

Job Curses His Day

Chapter 3

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

WHEREAS previously Job had not sinned with his lips,¹ he would not be able to claim this by the end of the book. In chapter 38 the Lord reproves Job for darkening His counsel by uttering words without knowledge: *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*²

Who is this, &c. — What and where is he that presumes to talk at this rate? *That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* — Words proceeding from ignorance, mistake, and want of consideration. Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them?³

Perhaps after being broken down over time and having friends nearby whom he felt he could trust, Job began to reveal his true inner thoughts.

and cursed his day, to wit, his birthday, as is evident from Job 3:3,⁴ which is called simply a man's *day*, Hosea 7:5;⁵ which also some others, through the same infirmity, and in the same circumstances, have cursed, as we see, Jeremiah 20:14.⁶ In vain do some men endeavour to excuse this and the following speeches of Job, who afterwards is reproved by God and severely accuseth himself for them, Job 38:2 40:4 42:3,6.⁷ And yet he doth not proceed so far as to curse or blaspheme God, but makes the devil a liar in his

prognostics. But although he doth not break forth into direct and downright reproaches of God, yet he makes secret and indirect reflections upon God's providence.⁸

Although Job does not directly curse God, he does curse his day. Perhaps unknown to him at this stage of his trial was that once men begin cursing the circumstances of their lives, then reproaching God will soon follow.⁹ Whereas previously Job had praised God, now he began despising the day of his birth. How fickle are we when whereas once from our mouths came praise and worship, now comes bitterness and cursing. Chapter three is the first of ten discourses in which Job speaks. They include chapters 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12–14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26–31, and 42. What is ultimately seen in Job's speech is contention with the Lord. It is this spiritual contention with the Almighty that God later reproved Job for. *Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*¹⁰ Again the Lord stated that Job had, by his lack of wisdom, proven himself guilty of darkening God's plans through words without knowledge. *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*¹¹ In short, during Job's trial, he entered into conflict with

1 Job 1:22 *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

2 Job 38:2

3 Benson Commentary, Job 38:2

4 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.*

5 Hosea 7:5 *In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners.*

6 Jer. 20:14 *Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.*

7 Job 38:2 *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

Job 40:4 *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*

Job 42:3 *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

Job 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

8 Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 3:1

9 Jas. 3:10 *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

10 Job 40:1&2

11 Job 38:1–3

the Lord by bringing in false thoughts of both the Lord and his circumstances.

Job could not understand why such a righteous man as himself should have to endure such hardship. The sinner's unbelief, whether he is aware of it or not, is that he believes his own righteousness to be more than God's. And because of this, he sees nothing wrong with questioning whether God has dealt with him fairly or not. When men then think they are on God's level, they will not hesitate in condemning His ways. *Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?*¹² If tragedy and the pain it brings are not perceived as man's fault, most will conclude they must be God's. When men believe themselves to be pure and righteous, they will wrongly conclude that God is unrighteous, especially if what they receive in life is not what they think they deserve. This contention will become visible in man's speech.

The tongue no doubt is an unruly evil. And if it is let loose and not controlled by God's Spirit, it will do nothing but bring judgment upon its owner. Job, by speaking presumptuously about his state, only helped to prove God's case against him, which was that he really knew nothing of the Lord and His ways with men. Job heard of God by his ear, but it was not until his trial was over that he really saw God. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*¹³ Hence, what we observe from Job's words is someone who did not truly know the Lord or the process God oftentimes uses to bring men to understand their true condition and ultimately possess a broken and contrite spirit. *Lo, all these things worketh God*

*oftentimes with man,*¹⁴ To speak before knowing is not a wise thing. *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*¹⁵

no man—literally, “no one of men”: neither can a man control his neighbor's, nor even his own tongue. Hence the truth of Jas 3:2¹⁶ appears.

unruly evil—The Greek, implies that it is at once restless and incapable of restraint. Nay, though nature has hedged it in with a double barrier of the lips and teeth, it bursts from its barriers to assail and ruin men [Estius].

deadly—literally, “death-bearing.”¹⁷

Jesus also warned men that the words they speak will result in either their justification or their condemnation. *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*¹⁸

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment—They might say, “It was nothing; we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?” Jesus replies, “It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment.”¹⁹

Doubtless very few take the words they speak as having any real bearing on the divine judgment that will ultimately fall upon their lives. But *words*, like works, reveal who a man really is. If the Holy Spirit is not in a man's soul to guide him on what to speak,²⁰ then human speech will turn to sin, whether it be

