

Pastor Richard Allen Farmer

Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Rd.

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

770.469.9069

Cursing Your Birthday

Text: Job 3:1-26

Pastor Johansson decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon. Pastor Johansson placed four worms into four separate jars.

- The first worm was put into a container of alcohol.
- The second worm was put into a container of cigarette smoke.
- The third worm was put into a container of chocolate syrup.
- The fourth worm was put into a container of good clean soil.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the minister reported the following results:

- The first worm in alcohol - Dead.
- The second worm in cigarette smoke - Dead.
- Third worm in chocolate syrup - Dead.
- Fourth worm in good clean soil - Alive.

The pastor wondered aloud, “what do we learn from this visual demonstration?”

Just then a little old woman in the back quickly raised her hand and said, "I get it! As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won't have worms!"

We often see a visual sermon and fail to get the lesson of it. We are often in the middle of a visual sermon and don't see what God is up to.

As we look at the larger narrative of the book of Job, we are seeing a sermon, a teaching. We are witnessing the suffering of

a righteous man. He has lost his children, his livestock and the comfort of his wife.

By the time we arrive at this third chapter of this epic saga, Job is sorry he was ever born!!! Look, with me, at one statement and three questions from this text.

1. Cursed be the day of my birth (vs. 1-10)

Comment [1]:

M. Fishbane says that in Job 3 we have a “counter-cosmic incantation” as he negates God’s creation language in Genesis 1<sup>(M.)</sup>.

Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23–26 and Job III 3–13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern,” VT 21 (1971): 151–67, see 153 for the

designation.) Job’s curse is a negation of the creation motif and rhythm.

God is saying, “Let there be light”

(Genesis 1:3) and Job is saying, “Let there be darkness” (Job 1:4).

In Genesis 1:16 we read of God making two great lights, one to rule the day and one to rule the night. In Job 3:5, wishes for an eclipse over his birthday.

In Genesis 1:17, God sets lights in the firmament and it was good. In Job 3:9, Job wishes that the stars would be dark. In Genesis 1, we read a creation benediction.

Comment [2]:

In Job 3, Job delivers a creation

malediction. Job is not singing,

Comment [3]:

“Happy birthday to me. Happy birthday to me. Happy birthday, dear Job. Happy birthday to me.” No, he’s singing, “**No** birthday to me. **No** birthday to me...”

2. Why didn't I die shortly after birth? (vs.

11)

Comment [4]:

If Job was born, he wonders, why did he live? Why not give his parents the experience of a full-term pregnancy and then have Job die?

3. Why didn't I die in the womb(stillborn)?

(v. 16)

Comment [5]:

Job is thinking that the place of eternal rest would be better (17-19). He would rather be "there"(17a, 18a,19a) than here.

4. Why is light still coming to me? (20a,

23a) The God of creation brings light while

Comment [6]:

Job wishes for the extinguishing of light.

“The thing I feared has happened(v. 25)

and I am restless. I wish I’d never been

born!!!”

This passage is the only one in which Job

utters a curse. He is in the company of

Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:14-18). In 1:10, The

Satan suggests that there is a hedge of

*protection* around Job. In 3:23, Job sees

that same hedge as a *restriction*. One

writer(Jonathan Walton) has said that a hedge of some kind or another is inevitable in this book.

Job knows he ought not curse his mother or father (Leviticus 20:9), so he curses the day they welcomed him into the world.

Have you been there? Life seems so bleak it would have been better, so you think, not to have been born at all?

### **Illus.**

A childless woman named Sharon wrote a letter which was printed in the Guardian

newspaper in Great Britain. The letter is titled, “A letter to the child we might have had, but never will.”

*I'm sorry you didn't get the chance to be born and carry on the family line. You might have been funny and warm like your potential dad, Bob, or ditzy and slightly neurotic like your potential mum, Sharon, but we'll never know. You see, I never felt particularly broody. Other women would drool over babies, but although I agreed*

*they were cute I didn't feel that I must have one. Whenever I held someone else's baby they always cried, as if sensing they were being cradled by a novice. Now it's too late. I am entering the perimenopause, you see. My child-bearing years are nearly at an end and Bob and I are too set in our ways now. Even if I decided to try to beat my biological clock and gave birth to you in nine months time, in September 2015, by the time you were 20 I would be 69. I'm too old to start changing dirty nappies and have sleepless*

*nights. I'm already looking forward to my  
retirement and unfortunately the picture I  
have doesn't include  
you.* (<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/jan/24/letter-child-will-never-be-born>)

In my imagination, Job wishes his parents had written such a letter. He sighs before he eats. He groans as easily as he breathes or perspires (24). He is not at ease(26). He who could hardly believe his wife would suggest he curse God

and die (2:9) now, Himself, curses God's giving  
Job life! Where do we go from here?

1. Life is to be valued even if it doesn't turn

out as we'd like it to. (23:10)

Comment [7]:

Job know that God knows the way that Job  
takes...and that's enough.

2. Throughout life's journey, we must take  
responsibility for what we say (1:21-22;

2:10b; 3:1)

Comment [8]:

Do you feel like Job? Would you rather be dead  
than alive? The God of LIFE is calling to you.

Hear Him! I'm glad I was born. I am just about  
at the point where I can agree with the psalmist  
in Psalm 119:71:

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted,  
that I may learn Your statutes.*

Amen