

Job Chapter 29

Verses 1-25: Job did not change his mind about his sin, but continued to deny that he had earned this pain with his iniquity. The realities of his own words (in chapter 28), had not yet fully taken over his mind, so he swung back to despair and rehearsed his life before the events of (Job 1-2), when he was so fulfilled because God was with him (verse 5). God still was with him, but it seemed as if He were gone.

Job's memory is stirred as he recalls his glorious past. He lived under the protection of God: "God preserved me" (verse 2). His family was blessed: "my children were about me" (verse 5). He was materially blessed: "the rock poured me out rivers of oil," a hyperbole for excessive prosperity (verse 6). He had the respect of his community: "the aged arose, and stood up" (verse 8). He assumed that he would live a long and prosperous life: "I shall multiply my days as the sand" (verse 18). Finally in summary, he lived "as a king" (verse 25).

Verses 29:1 – 31:40: Job's concluding monologues present a summary of his genuine righteousness and his desire for true justice to be done on his behalf.

Job 29:1 "Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,"

In this chapter, he recounts wistfully his past happiness. In his case it was indeed not without cause, though in point of fact he was then passing through a time of trial which was itself coming fast on his time of deliverance. And which was to make his name famous throughout the world and in all time. And in most similar cases we have need to bear in mind the words of Solomon (Eccl. 7:10): "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."

Verses 2-6: Job recalled his life before tragedy struck ("the days of my youth"). He had been a defender of the disadvantaged and had known the "secret" presence of God. Now, however, he was suffering for reasons unknown to him. (Psalm 77:10), expresses similar sentiment.

Job 29:2 "Oh that I were as [in] months past, as [in] the days [when] God preserved me;"

O that God would re-establish me in that happy condition wherein I was some time ago.

"In the days when God preserved me": From all those miseries which now I feel, and when I seemed to be a principal part of his care! You would then pay a greater regard to my words than you do now in my adversity.

In this chapter, we see Job looking back to the way things were before Satan attacked him. We must keep in mind that Job was not aware that this attack he had experienced was from Satan. We see in the verse above, that Job was aware that God had protected and blessed him in times past.

Job 29:3 "When his candle shined upon my head, [and when] by his light I walked [through] darkness;"

Compare Psalm 18:28: "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness". A "candle," or "lamp," is a general symbol in Scripture for life and prosperity. God is said to light men's candles when he blesses them and makes his countenance to shine upon them. Conversely, when he withdraws his favor he is said to put their candles out (Job 18:6; 21:17).

“And when by his light I walked through darkness”: The light of God's countenance shining about a man's path enables him to walk securely even through thick darkness, i.e. through trouble and perplexity.

Job had lived in a darkened world, but the Light that God had shined on him made the area where Job was very bright. Job had fellowship with God in His Light.

Job 29:4 "As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God [was] upon my tabernacle;"

Literally, in the days of my autumn, by which Job probably means the days of his "ripeness" or "full manhood". Which he had reached when his calamities fell upon him.

“When the secret of God was upon my tabernacle”: Or, the counsel of God. When, i.e., in my tent I held sweet counsel with God, and communed with him as friend with friend (compare Psalm 25:14). "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant".

The relationship that Job had with God had been special from the time of his youth. Psalms 25:14 "The secret of the LORD [is] with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

Proverbs 3:32 "For the froward [is] abomination to the LORD: but his secret [is] with the righteous."

This just meant that Job knew things about God that the secular world did not know.

Job 29:5 "When the Almighty [was] yet with me, [when] my children [were] about me;"

“When the Almighty was yet with me”: Job felt abandoned by God. But God would demonstrate to Job, by addressing his criticisms that God was with him all throughout this ordeal.

Job knew that the Almighty had been with him before, and that now it appeared He was not. He had no idea why this was so however. The greatest loss to Job, besides losing his fellowship with God, was the loss of his children. He remembered back to the joyful times with his children.

