

I mentioned last week that chapters 29-31 are closely related. In chapter 29 Job looked back to better days, in chapter 30 he laments his present condition, and in chapter 31 he maintains his overall innocence.

Thus, it's important to keep in mind that chapter 30 is in stark contrast to chapter 29. Everything he had he now lost. If God was close to him, he now feels as if God left him; if he was honored by man, he's now mocked by man; and if he was able to help others, he's now un-helped by others. Everything has changed (v1, v9, v16 – 'but now').

James Durham—"You heard how Job laid out his prosperity in the former chapter; here he lays out his adversity, that by laying the one against the other, his prosperity against his adversity, his adversity may take the deeper impression on these who hear of it." Perhaps we can say: "The LORD gave (chapter 29), and the LORD has taken (chapter 30)"—Job's former prosperity is contrasted with his present adversity.

Thus, as we come to our theme, Job's Present Affliction, I want to divide the chapter into three parts: His Social Affliction (vv1-15), His Physical Affliction (vv16-19), and His Spiritual Affliction (vv20-31)—keep in mind these three go together and even overlap (I'm dividing them only to give our study of this chapter some order).

- I. His Social Affliction (vv1-15)
- II. His Physical Affliction (vv16-19)
- III. His Spiritual Affliction (vv20-31)

I. His Social Affliction (vv1-15)

1. By "social affliction" I refer to the reproach and mockery of men, and especially foolish and vile men.
2. V1—"But now they mock at me, men younger than I"—the phrase "but now" underscores a contrast.
3. Whereas in the past young men respected and honored him, now they mock at him—they ridicule him.
4. Thus, the main point of verses 1-19 is to show how he is now treated very differently than he was before (notice the source and nature of his social affliction).
5. (1) Its source (vv1-8)—within verses 1-8, Job identifies the source of his social affliction as despised men.
6. V1—"But now they mock at me, men younger than I, whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock."
7. That is, the young men who were presently mocking him, had fathers unworthy to watch over his dogs.
8. And then from v2 to v8, he describes them as if they were wild beasts who lived in desolate and wild places.
9. V8—"They were sons of fools, yes, sons of vile men; they were scourged from the land"—those who mocked him were evil men.
10. Here's the point—Job was sunk so low, that even the filth of the earth, wicked and vile men, mocked him.
11. This of course was in contrast to former days, when respected young men closed their mouths in his presence.
12. But now, the worse of society mocked him—the lowest of the low opened their mouths against him.

13. (2) Its nature (vv9-15)— Job begins by describing them as taunting him (v9) and abhorring him (v10).
14. (a) Taunting him, v9—"And now I am there taunting song; yes, I am there byword"—to taunt is the same as to mock.
15. It fundamentally means "to laugh at someone who's suffering"—instead of helping them you mock them.
16. V9—"Yes, I am their byword"—that is, he was the subject of their speech—he became a proverb to them.
17. (b) Abhorring him, v10—"They abhor me, they keep far from me; they do not hesitate to spit in my face."
18. To abhor is to "deeply hate or despise"—this abhorrence or hatred showed itself in two concrete ways.
19. First, they kept far from him (that is, they refused to help or assist him); second, they spit in his face.
20. Because they hated him, they refused to help—they abandoned him—they kept at a distance from him.
21. But not only that, they spit in his face—this was the worse form of disrespect, contempt, and disgrace.
22. V11—"Because He has loosed my bowstring and afflicted me, they have cast off restraint before me."
23. That is, because God has loosed the cords to his bow, his enemies now are emboldened against him.
24. I think the idea is—God has weakened him or made him vulnerable to the attacks of unprincipled men.
25. Tremper Longman—"When he was strong, these vicious people needed to be careful around him, but no more. Nothing restrains them from attacking him directly."
26. Verses 12-14 describe their attack as an angry mob against a defenseless city—they leave him in ruins.
27. V15—"Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my honor as the wind, and my prosperity has passed like a cloud."
28. This means—his former honor and prosperity have passed as the wind and like a cloud—they are no more.
29. This is Job's social affliction—a man who was commanded the room and was highly esteemed by all.
30. But now, he's become the object of ridicule and shame—a taunting song and byword—a broken down city.

II. His Physical Affliction (vv16-19)

1. V16—"And now my soul is poured out because of my plight; the days of affliction take hold of me."
2. When Job says his soul is "poured out" he means, it melted because sorrow—it dissolved in tears of grief.
3. V17—"My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest"—he was in great physical pain.
4. V18—"By great force my garment is disfigured"—by "garment" he likely refers to his body—it was disfigured.
5. V18b—"It binds me about as the color of my coat"—Job is likely describing himself as suffocating or having a difficulty breathing.

