

## KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

## Basic English Diagram / Structure

Job 29

1 And Job again took up his discourse and said,  
2 “Oh that I were as in months gone by,  
As in the days when God watched over me;  
3 When His lamp shone over my head,  
And by His light I walked through darkness;  
4 As I was in the prime of my days,  
When the friendship of God was over my tent;  
5 When the Almighty was yet with me,  
[[And my children were around me;]]  
6 When my steps were bathed in butter,  
And the rock poured out for me streams of oil!  
7 “When I went out to the gate of the city,  
When I took my seat in the square,  
8 The young men saw me  
and hid themselves,  
And the old men arose  
and stood.  
9 “The princes stopped talking  
And put their hands on their mouths;  
10 The voice of the nobles was hushed,  
And their tongue stuck to their palate.  
11 [[“For when the ear heard, it called me blessed,]]  
[[And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me,]]  
12 Because  
I delivered the poor who cried for help,  
And the orphan who had no helper.  
13 “The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me,  
And I made the widow’s heart sing for joy.  
14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;  
My justice was like a robe and a turban.  
15 “I was eyes to the blind And feet to the lame.  
16 “I was a father to the needy,  
And I investigated the case which I did not know.  
17 “I broke the jaws of the wicked And snatched the prey from his teeth.  
18 [[“Then I thought,]]  
‘I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand.  
19 ‘My root is spread out to the waters, And dew lies all night on my branch.  
20 ‘My glory is ever new with me, And my bow is renewed in my hand.’  
21 “To me they listened and waited,  
And kept silent for my counsel.

22                   “After my words they did not speak again,  
                      And my speech dropped on them.

23           “They waited for me as for the rain,  
                      And opened their mouth as for the spring rain.

24           “I smiled on them when they did not believe,  
                      And the light of my face they did not cast down.

25           “I chose a way for them and sat as chief,  
                      And dwelt as a king among the troops,  
                      As one who comforted the mourners.

## TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 29 1 And Job again took up his discourse and said, 2 “Oh that I were as in months gone by, As in the days when God watched over me; 3 When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light I walked through darkness; 4 As I was in the prime of my days, When the friendship of God was over my tent; 5 When the Almighty was yet with me, And my children were around me; 6 When my steps were bathed in butter, And the rock poured out for me streams of oil! 7 “When I went out to the gate of the city, When I took my seat in the square, 8 The young men saw me and hid themselves, And the old men arose and stood. 9 “The princes stopped talking And put their hands on their mouths; 10 The voice of the nobles was hushed, And their tongue stuck to their palate. 11 “For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, 12 Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper. 13 “The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow’s heart sing for joy. 14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. 15 “I was eyes to the blind And feet to the lame. 16 “I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know. 17 “I broke the jaws of the wicked And snatched the prey from his teeth. 18 “Then I thought, ‘I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand. 19 ‘My root is spread out to the waters, And dew lies all night on my branch. 20 ‘My glory is ever new with me, And my bow is renewed in my hand.’ 21 “To me they listened and waited, And kept silent for my counsel. 22 “After my words they did not speak again, And my speech dropped on them. 23 “They waited for me as for the rain, And opened their mouth as for the spring rain. 24 “I smiled on them when they did not believe, And the light of my face they did not cast down. 25 “I chose a way for them and sat as chief, And dwelt as a king among the troops, As one who comforted the mourners.

### PASSAGE OUTLINE:

#### *Bible Knowledge Commentary*

- I. BILDAD’S THIRD SPEECH (CHAP. 25)
- II. JOB’S THIRD REPLY TO BILDAD (CHAPS. 26–31)
  - A. Job’s description of God’s majesty in nature (chap. 26)
  - B. Job’s description of the fate of the wicked (chap. 27)
  - C. Job’s discussion of God’s wisdom (chap. 28)
    - 1. Getting valuable metals from the earth (Job 28:1–2)
    - 2. Going underground (v. 3)
    - 3. Remoteness of the mines (unseen) seen by people, v. 4)
      - a’. Getting valuable metals and gems from the earth (vv. 5–6)
      - c’. Remoteness of the mines (unseen by birds and animals, vv. 7–8)
      - b’. Going underground (v. 9)
    - a’’. Getting valuable metals from the earth (vv. 10–11)
      - a. Inaccessibility of wisdom (vv. 12–14)
      - b. Wisdom’s value beyond [gold, silver jewels (vv. 15–19)]

- a'. Inaccessibility of wisdom (vv. 20–22)
- b'. Wisdom's value known by God (vv. 23–27)

