

THE GREATEST RIDDLE OF ALL AGES

JOB 25:4-6 • TV151B

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Job 25:4-6

“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?”

I’m not looking for catchy titles for sermons but I do have a title that I think belongs to this message. When I prepared the message this title fit the message. I think it will be an interesting message. I think this question that I am asking is going to be beneficial to all of us, to me and to you.

Here is the title and here is the question: **“WHAT IS THE GREATEST RIDDLE OF ALL AGES?”**

Now, I am going to be using **Job 25**. If you want to follow along in your Bible, turn to the **25th chapter of Job** and I will be reading verses: **4 through 6**. Here is the message on **“WHAT IS THE GREATEST RIDDLE OF ALL AGES?”**

Isaiah wrote: *“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord, high and lifted up and his train filled the temple and the seraphim’s cried one to another, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.”*

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My friend, this fact is established from Genesis to Revelation: God is infinitely, unchangeably, everlastingly holy. God is holy. Even Moses could not look on God and live. In order to see the goodness of God, the glory of God, Moses himself had to be hid in the cleft of the rock. *“God is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.”*

First of all: What I am trying to establish is what I believe the Word of God establishes, that God is infinitely, immutably, holy!

Secondly: We know from the Scriptures and from experience, not only from God’s Word but from our own hearts; we know what man is by birth and by practice and by nature, *“there is none righteous, no not one. There’s none good, no not one. There’s none that understandeth, no not one, none.”*

Do you see all of those statements *“none, no not one, none, no not one, none righteous, none good, none profitable, no not one?”*

God said: *“He looked down from heaven to see if there was one righteous man and he found that they were all gone out of the way, altogether become unprofitable. He saw that every imagination of man’s heart was evil continually.”*

He said this: *“Man at his best state, (none of us have obtained unto our best state yet); man at his best state is altogether vanity. Even our righteousnesses are filthy rags.”*

Now think about that; think of the distance between absolute, immutable, infinite holiness, and absolute sin and guilt. Our sin is so double-dyed and so deep in the stain that just as an *“Ethiopian can’t change the color of his skin and a leper cannot change his spots, neither can we do good.”* We can’t do any good; *“in our flesh dwelleth no good thing.”*

God is an eternal Spirit and we are dying flesh. God is Light and we love darkness. God is life and we are death. *“God is true and all men are liars.”* That is what the Scripture says: *“God is good and in the flesh no man can please God.”*

So, my friends; here is the question; here is the question of questions. Here is the greatest riddle of all ages, right here in **Job 25: 4 through 6** and it is often asked in the Scriptures; here, listen to it!

How then, this being true, God’s infinite, immutable, immaculate, eternal holiness, man’s depth of depravity and degradation and sin: *“How then can man be just with God?”* You see, that is the question and that is the riddle.

“How can he be clean that’s born of a woman? Behold; the moon; (look at the moon), it shineth not. The stars are not clean in God’s sight.” That is what the Lord says; *“The stars are not pure in God’s sight, how much less is man that is a worm,”* and the word *“worm”* means maggot. It’s a terrible word but that is what it is.

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In **Job 15: 14 through 16**, listen to this: *“What is man?”* Here’s that same riddle. They just keep on asking it in God’s Word because all of these prophets knew about sin and about God’s holiness. All of these prophets like Isaiah that had seen the Lord, consequently, had seen themselves.

Job said: *“I have seen the Lord; I hate myself.”* Daniel said: *“I have seen the Lord; my comeliness melted into corruption.”* These men had seen the Lord. These were not jack-legged preachers. These men had seen the Lord.

Now listen to Job again: *“What is man that he should be clean: And he that is born of woman that he should be righteous? Behold; God puts no trust in his saints. The heavens are not clean in God’s sight: How much more abominable; (now listen, this is some language here, this is shaking, shattering) how much more abominable and filthy is man who drinks iniquity like he drinks water.”*

Here is the greatest riddle of all times, all ages: *“How can man be just with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman? How can he be righteous who drinks iniquity like the water?”*

Now, in order to be clean, in order to be just before God, what’s got to take place, to be accepted of God, what has to take place to be in fellowship with a holy God, what has to happen to this man?

First of all: He has to have spiritual life restored; he’s death, he’s got to become life!

Our Lord said: *“Ye must be born again.”* I know that a lot of folks are making fun of that today and a lot of preachers are making light of it (liberal preachers), but it is still true: *“Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”* He has to have life restored.

Secondly: He’s got to have a perfect righteousness before God’s law, not pretty good, not better than Joe’s or Floyd’s or Bill’s but as good as God’s righteousness before the law; he has to have that before God.

