

JOB 3

JOB GIVES WAY TO IMPATIENCE

For seven days, Job's three friends sat by him in silence; and at the same time, Satan assaulted his mind in an attempt to shake his confidence, and to fill his head with hard thoughts of God. It seems that the Divine permission that was given to Satan included this affliction, in addition to the physical torturing of Job's body. Job was a picture or a foreshadow of Christ Jesus, Whose inward sufferings – both in the garden and upon the cross – were very dreadful; and like Job's, they arose in a great degree from the assaults of Satan in that hour of darkness.

These inward trials show the reason of the change that seems to have taken place in Job's conduct, between the last chapter and this one. At first, we saw him in entire submission to the will of God; but now his impatience appeared, which also comes out in other parts of the Book. The believer knows that a few drops of these inward bitternesses – when he is not favored with a sweet sense of the love and presence of God – are more dreadful than the sharpest outward afflictions. And so we are not surprised to find out that Job proved to be a man with the same sins, failings, and feelings as others. But we may rejoice that Satan was disappointed, and that he could not prove the Lord's servant to be a hypocrite; for although Job cursed the day of his birth, he did not curse his God!

What Job said about the day of a person's birth is true enough, in regards to our being born in sin. And in this spiritual sense, the day when we die to sin is far better; for then we are born anew unto a life of righteousness in Jesus (Ecc. 7:1). But otherwise, a child of God – even under the heaviest afflictions – has a consolation in Jesus, which sweetens everything. Many poor sinners have been sorely tempted to curse the day of their physical birth. But the Lord, in infinite mercy, has given us new life; and therefore, we may certainly bless the day of our new birth in grace!

Job also complained of those who were present at his birth, for their tender care and attention to him. Nothing comes into this world as helpless as a little child. But God's power and Providence have mercifully upheld our frail bodies, and His pity and patience have spared our sinful souls. To desire to die so that we may be with Christ, in order to be free from sin, is the effect and evidence of grace; but to desire to die only because we wish to be delivered from the troubles of this life is a mark of corruption reigning in our heart. It is our wisdom and duty to endeavor both to live to the Lord, and also to die to Him.

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Job's spirit gives way to impatience and laments that he was born – verses 1-10
- ❖ He laments that he did not die as soon as he was born – verses 11-19
- ❖ He laments that his life was continued when he was in such misery – verses 20-26

Let us observe how Job described the repose of the grave: "There the wicked cease from troubling." When persecutors die, they can no longer persecute. There the weary find rest; for in the grave, they rest from all their labors. And a rest from sin, temptation, conflict, sorrows, and labors remains for believers in the presence and enjoyment of God. It is there that believers rest in Jesus; but as we trust in Him and obey Him, we may still find rest to our souls, even when we are enduring tribulation in this world.

Job was like a man who had lost his way, and had no prospect of escape or hope of better times. But surely he was in an ill frame for death when he was so unwilling to live. It should be our constant care to be always ready for eternity, and then we should leave it to God to determine when it is best for us to enter therein. The afflicted and tempted Christian knows something of Job's heaviness. When he has been looking too much at the things of this world, some chastisement of his heavenly Father will give him a taste of this disgust of life, and a glance at these dark regions of sadness. Nor is there any help for him, until the Lord restores to him the joy of His salvation (Ps. 51:12).

Job's case was such that life itself had become irksome. He wondered why he was kept alive to suffer. Could not God's mercy allow him to die immediately? Light is most precious, yet he came to such a point that he asked why it was given. Even to an ungodly person, sufficient answers for this question are at hand. It is mercy indeed that the light of life is prolonged to us, for it keeps us from worse suffering. Divine wisdom restrains us from sin by hedging up our way and darkening our spirit, for it is better to be downcast than to be depraved. And it is an example of God's love which causes Him to spare people's lives, for it gives them time to repent and find salvation and mercy in Jesus. Every sorrow is intended to drive us closer to the Lord. The hedges enclose us so that we are alone with God, and the darkness makes us cling tightly to Him. He continues to give us life so that His grace may be increased toward us. He sends us trials in order to magnify His grace. If our ways were always bright and sunny, we could not so well exhibit the sustaining, consoling, and delivering power of the Lord. Trials prepare us for greater prosperity; and they make us more like our Lord Jesus, who lived His earthly life in affliction. Let us pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit to keep our eyes turned toward our Savior, even when life is difficult; and let us ask Him for strength to keep walking between the hedges, even when they are not hedges of roses, but fences of briars!

Lord, we repent of times when we may have just wished that we were dead, simply so that we can escape the sorrows that sometimes come upon us in life. We thank You that our life is continued, so that Your grace may be increased to us! Amen.

