

Job Chapter 30

Verses 1-15

Turning from wistful reflection of an exalted past, Job laments his present status.

He is so low that he is mocked by the children from the lowest rung of society and disrespected by outcasts.

Verses 1-31

Job moved from the recollection of good days in the past (chapter 29), to lament his present losses.

Job 30:1 "But now [they that are] younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock."

"But now" introduces the contrast of his present suffering with the glory just described (in chapter 29).

Now he is insulted and ridiculed by the same derelicts he earlier helped.

"They abhor me" (verse 10).

Now he suffers internally, both physically and psychologically: "the days of affliction have taken hold" (verse 16).

God Himself has persecuted him?

"He hath cast me into the mire" (verse 19).

Whom both universal custom and the light of nature taught to reverence their elders and betters.

"Have me in derision"; make me the object of their contempt and scoffs: thus my glory is turned into shame.

"I would have disdained":

Or rather, I might have disdained, i.e., whose condition was so mean and vile.

That in the opinion and according to the custom of the world they were unworthy of such an employment.

"To have set with the dogs of my flock":

To be my shepherds, and the companions of my dogs which watch my flocks.

Dogs are everywhere mentioned with contempt, as filthy, unprofitable, and accursed creatures (2 Sam. 16:9; 2 Kings 8:13; Phil. 3:2; Rev. 22:15).

In the last lesson, we saw a description of the life of Job before Satan attacked him.

Now in this lesson, we see the depths to which he had fallen.

Job was disgraced in front of the young people and the people of low character.

Verses 2-8

Job described these mockers as dissipated vagabonds who, because of their uselessness and wickedness, were not welcome in society, so were driven out of the land.

These base men had made Job the object of their sordid entertainment (verses 9-15).

Job 30:2 "Yea, whereto [might] the strength of their hands [profit] me, in whom old age was perished?"

For though they were strong, lusty, hale men, able to do business, yet their strength was to sit still and fold their hands in their bosoms, so that their strength was of no profit or avail to themselves or others.

They were so slothful and lazy, that Job could not employ them in any business of his to any advantage to himself.

And this may be one reason, among others, why he disdained to set them with the dogs of his flock to keep it.

For the fathers seem to be intended all along to (Job 30:8).

Though it matters not much to which of them the words are applied, since they were like father like son.

"In whom old age was perished":

Who did not arrive to old age, but were soon consumed by their lusts, or cut off for their sins.

And so the strength and labor of their hands, had they been employed, would have been of little worth.

Because the time of their continuance in service would have been short, especially being idle and slothful.

Some understand it of a lively and vigorous old age, such as was in Moses; but this being not in them, they were unfit for business (see Job 5:26).

Or they had not the endowments of old age, the experience, wisdom, and prudence of ancient persons, to contrive, conduct, and manage affairs.

Or direct in the management of them, which would make up for lack of strength and labor.

The people, who had come to help Job were no help at all.

They needed help themselves.

It appears his help was from feeble people.

Perhaps they were not just feeble in age, but in ability to help.

Job 30:3 "For want and famine [they were] solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste."

Rather through famine and want they were reduced to the utmost extremity, and were as destitute of food as a rock, or hard flint, from whence nothing is to be had, as the word signifies (see Job 3:7).

Fleeing into the wilderness; rather, gnawing the wilderness.

I.e. feeding on such dry and sapless roots and fruits as the wilderness produces.

In former time desolate and waste; or, on the eve of desolation.

People who were starving to death did not have the energy to speak.

They sat alone until they were gone.

They had gone into the wilderness to eat roots, or any berries they might find there.

Job had helped the desolate people before, but was now desolate himself.

Job 30:4 "Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots [for] their meat."

Or, bitter herbs, as the word seems to import, which shows their extreme necessity.

By the bushes: Or, by the shrubs, nigh unto which they grew.

Or, with the bark of trees, as the Vulgate Latin renders it.

