



Job 29-31

Tape #7164
Job 29-31
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to the book of Job, chapter twenty nine. It is important to remember in the beginning of the book of Job, we have God's estimate of Job. God's declaration concerning him was that, "He was a perfect man. One who loved God, and hated evil". That was God's estimate of Job. For reasons unknown to Job, known to us because we have the background in the first part of the book of Job, God allowed Satan to strip Job of all of the blessings that God had bestowed upon him. The wealth, the family, even his own health.

Job cannot understand why all of these calamities. His friends think they understand. They have a philosophy that says that, "The righteous will always prosper and the wicked will always be punished". That is true in an ultimate sense, but we do not always see that fulfilled in the time that we spend upon the earth. In fact the time that we spend upon the earth is often an enigma to us. Because, through observation we see that many times godly people suffer, and ungodly people prosper.

That was the whole problem that Asaph had, when he wrote the seventy third Psalm. "When I saw the prosperity of the wicked", he said, "I almost slipped. I was just about wiped out! I couldn't understand it. I try to do right, I try to live a clean life, and yet, I'm plagued every day. These blasphemous, unrighteous people seem to have more than their hearts can desire. It seems that it doesn't pay to try to do the right thing, to try to do the right life, to live the right life, and when I sought to understand this", he said, "it was just too painful for me. Until, I went into the house of God, and then I understood their end".

We, as children of God realize that our real life is not to be totally fulfilled in our pilgrimage upon this earth. We are strangers and pilgrims here. We are passing through, we're journeying towards that city which hath foundation, whose maker and builder is God. We know that the present sufferings that we may be experiencing, in this momentary time that we are upon the earth, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that's going to be revealed in us. So we endure, because we can see the invisible.

Job's friends had a philosophy that would not allow for righteous people to suffer. If you were suffering calamities such as Job, there can only be one reason for it, in their mind, and that is horrible wickedness. Now there was nothing obvious in Job that they could put their finger on, and so their assumption is, that he was cleverly hiding it. He was guilty of hypocrisy. "He's putting on this righteous act, but inwardly, he must be a really rotten fellow!" And, they accused him of such. They continually accused him of such, and Job continually maintains that they're wrong. He hasn't done these things, of which they accused him. He hasn't been guilty of these sins, and that only makes them angry, and causes them to even make further accusations.

So we've had this round of discourses. Job's friends making their accusations, trying to justify Job's sorrows and misery, and Job's protesting his innocence. Finally, Job gets to talking, and he just hardly quits. This final eighth answer of Job, began with chapter twenty six, and it is continuing through chapter twenty nine, where we are tonight. Job is going to make his final, once and for all declarations of his innocent of charges. "I am not guilty of these things." As we get to chapter thirty one. But, in chapter twenty nine, as he is building up to this, Job reflects on what it used to be. So we read...

Job continued his parable, and he said, Oh that I were as in the months past, in the days when God preserved me (29:1-2);

As he remembered those days when he was so blessed, he had so much wealth, he had just an abundance of things. He was remembering what it used to be like. "Oh that I were as it was."

When God's candle shined upon my head, [That is, "My life and my path was lighted by God".] and when by his light I walked through the darkness; ["Where God was leading me, in this path and I could understand it."] Oh that I were as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret [Or the counsels] of God were upon my tabernacle; ["When I felt that presence of God, when God was leading me and guiding me

with His counsel, and with His wisdom.”] *When the Almighty was yet with me, and when my children were about me;* [Of course this is sort of a filled with pathos, as he remembers those ten children, and the days when they were around the table, and the family life, and the, and the goodness that he used to have. “When my children were still around me.” Of course they’d all been killed now, in that tragic accident. Job remembers what it used to be, and he longs for those days.] *When I washed* [“When the Almighty was yet with me, my children were about me. When I washed”,] *my steps with butter, and the rock poured out rivers of oil (29:3-6);*

When he was so prosperous, that the olives, he just had this abundance. Rivers of oil, olive oil, out of the rock. The rock of course was the large grindstones, where they would grind the olives. They would, in grinding the olives, the oil comes pouring down the trough of this stone. So, “The oil out of the rocks”, or the olive oil that is produced by the grinding of the olives by these huge millstones.

When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street (29:7)!

