

Thus far we've heard from Job twice (once in chapter 1 and once in chapter 2). On both of these occasions, Job maintains his integrity and does not charge God with wrong. Now in chapter 3, we are going to hear from Job again, but this time, Job sounds very different. In the previous chapters he spoke words of confident resolve, in this chapter he speaks words of great lamentation. Job now gives vent to his anguish.

Chapter 3 has three parts: he curses his birth (vv1-10); he longs for death (vv11-19); he deplores his life (vv20-26). It's important to realize these three things are closely related. In fact, they are basically the same thing, viewed from different perspectives (it's for this reason I feel obligated to consider it together, which means we won't consider every phrase).

I. He Curses His Birth (vv1-10)

II. He Longs for Death (vv11-19)

III. He Deplores His Life (vv20-26)

I. He Curses His Birth (vv1-10)

1. V1—"After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth"—by "after this" is meant the 7 days of mourning.
2. After the 7 days of silence, Job now opens his mouth to speak, in the hearing of God and his 3 friends.
3. Thus, we must remember, while Job is audibly speaking, he isn't actually speaking to anyone in particular (he is simply venting)
4. And yet, as we shall see from the discourses that follow, Job's three friends listened closely to his complaint or lament.
5. In fact, there's a sense in which, everything his friends say in the following chapters is in response to his words in chapter 3.
6. Job not only curses the day of his birth, but the night of his conception, v3—"May the day perish on which I was born, and the night in which it was said, 'A male child is conceived.'"
7. In vv4-5 he curses the day, and in vv6-10 he curses the night—the day he was born and night he was conceived (obviously these are two different times, but he puts them together).
8. (1) What does it mean to curse the day and night? V3—"May the day perish on which I was born, and the night in which it was said, 'A male child is conceived.'"
9. Fundamentally, by cursing the day and night Job wishes they would perish—that they would cease to exist.
10. Throughout verses 4-9, Job uses a consistent imagery to illustrate his point, v4—"May that day be darkness" v5—"May darkness and the shadow of death claim it" v6—"As for that night, may darkness seize it."
11. The imagery is that of death—Job wishes that the day he was born and night he was conceived would die.
12. This is poetic language—Job knew that neither the day or night can literally die (but this is what he wanted).
13. If the day of his birth and night of his conception did not exist, then obviously he himself would not exist.
14. (2) Why does he curse the day and night? V10—"Because it (the night) did not shut up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hide sorrow from my eyes."
15. The night failed to keep his mother from conceiving, which resulted in his birth, and then knowing sorrow.

16. In other words, Job basically characterizes his life as filled with sorrow (which of course wasn't true).
17. And this is important to understand this chapter—Job's grief and sorrow blinded his eyes from reality.
18. Yes, Job experienced great sorrow, but let us not forget, he also knew great happiness (and he likely knew happiness longer than sorrow).
19. But here's the thing—his sorrow was so great it eclipsed his happiness—it out weighed his happiness.
20. This is why he cursed the day of his birth (and the night of his conception)—the sorrow was too much.
21. The sorrow was greater than his happiness—it's as if, he preferred to erase his happiness because of his sorrow.
22. He says—"On one hand I've known great happiness" and yet "On the other hand I have known great sorrow."
23. He concluded his sorrow was heavier than his happiness (now keep in mind this is merely Job's present conception and not necessarily reality).

II. He Longs for Death (vv11-19)

1. Notice the progression—in vv1-10 he wished he was never conceived, in vv11-19, he longs for death.
2. In other words—he first wished he was never born, now he wished that if he was stillborn or born dead.
3. Verses 11-13—"Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb? Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should nurse? For now I would have lain still and been quiet, I would have been asleep; then I would have been at rest."
4. Now, let me clarify at this point—Job isn't being tempted with suicide—he wishes he had died at birth.
5. He wished he never lived—wishing you never lived and thinking about suicide are two different things.
6. Thus, Job 3 says nothing about suicide! Job instead wishes he was never born or that he was stillborn.
7. Within verses 13-19 job speaks of death as the place where all people go—kings and princes (vv13-15); wicked and weary (v17); prisoners and masters (v18).
8. Verse 19 summarizes all of these—"The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master."
9. (1) Those who die in the womb are people, v16—"Or why was I not hidden like a stillborn child, like infants who never saw light."
10. In verses 1-10 Job wished was never conceived and in verses 11-19 Job wished he died in the womb.
11. (2) Death ends the troubles of this life, v17—"There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest."
12. Notice, Job does not say—"there the wicked cease from troubles" but "there the wicked cease from troubling (others)."
13. (3) Everyone dies and goes to the grave, v19—"The small and great are there"—the young, old, rich, and poor.