“And juniper roots”:

Possibly the word may signify some other plant, for the Hebrews themselves are at a loss for the signification of the names of plants.

These mallows show the extremity of their need.

These plants were bitter to the taste, but had some nourishment in them.

They had no choice but to eat them if they wanted to live.

Job 30:5 "They were driven forth from among [men], (they cried after them as [after] a thief;)"

From towns and cities, and all civil society, as unfit to be among them.

Not for any good, it may be observed, but for crimes that they had done, like our felons, and transported persons.

"They cried after them as after a thief":

As they were driven and run along, the people called after them, saying, there goes a thief.

Which they said by way of abhorrence of them, and for the shame of them, and that all might be warned and cautioned against them.

And, generally speaking, such as are idle and slothful, and thereby become miserable, are pilferers and thieves.

This shows the complete helplessness of a tribe of people who must listen to the people who own the land.

They were desolate with nowhere to go.

They were driven from place to place, as a thief would be.

Job 30:6 "To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, [in] caves of the earth, and [in] the rocks."

Or "brooks", in such hollow places as were made by floods and streams of waters.

"In caves of the earth, and in the rocks":

Where they betook themselves for fear of men, and through shame, being naked and miserable not fit to be seen.

Job has respect to the Horites and when I read of this, my mind goes to David who dwelled in the cliffs and caves, when he was running from Saul.

He dwelt in these secret places to keep Saul from killing him, but he dwelt there also, to keep his men from killing Saul.

The places mentioned were hiding places for those on the run.

Job 30:7 "Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together."

The sounds which came from their mouths sounded to Job less like articulate speech than like the braying of asses.

Compare what Herodotus says of his Troglodytes: "Their language is unlike that of any other people; it sounds like the screeching of bats."

"Under the nettles":

Or, wild vetches.

"They were gathered together":

Rather, huddled together.

They huddled together for safety.

Their speech was so unintelligible that they sounded like asses braying.

Job 30:8 "[They were] children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth."

The physical degeneracy whereof Job has been speaking is accompanied in most instances by extreme mental incapacity.

Some of the degraded races cannot count beyond four or five; others have not more than two or three hundred words in their vocabulary.

They are all of low intellect, though occasionally extremely artful and cunning.

"Yea, children of base men":

Literally, children of no name.

Their race had never made for itself any name, but was unknown and insignificant.

"They were viler than the earth":

Rather, they were scourged out of the land.

This must not be understood literally.

It is a rhetorical repetition of what had been already said (in verse 5).

The expression may be compared with the tale in Herodotus, that when the Scythian slaves rebelled and took up arms, the Scythians scourged them into subjection.

These were some of the people with the very worst character of anyone that Job had ever known.

They were not only evil themselves, but their fathers before them had been evil as well.

Job 30:9 "And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword."

"I am their byword":

Job was the object of their jeering, whereas in former days he would not hire their fathers to tend his animals like sheepdogs (30:1).

Job 30:10 "They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face."

In contempt of my person, and loathing of my sores.

"Spare not to spit in my face":

Not literally, for they kept far from him, as he now said.

But figuratively, i.e. they use all manner of contemptuous and reproachful expressions and carriages towards me, not only behind my back, but even to my face.

Even these people, who were of the vilest in the earth, had begun to ridicule Job.

They had no respect at all for him, and even spit in his face to show their disgust of him.

They thought of Job as someone even viler than they were themselves.

There are many types and shadows of Job as Christ here.

They spit on Jesus.

They reviled Him and hated Him as well.

Job was in very good company.

Job 30:11 "Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me."

Better, his:

I.e. "God hath loosed the cord of his bow and they have cast off all restraint before me."

"Afflicted me":

When they perceived that God, who had been my faithful friend, and constant defender, had forsaken me, and was become mine enemy, they presently took this advantage of showing their malice against me.