When Job was one of the leaders of the community, the gates of the city were the places of judgement. Job was one of the judges. They would set his seat, or his throne, there in the gate of the city, and they would bring matters of judgement to Job. A place of distinction, a place of honor, that he once had had. He longs for those days.

When the young men saw me, they hid themselves: and the aged arose, and they stood up. [He was honored. The young men would, would dare to stand in his presence, and the older men to honor him, as he came in to sit upon his place, they would stand up in respect and honor to him.] *Even the princes refrained talking, and they laid their hands upon their mouth.* [He had a place of tremendous respect.] *The nobles held their peace, their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. And when the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me (29:8-11):*

So Job remembered those days when he had honor, when he had respect, when people sought his counsel, his judgement, his wisdom. His judgements were so right that the people blessed him when they would hear his words.

Because [Job said] *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had no one to help him.* [Job was a champion for the poor, for the down trodden, and thus he was respected because of the stand that he made for those people.] *The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.* [In his judgement he was fair, he was honest, and he, in judgement, sought the cause of the poor and the needy.] *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:* [“Clothed in righteousness.”] *and my judgement was a robe and a diadem.* [Crown.] *I was eyes to the blind, and I was feet to the lame (29:12-15).*

Now this, Job is, is declaring the kind of life that he lived. It is confirmed by God, God said, “He’s a perfect man. He loves good, he hates evil.” Job is affirming now, “This is the kind of life, these are the kind of things that I did”.

I broke the jaws of the wicked, to pluck the spoil out of his teeth. I was a father to the poor: [We skipped verse sixteen.] *and the cause which I knew not I searched out. Then I said, I shall die in my nest,* [He felt that life was wonderful, and he felt like it must be that it will always go on like this.] *and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root was spread out by the waters,* [It talks about a tree that’s roots are spread out to the waters, so it draws the moisture from the stream.] *and the dew lay all night upon my branch.* [There was just that freshness, that strength.] *My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me men gave ear,* [They paid attention.] *they waited upon me, and they kept silence at my counsel. After my words they would not speak again; for my speech dropped upon them.* [Or, solved their problems.] *And they waited for me as the rain;* [“As the dry parched land waits for the first rains in the fall, so they waited for me.”] *they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rains (29:16-23).*

In the springtime when the vegetation is starting to come up, and those latter rains, that are just drunk in by the new planting.

If I laughed on them, they believed it not; [The idea there is, they were so honored, his smile, and his approval, his laughter would so honor them, they couldn’t believe that Job was laughing at them, and with them.] *and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and I sat as their chief,*

and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners (29:24-25).

So Job recalls what it was like. The days of years gone by. The days of prosperity. The days of blessing. The days of honor. The days of respect and glory. But oh what a change, as he describes now, his present circumstances.

Chapter 30

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

Now Job is describing the lowest category of people in that area. People who were sort of nomadic. They weren't a part of the civilized race. These were the people who, because of their place, or position in life, were sort of the outcasts. They did not even live within the realms of society. They were half savage. "Their young people", these young half savage people, "hold me in derision. I would not have even had their fathers with the dogs of my flock." To watch, the herdsman was one of the lowest of the tasks, or jobs, and Job says, "I wouldn't even have them as one of the herdsman, who, or the dogs of the flock".

Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished? [I mean they were, because of the, the type of life, these people were weak. They weren't able to do a full days work, so they couldn't have been of any value or profit to him.] For want and famine they were in these solitary places; they flee into the wilderness in former times that were desolate in waste. They cut up the mallows by the bushes, and the juniper roots for their meat. [These are the people that live as sort of the natives, off of the land. They eat the roots of the trees, and the bushes. They really don't plant. They're not really civilized people.] They were driven forth from among men, (and they cry after them as after a thief;) [These people, because of their being pushed to the bush country and all, having to live off the land, became the pirates, the marauders. They, they would gang up, and come in, and rip off the flocks, or they would rip off the crops.] They dwell in cliffs and in valleys, and in caves of the earth, and in the rock. [They're, as I say, uncivilized. They, they live in caves, they live in rocks. They don't build houses.] And among the bushes they brayed; [They would make these peculiar noises. Sort of as a donkey.] under the nettles there were gathered together (30:2-7).

