

Job Chapter 3

Verses 3:3 - 42:6

This whole section is poetry, a dramatic poem of speeches attempting to understand Job's suffering.

Verses 3:1 – 37:24

This section covers the cycles of speeches between Job and his well-meaning friends, including Elihu (chapters 32-37).

Verses 3:1 – 14:22

The first cycle of speeches given by Job and his 3 friends begins.

Job was the first to break the week-long silence with a lament (3:1-26).

Verses 1-26

In Job's introductory soliloquy, he despairs of his life and experiences even greater sadness when he realizes God will not let him die (Psalm 58:8).

Verses 3:1 to 10

Job began his first speech by cursing the day of his birth, which should have been a day of great rejoicing and welcomed the day he would finally die.

In short, Job says "I wish I'd never been born" (see 3; 6-7; 9-10; 12-14; 16-17; 19, 21, 23-24; 26-31; 40:3-5; 42:1-6 for Job's speeches).

Job 3:1 "After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day."

"Cursed his day":

Job was in deep pain and despair.

What God was allowing hurt desperately, but while Job did not curse God (2:8), he did curse his birth (verses 10-11).

He wished he had never been conceived (verse 3), or born because the joys of his life were not worth all the pain.

He felt it would have been better to have never lived than to suffer like that; better to have never had wealth than to lose it.

Better to have never had children than to have them all killed.

He never wanted his birthday remembered, and wished it had been obliterated from the calendar (verses 4-7).

“After this”, that is, after the seven days of silence, Job broke the silence.

Whereas the first two chapters were written in prose, everything in 3:3 – 42:6 is in poetry.

Job “cursed his day” (birth), in a manner that conveyed great suffering and depression.

These are the words of a man who was so broken, he no longer cared what he said, but he did not curse God.

Job refused to curse God.

He was cursing the day he was born.

He had sat there 7 days, not saying a word to anyone.

His three friends had come to be with him.

From the statement above, he had realized that his friends thought that something he had done had caused this punishment to come to him.

I see this so much among church people even today.

If someone has a problem, they are quick to say that it is judgement from God.

It is more likely that they are like Job here.

Satan does not bother with those he already has in his camp.

It is the true believer he is after.

I was complaining about some persecution levelled against our church one day.

A friend said, Praise God they are attacking you, Satan is not even bothering some churches.

Job 3:2 "And Job spake, and said,"

Hebrew, "answered," that is, not to any actual question that preceded, but to the question virtually involved in the case.

His outburst is singularly wild and bold (Jer. 20:14).

To desire to die so as to be free from sin is a mark of grace; to desire to die so as to escape troubles is a mark of corruption.

He was ill-fitted to die who was so unwilling to live.

But his trials were greater, and his light less, than ours.

After 7 days of silence, he spoke. Notice, Job spoke first.

The friends could begin to talk to him now.

Job 3:3 "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night [in which] it was said, There is a man child conceived."

Let the remembrance of that day be utterly lost; yea, I heartily wish that it had never been.

Such wishes are apparently foolish and impatient, and yet have been sometimes forced from wise and good men in grievous distresses.

Not as if they expected any effect of them, but only to show their abhorrence of life, and to express the intolerableness of their grief.

And to give some vent to their passions, in which it was said with joy and triumph, as happy tidings (compare Jer. 20:15).

"Conceived":

Or rather, brought forth, as this word is used (1 Chron. 4:17); for the time of conception is unknown commonly to women themselves, and doth not use to be reported among men, as this day is supposed to be.

No one could blame Job for such despair as this.

His sorrows have finally overwhelmed him, and he wished he had never lived.

Job 3:4 "Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it."

I wish the sun had never risen on that day; or, which is the same thing, that it had never been.

And when that day returns, instead of the cheering and refreshing beams of light arising upon it, I wish it may be covered with gross, thick darkness, and rendered black, gloomy, and uncomfortable.

"Let not God regard it from above":

From heaven, by causing the light of heaven to visit it; or, let God make no more inquiry after it than if such a day had never been.

Job 3:5 "Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it."

I.e. a black and dark shadow, like that of the place of the dead, which is a land of darkness, and where the light is darkness.

As Job explains this very phrase (Job 10:21-22).

Or so gross and palpable darkness, that by its horrors and damps may take away men's spirits and lives.

"Stain it":

Take away its beauty and glory, and make it abominable, as a filthy thing. Or, "Challenge it":

I.e. take and keep the entire possession of it, so as the light may not have the least share in it.

"Terrify it":

To wit, the day, i.e. men in it.

Let it be always observed as a frightful and dismal day.

It is as if he was saying that it was a very dark day, when he was born.

This again, was speaking of the terribleness of the day he was born.

He was just saying, that it had to be a very dark day and night when he was born.

