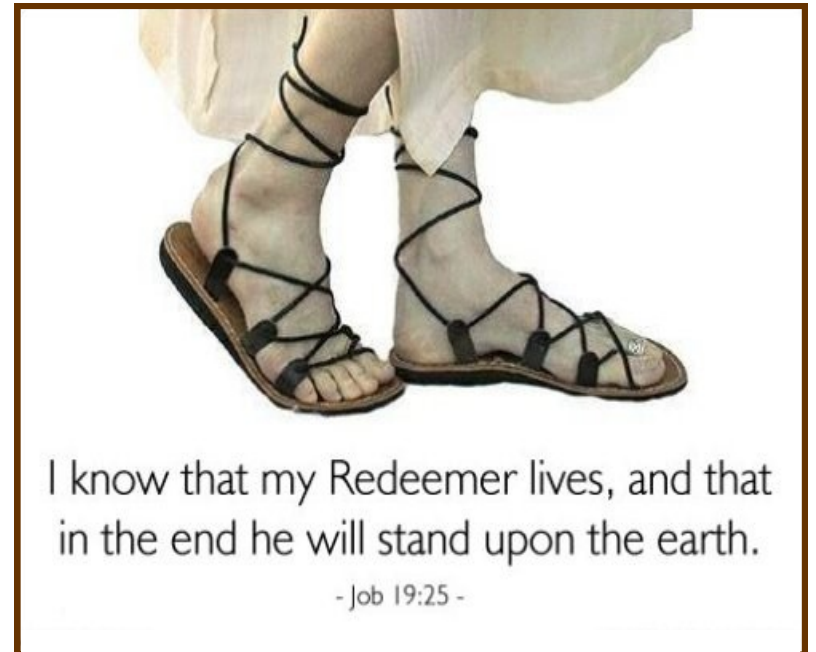


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# *Job*

## *Chapter Three:*



*Job's Lament*

*The commentary on the Book of Job, is by Saint Thomas Aquinas and was translated by Brian Mulladay and edited by Rev. Joseph Kenny, O.P. The book shows how human affairs are ruled by divine providence using probable arguments.*

## **CHAPTER THREE – JOB’S LAMENT**

### **The First Lesson: Job Curses His Life**

1 After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. 2 And he said: 3 Let the day perish on which I was born; the night in which it was said, ‘a man child is conceived’. 4 Let that day be darkness; may God not seek it, let in not be in recollection, nor let light shine on it. 5 Let gloom claim it; let clouds dwell upon it and let it be enveloped in bitterness. 6 Let a tempest envelop that night with a whirlwind; let it not be reckoned among the days of the year, let it not be numbered among the months. 7 Let that night be lonely, let it not be worthy of praise. 8 Let those curse it who curse the day, those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan. 9 Let the stars be blotted out in its darkness; let it hope for light, but not see it, nor the rising dawn of the morning, 10 because it did not shut the doors of my mother’s womb, or hide trouble from my eyes.

In Chapter 2, I explained that there were two opinions held by ancient philosophers about the passions. The Stoics said that there was no place in the wise man for sorrow. The Peripatetics said that the wise man is indeed sad, but in sad things he conducts himself with a moderation in accord with reason. This opinion accords with the truth. For reason does not take away the condition of nature. It is natural to sensible nature to rejoice and be pleased about fitting things and grieve and feel pain about harmful things. So reason does not take away this natural disposition, but so moderates it that reason is not deflected from its right course because of sorrow. This opinion also accords with Holy Scripture which places sorrow in Christ, in whom there is every fullness of virtue and wisdom.

