

JOB

Chapter 30

“But now they laugh at me, men who are younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock. 2 What could I gain from the strength of their hands, men whose vigor is gone? 3 Through want and hard hunger they gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation; 4 they pick saltwort and the leaves of bushes, and the roots of the broom tree for their food. 5 They are driven out from human company; they shout after them as after a thief. 6 In the gullies of the torrents they must dwell, in holes of the earth and of the rocks. 7 Among the bushes they bray; under the nettles they huddle together. 8 A senseless, a nameless brood, they have been whipped out of the land. 9 “And now I have become their song; I am a byword to them. 10 They abhor me; they keep aloof from me; they do not hesitate to spit at the sight of me. 11 Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. 12 On my right hand the rabble rise; they push away my feet; they cast up against me their ways of destruction. 13 They break up my path; they promote my calamity; they need no one to help them. 14 As through a wide breach they come; amid the crash they roll on. 15 Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is pursued as by 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 taken hold of me. 17 The night racks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest. 18 With great force my garment is disfigured; it binds me about like the collar of my tunic. 19 God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes. 20 I cry to you for help and you do not answer me; I stand, and you only look at me. 21 You have turned cruel to me; with the might of your hand you persecute me. 22 You lift me up on the wind; you make me ride on it, and you toss me about in the roar of the storm. 23 For I know that you will bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living. 24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, and in his disaster cry for help? 25 Did not I weep for him whose day was hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? 26 But when I hoped for good, evil came, and when I waited for light, darkness came. 27 My inward parts are in turmoil and never still; days of affliction come to meet me. 28 I go about darkened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. 29 I am a brother of jackals and a companion of ostriches. 30 My skin turns black and falls from me, and my bones burn with heat. 31 My lyre is turned to mourning, and my pipe to the voice of those who weep.

30:1–31 In contrast to the positive notes of blessing and honor sounded in ch. 29, Job now bemoans the suffering and dishonor he has been forced to undergo. God has heaped overwhelming terrors on him (v. 15). His final, forlorn lament (see v. 31) over his condition shows that his rage has not yet subsided. (CSB)

30:1, 9 *abhor me*. Earlier both young and old had deferred to him (see 29:8–11, 21–25). (CSB)

“The greatest man among all the people of the East” (1:3) is mocked and ridiculed by young men who were of the lowest classes of society. (PBC)

30:1 *dogs of my flock*. Vicious insult. Dogs were regarded with contempt, despite their use in protecting flocks. These people were unworthy even to keep company with sheepdogs. (TLSB)

30:3 *gnaw the dry ground*. Pictures deplorable state resulting from starvation. Starving people may try to fill their empty bellies with dirt, just as persons deprived of certain minerals are driven to eat dirt. (TLSB)

30:4 *saltwort*. Probably saltwort, which grows in otherwise infertile areas, including the regions east of Sinai where Job and his friends lived. Cf. 39:6. (CSB)

Plant that grows in salty regions of the Near East. In extreme need, roots of this plant could be ground to make a crude flour for bread. (TLSB)

Job goes on to describe their unappetizing and unhealthful diet on which only the destitute would live. (PBC)

broom tree. A large bush that grows in the deserts of Palestine and Arabia (see 1Ki 19:4; Ps 120:4). (CSB)

30:5–8 These brutish people are the outcasts, true troglodytes, considered unfit to live in human society. Those for whom Job once provided charity now consider themselves superior to him. (TLSB)

30:5 *They*. Lowly people who now taunt Job. More respectable people would drive these lowly drifters out of their towns and farmsteads. (TLSB)

30:6 *gullies of the torrents* – They are forced to live in open-air houses by respectable people. (PBC)

30:7 *bray*. Mournful and inarticulate cry from those who have been driven out of their human community. (TLSB)

30:9 *byword*. Job’s fall into suffering has already made him a proverb of scorn and derision. (TLSB)

30:11 *God has loosed my cord*. In contrast to 29:20, where Job was confident that his bow would be new and strong. (CSB)

Job is like a bow “unstrung” by God (cf 29:20), making him liable to abuse. (TLSB)

cast off restraint. Those who once would have shown deep respect for Job now find that he is at their mercy. Job’s authority and honor no longer restrain them. (TLSB)

30:14 *breach*. In a city wall. (CSB)

Hole broken in a fortress by attackers. (TLSB)

30:17 *pain that gnaws me*. The precise nature of Job’s sickness is uncertain, but its symptoms were painful festering sores over the whole body (7:5), nightmares (7:14), scabs that peeled and became black (30:28, 30), disfigurement and revolting appearance (2:12; 19:19), bad breath (19:17), excessive thinness (17:7; 19:20), fever (30:30) and pain day and night (30:17). (CSB)

30:18 *force my garment*. Tight-fitting collar. (CSB)

Job's garments, once flowing and opulent, now bind and chafe his sore, swollen skin.

