

# Job Curses His Day

## Job Chapter 3

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

**A**LTHOUGH previously Job had not sinned with his lips,<sup>1</sup> by the end of the book he would not be able to claim this to be true. This is seen in chapter 38 when the Lord reproves Job for darkening His counsel by speaking words without knowledge: (Job 38:2) *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

(Benson Commentary, Job 38:2) *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?

Perhaps since he had been broken down over time, and now had friends nearby whom he felt he could trust, Job began revealing his true inner thoughts.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 3:1) *and cursed his day*, to wit, his birthday, as is evident from Job 3:3,<sup>2</sup> which is called simply a man's day, Hosea 7:5;<sup>3</sup> which also some others, through the same infir-

mity, and in the same circumstances, have cursed, as we see, Jeremiah 20:14.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

Although Job does not directly curse the Lord, he does curse his day. Perhaps he did not know at this stage of his trial that once men begin cursing the circumstances of their lives, then reproaching the Lord soon follows.<sup>6</sup> Previously Job had praised God, but now he despised the day of his birth. How fickle are men also when from their mouths once came praise and worship and now proceeds bitterness and cursing.

Chapter 3 is the first of ten discourses in which Job speaks. These chapters include 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12–14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26–31, and 42. As the trial of Job's life advances, we ultimately see his increased contention with the Lord. It is because of this spiritual contention with the Almighty that Job is later reproved.

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

2 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.*

3 Hos. 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.*

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

5 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.*

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

## *I Repent in Dust and Ashes*

(Job 40:1–2) *Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.* The Lord stated that by his lack of wisdom, Job had proven himself guilty of darkening God's plans through words without knowledge. For this sin, he needed to stand before the Lord and give an account of his actions. (Job 38:1–3) *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.* Whenever men sin against the Lord, they will, like Adam and Eve in the garden,<sup>7</sup> need to eventually stand before Him. David needed to give an account of his sin,<sup>8</sup> Miriam hers,<sup>9</sup> and we ours.<sup>10</sup>

Job could not understand why such a righteous man as himself should have to

7 Gen. 3:8–13 *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.* <sup>9</sup>*And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?* <sup>10</sup>*And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* <sup>11</sup>*And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* <sup>12</sup>*And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* <sup>13</sup>*And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*  
8 II Sam. 12:1–13 *And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.* <sup>2</sup>*The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:* <sup>3</sup>*But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.* <sup>4</sup>*And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.* <sup>5</sup>*And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: <sup>6</sup>And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.* <sup>7</sup>*And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; <sup>8</sup>And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives unto thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.* <sup>9</sup>*Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.* <sup>10</sup>*Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.* <sup>11</sup>*Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.* <sup>12</sup>*For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.* <sup>13</sup>*And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*  
9 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.* <sup>2</sup>*And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.* <sup>3</sup>*(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)* <sup>4</sup>*And 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.* <sup>5</sup>*And 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.* <sup>6</sup>*And 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.* <sup>7</sup>*My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.* <sup>8</sup>*With 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?* <sup>9</sup>*And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.* <sup>10</sup>*And 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.* <sup>11</sup>*And 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.* <sup>12</sup>*Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.* <sup>13</sup>*And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.* <sup>14</sup>*And 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.* <sup>15</sup>*And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.*

10 Rom. 14:12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

endure such hardship. Whether aware of it or not, the sinner believes his own righteousness to be more than God's. And for this reason, when personal tragedy hits, foolish complaints, if not initially, can easily soon be directed toward Him. (Job 35:1–2) *Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?* It is undoubtedly self-righteousness which is at the core of men condemning the Lord. Hence, if men think they are on God's level, they will not hesitate in condemning His ways. Thus, if sinners do not perceive their tragedy and pain to be either directly or indirectly connected to themselves, then they will undoubtedly claim the fault to be solely God's. Yet God's righteousness is such that He can never, nor will ever, do anything unjust toward man.<sup>11</sup> The Lord's own holy and righteous character prohibits this.

*Opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.* The tongue is without question an unruly evil. If it is let loose and not controlled by God's Spirit, it will undoubtedly bring judgment upon its owner. (Jas. 3:8) *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Jas. 3:8) *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 3:2<sup>12</sup> 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.”

Jesus clearly warned that the words men speak will result in either their justification or condemnation. So great is the tongue, that eternal life hangs in the balance, by the words it brings forth. (Matt. 12:37) *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* While most give no account to their words and speeches, and also believe they will quickly disappear in the air after spoken, the Lord both remembers and will demand that what has been said through sin, must be given account for.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Matt. 12:37) *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.”

