

God's Megaphone: Pain and Providence in the Book of Job, 3

Job's Lament

Job 3:1–26

Sunday Evening Bible Study

January 19, 2020

1. **Review: Is Our Suffering God's Will?**

1.1 The Bible speaks of God's will in two senses:

1.2 The revealed (aka: moral, commanded) will of God (what should be)

1.3 The decreed (aka: secret, sovereign) will of God (what shall be)

1.4 God often permits in his decreed will what does not please him according to his revealed will. (Luke 22:3 vs. Acts 2:23; Luke 23:11, 21, 24 vs. Acts 4:27,28; Isaiah 53:4,10; 1 Tim. 2:4 vs. Ephesians 1:4,5 Romans 9:15-16)

2. **Is this understanding of suffering new or unusual?**

Westminster Confession, 1647 (Presbyterian and Congregational) and Second London Confession, 1689 (Baptist)

- 5:1 God the Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.
- 5:2 Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.
- 5:3 God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure.

The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563: Reformed and Lutheran

Q27: That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that in them is, who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ his Son my God and my Father, in whom I so trust as to have no doubt that he will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil he sends up on me in this vale of tears, he will turn to my good; for he is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father.

Q28: The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, d.1892

“We are not held captive to God by a chain of sweets, nor are we bought with cupboard love, nor bribed in any other way to love him; but now, because he first loved us, our heart hath loved him, and rested in him; and if cross providences and strange dealings come from the hand of the Most High, our cry shall not be ‘Oh that we could get away from him!’ but, ‘Oh

that we knew where we might find him, that we might come even to his seat!’ This is the mark of our regeneration and adoption, –that, whatever happens, we still cling to our God.” (Expository Encyclopedia, 14:425)

John Calvin, 1541

“God so attends to the regulation of individual events, and they all so proceed from his set plan, that nothing takes place by chance...not one drop of rain falls without God’s sure command...no wind ever arises or increases except by God’s express command...Satan and all the impious are so under God’s hand and power that he directs their malice to whatever end seems good to him, and uses their wicked deeds to carry out his judgments.” *Institutes*, 1:203,204,206,229

Jonathan Edwards, 1735

“It is most evident by the works of God that his understanding and power are infinite; for he that hath made all things out of nothing, and upholds, and governs, and manages all things every moment, in all ages, without growing weary, must be of infinite power....he knows and perfectly sees all things, great and small, in heaven and earth, continually at one view...” *Divine Sovereignty*, Works 2:108

Job’s Lament (Job 3)

1. Job breaks seven days of silence (1,2)
2. Job curses his birthday (3-10)
 - 3:3 I wish I had never been born.
 - 3:3 I wish my parents had never conceived me.
 - 3:4-7 I wish my birthday was swallowed in darkness.
 - 3:8 I wish my birthday was swallowed by the sea.
 - 3:9 I wish my birthday never had a sunrise.
 - 3:10 I wish I had never made it out of my mother’s womb alive
3. Job longs for his deathday (11-19)
 - 3:11 Why didn’t I die at birth?
 - 3:12-15 Why did my mother live to take care of me?
 - 3:16-19 Why was I not stillborn?
Note: Job expects an afterlife with no pain, but in the progress of revelation, there is no developed doctrine of heaven in Job’s day. Believers viewed the afterlife as a shadowy place where the dead went, but there was hope God would rescue them from the grave (Ps. 139:8; Acts 2:27).
 - 3:20-22 Why do I have to live if I don’t want to?
 - 3:23 Why do I have to live if God permits so much trouble?
4. Job’s Final Groan
 - 3:24 I have lost my appetite.
 - 3:25 I have lost my hope.
 - 3:26 I have lost my peace, quiet, and rest.
5. Summary of Job’s Lament: It’s better to not live at all, than to live with pain.