength and wisdom of God. When God draws near as the mighty Judge, the creation itself trembles at His presence (9:5-7.) Note, also, Isaiah 13:11,13,

*"I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. I will bring to an end the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless ... <sup>13</sup>Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place by the wrath of Jehovah of hosts on the day his fierce anger [is expressed]."*

Job testifies that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe: all has been created by Him, all is subject to Him, all is accountable to Him (9:8-10.) The Almighty, in His transcendence, is beyond man's ability to perceive, let alone restrain; no one can stand up to the Almighty, successfully oppose His will, and demand that He give an account of His actions (9:11-12.) Note, also, the testimony of King Nebuchadnezzar,

*At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my sanity was restored to me. Then I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and*



*his kingdom continues from generation to generation. <sup>35</sup>All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can push away his hand, or demand of him, What are you doing? ...<sup>37</sup>Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and honor the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just, and he is able to humble those who walk in pride. (Dan. 4:34-35,37)*

Note: Throughout this passage Job emphasizes the awesome might of God; but it must be understood that in Scripture true, irresistible might is derived from righteousness, and righteousness is the source of true, unmovable might. Referring to God, Elihu asks Job, *“Will you condemn the just and mighty One?”* (Job 34:17b.)

Job acknowledges that when God asserts Himself as the righteous Judge and manifests His righteous indignation, he will not restrain his anger (9:13.) *“Rahab’s helpers lie prostrate before him”* (9:13b.) *“Rahab”* is one of the sea monsters prominent in the mythology/theology of Israel’s pagan neighbors. In the Old Testament the term is used to personify the cosmic forces of evil that set themselves in opposition to God—but when the Almighty asserts Himself as the righteous Judge of all the earth, no one can come to the help of *“Rahab”* to deliver this cosmic monster from the righteous judgment of God.

If the cosmic forces of evil cannot withstand God, how much less can Job as a mere mortal enter into litigation against God and prevail? (9:14.) Job recognizes that he could not endure God’s cross examination; in legal contexts the term “to argue,” or, “to answer,” means “to deliver a defense” under cross examination (Hartley, p. 175, footnote #17.) Even if he were righteous, Job would not dare to contest his innocence before God; he confesses, *“I could only implore the mercy of my Judge”* (9:15.) Such is Job’s appreciation of the infinite righteousness of God, and his awareness of his own lack of true righteousness before God in the ultimate sense.

Like Job, we, too, must acknowledge our own sinfulness and lack of true righteousness before God (cp. Isaiah 64:6; Philippians 3:7-9;) a sinfulness that testifies that we do not have an unwavering commitment to justice, a sinfulness that impairs our understanding of justice. By way of illustration, it is like a drunken man arguing his case before the judge: when he opens his mouth his guilt becomes evident, and it impairs his ability to argue rationally.

*All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. All of us shrivel up like a leaf; and, like the wind, our iniquities sweep us away. (Isa. 64:6)*

*However, whatever things were gain to me, these things I now regard as loss on account of Christ. <sup>8</sup>But much more than that, I regard all things as loss on*

*account of the all-surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of whom I have suffered the loss of all things. Indeed, I regard [all such things as] rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup>and be found in him—not having my own righteousness derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that is from God [and received] by faith.* (Phil. 3:7-9) This is Paul’s testimony when he was confronted with the absolute righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### III. We Must Not Succumb to Despair

Although Job acknowledges himself to be a sinner before the infinitely holy God (9:2b-3,) he is also aware of the fact that he is a pious man: a man who has diligently sought to live in devotion to God and has not willfully transgressed against the law of God. As such, his present calamities administered by God are incomprehensible to him—given these circumstances, Job is precipitously close to despair.

In his moment of weakness, caused by his physical and spiritual anguish, Job questions God’s goodness and justice (9:16-18.) Job declares that if he were to call upon the LORD and the LORD were to answer him, he has no confidence that the LORD would listen to him and come to his rescue (9:16.) The reason Job feels this way is due to the fact that the LORD *“crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without [just] cause”* (9:17.) Job is maintaining that there is no reason why he, a righteous man—one who trusts in the LORD and is devoted to Him—should be suffering the calamities reserved for the ungodly. The LORD shows him no mercy, giving him no respite; but rather, is filling him with bitterness (9:18.)