Very few take the words they speak as having any bearing on whether they will be justified or condemned. But, since out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,<sup>13</sup> a man's words will directly affect his salvation. By a man's speech is his true inner heart known, and by his utterances his soul is brought to light. Perhaps Job possessed some of this understanding, but his spiritual ignorance reveals that he did not possess enough of it to avoid the treacherous path of indicting himself in God's eyes. Sinners often foolishly believe

11 Ps. 119:137 *Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.*

Ps. 145:17 *The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

12 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.*

13 Luke 6:45 *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

that they will not have to give an account for the words they speak. Yet whatever men do through even one member of their body—whether it be by the hand, tongue, or foot—if it is sinful, will one day be brought into the light,<sup>14</sup> and can surely indite the whole man.

Four important points are seen in this chapter: (1) Job cursed his birth;<sup>15</sup> (2) he praises the benefits of the grave;<sup>16</sup> (3) he questions why God gives light to men but then hems them in so that they cannot escape their bondage;<sup>17</sup> and (4) he reveals the personal unrest that filled his soul.<sup>18</sup>

*Job 3:2–12 And Job spake, and said,*

*<sup>3</sup>Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.*

*<sup>4</sup>Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.*

*<sup>5</sup>Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.*

*<sup>6</sup>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.*

*<sup>7</sup>Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.*

*<sup>8</sup>Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.*

*<sup>9</sup>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:*

*<sup>10</sup>Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.*

*<sup>11</sup>Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?*

*<sup>12</sup>Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?*

With deep depression will often come the natural conclusion that life is nothing but vanity: that life is not worth living, and to die would be better and a more pleasant alternative. (Eccl. 1:2) *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*

(Benson Commentary, Eccl. 1:2) *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*

14 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.

15 Job 3:1–12 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. <sup>2</sup>And Job spake, and said, <sup>3</sup>Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. <sup>4</sup>Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. <sup>5</sup>Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. <sup>8</sup>Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. <sup>9</sup>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: <sup>10</sup>Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. <sup>11</sup>Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? <sup>12</sup>Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

16 Job 3:13–22 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, <sup>14</sup>With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves; <sup>15</sup>Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: <sup>16</sup>Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. <sup>17</sup>There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. <sup>18</sup>There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. <sup>19</sup>The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. <sup>20</sup>Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; <sup>21</sup>Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures. <sup>22</sup>Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

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

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

they promise, but, instead of that, are the occasions of innumerable cares, and fears, and sorrows, and mischiefs.

The Scripture states that all creation *groaneth and travaileth in pain* even now.<sup>19</sup> Hence, this life will often not seem worth remaining in if we forget that God has a plan for it. It is hard to *kick against the pricks*,<sup>20</sup> because this will only injure the one resisting the Lord's plan for our lives. Without this knowledge, men will spend much of their life fighting against divine will, which in the end will only bring more pain and suffering upon themselves. He who is foolish enough to contend with the Almighty should never deceive himself to believe, that human will, can ever supersede divine will.

*Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?* After lamenting being born and the deep pain his trial had brought him, Job unwisely concluded that it would have been better if he had died at birth. Undoubtedly Job's weak and painful condition contributed to his thinking. Yet death is an enemy and should never be desired over life, though it often will be.<sup>21</sup> Sadly when men have lost sight of God, they often look to the grave, and the false release they think it can give them. It is also more than enough to suffer personal pain without adding the great burden it

is to break fellowship with the only true One Who can remove it.

When believers undergo earthly trials, they seldom consider what they are actually purposed to accomplish, which is to bring attention that something is amiss in either the heart or life, and only a trial of God can assist in correcting it. The ultimate purpose of all trials also is to reveal the inward heart of the one being tried. This was true with Israel, and it is likewise true with saints, that trials are purposed to reveal whether those called to God, will obey His commandments or not. (Deut. 8:2) *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Deut. 8:2) *To know what was in thine heart*, i.e. that thou mightest discover to thyself and others that infidelity, inconstancy, hypocrisy, apostacy, rebellion, and perverseness, which lay hid in thy heart; the discovery whereof was of singular use, both to them and to the church of God, in all succeeding ages.

