

Jeremiah in the Dungeon

by C.I. Scofield

C.I. Scofield's sermon examines the profound mystery of why good people suffer, using Jeremiah's imprisonment as a focal point to illustrate God's purposes in trials.

Scripture: Job 42:5, Jeremiah 38:1, Daniel 6:16, Romans 8:18, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Peter 4:12, 1 Peter 5:10, Revelation 1:9

Topics: "Suffering And Faith", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the mystery of permitted suffering of the good, using the story of Jeremiah's affliction to illustrate how God's power is magnified in delivering His faithful servants from trials. He emphasizes that suffering, when endured with meekness, leads to cleansing, nearness to God, and ultimately blessings. Scofield also points out that the suffering of saints often contributes to the furtherance of the Gospel and their increased effectiveness in ministry, even though the reasons may not always be clear. He encourages believers to trust that God's loving intent will be revealed in due time, even in the midst of seemingly senseless tragedies and deaths of the righteous.

Transcript

(Jer. xxxviii:1-13.)

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The permitted affliction of the good is evidently the heart of things here. In a time of final declension and utter apostasy Jeremiah stands forth uttering in a blameless life the terrible messages of God. No braver, more devoted servant, save only Jesus Christ, did Jehovah ever have on this earth. And furthermore, the very point of his pleading with king and people was the power of God to deliver Judah even yet from all the power of Babylon if only Judah would return to Jehovah, her covenant God.

And, now, in the mystery of God's will, the very preacher of His power to deliver is not delivered! "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." Why?

We must remember that this case does not stand alone. Job, the best man of his time, is given over, as to all else but his life, into the hand of Satan. The three faithful Jews are cast into the burning fiery furnace. Daniel himself must go into the den of the lions. John the Baptist loses his head at the request of a lewd

dancing girl. Stephen is stoned. Paul is beaten and imprisoned. All the apostles save John die by the executioner. Countless Christian maidens are torn by lions and devoured by flames. Why?

We may not go to the end of this mystery of the permitted suffering of the good, but we may go some way in it.

Think first of the cases illustrated by this instance of Jeremiah's--the cases which end in deliverance. In all of them three facts are clearly discernible.

First: The power of God is far more strikingly shown in His deliverance of His servants from the trials into which they were permitted to be drawn, than it could have been in simply keeping them out of the trial. It was an amazing manifestation of the power of God that Shadrach and his companions were not hurt by the flames, nor Daniel by the lions. Jeremiah, mute and meek in his horrible miry pit, was an appeal to whatever of heart and conscience Judah had left.

Secondly: We cannot doubt that for them there was great gain. Not always do the narratives show this, but they show it often enough to make us sure that suffering, unjustly inflicted, meekly borne, is always a process of blessing.

Cleansing and a resultant nearness to God are invariable. In the burning, fiery furnace the three men of the captivity were seen wallcing, their bonds burnt away, but not even their garments hurt, while with them was the ineffable presence of "the Fourth."

Job, good, but too conscious of it, was brought to see God, and in the light of that vision to see also and to abhor himself.

Thirdly: The permitted suffering of the Saints often turns out to the furtherance of the Gospel, and to their greater efficiency. Job, purified, becomes the priest through whom his accusing friends are pardoned. Aged John, exiled to Patmos, is given the Apocalypse to write. There are. mysteries, but we do know

" 'Tis suffering sublimes the soul,

So perfect peace may come at last,

And we shall know God's kind intent

When these sharp pains are past."

But of the undelivered, what shall we say? To what end the murder of John the Baptist, the stoning of Stephen, the cruel deaths of the unnumbered martyrs?

Let us remember that there are two spheres of life to be taken into account. When earth's last word is said, eternity's first word is uttered. Never, until we pass, "To where, beyond these voices there is peace," shall we know the other side of agony and death of the good; but this at least faith confidently affirms--that everything which seems hardest in the permitted suffering of the good, will some time be seen to be God's sweetest touch of love.

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