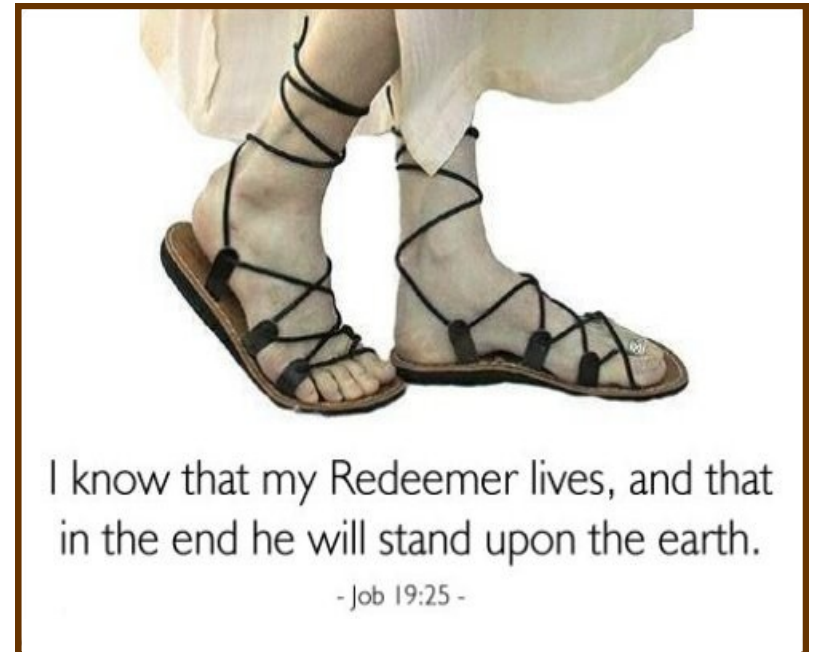


FOR MORE PAMPHLETS ON BOOKS OF THE BIBLE  
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.pamphletstoinspire.com](http://www.pamphletstoinspire.com)

# *Job*

## *Chapter Twenty Two:*



I know that my Redeemer lives, and that  
in the end he will stand upon the earth.

- Job 19:25 -

## *The Third Discourse of Eliphaz*

*The commentary on the Book of Job, is by Saint Thomas Aquinas and was translated by Brian Mulladay and edited by Rev. Joseph Kenny, O.P.*

*The book shows how human affairs are ruled by divine providence using probable arguments.*

## **CHAPTER TWENTY TWO: THE THIRD DISCOURSE OF ELIPHAZ**

### **The First Lesson: Job is Presumptuous**

1 Eliphaz the Temanite took up the argument and said: 2 Can man be compared to God, even if he is perfect in knowledge? 3 What advantage is there for God if you will be just? Or what will you give him if your life will be blameless? 4 In fear will he blame you and come with you into judgment? 5 Is it not because of your great malice and your infinite iniquities? 6 For you took away the pledge of security of your brother without cause and you despoiled the naked of their clothes. 7 You did not give water to the weary and you have taken bread from the hungry. 8 You gained possession of your land by the strength of your arm and you kept it because you were the most powerful. 9 You sent widows away empty-handed and you weakened the arms of the orphans. 10 On that account you are surrounded with snares and sudden dread throws you into confusion. 11 You thought that you would not see darkness and you would not be oppressed by the force of flood waters. 12 Do you think that God is higher than heaven and is elevated above the highest star? 13 And you say: What, indeed, does the Lord know? He judges as though through a fog. 14 The clouds are his hiding place and he does not see ours, and he walks about the hinges of heaven.

When blessed Job had finished speaking, Eliphaz did not understand his words according to the intention with which they were spoken. Indeed, when Job had spoken first about the exalted character of the matter, he said “Is my debate against man,” (21:4) Eliphaz takes this to have been said in such a way as if to dispute contentiously with God, and so accuses him of presumption for three reasons. First, one is provoked to discussion or dispute with another when one sees him comparable to himself in knowledge of the truth, so that from mutual discussion something hidden may be brought to light. However, it is especially presumptuous for man to dare to compare his knowledge to divine knowledge, and so he says, “Can man be compared to God, even if he is perfect in knowledge?” as if to say: “No” because the knowledge of God is infinite. Second, someone is provoked to dispute or reason with another because of things which he received from him, so that a comparison of things given and things received may be made. However, it is presumptuous that man should think that the goods which he does are useful to God, and so the Psalmist says, “I said to the Lord: You are my God because you do not need my goods,” (15:2) and so he continues, “What advantage is there for God if you will be just,” in doing good works? “Or what will you give him if your life will be blameless,” by abstaining from sin? Third, someone is challenged in a judgment with another from the fear of the higher power of the one calling him into judgment, which is a wicked thing to think of God. Thus he says, “In fear,” of some judge, “will he blame you,” by accusing you, “and come with you in judgment,” as if summoned by an equal? Pg 1