Thirdly: He must have paid the penalty for justice having broken God’s law!

We have broken God’s law: *“To offend in one point is to be guilty of the whole law.”* So, having broken God’s law we have to have not only before the law a righteousness but we have to have before justice a clean, clear, bill and justified, (without guilt, pardoned and all sin forgiven).

Then, he must honestly, actually hate what he now loves by nature and love what he now hates by nature.

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You talk about difficult; Nicodemus cried, *“How can these things be?”* That was his response to this question: *“How can man be clean that is born of a woman? How can man be just with God? How can man’s life be restored?”* He said, *“How can these things be?”*

Job said: *“How can man be just?”* Bildad said: *“How can man be clean?”* Paul wrote; *“How can God be just and justify the ungodly?”* This is the riddle of all ages!

I will tell you this, my friend; if you find the answer to this riddle you will have learned the Gospel, that’s so, you will have learned the Gospel. If you find the answer to this riddle you will have found salvation, if you find the answer.

Fourthly: If you find the answer to this riddle you will have understood the mystery of godliness; that is where it is, it’s all right here, right here!

Now, men have come up with all sorts of answers to this burning, burning, question of all questions. Men have come up with all types of answers to this riddle.

Some fellow turns to the sacrifice and to the ceremonies. Israel was bad about that; their table became a *“stumbling block and a snare.”* They thought they had found life in the ceremonies and the sacrifices.

Some people turned to the ceremonies of religion, knowing that they are not just, knowing that they are not justified, knowing that they are not clean, trying to find the answer to this great mystery, this question of questions, *“how can I be clean before God, how can I be justified before God, how can I be accepted of God?”*

Well, “I will turn to baptism. I will turn to the sacraments. I will turn to the tithe. I will turn to the church membership. I will turn to some kind of ceremony.” This is said all the time.

God’s Word plainly says in **Hebrews 10:4**: *“It is not possible, that the blood of bulls and goats can take away sin.”* It’s not possible that all the ceremonies put together, performed by all of the Jews of all ages could put away one sin; it’s not possible.

Yet, men go on trying, knowing that it’s not possible. Our Lord said: *“With men it’s impossible.”* The disciples said: *“Well, who can be saved?”* He said, *“With men it is impossible!”*

You say, “Are you going to stop there?” No sir: we are going to go on! People have tried to find the answer to this riddle. Some have turned to Sinai’s law. They couldn’t find salvation in the ceremony so they turned to the law.

All the time God is saying in **Galatians Chapter 2:16**: *“By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight,”* yours, mine, or anybody else’s, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, rich or poor, male or female.

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“By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight.” Men can’t keep the law. The law can’t save; it wasn’t given to save. All the law can do is shut your mouth and pronounce you guilty before God; that’s all it can do.

All the law can do is pronounce you guilty and condemn you. The law can’t save you, or cleanse you, or wash you, or justify you, it can only damn you. *“By the law is the knowledge of sin.”* It wasn’t given for any other purpose.

Some have turned to religious works: “We will work. We will visit and we will teach Sunday school. We will sing in the choir and we will visit the sick and we will go to church on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night, to all of the meetings. We will win souls and will get into the work.”

All the time God is saying: *“Not of works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy hath he saved us.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, they will cry in the Day of Judgment and say, *“Lord; we have preached in your name. We have cast out devils in your name. We’ve done many wonderful works in your name.”* He shall declare unto them; *“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Then, some turn to their religious heritage: “My father was a preacher.” I’ve heard young people say this: “Are you saved? Are you a Christian? Do you know God?” “My daddy’s a preacher.”

There are preacher’s sons and daughters who don’t know God. There are preachers who don’t know God, many, many of them. They don’t even know the Gospel, let alone God. Well, “My father and mother were Baptists. We have been a Baptist clear back to our great, great, great, grandfather.” My friend; *“he’s not a Jew which is one outwardly.”* That’s what the Scripture keeps saying: *“He’s not a Jew which is one outwardly.”*

He’s not a Christian who is one outwardly. He’s a Christian whose heart has been circumcised, whose heart has been rent in two and whose soul has been brought into a vital union with Jesus Christ.

Yes, men look everywhere for the answer to this riddle and they don’t find it. They look for security in every place. Lucifer found no security in angelic circles.

Think about this now: if you are looking for security in the church or in the ceremonies or in the law or the ordinances or your profession or your easy beliefs or your decision; I warn you: *“Lucifer, son of the morning,”* found no security, even in angelic circles.

Adam found no security in Paradise Garden; now think about that. Israel found no security in a God-given Levitical covenant. Joab found no security, *“though he held to the horns of the altar in the holy place.”* Now think about that!

