

The Benefit of Affliction

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Psalm 119:71

When Adam and Eve sinned, God promised that they would spend their days on earth in perpetual pain and opposition: "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'"¹

Pain and opposition distract man from his lust for autonomy. Israel spent the time between the deaths of Moses and Joshua at war as she conquered the land; she had no time for sinning. Judges, on the other hand, records a series of cameos in which Israel continually strayed from God. When Israel was free from war she sinned, and when at war or in captivity, she repented.

You are never more vulnerable to temptation than when all is well. Tribulation stimulates dependence. God does not expect you to enjoy affliction any more than He expects you to enjoy open-heart surgery. However, when it comes, do you thank God for it, as did King David?

¹ Genesis 3:16-19