

As mentioned last week, chapters 26-31 entail Job's final response to his three friends. Chapter 26 was a more direct response to Bildad, whereas chapter 27 addresses all three friends. It has three parts: in vv1-6 he makes an oath, in vv7-10 he offers a prayer, and in vv11-23 he gives instruction.

- I. Job's Oath (vv1-6)
- II. Job's Prayer (vv7-10)
- III. Job's Instruction (vv11-23)
- IV. Lessons

- I. Job's Oath (vv1-6)

1. The first three words "As God lives" indicates that what follows is an oath—"As God lives"—that is, as God is my witness.
2. As our Confession teaches—"A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgment, solemnly calls God to witness what he swears, and to judge him according to the truth or falseness thereof."
3. This means, in calling God as a witness, Job is saying—"Let God Himself determine whether or not I am telling the truth."
4. For example, before a man takes the witness stand, he would swear an oath that what he says is true.
5. This is another way of calling God as our witness—this is why the generally have you swear on a Bible.
6. This is just another way of saying—"As God is my witness" or as in the case of Job—"As God lives."
7. (1) Who does he swear to? "As God lives, who has taken away my justice, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter."
8. By this Job means, God took away his justice—or, put another way—he says God denied him justice.
9. And as the result of this—"He has made my soul bitter"—he was grieved because he felt like justice was withheld from him.
10. He knew he was innocent of his friend's accusation, and yet he felt the deep pains of God's chastisement.
11. (2) What does he swear? Job's oath concerned four things: his lips/tongue, his integrity, his righteousness, and his heart.
12. (a) His lips/tongue, vv3-4—"As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit."
13. This is no doubt in response to the continued accusations of his friends, who labelled him a hypocrite.
14. (b) His integrity, v5—"Far be it from me that I should say you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me."
15. If you recall "integrity" refers to what we are on the inside—behind closed doors—when no one is looking.
16. Our integrity is evident when things get difficult—when we thrust into the fires of affliction and pain.
17. It's relatively easy to walk with God when times are good, but when times are hard, that's when integrity shows.
18. In saying "far be it from me that I should say you are right" Job is merely affirming that they were wrong.

19. They were wrong about his character—Job wasn't a hypocrite—he was an upright and righteous man of integrity.
20. (c) His righteousness, v6a—"My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go"—by "righteousness" is meant "right living defined by the law."
21. Regardless of the opposition he faced (Satan, his friends, and his struggles with God), he will not let it go.
22. This means, he will live right, as defined by the law of God, regardless of his particular circumstances.
23. (d) His heart, v6b—"My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live"—to "reproach" is to "censure or criticize."
24. Job swears not to allow his heart to wrongly criticize him as he endures the fiery flames of his affliction.
25. The reason why his heart shall not reproach or criticize him is because of what he promises in verses 3-6a).
26. His heart did not contract all that he's said—his conscience was good with respect to his recent claims.

## II. Job's Prayer (vv7-10)

1. Notice two things about the prayer of Job: (1) What he prays (v7), and (2) Why he prays it (vv8-10).
2. (1) What he prays (v7), v7—"May my enemy be like the wicked, and he who rises up against me like the unrighteousness."
3. Now, the first thing that needs clarification here is, by "enemy" he's referring to his three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar).
4. I say this for two reasons: first, there's no other option—he's not talking about God or Satan, so who else is there?
5. Second, Job is merely describing them in the same way they described him—just as they described him as a hypocrite (who deserved God's judgment), so he describes them as hypocrites (who deserve judgment).
6. Thus, Job's prayer as found in v7 is what's called an "imprecatory prayer"—a prayer against our enemies.
7. A prayer that invokes the judgment of God to fall upon the enemies of God—it is a prayer for justice.
8. Job is praying or expressing the desire, that his enemies would "be like the wicked" or "the unrighteous."
9. That is, that they would be treated as the wicked will be treated (which he actually describes in verses 13-23).
10. Derek Thomas—"Job's belief in God's justice now leads him to call forth a curse on his enemies (or his friends). To charge someone wrongfully made a person liable to the punishment for that crime. Hence, Job wants his friends to be regarded by the same label they have applied to him—wicked."
11. To put this more simply—Job is basically wishing upon his friends the very things they wished upon him.
12. Now, before I move on to vv8-10 I need to answer a possible question—was such a wish lawful or righteous?
13. Well, as you can imagine there's been a number of answers given to that question—some say Job was sinning.

