

## Job's Final Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 29–31

**Job Reflects on the Past**

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

- 2 “O that I were as *in* the months before,  
as *in* the days *when* God watched over me,  
3 when his shining lamp *was* over my head—  
by his light I walked through darkness—  
4 as when I was in the days of my prime,  
when God’s confiding *was* over my house,  
5 when Shaddai *was* still with me,  
my children *were* all around me,  
6 when my paths were washed in sour milk,  
and *the* rock poured out streams of oil for me.  
7 “At my going out *the* gate to *the* city,  
I secured my seat in the square.  
8 Young men saw me and stepped aside,  
and *the* aged rose up *and* stood.  
9 Officials refrained from talking,  
and they laid *their* hand on their mouth.  
10 *The* voices of nobles were hushed,  
and their tongue stuck to their palate.  
11 “When *the* ear heard and commended me,  
and *the* eye saw and testified in support of me  
12 because I saved *the* needy who cried for help,  
and *I* saved *the* orphan for whom *there was* no helper.  
13 *The* blessing of *the* wretched came upon me,  
and I caused *the* widow’s heart to sing for joy.  
14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;  
my justice *was* like a robe and a headband.  
15 “I was eyes to the blind,  
and I *was* feet to the lame.  
16 I *was* a father to the poor,  
and I investigated the stranger’s legal dispute.  
17 And I broke *the* evil one’s jaw bones,  
and I made *his* prey drop from his teeth.  
18 “And I thought, ‘I will pass away in my nest,  
and like the phoenix I shall multiply *my* days.  
19 My roots *were* open to water,  
and dew spent the night on my branches;  
20 My glory *was* new with me,  
and I was revitalized regularly.’  
21 “They listened to me and waited,  
and they kept silent for my counsel.  
22 After my word, they did not speak again,  
and my word dropped down *like dew* upon them.  
23 And they waited for me as *for* the rain,  
and they opened their mouth wide *as for the* spring rain.  
24 I smiled for them *when* they had no confidence *in anything*,  
and they did not extinguish the light of my face.  
25 I chose their way, and I sat *as* head,  
and I dwelled like a king among the troops,  
like *one* who comforts mourners.

**Job Mourns His Present Disgrace**

30:1 “But now *those* younger than I, as far as days, laugh at me,  
whose fathers I rejected for setting with the dogs of my sheep and goats.

- 2 Moreover, what use to me is the strength of their hands?  
With them, vigor is destroyed.
- 3 Through want and through barren hunger  
they are gnawing *in the* dry region *in the* darkness of desolation and waste.
- 4 They are picking salt herbs, the leaves of bushes,  
and *the* roots of broom trees to warm themselves.
- 5 They were driven out from fellow people;  
they shout at them as *at* a thief,  
6 so that they dwell *in* holes of *the* ground and *in the* rocks.
- 7 They bray among *the* bushes;  
they are gathered under *the* nettles.
- 8 A senseless crowd, yes, a disreputable brood,  
they were cast out from the land.
- 9 “But now I am their mocking song,  
and I have become a byword for them.
- 10 They abhor me; they keep aloof from me,  
and they do not withhold spit from my face  
11 because he has loosened his bowstring and humbled me,  
and they have thrown off restraint in my presence.
- 12 On *the* right hand the brood rises up;  
they put me to flight,  
and they build up their siege ramps against me.
- 13 They destroy my path;  
they promote my destruction;  
they have no helper.
- 14 As *through* a wide breach they come;  
amid a crash they rush on.
- 15 Terrors are turned upon me;  
my honor is pursued as *by* the wind,  
and my hope of deliverance passed by like a cloud.
- 16 “And now my life is poured out onto me;  
days of misery have taken hold of me.
- 17 At night I am in great pain;  
my pains do not take a rest.
- 18 He seizes my clothing with great power;  
he grasps me by my tunic’s collar.
- 19 He has cast me into the dirt,  
and I have become like dust and ashes.
- 20 I cry to you for help, but you do not answer me;  
I stand, and you *merely* look at me.
- 21 You have turned cruel to me;  
you persecute me with your hand’s might.
- 22 You lift me up to *the* wind—you make me ride *it*,  
and you toss me about *in* the storm.
- 23 Indeed, I know *that* you will bring me to death  
and *to the* house of assembly for all *the* living.
- 24 “Surely someone must not send a hand against *the* needy  
when, in his misfortune, *there is* a cry of help for them.
- 25 Have I not wept for the unfortunate,  
*and* grieved myself over the poor?
- 26 Indeed, I hoped for good, but evil came,  
and I waited for light, but darkness came.
- 27 My bowels are in turmoil, and they are not still;  
days of misery come to confront me.
- 28 I go *about* in mourning garb, *but* not in sunlight;  
I stand up in the assembly, *and* I cry for help.
- 29 I am a companion for *the* jackals  
and a companion for ostriches.