There are other accounts of history of these nomadic type people. They had very limited vocabularies. They were very weak and emaciated, because of the lack of good diet. As the result of the not having a good diet, they were mentally deficient. They would howl like the jackals. They would chatter in this peculiar sound. He's describing them. "Among the bushes they brayed."

They were the children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth. And now [“They look down on me! I mean these were, these were as low as you can get! And, and now in my position, they look down on me!”] I am their song, and their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and they spit in my face (30:8-10).

In the Orient, one of the worst insults that you can demonstrate to a person, is to spit on them. We have a friend who is a missionary in Okinawa, shortly after the war. He sent his little twelve year old boy to school in Okinawa. The first day, his little boy came home, beaten up, and covered with spit. The kids there just resented his being an American. His dad really was sort of wondering, "What can I do? You know I can't allow my son to go through this, being beaten up, and spit upon". So he said, "Son we'll get a correspondence course. You don't have to go to school, we'll teach you here at home". His boy said, "Oh no dad, those kids really need Jesus Christ, and I've gotta be there to witness to them". That's the kind of stuff missionaries are made of!

But it's, when we go to Israel sometimes, the Arabs will spit at us. They, they're, they don't spit on you, they spit on the ground when you go by, they spit. It's sort of a disdain kind of a thing. So Job, they make up songs of derision against him. They use the name, "Job", as a byword. "They abhor him, they spare not to spit in his face."

Because he [That would be God.] hath loosed my cord, and has afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me. [“Because of the things that God has allowed to take place. Because it would appear that God has taken His hand off my life.” They are doing then, all of these things to Job to make his life more

miserable. "They let loose the bridle before me." *Upon my right hand the youth rise up; and they [trip me] push away my feet, they raise up against me the ways of destruction. They mar my path, [They stand in his path. Won't let him get by.] they set forward [Or they increase] my calamity, they have no helper. They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me. [So that,] Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passes away as a cloud (30:11-15).*

Job remembered what it used to be. The honor, the respect that people had for him, and now, the horrible disdain, and the result...

My soul is poured out upon me; and the days of my affliction have taken hold upon me. My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest (30:16-17).

Some have suggested that Job had that loathsome oriental disease, known as elephantiasis, which causes a great aching in the bones, as one thing. It usually takes place at night when you lie down. The aching of the bones becomes so severe that you can't sleep. It also causes the joints of the body to sort of separate. Job makes a hint to that in a little bit. So they believe that is perhaps the affliction that happened to Job. "My bones are pierced they pain in me in the night season. I can't sleep at night because of this gnawing pain."

By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it binds me about as the collar of my coat. [The ulcers, the sores running, gets his robe moist with this, this putrid running sores. Then it would cake and dry, and become stiff, and it would bind him. Like a, his neck was bound in this stiff, "In my horrible condition". Poor guy!] He hath cast me [Talking again now, about God.] into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes. [Talking to God, he said,] I cry unto thee, and you do not hear me: I stand up, but you do not regard me. You have become cruel to me: and with your strong hand you've opposed yourself against me. You have lifted me up to the wind; and you've caused me to ride upon it, and you have dissolved my substance. ["You've taken away my riches."] For I know that you will bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all of the living. ["I'm, I know that, you know, I'm, you're gonna take me right on down to the grave!"] Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction (30:18-24).

Now Job again, is protesting his innocence.

Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor? When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. My bowels boil, and they rest not: the days of affliction prevent me. I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. [Again, the effect of this disease upon him. The skin turning black, and not because of the sun. "My bones burning with this heat."] My harp turned into mourning, ["A instrument of, of music for praise, and light, but it's, only gives forth mourning, mournful sounds."] and also my organ into the voice of those that weep (30:25-31).

It's, of course not an organ, as we think of an organ today. The instrument here is one of conjecture. Most of them say, because an organ has pipes, and the word is, "pipes", that's why it was translated "organ". But it, it's a little instrument, a pipe type of instrument that they played for the dances. It was usually an instrument for parties, and dancing. They'd get out the little pipes, and they'd play their pipes, and the people would dance. But Job says, "My little pipe is as the voice of those that weep. It isn't a joyful, happy party sound, but one of weeping and mourning."

Chapter 31

Now Job is going to make his final declaration of his innocence.

I made [he said] a covenant with my eyes; [Job had determined that he was not going to look upon a woman to lust after her. "I made a covenant with my eyes. I will not allow my eyes to bring lustful thoughts into my mind."] why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? ["For the adulterer? What portion has the adulterer with God? What inheritance?"] Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity (31:1-3)?