***So, Job then indeed feels sad as a result of those adversities which he suffered and described above, otherwise the virtue of patience would have no place in him .***

***So Job cursed his day in remembering the evils  
which had happened to him on that day***

So, Job then indeed feels sad as a result of those adversities which he suffered described above, otherwise the virtue of patience would have no place in him. But his reason did not desert the right path because of sorrow but rather ruled the sorrow. This is proved when the text says, "After this, Job opened his mouth." "After this" means after he had passed seven days in silence. This clearly shows that what he is going to say is said in accord with a reason which is not confused by sorrow. In fact, if they had been spoken from a mind confused by sorrow, he would have said them sooner, when the force of sorrow was more acute. For every sorrow is mitigated with the passage of time and one feels it more in the beginning. He seems to have kept silent for a long time for this reason, so that he would not be judged to have spoken from a confused mind. This is shown by the text, "He opened his mouth." In fact, when someone speaks because of a fit of passion, he does not open his mouth himself, but he is compelled to speak by the passion. For we are not the masters of our acts done through passion, but only of those done through reason. In speaking he showed the sorrow which he suffered, he showed patience. Wise men usually express the motion of the passions which they feel in a reasonable way.

So Christ said, "My soul is sorrowful unto death," (Matt. 26:38) and St. Paul in Romans, "I do not do the good I want, but the very evil that I hate, I do." (7:15)

Also, the philosopher Boethius at the beginning of the *Consolation of Philosophy* opens with the expression of his sadness, but he shows how to mitigate it by reason. So Job expresses his sorrow verbally.

The text continues, “and he cursed his day.” This seems to contradict what St. Paul says in Romans, “Bless and do not curse.” (12:14) Note that cursing can mean several things. For since “to curse” (*maledicere*) is to speak evil [*malum dicere*], every time one speaks evil, he is said to curse. One speaks evil of someone by speech which causes evil, as God causes evil to something in his very speech and the judge causes the punishment on another in speaking the sentence of condemnation. This is the way the Lord spoke evil or cursed in Genesis, “Cursed is the ground because of you,” (3:17) and “Cursed be Canaan, a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.” (9:25) Joshua also cursed Achor who suffered from the condemnation. (Jos. 7:25) In another way, one may understand cursing another as invoking or desiring evil to him. For example, in I Kings, “The Philistine cursed David in his ways.” (17:43) In a third way, one may simply speak evil by disclosing it either in the present, the past, the future, truly or falsely. Paul prohibits cursing in this way when someone deprecates someone or defames his character falsely. However he does not prohibit it when a judge condemns a defendant who is guilty or when someone expresses in an ordered way the real evil of someone, either by demonstrating an act to occur in the present, or by relating something past or by predicting something in the future. So, one should understand that Job cursed his day, because he denounced it as evil, not only because of its nature, which was created by God, but according to the common usage of Holy Scripture where time is called good or evil because of what happens in that time. The Apostle Paul speaks in this way when he says, “[...] making the most of the time, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:16) So Job cursed his day in remembering the evils which had happened to him on that day.

A man often suffers unhappiness and bitterness through his own fault. But this is not the case here, for Job says, “Have I not dissembled? This is not the case here, for Job says, Have I dissembled?” Understand here that someone sins and so merits punishment from God in two ways. In one way when from injuries inflicted on him, he is provoked to revenge beyond what is his due, as Psalm 7 says, “If I repaid evil things to those requiting me, may I perish deservedly destitute at the hands of my enemies”. (v. 5) He denies this possibility saying, Have I not dissembled?” as to the injuries done to me. In another way when someone offends another first in words. He shows this is not the case here saying, “Have I not been silent?” as if to say: For I have spoken abusive or injurious words. Nor has he offended in deeds and he removes this from himself saying, “Have I not been master of myself?” “For the impious are like the restless sea which cannot be quiet.” (Is. 57:20) Although I am innocent, still “his wrath came upon me,” i.e. the punishment given by God, for anger in God does not happen because God is disturbed in soul, but because he wants to punish someone. In this Job recognizes that the adversities of this world do not happen without divine command.

To summarize what Job said in his lamentation, note that three things are contained in it. First, he shows his own life is wearisome (“Cursed be the day of my birth”) v. 3; second, the greatness of the unhappiness which he was suffering (“Before I eat, I sigh) v. 24; and third, he shows his innocence (Have I not dissembled) v. 26 and so on.

