

Job 29
September 20, 2026

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: What do you think it would feel like to move from a position of wealth, respect, confidence, and security to being mocked and detested? [Let people engage]

Transition: Job himself invites us to observe his emotional state in Chapter 29. Rather than defending himself against his friends' accusations, he turns inward—away from their voices entirely—to contemplate the staggering loss he has endured. Job's detailed recollection of his former stature shows his intimate fellowship with God and the community's recognition of divine favor in his life. Let's read the text and enter his world. Let's begin.

BOOK:

29 Job continued his discourse:

² “How I long for the months gone by,
for the days when God watched over me,
³ when his lamp shone upon my head
and by his light I walked through darkness!
⁴ Oh, for the days when I was in my prime,
when God's intimate friendship blessed my house,
⁵ when the Almighty was still with me
and my children were around me,
⁶ when my path was drenched with cream
and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil.
⁷ “When I went to the gate of the city
and took my seat in the public square,
⁸ the young men saw me and stepped aside
and the old men rose to their feet;
⁹ the chief men refrained from speaking
and covered their mouths with their hands;
¹⁰ the voices of the nobles were hushed,
and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths.
¹¹ Whoever heard me spoke well of me,
and those who saw me commended me,
¹² because I rescued the poor who cried for help,
and the fatherless who had none to assist him.
¹³ The man who was dying blessed me;
I made the widow's heart sing.
¹⁴ I put on righteousness as my clothing;
justice was my robe and my turban.
¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame.
¹⁶ I was a father to the needy;

I took up the case of the stranger.

¹⁷ I broke the fangs of the wicked
and snatched the victims from their teeth.

¹⁸ “I thought, ‘I will die in my own house,
my days as numerous as the grains of sand.

¹⁹ My roots will reach to the water,
and the dew will lie all night on my branches.

²⁰ My glory will remain fresh in me,
the bow ever new in my hand.’

²¹ “Men listened to me expectantly,
waiting in silence for my counsel.

²² After I had spoken, they spoke no more;
my words fell gently on their ears.

²³ They waited for me as for showers
and drank in my words as the spring rain.

²⁴ When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it;
the light of my face was precious to them.

²⁵ I chose the way for them and sat as their chief;
I dwelt as a king among his troops;
I was like one who comforts mourners.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Character and Influence

The chapter models what it means to live as someone who aligns their life under God’s authority¹. Rather than demanding respect through self-promotion, Job earned it through his conduct and character, thereby elevating the moral standard of his entire community¹. This suggests that genuine influence flows from integrity—not from position or charisma. For modern readers, the application is clear: your reputation and impact depend on consistent ethical behavior, not on the status you claim.

Compassion as Justice

Job was known for practicing mercy and justice, caring for the poor, fatherless, dying, widow, blind, lame, needy, and stranger¹. The biblical principle here is that those with resources bear responsibility for meeting the basic needs of the helpless and protecting them from legal

oppression—demonstrating active compassion for the needy as an expression of loving God². This transforms charity from optional benevolence into a core moral obligation.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W.W. (1996). Be Patient. (pp. 110-113) Victor Books

1. Job looks back at life's joys (Job 29)

Job had opened his defense by saying that he wished he had never been born (Job 3). Now he closed his defense by remembering the blessings he and his family had enjoyed prior to his crisis. This is a good reminder that we should try to see life in a balanced way. Yes, God permits us to experience difficulties and sorrows, but God also sends victories and joys. “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (2:10) C.H. Spurgeon said that too many people write their blessings in the sand but engrave their sorrows in marble. “Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me!” (29:2) When we are experiencing trials, it’s natural for us to long for “the good old days”; but our longing will not change our situation. Someone has defined “the good old days” as “a combination of a bad memory and a good imagination.” In Job’s case, however, his memory was accurate, and “the good old days” really were good.

There is a ministry in memory if we use it properly. Moses admonished Israel to remember the way God had led them and cared for them (Deut. 8:2). In fact, the word “remember” is found fourteen times in Deuteronomy and the word “forget” nine times. In days of disappointment, it’s good to “remember the years of the right hand of the Most High” (Ps. 77:10–11; see 42:6). But the past must be a rudder to guide us and not an anchor to hold us back. If we try to duplicate today what we experienced yesterday, we may find ourselves in a rut that robs us of maturity. It is significant that Job mentioned as his number-one joy *the presence of God in his home* (Job 29:2–6). God watched over him and shared His “intimate friendship” with him (v. 4, NIV). The light of God was upon Job, and God’s presence was with him and his children. God was the source of all of Job’s wealth and success, when his “path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out ... streams of olive oil” (v. 6, NIV). (Zophar promised Job “honey and cream” if he would repent. See 20:17, and note Deut. 32:13–14; 33:24.)

There is one especially poignant note in this opening statement: Job wished he were back in the prime of life (Job 29:4). While this is a natural desire, it is also a dangerous one. *If we focus so*

much on the glories of the past that we ignore the opportunities of the present, we may end up unprepared to meet the future. That future will come whether we like it or not. Few people eagerly anticipate old age and the special problems that it brings, but we can't avoid it. It's a proven fact that those who have the most birthdays live the longest, and those who live the longest become the oldest; and old people eventually die.

Remember the “never die” jokes? Old skiers never die: they just go downhill. Old bakers never die: they just fail to rise. Old football players never die: they just fumble away. Old golfers never die: they just lose their drive. We may think *we* will never die, but we will, unless the Lord returns to take us to heaven; and this means that we must prepare for old age and death. It is futile to look back with regret; it is faith to look ahead with rejoicing. “To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom,” wrote Henri Amiel, “and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.”

