

Job 10:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb?
Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

Analysis

Job wishes he had never been born: 'Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!' The question 'Wherefore' (lammah, למה) demands reason for God bringing Job to birth. The phrase 'given up the ghost' (gava, גָּוָה) means to expire or perish—Job wishes he had died at birth. 'No eye had seen me' expresses desire for non-existence, never entering human observation.

Job's death wish intensifies—earlier he cursed his birthday (chapter 3); now he questions why God gave him life at all. The lament assumes God's agency in birth, making the question theological, not merely existential. If God purposed Job's existence, what possible purpose justifies this suffering? Job cannot reconcile divine intention in creating him with divine action in destroying him.

The question finds answer in Christ: God brought forth the Son in human birth specifically to suffer and die (Hebrews 2:14-15). Christ's incarnation was purposefully oriented toward crucifixion. God births in order to redeem through suffering. Job cannot yet see that his suffering serves purposes beyond mere existence—it vindicates divine confidence in genuine faith.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures generally viewed life as precious gift from gods and death as tragedy. Job's wish for non-existence represents profound despair that

inverts normal values—better never to exist than to exist in such agony. This extreme lament underscores his suffering's severity.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do we respond pastorally to those who wish they had never been born?
2. What does Job's death wish teach about suffering's power to make existence itself seem cursed?
3. In what ways does Christ's purposeful incarnation toward death transform our understanding of life's purpose?

Interlinear Text

וְלִמָּה	מִרְחֹם	הֵצֵאתָ נִי
H4100	out of the womb	Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth
	H7358	H3318
אֶגֶּן ע	וְעַיִן	לֹא תִרְאֶנִּי
Oh that I had given up the ghost	and no eye	had seen
H1478	H5869	H3808 H7200