***“Can man be compared to God,  
even if he is perfect in knowledge?”***

## **END OF JOB CHAPTER 22**

Then, since Job had said that the opinions of those who had said that his house had perished like “the tents of the wicked” (21:28) were unjust, Eliphaz intends to show that his opinion is right when he says, “Is it not because of your great malice and your infinite iniquities?”, as if to say: God accuses you by afflicting punishments, not because of fear, but because of the love of justice, to punish your sins. So “malice” can refer to the sins by which he wounded others; “iniquity” to the sins by which he omitted the works of justice. So he says the malice is “great” and the iniquities are “infinite”, because man sin in more things by omission than by commission. Then he first explains an observation about injuries born to neighbors, which are sometimes inflicted by means of calumny under the pretext of justice. So he says, “You took away the pledge of security of your brother without cause,” without necessary things, because you were able to trust your brothers without a pledge of security. Sometimes harms are inflicted without any tint of justice, and as to this he says, “You despoiled the naked of their clothes.” This can be understood in two ways: in one way because in despoiling them you have left them naked, leaving them nothing; in another way, because although they were naked and without sufficient clothing, you took away what little they had. He continues then with the omission of the good works saying, “you did not give water to the weary.” They needed drink because of the thirst which arises from the toil of the journey, as if to say: You did not bear help and solace to workers and the afflicted. “And you have taken bread from the hungry,” saying in effect: You did not help the needy. These things are said about the sins which he committed as a private person.

He next speaks about sins which relate to things given into his rule. Among these he places first that he obtained his dominion not by justice, but by violence, and so he says, “You gained possession of your land by the strength of you arm,” for you acquired dominion of the land by your own force. He says second that he did not govern his subjects with justice, but with force, according to that is said in Wisdom, “Let our strength be the law of injustice.” (2:11) So he then says, “and you kept it because you were the most powerful,” as if to say: You used your subjects for your own will with the might of force. He treats third of evil judgments, since he did not render justice to weak persons, and so he then says, “You sent widows away empty handed,” since you did not do justice for them against their adversaries, as Isaiah says, “The cause of the widows has no place with them.” (1:23) You even oppressed the weak, and so he then says, “and you weakened the arms of the orphans,” as if to say: If there were any power in them, you have taken it away, contrary to what is said in Psalm 9, “To judge in favor of the humble and the orphan.” (v.35)

He then states that punishments have come upon him because of these faults, and so he says, "On that account you are surrounded with snares," for you are oppressed on all sides with adversities so that no place is open for you to escape after you have fallen into them. Nor were you even able to hide before because they came upon you suddenly, and so he says, "and sudden dread throws you into confusion," since evil things overcame him suddenly resulting in his being able to fear others also. He shows the reason why they come on him suddenly when he then says, "You thought that you would not see darkness," that is, you would not arrive at these doubts in which you do not know what to do, which refers to the snares. Then, as to the fear which throws him into confusion he says, "and you would not be oppressed by the force of flood waters," as if to say: You thought that you would never come to be oppressed by the violence and the great number of adversities coming from above, as 1 Thessalonians says, "When they say: peace and security, sudden destruction will come upon them from above." (5:3)

He concludes and lists the character of these goods which he promises will be restored to him. He places first security resulting from the protection of God when he says, "The Almighty will fight against your enemies," so that they cannot destroy again what will be restored to you by God. He places second the abundance of riches when he says, "and you will heap up masses of silver." All riches are really meant by the name of silver because money is commonly made from silver. Lest he seems to only promise corporeal goods, he adds spiritual goods, among which he places first that man might love God and enjoy him, and so the text continues, "Then you will abound in the delights of the Almighty above," when you have peace with him you will delight in him. Since each man looks with pleasure on what he delights in he then says, "and you will raise your face (your mind) up to God," so you can contemplate him often. From this contemplation you will get confidence in having recourse to him, and so he then says, "you will ask him." This will not be without result and so the text says, "and he will hear you." Those whom God has heard usually fulfill the promises which they made in praying. So he says, "and you will fulfill your promises," as the sign that you have been heard. Then he promises success and prosperity in all his plans when he says, "You will decide on a matter," that is, you will order by your own providence how something will be, "and it will come to you," for your hope will not be in vain. Lest you hesitate about what should be decided, what means you should use will be clear to you, and so he then says, "and light will shine on you ways," that is, it will appear clearly to you by what ways you should proceed.