14. Other say, such prayers are lawful for OT saints but run contrary to the tenor and teaching of NT Scripture.
15. Well, I suggest to you that both of these are wrong—Job was neither sinning nor running contrary to the NT.
16. It's important to notice that Job is not seeking revenge for himself—he is merely looking to the justice of God.
17. He's doing precisely what the NT tells us to do—"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord' (Rom.12:19).
18. This anticipates a second question—why didn't Job try to evangelize them or pray for their salvation?
19. Well, this is actually what Job does later in the chapter, as he seeks to teach them the end of the wicked (v11).
20. (2) Why he prays it (vv8-10)—in vv8-10 Job briefly describes the destiny of the wicked or hypocrite.
21. Verses 8-9—"For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life? Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him?"
22. That is, what is the confidence of the hypocrite, even if he has an abundance of worldly riches and fame.
23. If God takes away his life, how can these things help—these are the things, in which the hypocrite trusts.
24. V9—"Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him?"—by "trouble" I think he means "death."
25. It's the trouble that results from having his life taken away—the word rendered "trouble" means "distress."
26. When he leaves this world and faces God in judgment, will God hear his cry? Will God be merciful to him?
27. Prov.1:27-29—"When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently, but they will not find Me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD."
28. V10—"Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call on God?"—this is a description of the hypocrite.
29. While he has an external form of religion, it fails to continue—it runs out of steam prior to his death.
30. Thus, the questions "will he delight himself in the Almighty" and "will he always call on God" describe the temporal nature of his religion.
31. He will not always delight in God nor will he always call upon God in prayer and praise—his religion doesn't last.

### III. Job's Instruction (vv11-23)

1. V11—"I will teach you about the hand of God; what is with the Almighty I will not conceal. Surely all of you have seen it; why then do you behave with complete nonsense/"
2. The instruction Job refers to in v11 is provided in vv13-13 and concerns the way God deals with the wicked.
3. Before we briefly conserved this, let me point out Job uses imagery that would be found in the OC curses of God.

4. In association with the OC, God described both curses and blessings largely in physical and poetic form.
5. Now even though these would be written some time after Job, Job here anticipates them in great detail.
6. I trust the basic reason is obvious—these curses would not only fall upon the wicked but upon hypocrites.
7. (1) His offspring (vv13-15)—although these may be multiplied, they suffer for lack of true knowledge.
8. Though he may have left them earthly possessions, they perish for lack of true, spiritual, and lasting riches.
9. (2) His possessions (vv16-19)—even though he heaps up silver and piles up clothing, it will be left behind.
10. V17—"He may pile it up, but the just will wear it, and the innocent will divide the silver"—it remains on earth.
11. (3) His death (vv20-23)—his death is described as a flood and storm that carries or sweeps him away.
12. Why does Job feel obligated to teach his friends about the death of the wicked: first, because he fears they're hypocrites.
13. Second, as I've said, he instructs them so that if they are hypocrites, they may recover themselves before it's too late.

#### IV. Lessons

1. There are a number of very important and practical lessons that could and should be learned from this chapter.
2. But before I come to these, let me point out very briefly, the book of Job beautifully weaves together two themes: the doctrine of God and practical living.
3. While both of these are found in each chapter to some degree, some chapters highlight over the other.
4. Last week, chapter 26 focused on the doctrine of God, whereas, this week, chapter 27 places the focus on Christian living.
5. Both of these are necessary and are closely related—remember, chapter 26 and 27 actually go together.
6. (1) A lesson about integrity—I want to consider two things about integrity: its context and its promotion.
7. (a) Its context—the context wherein our integrity is evidenced is found in v2—"As God lives, who has taken away my justice, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter."
8. He was being unjustly treated by his friends, and his heart was made bitter because of his pain and suffering.
9. Thus, mistreatment and suffering are the two flames that fueled the furnace of Job's severe affliction.
10. And thus, affliction of some sort is almost always the context in which our integrity is revealed or exposed.
11. (b) Its promotion—here I want to answer the question, how do we keep our lips from speaking wickedness, our tongue from uttering deceit, and hold fast to our righteousness while in the midst of this two-flame fire?
12. Well, the best way to answer this question is to turn you to one text in the NT that provides an answer.

