

## JOB 24

## EVILDOERS SEEM TO PROSPER

Having given vent to his passion by his complaints in the foregoing chapter, and thereby gained some ease; Job now broke off his complaints abruptly, and applied himself to a further discussion of the doctrinal controversy between him and his friends concerning the prosperity of wicked people. He had already shown in chapter 21 that many who live at ease are ungodly and profane, and despise all the exercises of true devotion. But now he went further. In verses 1-12 especially, he showed that although many are mischievous to mankind and openly defiant to all the laws of justice and common honesty, yet they thrive and succeed in their unrighteous practices; and often, we do not see them reckoned with in this world. And so, in reference to this whole matter in general, we cannot say that all in this world who are in trouble are *necessarily* wicked; for it is obvious that all in the world who are in prosperity are not *necessarily* righteous.

Job opened the subject, in verse 1, with a pertinent question, which was as much as to say, "If you think that riches and prosperity are sure marks of God's favor, and that the opposite circumstances of poverty and adversity are the evident indications of His displeasure; on what principle, consistent with this maxim, can you show why the knowledge and love of God do not always keep pace with it?" And he brought up a variety of most oppressive cases that illustrate the prosperity of bad men, against whom no judgment is immediately executed; and from these, Job left his friends to make their conclusions. He gave a very descriptive representation of the tyranny and injustice of proud and oppressive men; of infamous robbers of property, who remove ancient landmarks or boundary-markers; of perverters of right paths, who turn the needy out of his way; of those who violently seize the property of the poor, and deprive the laborer of his hire – and in short, of those who do all manner of injustice. And yet, because judgment is not executed speedily upon these wicked persons, who would infer that these things are hidden from the eyes of the Almighty? Job said, "God layeth not folly to them" – that is, He does not *immediately* send His judgments upon them, thereby making them examples, and manifesting their folly to all the world. But we do know that the person who gets riches unrighteously shall be proved a fool indeed in the end (Jer. 17:11).

Verses 13-17 illustrate the great care and pains that wicked people take in order to attain their wicked purposes, and this ought to shame our own negligence and slothfulness in doing good. See what great lengths depraved persons

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ Job shows that open evildoers are often not punished, not are the injured righted – verses 1-12, 21-22
- ❖ He shows that those who secretly do evil often go undiscovered – verses 13-17
- ❖ He shows that the Lord punishes such persons by secret judgments, and that He reserves them for future punishments – verses 18-20, 23-25





will go to, in order to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. They take pains to get what they want, and then they take even more pains to hide that which will end in death and hell. How much less pains they would go through to mortify and crucify the flesh, and then to attain everlasting life and heaven in the end! Shame came into this world with sin, and everlasting shame will also be the end of sin. Sinners promise themselves pleasure and enjoyment; but they are actually terribly miserable, for they are exposed to continual frights of being discovered. And yet their great folly is plain to see, too – for they are afraid of coming under the eyes of men; but they have no dread of God’s eye, which is always upon them.

The thief of the day and the murderer of the night are both alike in one respect: sometimes their prosperity is great, as if they had committed no evil; and sometimes their destruction comes speedily. But from these outward circumstances, no conclusions can be drawn with such certainty as to infer therefrom the judgment of God. The unerring doctrine of Divine government is that it will be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; but it is impossible for human beings, with their scanty knowledge and observation, to be able to always form just conclusions as to who are righteous and who are wicked. The wise man has a beautiful observation on this same doctrine, and he draws the same conclusion as Job did: “Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged; yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God!” (Ecc. 8:12-13)

In this sinful world, there will often appear much to resemble the wrong view of Providence which Job’s friends seemed to have. But we are taught by the inspired Word of God that these notions are formed in ignorance, from partial views that we see through human eyes. The Lord’s Providence in the affairs of men is a just and wise Providence in everything! Let us remember this whenever our God may try us. He cannot do anything wrong! Even the unequalled sorrows of our Savior, during His ministry on earth, will perplex our minds unless we look at them in this view. But when we behold Him as the sinner’s Substitute, bearing the sinner’s curse; we will understand that the reason why He endured the wrath which was due to sin was so that Divine justice might be satisfied, and His people saved!

Having finished his sermon, Job demanded his friends to confront it if they could. The man of Uz made a short but striking application from a long discourse. If they could disprove what he had said, and show the reverse – namely, that no righteous person was ever made to mourn, and no wicked person was allowed to rejoice – then his miseries might be supposed to be the result of his sins, as his friends imagined them to be.

*Lord, help us to acknowledge that Your Providence is just and wise in everything. And thank You for sending Jesus to be the spotless Sacrifice for Your people! Amen.*