

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Man has no answers in contention with God

Job 9:1 "Then Job answered and said, 2 I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? 3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand."

Job's question is "how should man be just with God?" Job went on to say that if we contend for our own righteousness, then we cannot answer God one of a thousand just accusations. Thousand is used in this instance not as a literal number, but to show the impossibility to establish through our own efforts (be they ever so numerous) a righteous state with God.

First, we consider that God is all wise, all knowing, and all-powerful. He is also completely and perfectly just. He is the creator of all things. As the Creator, he has every right to establish his laws as he sees fit. Every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward. Even the very thought of foolishness is sin. God gave the law and the penalty for breaking the law. God also apprehends the transgressor. God judges the sinner. God also executes his wrathful judgment our sins deserve.

Man may plead his innocence, but God knows all things, considers the thoughts of our heart, and thus knows that we are guilty a thousand fold. We cannot answer God for any of the vast multitude of sins we have committed.

Second, we may plead our ignorance of God's laws. Even in man's laws, ignorance is no excuse. Nature itself teaches us the glory of God: Psalms 19:1 "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Rom. 1:18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not

as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Not only is ignorance itself not an excuse for breaking the law, but God himself has manifest his righteousness to his creation. Therefore, we cannot plead ignorance before God.

Third, we may plead our own good works and deeds as justification before God. Yet, the scriptures plainly declare:

1. Isa. 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

2. Psa. 62:9 "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."

3. Psa. 130:3 "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"
Though we cannot answer God one of a thousand, yet he has brought his people into a just state before him:

1. 2 Sam 14:14 "For we must needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him."

2. Rom. 8:29, 30 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

3. Heb. 10:12-14 "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

4. Rom. 3:24 "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

5. Rom. 8:33, 34 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Though man cannot answer God one of a thousand trying to establish his own righteousness, yet God has made his people righteous according to the covenant of redemption. He sent Jesus to be a perfect sacrifice for them and to satisfy the just demands of his perfect law by suffering and dying on the cross for his people. Now they all stand just before God and there is no charge that can be laid against them.