**END OF CHAPTER 3**

After he shows that the life of man is difficult because of the unhappiness and bitterness of men, he applies to himself what he said about men in general. In this he expresses his own bitterness when he says, "Before I eat, I sigh," for as laughter is a sign of joy, so sighing is a sign of bitterness of soul. In this he shows the manner of his bitterness from the manner of his sighing. He began his sighing easily, "Before I eat, I sigh." And his sighing was continuous and great. So he adds, "and my wailing is like flood water." For as sighing is a sign of moderate sorrow, so wailing is a sign of vehement sorrow, a sorrow which can hardly be tolerated. This wailing is compared to the roaring of water, for water which moves swiftly makes a murmuring sound. So a man experiencing great affliction is provoked to wailing from a slight recollection of his misery. He continues, "like flood water," to emphasize the continuous character of his bitterness, for flooding water moves continuously and makes a loud noise.

Because bitterness of soul arises from unhappiness, after he speaks of the bitterness of his soul, he next speaks about his unhappiness saying, "For the thing that I fear comes upon me." Note here that the unhappiness of man which provokes bitterness seems to consist in two things. First, in the damage to his things or his person and in dishonor. As to the first two, he says, "For the thing that I fear comes upon me," i.e. those things which I fear happen to me. Here this expression refers to the greatness of loss and pain for the more prudent someone is, the more he recognizes what can happen to him in a time of adversity when he is still in a time of prosperity. So Sirach says, "In the day of prosperity, do not forget evil." (9:27) Job, who was the most prudent of men, suffered great unhappiness when the very evils happened to him which he feared. As for the second, dishonor, he says, "and what I dread befalls me." According to the philosopher Aristotle, shame is "the fear of dishonor." He shows therefore by this that from great glory, he fell into many disgraces and dishonors.

The next verse explains the manner of his cursing and continues, "And Job said: Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night which said, 'A man child is conceived.'" Note that although to exist and to live are desirable in themselves, yet to exist and to live in misery like this should be avoided, although one may freely sustain being miserable for some purpose. So a wretched life which is not ordered to some good end should not be chosen for any reason. The Lord speaks in this way in Matthew, "It would have been better for that man if he had never been born." (26:24) Reason alone apprehends what good can be expected in some misery. The sensitive power does not perceive it. For example, the sense of taste perceives the bitterness of the medicine, but reason alone enjoys the purpose of health. If someone wanted to express the feeling of his sense of taste then he would denounce the medicine as evil, although reason would judge it to be good because of its purpose. So the blessed Job was able by his reason to perceive the misery which he suffered as certainly useful for some end. But the lower part of the soul influenced by sorrow would completely repudiate this adversity. Thus, life itself under such adversity was hateful to him. When something is hateful to us, we abhor everything by which we come to that thing. So in the inferior part of his soul, whose passion Job now intended to express, he hated both the birth and the conception by which he came into life and consequently both the day of his birth and the night of his conception according to the usage of attributing to time the good or evil which happens in that time. So therefore because Job repudiated life in adversity from the point of view of the senses, he wished that he had never been born or conceived. He expresses this saying, "Let the day perish on which I was born," saying in effect, "Would that I had never been born!" and "the night on which it was said," i.e. it could truly be said, "a man-child is conceived," [that is, "Would that I had never been conceived!"] He uses a fitting order here, for if birth does not take place, this does not preclude conception, but lack of conception precludes birth. He also fittingly ascribes the conception to night and birth to day, because according to the astrologers, a birth during the day is more praiseworthy since the principal star, the sun, shines over the land at that time; but a conception at night is more frequent. Jeremiah uses a similar way of speaking saying, "Cursed be the day I was born, may the night on which my mother bore me not be blessed." (20:14)

After cursing the day of his birth and the night of his conception, one by one the curse for each of these periods of time. First with the curse of the day of his birth, "Let that day be darkness!" Consider that, as Jerome says in his *Prologue*, "from the words in which Job says, 'Let the day perish on which I was born,' (1:3) to the place where it is written near the end of the book, 'For that reason, I repent,' (42:6), the verses are hexameters in dactyl and spondee." Therefore it is clear after this that this book was written in poetic style. So he uses the figures and images which poets customarily use through this whole book. Since poets want to touch others deeply, they customarily use several different images to express the same idea. So here too Job uses things which often make a day hateful, to curse his own day in the manner of which we are speaking.