So, Job said, "Hey, I determined, I was determined to live a, a righteous, godly life. Because destruction

is to the wicked!"

Does he not see my ways, and count all my steps? If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot has hasted to deceit; Then let me be weighed in an even balance, that God might know my integrity. ["If I have done this", then, and of course, here we get the idea of the balances of justice. "Let's put it in the balances, let's see where, how heavy are the iniquities and all. That they might balance my integrity."] *If my step* ["If I'm guilty of these things that you've been accusing me of", and these are the accusations that they had made against Job. "If my step",] *has turned out of the way, and my heart has walked after my eyes, and if there's any blot that is cleaved to my hands; Then let me sow, and another man eat; let my offspring be rooted out.* [Of course, Job did sow, and other people ripped it off, in the opening chapters. They ripped off his cattle, his sheep, and his children, his offspring were cut off.] *If my heart has been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbor's door;* [That is, "If I waited in the back until he left, that I might go in for an adulterous affair with his wife".] *Then let my wife take the lowest position of a slave to another,* [Grinding was one of the lowliest tasks. This grinding of the wheat and so forth, and the grinding of the olives, using the millstone. That was one of the lowest jobs, and so, "Let my wife have one of these low jobs, and if I have, if I'm guilty of these things,"] *let others bow down upon her. For this is a heinous crime; yes, it is an iniquity that is to be punished by the judges.* ["If I have actually done these things."] *For it is a fire that consumes to destruction, and would root out all my increase (30:4-12).*

Now it's interesting, as he's talking about lust, he declares that, "Lust is a fire that consumes to destruction". How many people have been consumed by their lusts, and have been destroyed by their lusts? I think today, of how many people are being consumed and destroyed by their lusts. I think of all of the venereal diseases that are so prevalent today. AIDS being among them, but only one of the many, many. The herpes viruses, and all of these sexually transmitted diseases, and people being destroyed and consumed by their own lusts. Going from those types of sins...

If I despise the cause of my manservant or maidservant, if they contended with me; ["If they came with a grievance, and I just despise them. If I didn't pay any attention. If I didn't listen, if I disdained them."] *What shall I do when God rises up?* ["If I've treated my servants that way?"] *when he visits, what shall I answer him?* [I, he felt that responsibility to God. Oh that we would feel such a responsibility before God, knowing that we will be called into account for our actions.] *Did not he that [make] made me in the womb make him?* [Job sees the equality of man. "The same God that made me, made them."] *and did not one fashion us in the womb?* ["We are all creatures of God, and thus I cannot mistreat another person. I cannot look down upon them as being of lower rank, or inferior to me." Job was accused of these things. Of, holding back from the poor. But, he said,] *If I have withheld [from the poor, withheld] the poor from their desire, or if I've caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or if I have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten (31:13-17);*

"If I have just lived a, a luxurious, sumptuous type of a life, while others are in need around me."

(For [he declares] from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or if I see the poor without covering; [Eliphaz said, "Hey you've taken the garment of the poor for a pledge". He said, "If this is so..."] *If his loins have not been blessed by me, if he were not warmed with fleece of my sheep; If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: Then let my arm fall from my shoulder blade,* [Again, one of the effects of this elephantitis, it's the separation of the joints. So, "If this is so, then let this arm fall away from the shoulder blade".] *and let my arm be broken from the bone.* [That is, "The separation of my arm, at the elbow joint".] *For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. If I have made gold my hope, if I have said to the refined gold, You are my confidence; If I had rejoiced because [of my wealth, because,] my wealth was great, and because my hand had gained much; If I beheld the sun when it shined, [That is, "If I worshiped the sun".] or if I worshiped the moon walking in its brightness; And my heart has been secretly enticed, or my mouth has kissed my hand (31:18-27):*

"If I'm guilty of these things, the things that you've charged me with..."

This also is an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied that God is above. ["The

worship of the sun, the worship of nature, the worship of myself, (kissed my hand), in sort of just you know, that pleasure with myself, and 'I've got it made', then this is an iniquity that God should punish. Because it is the denial of the existence of God to do these things!"