He shows the reason for these promises saying, "He who will be humbled," by subjecting himself to God in his affection, "will be in glory," which he will get from God. "And he who lowered his eyes," to not think something stupid and proud in his intellect against God," will be saved," freed, from evils and made steadfast in good. Still not only is interior humility of the affection and the intellect required for salvation, but exterior purity of works is also necessary, and so he then says, "The innocent will be saved." He shows by what merit he will be saved saying, "he will be saved through the cleanness of his hands," that is, the innocence of his works. Consider here Eliphaz not only promises Job temporal goods which can be common to good and evil (if he is converted) as he had already, (5: 17-26) but also spiritual goods, which are proper to good men. But he still promises these only in this life.

Since he had said (v.17) that this kind of ruin happens to the wicked because they struggled against God, so that Job is able to avoid a similar overturning when he adds, "Go along with him and be at peace," as if to say: You were agitated because you wanted to argue against him. "And in this," through that peace by which you will be reconciled with him, "you will bear the best fruit," as if to say: You will attain whatever can be best as the fruit of this peace. He shows how he should find comfort in God in the next statement, "Receive the law from his mouth," as if to say: Do not think that human affairs are not ruled by divine providence, but rather you should dispose your life according to the law of his government. Since some profess the law of the divine government but yet did not follow it in practice, he then says, "and put his decrees in your heart," to meditate on his commandments and disposed to keep them. He shows in what manner he will experience these "best of fruits" saying, "If you will return to the Almighty," to believe in his omnipotence and you submit yourself to him, "he will rebuild you," as if to say: The prosperity of your house which was destroyed will be restored. He then shows how he should return perfectly to God saying, "and you will put evil far from your tent (Here "if" should be understood so that the literal text reads, if you will put evil far from your tent) He (God) will give flint in place of earth and golden torrents in place of flint." His saying, "If you will put evil far from your tent," explains what he had said, ""If you return to the Almighty." (v. 23) He does not say: "If you will put evil far from you," but "from your tent," because he wants to insinuate that adversity happened to him not only for his own personal sins but also for the sins of his family. To be sure when he says, "he will give flint in place of earth," "flint" refers to what he had said, "you will be rebuilt," to indicate that there will be a restoration, but to something greater, so he can receive greater things in place of those he lost. Flint is more precious than the soil of the earth, and gold than flint.

The opinion that one will not suffer punishments for sins is related to the fact that one does not believe that God has providence over human things. He perhaps wished to twist what Job had said, "Will anyone teach God knowledge," (21:22) which he interpreted wrongly to express a defect of divine knowledge, and so it seems right to him to imply that Job denies the providence of God. Consider that some deny that God has knowledge and providence over human affairs because of the high character of his substance, to which they say his knowledge is proportioned so that he knows nothing except himself. They think that his knowledge would be defiled if it were extended to lower things, and so he says, "Do you think that God is higher than heaven," the whole universe of creatures, "and is elevated above the greatest of the stars," above the highest of the creatures? He draws the conclusion of this thought, "And you say: What, indeed, does God know?" about those lower things? Still, men of this sort do not totally take knowledge of things away from God, but they say that he knows them universally, for example, by knowing the nature of their being or universal causes, and so he says, "He judges as though through a fog." For to know something only in universal is to know it imperfectly, and so he calls this knowledge foggy, as if it depends on what is seen far off as if in a mist. So he knows there is a man, but he doesn't know who he is. He shows this to be analogous to what happens with men, among whom one who hides in some place is not seen by those who are outside the place, and he does not see them. "The clouds are his hiding place and he does not see ours," as if to say: Just as he is hidden from us as though obscured by the clouds, because we cannot know fully what is above the clouds. Therefore, the converse is true. He does not see those things which pertain to us as if they existed under the clouds, as Ezekiel says, speaking in the person of one who has this opinion, "The Lord has forsaken the earth, he does not see." (9:9) For they thought that since things which are on the earth are subject to many defects and disorders they are not ruled by divine providence. Only the heavens whose order remains without defect are so ruled, and so he says, "And he walks about the hinges of heaven." A hinge is something on which a door turns. Therefore, by this he means that heaven is moved by the providence of God and divine providence descends to these lower things from this motion like a door. For just as they say that God only knows human things in universal, so they say that he governs human affairs, but through universal causes which he governs by himself. Perhaps he wanted to allude to what Job had said above, "Who judges eminent men." (21:22)