Through earthly trials, the true condition of a man will be made known. This was evidenced with Abraham, when he passed the Lord's trial,<sup>22</sup> as well as with

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

20 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.*

21 I Cor. 15:26 *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

22 Gen. 22:1-12 *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. <sup>2</sup>And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. <sup>3</sup>And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup>Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. <sup>6</sup>And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. <sup>7</sup>And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? <sup>8</sup>And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. <sup>9</sup>And they came to*

## *I Repent in Dust and Ashes*

Israel, when they repeatedly failed theirs.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, trials will reveal whether men will keep the Lord's commandments or not, and whether or not there is true trust in Him and His will for the life.

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

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

<sup>15</sup> *Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:*

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

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

<sup>18</sup> *There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.*

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

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

<sup>21</sup> *Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;*  
<sup>22</sup> *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 proceeds to ponder the advantages of death, and how through death, one can find rest from oppression (v. 18), servants are freed from their masters (v. 19), and how death can be considered as light and welcomed, when this earthly life is filled with misery (v. 20). Job longed for death and the grave and he thought that if he could be so lucky as to die, his soul would rejoice (v. 22).

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

Job's assumption was that since the Lord had given him light, why should he be

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*the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.*<sup>10</sup> *And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.*<sup>11</sup> *And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.*<sup>12</sup> *And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*  
23 Israel refuses to cross the Red Sea: *Exod. 14:12 Is 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.*

Israel murmurs about a lack of good drinking water: *Exod. 15:24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?*

Israel murmurs about a lack of food: *Exod. 16:3 And 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.* Some Israelites keep manna until morning: *Exod. 16:20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.* Israel murmurs and nearly stones Moses for lack of water: *Exod. 17:3–4 And 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? <sup>4</sup>And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.*

Israel gets impatient and builds a golden calf to worship: *Exod. 32:1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

Israel complains, kindling the Lord's anger: *Num. 11:1 And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.*

Israel weeps about eating nothing besides manna: *Num. 11:5–6 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: <sup>6</sup>But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

Israel desires to make a captain to return to Egypt: *Num. 14:3–4 And 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? <sup>4</sup>And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*

hedged in? No doubt, Job thought he possessed more light than he really did. This is common for the afflicted, that they assume to possess more understanding of the Lord than they actually have, and therefore are befuddled and confused as to the reason for their bondage.

For the first time Job now implies that God is involved in his captivity, that *God* had *hedged* him *in*, that it was God Who was allowing no escape from his painful and enslaved condition. Job foolishly, and with great error declares that surely it must be God's fault that he could find no avenue of escape, nor release from his captivity.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 3:23) Why is light given to a man whose way is hid? . . . 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.*

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*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 3:23) 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. . . . 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.

... 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.

Just as men are powerless to prevent a trial, so also are they just as weak and feeble to end it. Ultimately both the severity of the spiritual trial and its duration, lay within God's will and not man's. Also, not until the Lord turns a man's captivity, as will be seen with Job,<sup>24</sup> can true deliverance and personal freedom from sin and its consequences be experienced. To foolishly believe that we can extract ourselves through fleshly strength when being tried by the Lord, reveals that we do not know the power of the Lord, nor His complete sovereignty over our lives.

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

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

<sup>24</sup> Job 42:10 *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.*

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

There is great insight in these verses as they reveal that even prior to Job's trial, there was an uneasiness and unrest in his soul. Thus, even before Satan's assaults on his life, Job internally knew that he was not in safety, nor could he find rest. What precisely Job feared would come upon him we do not know for certain. It could have been God's judgment upon his children for their sin, or perhaps simply the uncertainty and unpredictability of a worldly existence. Hence, even though Job possessed an abundance of earthly prosperity,<sup>25</sup> he held a strong suspicion that something was not truly right in his life, teaching us that even if a man's outward life may appear both pious and prosperous, if there is sin being committed, then the conscience cannot be at rest, until confession of sin is made.<sup>26</sup> It is also worth noting, that sin in the heart, is just as worthy of judgment, as sin practiced and executed in the life.<sup>27</sup>

Though Job would continue to believe and profess himself as righteous before the Lord, this did not quiet nor give any true comfort to his heart. It is not enough then to tell ourselves how righteous we are, if deep within our souls there is a spiritual awareness that all is not right concerning our relationship with God.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 3:25) For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me—Before this flood of misery was poured upon me, I was indeed under great and strong*

apprehensions, which I could not account for, of something or other that would happen to me; something extremely grievous and afflicting; something as bad, nay, worse than death itself. For I considered the variety of God's providences, the changeableness of this vain world, the infirmities and contingencies to which human nature is liable in the present life, God's justice, and the sinfulness of all mankind. And it is now evident that these fears of mine were not in vain, for they are justified by my present calamities. I may, therefore, say that I have never enjoyed any sound tranquility since I was born; and, of consequence, it hath not been worth my while to live, since all my days have been evil, and full of trouble and distress, either by the fear of miseries or by the suffering of them.