III. He Deplores His Life (vv20-26)

1. Here we have a further progression—he first curses the day of his birth, then wishes he was born dead, and now laments the fact he's alive.
2. V20—"Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter of soul"—here light and life are equated.
3. As darkness referred to death light refers to life—life outside the womb, beneath the sun, on the earth.
4. V23—"Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in?"—this is an important statement.
5. The reason why Job deplored or abhorred his life, was because he felt as if God hedged or boxed him in.
6. V23—"Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden"—that is, Job's way was concealed from him.
7. He was unable to understand all that was happening to him—he was hedged (fenced) in and unable to see.
8. Thus, in closing this brief exposition, let me suggest (in vv24-26), Job's abhorrence of his life is seen in three things.
9. (1) His groans, v24—"For my sighing comes before I eat, and my groanings (cries) pour out like water."
10. This first word "sighing" literally means "groaning" and likely means—groaning came in the place of his food.
11. The second word "groanings" literally means "roaring" and is applied to a lion in 4:10—"the roaring of the lion."
12. It here refers to the deep distress of the soul—the groaning (roaring) of a man under great pain and anguish.
13. (2) His fears, v25—"For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me."
14. Brethren, I think most of have thought like this—what would we do if our spouse or children all died.
15. Perhaps, we have a nightmare where all of our loved ones die, or we lose our possessions or our health.
16. I think most parents can relate to this—when your children first begin to drive, your heart stops when the phone rings.
17. Or you begin to have severe headaches or find a lump, and you have to go and get examined by a doctor.
18. Well, in Job's case, all that he could possibly fear came true! Everything we dreaded happened at once!
19. (3) His unrest, v26—"I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes"—this refers to a troubled soul.
20. This is really where Job's afflictions multiply—it's been a week and the truth of things is beginning to settle.
21. The shock of it all has wore off, and now Job really begins to feel the weight of all that's happened to him.
22. They say when a tragedy occurs, it takes a few weeks for it to sink in (because at first, it's hard to process).
23. This was true of me when my father died in 2010 (it took a few weeks until I realized he was gone forever).
24. Remember, chapter 3 happens at least a week later (and some commentators have suggested even longer).

25. And now Job says—"trouble comes"—now is the time when his soul becomes unsettled and disquieted.

IV. Observations

1. Here I want to spend the remainder of our time, suggesting to you three practical and important observations.
2. (1) Behold the reality of Christian lamentation—the first thing I want to do here, is underscore the word Christian.
3. Job's lamentation in this chapter is that of a Christian—it's that of a righteous man who is deeply loved by God.
4. Furthermore, the condition that Job finds himself in, is not something unique to Job—others have experienced it too.
5. Jer.20:14-15—"Cursed be the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me! Let the man be cursed who brought news to my father, saying, 'A male child has been born to you!'"
6. Verses 17-18—"Because he did not kill me from the womb, that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb always enlarged with me. Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?"
7. Jeremiah was commissioned to proclaim a message of judgement, and thus was hated, beaten, and imprisoned.
8. In fact, these words are uttered by Job after he's released from prison—it's a lamentation similar to Job's.
9. In fact, as I have said, vv14-18 is a loose quotation from Job 3—apparently Jeremiah memorized Job 3 (what Scriptures have we memorized).
10. Ps.88:6-9—"You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the depths. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. You have put away my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; I am shut up, and I cannot get out; my eye wastes away because of affliction."
11. (a) It's common—here I want to simply underscore, that Christians often encounter similar experiences.
12. I've referenced Jeremiah and the Psalmist, but I could also mention Elijah, Moses, and other non-biblical people.
13. For example, most of you know that men like Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon at times found themselves in Job 3.
14. This doesn't mean that every Christian goes through chapter 3 as Job did (remember, Job encountered unusual loss and pain).
15. But just as Job endured unusual loss and pain, so he expressed unusual grief, sorrow, and lamentation.
16. Why? To allow every Christian to find comfort and instruction from Job—few people go beyond Job.
17. For example, let's say Job's pain and thus lamentation, took him down one hundred floors into darkness.
18. And because he has gone down 100 floors, regardless if we only go down 5 or 10 floors, we can relate.
19. Thus, don't get me wrong—when I say this condition is common, I don't mean in the same degree as Job.
20. Few people will ever descend 100 floors down, but most Christians will descend a lesser number of floors.