13. That passage is 1Peter 2:21-24, and as you turn to that passage, let remind you of something I've said before.
14. And that is, Christ is seen in the book of Job three ways: first, by prophecy; second, by necessity (Job was unable to find any help, comfort or mediation from his friends); third, by typology (Job pictured Christ).
15. 1Pet.2:21-24—"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteousness; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree."
16. Christ suffered as Job suffered and in similar ways—both suffered unjustly by men and justly by God.
17. Furthermore, both Christ and Job held to their integrity; notice how—"He committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."
18. (2) A lesson about conscience—by conscience is meant that voice within the heart that accuses or excuses.
19. Every person has a court within their souls, and conscience either serves as the Prosecutor or Defender.
20. (a) Hold fast to your imputed righteousness—by this I mean that righteousness whereby we are justified before God.
21. This righteousness comes from Christ and becomes ours by faith—"My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go."
22. Those who possess this righteousness will never be condemned by the law, nor justly condemned by their conscience.
23. (b) Hold fast to your imparted righteousness—by this I mean the righteousness of a practically holy life.
24. This righteousness is can be divided into two parts—that which concerns God and that which concerns man.
25. Acts 24:16 (Paul before Felix)—"I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men."
26. Do I have any known controversy with God; have I left any duty undone; have I left any sin un-addressed?
27. (3) A lesson about hypocrisy—the most obvious difference between the hypocrite and Job is endurance.
28. Throughout verses 3-6, Job commits to endure to the very end, v3—"as long as my breath is in me and the breath of God in my nostrils" v5—"till I die I will not put away my integrity from me."
29. This is start contrast to the hypocrite whose hope, delight, and duty decline and usually, come to an end.
30. To put it rather plainly—the religion of the hypocrite fails to endure to the end (and this is true in three ways).
31. (a) Their hope erodes, v8—"For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life."
32. By hope is meant his confidence—his hope or confidence increasingly changes from Christ to other things.
33. At one time he professed that his hope was in Christ, but over time, that faith proves only to be temporary.
34. Lk.8:13—"But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while but in time of tribulation or persecution because of the word, fall away."

35. This may or may not mean they stop attending services—they may remain members of a local church.
36. But they no longer believe—they may believe the general facts about God, Scripture, Christ, and salvation.
37. But they no longer believe they are sinners saved by grace—they no longer have hope solely in Christ.
38. (b) Their affections cool—"Will he delight himself in the Almighty"—will his love for God continue?
39. At first, they may have had a measure of religious emotions or affections—they had a measure of joy.
40. Lk.8:13—"The ones on the rock (the rocky ground hearer), when they hear, receive the word with joy."
41. But as with their hope and faith it doesn't last—their delight in Christ and spiritual things slowly fades away.
42. (c) Their duty is neglected—Will he always call on God?"—will he continue in call on God in Christ?
43. This phrase refers specifically to private or secret prayer—when a man calls upon God from the heart.
44. This is usually the first thing that stops—he may attend public and family prayer, but private prayer eventually ceases.
45. And here's the tragedy—he can continue all the other duties of religion and give the appearance of piety.
46. He can still come to church, attend prayer meetings, read religious books, and talk of religious things.
47. And yet, all the while, he's long since ceased from calling on God—he rarely if ever prays in private (secret).
48. And thus, the hypocrite starts out having some measure of hope in Christ, delight in God, which shows itself in obedience (even secret prayer).
49. But none of these things last—yes, he might continue to go to church (and in fact, he likely continues going to church).
50. You see, he hasn't shrugged off religion in total—he may even live a relatively decent life outwardly.
51. But he's only a shell of religion—just a white-washed tomb—just an externally or outwardly cleansed swine.
52. But what is the fundamental difference between this type of person and a true genuine child of God?
53. While there's several things we could say—for example, the child of God continues or perseveres in these things.
54. His hope does not erode into nothing—his delight does not cool into nothing—and his duties are not neglected in total.
55. But then the question becomes—Why? Why does he endure or persevere when the hypocrite doesn't?
56. In thinking about this question, I picked up Volume 2 of The Works of Jonathan Edwards, where there's two sermons preached in June of 1740 entitled, *Hypocrites Deficient in the Duty of Prayer* (his text was Job 27:10).
57. They are rather simple sermons—he first briefly explains the context of the text and then provides this doctrine—However hypocrites may continue for a season in the duty of prayer, yet it is their manner, after a while, in a great measure to leave off."

58. His third heading was entitled—Reasons why this is the manner of hypocrites—he begins with an exposition of Zech.12:10.
59. Zech.12:10—"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication: then they will look on Me whom they pierced (Jn.19:37).
60. JE—"Hypocrites never had the Spirit of prayer. The true Spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this Spirit comes from God, so does it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God to converse with Him by prayer."
61. Thus, notice the order Zech.12:10—"I will pour on them the Spirit of grace and supplication"—that is, the Spirit who gives them grace and enables them to pray.
62. This is why a person's faith decays, affections cool, and duties get neglected—they've never been indwelt by the Spirit.
63. They have had the common operations of the Spirit, but they've never had the saving operations of the Spirit.
64. And how do you know the difference—well with regards to the latter, they continue or persevere to the end.
65. Though my hope or faith declines it always revives; though my affections cool they always rekindle; though my duties at times are neglected, I always repent.