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Judas found no security, though he was a disciple, (one of the twelve). Simon Magus found no security in the water. Peter said: *“Your heart’s not right with God.”*

Ananias and Sapphira found no security in their gifts. Demas found no security in the companionship of the most powerful preacher who ever lived, the apostle Paul.

How in the world do you hope to find any security in any of these false claims? *“How can man be just with God? How can sin be put away? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?”*

I’m telling you: if you don’t know the answers to those questions you ought to find them out. You must know, you must know, it is essential that you know. I will give it to you:

In **1 Peter 1: 18 and 19**; listen to this and memorize it: *“For as much as you know, you are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from your vain conversation, received from the tradition from your fathers (from your evil nature received by tradition or birth from your fathers), but by the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

That’s how men are clean, in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to **1 John 1:7**: *“If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s son, cleanseth us from all sin.”*

Listen to **Ephesians 1:7**: *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace.”* Listen to **Hebrews 9:22**: *“And without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”*

How can he that is born of woman be clean, clean enough for God’s fellowship? Only in the blood of Christ!

“How can a man be justified with God when even the moon that shineth not and the stars are not pure in his sight, and he puts no trust in his saints, the abominable, filthy man, who drinks iniquity like water, how can he be clean, holy, righteous, and justified in the very presence of the living God?”

It’s only in the blood of Christ. It’s not in the altar, not in the ceremony, not in the baptismal pool, not in the sacrifices, not in the law, not in any way, but in the blood of the Son of God that was shed for us on the cross of Calvary.

Now, I want to give you, if you have a pencil and paper and want to jot these notes down; I want to give you six things about the blood of Christ. I think that this is important and I will back this up with Scripture. There are six things about the blood of the Son of God:

First of all: The blood of Christ is the blood of atonement!

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Now, I have never found any better definition for the word atonement than the one I am about to give you. The definition is right here in the Word. I think that this is good; it is simple. I need simple things and maybe you do too.

Atonement is (at-one-ment), to make the two one, to bring them together again. That is what the blood of Christ does. *“It is the blood that maketh atonement.”* We are one with God in Christ; we now have peace, forgiveness, pardon and mercy through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We were divided. We were separated: *“Your sins have separated you from your God”* but Christ has brought us together again. *“He restoreth my soul. It’s the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”*

Now, in Jesus Christ; listen to this: *“Now, in Jesus Christ, we who were at one time far off (and I wish I could describe how far off we were; I wish it were possible for you to realize how far away from God we were by birth and nature) are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”* How near?

**“Near, so near to God
Nearer I cannot be
In the person of his Son
I’m as near as He.”**

I’m seated in Christ on the right hand of God; that’s how near, that’s how near. Isn’t that fabulous, isn’t that a blessing? That’s how near!

God said, *“when I see the blood, I will pass over you.”* Justice is now satisfied. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.”* God is satisfied; His justice is satisfied. The whole law is now honored. God can now be both just and justify, both righteous and forgiver; the price is paid. The debt is paid, the debt is satisfied.

The song writer put it this way:

**“Oh how sweet to view the flowing
Of his sin atoning blood
With divine assurance knowing
That he made my peace with God.”**

I get so upset when I hear people talk about “making their peace with God.” I didn’t do that; Christ did that. His blood is atoning blood. With his blood we have atonement (at-one-ment) with God, only in the blood of Christ.

When God passed through the land of Egypt at midnight, everywhere He saw the blood, He passed over. Where there was no blood, judgment fell. That’s how clear-cut it is.

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Secondly: The blood of Christ is cleansing blood, cleansing!

I like this so much because I feel that my sins are ever before me, aren't yours? Don't you feel your sin and the guilt of them and the filth of them, the evil of them, don't you?

Listen to this verse: *"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth."* That is present-tense, *"cleanseth."* That's not just has cleansed or will cleanse, but *"cleanseth."*

Isaiah said: *"Though your sins be as scarlet, though they be red like crimson, (though they be double-dyed), they shall be white as snow."*

How double-dyed are our sins. In the Book of Revelation, where it talks about those in heaven, it says; *"who are these and where did it come from?"*

He said: *"You know; these are they that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."* White; think about it, white as God sees it. *"Unto him who loved us and washed us, washed us from all our sins."* David said, *"Purge me and I shall be clean."*

**"Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?
Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?
Are you fully trusting in His blood this hour;
Are you washed in in the blood of the lamb?"**

His blood is cleansing blood. That's what it says: *"The blood of Christ cleanseth."* I am clean in God's sight by the blood of Christ.

Thirdly: His blood is redeeming blood!

Ephesians 1:7 says: *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin."* Now, redemption is spoken of many times in the same vein or with the same meaning as pardon, to be pardoned from all sin.