Job acknowledges the fact that he is at the mercy of God—that he is no match for God (9:19-20.) The LORD God is the Almighty with whom no man can contend (9:19a.) Since God Himself is the source of justice, there is no one else to whom Job can appeal: there is no higher authority than God Himself (9:19b.) Furthermore, Job is aware of his own sinful state, despite his sincere endeavor to lead a pious and godly life (9:20.) Job recognizes and testifies that it is his mouth that would condemn him and demonstrate him to be a sinner. He is in full agreement with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ when He declared, *“out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks ...<sup>36</sup>But I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken; <sup>37</sup>for by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned”* (Matt. 12:34b, 36-37.)

In a moment of despair, Job casts caution (and hope) to the wind: *“I am blameless! [But] I have no regard for myself; I loathe my life!”* (9:21.) He asserts that he is *“blameless;”* i.e.; he is innocent, upright. Again, *“blameless”* is being used in the sense of *“godly, devoted to the LORD,”* not in the sense of being without sin. He then goes on to accuse God of acting unjustly: *“[God] destroys [i.e.; condemns] both the blameless and the wicked”* (9:22.)

Job proceeds to submit evidence that appears to support the charge he has just made: *“When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the calamity of the innocent”* (9:23.) When a plague (be it a flood or disease or some other form of devastation) sweeps through the land, God *“mocks the calamity of the innocent.”* That is to say, the innocent succumb to the plague just like the wicked, both are swept away before the calamity. God does not spare the innocent and cause only the wicked to be afflicted by the scourge. Job further charges that God is indifferent to the cause of righteousness: the wicked dominate the world, and God *“blindfolds its judges”* so they do not see and take the appropriate action against the wicked—ultimately, it must be God who is responsible for these things (9:24.)

Job sees his life swiftly passing away. He compares his fleeting days to a swift runner, or, courier, who ran with a message from one city to another (9:25;) ... to an Egyptian skiff, a sleek ship that was known for its speed (9:26a;) ... and to an eagle as it swoops down on its prey with rocket-like speed (9:26b.) Furthermore, his days pass without a glimpse of joy (9:25b.)

It is not possible for him to forget his complaint (i.e.; his protest against his “unwarranted” calamities,) change his expression, and be cheerful (9:27.) He cannot do so because he is in dread of what he still anticipates: *“I [still] dread my suffering”* (9:28a.) The pains he now suffers—“undeservedly”—convince him that God will finally condemn him (9:28b-29a.)

Job cries out, *“[Since] I am considered wicked, why should I struggle in vain?”* (9:29.) If God is determined to treat him in the same way as the wicked, why should he strive to lead a pious life, why should he endeavor to maintain his integrity? If he were to purify himself and make himself morally clean, *“Even if I washed myself with soap and cleansed my hands with lye”* (9:30,) Job is convinced that God would plunge him into *“the filthy ditch”* (i.e.; the latrine) (9:31.) At this point Job views God as being opposed not only to himself personally, but even opposed to his endeavors to present himself as righteous before God.

What adds to Job’s sense of despair is the fact that there is no one else to whom he can appeal his case—no one else to whom he can appeal for justice and mercy (9:32-33.) God is not a fellow man. If it were a human adversary who was contending against Job, then Job could appeal his case to a higher authority, namely, to God—but it is God Himself who appears to be Job’s adversary. There is no *“arbitrator”* between Job and God; there is no higher authority to whom God must submit—God Himself is the ultimate authority. There is no one who can remove God’s rod, which constantly threatens Job and intimidates him, preventing him from even making a reasonable case in his defense (9:34-35.)