Job 29:6 "When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;"

“Butter ... oil”: He had the richest dairy products and best olive oil in abundance.

“Steps with butter” and “rock” pouring out “rivers of oil” are poetic references suggesting the extent of the abundance and luxury in which Job had once lived.

It seemed that his entire life was running smooth. Rocky ground generally, is not a good place to produce anything. The olive tree seems to flourish among the rocks however. This was saying that God had poured His blessings upon Job, and even the rocks produced plentiful oil for him. In a spiritual sense, Jesus is the Rock and the oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

Job 29:7 "When I went out to the gate through the city, [when] I prepared my seat in the street!"

“Gate ... my seat”: This was a place in society reserved for city leaders. Job had been one because he was a very wealthy and powerful man.

Job 29:8 "The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, [and] stood up."

Out of reverence to my person and dignity, or out of a consciousness of their guilt and folly. Which they supposed I might understand either by information from others, or discover by their countenances. And for which they knew I would reprove them, and bring them to shame or other punishment.

"And the aged arose and stood up": While I either passed by them, or was present with them. So great was the veneration which they had for me, although you treat me with such contempt and scorn.

This was just saying that the old and young alike had great respect for Job. The young men hid, because they feared Job would teach them the way of righteousness. The standing up of the old men showed they respected him for his wisdom.

Job 29:9 "The princes refrained talking, and laid [their] hand on their mouth."

Either fearing that I should discern their weakness by their words; or desiring to hear my words and sentence, which they readily approved of, and fully assented to. Such an opinion had they of my wisdom, and did not think me such a foolish, erroneous, and impertinent person as you fancy or represent me to be.

"Laid their hand on their mouth": In token both of their wonder at Job's wise speeches and sentences, and of their resolution to be silent. (See Job 21:5; Prov. 30:32).

This was saying they guarded their words around Job. They actually stopped talking, so they might hear a word of wisdom from Job. It appeared that Job was a man of esteem. Possibly, he had a high rank in the community.

Job 29:10 "The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth."

The other leading men followed the example of the "princes," and equally kept silence till Job had spoken.

"And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth": That is, awed by my presence, the emirs or sheiks were silent.

The nobles were as the princes, though of high rank themselves, they bowed to someone with more authority. It appears to me, that the respect that Job got was from the things he said, because everyone stopped speaking when he appeared.

Job 29:11 "When the ear heard [me], then it blessed me; and when the eye saw [me], it gave witness to me:"

Job, having described his reception by the nobles and chief men of the city, proceeds to speak of the behavior of the common people. The former were respectful and attentive, the latter rejoiced and made acclamation. Being of the class most exposed to oppression and wrong, they hailed in the patriarch a champion and a protector. They were sure of redress and justice where he was the judge.

"And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me": The eye of the poor man lighted up with joy and rejoicing as Job sat down upon the seat of judgment, thus hearing witness to his fairness, candor, and integrity.

This was speaking of the speech of Job being fair. Perhaps he was in a position as a judge. Even the poor were glad to see Job, because they knew he was no respecter of persons.

Verses 12-13: "Poor ... fatherless ... ready to perish ... widow's": All over the ancient Near Eastern world, a man's virtue was measured by his treatment of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society. If he protected and provided for this group, he was respected as being a noble man. These things, which Job had done, his accusers said he must not have done or he wouldn't be suffering (see 22:1-11).

Job 29:12 "Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and [him that had] none to help him."

They did not honor me for my great wealth or power, but for my impartial justice and pity to the afflicted, and courage in maintaining their cause and right against their mighty adversaries.

"None to help him": None that would own or help them, partly because they were poor, and unable to recompense them for it. And partly because their enemies were great, and likely to crush both them and their helpers; which made Job's virtue more glorious.

Job 29:13 "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Who was in danger of losing his life or estate, by the malice and tyranny of wicked men.

"Came upon me": Both he, and others for his sake, blessed me, and begged that God would bless me.

