

# Job 3

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[ 0 : 00 ] Job chapter 3, Job chapter 3. Tonight we officially open up what we would call the meat of the book.

! That is we begin to get into the poetic discourse, the interchange between Job and his friends. Eventually it will be Job, his three friends, the fourth one, and then God will speak before we bring it to a conclusion there with the final chapter, which is not in the poetic prose.

But we are entering into it this evening, so it will be Job chapter 3. We'll look at that chapter in its entirety. I will say that most of the book, just reading ahead and trying to do a little bit of studying as we move ahead, we'll have to look at it in larger chunks.

We'll have to look at it probably one to two chapters at a time. What we'll probably be constrained to do is looking at the discourse as Job speaks here, and then we would look at the response, and then we'll look at Job's response.

So we'll look at each part of the conversation, which at times will compel us to look at two chapters. And the reason why we do that, as we say in particular in this book, is because if we were to really dissect it verse by verse, there are some verses that we would pull out and like, man, that is absolutely right.

[ 1 : 25 ] I mean, that is spot on. And that is solid, and that is grain, and we could build theology upon that. We can build doctrine on that, and seemingly it would be good doctrine, but by the time we get to the end of the book, God will declare that those who spoke those things were wrong.

And so we have to be careful, and we need to see it in the context of it. And hopefully we'll begin to open that up a little bit tonight, and I know I kind of made it foggy for you. Because things can seem so right and contain such a nugget of truth that you're like, yes, that is absolutely right.

I'm going to build my theology and my thought process on that. But when you said it in the context of the response and you said it in the context of what is going on, then hopefully we'll see the fallacy therein.

Because at times, even in our own argument, if we're not careful in our discourses back and forth and in our understanding of biblical matters, we can do the same thing.

We can interpose a truth into a misconception, if you will. We can take a truth and apply it to something that is not true. And I'll show you why in just a moment.

[ 2 : 41 ] Now that got you thoroughly confused, let's pray. Father, we thank you for the day. We thank you for the grand opportunity of gathering together. Lord, what a joy it is.

Thank you for this place and this time and these people. We thank you for the word of God and the opportunity we have to open up the pages of your word. To hear you speak.

To hear the truth that it proclaims. Lord, to come to it with minds and hearts that are willing to be challenged. Lord, that we would learn of you.

We would learn of your ways. Learn of our own weaknesses and our own failures. But we want to learn of you. So, Father, we pray that you lead in our time here. We pray that you be glorified, Lord Jesus, throughout this place.

In every room. With every teacher. In every circumstance. Through the recreation. And the teaching time. In all matters. Lord Jesus Christ, be lifted high. Thank you for the opportunity we have to pour into those who come within the walls of this building.

[ 3 : 47 ] And thank you for those who are doing the pouring into, Lord, our teachers and leaders. We continue to lift them up. Lord, may we be encouraged as we draw closer to you each and every day.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. When we come to the book of Job, really what we're dealing with is a theology called retribution theology.

And retribution theology, you know it fairly well. It is that if you do good, God will bless you. And if you do evil, God will judge you or discipline you. And on the surface, that is absolutely right. We expect blessings for obedience. And we expect discipline because of failures or disobedience. The book of Job really confronts that retribution theology, which is so prominent in the remainder of the Old Testament.

I mean, the law itself says that if you do good, that if you obey these commands, then you will be my people and I will be your God. The sky will not withhold its rain.

[ 4 : 54 ] The ground will not withhold its produce. Your animals will not fail to give birth. There will be all of these blessings that come because of your obedience. A handful of you will run away thousands.

You will overcome your enemy. You will be the head and not the tail. But if you disobey me and if you forsake me, then the sky will hold back the water. Your animals will fail.

Your crops will fail. Others will reap your harvest. Even when Joshua took the nation of Israel into the promised land, they had what was called the Mount of Blessing and the Mount of Cursing.

And the blessings were God's decrees for obedience. The curses were God's curses for disobedience. And this is why the nation of Israel was told to choose.

And that's retribution theology. It is an expectation that God will bless if we are in obedience. And also an expectation that if we are facing judgment, it is because we have sinned or disobeyed in some way.