"They have also let loose the bridle":

They cast off all former restraints of law, or humanity, or modesty, and gave themselves full liberty to speak or act what they pleased against me.

"Before me":

They dare now do those things before mine eyes, which formerly they trembled lest they should come to my ears.

He, in the verse above, is speaking of God.

Job still believed that this terrible attack upon him had come from God.

I guess in a sense it did.

He allowed Satan to do this to Job as a test to see if Job would remain loyal to God through it all.

The enemies of Job had freedom to attack Job too.

Job 30:12 "Upon [my] right [hand] rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction."

The place of adversaries or accusers in courts of justice (Psalm 109:6; Zech. 3:1).

Or this may be observed to show their boldness and contempt of him, in that they dared to place themselves on his right hand.

"Rise the youth":

Hebrew, young striplings.

Those who formerly hid themselves from my presence (Job 29:8), now rise up, in the way of contempt and opposition, or to accuse and reproach me.

"They push away my feet": Either,

(1) Properly, they trip up my heels; or

(2) Metaphorically, they endeavor utterly to overthrow my goings, and to cast me down to the ground.

"And they raise up against me the ways of their destruction":

That is, causeways or banks, alluding to soldiers who cast up banks against the city which they besiege.

The meaning is, they prepare, contrive, and use several methods to destroy me.

This was speaking of a group of youth who had gathered like a gang and taunted Job.

They tried to trip him when he walked by them, and they put obstacles in his path that took great pain to go around.

They showed no respect at all for Job.

He was the laughing stock of the town.

Job 30:13 "They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper."

Hindered him in the exercise of religious duties.

Would not suffer him to attend the ways and worship of God, or to walk in the paths of holiness and righteousness.

Or they reproached his holy walk and conversation, and treated it with contempt, and triumphed over religion and godliness.

"They set forward my calamity":

Added affliction to affliction, increased his troubles by their reproaches and slander, and were pleased with it, as if it was profitable as well as pleasurable to them (see Zech. 1:15).

"They have no helper":

Either no person of note to join them, and, to abet, assist, and encourage them.

Or they needed none, being forward enough of themselves to give him all the distress and disturbance they could, and he being so weak and unable to resist them.

Nor there is "no helper against them"; none to take Job's part against them, and deliver him out of their hands (see Eccl. 4:1).

These gangs of young men, who were no more than delinquents themselves, tried to stop Job in every step he took.

They had no authority to do this.

They were just trouble makers.

Job 30:14 "They came [upon me] as a wide breaking in [of waters]: in the desolation they rolled themselves [upon me]."

As fiercely and violently as a river doth when a great breach is made in the bank which kept it in.

As at a wide breach, as a besieging army, having made a breach in the walls of the city, do suddenly and forcibly rush into it.

The word waters, the reader will observe, is not in the Hebrew.

"In the desolation they rolled themselves upon me":

As the waters or soldiers come tumbling in at the breach, they poured themselves upon me, that they might utterly destroy and make me desolate.

This was speaking of a mighty force of water, as when a dam breaks.

It appears when no one was looking, they actually attacked Job physically.

Job 30:15 "Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud."

Many terrible things from God, who sets himself against me, and in some sort joins his forces with these miscreants, are directed against me, to whom they seem not to belong, as being the portion of wicked men.

"They pursue my soul":

Hebrew, nedibathi, my principal, or excellent one.

That is, my soul, which is properly so called, as being the chief part of man.

And which was the proper seat and object of divine terrors, as his body was of his outward pains and ulcers.

"As the wind":

That is, speedily, vehemently, and irresistibly.

"And my welfare":

All the happiness and comfort of my life.

"Passeth away as a cloud":

Which is quickly dissolved into rain, or dissipated by the sun, or driven away with the wind.

All of this terrible treatment by these gangs of young boys, coupled with the shame and disgrace that Job was feeling, had him terrified.

It seems that no one was interested in the welfare of Job.