The dignity of a day is its brightness, for it is by this that it is distinguished from night. He excludes this dignity saying, "Let that day be darkness," an idea which seems frivolous and vain according to a superficial reading of the text. For the day of his birth had passed and was not now present. What has passed cannot be changed. How then could a day which has passed be changed into night? One should know that some judgments one makes about things are expressed as desires. So now the text says, "Let that day be darkness," as if it were to be said: The day of my birth ought to be in darkness because it befits the darkness and misery which I am suffering. For the sight of the light is delightful, as the philosopher Qoheleth says, "Light is pleasing and it is delightful for the eyes to see the sun." (11:7) It is customary in Holy Scripture to represent sorrow by darkness, as one sees in Qoheleth, "He spent all his days in darkness and grief, in much vexation and sickness and resentment." (5:16)

Someone could object that although life is useless if given to miserable men, yet it is useful if given to those who enjoy prosperity. He removes this possibility saying, "Why are they (i.e. light and life) given to man whose way is hidden?" The way of a man is hidden because he does not know how the state of his present prosperity will end. As Proverbs says, "Laughter will be mixed with pain, and the end of joy is grief," (Prov. 14:13) and Jeremiah, "Man's road is not in his control." (10:23) and the philosopher Qoheleth, "What necessity is there for man to seek greater things for himself, when he does not know how to use things profitable for himself in this life? Or who can indicate what will be after him under the sun?" (7:1) He explains how the way of man is hidden on the earth saying, "And God has hedged him in with darkness." This is evident in many ways.

First, as to those things which happened in the past or will happen in the future Qoheleth says, "Many are the afflictions of man because he is ignorant of the past and the future or who can tell him how it will be?" (8:6)

Second, as to what is near him, namely men. As 1 Cor. says, "For who knows a man's thoughts but the spirit of the man which is in him." (2:11) As to those things above a man, the last chapter of 1 Timothy says, "He (God) lives in inaccessible light, whom no man sees or is able to see," (1 Tim. 6:16) and in the Psalms, "He makes the darkness his hiding place." (17:12)

Finally as to those things which are below him, Qoheleth says, "All things are difficult, a man cannot explain them with speech." (1:8) God is said to have hedged a man in with darkness because God bestows the kind of intellect on him by which he is not able to understand these things.

### Third Lesson: Like The Unhappy

20 Why was light given to him that is in misery? Why is life given to the bitter in soul? 21 Who long for death, which does not come, like those who dig for buried treasure. 22 And are glad powerfully when they find the grave. 23 Why is it given to man whose way is hidden? And God has hedged him in with darkness? 24 Before I eat, I sigh; and my wailing is like flood waters. 25 For the thing that I fear comes upon me. 26 And what I dread befalls me. 26 Have I not dissembled? Was I not silent? Have I not kept quiet? And his wrath comes upon me.

After Job has detested his own life in many ways, he now detests the life of the whole human race taken collectively, both of those in prosperity and those in adversity. He begins to treat first of those who are more renowned. Note that there are two things which belong especially to living beings: to live and to know. Although knowing in itself is very delightful and very noble, yet to know those things which cause affliction is painful. So he says, "Why was light given to him that is in misery?," as if to say: For what purpose does a man subject to unhappiness have the light of knowledge, since by it he can consider the evil with which he is afflicted? To live is noble because of the soul, but if the soul should exist in bitterness, living itself is rendered bitter. So he says, "and life to the bitter of soul." (Understand "why is it given?" to be repeated) He shows that life is given to them uselessly because unhappy men desire its contrary. So he says, "Who," living in bitterness, "long for death, which does not come," that is as quickly as they would like. To show that those who are unhappy wait for death not shrinking from it but desiring it he continues, "like those who dig for buried treasure," aroused by their great desire to find the treasure by digging. Because desire, when it is fulfilled causes joy, he adds, "and are glad powerfully when they find the grave," i.e. when they see they have arrived at death which procures a grave for them. Some think this passage refers to the fact that those who dig for treasure rejoice in finding a grave because they often found treasures in ancient tombs. But the first explanation is better.

