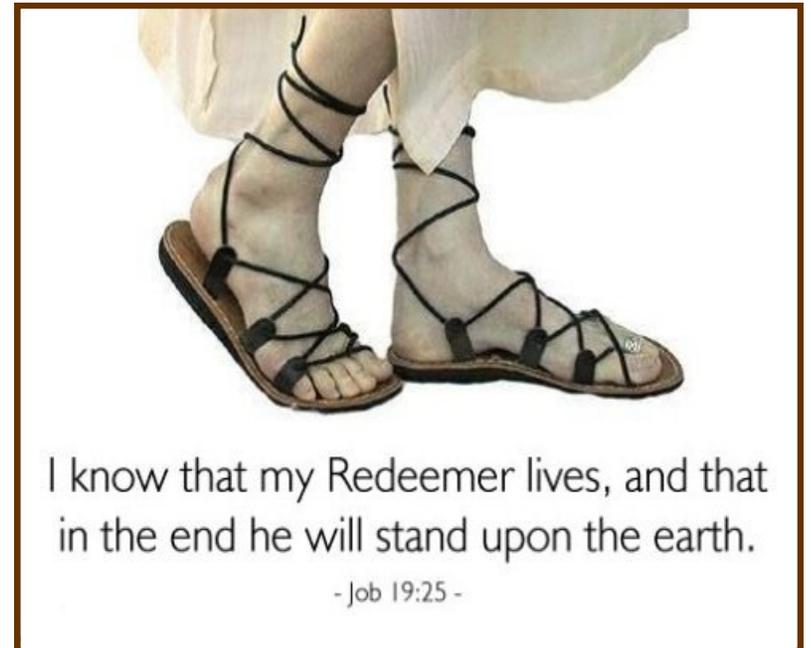


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# *Job*

## *Chapter Thirty Five:*



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

- Job 19:25 -

*Eliud Continues His Discourse*

*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 THIRTY FIVE: ELIUD CONTINUES HIS DISCOURSE**

### **The Lesson: Man's Deeds are not Indifferent to God**

1 So Eliud spoke again: 2 Does your reflection seem reasonable to you when you say: I am more just than God? 3 For you said: Good does not please you nor what does it profit you if I sin? 4 That is why I will answer your discourses and at the same time those of your friends. 5 Look up to heaven and see and contemplate the upper air because it is higher than you. 6 If you sin, what harm will you do against him? 7 If your iniquities are multiplied, what will you do against him? Further, if you act justly, what will you give him? Or what will he receive from your hand? 8 Your impiety will harm man who is your fellow creature and our justice will help a son of man. 9 They will cry out because of the great number of their calumniators and they will wail because of the strong arm of the tyrants. 10 And Job did not say: Where is the God who made me? He who gave his poems in the night. 11. He who teaches above the flocks of the earth, he teaches more than the birds of heaven. 12 They will cry out and he will not hear because of the pride of the wicked. 13 For no one who is vain will God hear, and the Almighty regards the causes of each man. 14. Even though you have said: He does not consider, be judged in his presence and await him. 15 for now he does not unleash his fury nor does he take vengeance on a crime exceedingly. 16 So Job opens his mouth in vain and multiplies words without knowledge.

***“That is why I will answer your discourses and at the same time those of your friends.”***

Since God hates evil and good pleases him, he hears the oppressed when they cry out, and does not hear the oppressors. So he says, "They will cry out," i.e. calumniators and tyrants seeking the fulfillment of their desires from God, "and he (God) will not hear." He does this, "because of the pride of wickedness," according to Psalm 101, "He regarded the prayer of humble men." (v. 18) So that one does not believe that God hears all people indiscriminately he says, "For not in vain," without reason, "will God hear," because he hears some and not others for a very just reason. He expresses this reason saying, "and the Almighty will regard the causes of each man" in that he hears the worthy but not the unworthy. God especially does not seem to see the causes of individuals because the wicked sometimes prosper, but to disprove this he says, "Even though you have said," i.e. when you reflected in your heart, "He (God) does not consider," the deeds of men, "be judged in his presence," prepare yourself to submit to his judgment, "and await him," the future judgment, even if he does not punish you here. For he delays that he might punish more harshly later, and Eliud adds, "For now," in the present life, "he does not unleash his fury," the great extent of his punishment, "nor does he take great vengeance on a crime," i.e. he does not punish in the present according to which the gravity of fault demands. For the punishments of the present life are for correction and therefore he reserves for future damnation those whom he judges unworthy of correction. This is another reason why the wicked prosper in this world and he agrees with the opinion of Job about this. But since he took Job's words in a evil sense, he therefore rejected them, concluding from what he had said, "So Job in vain (without reason) opens his mouth, "rejecting his lengthy discourse, "and multiplies words without knowledge." In this he accuses him of ignorance and useless verbosity.

