

546 A Weaver's Shuttle

We read that Job “was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil”, having great wealth and high social status (Job 1.1-5). But then came calamity after calamity, from the hand of Satan yet by the Lord’s allowance (1.6 – 2.10). The scene was set for two key tests: was Job “perfect and upright” simply because life was going well? – and would Job curse God when everything went, and remained, horribly wrong? (1.11; 2.4-6).

Job’s three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, did their best to comfort him by taking the common view that Job’s sufferings must be the consequence of Job’s sins. Their efforts did not impress Job! – “miserable comforters [are] ye all” (Job 16.2b, KJV).

Job poured out his grief and puzzlement as to why his life had taken such a turn for the worse. In Job 7.6 we read – “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope”. The Book of Job is thought to be of an early date, even perhaps pre-Flood, yet we have this reference to a speeding weaver’s shuttle, which surely sees off the notion that our forebears were mere semi-human grunTERS as Charles Darwin’s supporters like to tell us. No, “So God created man in his [own] image ... male and female created he them”, and their offspring soon became highly skilled (from Genesis 1.27; and eg., 4.20-22).

We can all identify with Job over time flying past like that shuttle. Later we read, “Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14.1), and “For what [is] your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4.14b).

As we note the rapid passing of this earth-bound stage of our lives, we remember that we are wholly in the Lord’s gracious hands - “My times [are] in thy hand ... Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it [is; that] I may know how frail I [am]” (Psalm 31.15a; 39.4).

Each day counts – “This [is] the day [which] the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118.24). We live constantly in the Lord’s presence – “(may I) dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple”, and – “Mary ... sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (from Psalm 27.4 / Luke 10.39).

We trust in the Lord in practice (Proverbs 3.5-6). We set out to live this day as it should be lived, “walking in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (from Colossians 4.5), “seeking first the kingdom of God” and “taking no more thought for tomorrow” than is needful (from Matthew 6.33-34), and “casting all our cares upon the Lord God who careth for us” (from I Peter 5.7). Truly, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14.8).

We need to be patient, for the Lord’s ways and timings are not our ways and timings: “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer ... one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ... Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ” (from I Peter 4.7 / II Peter 3.8 / Philippians 1.6).

Day by day we can anticipate the promised Father-granted, Christ-won blessings which await us, now known in part, but soon to be known in their fulness. All in Christ, be they Jew or Gentile, are bidden by the Lord Jesus, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25.34); we are “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ... he that overcometh shall inherit all things ... There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only but unto all them also that love his (Jesus’) appearing” (from Romans 8.17a / Revelation 21.7a / II Timothy 4.8).

Job held firm as his days passed “swifter than a weaver’s shuttle”, with limited understanding but with solid trust – “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ... For I know [that] my redeemer liveth ...”, and sure enough, in due time, “So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (Job 13.15a; 19.25a; 42.12a). Just so for us in Christ in these high-pressure times: we join with Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in proclaiming, “For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1.14).

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