

March 13th

And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning...
-Job 42:12

For a despair-filled and cynical world, happy endings are the stuff of fairy tales. Those who have been beaten down by the pain of life, who have been disappointed by the failures of others, usually resign themselves to fact that their current experience is 'as good as it gets'. But as the last chapter of the book of Job reminds us, a happy ending is not wishful thinking for those who serve the one, true God. Job was a man beaten down by the pain of life. The death, loss, and sorrow of this book's opening chapters (1:1-2:13) far outweigh even the most tragic of literary tragedies. Similarly, the middle chapters of Job (3:1-41:34) offer no reprieve for the reader. These monologues and dialogues only deepen the suffering as we hear Job's friends accusing him of deceit and Job himself questioning the worth of his own life. But in chapter 42, God brings about a glorious resolution. Not only does God rebuke Job's friends, but He goes on to restore Job's fortunes. Yet notice what we learn here about God's restoration. Job was given twice as much as all he possessed before his trials. Even in the area of emotional hurt, an area that could not be addressed by a restoration of things, God provided Job with a wealth of family members who "consoled him and comforted him" in the midst of his grief (42:11). To drive this point home, the last line of the book tells us, "Job died, an old man and full of days" (42:17) Now some today might read this ending and label it 'unrealistic'. But for those who know, love, and serve the God of Job, the Father of Jesus the Messiah, this ending is an accurate picture of ultimate reality. While God never promises us a pain-free life, He does guarantee a happy ending. As Paul reminded the Philippians, "to die is gain" (1:21), for when we do, we know "we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Corinthians 5:1) in which "there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain" (Revelation 21:4). The hope that God gives us, even though we dwell in the midst of a despair-filled and cynical world, even though we suffer now, is the hope of a new life far better than we could ever imagine. But this reality should not be foreign to us. Even now we should be buoyed by our future blessing, not because we are called to dwell on the details of our eternal home, but because new life is ours now and the Eternal One is with us. In those times when you feel like Job, remember how "the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning". For in that past event is the whisper of our future hope.

Even though our lives are filled with uncertainty, we thank you, Father, for the certainty of your love.