Verses 16-31

As Job proceeded to blame God, he claimed to be the victim of a divine mugging.

His health was gone, and he had been "cast" aside (Psalm 22:14).

Job's life ebbed away, suffering gripped him, his bones ached, gnawing pain never relented, his skin was changed (verse 30), and he was reduced to mud, dust, and ashes.

Job 30:16 "And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me."

Compare Psalm 42:4.

My very soul seems to be gone out of me.

"I faint and swoon away, because of my fears".

"The days of affliction have taken hold upon me":

All my prosperity is gone, and I am come to "the days of affliction", and, as it were, possess me.

This was just saying that the afflictions of Job had been so great, that he had lost his will to live.

His affliction was so great that he could think of nothing else.

Job 30:17 "My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest."

Such was the force of his disease that it pierced and penetrated even into his bones, and the marrow of them.

And such the pain that he endured in the muscles and tendons about them, and especially in the joints of them, that it was as if all his bones were piercing and breaking to pieces.

"In the night season":

When others do, and should, receive some rest and refreshment.

"And my sinews take no rest":

See the word here rendered sinews.

The word literally means gnawers, and hence, the teeth.

The idea is, that every part of the body was diseased and filled with pain.

In the particular disease that many believed that Job had here, the pain in the joints and in the bones was almost unbearable at night.

This was not just a skin disease.

Job 30:18 "By the great force [of my disease] is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat."

My disease is so strong and prevalent, that it breaks forth everywhere in my body, in such plenty of purulent and filthy matter, that it infects and discolors my very garments.

"My garment changed":

In both these translations the words, of disease, and of God, are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied by the translators.

But the words are by some not untruly nor unfittingly rendered thus, without any supplement.

With great force my garment is changed; for so this verb is used (1 Kings 22:30).

So the sense is, I cannot shift or put off my garment without great strength and difficulty.

The reason whereof is rendered in the following words:

"It bindeth me about":

It cleaves fast to me, being glued by that filthy matter issuing from my sores.

"As the collar of my coat":

As my collar girds in and cleaves to my neck.

He alludes to the fashion of the Eastern outward garments, which were seamless, and all of a piece, and had a straight mouth at the top, which was brought over the head, and contracted and fastened close about the neck.

His garments were changed because of the discharge these sores gave off.

He had changed often.

Even at that, the clothes clung to these sores.

The mention of the collar of a coat being tight meant that these disease soaked clothes clung to his body very tightly.

Job 30:19 "He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes."

"He":

I.e. God.

"Hath cast me into the mire":

"The mire" here is the lowest depth of misery and degradation (compare Psalm 40:2; 69:2, 14).

Job feels himself cast into it by God, but nevertheless does not forsake him nor cease to call upon him (verses 20-23).

"And I am become like dust and ashes":

I.e. unclean, impure, offensive to my fellow men, an object of dislike and disdain.

Job believed that God had discarded him.

He sat in ashes and prayed.

Job 30:20 "I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me [not]."

This caused the most suffering of all, what seemed to be the cruel silence of God (verse 21).

Job said that whether he was sitting in the ashes or standing up, God did not hear his prayer.

Job knew that his only help was through the LORD.

He cried to God, but seemed to get no answers.

Job 30:21 "Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me."

Literally, thou art turned to be cruel to me.

In other words, "Thou art changed to me, and art become cruel to me."

Job never forgets that for long years God was gracious and kind to him, "made him and fashioned him together round about," "clothed him with skin and flesh, and fenced him with bones and sinews," "granted him life and favor, and by his visitation preserved his spirit" (Job 10:8, 11-12).

"Thou opposest thyself against me":

Thy power wherewith I hoped and expected that thou wouldst have supported me under my troubles thou uses against me.

What was happening to Job was a cruel thing.

What made it even crueler was that he believed God was doing this.

He could not understand why this was happening.

It was as if the hand of God was against him.

