

Job's Final Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 29–31

Job Reflects on the Past

29:1 And Job again took up his discourse and said,

- 2 “Oh that I were as in months gone by,
As in the days when God watched over me;
3 When His lamp shone over my head,
And by His light I walked through darkness;
4 As I was in the prime of my days,
When the friendship of God *was* over my tent;
5 When the Almighty was yet with me,
And my children were around me;
6 When my steps were bathed in butter,
And the rock poured out for me streams of oil!
7 “When I went out to the gate of the city,
When I took my seat in the square,
8 The young men saw me and hid themselves,
And the old men arose *and* stood.
9 “The princes stopped talking
And put *their* hands on their mouths;
10 The voice of the nobles was hushed,
And their tongue stuck to their palate.
11 “For when the ear heard, it called me blessed,
And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me,
12 Because I delivered the poor who cried for help,
And the orphan who had no helper.
13 “The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me,
And I made the widow’s heart sing for joy.
14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
My justice was like a robe and a turban.
15 “I was eyes to the blind
And feet to the lame.
16 “I was a father to the needy,
And I investigated the case which I did not know.
17 “I broke the jaws of the wicked
And snatched the prey from his teeth.
18 “Then I thought, ‘I shall die in my nest,
And I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.
19 ‘My root is spread out to the waters,
And dew lies all night on my branch.
20 ‘My glory is *ever* new with me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.’
21 “To me they listened and waited,
And kept silent for my counsel.
22 “After my words they did not speak again,
And my speech dropped on them.
23 “They waited for me as for the rain,

And opened their mouth as for the spring rain.

24 “I smiled on them when they did not believe,
And the light of my face they did not cast down.

25 “I chose a way for them and sat as chief,
And dwelt as a king among the troops,
As one who comforted the mourners.

Job Mourns His Present Disgrace

30:1 “But now those younger than I mock me,

Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.

2 “Indeed, what *good was* the strength of their hands to me?
Vigor had perished from them.

3 “From want and famine they are gaunt
Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation,

4 Who pluck mallow by the bushes,
And whose food is the root of the broom shrub.

5 “They are driven from the community;
They shout against them as *against* a thief,

6 So that they dwell in dreadful valleys,
In holes of the earth and of the rocks.

7 “Among the bushes they cry out;
Under the nettles they are gathered together.

8 “Fools, even those without a name,
They were scourged from the land.

9 “And now I have become their taunt,
I have even become a byword to them.

10 “They abhor me *and* stand aloof from me,
And they do not refrain from spitting at my face.

11 “Because He has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me,
They have cast off the bridle before me.

12 “On the right hand their brood arises;
They thrust aside my feet and build up against me their ways of destruction.

13 “They break up my path,
They profit from my destruction;
No one restrains them.

14 “As *through* a wide breach they come,
Amid the tempest they roll on.

15 “Terrors are turned against me;
They pursue my honor as the wind,
And my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.

16 “And now my soul is poured out within me;
Days of affliction have seized me.

17 “At night it pierces my bones within me,
And my gnawing *pains* take no rest.

18 “By a great force my garment is distorted;
It binds me about as the collar of my coat.

19 “He has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.

20 “I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me;

I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me.

- 21 “You have become cruel to me;
With the might of Your hand You persecute me.
- 22 “You lift me up to the wind *and* cause me to ride;
And You dissolve me in a storm.
- 23 “For I know that You will bring me to death
And to the house of meeting for all living.
- 24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out *his* hand,
Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help?
- 25 “Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard?
Was not my soul grieved for the needy?
- 26 “When I expected good, then evil came;
When I waited for light, then darkness came.
- 27 “I am seething within and cannot relax;
Days of affliction confront me.
- 28 “I go about mourning without comfort;
I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out for help.
- 29 “I have become a brother to jackals
And a companion of ostriches.
- 30 “My skin turns black on me,
And my bones burn with fever.
- 31 “Therefore my harp is turned to mourning,
And my flute to the sound of those who weep.

Job’s Final Defense—“If...”

- 31:1 “I have made a covenant with my eyes;
How then could I gaze at a virgin?
- 2 “And what is the portion of God from above
Or the heritage of the Almighty from on high?
- 3 “Is it not calamity to the unjust
And disaster to those who work iniquity?
- 4 “Does He not see my ways
And number all my steps?
- 5 “If I have walked with falsehood,
And my foot has hastened after deceit,
6 Let Him weigh me with accurate scales,
And let God know my integrity.
- 7 “If my step has turned from the way,
Or my heart followed my eyes,
Or if any spot has stuck to my hands,
8 Let me sow and another eat,
And let my crops be uprooted.
- 9 “If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
Or I have lurked at my neighbor’s doorway,
10 May my wife grind for another,
And let others kneel down over her.
- 11 “For that would be a lustful crime;
Moreover, it would be an iniquity *punishable by judges*.
- 12 “For it would be fire that consumes to Abaddon,

And would uproot all my increase.
13 “If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves
When they filed a complaint against me,
14 What then could I do when God arises?
And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him?
15 “Did not He who made me in the womb make him,
And the same one fashion us in the womb?
16 “If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
17 Or have eaten my morsel alone,
And the orphan has not shared it
18 (But from my youth he grew up with me as with a father,
And from infancy I guided her),
19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
Or that the needy had no covering,
20 If his loins have not thanked me,
And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep,
21 If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan,
Because I saw I had support in the gate,
22 Let my shoulder fall from the socket,
And my arm be broken off at the elbow.
23 “For calamity from God is a terror to me,
And because of His majesty I can do nothing.
24 “If I have put my confidence *in* gold,
And called fine gold my trust,
25 If I have gloated because my wealth was great,
And because my hand had secured *so* much;
26 If I have looked at the sun when it shone
Or the moon going in splendor,
27 And my heart became secretly enticed,
And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth,
28 That too would have been an iniquity *calling for* judgment,
For I would have denied God above.
29 “Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy,
Or exulted when evil befell him?
30 “No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for his life in a curse.
31 “Have the men of my tent not said,
‘Who can find one who has not been satisfied with his meat’?
32 “The alien has not lodged outside,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler.
33 “Have I covered my transgressions like Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,
34 Because I feared the great multitude,
And the contempt of families terrified me,
And kept silent and did not go out of doors?
35 “Oh that I had one to hear me!
Behold, here is my signature;
Let the Almighty answer me!

And the indictment which my adversary has written,
36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,
I would bind it to myself like a crown.
37 “I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him.
38 “If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
39 If I have eaten its fruit without money,
Or have caused its owners to lose their lives,
40 Let briars grow instead of wheat,
And stinkweed instead of barley.”

The words of Job are ended.

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