"I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy": For her great and unexpected deliverance. Widows are the common objects of injuries and oppressions, because they are generally unable to defend themselves from the violence of their oppressors, or to offend those who molest them.

It appears that Job was the champion of the poor and the widow. Job had some position of great authority, because these verses spoke of him delivering the poor and the widow.

Job 29:14 "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment [was] as a robe and a diadem."

As a garment covers the whole body, and is worn continually all the day long. So I was constantly just in the whole course of my administrations, public and private. And I never put off this clothing, out of partiality to myself, or respect to the persons of others, as the manner of many judges is.

"My judgment was as a robe and diadem": My judgments, or decrees, were so equal and righteous, that they never brought shame and reproach upon me, but rather honor and reputation. And I looked upon them as a greater ornament than the purple robe or the diadem.

This was a statement admitting that his righteousness was not his own. He had put on the righteousness of God. That is exactly what the Christian does. We give our sins to Christ, and He clothes us with His righteousness. This judgement was also righteous, put on Job from God. This meant his judgement was righteous. Jesus not only puts His robe of righteousness on the true believer, but gives them a crown of gold. "Diadem" means head dress.

Verses 15-16: "Blind ... lame ... poor": Contrary to the accusations of the 3 friends, Job went beyond the standards of the day to care for the widow, the orphan, the poor, the disabled, and the abused.

Job 29:15 "I was eyes to the blind, and feet [was] I to the lame."

That is, instead of eyes, to instruct, direct, and assist such, as through ignorance or weakness were apt to mistake, and to be seduced or cheated by the craft and artifices of evil minded men.

"And feet was I to the lame": That is, ready to help him who was unable to help himself.

The kings had appointed people who they called their eyes and ears, to watch over the people. I believe that is what Job was saying here, but he was doing this for the blind and the lame, not for the king. Job helped them and guided them.

Job 29:16 "I [was] a father to the poor: and the cause [which] I knew not I searched out."

“I searched out”: Much oppression occurred in unjust courts, and there Job protected the weak.

This was just saying that Job saw to it that they had their needs taken care of. If he even heard of someone in trouble, he searched them out, and helped them.

Job 29:17 "And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth."

Their jaw teeth, or grinders, alluding to beasts of prey, who have such teeth, very large. The meaning may be, that Job confuted the arguments which wicked men made use of in their own defense, and against the poor. Exposed the weakness of them, and made them ineffectual to answer their purposes. Disabled tyrants and cruel oppressors from doing any further hurt and damage to the fatherless and helpless. Was an instrument in the hand of God of breaking the power, and weakening the hands of such persons, and hindering them from doing the mischief they otherwise would (see Prov. 30:14).

"And plucked the spoil out of his teeth": As David took the lamb out of the mouth of the bear and lion that came into his father's flock, and carried it off. Thus Job delivered the poor out of the hands of such monsters in nature, comparable to beasts of prey, and saved them from being utterly ruined by them, and obliged them to restore unto them what they had in an unrighteous manner taken from them.

Job was saying that he was just as tough on the wicked, as he was kind to the innocent. Many people would like to be what Job said he had been here, but they do not have the money or the power to do it. Job it appears, had both.

Verses 18-20: Job had vigorous health like a widely rooted tree enjoying fresh dew, and he had expected to live a long life with his family (“nest”).

Job 29:18 "Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply [my] days as the sand."

The “nest” metaphor conveys Job’s once-held belief that he would die a satisfied old man, surrounded by children and grandchildren.

Job had felt that he would live and die at home with the blessings of God abounding upon him.

Job 29:19 "My root [was] spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch."

I was like a tree, whose root, spreading out itself by the waters, receives continual moisture and nourishment from the earth, so that it is in no danger of withering. And, being deeply fixed in the ground, is kept firm, so that it is in no danger of being overturned.

"And the dew lay all night upon my branches": I was watered by the divine favor and influence from above, as well as nourished from the earth beneath, and consequently prospered in soul as well as body. And was enriched with spiritual as well as temporal blessings. Let none think to support their prosperity or comfort with what they draw from the earth, without that blessing which is derived from heaven.

