

JOB 29

JOB'S THOUGHTS ON BYGONE DAYS

After Job's excellent discourse concerning wisdom in the foregoing chapter, he sat down and paused awhile – not because he had talked himself out of breath, but because he would not engross the talk to himself without the consent of his friends. He gave room for them, if they pleased, to make their reply to him; but they apparently had nothing to say. And therefore, after he had recollected himself a little, he went on with his discourse concerning his own affairs, as recorded in this and the two following chapters. He described the height of the prosperity from which he had fallen, and the depth of the adversity into which he had sunk; and he did this to arouse the pity of his friends, and to justify (or at least excuse) his own complaints. But then, in order to prevent his friends' further censures, he made a very ample and particular protestation of his own integrity.

Job contrasted his former prosperity with his present misery, which had arisen from God's apparent withdrawing from him, as well as from the loss of his family. The Lord's presence in a person's home – even if it is only a cottage – makes it a palace! And in all of the expressions of the first six verses of this chapter, the man of Uz was chiefly lamenting – not that he was in distress – but that the presence of the Lord was not with him as he had hitherto enjoyed it.

All sorts of people had formerly paid great honor and respect to Job – not only for the dignity of his rank, apparently as a local magistrate; but also for his personal merit, prudence, integrity, and good management. Happy are the people who are blessed with such gifts as these! They have great opportunities of honoring God and doing good, but they also have great need to watch against pride. And happy are the people who are blessed with leaders who possess such gifts! It is a token of good to them.

Here we see what Job valued himself by, in the days of his prosperity. It was by his usefulness. It seems that he was a magistrate who sat in the city gate, and was appointed for the administering of judgment and justice; and he valued himself by the checks and limitations which he gave to the violence of proud and evil men. Good judges and magistrates must be a restraint to evildoers, and a protection to the innocent; and to this end, they must arm themselves with zeal and resolution. Such men are public blessings; and in their public office, they resemble our Lord Jesus, Who rescues poor sinners from the oppression and tyranny of Satan.

This account which Job gave of himself is related in such a beautiful simplicity that it cannot be equaled. But if we pass over Job and behold him as a pic-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Job speaks of the pleasure he had formerly enjoyed in his family – verses 1-6
- ❖ He speaks of the honor that had formerly been shown to him – verses 7-10
- ❖ He speaks of the good that he had done as a magistrate – verses 11-17
- ❖ He speaks of his former prospects of the continuance of prosperity – verses 18-25

ture and a foreshadow of Jesus, then these expressions rise in beauty, and are abundantly more blessed and delightful! None among the children of fallen Adam can truly lay claim to the exalted account that is here given. No robe of righteousness (verse 14) can be found except that of Christ. No human being was ever – in the strict sense of the word – eyes to the blind and feet to the lame (verse 15), except for the Lord Jesus. By Him, kings reign and princes decree justice (Prov. 8:15). Righteousness and faithfulness were indeed the girdle of His loins (Isa. 11:5). Jesus put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation was upon His head (Isa. 59:17). He broke the jaws of the wicked when He triumphed over hell and the powers of darkness, and when He rescued our poor fallen nature from the teeth of Satan. How many souls who were once ready to perish are now blessing Him, because the trumpet of His Gospel has been blown! (Isa. 27:13) But who can show forth His praises? May we trust in His mercy; and may we seek to imitate His truth, His justice, and His love!

Being thus honored and useful, Job had hoped to die in peace and honor, in a good old age. If such an expectation arises from lively faith in the Providence and promises of God, it is well; but if it comes from conceit of our own wisdom, and dependence upon changeable earthly things, then it is ill-grounded and turns to sin. Not everyone who has the spirit of wisdom also possesses the skill of good government, but Job had both; and he also had the tenderness of a comforter to those who were in need. These things he thought upon with pleasure when he was now mourning.

Our Lord Jesus is a King who hates iniquity; and upon Him, the blessing of a world that is ready to perish comes. To Him, let us come with our prayers and petitions; for we know that He hears us, and He will surely help us!

Lord Jesus, we pray for grace to imitate You and do good to all who come within our range of ability to help relieve their miseries. Amen.