A day is bright in many ways. First, of course, from the sanctification of God who instituted it to be celebrated, as Exodus teaches, "Remember, keep holy the Sabbath day." (20:8) Therefore, Job removes this sort of brightness from the day mentioned previously when he says, "May God not seek it." as if to say: May God not require men to celebrate it. In fact, God requires some days be celebrated because of some extraordinary favor conferred on that day on men. For example, the Sabbath in the Old Law was celebrated because of the gift of Creation and the Passover was celebrated because of the gift of liberation from Egypt. This is also true of the feast days which are celebrated in the New Testament. Thus Job wishes to show by this that his birth should not be reckoned among the extraordinary favors of God, since he seems to have been born more for sorrow than for joy. Second, a day is bright from the recollection of men. For men customarily celebrate certain days on which something great or joyous happened to them, like Herod and Pharaoh celebrated their birthdays. He excludes such brightness from this aforementioned day saying, "May it not be remembered," namely, by men because in truth nothing joyous happened on that day, but rather something sad happened on that day as is plain from the result. Third, a day is bright from physical light, which can be taken away in many ways. First, from the loss of the rays of the sun which illumine the earth, as appears in an eclipse of the sun. The text speaks about this saying, "nor let light shine on it." Second, from the interposition of clouds or things like this which hide the rays of the sun. The text means this when it says, "Let gloom claim it." Third, when the subject himself lacks the power of sight, since when someone is dead or deprived of sight, the clarity of the sun is taken away from him. The next verse expresses this, "and the shadow of death."

Job explains two ways which can produce the aforementioned darkness. First, as to the order when he says, "Let clouds dwell on it." For clouds dwell on a day when a day which dawned clear and beautiful is suddenly and unexpectedly overcast by clouds. Job's own life seems to be like this. Second, as to the kind of darkness. So he says, "Let it be enveloped in bitterness." In this verse he shows that everything which has been said about darkening should refer to the darkness of sorrow. In fact, his style seems to explain an allegory using another allegory. In all these expressions, he only means to say that the day of his birth should not be judged as one of joy but as one of mourning since he entered by his birth into a life of such great adversity.

After he curses the day of his birth, he next curses the night of his conception using a similar style. First, he attributes to it the reason why the night is rendered very horrible. Since night is frightful in itself because of darkness, the deeper the darkness of the night, the more frightful it is. This happens when a great storm arises during the night. So the text continues, "let a tempest envelop that night with a whirlwind," as if he were to say: It would have been fitting for that night to be seized by some dark whirlwind to correspond to my life which is enveloped by such a great whirlwind of misfortune.

Then he takes away from the night what seems to pertain to the good of the night, first as to the opinion of men. For since men divide up the times by what happens during those times, things which happen at night seem small and hardly worth remembering. So night is not accounted anything in itself in the memories of men, but in connection with the day. He removes this good from the night about which he is speaking saying, "Let it not be reckoned among the days of the year; let it not be numbered among the months." Here he says in effect: That night is not worth remembering since nothing important happened on it, but rather something which causes sorrow. Among the nights which find a place in the memories of men, some are not only remembered, but are also celebrated and festive on which people gather together to make merry. He takes this good away from this night saying, "Let that night be lonely." When men come together for things like this on a given night, they do so in praise and celebration of that night because of some important deed which is remembered on that night, as is the case with the faithful when they celebrate the night of the Lord's Resurrection. So he adds, "let it not be worthy of praise." For certain nights are worthy of praise because of some great deed which happened on that night.

