

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #85

"Election of Dying Infants - The Painful Testimony" (Scriptures from NKJV)

Matthew 18:14 -

Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

INTRODUCTION: This is the sixth lesson in the sub-series on the "Election of Dying Infants." In the previous lesson we addressed the issue as to why the Scriptures are so silent on the subject. In so doing, I made the observation that I have never encountered anyone who raised the following question,

"Why do we not have recorded in Scripture one example of a mother going to either Moses or one of the prophets, or to Jesus or one of the apostles, and asking the question, 'where is my infant who has died?'"

I proceeded to cover the topic entitled, "The Silent Testimony" involving the death of David's infant son, wherein David's grief over his sick infant was removed when his infant son died. David said that while he could not bring the child back from the dead, he could go to be with his child when he himself died. David did not have to go to Nathan the prophet and ask where his deceased son was. He knew that he had gone to heaven, and he would soon follow him there. How did David reach this conclusion? He could only do so with the understanding that all infants who die in infancy go to heaven because they are elect, redeemed and regenerated prior to their death. The line of evidence and argumentation comes out of the text in II Samuel 12:14-23.

First, there is no evidence in the text that God ever informed David in advance of the child's death that his child was going to be an exception, and other infants might be sent to hell. If God had done so before the child died, then David could have been consoled before the child died, but he was not consoled.

Secondly, David did not know the future destiny of his child until the child died. In verses 22 and 23, David clearly says this. ***"And he said, While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.'"***

Thirdly, God said nothing to David, after the child has died, that He was making an exception in revealing the destiny of the child.

Fourthly, It was only the death of the child that confirmed to David the destiny of the child. This shows that only the belief that all infants dying in infancy go to heaven could be the source of comfort and hope for David.

We then gave a quote from Dr. Curt Daniel to this effect,

Had the baby recovered, David could not know if he would live and become right with God and go to heaven or not. But when he died, David knew at once that he went to the same heaven where he himself would one day go David knew this, and so is moved by God to realize that all dying infants, including his own, are saved. (Daniel, *History and Theology of Calvinism*, p. 338).

I called the last lesson, "The Silent Testimony." I am calling the present lesson, "The Painful Testimony" and it is taken from an account in the life of Job as found in Job 3:1-26.

A. THE TRIALS OF JOB - Job 3:1-26

1. The Setting and Contents of the Chapter.

The third chapter of Job is one of the most sad and depressing chapters in the Bible. It is the lowest of several low points in the book. Job has reached the end of his rope. Up until now, he had stood up in all of his extended trials. Though severely wounded by the continual onslaughts of Satan against him, Job has witnessed a good confession before God and man. Satan's goal was to get Job to curse God and renounce Him as one who was unworthy of honor and glory. Job has lost his wealth, his possessions, his family, his reputation, and the support of his wife. Yet he still refused to curse his God. His creed was that of **"*Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity? In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*"** (Job 2:10). Job shines forth as the noble believer which God describes him to be (see Job 1:1,8; 2:3).

But when it comes to the loss of his health, Job collapses under the weight of it all. While he never curses God, he does curse the day of his conception in his mother's womb, and wishes he had died while yet in the womb. Chapter three describes a man sunk in the pit of utmost depression. He utters things which are unsound and confusing. While real to Job, they are not to be taken as models of sound doctrine and practice. They reveal how a true believer can be brought down to utter despair and hopelessness, even to the point of desiring to die. While he desired to die, he did not entertain the idea of taking his own life. In chapter three, he is struggling with the concept of God's sovereignty and the misery of his own pain brought on by bodily suffering and mental distress. Many of God's greatest servants are exposed to bouts of undescrivable depression. Charles Spurgeon said, *"I am the subject of depression so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to."* Martin Luther said, *"For more than a week I was close to the gates of death and hell. I trembled in all my members. Christ was wholly lost. I was shaken by desperation and blasphemy of God."* Job is now at the point where he is saying "Leave me alone, I just want to die."

2. The Outline of the Chapter.

I am indebted to Steven Lawson for the outline he gives in his commentary on Job as found in the *Holman Old Testament Commentary*. For my own purposes, I will add or rephrase some of his words.