¹² Job 35:1&2

¹³ Job 42:5

¹⁴ Job 33:29

¹⁵ Jas. 3:8

¹⁶ Jas. 3:2 *For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

¹⁷ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Jas. 3:8

¹⁸ Matt. 12:37

¹⁹ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Matt. 12:37

²⁰ Matt. 10:20 *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

I Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

murmuring,²¹ bringing false accusation,²² or speaking evil of dignities.²³ By a man's words shall his true inner heart be known. Perhaps Job possessed some of this understanding, but his words show he did not possess enough of it to avoid indicting himself in God's eyes. It also seems to be the nature of ignorant man to naïvely believe that the words he has spoken in the past will not have to be accounted for in the future. What has been done in the body by hand, tongue, or heart will be judged,²⁴ because God hears and knows, and all will one day need to be accounted for.

There are four important points to take from this chapter: (1) Job cursed his birth,²⁵ (2) he praised the benefits of the grave,²⁶ (3) he questioned why God gives light to men but then hems them in so that they cannot escape their circumstance,²⁷ (4) and last, Job revealed the personal unrest and disquietness that filled his soul.²⁸

Job 3:2–12 And Job spake, and said,

21 John 6:43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. I Cor. 10:9–10 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. ¹⁰Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Phil. 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: Jas 5:9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. 22 Exod. 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Exod. 23:1 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. 23 II Pet. 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 24 II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 25 Job 3:1–12 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. ²And Job spake, and said, ³Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. ⁴Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. ⁵Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. ⁶As 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. ⁷Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. ⁸Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. ⁹Let 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: ¹⁰Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. ¹¹Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? ¹²Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? 26 Job 3:13–22 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, ¹⁴With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves; ¹⁵Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: ¹⁶Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. ¹⁷There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. ¹⁸There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. ¹⁹The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. ²⁰Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; ²¹Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; ²²Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave? 27 Job 3:23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? 28 Job 3:26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

With deep depression will often come the human conclusion that physical life is nothing but vanity. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*²⁹

All — All worldly things; *is vanity* — Not in themselves, for they are God's creatures, and therefore good in their kinds, but in reference to that happiness which men seek and expect to find in them. So they are unquestionably *vain*, because they are not what they seem to be, and perform not what they promise, but, instead of that, are the occasions of innumerable cares, and fears, and sorrows, and mischiefs.³⁰

It is for this reason that the world cannot truly satisfy man, that the world will not and cannot yield to men a reasonable reason for living. All of creation, God's Word states, *groaneth and travaileth in pain* even now.³¹ This life will often not seem worth remaining in if we forget that God has a plan for it. Trials become the most difficult when while in them, men lose sight of God's sovereignty. One of the lessons every trial aims to teach is that men must yield themselves to God's will for their lives. It is hard to *kick against the pricks*, as Paul learned.³² However, this is what the majority of men will do instead of yielding to God's sovereignty. Time, though, will prove that it is impossible to successfully go against God's will and not have to eventually submit to His universal rule. God's will shall be done in both heaven and earth whether men agree with it or not.³³ The sooner men yield to this truth the sooner they will move toward gaining peace in themselves. Without this knowledge, most will spend much of their lives

²⁹ Eccl. 1:2

³⁰ Benson Commentary, Eccl. 1:2

³¹ Rom. 8:22 *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

³² Acts 9:5 *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Acts 26:14 *And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

³³ Matt. 6:10 *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Luke 11:2 *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

³⁴ Jas. 3:10

³⁵ I Cor. 15:26

³⁶ Mark 8:36

fighting against God's will. Of course, he who contends with the Almighty should not hope to win. To curse anything is a slippery slope that men should regard as very dangerous to their spiritual health. *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*³⁴

After lamenting being born and the pain that he believed life had brought to him, Job concluded that it would have been better had he died at birth. *Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?* (^v11) There is no doubt that Job's condition marred his thinking. It is also safe to say that when men look to the grave for solace, divine faith is lacking in them. Death is an enemy and surely not that which should be yearned for in times of trial. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*³⁵ It is common, though, when men have lost sight of God to look to the grave and the false release they think it will provide them. But this is no answer, because it is not the grave that will ultimately produce peace and joy in one's life, but reconciliation with the Lord.

When most go through earthly trials, they never consider what the trial is meant to accomplish. God will try men to lead them to their own soul's salvation. God knows that in the end, what men have or do not have in this world means little to nothing if their souls are not saved. *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*³⁶ When this is understood, that God's primary purpose for trying His people is to purify their faith, then earthly trials make much more spiritual sense. Trials can be put in perspective when sinners realize that they have as their primary

purpose to prove men's faith as worthy of eternal life. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*³⁷ To receive the crown of life there must be trials. Another benefit to trials is that they reveal to those undergoing them who they really are. Consequently, through trials men can be brought to see their true condition. Trials also have as their divine aim humbling men enough for God to speak to them. Hence, if men successfully go through a trial, they shall understand more fully that God's will for them is always better than their own. Through their trial their personal faith was strengthened, and God's name was glorified.