So after he shows that he should not have desired to have preserved his life after his birth, he demonstrates as a consequence that he should not have desired to preserve his life in leaving the womb and be born. In this he explains what he said above, "Why did I not die in the womb?" (v.11) Consider that some die in the womb before the infusion of the rational soul, which alone is immortal. He expresses this saying, "Or why was I not like a hidden aborted birth?" Aborted fetuses of this sort have nothing perpetual which remains of them. Some however die after the infusion of the rational soul. These truly subsist in the soul after death, but they do not see the light of this world. To express this Job says, "or" which must be interpreted as "like" (*sicut*) "those conceived who never see the light," i.e. of this present life. He shows that he should have chosen this for himself so as not to have been subject to the evils of this life. So he says, "There", in the state where those are who after they were conceived did not see the light of day, "the wicked cease from troubling," from the trouble they caused others in afflicting them, cleansed from the evil of fault. "And there", in the state of the dead, "the weary" warriors who are worn out from the struggle," are at rest," i.e. they are free from labor like this, because as was explained, he speaks now only of the rest from the evils of this present life. This passage can also be understood of the fatigue one suffers in any kind of work where he uses his own strength. "There, those" who were, "once chained, will be at ease together," without their former pain together with those who held them bound. There too men weighed down with anguish and with slavery, "hear not the voice of the taskmaster." This accords with Isaiah, "How the oppressor has ceased; there is no more tribute." (14:4b) He shows this is true by adding, "The small and the great are there," on an equal basis because smallness and greatness are reckoned in this life according to the inequality of earthly prosperity, when this is taken away they return to their natural equality. Therefore "the small and the great" should be interpreted to mean those who were different in this life because of the magnitude of earthly prosperity. Yet note that the difference between small and great in spiritual goods remains even there. But he does not speak about these goods now as has already been explained. There "the slave is free from his master," and so there will be no place there for tribute or anything of this sort.



But since when someone asks, "Why did this happen?", he means that this happened uselessly, Job shows next as a consequence not only the futility of preserving his life, but even more the harm. He shows this first as to the evils which he now suffers saying, "For now I would be sleeping and quiet; I would be at rest." He calls death sleep because of his hope in the resurrection, and he will later say this plainly. By silence, he means rest from the adversities which he was suffering; as if to say: If I had died immediately when I was born, I would not have been made restless by these evils which I now suffer. Second, he says it respecting the goods which he formerly possessed, for someone might say to him, "If you had not been preserved in this life, you would not have had the goods which you enjoyed in time past." As if to answer this he shows that the preservation of his life should not be desired for the sake of those goods, for even those who have enjoyed an abundance of these great goods throughout their whole lives, end in the same way in death. He means this when he says, "And in my sleep," i.e. death, "I would have been at rest," i.e. I would have been freed from the disturbing things of life, "with kings and counselors of the earth." Note that the intention of those who have a high place in society and seem to prosper greatly, is either to enjoy their pleasures, and as to them he says: "who built solitary dwellings for themselves," (literally: those wanting to be alone to hunt or some other pleasant past-time); or they want to accumulate wealth, and as to them he says, "or with princes who hoard gold and fill their houses with silver." This is as if to say: If I had died immediately after I was born, I would have had nothing less now than those men have after their deaths who prospered in many things. Consider that since rest occurs only in what subsists, he wants us to understand from these words, that man in his soul subsists after death. To the objection that kings and princes of the sort he is describing perhaps do not rest, but experience the torments of the punishments of hell, or even that life was useful to Job himself so that in life he could obtain merit for himself, we must return to what we already said. Job speaks now from the character of the sensual part of the human soul, and expresses what he feels. This part only allows a place for the corporeal goods and evils which are present in the here and now.