- 30 My skin turns black on me,  
and my bones burn with heat.  
31 So my lyre came to be *used* for mourning,  
and my flute *for the* voice of *those who* weep.

**Job's Final Defense—"If..."**

- 31:1 "I made a covenant with my eyes,  
so how could I look closely upon a virgin?  
2 And what *is* the portion of God from above  
or the heritage of Shaddai from on high?  
3 Is not disaster for *the* evil one  
and ruin for *the* workers of mischief?  
4 Does he not see my ways  
and count all my steps?  
5 "If I have walked with falseness,  
and my foot has hastened to deceit,  
6 let him weigh me in *the* balance of justice,  
and let God know my blamelessness.  
7 If my steps have turned aside from the way,  
and my heart has walked after my eyes,  
and my hand has clung to a spot,  
8 let me sow, and let another eat,  
and let my crops be rooted out.  
9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman,  
and at my neighbor's doorway I have lain in wait,  
10 let my wife grind for another,  
and let other *men* kneel over her,  
11 for that *is* a shameful act,  
and that *is* a criminal offense.  
12 Indeed, that *is* a fire that will consume up to Abaddon,  
and it would uproot all my crop.  
13 "If I have rejected my male or female slave's case  
when their complaint *was* against me,  
14 then what shall I do when God rises up?  
And when he enquires, how shall I answer him?  
15 Did not he *who* made me in the womb make them?  
And did not one fashion us in the womb?  
16 "If I have withheld *the* desire of *the* poor from *them*,  
or I have caused *the* widow's eyes to fail,  
17 or I have eaten my morsel alone,  
and *the* orphan has not eaten from it  
18 (for from my childhood he grew up with me like a father,  
and from my mother's womb I guided her),  
19 if I have seen *the one who* perishes because of no clothing  
or *that* there is no covering for the poor,  
20 if his loins have not blessed me,  
or by means of my sheep's fleece he has warmed himself,  
21 if I have raised my hand against an orphan  
because I saw my supporters at the gate,  
22 *then* let my shoulder blade fall from *my* shoulder,  
and let my arm be broken from its socket.  
23 Indeed, the disaster from God *was* a dread for me,  
and I was powerless because of his majesty.  
24 "If I have made gold my trust,  
or I have called fine gold my security,  
25 if I have rejoiced because my wealth *was* great  
or because my hand found a fortune,  
26 if I looked at *the* sun when it shone

or *at the* moon moving *in* splendor,  
27 and I was secretly enticed,  
and my hand threw them a kiss,  
28 this also *is* an iniquity *to be* judged,  
for I have deceived God above.  
29 “If I have rejoiced at *the* ruin of *the one who* hated me  
or have exulted when evil overtook him—  
30 no, I have not allowed my mouth to sin,  
to ask his life with a curse.  
31 Have the people of my tent not said,  
‘O that someone had not been satisfied with his meat’?  
32 An alien has not lodged in the street;  
I have opened my door to the traveler.  
33 Have I concealed my transgressions as *other* human beings  
to hide my iniquity in my bosom  
34 because I dreaded *the* great multitude,  
and *the* contempt of clans terrified me,  
so that I kept quiet, I did not go out of *the* doorway?  
35 O that I had someone hearing me!  
Here is my signature;  
let Shaddai answer me!  
As for *the* written communication *that* my adversary has written,  
36 I would surely carry it on my shoulder;  
I would bind it on me *like* a crown.  
37 I would give him an account of my steps;  
I would approach him like a noble.  
38 If my land has cried out against me,  
and its furrows have wept together,  
39 if I have eaten its yield without payment,  
or I have caused *the* breath of its owners to die,  
40 let thorns grow in place of wheat  
and noxious weeds in place of barley.”

The words of Job are ended.

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