But, really; I believe and many others believe this, that it has a stronger meaning, not only to be pardoned, (because men pardoned can be left alone), but it is to be set free from sin's curse, it is to be set free from sin's captivity. It is to be bought and owned by the Lord Himself; it's to become His. I'm not only set free from sin but I am moved into God's house. I have become a member of God's family. I am one of the sons of God who sits daily at his table.

I believe that it is possible for you to forgive a man and pardon a man and go your way and he goes his way. But, I thank God that He didn't pardon me and let me go my way. He bought me.

He said: *"You are not your own; you are bought with a price; you are mine."* That's what Hosea said to his wife: *"You are mine; I bought you; I redeemed you; I paid the price."*

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We are His (our Lord Jesus Christ) in a two-fold way. He created us. Somebody said, “He recreated us and He purchased us.” That’s a three-fold way.

Fourthly: The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son has interceding power!

Listen to this verse in **Hebrews 10:19**: *“Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”* Somebody said: “Where even the great high priest could only go once a year (*into the holiest*), through the blood of Christ I can go every day.”

You think about that! Back yonder in the Old Testament, when the tabernacle stood in the wilderness, there was the holy place, which was separated by the veil from the Holy of Holies.

In that Holy of Holies there was the presence of God, the Shekinah glory over the mercy seat wherein they kept the law of Moses, the broken tables of the law, and Aaron’s rod that budded and the cup of manna.

Once a year, no more than once a year, in the awful, awesome, holy presence of God, that high priest of old, Aaron, one of the sons of Levi, would take the blood atonement and slip under the veil and go there while the incense was burning.

The smoke was filling that place, right into the presence of God Himself. He put that blood on the mercy seat and then he would back away (this happened only once a year, in the presence of God). Here was a man, the high priest (a man), who once a year was representing all his people in the presence of God.

Let me tell you something, another Man, the God-man, the Man of whom all these sons of Aaron and Levi were types and pictures, another Man, one great high priest, *“a priest after the order of Melchizedek,”* having neither beginning or ending of days, having neither a mother or earthly father with an eternal priesthood, one day sacrificed Himself, not a lamb, Himself, the Lamb of God.

Christ Jesus took not the blood of an animal but His own blood, not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, into the presence of a holy God. And there on the mercy seat of glory he put His blood as propitiation and sacrifices for the sin of every believer and He perfected us forever.

And when Christ died, that old veil in the temple was *“torn into from top to bottom”* and God laid it apart and He says:

**“Come ye sinners
Poor and needy
Weak and wounded
Sick and sore,**

Jesus ready

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**Stands to save you
Full of pity
Love and power,**

**Let not conscience
Make you linger
Nor a fitness
Fondly dream,**

**All the fitness
He requireth
Is to feel
Your need of him.”**

Come on! Where preacher? Come right into the presence of God, right before the throne of grace.

“I couldn’t do that;” no, you can’t but Christ can. He can take you, for in Him, by His blood, it has interceding power; it opens for us into the presence of God, “*a new and living way.*” It’s not by the sacrifice of an animal, not once a year, represented by the high priest, but every hour of every day I can call Him, “my Prophet, my Priest and my King” by the blood of Christ.

Let me tell you something, “you foxhole religionists;” without the blood of Christ you needn’t holler “God have mercy” because God’s mercy is in Christ. I am telling you the truth; I am trying to be honest with you.

Just as that high priest of old didn’t dare go into the Holy of Holies without the blood, you better not dare come into the presence of God without the sacrifice of God’s Son, the blood of the Lamb.

I tell you that, there is no prayer without Christ. I don’t care what any man says. I don’t care whether he is Jew or Gentile, Baptist or Catholic; you can’t come to God except by Christ. He said, “*No man cometh to the Father, but by me.*” The blood makes atonement and the blood gives us access into the presence of God.

Fifthly, the blood of Christ is sanctifying blood. Listen to **Hebrews 13:12**: “*Wherefore, Jesus, that he might sanctify his people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.*” He set us apart by His sacrifice. He cleansed us and declared us to be holy by His sacrifice and by His sacrifice He makes us holy. We are sanctified in Christ by His blood.

Last of all: The blood of Christ unites all believers into one body!

Ephesians 2:16, talking about Jews and Gentiles; “*He hath reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God by his cross, by his blood.*”

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Wherever you find a believer, it doesn't matter whether he is a Jew or a Gentile or whether he is black or white, old or young, wherever you find a believer you will find that believer resting in the blood of the Son of God.

You will find him trusting in the death of the Son of God. You will find him believing on the Lord Jesus Christ!