Job 30:22 "Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride [upon it], and dissolvest my substance."

I.e. thou makes me to be storm-tossed.

I am as it were a straw caught up by a whirlwind, and borne hither and thither in the wide regions of space, unknowing whither I go.

I am treated as I have described the wicked man to be treated (Job 27:20-21).

"And dissolvest my substance":

By which my body is almost consumed, and my heart is melted within me.

The very thing that Job had said would happen to the wicked man had happened to him.

Job knew that he was not wicked.

He felt that God had tossed him into the air as a fallen leaf would be, and blown who knows where.

All of the wonderful things that God had given him had vanished away.

Job 30:23 "For I know [that] thou wilt bring me [to] death, and [to] the house appointed for all living."

I see nothing will satisfy thee but my death, which thou art bringing upon me in a lingering and dismal manner.

"To the house appointed for all living":

To the grave, to which all living men are coming and hastening.

Job was aware that it was God who controlled how long a person lived and where they went after death of the body.

He was making the statement that all men, good and evil, die.

The body of flesh was not made to live forever.

Verses 24-26

This seems to be saying that God must have some sympathy, if Job has (verse 25), so as not to destroy altogether what is already ruined.

Job thought that and reached out for help in his misery and received only evil (verse 26).

"Job 30:24 "Howbeit he will not stretch out [his] hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction."

This is a very obscure verse.

Some render it, "Surely against a ruinous heap he will not put forth his hand.

Though it be in his destruction one may utter a cry because of these things."

Others, understanding the word rendered "ruinous heap" otherwise, render "Howbeit, God will not put forth His hand to bring man to death and the grave when there is earnest prayer for them.

Nor even when in calamity proceeding from Him there is a loud cry for them:

That is to say, "I know that Thou wilt dissolve and destroy me, and bring me to the grave, though Thou wilt not do so when I pray unto Thee to release me by death from my sufferings.

Thou wilt surely do so, but not in my time or according to my will, but only in Thine own appointed time, and as Thou seest fit."

"Though they cry in his destruction":

In the destruction brought on them by death": That is, though most men cry out and are affrighted while they are dying.

While the body is sinking into destruction, yet I desire it: I have nothing to fear therein, since I know that my Redeemer liveth.

This is an unusual Scripture.

I believe that even though they cried over the destruction of the body, God would not stop death from coming.

Job 30:25 "Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was [not] my soul grieved for the poor?"

Have I now judgment without mercy, because I afforded no mercy or pity to others in misery?

No; my conscience acquits me from this inhumanity.

I did mourn over others in their misery.

"Was not my soul grieved for the poor":

The negative particle not, which is not in the Hebrew, seems to be here improperly supplied.

The sense will be stronger and more emphatical to understand the second part of the verse as containing an answer to the first.

And to render it, My soul was grieved for the poor.

That is, I not only wept, but my very soul was grieved for them.

Yea, even for those who were so necessitous as to be incapable of requiting my kindness in case of their recovery from affliction.

Job had wept for the poor, and God had heard.

Job had been a compassionate man.

Job 30:26 "When I looked for good, then evil came [unto me]: and when I waited for light, there came darkness."

Job was "looking for good," expecting fully the continuance of his great wealth and prosperity, when the sudden shock of calamity fell upon him it was wholly unexpected, and therefore the harder to bear.

"And when I waited for light, there came darkness":

This may refer to periods, after his calamities began, when he had hopes that his prayers would be answered, and a rest or pause, an interval of repose, be granted him (Job 9:34; 10:20).

Job thought he knew God.

He looked for nothing but good from God.

He was not expecting calamity.

He daily walked in the Light of God that the Word of God teaches, and darkness came to him unexpectedly.

He was not aware of the conversation that had gone on in heaven between God and Satan.

Job was having difficulty understanding why all of this had happened.

Job 30:27 "My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me."