Job 3:6 "As [for] that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months."

The night of conception; Job imprecated evils on the day he was born, now on the night he was conceived in, the returns of it.

"Let darkness seize upon it":

Let it not only be deprived of the light of the moon and stars, but let a horrible darkness seize upon it, that it may be an uncommon and a terrible one.

"Let it not be joined unto the days of the year":

The solar year, and make one of them.

"Let it not be one among them", let it come into no account, and when it is sought for, let it not appear, but be found wanting.

"Or let it not joy" or "rejoice among the days of the year", as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others interpret it.

Or be a joyful one, or anything joyful done or enjoyed in it.

"Let it not come into the number of the months":

Meaning not the intercalated months, as Sephorno, nor the feasts of the new moon, as others.

But let it not serve to make up a month, which consists of so many days and nights, according to the course of the moon.

The sense both of this and the former clause is, let it be struck out of the calendar.

Job 3:7 "Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein."

Destitute of all society of men, meeting and feasting together.

Let it afford no entertainment or pleasure of any kind

"Let no joyful voice come therein":

No music, no harmony of sound be heard, no cheerful or pleasing voice admitted!

Let no expressions of joy be so much as once attempted, however engaging and affecting they may be.

All of this was speaking of the amount of gloom that surrounded Job.

He had forgotten all of the good, and was only remembering the terrible last bit of time.

Job wished that the night of his conception and the day of his birth had been blotted from the calendar.

This was a sound of hopelessness.

Job 3:8 "Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning."

"Let them curse ... mourning":

Those who pronounce the most powerful curses, even to arousing the destructive sea monster (see note on 41:1; compare Psalms 74:14; 104:26; Isa. 27:1).

Instead of cursing God, Job cursed his own birth.

"Mourning" is better taken as "Leviathan," an ancient sea monster who came to symbolize opposition to God's creative force.

"To raise up" Leviathan would be to bring the world back to a state of chaos (Gen. 1:2) and negate the birth of Job).

Job 3:9 "Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but [have] none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:"

That adorn the heavens with so much beauty and luster, never be seen that night.

Let it look for light, but have none":

Let it wait with the greatest impatience for some pleasing refreshment from thick, heavy clouds hanging over it; but let not the smallest degree of light appear.

"Neither let it see the dawning of the day":

Neither let it perceive the least glimpse of those bright rays, which, with so much swiftness, issue from the rising sun.

Strangely enough this is the way that many people feel, when they are very ill and in great pain.

Some people in our society today feel this way in their spirit, even without problems like Job had here.

Many people cannot face the realities of life, and kill themselves.

If Job had not had such great faith in God, he might have contemplated something like that.

The light was not there for him was what he was trying to say.

Job 3:10 "Because it shut not up the doors of my [mother's] womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes."

Because it did not confine me to the dark prison of the womb, but suffered me to escape from thence.

"Nor hid sorrow from mine eyes":

Because it did not keep me from entering into this miserable life, and seeing or experiencing those bitter sorrows under which I now groan.

Verses 11-26

Job left the matter of never having been born (verses 1-10), and moved to a desire to have been stillborn (verses 11-19), then to a desire for the "light" of life to be extinguished in death (see verses 20-23).

There was no hint that Job wanted to take his own life, for there was nothing stopping him.

Job still trusted God for His sovereign hand in the matter of death, but he did consider the many ways in which death would be a perceived improvement to the present situation, because of the pain.

Job 3:11 "Why died I not from the womb? [why] did I [not] give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?"

That is, as soon as he came out of it; or rather, as soon as he was in it, or from the time that he was in it.

Or however, while he was in it, that so he might not have come alive out of it.

Which sense seems best to agree both with what goes before and follows after.

For since his conception in the womb was not hindered, he wishes he had died in it; and so some versions render it to this sense.

"Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?"

Since he died not in the womb, which was desirable to him.

He wishes that the moment he came out of it he had expired, and is displeased because it was not so (see Jer. 20:17).

Thus, what is the special favor of Providence, to be taken out of the womb alive, and preserved, he wishes not to have enjoyed (see Psalm 22:9).

He was wishing he had never been conceived.

Since he was conceived, he wishes he had died at birth.

All of life was looking futile to him at the moment.

Job 3:12 "Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?"

“Knees” to “prevent me” probably refers to the loving practice of holding a newborn child on the knees something people still do today.

Job wondered why his mother had not just abandoned him at birth if he was going to have a life that ended up like this.

Verses 13-19

Job described death as he understood it: as a time and place of relief from suffering.

He believed it to be the great equalizer.

The New Testament presents a more complete picture of death (1 Cor. 15:12-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Job 3:13 "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,"

Free from those torments of body, and that anguish of mind, which now oppress me.