6. V19—"He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes"—the first phrase refers to a pit of affliction.
7. God has cast me into the miry pit—a deep pit of sorrow, humiliation, and affliction—Job believes God did this.
8. The second phrase is similar—it underscores his humiliation and shame—"I have become like dust and ashes (a phrase often used to describe deep humiliation and grief)."
9. Ps.22:14-15—"I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death."
10. Ps.42:4—"When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I sued to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast."

III. His Spiritual Affliction (vv20-31)

1. This is really the greatest cause of his affliction and sorrow—he felt as if God had turned a deaf ear toward him.
2. It's one thing for wicked men (or even good men) to forsake him—but it's altogether different when it's God.
3. Thus, Job basically accuses God of two things—of being unkind (vv20-23) and being unjust (vv24-31).
4. (1) Unkind (vv20-23), v20—"I cry out to You, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You regard me."
5. When Job says God failed to answer him, he meant—he felt as if God had abandoned or deserted him.
6. This of course was true only of felt sense—Job failed to feel or sense God's gracious and loving presence.
7. When he says he "stood up" he refers to his posture in prayer—he lifted his head and his eyes to heaven.
8. And how did God respond—"and You regard me"—that is, you look at merely me without any response.
9. V21—"But You have become cruel to me; with the strength of Your hand You oppose me"—here Job goes further.
10. He accuses God of being cruel to him—the Hebrew word rendered "cruel" means "fierce" or "harsh."
11. V22—"You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride on it; You spoil my success"—he felt as if, God put him in a storm.
12. Thus, the "wind" he refers to isn't a nice cool breeze, but a tempest or storm—"You lift me up to a tornado, and cause me to ride on it."
13. The last phrase of v23 is translated very differently in our Bibles—"You spoil my success" is the NKJV and "You toss me about in the roar of the storm" is the ESV.
14. Either way the point is evident—all the success that Job once enjoyed has been radically removed from him.
15. V23—"For I know that You will bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living"—Job felt as if he would die.
16. Job isn't merely affirming that he would one day die—he felt as if he was presently on the verge of death.
17. (2) Unjust (vv24-31)—here Job claims God is unjust in His dealings with him, because of his innocence.

18. V24—"Surely He would not stretch out His hand against a heap of ruins, if they cry out when He destroys it."
19. By "a heap of ruins" Job is thinking about himself—he's likely thinking back to verses 12 and following (when he described himself as a ruined city).
20. He's basically asking—"Why would God destroy an innocent person who cries to him both day and night?"
21. V25—"Have I not wept for him who was in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor?"—I've helped the helpless, why has God not helped me?
22. V26—"But when I looked for good, evil came to me; and when I waited for light, then came darkness."
23. Nobody helped Job—not man or God—and as he looked for good and light, evil and darkness came.
24. V27—"My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; days of affliction (or suffering) confront me (or come to meet me)."
25. V28—"I go about mourning, but not in the sun"—that is, the light of God's countenance and sensed favor (he was in spiritual and moral darkness).
26. V28b—"I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help"—by assembly he can mean secular or religious meeting.
27. By being a brother of jackals and a companion of ostriches can mean either he howls like the jackals and ostriches or else he dwells in a deserted place.
28. V30—"My skin grows black and falls from me; my bones burn with fever"—this refers to the effects of his sickness.
29. V31—"My harp is turned to mourning, and my flute to the voice of those who weep"—harps and flutes represent joy and gladness.

IV. Lessons

1. We always need to ask the question, why is this passage in the Bible—what is its practical intent or purpose.
2. Why has the Holy Spirit preserved this lamentation of Job? Put another way, why is this chapter in our Bible?
3. Well brethren, I trust you understand, that every chapter in our Bible is placed there for our edification.
4. Perhaps I can put it this way—there's no wasted ink in our Bible—it's all given to us for a specific purpose.
5. (1) It provides a picture of Christ—Christ is found in Job in three ways: he's foretold, pictured, and needed.
6. First, He's foretold—Job prophecies of His resurrection; Second, He's pictured—Job shadows Christ as a righteous sufferer; Third, He's needed—Job is unable to find an effective comforter or mediator in his friends (he needed a friend who sticks closer than a brother).
7. Thus, out of all the many chapters in the book of Job, I don't know of any where he better pictures Christ than in chapter 30.
8. And I want to suggest that Job typifies or shadows Christ in this chapter in each of the three portions.
9. That is, just as this chapter describes the social, physical, and spiritual affliction of Job, so it shadows the social, physical, and spiritual suffering of Christ.
10. In fact, if we were to add up all the sufferings of our Savior, they would be social, physical, and spiritual.

