

Lesson 77 - CHRIST, OUR RANSOM *Job 33:16-28*

Up to *Job 32*, a young man named Elihu had listened to the exchange between Job and his three friends. He had kept silent out of respect for their age, but now they are silent. God moves Elihu to speak with so much wisdom and truth. He first admonishes Job's friends for judging Job in a completely self-righteous way that misrepresented God and Job. Here in *Job 33* he begins to admonish Job for justifying himself and accusing God of being unjust in punishing him. Job was a justified sinner, a sinner saved by grace, a true believer who looked to and rested in the Messiah who was to come, but he did not understand why God would bring such suffering upon him. Why do the righteous suffer? Such suffering is not a token of God's hatred towards His children or any sign that He has forsaken His people. It is the chastisement of a loving Father meant to wean us away from this world and drive us more and more to Christ for righteousness, life, peace, and joy.

(Job 33:16-18) - God has spoken by His loving chastisements. "Instruction" here speaks of correction, admonition, and chastisement which is common to all of God's true children (*Heb. 12:5-8*). This is meant to turn man away from His natural thoughts and purposes which only end in death and hell. Man by nature thinks that in all of his endeavors he is seeking righteousness and eternal life by his deeds, but he is deceived until God speaks and reveals Himself in Christ. And if God does not speak and turn us away from our natural thinking, we will perish.

(Job 33:19-22) - Pain and suffering wean us away from the pleasures and joys of this life. It makes us hate the bread of this life and long for Christ, the Bread of eternal life (*Heb. 12:11*). It makes us hate the best meats of this world and causes us long for the meat that perishes NOT - "*Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed*" (*John 6:27*).

(Job 33:23) - This and the following verses point us to Christ as the Angel, the "messenger," of the Covenant of grace. He is an "interpreter," which means "one who intercedes" for others. Elihu is reminding Job that God is not against him, nor is God his enemy, but God is with him because of this Messenger and Interpreter. He is "ONE AMONG A THOUSAND." This speaks of the uniqueness of Christ, the "chiefest among ten thousand" (*Song 5:10; 1 Tim. 2:5*). Christ is unique in the glory of His Person - God manifest in the flesh. He is unique in the redemptive work that He accomplished for His people - righteousness established whereupon God is just to justify them. He shows "unto man his uprightness." This does not mean that He shows man as already upright or righteous. It means He shows man the way of uprightness (righteousness) which is by God's grace through Christ. Man by nature is not righteous (*Rom. 3:10-20*), but Christ is the righteousness of God to everyone who believes.

(Job 33:24) - Salvation is by the grace of God by virtue of "A RANSOM." The truth of this ransom presupposes that man by nature is held captive by sin, Satan, and death. This is the state of all mankind by nature as fallen in Adam and born into this life as spiritually dead and depraved. This ransom is the full and just payment Christ made for all the sins of God's elect. Elihu states, "I have found ONE who has met the price of my redemption!" "*For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (*Mark 10:45*). It is the nature of a ransom, like redemption, to deliver and insure, not a mere possibility of life, liberty, and salvation. It delivers and insures the certain reality of life, liberty, and salvation.

But does the Word of God not say in *1 Timothy 2:6* that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time"? Yes, but "ALL" in this verse is not all without exception. The context shows us that the apostle is speaking of the fact that we as believers are to pray for the salvation of all of God's elect, no matter what their race or station in life, because

God's elect consists of all sorts of persons, both kings and paupers, Jew and Gentile. This speaks of *"God our Saviour; Who will have all men [all without distinction, not all without exception] to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:3-4). God's Word teaches us that no sinner by nature will *"come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (the Gospel of God's grace in Christ) until God gives spiritual life and reveals Christ to them.

God's Word teaches us that if the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself a ransom for many, that many (whoever they are) must be saved eternally. That many must be set free because they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Their sin-debt was charged to Christ, and they cannot be charged with that debt. They have His righteousness charged to their account, and they must go free. This is the heart of Elihu's message, and it is the heart of the Gospel for all of God's elect. It is a free gift that comes to us without any cause within us and without any conditions upon us. It is all in and by the Lord Jesus Christ Who fulfilled all conditions of salvation by giving Himself a ransom for many.

(Job 33:25) - Some object to the truth of the success of Christ's giving Himself a ransom as being the guarantee that all for whom He died shall be saved. They claim that He died for all without exception and sinners must believe and receive the gift, else they will perish. But the Scriptures teach us that man in his natural, sinful, and spiritually dead state will not receive Christ and believe in Him (1 Cor. 2:14). And consider these next verses that show the fruits of Christ giving Himself a ransom for many. First, *"His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth."* This speaks of a new beginning, a new birth. Christ said of His elect that they must be born again from above (John 3:3-7). It is written that it is only those who are born again by the Spirit who will receive Christ for salvation (John 1:11-13). God must give us a new heart, new spiritual eyes and ears, else we will not receive Christ.

(Job 33:26) - Next, *"He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him: and he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man His righteousness."* This speaks of God-given faith wherein a sinner, having seen by revelation from God the glory of God in Christ, prays and turns to God pleading the merits of that ransom paid by Christ, which is His righteousness imputed and received by God-given faith. This is the joy and peace that believers have by looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. This is the hope that gives assurance of all the blessings and benefits of eternal life and glory.

(Job 33:27-28) - Some interpreters view this as God looking upon men and upon seeing their confession of sin and unprofitableness in seeking salvation by their works, God will deliver their souls from the grave, and they will live in the light of salvation. But the Bible tells us in other verses of all people by nature - *"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one"* (Psalm 14:2-3; cf. Psalm 53:2-3; Rom. 3:10-12). So, it is clear that if the Lord simply looked down upon men to see if He could find any who would repent and believe in Christ, He would find no one, and all men would be doomed forever. Therefore, if this passage is speaking of God looking upon men, and any repenting and believing, this is simply an acknowledgment of God's power and grace in bringing His elect to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works. In other words, this is not attributed to man's goodness or "free-will," but to God alone Who has mercy and grace upon who He will have mercy and grace (Rom. 9:15-16).

If this verse is speaking of regenerate, believing men looking upon other men who are unregenerate and unbelieving, as evidenced by their perverting the way of salvation and righteousness, then it speaks of witnessing the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ to them, and God making it effectual as the power of God unto salvation to them, delivering them from death, darkness, and the grave. Either way, this is a glorious testimony of God's grace, mercy, and power to save His people whom Christ gave Himself for ransom.