From this he only intends to show that his conception was not something great nor ordered to something good, but rather to the evil of adversity which he was feeling. So he says, "Let those curse it who curse the day, those who are capable of rousing up Leviathan." According to the literal sense, this can be understood in two ways. In one way, Leviathan means some great fish, which seems to conform things said about him at the end of the book, "Can you draw out," he says, "Leviathan with a fishhook?" (40:20) This must mean that those who fish for a fish of this size, do it by attacking them at night in the darkness. So when day begins to dawn, they curse the day because their work and intention are interrupted by its coming. There is a second interpretation. Leviathan means the ancient serpent who is the devil, in the sense of Isaiah, "On that day the Lord will punish Leviathan the twisting serpent with his hard, great and strong sword." (27:1) Those men then are prepared to haul out Leviathan who are eager to carry out the suggestions of the devil by devoting themselves to the works of iniquity. These curse the day because, as John says, "Everyone who does evil hates the light" (3:20) and Job says later "The eye of the adulterer sees darkness" (24:15) and "if immediately the dawn should appear, he will judge it the shadow of death." (24:15) In this way then, when he speaks as before, "Let it not be worthy of praise," he wants this night to be hateful to the good men. So according to what he adds, "Let those curse it, etc." he also wants it to be hateful to the wicked, for both the good and the wicked shrink from adversity.

## Second Lesson: Job Would Rest in Peace with the Dead

11 Why did I not die in the womb? Why did I not come forth from the womb and expire? 12 Why did knees receive me? Or why was I suckled at the breast? 13 For now I would be sleeping and quiet; and in my sleep I would be at rest. 14 With the kings and counselors of the earth, who built solitary dwellings for themselves; 15 or with princes who hoard gold and fill their houses with silver. 16 Or why was I not like a hidden aborted birth? Or like those conceived who never see the light? 17 There the wicked cease to trouble; and there the weary from the struggle are at rest. 18 There those once chained together, hear not the voice of the taskmaster. 19 The small and the great are there; the slave is free from his master.

After Job has cursed the days of his birth and the night of his conception to show that he detested from the beginning of his life, he now shows that he detests from the preservation of his life. With these remarks he shows more clearly that his life is burdensome to him. There are two states of life: one is hidden in which those conceived live in the womb; the other is open where one lives after birth outside the womb. As for the first state, he says, "Why did I not die in the womb?" As to the second, "Why did I not come forth from the womb and expire?" He treats first about the second state.

One should know that the exterior life can be lost in two ways: sometimes, of course, from some harm coming on it, either intrinsic like sickness or extrinsic like a sword or something like that. So when he says, "Why did I not come forth from the womb and expire," it can be applied to this. Sometimes however, the external life is taken away by the loss of some necessary assistance, which can be extrinsic like being carried, warmth and other aids of this kind. The verse, "Why did the knees receive me?" refers to this; or something intrinsic, like food, and so he says, "Or why was I suckled at the breast?" Indeed the life of newborn baby needs these aids to life on the first day of its birth.

Next he excludes those qualities which belong to the good of the night according to nature from this night. One of these is night which is adorned by the view of the stars. He takes this away when he says, "Let the stars be blotted out in the darkness." Another quality is that it is bedecked with the hope of day, which he removes saying, "let it hope for light, but not see it," as if to say: Although it is natural to hope for the light of day during the night, yet this night should have a darkness so great that it never ends with the coming of the light of day. The darkness of night is completely broken in the full light of day, but it is diminished at the break of dawn. He calls down on this night not only that its darkness may not be ended by day, but also that it not be diminished by the dawn when he says, "nor see the rising dawn of the morning." But since what he had said seemed impossible, namely, for day and dawn not to succeed night, he shows how his words should be interpreted saying, "because it did not shut the door of my mother's womb." For the life of man is a hidden life in the womb of his mother, and so is compared to the darkness of night. However, when one appears in the open in birth, then it is like bright day. For this reason he said that night should not be followed by either dawn or by day to show that he wanted his conception to come never to birth or to childhood, which is understood by dawn or youth which is designated the full light of day. He says, "Because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb, and so on" not because this night should close the womb, that is, prevent his birth, but because this is done at night. For from conception itself, an impediment can stand out which does not allow conception to issue into birth. But since it also seems irrational for someone to detest life, when being and to living are desirable for all, he shows the reason why he has said this. "Nor hide trouble from my eyes," as if to say: I do not detest living because of life itself, but from the evil which I suffer. For although life itself is desirable, yet a life subject to misery is not. Here note that everything which he has said in metaphor above, he clarifies plainly in the final clause, a principle which will be observed in his other discourses.