Few if any of the critics of God's dealings with Job take into account the inward unrest and spiritual uneasiness, which he clearly confesses in verses 25 and 26. Few also have suspected that perhaps one of the main objectives of Job's trial was to finally put to rest the inward spiritual instability that had plagued him. There was something amiss in this pious man, that needed divine correction, before he could enjoy the same internal peace, that his outward life, prior to his trial possessed. It is also worth noting that no man will ever be able to discover true and lasting rest in his soul, until he spiritually discovers the mystery, and/or secret of what it is to truly possess a spiritually broken and contrite spirit.<sup>28</sup> It is this lesson also which is the ultimate purpose of Job's trial. For not until the heart is divinely brought low, can true peace with God exist. It is also only in this condition, of possessing

<sup>25</sup> *Job 1:3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ps. 32:5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

*Ps. 38:18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*

*Prov. 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

<sup>27</sup> *Matt. 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ps. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*



a broken heart and a contrite spirit, that those blind to their sin, can be released from its bondage. (Ps. 34:18) *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

(Pulpit Commentary, Ps. 34:18) *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and sayeth such as be of a contrite spirit.* On the value in God's sight of a broken and contrite heart, see Psalm [51]:17; and on his mercy towards the truly contrite, see Psalm 147:3; Isaiah 57:15; [66]:2.<sup>29</sup> He "is nigh" to such persons, he "dwells with" them, "looks to them, . . . revives their heart, . . . heals" them, "saves" them.

There is as much spiritual and eternal profit when men undergo the Lord's trials, than even when they are blessed by Him. Hence, a trial of God can accomplish so much more to bring sinners closer to the

Lord, than even if they were to be physically blessed by Him. Isaiah's vision is an example of how the heart will be brought low, when truly exposed to God,<sup>30</sup> just as the prodigal son's famine, did the same.<sup>31</sup> Hence, it is in a state of seeing the Lord, and coming to know our sin, that true humility in the heart is gained. It is also only those who are both humble and contrite, that God looks upon with favor. Job's own life will prove to be an eternal example of this.<sup>32</sup> (Isa. 66:2) *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 66:2) *But to this man will I look*—That is, 'I prefer a humble heart and a contrite spirit to the most magnificent earthly temple' (see the notes at Isaiah 57:15).<sup>33</sup>

29 Ps. 147:3 *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

Isa. 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Isa. 66:2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

30 Isa. 6:1–5 *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. <sup>3</sup>And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. <sup>4</sup>And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

31 Luke 15:11–19 *And he said, A certain man had two sons: <sup>12</sup>And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. <sup>13</sup>And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. <sup>14</sup>And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup>And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup>And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. <sup>17</sup>And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, <sup>19</sup>And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

32 Job 42:12–17 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. <sup>13</sup>He had also seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup>And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. <sup>15</sup>And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. <sup>16</sup>After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. <sup>17</sup>So Job died, being old and full of days.*

33 Isa. 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

## *I Repent in Dust and Ashes*

*That is poor*—Or rather ‘humble.’ The word rendered ‘poor’ (עֲנִי ‘*ânîy*), denotes not one who has no property, but one who is down-trodden, crushed, afflicted, oppressed; often, as here, with the accessory idea of pious feeling Exodus 24:12; Psalm 10:2, Psalm 10:9. The Septuagint renders it, Ταπεινὸν *Tapeinon*—‘Humble;’ not πτωχόν *ptōchon* (poor). The idea is, not that God looks with favor on a poor man merely because he is poor—which is not true, for his favors are not bestowed in view of external conditions in life—but that he regards with favor the man that is humble and subdued in spirit.

*And of a contrite spirit*—A spirit that is broken, crushed, or deeply affected by sin. It stands opposed to a spirit that is proud, haughty, self-confident, and self-righteous.

It is through faith in God and not complaint, that the Lord both hears and answers the prayers of His people,<sup>34</sup> when also His people are aware of their sin, and repentive of it. To the humble the Lord looks; to the proud He looks away.

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<sup>34</sup> Ps. 66:18–19 *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me: <sup>19</sup>But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*

*I Pet. 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

*II Chrn. 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

*Jer. 29:12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.*