21. (b) It's honest—by this I mean, such a lamentation as this is merely the verbal expression of inward struggle.
22. Here I want to answer the question about sin—did Job sin in this chapter and if so in what way or degree?
23. If you read the best commentators, while there's a variety of opinions, most agree, Job crossed the line.
24. I don't know of any commentator who justifies Job, other than to say Job was simply being brutally honest.
25. The bottom line is this—Job lost sight of reality—he lost sight of God's sovereign wisdom and goodness.
26. Joseph Caryl—"We must state it in the middle way, that Job is neither rigidly to be taxed of blasphemy or profaneness, nor totally to be excused, and especially not commended for this high complaint."
27. John Calvin—"But when all is carefully considered, we observe, on the other hand, a struggle in which human weakness is apparent and, on the other, we see some virtue in resisting trials. So Job is caught in the middle here. Where there had previously been only steadfastness and virtue, we find a mixture: the weakness of his flesh inclines him to grumble against God, but he does not intend to become God's enemy."
28. Personally, I think "honesty" is the best way to describe Job's lamentation—he's simply being truthful.
29. It's similar to Paul in Romans 7, when he laments the fact that he fails to do the things he desires to do.
30. He admits that evil is resident within him—that he is always tempted to act contrary to God's holy law.
31. And so, Romans 7 is intended to encourage Christians—it's an example of an open and honest realism.
32. This is one of the benefits of Scripture—it records the good, the bad, and the ugly (it actually proves their divinity).
33. If Scripture was merely a human product, it would have recorded chapters 1 and 2, but not chapter 3.
34. Why, because the first two chapters portray Job in positive light, whereas chapter 3 in negative light.
35. Scripture portrays men in the totality of their character—it reveals the good without denying the bad.
36. Perhaps I can say—Scripture only has one HERO—there's only one person who is perfect (and it's not Job).
37. (c) It's restrained—by this I mean, if we were to compare his pain with his complaint, it was rather restrained.
38. Yes, it's true, his complaint was the result of unbelief, and yes, it was the result of losing sight of reality.
39. But nowhere does Job curse God and charge God with wrong; all things considered, it's rather restrained.
40. (d) It's temporary—by this I mean, while such a condition is common, it ordinarily is a passing condition.
41. Remember dear brethren, though Job was in chapter 3, the LORD did not leave him in chapter 3 forever.
42. (2) Behold the covenant patience of God—by this I mean, God is patient with His lamenting children.

43. God doesn't jump in after chapter 3 to rebuke Job—as we will see Job's friends begin to speak from chapter 4.
44. Now this doesn't deny God rebukes Job at the end—as we shall see, Job eventually repents from his words.
45. The LORD is a wise and patient Father—He knows the pain His children endure and is patient with them.
46. For example, think of a wise and loving mother, who would deal with her seriously injured child patiently.
47. If the child is crying excessively out of rebellion (because he's denied something that he wants)—the mother may discipline him.
48. But let's say, the young child fell down some steps and has a bloody lip, with bumps and bruises on his body.
49. Then obviously, she will let her child cry much longer than the other situation—she would be more patient.
50. Job's lamentation isn't because he's a rebel—his lamentation is the result of a serious fall—serious pain.
51. (3) Behold the comfort of Christ—Job shadowed Christ throughout the book, including chapter three.
52. Now, here I must be quick to clarify, the lamentations of our Savior, though similar to Job's, were free from all sin.
53. But brethren, this is true of every type of Christ—they merely shadow our Savior and they are not our Savior.
54. And yet, we find several statements from our Savior that sound very similar to the lamentations of Job.
55. For example, the same word translated "groaning" in Job 3:24, is found in Ps.22:1—"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?"
56. As I've said, this Hebrew word literally refers to the "roaring of a lion"—it describes deep distress and pain.
57. Psalm 22 describes the pain and suffering our Savior endured while on the cross—v1 is His lamentation.
58. He roared under the pain! Yes, unlike Job, He was free from sin, but like Job, He knew great mental pain and anguish.
59. And again, while in the garden our Savior said—"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death" (Matt.26:38)—that is, His soul was so sorrowful that He was ready to die.
60. Thus, when we find ourselves in Job 3, let us remember three things: first, you have in Christ a sympathetic High Priest.
61. Second, you have in Christ a perfect example—how did Christ respond to such darkness? He trusted in God.
62. Third, you have in Christ a sinless sacrifice—remember, Christ never sinned when He roared under pain.
63. And yet, here's the irony—He was punished on the cross as if He uttered (said) all of our sinful complaints.