Casting all caution (and reverent fear of God) aside, Job, in his despair and bitterness of soul, contemplates taking God’s own position as sovereign Judge (10:1-7.) Job boldly and impiously demands that God not render a verdict of



guilty against him; furthermore, Job challenges God to submit evidence to support His case against him (10:2.) Job now raises a challenge to God's moral integrity: Does it seem good to God for Him to oppress and reject the work of His hands? (10:3a) Does God deem it to be a good thing to oppress the man whom His has made, a man who is devoted to Him, and smile upon the schemes of the wicked? (10:3b)

Job asks God, "*Do you have eyes like a mortal?*" (10:4) Job ... asks God if in making a judgment His eyesight is limited like a human being's. If God has eyes like a mortal, He would see only partially, looking only on the externals of a matter, not on the inner motivations (Hartley, pp 184-185.) If that be the case, then God has misjudged His faithful servant, failing to take into account a godly devotion that springs from his heart.

Job further inquires, "*Are your days like those of a mortal?*" (10:5) Job wonders if God feels limited by a short life span as a human being does in His search to learn if His servant has sinned in any way. If God feels pressured by time constrains, this may explain why He is using such severe measures to detect any hidden faults in His servant's life or character (Hartley, p. 185.)

Job pleads with God to take pity on him, but at present Job sees no prospect that God will indeed do so (10:8-17.) Job reminds God that He has created him with His own hands, yet now God seeks to destroy this very one whom He so lovingly and painstakingly made (10:8.) He pleads with God to remember that he has been made out of clay (i.e.; he is fragile;) will God reduce him once again to dust? (10:9) Note: The return to dust is part of the curse/judgment God originally pronounced against Adam's sin. Following Adam's willful transgression, the LORD declared, "*You are dust, and unto dust shall you return*" (Gen. 3:19b.)

Job goes on to describe his conception, (using the imagery of milk being curdled into cheese; Hartley, p. 187,) and the fact that upon being born he became the object of God's affection and care (10:10-12.) But now God has "*hidden these things in [His] heart*"—i.e.; God has withdrawn His affection and care for Job, He has hidden these attributes deep within the recesses of His own heart—this is evident from the way that God now treats Job (10:13-17.) If Job sins, God will execute His judgment against him and show him no mercy (10:14.) If Job is wicked, (if he defiantly transgresses against God's law,) woe to him; there is no hope, only the prospect of certain condemnation without God allowing for the possibility of his repentance (10:15a.) Even if Job is righteous there is no hope; for God will expose his natural sinful condition and condemn him (10:15b.) If Job were to lift himself up in defiant pride, the LORD would hunt him down like a lion (10:16.) Job asserts that God has set Himself against him. As a prosecuting attorney, God assembles more and more witnesses against him; ...as an enemy general, God sends more and more troops against him (10:17.)

Unlike Job, we, as New Testament era Christians who have the light of Calvary, must not succumb to despair:

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:31-35, 37-39)*

*This is how God showed his love toward us: He sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 Jn. 4:9-10)*

#### **IV. We Must Look Beyond the Grave**

Job ponders the question, If God finds no favor in him and even sets Himself in opposition to him (cp. 10:13-17,) why has God given him life? (10:18a.) Job reasons that it were better for him not to have been born—or to have died prematurely at the time of his birth (10:18b-19.)

Since the days of his life are few, Job pleads with God to lift His hand of oppression from off him so that he may have a brief moment of relief and comfort before his death (10:20.) What Job contemplates as his future is the grave: *“the land of darkness and shadows,”* the land where *“[even] the light is like darkness”* (10:21-22.) In his present state of agony and despair, Job contemplates the grave as his future destination after a life that has become engulfed in inexplicable suffering meted out by God Himself.

Unlike Job in this moment of despair, we must look beyond the grave for the answer and the solution to the dilemma when we presently find God’s dealings with us and His actions (or inaction) in the world to be humanly impossible to reconcile with His justice: *“[God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead”* (Acts 17:31.) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the proof of God’s justice and the proof that God will judge the world with justice.

## **Conclusion**

There may be times in his life when the Christian finds God's dealings with him hard to reconcile with God's justice.

As Christians, what are we to do at such times?

Based upon this present passage of Job as well as the rest of Scripture, we are exhorted to respond at those times in the following way: 1) we must affirm God's absolute justice; 2) we must admit our own sinfulness, which demonstrates our own lack of unwavering commitment to justice and to some degree impairs our understanding of justice; and 3) we must not succumb to despair—we must look beyond the grave for the answer, namely, to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the day He appears as the righteous Judge of all the earth.