This is what happens to make a very strong tree. The roots spread and go deep. It would take a tremendous wind to topple that tree. That was what Satan had done to Job. He sent the strongest attack that God would allow him to. Job was so grounded in God, he would not be moved.

Job 29:20 "My glory [was] fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand."

I.e. "my glory remained fresh". Received no tarnish, continued as bright as it had been at the first.

"And my bow was renewed in my hand": My strength did not fail. When it seemed on the point of failing, it was secretly and mysteriously "renewed."

"His glory being fresh in him" means that God renewed it every day. His light shined brighter every day. It seemed Job was prepared for anything.

In verses 21-25 Job reminded his friends that there had been a day when none rejected his insights. He was the one sought for counsel.

Verses 21-23: In his prime, Job was so respected that no one would say anything after him because his wisdom was so complete.

Job 29:21 "Unto me [men] gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel."

When I spake all men gave me the greatest attention, and my word was a law to them. "And waited and kept silence": Expecting till I spake, and silently listening to my counsel, which they were confident would be wise, and just, and good, and preferring it to their own judgment.

Job had become well known in his land for being a wise counselor. It appears that people listened when he talked. They knew his relationship with God.

Job 29:22 "After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them."

When Job had spoken, the debate commonly came to an end. It was felt that all had been said, and that further remark would be superfluous.

"And my speech dropped upon them": (Compare Deut. 32:2, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew"). The silent, penetrating influence of wise counsel is glanced at.

This was saying after Job gave them advice, they did not talk back. Job's words settled the matter.

Job 29:23 "And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide [as] for the latter rain."

I.e. "they were as eager to hear me speak as the parched ground is to receive the winter rain, which it expects and waits for and absorbs greedily."

"And they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain": They drank in my discourse as the spring vegetation drinks in the spring showers, known in the East generally as "the latter rains."

In that part of the world, the ground got very parched. The parched ground was very eager for the rain to come to give relief. The opening the mouth was like the vegetation drinking in all of the moisture they could. In the case of Job here, the people anxiously awaited what he said. They drank in his message and took it to heart. When you hear a good sermon today, you might say I drank in every word of it. That is what this was saying.

Job 29:24 "[If] I laughed on them, they believed [it] not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down."

"Laughed": This is likely a reference to saying something facetiously or jokingly. Job's word was so respected that they didn't believe his humor was humor, but took it seriously.

They never once thought that Job was making fun of them. They received what he said as being said in love. They never refused his counsel or made him feel badly either.

Job 29:25 "I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one [that] comforteth the mourners."

"As a king": Job was not a king but some sort of high local official such as a mayor. Mayors, called "hazannu" in Job's day, performed all of the activities Job claimed in the previous section.

Although Job used the words "chief" and "king", he had not led as an oppressive tyrant but as a compassionate leader.

Job guided their way as a leader of an army would. The army that Job led was an army of believers under his command. He actually determined what direction his nation would go. They looked to him for comfort, as well as advice, and got it when it was needed.

Job Chapter 29 Questions

1. What was Job wishing for in verses 1 and 2?
2. What must we keep in mind about all of this?
3. Job had lived in a _____ world.
4. What made the place where Job lived so bright?
5. What did verse 4 mean, then?
6. What did he call God in verse 5?
7. Aside from losing his fellowship with God, what was Job's greatest loss?
8. In a spiritual sense, _____ is the Rock.
9. What are verses 7 and 8 saying about Job?
10. Who stopped talking, when Job came around?
11. What position did Job, probably, hold?
12. Job was the champion of the _____ and the _____.
13. Where did Job's righteousness come from?
14. I was _____ to the blind, and _____ to the lame.
15. How did Job treat the wicked?
16. Where had Job thought he would live his life out?
17. What was Job saying in verse 19?
18. Job was well known as a wise _____.
19. Job compared their waiting for him to speak with what?