Job next listed the joy of *respect from others* (vv. 7–11). When he walked through the city, the young men stepped aside to let him pass. He had his seat at the city gate with the leading men of the city, and even they ceased their speaking when he arrived. Wherever he went, he was treated with respect. “Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me” (v. 11, NIV).

His third source of joy was *ministry to others* (vv. 12–17). What God gave to him, Job shared with others. Eliphaz had accused Job of exploiting the poor and needy (22:5–9), but Job denied it. These verses describe the ministry of a compassionate man who brought help and happiness to many. Job strengthened righteousness and justice in the city (29:14; Isa. 59:17) as he helped the handicapped, provided for the needy, and even defended the strangers. But Job did not stop with assisting the needy; he also confronted the wicked and broke their power (Job 29:17). Job compared the wicked to fierce animals that were ready to devour the weak, but he came and snatched the victims from their very jaws.

Confidence in the future (vv. 18–20) was another source of joy to Job before his calamities came upon him. God was blessing Job, and Job was sharing those blessings with others; so he had every reason to believe that life would continue that way for many years. He was confident that he would stay fresh and vigorous, live to an old age, and die in peace and glory. He saw himself as a deeply rooted tree that would go on bearing fruit (v. 19; Ps. 92:12–14). Since children are sometimes pictured as arrows (127:3–5), Job 29:20 suggests that Job expected to maintain his physical vigor and beget many children.

His final source of joy was the *privilege of speaking words of encouragement and help* (vv. 21–25). He was indeed a Barnabas, “a son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36, NKJV), whose words were respected and appreciated. When he spoke, it was as gentle and refreshing as the rain. When he smiled, it lit up the whole situation and gave people hope. Job's approval was like the dawning of a new day! He was a leader who helped the perplexed make wise decisions and gave the mourners fresh comfort and hope.

Yes, Job had enjoyed a rich and rewarding life; but now all of that was gone.

Zuck, R. B. (1985). *Job*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 751-752) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

29:1–6. In previous **months** (thus suggesting that his disease extended over at least several months' time; cf. 7:3) **God** had **watched over** him (cf. 10:12) and **blessed** him. To have God's **lamp** over him, like a lamp suspended in a tent (cf. 18:6; Ecc. 12:6, "bowl" means "lamp") meant to be under His favor. Also God guided him **through** the **darkness** of difficulties, befriended him, and was **with** him. Job had a happy home (his **children were** with him, in contrast with their now being dead), and he was prosperous (**cream** and **olive oil** were symbols of plenty).

29:7–11. The suffering saint also enjoyed social prestige as a judge (elders held court sessions at the city **gate**; cf. Deut. 21:19; 22:15; Josh. 20:4, which may partially account for Job's use of legal terms). He was respected not only by those younger than he but, contrary to normal customs, also by older persons. The silence of his elders at the city gate, where they waited for his words of wisdom (cf. Job 29:21–23), was missing from his three gabby associates! Others had put **their hands** on **their mouths** (to gesture their silence), but not these three! (21:5; cf. 40:4) Job was then **well spoken of** (29:11), not maligned as his present company was doing to him (19:2–3).

29:12–17. Why was Job so highly respected? One reason is that he helped the needy (vv. 12–13, contrary to Eliphaz's charges, 22:6–7, 9), including **the poor**, orphans, the **dying**, and bereaving widows. Another reason is that he administered **justice** (29:14–17), championing the causes of and assisting **the blind**, the **lame**, the **needy**, and **the stranger**, and overturning their oppressors (**the fangs of the wicked**, *'awāl*, "an unrighteous person"; cf. 18:21; 27:7; 31:3). Ironically Job's associates failed to help *him* now that *he* was down.

29:18–20. Job had fully expected God's blessings to continue, with his living a long life (**days** like the **sand**) of stability (**roots**), prosperity (**dew**), an honorable reputation (**glory**), with perennial strength (pictured by a new **bow**; cf. 30:11).

29:21–25. Besides being blessed (vv. 2–6), helping others (vv. 7–17), and expecting his health and vigor to continue (vv. 18–20), Job's **counsel** was welcomed—contrary to the attitude of his three uninvited guests! People had eagerly welcomed his opinions, like the soil drinking in **the spring rain**. In his counseling he even encouraged others by his smile; in contrast one wonders if the three friends ever uplifted Job with warm smiles. Job's counselees had taken his advice (**I chose the way for them**), and respected him (cf. v. 11) as if he were a **chief** or **king**. Besides, he also comforted those who grieved, another area in which his assailants failed.

Garrett, D. A. (1998). *The Poetic and Wisdom Books*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 210). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Job's Final Discourse (29:1–31:40). This discourse is in three parts: (1) Job's former glory, (2) Job's present humiliation, and (3) a negative confession.

Job remembered his former glory especially as a time when he was respected and loved by one and all. He now looked upon his former belief that all was secure as mistaken, although in fact those words would come true (42:12–16).

Chapter 29 begins and ends with the term “light.” In chapter 3 Job cursed the light, but here he remembered when he blessed God’s light and others blessed the light of his own face (see Exod. 34:29–35 and Num. 6:25–26).

From a position of highest renown, Job had fallen to complete infamy. He once enjoyed universal respect. Now even the sons of the dregs of society mocked him. His physical pain was more than he could endure, and he awaited death. He voiced another prayer of complaint to God.

1. Tony Evans, [*The Tony Evans Study Bible*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible, 2019), [583–584](#).

2. Lawrence O. Richards, [*The Bible Reader’s Companion*](#) (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), [341](#).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Job29). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.