



November 5, 2006

The Visitation Of Trial

Studying the usage of the word “visit” in its various forms in the scriptures, it is evident that one such application appears in the trials that come upon us. God has the power to relieve us of trial in all forms and yet allows us to be tried. Such was the case with Job, a righteous man, who had attracted the hate and jealousy of Satan. God allowed the devil to try Job and through these trials we see that Job’s appeal was to God for deliverance. Job was filled with questions, as we are at times in our lives and sought to find answers for the things that had befallen him. Job asks, “**What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?**” (Job 7.17-18). Job acknowledges that God rules over our lives and reaches the conclusion that he is being punished for sins that he has committed. Job states, “**How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?**” (Job 7.19-20). Job never questions that righteousness of God, nor does he challenge God’s right to try him. A reading of the book however reveals that God allowed these trials to come upon Job but placed a limit on what Satan could do to him (Job 2.6). Those who seek to follow God will be subject to trials in this life. During such times we may question God as Job did and it is at these times that we must turn to the scriptures for the comfort that they afford. Christ warned his disciples that trials would come upon them as they continued the work that he had set before them. Christ stated, “**And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**” (Matt 10.22). Christ also stated that some of them would be afflicted and killed. “**Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.**” (Matt 24.9). Later we find these things happening as the gospel was preached and persecutions arose. We have the assurance of God’s assistance when these things come about. Paul stated, “**...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.**” (1 Cor 10.13). Paul told Timothy, “**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**” (2 Tim 3.12). There are some, like Job’s friends who came to “comfort” him, who will insist that trials are a mark that one is not living right. At times this is true if we bring such things on ourselves. Job is an example of a godly man who was persecuted by Satan, not because of his unrighteousness, but because of godliness. When such things befall us we should look to strengthen our resolve to remain faithful to God. As Paul stated above, God will provide a way for us to deal with these things and persevere. Patience comes from the act of remaining faithful in spite of the bad things that may come upon us. Solomon wrote, “**If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.**” (Prov 24.10). We will never exercise true faith if we allow ourselves to weaken under the strain of trial that is brought on through the evil that exists in the world. James tells us, “**My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.**” (Jas 1.2-3). The patience that is spoken of in this passage is the measure of the strength that we will achieve if we resolve to be faithful no matter what happens to us. Job did not understand the reason for his trials and so voiced an appeal to God as a righteous judge over all of his affairs. God allows us to be tried in the same way that we may allow our children to endure discomfort in measured amounts, to toughen them perhaps to be able to endure the obstacles and setbacks that life will undoubtedly present during the course of their time on earth. As God’s children we must endure trials looking to God who is able to strengthen us. Some look for “miracles” to occur during times of distress and seek a divine intervention that will make things better. God has provided us a very great gift in the preservation of His word (Rom 15.4) and the assurance that we can call upon him through prayer for aid. This assurance is stated by the writer of Hebrews who writes, “**...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.**” (Heb 13.5-6). We also have the promise of Christ who told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them (John 14.2-3). These things can strengthen us if we do not let go of them and persevere.

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