Job 3:13–22 *For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,*

¹⁴ *With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves;*

¹⁵ *Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:*

¹⁶ *Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.*

¹⁷ *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.*

¹⁸ *There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.*

¹⁹ *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.*

²⁰ *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;*

²¹ *Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;*

²² *Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?*

After questioning why he was born and did not die at birth, Job proceeded to think of the advantages of death. His contemplations concerning death are that through entering the grave, prisoners find rest by being delivered from their oppressors (^v18), servants are freed from their masters (^v19), and death is a light and a welcome sight when men are living a life of misery (^v20). Job longed for both death and the grave, and he thought that

³⁷ Jas. 1:12

³⁸ Benson Commentary, Job 3:23

if he could be so lucky as to find it, his soul would rejoice exceedingly (^v22). Although Job's thoughts concerning death are not unique, it does not mean that they are right. It is also common that men will look to the grave before they have the sense to look to God.

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

These are Job's words, and for the first time he infers that God is involved in his captivity.

Why is light given to a man whose way is hid? — Hid from him; who knows not his way, that is, which way to turn himself, what course to take to obtain comfort in his miseries, or to get out of them. *And whom God hath hedged in* — Whom God hath put, as it were, in a prison, so that he can see no way or possibility of escape; but all refuge fails him.³⁸

Why is light given "to a man whose way is hid?" That is, who does not know what way to take, and who sees no escape from the misery that surrounds him.

Whom God hath hedged in - ...The meaning here is, that God had surrounded him as with a high wall or hedge, so that he could not move freely. Job asks with impatience, why light, that is, life, should be given to such a man? Why should he not be permitted to die? This closes the complaint of Job, and the remaining verses of the chapter contain a statement of his sorrowful condition, and of the fact that he had now been called to suffer all that he had ever apprehended. - In regard to the questions here proposed by Job, Job 3:20–23, we may remark, that; there was doubtless much impatience on his part, and not a little improper feeling. The language shows that Job was not absolutely sinless; but let us not harshly blame him. What he says, is a "statement" of feelings which often pass through the mind, though they are not often expressed. Who, in deep and protracted sorrows, has not found such questions rising up in his soul - questions which required all his energy and all his firmness of principle, and all the strength which he could gain by prayer, to suppress? To the questions themselves, it may be difficult to give an answer; and it is certain that none of the

friends of Job furnished a solution of the difficulty. When it is asked, why man is kept in misery on earth, when he would be glad to be released by death, perhaps the following, among others, may be the reasons:

(1) Those sufferings may be the very means which are needful to develop the true state of the soul. Such was the case with Job.

(2) They may be the proper punishment of sin in the heart, of which the individual was not fully aware, but which may be distinctly seen by God. There may be pride, and the love of ease, and self-confidence, and ambition, and a desire of reputation. Such appear to have been some of the besetting sins of Job.

(3) They are needful to teach true submission, and to show whether a man is willing to resign himself to God.

(4) They may be the very things which are necessary to prepare the individual to die. At the same time that people often desire death, and feel that it would be a relief, it might be to them the greatest possible calamity. They may be wholly unprepared for it. For a sinner, the grave contains no rest; the eternal world furnishes no repose.

One design of God in such sorrows may be, to show to the wicked how "intolerable" will be future pain, and how important it is for them to be ready to die. If they cannot bear the pains and sorrows of a few hours in this short life, how can they endure eternal sufferings? If it is so desirable to be released from the sorrows of the body here, - if it is felt that the grave, with all that is repulsive in it, would be a place of repose, how important is it to find some way to be secured from everlasting pains! The true place of release from suffering for a sinner, is not the grave; it is in the pardoning mercy of God, and in that pure heaven to which he is invited through the blood of the cross. In that holy heaven is the only real repose from suffering and from sin; and heaven will be all the sweeter in proportion to the extremity of pain which is endured on earth.³⁹

So often in trials we are misled into thinking that we must find a way out ourselves. Yet the truth is that for every trial God already has a plan in place after it has accomplished its designated purpose.

³⁹ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 3:23

⁴⁰ I John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

⁴¹ Job 32:1

So in the end it is not men's wisdom that delivers them but God's mercy. None shall find divine deliverance unless it is brought to them by God's mercy, and whenever Satan binds us, it must be God's involvement that delivers us.