Job was wishing that his mother had not nourished him.

He felt if he had died at birth, he would not have had these great sorrows.

Job 3:14 "With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;"

I.e., gorgeous tombs and splendid sepulchers, which, being inhabited only by the dead, are desolate.

Or it may mean that the places so built of old are now ruined and desolate.

In the former sense it is possible that the Pyramids may here be hinted at.

Job was speaking of the futility of building great kingdoms for themselves that died anyway.

Job 3:15 "Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:"

A large abundance of it while they lived, but now, being dead, were no longer in the possession of it, but on a level with those that had none.

Nor could their gold, while they had it, preserve them from death, and now, being dead, it was no longer theirs, nor of any use unto them.

These princes, by this description of them, seem to be such who had not the dominion over any particular place or country, but their riches lay in gold and silver, as follows.

"Who filled their houses with silver":

Had an abundance of it, either in their coffers, which they hoarded up, or in the furniture of their houses, which were much of it of silver.

They had large quantities of silver plate, as well as of money; but these were of no profit in the hour of death.

Nor could they carry them with them; but in the grave, where they were, those were equal to them, of whom it might have been said, silver and gold they had none.

The princes who had stacked up gold, died and left it for someone else.

Job 3:16 "Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants [which] never saw light."

Another condition which would have relieved him from the experience of suffering.

This is speaking of death coming to all.

Job was still wishing he had died at birth.

He was saying, he wished his mother had miscarried.

Job 3:17 "There the wicked cease [from] troubling; and there the weary be at rest."

I.e., in the grave, the place indicated, but not distinctly expressed.

The wicked are never satisfied.

The wicked may stop trouble on this earth, but they have a terrible fate awaiting them.

The weary are not the same as the wicked.

Even Christians get weary.

There is a perfect rest awaiting those who die knowing the LORD.

Job 3:18 "[There] the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor."

That is, one as well as another; they who were lately deprived of their liberty.

Kept in the strongest chains and closest prisons, and condemned to the most hard and miserable slavery, rest as well as those who were captives in much better circumstances.

"They hear not the voice of the oppressor":

Or exactor or taskmaster, who urges and forces them, by cruel threatening and stripes, to labor beyond their strength.

Job does not here take into consideration their eternal state after death, of which he speaks hereafter, but only their freedom from worldly troubles, which is the sole matter of his present discourse.

The prisoners are oppressed on the earth.

In those days, prisoners were either chained up, or they were forced to do hard labor.

The oppressor in this instance, would be those who were the taskmasters.

When this life is over, all of that stops.

Job 3:19 "The small and great are there; and the servant [is] free from his master."

I.e. persons of all qualities and conditions, whether higher or lower.

"Are there":

In the same place and state, all those kinds of distinctions and differences being for ever abolished.

There will be no separations in heaven.

God is no respecter of persons.

All go to the same heaven, or the same hell.

The servant is no longer under the master after death.

Verses 20-26

Although Job repeatedly asked “why” his life went on (five times), he was not considering suicide.

His lament centered on why God preserved his life.

God’s people can ask why (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), but they must remember that God is not obligated to give an answer.

Job 3:20 "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter [in] soul;"

Wherefore giveth He light, namely, God.

Often omitted reverentially (Job 24:23; Eccl. 9:9).

Light, that is, life.

The joyful light doesn’t suit the mourners.

The grave is most in unison with their feelings.

In this chapter, all the way through, Job was speaking of a better place awaiting.

Those that live in abject poverty on this earth, will live in splendor in heaven.

There are some who have a miserable plight on this earth.

It seems, they live where there is no light, but in heaven where God dwells, there is continuous light.

Job 3:21 "Which long for death, but it [cometh] not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;"

I.e., desire and pray for it with as much earnestness as men dig for treasure.

But it is observable that Job did not lay violent hands upon himself, nor do anything to hasten or procure his death.

But notwithstanding all his miseries and complaints, he was contented to wait all the days of his appointed time, till his change came (Job 14:14).

Job counts himself among those who seek death.

He was miserable in life, as the people he mentioned were miserable.

He knew there was coming a day, when all pain and suffering would be done away with.

Job 3:22 "Which rejoice exceedingly, [and] are glad, when they can find the grave?"

To be thus impatient of life, for the sake of the trouble we meet with, is not only unnatural in itself, but ungrateful to the Giver of life, and shows a sinful indulgence of our own passion.

Let it be our great and constant care to get ready for another world: and then let us leave it to God to order the circumstances of our removal thither.

Even Paul looked forward to the death of the physical body, so that he could be with the LORD.

He knew it was necessary to live on this earth, until he had completed his mission.

However all believers' sin.

Those in Christ are looking forward to that heavenly home, where all the sorrows of this life are done away with.