[ 5 : 57 ] And that is very prominent throughout the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, it is the bulk of the Old Testament except for one book. And that one book is the book of Job.

Now, I do not think that it is coincidental nor accidental that the book of Job predates any other writing in the Old Testament. And then God gives us an illustration of faithfulness with him and who he is before he gives the commands and the law and dictates obedience.

We are reminded in the Old and the New Testament that it is not sacrifices that God longs for, but really the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart.

It is the humbleness that comes from the individual. And yet we are also told in the book of Job that it is possible to be doing exactly right and suffer extremely difficult times.

It challenges us. Retribution theology today is prominent among many Christians. And among many religions. There are many professing Christians that will tell you that if you are experiencing bad things in your life, it is because you have unconfessed sin.

[ 7 : 16 ] It is because there is something you need to repent of. Maybe you don't even know it yet, but you need to find out what it is. By the way, that is exactly the argument of Job's friends.

So there indeed is nothing new under the sun. What has been, what is, has already been. And we need to understand that because if we were to ask, if that is true, then what about the martyrs of the faith?

What about those who have died horrendous deaths? I have held on in my own life. And I know this is a long introduction, but stay with me. I have held on in my own life that the word of God says, I have never seen the righteous go hungry.

I've never seen them forsaken. But yet history tells us that if we read, there are strong, prominent believers who have literally starved to death. And so we have to reconcile those realities.

And these are the matters in which we must wrestle with. And I told you when we got into the book of Job, we're treading in deep waters. And these require us to put our hearts aside at times and our minds open to the word of God and allow it to speak to us.

[ 8 : 29 ] Everything in Job's life has fallen apart. He has lost all of his earthly possessions. All of his children have perished at one moment. In successive form, everything was taken away from him.

Possibly up to a year, at least some time later, then physically he is tortured and tormented. And not only physically in the flesh, but physically in his marriage.

For even his wife says, are you still walking in faithfulness? Why don't you just curse God and die? And she is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. The two have become one. So in every way, physically, he is dealing with torment.

The three friends that had made an appointment to come and console him and sympathize with him. When they saw him and they saw the sores that covered him in the scraping with a pot shirt as he sat in the ash heap, were so appalled by his appearance that they could not say anything.

And they sat silent for seven days and seven nights. They were so horrified by the reality of the condition and the suffering of Job that even his friends could not speak, could not help, and could not aid.

[ 9 : 51 ] They were dumbfounded by what they saw. And that's where the first two chapters leave us. But in the midst of that, even the Lord God himself has testified that Job was a man of completeness and integrity and faithfulness.

And we are told that in all these things, Job did not sin with his lips. That he continued to worship. And so now we get into the poetic prose.

We begin to see what's happening. We start with Job. For no one knows what to say, so Job speaks first. And I want you to see this evening, the lament of the suffering.

The lament of the suffering. It says, Let it not come into the number of the months.

Behold, let that night be barren. Let no joyful shout enter it. Let those curse it who curse the day, who are prepared to arouse Leviathan. Let the stars of its twilight be darkened.

[ 11 : 27 ] Let it wait for light, but have none. And let it not see the breaking dawn. Because it did not shut the opening of my mother's womb, or hide trouble from my eyes. Why did I not die at birth?

Come forth from the womb and expire. Why did the knees receive me? And why the breast that I should suck? For now I would have lain down and been quiet. I would have slept then, and I would have been at rest.

With kings and with counselors of the earth who rebuilt ruins for themselves, or with princes who had gold, who were filling their houses with silver. Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be as infants that never saw light.

There the wicked cease from raging, and there the weary are at rest. The prisoners are at ease together. They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. The small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master.

Why is light given to him who suffers, and life to the bitter of soul, who long for death but there is none, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, who rejoice greatly and exult when they find the grave?

[ 12 : 32 ] Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in? For my groaning comes at the sight of my food, and my cries pour out like water. For what I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me.

I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, and I am not at rest, but turmoil comes. This is the lament of suffering.