All contained within him, his heart, lungs, and liver, in a literal sense, through a violent fever burning within him.

Or figuratively, being under great distress and trouble, by reason of his afflictions, outward and inward (see Jer. 4:19).

"The days of affliction prevented me":

Came sooner upon him than he thought.

He did not expect the evil days to come, and the years draw nigh in which he should have no pleasure, until he was more advanced in years, and the time of his dissolution was at hand.

They came at once, and unawares upon him, when he looked not for them.

Job had been living in divine health, and this terrible disease came upon him.

He got no sleep or rest day or night.

The pain from the disease made him feel as if there was a fire within him that would not be quenched.

Job 30:28 "I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, [and] I cried in the congregation."

Rather, I go mourning without the sun; or, according to some, "blackened, but not by the sun."
Meaning by his disease.

"I stood up, and I cried in the congregation":

I.e., not merely in secret, but in the face of all men.

Job put on the clothes of mourning, he fasted and he sat in ashes and threw them upon his head.

He even cried aloud in the congregation, without any answer from God.

Job 30:29 "I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls."

The verse expands the words "I cry" (in Job 30:28).

I am a brother to the dragons (jackals), and a companion to the owls (ostriches).

The mournful howl of the jackals is elsewhere referred to (Micah 1:8); the ostrich also sends forth a weird, melancholy cry, particularly by night; hence in (Job 39:13), the female ostrich receives the name of "wailer."

Dragons are associated with the evil ones.

Owls are settled in desolate places.

His cry was loud and shrill.

Perhaps, it was speaking of the crying out of Job.

"Job 30:30 "My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat."

"My skin ... my bones":

Job was describing the effect of his disease (see 2:7).

Job described his skin as "black," likely indicating that his skin was dark and peeling.

He felt abandoned by God and hopeless, and his physical condition amplified this perception (Psalm 102:3; Lam. 4:8).

At the very beginning of his sorrows, he sat for seven days out in the heat in a bed of ashes.

This burning in the bones was possibly pain wracking him from within.

He probably was running a pretty high temperature as well.

Job 30:31 "My harp also is [turned] to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep."

The result of all is that Job's harp is laid aside, either literally or figuratively.

Its music is replaced by the sound of mourning (see verses 28-29).

And my organ (or rather, my pipe), into the voice of them that weep.

The pipe also is no longer sounded in his presence; he hears only the voice of weeping and lamentation.

Thus, appropriately ends the long dirge in which he has bewailed his miserable fare.

Job had rejoiced greatly in the LORD before this calamity came upon him.

He had played his harp and sang songs of praise and worship before this attack upon him.

Now he had lain the harp down and began moaning instead.

His moaning was accompanied with weeping.

The voice that had sung such high praises to God, now could do nothing but moan and cry.

Job Chapter 30 Questions

1. Job said he was disgraced in front of whom?
2. What was the condition of the people in verse 3?
3. What were mallows?
4. They were driven from place to place, as a _____ would be.
5. Where did they dwell for safety?
6. They huddled together for _____.
7. Who did Job call them in verse 8?
8. Even these people, who were the vilest in the earth, had begun to _____ Job.

9. What had they done to Job to show their utter disgust?
10. Job, in this instance, was a type and shadow of _____.
11. Who is "He" in verse 11?
12. Job believed this terrible attack upon him had come from _____.
13. Verse 12 was speaking of whom?
14. What did they try to do to Job?
15. What did the author call the young men in the gangs?
16. What caused the terror of Job?
17. Where was a great deal of Job's pain from this disease?
18. Why did Job's garments have to be changed often?
19. What was the worst of the cruelty mentioned in verse 21?
20. Who had Job said would have the very problems that he was having?
21. _____ controls how long a person lives.
22. Job had been a _____ man.
23. Job's disease made him feel as if what was happening to him?
24. What had Job done to show his deep sorrow about what was happening to him?
25. Why was Job's skin black?