Verse 22 is not speaking of suicide.

It is speaking of rejoicing on that day, when we shed this physical body, and rise to heaven in our spiritual bodies.

Job 3:23 "[Why is light given] to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?"

“Hedged in”:

Satan spoke of a hedge of protection and blessing (1:10), whereas Job spoke of this hedge as a prison of living death.

Job was speaking of himself here.

He had lived in the light.

He felt that God had given the Light of God to him.

The Light seems to be unable to get him out of this time of being hedged in.

Job felt useless to witness of that Light at this point.

He felt this was from God and there was nothing he could do about it.

Job 3:24 "For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters."

“Sighing ... roarings”:

These destroyed any appetite he might have had.

Verses 25-26

“Which I greatly feared”:

Not a particular thing but a generic classification of suffering.

The very worst fear that anyone could have was coming to pass in Job’s life, and he is experiencing severe anxiety, fearing more.

Job 3:25 "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me."

(Compare Prov. 28:14).

It means that he had always had in remembrance the uncertainty and instability of earthly things, and yet he had been overtaken by a calamity that mocked his carefulness and exceeded his apprehensions.

These two Scriptures (24-25), in my opinion, have been grossly misunderstood.

We are told in the beginning of these lessons, that Job feared God.

We are not told that he feared anything else.

Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

His fear of God is what he was speaking of here that had come true.

Job wanted to please God in all that he did.

He was careful to keep the relationship with God open.

He prayed and sacrificed regularly.

We know that God found no fault in Job's fear, because it was God who told Satan that Job was perfect and upright.

Job, in a verse above, knew that it was God who allowed him to be hedged in.

I believe that greater than Job's pain from the sores on his body, was a feeling in his heart that he might have in some way offended God.

There was no error on Job's part.

This was an attack of Satan on a righteous man.

His roarings were like a mourning.

He desired that close fellowship with God he had known in the past.

Job 3:26 "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came."

This cannot refer to the time of his prosperity; for he certainly then was in safety.

God having set a hedge about him, so that none of his enemies, nor even Satan himself, could come at him to hurt him.

"Neither had I rest, neither was I quiet":

Which also was not true of him before his afflictions, for he did then enjoy great peace, rest and quietness.

He lay in his nest at ease, and in great tranquility; and thought and said he should die in such a state (see Job 29:18).

Nor is the sense of these expressions that he did not take up his rest and satisfaction in outward things.

And put his trust and confidence in his riches, and yet trouble came upon him.

But this relates to the time of the beginning of his troubles and afflictions, from which time he was not in safety, nor had any rest and peace.

There was no intermission of his sorrows; but as soon as one affliction was over, another came.

"Yet trouble came":

Still one after another, there was no end of them.

Or, as Broughton renders it, "and now cometh a vexation"; a fresh one, a suspicion of hypocrisy; and upon this turns the whole controversy, managed and carried on between him and his friends in the following part of this book.

Trials and troubles come to everyone.

It is not the number or severity of the trials that come that make us different.

It is the way we handle those troubles when they come.

Christians are not exempt from trials.

The following is what Jesus said about this very thing.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Our peace is not because there is no tribulation.

Our peace is in Christ.

In the middle of terrible tribulation, we can experience His peace.

I would rather be like Job, who wanted to please God in whatever circumstance he was in.

If I were not experiencing any hardships, I would be concerned that Satan did not find me a threat to him.

Job Chapter 3 Questions

1. When Job finally spoke, he cursed ____.
2. How long had he sat without saying anything?
3. What had Job realized about his friends, while they were sitting there?
4. Who is Satan generally after?
5. What did Job say in verse 3?
6. He was really wishing he had never _____.
7. What was he saying about the day he was born, in verse 4?
8. What was verse 7 telling us about Job?
9. The statements that Job was making, in verse 9, is the same way many people feel who are _____.
10. In verse 11, he was wishing he had never been _____.
11. In verse 14, Job is speaking of the _____ of building great kingdoms for themselves.
12. The princes who stacked up gold, _____ and left it for someone else.

13. There is a _____ for those who die knowing the LORD.
14. What was the plight of prisoners in that day?
15. There will be no _____ in heaven.
16. God is not a _____ of persons.
17. In this entire chapter, what was Job speaking of?
18. Why do some people look forward to death?
19. What great apostle looked forward to death?
20. Who was Job speaking of in verse 23?
21. Who did Job believe his great distress was from?
22. Job's roaring was poured out like the _____.
23. What was the only fear that Job had?
24. Fear of God is the beginning of _____.
25. How did Job attempt to keep his relationship with God open?
26. Who told Satan that Job was perfect and upright?
27. What was the greatest pain that Job felt?
28. This was an attack of Satan on a _____ man.
29. Troubles and trials come to _____.