Some have called it Job's death poem. In the original language, it is one of the most complex Hebrew, and the most extensive use of words in their language, so much that it has perplexed scholars for years as to who could have written it.

There is use of an extensive Hebrew knowledge, and even reference to Aramaic knowledge in the wordings. We do not really garner the appreciation from it in the English language, for in the Hebrew, there was the repetition of sound, and kind of the humdrum of beating.

There is a continual emphasis of matters, as we were to just look at it in a linguistic point of view, such as the very first one, when he begins to open up darkness, and then he expounds the darkness, and he gives this multifaceted comparison of these dark matters, even referencing, which many people believe to be an eclipse, the building up of clouds, the darkness of the darkest night, the concealing of the brightest dawn.

[ 14 : 11 ] It is a true lament, and it is the beginning of one of the greatest poems in all of history, if not the greatest. Now, because of that, many are compelled to say that these are not historical features.

We understand them to be so. We have seen from the first two chapters the historicity of the events and the actual happenings that took place, biblical references to the reality of the person of Job. But it does not mean that at some point after all of these events, for this book was certainly written when the matter was brought to its conclusion, that someone, moved by the Spirit of God as they were writing the Word of God, was so moved that they wrote with such beauty this record that transpired during that time.

And it begins with this grand lament. And we want to see, as Job is opening up the discussion, really the weight of the sufferer.

For before we can judge the individual that seems to have done wrong, and before we dare disclose what we think is the root of the problem, it would do us well to pause and to consider how deep the problem goes.

[ 15 : 38 ] How much pain and misery that it is creating in the individual's life. The depth of their suffering and the weight of their misery.

For when we look at the first three friends of Job that speak, each one of them will represent a worldview. Worldviews, honestly, that are not very different from much of our worldviews.

The first worldview that will be presented is a worldview of observation. This is what I have seen.

This is what I know. Based on what I've seen and what I've studied, this is what I understand.

So, based upon my observations, Job, this is what's wrong. Now, a worldview of observation is not always wrong, but it's also not always right.

The second worldview would be a worldview of understanding. This is what I have come to know from those who went before me. What I have learned from the wise sages.

[ 16 : 47 ] An understanding and wisdom is to be sought, but sometimes wisdom can also be misguided, if not also misapplied. The third friend, and the harshest of the three, will be the worldview of dogmatism or religion.

This is so, for it has to be so. And it comes to it from a legalistic point of view. But before we have an understanding of everybody else's opinion, it would do us well to have an understanding of Job's suffering.

And for that matter, it is Job who speaks first. We use the word consternation when we spoke of Job's three friends. We defined it last time we were together.

You might not have been here, but Noah Webster defined the word consternation back in the 1800s was to be so amazed and appalled by something to be rendered incapable of offering help.

To be struck with such wonder at the atrocity before you, you are rendered incapable of doing anything.

[ 18 : 05 ] You are frozen. That's what consternation is. And because of that, the three friends that are looking at Job and sitting silently with Job have nothing to say for they don't know what to say.

They will respond to Job's suffering. And just so you understand, and we have to introduce it a little bit more in this chapter, Job poses the question in this chapter, in chapter three, that is sought to be answered throughout the book in which finally when God does speak, he says, Job, you wanted to know.

And God repeats the question. But you need to know this on the front end. God never answers the question. All God does is reveal to Job that he is not worthy to administer the universe and therefore is incapable of understanding the answer to the question.

That's why he says, were you there? Since you can't hold the world together, you don't need to know why this is happening. And for some of us, that bothers us, for we want to know the answer to the question.

Job tells us it's okay to question God, but what it does tell us as well, and it implies as we read it, do not expect that you can mandate that God will answer your question. There's nothing wrong with posing the questions, but there has to be contentment in the understanding that sometimes God doesn't always answer every question.

[ 19 : 50 ] And we see this in his lament here, and we see this in his cry. And the first thing that we notice about this lament is the weight of his despair.

It tells us, afterward, Job opened his mouth. Now, the wording there in the original language is very intentional, especially when you take it in the context of the culture that they were in. It's after they sat there, and after his three friends had gathered together, and after they were of no benefit to him, and after seven days and seven nights.

