

JOB 35

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

Job still remained silent; and Elihu, for the third time, undertook to show him that he had spoken amiss, and that he ought to recant. He began by reproving Job for justifying himself more than God. The great defect of Job's discourse all along had been that he sought his own justification more than the Divine glory. But Elihu called his attention to the heavens; they are far above us, and God is far above them. How much, then, is He out of the reach of either our sins or our services! Elihu showed that Job had represented the exercise of true religion as an unprofitable thing, which God enjoins for His own sake and not ours; but he demonstrated that this was not true. All the "good deeds" that people do in this world are unprofitable to the Lord; for whether human beings bless Him or revile Him, the one cannot add to His glory, nor can the other lessen it. The brilliant glory of the sun is never darkened by any clouds that overshadow the earth. And in the same way, the Lord does not *need* any of our services! Indeed, if a person does anything that we would label as "good," the ability to even do such a thing is derived from God Himself. He is not indebted to anyone. By nature, we are guilty and unclean sinners. The very fact that we are enabled, by grace, to live in righteousness and holiness is because our Lord Jesus has mercifully redeemed us with His own precious blood. Notwithstanding all our unworthiness and vileness, He loved us and gave Himself for us; and now He has clothed us with the spotless robe of His own perfect righteousness!

Job had complained that God seemed to be deaf to the cries of the oppressed; and against this imputation, Elihu endeavored to justify the Lord. Job considered himself to be too heavily afflicted. But surely, in his soul's anguish, he had forgotten that if the Lord were to judge us according to our iniquities, none of us would be able to stand! He had forgotten that if He were to deal with us as we deserve, He would surely be most just in condemning us. Job had complained that God did not seem to regard the cries and tears of those who suffer at the hands of evil people. He did not know how to reconcile this with the goodness of God and the righteousness of His government of the world, but Elihu helped him see the solution to the difficulty. Often, we do not notice the mercies that we enjoy when we are under affliction, nor are we usually thankful for them; and therefore, we cannot expect that God should deliver us out of them. He gives "songs in the night." This means that when our condition is dark and sorrowful, God's Providence and promises are sufficient to support us, and

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *Elihu disagrees with Job's words about religion not being profitable – verses 1-8*
- ❖ *He justifies God against Job's complaint of Him being deaf to the oppressed – verses 9-13*
- ❖ *He shows Job the true cause of the delay of the return of God's favor to him – verses 14-16*

to enable us to rejoice even in tribulation. When we brood over our afflictions, and neglect the consolations of God which He has treasured up for us; it is only just for Him to reject our prayers. If we cry to God for the removal of an affliction, and it is not removed; the reason is certainly not because the Lord's hand is shortened, nor is His ear heavy – but perhaps it may be because we are not sufficiently humbled.

How wonderfully is this Scripture verified in the daily experience of mankind! Under the various oppressions of life, people will cry out – some under sickness, some under poverty, and some under other kinds of affliction. But in many cases, their cries are not directed unto the Lord! Go wherever you wish – in prisons, in hospitals, in poor cottages, and even in rich mansions – and you will hear the cries of persons in sorrow and pain. You will hear them exclaiming, in the depths of their sufferings, “O my child! My brother! My husband! My mother! My friend! My head! My heart! O the cruelty of this affliction!” And yet, amidst all these bitter sorrows and lamentations, it is very seldom that you will hear among them the voice of an awakened soul, crying out, “Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?” Alas! What an awful blindness has the Fall induced in the circumstances of all mankind by nature! How awful it is to behold people thrown into prison, lying upon deathbeds, and suffering under terrible losses – and yet they *complain* to God, but they do not *cry out* to Him. It is vastly different with the Lord's redeemed children; they have their “songs in the night,” whether they are in sorrow, affliction, or sickness. From the sweet visits of Jesus, they can and do say, “In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul!” (Ps. 94:19)



In prosperity, we are often inclined to think that our mountain will never be brought low; and so also, when we are in adversity, we are ready to think that our valley will never be filled up. But to conclude that tomorrow *must* be as this day is as absurd as to think that the weather – either fair or foul – will *always* be the same. There is a day of judgment, when all that now seems to be amiss will be found to be right after all, and all that now seems dark and difficult will then be cleared up and set straight. And if we experience Divine displeasure in our troubles, it may be because we are quarreling with God, and are fretful and distrustful of His good purposes and plans. This was Job's case. Elihu was directed by the Lord to humble Job; for in some things, he had indeed opened his mouth in vain, and had multiplied words without knowledge. When we find ourselves under afflictions, let us not endeavor so much to set forth the greatness of our sufferings, as much as the greatness of the mercy of our loving God!

Lord, we confess that we have often complained to You in our afflictions. Give us grace, in our troubles, to cry out to You and find comfort in Your promises! Amen.