## The Second Lesson: The Justice of God Triumphs

15 Do you want to follow the path of the world, which wicked men have trod? 16 They were snatched away before their time and the river undermined their foundation. 17 They told God: Depart from us. They thought the Almighty could do nothing. 18 Although he filled their houses with good things; let the opinion of these men be far from me. 19 The just will see it and will rejoice and the innocent will mock them. 20 Has not their insolence been beaten down and fire devoured their remains? 21 Go along with him and be at peace, and in this you will bear the best fruit. 22 Receive the law from his mouth and put his decrees in your heart. 23 If you will return to the Almighty, he will rebuild you; and will put evil far from your tent. 24 He will give flint in place of earth and golden torrents in place of flint. 25 The Almighty will fight against your enemies and you will heap up masses of silver. 26 Then you will abound in the delights of the Almighty above and you will raise your face up to God. 27 You will ask him and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your promises. 28 You will decide on the matter, and it will come to you, and light will shine on your ways. 29 He who will be humbled, will be in glory and he who lowered his eyes will be saved. 30 The innocent will be saved; he will be saved by the cleanliness of his hands.

In the words above, Eliphaz seems to have imposed the charge on Job that he did not believe that God had providence in human affairs. Now as a consequence he seems to impose on him the effect of this lack of faith. For those who do not believe that God has care of human affairs usually follow their own will in all things, disdain the fear of God, and so he says, "Do you want to follow the path of the world?", the conduct of those who believe in nothing but those temporal things which they see, and from this proceed to works of injustice. So he then says, "which wicked men have trod?" They are said to trod a path who frequent it, and intentionally and without hesitation wear it away. So those who do not believe in divine providence frequently, freely, and intentionally, do works of injustice. This does not happen to those who believe in divine providence, although sometimes they fall into injustice from weakness. Lest they appear to do this with impunity he then says, "They were snatched away before their time," because they died without completing their natural span of life, and he assigns the cause for this saying, "and the river undermined their foundation." The foundation of each man is that on which his hope principally rests. Such men do not place their hope in God, but only in temporal things which are corrupted by the changing course itself of things which he calls a river.

He explains what he means by path above when he says, "They told God: Depart from us," for in their affection they disdained both him and his spiritual goods. He describes their lack of faith in the intellect saying, "They thought the Almighty could do nothing," because if the care of human affairs does not belong to him, he can do nothing good or ill to man. This is contrary to the idea of omnipotence. To aggravate their fault he then speaks about their ingratitude saying, "though he filled their houses with good things," with temporal things which are given by God to men," To disprove their assertion he says, "let the opinion of these men be far from me."

Lest it seem the just also are overturned together with the wicked, Eliphaz excludes this adding, "The just will see it and will rejoice," and by this he wants to say that the just will not be ruined, but will live in joy. To show that they lack justice because they rejoiced over the ruin of others he says, "and the innocent will mock them," as if to say: The innocent can mock them safeguarding their innocence by the fact that they are undermined against their opinion. In this they rejoice in divine justice. This action seems to answer what Job had said directly, "After this, if it seems right to you, laugh," (21:3) where he seemed to complain that he was being mocked by them.

To answer any doubts that the river has undermined the foundation of evil men, he proposes this as something clear in question form, "Has not their insolence been beaten down?" For they seemed from earthly prosperity, or also from their own pride to grow high like a tree. But as the growth of a tree is suddenly interrupted by cutting it down, so also their being raised up suddenly ceases through the removal of these things. Sometimes when a tree is cut it does not grow higher, but still remains the same in length. If, however, it is burned, no trace of its past height remains. So also if a man who is a sinner has died or been cast down, his sons also perish and his riches are taken away by the fire of adversity, and nothing will appear to remain of his former eminence; and so he continues, "And fire devoured their remains," in the heat of tribulation, according to James, "The sun rose hot and dried the hay." (1:11) The "remains" of a man express his sons or whatever else remains of him after him.