And the wording is that Job intentionally opened his mouth for he had something to say, and he was going to say something that had been well thought out.

I love what one commentator said, for I have a lot to learn from it. The custom of that day among those people was not just to speak for speaking's sake, but rather they only spoke when they had something to say.

Okay. I think it was Charles Spurgeon who said, it is not the calling of the pastor to fire off firecrackers, it's the calling of the pastor to aim his gun and shoot it so that the individual feels the weight of the message.

[ 21 : 06 ] He said in his day, we got a lot of firecracker preachers, they're just making a lot of noise, but they're not aiming at anything. And it's the same understanding here. Job has something to say to the friends who don't know what to say.

And so he speaks. So what's about to come out of his mouth is well thought out. The reason I say it would be well for me to learn that because at times I say things and I'm like, well that's not what I meant to say.

That's not what I was intending to say. Wait a minute, I messed that up. The implication here is that Job doesn't mess up. after he had thought about it, sat on it for a moment, Job had something to say.

And the very first thing he says is cursed be the day of my birth. It is literally cursed be his day. Now that should carry a little bit of weight for us because if we go back to the first chapter we will notice that the sons and daughters of Job would gather each on his day.

That would be his birthday. And on his day it was a day of celebration and on his day it was a day of family gathering together and upon his day it was a day of rejoicing and feasting and drinking and on his day it was done with such sincerity and truthfulness and it was really nothing done with any misguided intentions but rather it was wholesome and it was a day of celebration and it had been the custom of Job's family to each celebrate his day.

[ 22 : 44 ] But the first declaration of Job is to be cursed be my day. Cursed be the day of my birth.

And then he goes even further by the way this is a great passage for life beginning at conception in case you miss it. He said cursed also be the day of my conception he goes back nine months when it was said a man child I know in New American Standard it says child some of you say child if you read the legacy standard it says man when it was said a man is conceived and he was acknowledging that what took place at the conception nine months prior to that was not just some blob but it was a man in the womb it was him.

So Job says not only be cursed my day but cursed be the day that I was even conceived. and we notice the weight of his despair for he says may it be blotted out of the calendar may it be a day of darkness a building up of clouds a day where the sun refuses to shine when the dawn never comes it is this repetition to show us that it would not be a day of rejoicing it would not even be a day on the calendar his despair is so great and so grand and so heavy upon him he is literally despairing even of life even of the fact that he was brought in to this life even to the fact that he was even conceived in his mother's womb he says it should have never happened and he curses that day he even calls upon those who curse the day which was a tradition of that time it's not saying that he's adhering to that tradition but he says if there are people who would curse the day let them come and curse the day and rouse Leviathan all kinds of different biblical understandings of who Leviathan is we're not here to get into that some believe it's a mythological character that had seven heads that reigned the days of

Canaanite descent I believe the Canaanites took that from the book of Job and imposed it upon theirs so they imposed Leviathan upon their tradition rather than Job quoting the Canaanite tradition and biblical text that's my understanding just a little side note but he said if there are those who can curse the day let them curse my day and the weight of his despair is overbearing upon him and he fills it and he can't get over it and this weight is creating a longing something that he is seeking and we notice in his transition the refuge that he sought because he finally comes to this point where he reconciles himself and says okay so I was conceived and nine months later I was born why did my mother even love me why was I given nurture that I may live why wasn't I just cast off to the side and to us we're appalled at that thought that's just unthinkable why would an individual do that no mother could ever do that no individual could ever go but what it is showing us is the refuge that he's seeking keep in mind when we're looking at

Job we're looking pre Adamic covenant not Adamic covenant Abrahamic covenant we're looking at pre Sinai we're looking before the tabernacle temple altar any of these things his mind frame which is the same mind frame that runs pretty consistent throughout the Old Testament is leading him to seek this so what we can't do one of the challenges for studying this is we can't interpose our world view or even our eternal view onto the text rather we have to seek what Job is thinking and here's what it is this is what he's his refuge he says why wasn't I just allowed to die I wish I could have died why because for now I would have lain down and have been quiet I would have slept then I would have been at rest because see the Old