If I rejoiced at the destruction of the one who hated me, or I lifted up myself when evil found him: ["If I rejoiced in, in my enemies being cut down." Now that's something that's hard not to do! You know when someone who has really hated you, and done a lot of dirty things, but when they smash their car, you know, it's sort of hard not to say, "Aha! You got it coming!" You know. Job said, "If this is so..."] Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. ["I've, I've never, I've never uttered a curse upon him. I didn't ask God to bring him into desolation."] If the men of my tent said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied (31:29-31).

That is, "If I, if I didn't provide for those within my tent, my servants and all, so that they were hungry, and they were longing the meat that I was eating".

If the stranger [was not invited to lodge, or,] if I did leave him to lodge in the street: and I did not open my doors to the traveler. If I covered my transgressions as Adam sought to do, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out the door? ["If I wasn't ready to help the person in need, even though there was a certain amount of danger involved, and a risk involved in it."] Oh that one would hear me! behold, this is my desire, that the Almighty would answer me, and that my adversary would write out the charges against me. ["I would like to see just what charges are being made because of this judgement that I am experiencing."] Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and I would bind it as a crown to me. I would declare unto him ["If I could only just speak to God about these things, if God would just answer me, I would declare unto Him,"] the number of my steps; as a prince I would go near unto him. And if my land cry against me, or the furrows likewise thereof complain; If I have eaten the fruit thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: Then let the thistles grow ["If I've taken away the land from someone, if I've defrauded them and taken their land, then let it not prosper, let thistles grow."] instead of wheat, and the cockle burr instead of barley. The words of Job are ended (31:32-40).

I mean, "I've had it man!" You know, he laid his case out. "I have nothing more to say." Well, his friends had nothing more to say. I mean it was just, "That's it". But there's a young kid that's been sitting there, listening to this whole debate, and discourse. This young kid's name is Elihu. When they don't respond to Job, he gets mad. He decides that he will respond. He spends several chapters telling of his clear understanding of the whole thing, and his wondering why, these men who were supposed to be wise, can't see through it. He's mad at these men because they haven't been able to shut Job up. Because, Job has continued to justify himself, and he spends his whole time telling what important things he's gonna say. The solution, and the problem that he has, however, he never gets there. Ha, ha! He only talks about how great his speech is gonna be. But it's all an introduction to a great speech that is never spoken.

So we will start next week with the words of this young man, Elihu, who finally puts in his three pence worth. Then, the exciting part! We're, we're gonna, we have to take, we have to go through Elihu for a couple of Sunday nights, but then, oh man, we finally come out with, chapter thirty eight. Finally the Lord speaks! What a difference that makes! When men finally come to the end of their speeches, and we can then hear the voice of God. How glorious! Shall we stand.

Again we pray God's blessings upon you through this week, as you walk in fellowship with the Lord. Job is always an interesting book to turn to, because you think you've had it bad? Man! We've seen nothing compared to what Job went through! Yet, Job said in the midst of all of this, said, "I know that when I am tried, I shall come forth as gold". Peter tells us that the trying of our faith is more precious than gold, though it perishes when it is tried in the fire. He also tells us, "Don't count it strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you, as though some strange thing has happened to you". There is a testing and a trial often, of our faith. But "God is faithful, and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are capable of bearing, and will, with a temptation, provide a way of escape". If God is trying it, in trying us, it is for our benefit, and it is for our good. Peter said, "They that suffer, let them commit the keeping of their souls unto Him that is faithful".

The answer to the test and the trials, and the mysteries of life, is that of commitment to the Lord. I don't understand why God is doing these things. I don't understand why God has allowed this, but I commit myself Lord, to your hand, to your work. You do what you know is necessary for my best welfare". The committing of my ways to God, as a faithful creator. That's the answer! God will vindicate His children. When we are tried, we will come forth as gold.

Thus, some of you are going through trials tonight, and the trials of life always seem to be accentuated more during the holiday seasons. So often times, it's like Job, you begin to reflect on the past. The past holidays, the joys when the family was all together. These things were all going right, and now things are such a mess, and holidays become a real burden many times, and a real trial. But, cling to the Lord, keep your focus on Him, surely the Lord will strengthen and bless, and be with you, and bring you forth in victory in Christ. God bless you, and give you a beautiful week, walking in fellowship with Him, filled with His Spirit, growing in grace, and in knowledge, of His love for you.