I. Job's weeping (3:1-10)

- (1) He says, "Let my birthday be abolished." 3:1-3
- (2) He then says, "Let my birthday be darkened." (3:4-6)
- (3) He then says, "Let my birthday be barren." (3:7)
- (4) He then says, "Let my birthday be cursed." (3:8)
- (5) He then says, "Let my birthday be removed." (3:9-10)

II. Job's wailing (3:11-19)

- (1) He first says, "I wish I had been miscarried." (3:11-15)
- (2) He then says, "I wish I had been still born." (3:16-19)

III. Job's woe (3:20-26)

- (1) He asks, "Why is life given to the miserable?" (3:20-22)
- (2) He then asks, "Why is life governed by God?" (3:23-26)

While Job does not curse God with his lips, he does not hide his pain and despair.

B. JOB'S CONCEPTION OF HUMAN LIFE

1. While much could be said about Job's miseries, they are not the focus of our lesson. We want to see what his views of human life within the womb involves, and what he believes happens to that human life if it should die while within the womb or at birth.

2. Job believed that God created and formed human life within the womb of the mother. He also believed that God has the right and power to take away that physical life in the death of the body. In Job 10:8-12 we read: **"Your hands have made me and fashioned me, An intricate unity; Yet You would destroy me. Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay. And will You turn me into dust again? Did You not pour me out like milk, and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews? You have granted me life and favor, and Your care has preserved my spirit."** (Job 10:8-12).

3. Job believed that his humanity consisted of both physical and spiritual components. He also believed that after the death of the physical body, there was to be a resurrection of the dead, followed by a judgment. In Job 19:25-29 we read: **"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for**

myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?'—Since the root of the matter is found in me, be afraid of the sword for yourselves; for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment." This is confirmed by numerous other sections of Scripture. While Job did not possess all the revelation given to us in the rest of Scripture, he possessed enough to conclude that God creates life in the womb, the death of the body will occur sometime later as determined by God. There will be an afterlife following the death of the body.

4. So did Job believe that life began at conception and progressed in the womb of the mother? Randy Alcorn, in an article on "Abortion" published in the April, 2013 issue of the *Tabletalk* magazine, says this:

Job graphically described the way God created him before he was born (Job 10:8-12). That which was in his mother's womb was not something that might *become* Job, but someone who *was* Job—the same man, only younger. To the prophet Isaiah, God says, **"Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you."** (Isa. 44:2). What each person is, not merely what he might become, was present in his mother's womb.

Psalms 139:13-16 paints a vivid picture of God's intimate involvement with a preborn person. God created David's "inward parts" not at birth, but before birth. David says to his Creator, **"You knitted me together in my mother's womb"** (v. 13). Each person, regardless of his parentage or handicap, has not been manufactured on a cosmic assembly line, but personally formed by God. All the days of his life are planned out by God before any come to be (v. 16).

Meredith Kline observes: "The most significant thing about abortion legislation in Biblical law is that there is none. It was so unthinkable that an Israelite woman should desire an abortion that there was no need to mention this offense in the criminal code." All that was necessary to prohibit an abortion was the command, **"You shall not murder."** (Ex. 20:13). Every Israelite knew that the preborn child was a child. So do we, if we are honest. We all know a pregnant woman is "carrying a child."

Every child in the womb is God's handiwork and part of God's plan. Christ loves that child and proved it by becoming like him—He spent nine months in His mother's womb.

Like *toddler* and *adolescent* the terms *embryo* and *fetus* do not refer to nonhumans but to humans at various stages of development. It is scientifically inaccurate to say a human embryo or a fetus is not a human being simply because he is at an earlier stage than an infant. This is like saying that a toddler is not a human being because he is not yet an adolescent. Does someone become more human as he gets bigger? If so, then adults are more human than children, and football players are more

human than jockeys. Something nonhuman does not become human or more human by getting older or bigger; whatever is human is human from the beginning, or it can never be human at all. The right to live does not increase with age and size; otherwise, toddlers and adolescents have less right to live than adults.