[ 27 : 24 ] Testament concept of death was to go to an abode of kind of non-existence but existence and rest a time of waiting a time of commonality with all other individuals it's referred to as Abaddon or Sheol we're not talking about heaven and hell here it is just this place of I'm just there and he's longing for that because he says look when I get there I would have been at rest with the kings and with counselors of the earth who rebuilt ruins for themselves and with princes who had gold and were filling their houses with silver he said listen I would have been just like everybody else and I would have just been there he goes on he elaborates it or like the miscarriage is discarded I would not be infants that never saw the light why there the wicked cease from raging and there the weary are at rest the prisoners are at ease together and they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster the small and the great are there and the slave is free from his master if you want to see the refuge he's seeking notice the descriptions he gives he gives them in a repeated fashion look at what he says

I would have lain down I would have slept I would have been at rest we go on down just a little bit further the wicked cease from raging the weary are at rest the prisoners are at ease the small and the great are there the slave is free what does he want he wants release from the burdens of this life just put me at a place of rest place where everybody's equal it doesn't matter if you built a great city it doesn't matter if your house was full of gold it doesn't matter if you were storing up silver it doesn't matter if you were a slave or a laborer or a taskmaster that place we're all at rest now you and I know you and I know that apart from Christ death is not a place of rest we know that rest is the description given for the death of the believer in Christ is a time of waiting but for those who do not know

Christ it is definitely not a place of rest it is a place of eternal separation it will lead to a time of judgment and condemnation we know that for Christ has come and disclosed to us those matters and those things and the revelation has progressed but at the time of Job he did not know that but his longing because the suffering was so great his longing was just to get to a place where everybody was equal and the burdens were gone unfortunately so many people today still conceive of death like that that it's just a place where I'm just at rest without Christ it's not how can they think that way it's because the burden of this life are so weighty upon them that the thing they are seeking the refuge they're longing for is to be free from the burdens that are pushing them down and to get to a place where everybody's in equality and it just all stops it's the weight of the suffering and this is the refuge he's seeking in S.M.

Lockridge's greatest sermon ever preached it's titled that on YouTube I don't say it it's just I'm just telling you it's titled that I love his introduction to that it is the sermon from which the clip that's my king comes out of but I love his introduction to that entire sermon it's a very long sermon but I love it and he says this world is forever chasing bubbles I told you that before he says this world is forever chasing bubbles and he begins to disclose the bubbles the drugs the drinking and the smoking and eating and all these things and he's absolutely right the reason for the world chasing bubbles is because everyone is seeking the same refuge everyone is seeking to be free from the burdens and the pains of life but then you can hear the transition in the sermon where he stops it's one of those old recordings and you hear the congregation behind him

I love those by the way those old recordings where he stops and he says but old friend I know where a poor man can find some bread I know where a broke man can find some money I know where a sick man can find some healing and I know where a dead man can find life he said it's in Jesus Christ because see the suffering of the world leads the longing for a refuge to be free that's exactly what Job was feeling we know where that can be found and it is not found in the grave apart from Christ it is found in an empty tomb in which he once resided and now has walked out of it is found in the risen Savior but in the moment of suffering the lament and the pain of the sufferer is leading them to seek a refuge to be free from the burden and is exactly what's going on in

[ 33 : 22 ] Job's life and this brings him to the final thing in this passage and that is the question he asks it is the question that will resonate throughout the rest of the book it is the question that God will address but never answer and it is the question that is still being asked today it is I would say the leading argument against Christianity in which the people who pose it think that we do not have an answer for it is the one thing that I have been asked more than any others and it is the one thing that people think well if I ask him this then I will stop him and he will not be able to answer it!

