

Job

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Job 2:12-3:26



Job 2:12 – 3:26

2:12-13

- As Job's 3 friends arrived, they see a man sitting in the ashes. This is their friend Job. The effect of the boils on his body was so strong that they did not recognize him. This was not the strong and vibrant Job they had known. This was a man on the verge of death: weakened, emaciated, wracked in pain. They were shocked and overcome with grief, crying out with tears. They tore their clothes as a demonstration of extreme grief and sorrow, as was the custom. They threw dust as high as they could in the air to symbolize the dust falling from heaven, so as Job was worthless and sitting in ashes, they too would take on worthlessness and identify with Job as being the lowest creatures on earth.
- Then they sat down a short distance away and sat there silent for seven days and seven nights, which was the customary time of mourning for the dead. His pain was very great and it had sapped him of all of his strength. Any breath he took could be his last. His friends were there to be with him as he died.

3:1

- This verse serves as a bridge over to the poetic part of the story. To his friends Job looks as though he could die at any moment. But suddenly Job speaks! After seven days and nights, it is Job who breaks the silence. But he is not speaking to anyone in particular. He is not addressing his friends and may not have been aware of their presence. This is a deeply sourced lament, a cry to everyone and no one, which Job revisits in Ch's. 27, 29-31.

Vss. 2-10

- Job cries out that it's not just that he wishes he had never been born, but that the day he was born, no, the very night he was conceived, had never existed! He asks that the day he was born be forever covered in darkness and that God let it rot and the night of his conception be forever darkness and gloom.
- Vs. 8 invokes the idea of the priests of the pagan gods who were professional cursers, to curse the day he was born. The rousing of Leviathan refers to a Semitic myth, where at Creation God had to wrestle the great monster of the sea as a means of bringing order to chaos. In Isaiah 27:1, Leviathan is an enemy of God, but Psalm 104:26 points out that God is so great that Leviathan is a

mere plaything to Him. But Job here is suggesting that if Leviathan had been roused ahead of his birth, then the chaos may have prevented his conception and birth.

- Let that day be cursed in darkness forever, for it failed to prevent Job's birth.

Vss. 11-19

- In vs. 12, since the day he was born couldn't be erased, Job asks why they couldn't have just let him die the moment he was born, instead of being put on his mother's or the nurse's knee. Why feed him? Why not just let him starve? Then, he says in vs. 13, he could have just laid down to an eternal sleep, (Psalm 13:3). Then as a prince of a wealthy and powerful family he could have been buried like "kings and counselors...princes" who rebuilt ancient ruins as magnificent tombs for themselves and filled their tombs with gold and silver.
- In verse 16 he laments that while in his mother's womb he wasn't a miscarriage "which is discarded" or a baby who was stillborn. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it uses the same Greek word Paul does in 1 Corinthians 15:8, where he describes being the last one to whom the Risen Christ appeared as being "one untimely born".
- Death is the great equalizer. Everything is quiet. The wicked stop doing evil. The weary get their rest. The prisoners and slaves are not stressed or vexed by their masters. Kings and paupers, the small and the great are there.

Vss. 20-26

- Job here asks a series of rhetorical questions. He uses the word "light" to denote "life", as John does in his opening verses: "In Him was Life and the Life was the Light of men".
- Why is Light/Life given to people who long for death?...who rejoice and exult when they find their grave?
- And why is Light/Life given to someone whose way forward has been hidden and blocked, hedged in. In other words, why would God allow a person to live when there doesn't seem to be a point to life? Who knows? Perhaps there is one more thing God requires that we are not aware of. Perhaps there is someone else who our suffering is affecting as God is working in them. We see through the glass darkly. We are to simply trust God as Job did.
- Food and water bring Job no joy. In fact, he is so ill that it only upsets him more. Every fear he has had is now on him. He has no rest, no peace, no quiet. The disease torments him from the outside and his fear and grief torment him from the inside.
- This is the lament of a person who is completely defeated. As best he can tell, his life is over, but he doesn't get to die, doesn't get the relief from the suffering that death could bring. No going forward. No going backward. Simply stuck in misery with no hope in sight.