Job 3:24-26 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

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

²⁶ ***I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.***

What Job precisely feared would come upon him we do not know for certain. It could have been God's judgment upon his children for their perceived sin, or it could have been simply the uncertainty and unpredictability of a worldly existence. It is difficult to be certain of Job's specific fear, but what can be known is that if something is lacking within us, there will be uneasiness in the soul, and fear will produce great spiritual instability.⁴⁰ Job, even while possessing an abundance of earthly prosperity, had an extremely strong suspicion that something was undone in his life. This caused him to experience a lack of safety and security, plus an inward uneasiness that would not allow him to rest. Something was wrong in his heart, and he knew it. His internal fear was the first evidence of a degree of separation from God, at least concerning God's providence in his life. It is the deepest part of man that knows his true condition. Whether things are right or wrong is known acutely in the soul. Even when a man's outward life appears prosperous, if there is brokenness within and a degree of separation from God, his conscience will reveal it to him.

Though Job would continue to believe and profess himself righteous, this did nothing to quiet his heart. *So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.*⁴¹ Ultimately, what God would deliver Job from was this spiritual unrest that he knew existed

within him. Job's restoration finally resulted in his discovery of God's peace, a peace that cannot be known until men come to experience and possess a broken and contrite spirit. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*⁴² It is when men possess a broken spirit and a contrite heart that their offerings and worship to God are accepted. Pride and unbelief in men's hearts separate them from the spiritual and divine rest of God.⁴³ If we are tormented within, it is impossible to have strong confidence in God, as any sin undealt with will prevent faith from being fully employed. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*⁴⁴ If men desire to maintain confidence in God, they must live so that their hearts do not condemn them.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not - If we so live as to have an approving conscience - that is, if we indulge in no secret sin; if we discharge faithfully every known duty; if we submit without complaining to all the allotments of Divine Providence.⁴⁵

It is important for men to know that their hearts cannot condemn them and at the same time maintain strong confidence in God.

⁴² Ps. 51:17

⁴³ Heb. 4:9 *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

⁴⁴ I John 3:21

⁴⁵ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:21

⁴⁶ Exod. 5:20&21 *And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: ²¹And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.*

⁴⁷ Exod. 14:10-12 *And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. ¹¹And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? ¹²Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*

⁴⁸ Exod. 16:2&3 *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: ³And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

⁴⁹ Num. 11:4-6 *And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? ³We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: ⁶But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

⁵⁰ Exod. 17:1-7 *And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. ²Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? ³And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? ⁴And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. ⁵And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine*

It is also worth considering that when Job cursed his day, he started moving towards complaining against God's providence, and as with Israel, where there is complaint, contention with the Lord will soon follow. This shows us that it is a great part of the makeup of man's fallen nature to blame God and those He sends to lead people out of their bondage.

1. Israel complained that Moses had ruined their name in Pharaoh's eyes and that because of this, Pharaoh would slay them.⁴⁶

2. Israel complained that Moses had led them to die, and they said they would rather have remained slaves in Egypt.⁴⁷

3. Israel complained that Moses had not given them food.⁴⁸ But then, after receiving food they also murmured that all they had to eat was the manna God had supernaturally provided for them.⁴⁹

4. Israel complained that Moses had not given them water, and by doing so they again doubted God's presence with them:⁵⁰ *because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?*

Is the Lord among us or not? — To protect and provide for us according to his word; will he be as good as his word, or will he not? Words which implied that to them it was very doubtful. Against doubts of this kind we ought constantly to guard. For, whatever may be suggested to our minds by the enemy of our souls, we ought never to question whether God will be gracious to those that desire and endeavour to follow him in the ways of his appointment.⁵¹

These are but a few examples of Israel complaining about God and His servant Moses. The point of these records is that whenever complaining and murmuring are present, sedition is just one step away.

Another important lesson to be learned is that when undergoing trials, it is not complaints that should fill our hearts and lips—but prayer. What was not initially evident in Job's trial was his heart turning and praying to God. Yes, he spoke about the Lord, but somehow he forgot to speak to the Lord. Talking about God, even when using good words, is not the same as turning to Him in prayer. This teaches us that the only real antidote for sorrow and pain is faith and prayer. When Job complained of his birth and longed for his death, he seemed to have forgotten that prayer was still at his disposal. When men are more concerned with defending their own righteousness, it is difficult for them to turn to God in prayer. When men are broken, they will often spend more time defending who they are than seeking the Lord for the deliverance they need. It is also worth noting that Job was set free from his captivity only when he prayed for his friends. *And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*⁵² Prayer is the most integral act that men can do when they find themselves in spiritual captivity. Through prayer their thoughts are directed upward, away from their hand, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

⁵¹ Benson Commentary, Exod. 17:7
⁵² Job 42:10

⁵³ 1 Cor. 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

own pain and toward God's ability to save them.