is the! people will ask you and answer and if God didn't answer it we don't have to either and you can just say that's enough and you can answer it by saying I can't answer that for you for God has not disclosed it to me but he has told me he's on the throne and that's enough for me and here's the

question he asked why is like given to him who suffers and life to the bitter of soul who long for death but there is none and dig for it more than for a hidden treasure who rejoice greatly and exult when they find the grave why is like given to a man whose way is hidden in whom God has hedged in here's the question why do people suffer why is there suffering why do the innocent! suffer why is there pain and misery if God is the giver of life and he is even Job acknowledges this here why are those people who are such desperate condition longing for death but God will not permit them to die why is it that God seems to have hedged in it is astounding isn't it that Satan said Job was faithful because God had hedged him with blessings and now Job declares that God had hedged him in suffering why is it that there seem to be some people throughout history and even in our life today who are hedged in by suffering why is it that there are people that were no known sins no obvious sins to our own that it seems as if nothing ever goes right why is it as the psalmist declares I have seen the wicked with their mouths full and their bellies fat and I have seen them living in luxury but I have seen the righteous with their jaws sunken in and their bellies empty living in wants I love what the psalmist says there for the psalmist says and I almost despaired I almost despaired because when I looked around I put in a paraphrase those who did wrong were fat and healthy those that were doing right were struggling and straining and not eating as well and almost despaired it tells us but it says but then I considered the end of the matter that a day will come when the Lord will call the righteous to himself and the wicked will cease to be Job's not thinking with that mentality yet because that has not been disclosed in the history of revelation at the time of Job even today we do not think we despair when we forget to consider the end of the matter we despair because our worldview much like the worldview of Job's friends and even the worldview of Job at this time is limited to this world every answer that Job's friends give will sound right it will sound proper but when you look a little further you will see that the blessings they declare are blessings life and just so we understand God has not promised to bless us in this life and so the question remains why has God hedged some people in if he is omniscient and omnipotent and setting upon the throne why has he indeed hedged some people in and suffering continues why won't he release them why won't he just call them to the grave why does he permit these things to happen different world views will say well it has to be their fault God very clearly declares it is not

[ 38 : 20 ] Job's fault but you don't need to know why what we need to understand is we need to be content with the unanswered question but we need to also be content that the one who leaves it unanswered knows the answer for he sets on the throne above it all his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts and if we cannot speak it into existence if we cannot hold it by the will of our power if we cannot call the stars forth by name one of the greatest passages in the book of Job says he inscribed the circle of the earth and he hung it out on space he hung it on nothing and told it to stay there and it did if we cannot hang the earth on nothing and tell it to stay there and it does then we do not have the right to expect to know why suffering exists!

those who are confined by it it's not fair but fairness is circumstantial right what's fair to you may not be fair to me is it just in the economy of God it is is it right by our own standards maybe not by our own world view possibly not but heaven doesn't operate by a world view it operates by an eternal view so here we see this lament of the sufferer longing that the day of his birth would be darkness that he would just be free from the burdens of life and that God would just allow him to die and wanting to know why that's what we'll consider when we hear his friends speak some of it will sound so right some of it will have grand applications and we'll say yes that's exactly right we'll have to dig a little deep to see the connection there that while that may be right most of the time doesn't apply here why do we say this because sometimes we meet those people who seem to be in such a desperate condition we innately say within us surely they did something to deserve this surely their own sin brought it upon themselves or maybe still we find ourselves in a position where we cannot reconcile what's going on in our life and so the enemy whispers in our ear it's your fault you deserve this but if

Christ has redeemed us and set us free and declared us clean and there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ and it can't even be self condemnation for no condemnation means no condemnation if we have stood in the mirror of God's word and said Lord reveal me and search my heart and try my desperate mind see if there be any wicked way within me if there's a sin in our life and we confess it and say yes Lord I deserve this judgment but if we've been in the word of God and we've been with the people of God and we cannot find that sin in our life friend don't let the

enemy keep telling you it's your fault just say God is God and I am not I don't know why this is happening but I know who does and leave it at that don't be quick to judge those you come into contact with either maybe there's a fault and a failure they need to repent of sure walk with them in that maybe they're just hedged in in suffering and they need someone to set in the ashes with them not in consternation but in aid and in help not imposing our world view of telling them why it's happening but trying to point them to the one who knows what is happening there's a big difference there we're introduced to that in Job chapter 3 thank you my brother and I went very long on you tonight guys  
I'm sorry about that