### ***END OF JOB CHAPTER 35***

After Eliud had rejected the words of Job, because by his estimation Job imputed evil to divine judgment, he now intends to reproach him for saying that he was just. So the text says: "So Eliud spoke again," for he had interrupted his speech and waited to see if Job would answer. When he did not, Eliud took up his discourse again saying, "Does your reflection seem reasonable to you when you say: I am more just than God?" Job had never said this, and Eliud did not impute to him that he used these words, but that the words which he did say originated in this reflection, and so he clearly makes mention of this thought. Eliud distinctly says that Job had this intention, "For you said: Good does not please you, (or in another text, "what is right") or what does it profit you if I sin?" These two sayings are never found in what Job has said, but the first of them, that good does not please God, he seems to find in what Job had said in Chapter Ten, If I am wicked, woe is me! And if I am just, I will not raise my head." (v. 15) When Job has said this he meant that the just and the unjust are equally afflicted with temporal punishments, but Eliud interpreted him to have almost said that the justice of man does not please God. The second thing he says is, "what does it profit you if I sin?" One can find no text in which Job had said this, but he wanted to take this from what Job had said in the same place, "If I have sinned and you spared me for a little, why do you not allow me to be cleansed from my evil?" (10:14) Job had said this to show that temporal prosperity does not always accompany innocence, for he had been innocent in other respects in the time of prosperity, after he renounced his sins. So there was no reason why after the remission of his sins he should again be cleansed from sins by God. But Eliud twisted these words around as though Job held this opinion: that God had brought to Job in his sin the punishment of sin because of his own utility. From these two things: that God was not please with what is good and that he considered sin useful to him, it seems to follow that Job was more just than God since he had said about himself that evil displeased him and good pleased him. (v. 31)

He concludes from this that he is compelled to answer because of their absurdity, and so he says, "That is why I will answer your discourses and at the same time those of your friends," who could not convince you when you said such things. He begins from what he had said last, showing that God cannot be helped or harmed by our good and evil works, and this is so because of his high character. He proposes this first saying, "Look up (look into) to heaven," which is the throne of God. (cf. Is. 66:1) "And see", with sight, "and contemplate", with mind, "the upper air", all the higher bodies, not only of its height of this order, but also its magnitude, its motion and its beauty," because it is higher than you", so much so that your works cannot help or harm it. So he says, "If you sin", against yourself or God, "what harm will you do him?" as if to say: He will suffer no detriment from this. As to the sins which are committed against one's neighbor, he then says, "and if your iniquities are multiplied", by which you unjustly wound your neighbors, "what will you do against him?" as if to say: In no way will he be injured by this. As to the goods which are given to one's neighbor, he then says, "Further, if you act justly", giving what is due to your neighbor, "what will you give to him?" as if to say: What will he gain from this. As to the works of divine worship, he says, "Or what will he receive from you hand", in sacrifices and oblations? He implies the answer is, "Nothing", as Psalm 49 says, "I will not accept calves from your house." (v. 5)

One could object that God did not care whether man acts justly or unjustly. To answer this he then adds, "Your impiety will harm man who is your fellow creature", because he can receive harm: and your justice will help a son of man," who needs the help of justice. This is why God prohibits impiety and commands justice, since God cares about men who are helped or hurt by this. Oppressed men cry to God against their oppressors from this fact. Some crush them deceitfully by calumny, and he speaks about these, "They will cry out because of the great number of their calumniators," those who have been crushed so will cry to God. Some crush others by violence, and he speaks about these saying, "and they will wail because of the strong arm of the tyrants,: for they will weep to God because of the violent power of tyrants. From this we are given to understand that not only does God profit when someone sins, but that sin displeases him and he punishes it, otherwise the oppressed would cry out in vain.

Then he turns himself to rejecting the other thing Job said, "what is right does not please you," (v. 3) which is repugnant to divine wisdom. Surely this wisdom first appears in the creation of things, and so he says, "And Job did not say," because he does not think that good things pleased God, "where is the God who made me?" For God made things only for the good, as we read in Genesis, "God saw that it was good, etc." (1:25) Therefore, it is clear that good pleases God. Second, he brings in the benefit of human instruction by which some men are instructed for good by divine revelation, and so he says, "He who gave," by revelation, "his poems," the doctrines of human instruction, which were understood many times by the ancients as epics, "in the night," (literally, in the dreams of the night) or in the quiet of contemplation or obscurity of vision. He would not have instructed men familiarly for good unless good pleased him. Third, he brings in the infusion of natural light by which we discern good from evil by reason, in which we are higher than brute animals, and so he says, "He who teaches us above the flocks of the earth," which lack reason. Since the ancients consulted the chatter and motions of the birds who seem to almost be instructed by God and act like reasoning beings, he excludes this saying, "he teaches more than the birds of heaven," which also do not have reason.