

## **SUBJECT: UNDERSTANDING TRIALS**

**SCRIPTURE: Job 23:1-10**

*Text: "But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold" (vs.10)*

### **Introduction**

Job had been under a heavy trial for several months, he complains of God's hiding his face from him, and not hearing him. His spirit failing, his strength exhausted, his hands weak and feeble, he feels he cannot go another step. He declares his present sorrowful estate and condition, (1-2) **“Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.”**

**In desperation Job cries out** (vs. 3-5) **“Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would set my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.”** Job believes that God would deal favorably with him, strengthen him, and acquit him from the charges laid against him.

**Job felt that his trial was unbearable!** (vs.8-9) **"Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him."** Job cannot understand his circumstances.

**He consoles himself with one fact** (vs. 10a) **"He knoweth the way that I take"**, though he cannot see God, he knows that God can see him.

**Precious one, God is neither unmindful nor indifferent to your trial.** He knows when a sparrow falls, He knows how many hairs on your head, He knows the way that you take. **Like Job you must look beyond the immediate 'fiery trials'** to the outcome when you will be as gold refined. God knows the way you take. Three great truths are expressed here: let us briefly consider ...

**I. GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF MY LIFE (10a).**"He knoweth the way that I take." (Job 34:21)"For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings".

**Soloman, the wisest man who ever lived said (Prov. 15:3)** "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

**The prince of preachers, Charles Hadden Spurgeon said,** *"One of the greatest tests of experimental religion is, What is my relationship to God's omniscience?"* **What is your relationship to the all knowing God? Does it distress or comfort you?** Does it frighten you that God knows all about your way? **For the true Christian, this should be real comfort.** How encouraging to know that my Father knows all about my trials, my difficulties, my sorrows, my efforts to glorify Him.

**Job was drastically misunderstood by his friends.** They believed he was a great sinner and being punished by God. He appealed against their censorious verdict (vs.10) **"He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."** Your fellow Christians may misunderstand you, and misinterpret God's dealings with you. Like Job, console yourself with the blessed fact that the all knowing God knows all about you.

**Job himself, did not know the way that he took**, nor do any of us. How little do we know the way which we take. **Jeremiah said (Jer. 10:23) "O Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."**

**Soloman said (Prov. 20:24) "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?"**

**What that "way" was he tells us in the next two verses (Job 23:11, 12).** "My foot hath held his steps. His way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food". The way Job chose was the best way, the scriptural way, God's way. Have you made a similar choice? Can you say, *my foot hath held his steps. his way have I kept, and not declined?* If you cannot, confess your failure and ask His forgiveness. **John the apostle said (1 John 1:9) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"**.

Which way are you taking, the Narrow Way which leadeth unto life, or 'the Broad Road that leadeth to destruction? **Paul warns us in (Rom. 14:12) "So every one of us shall give account of himself to God"**. Let us consider...

**II. GOD'S TESTING (10b). "When he hath tried me." (Prov. 17:3) "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts"** This was God's way with Israel of old, and it is His way with Christians now. **Just before Israel entered Canaan, Moses said to the people, (Deut. 8:2) "And**

**thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what as in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no".**

**In the same way God tries, tests, proves, and humbles us.** If we realized this more, we would hold up better under trials and be more patient under suffering. **The daily irritations of life, the things which annoy you so much, what is their meaning?** Why are they permitted? Because God is "trying" you! God is trying your temper, your courage, your faith, your patience, your love, your fidelity.

**Frequently we blame Satan as the cause of our troubles.** But there is no comfort for the heart in this. The Devil cannot touch a hair of our heads without God's permission, and when he is allowed to disturb and distract us, even then it is God using him to "try" us. In the opening chapter of this book we find Satan obtaining permission to afflict God's servant, Job. **He used the Sabians to destroy Job's herds (v. 15): he sent the Chaldeans to slay his servants (v. 17): he caused a great wind to kill his children (v. 19). And what was Job's response? "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21). Job looked beyond the human agents, beyond Satan who employed them, to the Lord who controls all. He realized that it was the Lord trying him. **How much we lose by forgetting this!****

**We often question the wisdom and right of God to try us.** So often we murmur, *why should God lay such an intolerable burden upon me? Why should others be spared their loved ones, and mine taken? Why should health and strength be denied me?* The first

answer to all such questions is, **(Rom. 9:20) "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"**

**Scripture affords some light on the problem.** This light may not satisfy reason, but it will bring comfort and strength when received in child-like faith and simplicity.

**(I Pet. 1:6) "In this (God's salvation) ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (or trials): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."** Your present trial has in view the future. When you meekly endure your trial there will be a grand reward at the appearing of our Redeemer.

**(I Peter 4:12-13) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."** In the Christian life there is a need for our trials and therefore we are to think them not strange we should expect them. **Not only should we meet these trials with faith, but we should rejoice in them, because they permit us to have fellowship in the sufferings of Christ.** He, too, suffered: God had only one Son without sin, but never one without sorrow and trial. Sooner or later, in one form or another, trial will be our lot. **(I Thess. 3:2, 3) "And sent Timotheus our brother . . . to establish you, and comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves**

**know that we are appointed thereunto"** And again (Acts 14:22) **"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"**. It has been so in every age. Abram was tried severely. So were Joseph, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, the Apostles, Let us consider.

**III. THE ULTIMATE ISSUE(10C). "I shall come forth as gold."** Job did not say, "When he hath tried me I may come forth as gold," or "I hope to come forth as gold," but with full confidence and positive assurance he declared, "I shall come forth as gold."

**How did Job know this? How can we be sure of this?** Because we are told in (Phil. 1:6). **Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Pslm. 138:8a) "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me"** Cheer up, tried and troubled one! The process may be unpleasant and painful, but the reward is sure, you will come forth as gold.

### **Conclusion**

**(Jas. 1:12) Blessed is the man who endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."** The most wonderful thing in heaven will not be the golden streets or the golden harps, but golden souls on which is stamped the image of God predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son!