30:19 *dust and ashes*. Symbolic of humiliation and insignificance. Job would someday use “dust and ashes” to symbolize repentance (42:6). (CSB)

30:20–23 Job now directs his thoughts away from men and toward God. He accuses God of abusing his power by attacking him despite his pleas for mercy. (CSB)

Job felt God was arbitrary. In drawing this conclusion Job was wrong. He sinned in charging God with injustice, for God is perfect and just. (PBC)

30:20 *I stand*. Common posture for prayer. (TLSB)

30:21 *turned cruel*. Job feels that God has become his fierce and unrelenting enemy. Luth: “The fiercer our sufferings are, the greater and more wonderful are the things that are worked in the saints. It is a proof of grace and God’s goodwill when they are disciplined by the cross and afflictions” (AE 6:355). Luth: “In sudden terrors and dangers [our nature] is turned from the true God because it believes He is wrathful, as Job did.... But this is to imagine another god and not to remain in the simplicity of the faith that there is one God. Nor is God cruel, but He is ‘the Father of comfort’ (2 Cor. 1:3). Because He delays His help, our hearts make a wrathful idol of God, who is always like Himself and constant” (AE 12:374).(TLSB)

30:23 *bring me to death*. Ultimate end of suffering is death itself; the Lord allows Job to reach the brink of death. (TLSB)

30:24 Job feels that he has been treated unjustly, whether by God or by man. (CSB)

heap of ruins. A Hbr term related to the word for “Ai,” the ruins used as a fortification in Jsh 8; it means “disaster” and is another term for “ruins.” (TLSB)

ruins ... disaster. Describes Job’s desperate situation. (TLSB)

cry for help? The LXX wrongly suggests that Job considers taking his life by his own hand or by asking someone else to kill him. The Hbr more likely means that Job appealed to God as desperately as a man threatened with the total collapse of his world or as frantically as a drowning person stretches out his hand for help. (TLSB)

30:26 In the previous chapter he had listed some of the good deeds he had done for the unfortunate (29:12-17). Could he not expect others to return the favor now that he was in such dire straits? But no, that was not to be. It just didn’t seem right. (PBC)

30:27 *inward parts*. Churning in his belly or inner emotional turmoil (Ps 42:5). (TLSB)

30:28 *darkened*. The precise nature of Job’s sickness is uncertain, but its symptoms were painful festering sores over the whole body (7:5), nightmares (7:14), scabs that peeled and became black (30:28, 30), disfigurement and revolting appearance (2:12; 19:19), bad breath (19:17), excessive thinness (17:7; 19:20), fever (30:30) and pain day and night (30:17). (CSB)

Result of his disease or a sorrowful mood. (TLSB)

30:29 *brother of jackals ... companion of ostriches.* The prophet Micah uses similar imagery of himself in Mic 1:8. – It is possible that Micah actually walked stripped and barefoot through Jerusalem. (CSB)

ostriches. In ancient times, ostriches lived in the Near East. They make a haunting, lonely sound at night. (TLSB)

30:30 *skin turns black.* Skin disease. Cf v 28; 7:5. (TLSB)

bones burn. The precise nature of Job's sickness is uncertain, but its symptoms were painful festering sores over the whole body (7:5), nightmares (7:14), scabs that peeled and became black (30:28, 30), disfigurement and revolting appearance (2:12; 19:19), bad breath (19:17), excessive thinness (17:7; 19:20), fever (30:30) and pain day and night (30:17). (CSB)

30:31 *lyre.* Multistringed instrument in the harp family. (TLSB)

pipe. Reed flute or whistle. Musical instruments were signs of celebration and joy, but Job's distress turned them to instruments of mourning. (TLSB)

Chs 29–30 Luth: "Job did not deserve such punishments by his life; for he was God-fearing, guileless, and virtuous.... It tends to instruct and comfort us when we learn that God often causes even the innocent to experience the most serious misfortunes and punishments, merely in order to test them. When faint hearts feel the punishments, they immediately think of sin, and believe that these are punishments for sin. But one must maintain that the godly experience many evils, solely in order that they may be tested" (AE 2:319). • Merciful Lord, test me and prove me not on my own merits or strength. For then, I would surely fail. But test and prove me on the merits of Jesus Christ, who cannot fail to redeem me when I stumble. Amen. (TLSB)