

BIBLE CLASS 14. 03. 2024 GOD MAKES MY HEART SOFT

Dear brothers and sisters,

This observation of Job that “God makes my heart soft” (23:16) is a part of the first principles of the Oracles of God. The first of all principles being “Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all you soul, and with all your mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment”. It is the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. It is the most magnificent, and the most comforting, and the most purifying of all truths; this truth, that the beginning of things and the foundation of things is an Almighty, Eternal Person, who is the FATHER OF ALL—especially when seen in that part of this truth which Paul explains viz., that “He is not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27). We ask Paul, how far is He from us? How near is He to every one of us? and we get the answer in the very next sentence which he speaks: “FOR *in Him we live and move and have our being.*” We have the assurance that Yahweh through Moses gave the Israelites concerning his Word,

“It *is* not in heaven, that thou should say, “Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it?”

Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou should say, “Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?”

But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it. (Deut. 30:12-14) So Paul states “In him” we live, that is when we are baptized into the name of the Father and the Name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. “IN HIM; ” how much nearer could we get than this? He has told us He “fills heaven and earth” (Jer. 23:24).

We are as near Him on the planet earth as we should be in His burning presence in the heart of the universe; His Presence fills all space, the invisible energy of His power embraces all things in heaven and earth, so that everything is visible and audible to Him. Is not this a glorious, strengthening, warming, elevating truth? Let men and women embrace it—let them rest on it in full assurance of faith, and they will be

encouraged against all the difficulties of the present evil state. He will find it no vain figure of speech to call God, as David calls Him—his refuge, his high tower, his shield, and his defense. He will be able without doubt to say with him, “God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble.”

However there is one problem to this consolation at present. God is silent, and does not show His hand. We look in vain to find Him in the widest range of search. We may travel all lands, explore the thickest forests, ascend the highest mountains, or sail far off on the sea to distant zones; we may direct our searching gaze through the widest sweeping telescope among the glittering hosts that fill the boundless fields of space, or subject the elements to strictest analysis in the laboratory, or the fabric of being to the minutest scrutiny of the microscope, and we should, after all our search, have to say with Job: “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat. . . Behold, I go forward, but he is not; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot observe him; He hides himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him” (Job. 23:3, 8, 9).

This fact can be very distressing sometimes—needlessly so in fact, yet really so to us who may feel distraught. They are apt to think it strange if God be thus near to every one of us, that the fact should not be apparent to sense in some way or other. They see the evidence of power and wisdom in all the works of nature—in things great and things small: they decide in their inmost hearts that there must be a First Cause adequate to the production of these evidently wisdom marked and power-indicating developments: yet they have a dreadful reservation in distrust of this verdict of reason. They have a feeling that if God is everywhere, He ought to show himself.

There is a reason why He does not, which is revealed, and must be true. Philosophy can give us no reason. Philosophy is darkness itself in all things relating to God. The truth supplies the explanation of the

distressing fact lamented even by David, that God should be a stranger to the earth, that He should hide His hand in His bosom and cover His presence with cloud. Job too came to this conclusion when as he states;- "...but He knows the way that I take: when he has tried me, I shall come forth as Gold

God is great and holy and dreadful, and to be held in reverence. He is not to be mocked. He cannot look on sin. The inhabitants of the earth are steeped in sin. "They are all gone astray, There is none that doeth good—no, not one." From the day that Adam introduced disobedience and death, He has only been approached in sacrifice through faith.

The visible indications of the divine presence has been restrained, and as sin has gone on with increasing power and prevalence, the reasons for the divine reserve have acquired increasing strength, until at this present time, if it were not for His purpose, He would abandon the earth altogether, or more probably break forth destructively towards the entire race, as He did in the days of Noah. But He has a purpose which restrains Him—a purpose of wisdom and kindness, and for the sake of this, sin and sinners are tolerated for a season. He purposes finally a total change in the state of things upon the earth. He announced earlier this purpose in this indisputable form: "As truly as I live, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory."

So we find that as Job reflecting on his own experience of loss of family, loss of wealth and health, a suspect to his friends who provided nothing but allegations to throw at him, turns to his Maker saying, For God is making my heart, (i.e. inner man, mind, will, understanding) soft, (Heb. rakak) soft, tender, malleable (such as shaping a pot from clay) This Divine purpose Paul proceeded to explain to the "learned" Athenians; and this is the second point of his explanation of the gospel of the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus Christ, to be briefly glanced at. He said "²⁹ Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent: Because

he has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained; *whereof* he has given assurance unto all *men*, in that he has raised him from the dead.

In this is involved all that the heart can desire. It comes as the necessary counterpart of God's existence and greatness. The appointment of "a day" in which that existence will be as manifest to sense as it is to reason—and as powerful in the regulation of human affairs as it is in the maintenance of the universe, is a very glorious fact, and in the very nature of it glad-tidings (or gospel).

These experiences of Job reinforced his belief in God and the necessity of them, reinforcing his faith so that he could testify "For I know *that* my redeemer lives, 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. (Job 19:25-27)

Here we learn that Job believed in the resurrection of the dead and the establishment of world central government under of appointment his living redeemer our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1Pe 1:3-7)

DHH