James 5:15&16 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

¹⁶ Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

It takes prayer for God to move and a prayer of faith to save the sick. Also, no verses are more instructive about what must first be considered with any sickness: that sin may be involved. And if sin is indeed the cause of the sickness, then only confession and prayer can take it away. Make no mistake—Job's soul was filled with fear and unrest even as his body was plagued with boils. Just because men are hurting does not mean that they are sufficiently broken. Even in severe pain, men will choose to defend their own righteousness over the confession of sin and humble prayer.

Confess your faults one to another - This seems primarily to refer to those who were sick, since it is added, "that ye may be healed." The fair interpretation is, that it might be supposed that such confession would contribute to a restoration to health. The case supposed all along here (see James 5:15) is, that the sickness referred to had been brought upon the patient for his sins, apparently as a punishment for some particular transgressions. Compare the notes at 1 Corinthians 11:30.⁵³ In such a case, it is said that if those who were sick would make confession of their sins, it would, in connection with prayer, be an important means of restoration to health...

(1) If the sickness had been brought upon them as a special act of divine visitation for sin, it might be hoped that when the confession was made the hand of God would be withdrawn; or

(2) in any case, if the mind was troubled by the recollection of guilt, it might be hoped

that the calmness and peace resulting from confession would be favorable to a restoration to health.⁵⁴

Disease is often greatly aggravated by troubled minds, which arise from conscious guilt, and in such a case nothing will contribute more directly to recovery than the confession of sin.

However, for hidden sin to be discovered, God's wisdom must be sought, sim-

ply because no man knows the truth of himself without the aid of his Creator. This would be necessary for Job as well, for God would have to reveal to him his sin before confession could be made for it. Hence, for the deep things in us to be healed, it will often take first a trial and then prayer before what is broken within can be restored. Pain and prayer lead us to a greater awareness of God's goodness and our own brokenness.

⁵⁴ *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 5:16*

¹Endnote

Examples of Israel Complaining about God and His Servant Moses

Israel complained that the water Moses led them to was bitter, and that they could not drink it.¹

Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses' leadership after he married an Ethiopian woman.²

Israel complained that the land that God had promise to give them, possessed

giants, and they themselves were only grasshoppers in their sight.³

Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron because they believed they had brought them to die in the wilderness. The murmurers then discuss stoning Moses and Aaron, before God's glory interrupts them.⁴

Korah lead the rebellion against Moses and Aaron, claiming that they had set themselves above the Lord's assembly. Because of Korah's rebellion, along with those who followed him, the Lord has the earth swallow the guilty.⁵

¹ *Exod. 15:23-25 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? ²⁵And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,*

² *Num. 12:1-15 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. ²And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it. ³(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) ⁴And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. ⁵And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. ⁶And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. ⁷My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. ⁸With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? ⁹And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed. ¹⁰And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. ¹¹And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. ¹²Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. ¹³And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. ¹⁴And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. ¹⁵And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.*

³ *Num. 13:32&33 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. ³³And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*

⁴ *Num. 14:1-10 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. ²And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! ³And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? ⁴And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. ⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. ⁶And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: ⁷And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. ⁸If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. ⁹Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. ¹⁰But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.*

⁵ *Num. 16:1-31 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: ²And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: ³And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? ⁴And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: ⁵And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. ⁶This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; ⁷And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye*

Israel complained after Korah and his cohorts' destruction, that Moses had killed the people of the Lord. A plague is sent from the Lord for judgment.⁶

Israel spoke against God and Moses, complaining again of lack of care in leading them to die in the wilderness. The Lord sends fiery serpents to execute justice.⁷

take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. ⁸And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: ⁹Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? ¹⁰And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? ¹¹For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? ¹²And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: ¹³Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? ¹⁴Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. ¹⁵And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. ¹⁶And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow: ¹⁷And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer. ¹⁸And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. ¹⁹And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. ²⁰And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, ²¹Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. ²²And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? ²³And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²⁴Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. ²⁵And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. ²⁶And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. ²⁷So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. ²⁸And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. ²⁹If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. ³⁰But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. ³¹And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them:

6 Num. 16:41-50 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. ⁴²And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. ⁴³And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. ⁴⁴And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ⁴⁵Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. ⁴⁶And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. ⁴⁷And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. ⁴⁸And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. ⁴⁹Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. ⁵⁰And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

7 Num. 21:5-6 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. ⁶And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

I Repent in Dust and Ashes