11. (a) His social affliction—by this I mean, our Savior was mocked, rejected, and spit on, just as Job was.
12. Ps.69:7-12—"Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered My face. I have become a stranger to My brothers, and an alien to My mother's children; because zeal for Your house has eaten Me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became My reproach. I also made sackcloth My garment; I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against Me, and I am the song of the drunkards."
13. Ps.69:19-21—"You know My reproach, My shame, and My dishonor; My adversaries are all before You. Reproach has broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave Me gall for My food, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."
14. (b) His physical affliction—like Job, our Savior's afflictions were more than verbal but were also physical.
15. Isa.50:5-6—"The LORD God has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. A gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting."
16. Ps.22:14-18—"I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots."
17. (c) His spiritual affliction—like Job, the greatest part of our Savior's suffering wasn't verbal or physical, but spiritual.
18. Ps.22:1-2—"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O MY God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent."
19. (2) It reveals the depravity of man—one of the grossest displays of depravity is their refusal to help those in need.
20. For example, how many videos have gone viral, that were made by people who watched others being harmed.
21. One girl is beating up another girl, and other young people are recording the assault on their cell phones.
22. And what makes these video's even worse is, usually the person recording them is laughing and mocking.
23. And yet, I suggest that man's depravity is even more evident in Job's case because of two basic reasons.
24. (a) His suffering was great—as I've said before, outside of our Savior, I don't know of anyone who suffered like Job.
25. It takes a great degree of depravity to kick someone when they are down—to be void of pity and compassion.
26. (b) His righteousness was known—that is, he had a reputation for helping those who were in need of help.
27. This of course also reminds us of our Savior, who asked the Jews, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me" (Jn.10:32)?
28. (3) It teaches the brevity of success—that is, all that Job had in months past, he now had the exact opposite.
29. V1—"But now" v9—"And now" v16—"And now"—these are two small words that carry big meaning.

30. A few months before, Job was respected and honored among society, whereas now he was mocked and hated.
31. A few months before, Job was surrounded by his children, whereas now he was alone without anyone.
32. A few months before, Job was healthy and happy, whereas now he was wasting away and full of sorrow.
33. A few months before, Job was enjoying intimacy with God, whereas now he felt abandoned and opposed by God.
34. In other words, while he was on the mountain top in months past, he was now in a lonely and dark valley.
35. And this is one obvious lesson this chapter teaches us—it teaches us mountain tops can quickly give way to valleys (let me give you three brief helps for when you spend time in the valley).
36. (a) Though your circumstances have changed God hasn't changed—I mentioned this last week, so I can be brief.
37. But remember, the same God who was with you on the mountain top, is the same God with you in the valley.
38. (b) Though your circumstances have changed they can change again—just as mountain tops can give way to valleys, so valleys can give way to mountain tops.
39. (c) Though your circumstances have changed they will change again—and this time, never to change again.
40. (4) It shows the sovereignty of God—how does God respond to Job while he was undergoing intense affliction?
41. Job rightly cried out to God, but how did God respond? From Job's perspective God didn't respond at all.
42. This means, it's ultimately God's choice to keep on the mountain or to put us in the valley—He knows what is needed and for how long.
43. This doesn't deny of course, that we can go from the mountain to the valley because of our sin or behavior.
44. But if you remember, Job was a righteous man who did nothing to deserve to be taken from the mountain top to the valley.
45. Furthermore, not only did God determine this, but He also chose to put Job in the darkest of all valleys.
46. Thus, what do we do while in the valley? What is to be our response? Well, let me suggest we do as Job did, and cry to God!
47. And even if God turns a deaf toward us and it feels as if He's not listening, we still trust and obey Him.
48. Ps.44:13-16—"You make us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to those all around us. You make us a byword among the nations., a shaking of the head among the peoples. My dishonor is continually before me, because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, because of the enemy and the avenger."
49. Ps.44:17-19—"All this has come upon us; but we have not forgotten You, nor have we dealt falsely with You covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from Your way; but You have severely broken us in the place of jackals, and covered us with the shadow of death."
50. The nation of Israel went through similar experiences as Job, the difference being, they were in physical exile for their sin (furthermore, while in exile the nation of Israel serves as a picture of the church in this world – thus, their experiences not only mirror Job's but in some sense foretell ours).
51. First, they, like Job, reflected on better days (Ps.137:1 – 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion'); second, they, like Job became a taunting song and byword; third, they, like Job, cried to God even though they felt as if we did not hear them.