5. Job referred to himself as a person while in his mother's womb. God brought him into existence the moment of his conception. This involved both his body and soul or spirit. Time will not permit us to address the difficult doctrine of the origin of the soul. I will only list the views for the readers' information.

(1) The Pre-existence view of the soul: all souls pre-existed before the creation of the world and mankind. When the parents produce the physical body, it is then God places the soul in the body.

(2) The Creationist view: When the parents produce the body, God creates the soul and joins it to the body. This may take place at conception, or at birth, or somewhere between the two.

(3) The Traducian view: That the parents produce both the soul and body.
NOTE: The problem which exists is how the original sin of Adam is transmitted to his offspring. If my readers have not thought in these areas, I would encourage them to investigate the views in a more knowledgeable manner.

6. Now we are ready for the question at hand. What did Job believe would have happened to him if he had died in his mother's womb? Would he have advocated the, "Well, I don't know view? We simply don't know what happens to infants who die in infancy." No. Job had a clear view of what happens to infants who die in infancy.

First, he believed his body would have been at rest from the physical pain. In Job 3:13, 14 he says that he **"would have lain still and been quiet. I would have been asleep; then I would have been at rest with kings and counselors of the earth . . ."** While the immediate reference is referring to the grave, Job is assured that his body would never again experience pain. This cannot be said about those whose bodies and souls will suffer in hell. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, **"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."**

Secondly, Job believed his soul would be at rest. In verse 17 he says, **"There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."** Job believed the soul would survive the death of the body. In this intermediate state between the death of the body and its resurrection, Job believed his soul would be at rest. He did not believe that he, as an

infant, would be in hell.

There are numerous texts in the Old Testament which refer to the immortality of the soul. Samuel made a temporary re-appearance in I Samuel 28:7-20. Both Enoch and Elijah, who did not taste death, nevertheless continued to live on after departing this life. Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount with Jesus - Matthew 17:3. Christ told the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in paradise - Luke 23:43. Jesus gives the account of the rich man and Lazarus - Luke 16:23, 24. Ecclesiastes 12:7 describes the death of the human as being the time when ***"The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."***

Thirdly, Job believed that his body would experience a future resurrection free of any pain. In Job 19:25, 26, we repeat the text referred to earlier. ***"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God."*** This "implicit" evidence proves conclusively that Job believed he would have gone to heaven if he had died in his mother's womb. Now how did Job reach this conclusion? Only by one possible way. The same way that David reached the conclusion about the destiny of his infant son - that being "that all infants who die in infancy go to heaven!" It was a given understanding which the Old Testament saints had given to them.

Just as Meredith Kline pointed out in his previous quote that it was a given understanding of a Hebrew mother, that she was carrying a child in her womb, and that abortion would be the murdering of the child; so the same mother would possess a given understanding that the death of her infant would assure her of its heavenly destiny. This is why no one in the Bible ever asked the question, "Where did my child go when it died?" It was a given! One may search the Bible in its entirety and not find one hint of an infant being cast into hell and suffering forever without understanding why it was there.

C. CONCLUSION AND CHALLENGE

1. The Biblical evidence is building up to support the conclusion that God has unconditionally chosen or elected all infants who die in infancy to be taken to heaven. Those who hold to the "we don't know" position must deal with this evidence if they wish to remain true to the Biblical data on the subject. I acknowledge there are some in this camp who sincerely hold to their position on the ground of desiring to uphold the integrity of the Scripture. They maintain that the Bible does not explicitly tell us what the destiny of dead infants shall be. Thus we should not add to or take away from that which the Bible does not cover. I wholly agree with this principle of interpretation. I disagree with the conclusion

that the Bible does not speak to the issue, and the evidence is clear which we are presenting. If my reader (hearer) is truly concerned about upholding the integrity of Scripture, then he or she must intelligently face the evidence which has been presented thus far, and give a Biblical rebuttal of the evidence.

2. We have presented "A Silent Testimony" from David's child. We have just presented "A Painful Testimony" from Job. In the next lesson, we will cover "A Mother's Testimony" taken from II Kings 4:26.