

11 *“Why did I not die at birth,
come out from the womb and expire?
12 Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?..... Job 3:11-12*

16 *Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child,
as infants who never see the light?..... Job 3:16*

20 *“Why is light given to him who is in misery,
and life to the bitter in soul,
21 who long for death, but it comes not,
and dig for it more than for hidden treasures,
22 who rejoice exceedingly
and are glad when they find the grave?
23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?..... Job 3:20-23*

After his three friends had mourned his suffering and patiently sat silently with him for seven days and seven nights, Job broke the long silence with an initial lament, cursing the day of his birth. The 6 questions Job asks in his lament express his belief that it would have been better to dwell in the darkness of death than to live in the light of a life of suffering.

Lamentation can be honoring to God, and it can be sinful, and the line between the two can be a fine one. I believe Job’s lamentation crosses the line into sin, because it is not an expression of awe concerning God’s whereabouts, but a questioning of His wisdom. One commentator says this about Job’s first lament, *“He never actually charges God directly with wrongdoing, but in saying, essentially, that it would have been better if he had never been born, Job calls into question God’s wisdom in overseeing the created order.”*(1) Note, Job later humbly repents of this sin. (42:1-6).

In contrast to Job, consider Jesus, the ultimate *“innocent sufferer”*.(2) Who, in agony on the cross, loudly repeated the words of David, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Palm 22:1)(Matthew 27:46)*. In uttering these words, the Savior inquires about the *whereabouts* of His Father, as a way of expressing the most profound mystery of the Father’s wrath being poured out upon Him in the place of sinners. But the Son does so without ever calling into question the wisdom of God.

And consider David, who in the same Psalm Christ quotes, and in contrast to Job, addresses the day of his birth in light of his present suffering without questioning the wisdom of God in giving him the light of life,

*“Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.*

*On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God. Psalm 22:9-11*

*Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.”*

Dear brothers and sisters, be warned. Do not sinfully question the wisdom of God under the guise of lament. Flee from cursing the day of your birth and asking questions reflective of such a thought, thereby questioning the all-wise God who loves you and is with you in your suffering.

But, by all means, make use of lamentation. Cry out to God in obedience to His command to bring everything to Him in prayer. Even reverently inquire of His whereabouts in the midst of your suffering, knowing He is wisely working all the time. And then join the glorious chorus of all the redeemed, telling of and praising God’s Name even to the next generation while you wait patiently for the return of the One who suffered and lamented perfectly in your place.

*“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:*

*You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!*

*For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.*

*From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.*

*The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!*

*All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.*

*For kingship belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.*

*All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.*

*Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;*

*they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.” - **Psalm 22:22-31***

In Christ,
Rich

1. “Job’s First Lament.” *Reformed Bible Studies & Devotionals at Ligonier.org*, Ligonier Ministries, 3 June 2015, <https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/jobs-first-lament>.
2. *ESV Study Bible*. Crossway, 2008, p. 963, study notes.