- D. Job's concluding soliloquy (chaps. 29–31)
  - 1. Job's past glory (chap. 29)
  - 2. Job's present gloom (chap. 30)

### ***UBS Handbook Series***

- I. Job Recalls His Prosperous And Honored Life Job 29:1–10
- II. Job Recalls His Fair Treatment of the Oppressed Job 29:11–17
- III. Job Recalls How People Respected Him Job 29:18–25

### ***The Outline Bible***

- II. Bildad's Denunciations (25:1-6)
  - A. God is Powerful (25:1-3)
  - B. No One is Righteous (25:4-6)
- II. Job's Defense (26:1-31:40)
  - A. How Have You Helped Anyone? (26:1-4)
  - B. Creation is But a Minor Work of God (26:5-14)
  - C. A Two-Fold Vow (27:1-6)
  - D. The Godless Have No Hope (27:7-23)
  - E. Finding Valuable Things (28:1-11)
  - F. Wisdom Cannot be Found or Bought (28:12-21)
  - G. God Knows Where Wisdom is Found (28:22-28)
  - H. Once Respected for Who I Was (29:1-11)
  - I. Once Respected for What I Did (29:12-25)
  - J. Now Despised by the Despicable (30:1-14)
  - K. Unending Pain and Unanswered Prayers (30:15-21)
  - L. Have I Lusted? (31:1-12)
  - M. Have I Mistreated Others? (31:13-23)
  - N. Have I Worshipped Money or Idols? (31:24-28)
  - O. Have I Concealed Any Other Sin? (31:29-40)

### ***The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)***

- I. JOB: HIS PAST, HIS PRESENT, AND HIS INNOCENCE (29:1–31:40)
  - A. Memories of When God Blessed Him (29:1–25)
    - 1. God's Watchcare and Provision (29:1–6)
    - 2. His Place of Honor in the Community (29:7–17)
    - 3. Anticipation of a Peaceful Death (29:18–20)
    - 4. His Well-Received Counsel (29:21–25)

***Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)***

- I. Job looks back at life's joys (Job 29)
  - A. The presence of God in his home (Job 29:2-6)
  - B. Respect from others (vv. 7-11)
  - C. Ministry to others (vv. 12-17)
  - D. Confidence in the future (vv. 18-20)
  - E. Privilege of speaking words of encouragement and help (vv. 21-25)

***Job (Charles Swindoll)***

- I. Reflecting on His Past Glory (29:1-3, 6-17, 25)
- II. Rehearsing the Present Misery (30:1, 9-10, 15, 17-22, 26-29, 30-31)
- III. Reaffirming His Personal Integrity (31:1-2, 5-6, 9-11, 13-15, 16-21, 24-25, 28, 35-37)

***Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash)***

N/A

## **BASIC OUTLINE:**

- I. Job's Past Prosperity (chapter 29)
- II. Job's Present Passion (chapter 30)
- III. Job's Prospective Pardon (chapter 31)

## **PASSAGE OUTLINE:**

- I. Summary Statement: Reflecting on Past Glory (1-3)
- II. Domestic Blessings (4-6)
- III. Social Blessings (7-11, 21-25)
- IV. Reasons for Job's Past Blessings (12-17)
- V. Hope for the Future (18-20)

## **SERMON OUTLINE:**

- I. Job's Past Prosperity (29:1-25)
  - A. Blessings Summarized: The Good Old Days (1-3)
  - B. Blessings at Home: The Good Life (4-6)
  - C. Blessings in the Marketplace: The Respected Life (7-11, 21-25)
  - D. Blessings Defended: The Good Done for Others (12-17)
  - E. Blessings Future: The Good to Come (18-20)

### *Closing Points:*

- 1. The Past is Past — Forget it or Glorify God For it
- 2. Live in the Present
- 3. Be Careful How You Interpret Life (Don't equate temporal blessings / trials with God's favor or lack thereof)
- 4. Let Your Future Hope Center on That Which Doesn't Change (with Christ)
- 5. Be Sure You Are Clothed in Christ's righteousness

**PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about):** Job longs for the good old days

**PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about):** when life was good

**PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text):** Job Swears He is Innocent.

**CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON:** Don't live life on the fuel or frowns of the past.

**SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE:** Job's Defense Rests (Part 2): A Soliloquy on Past Blessing

## HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

In chapter 27 Job begins his final speech. His arguments cease at the end of chapter 31. Using a series of questions in 26:2–4, Job bitterly denounced the friends for their failure to offer him wise and helpful counsel. In 27:1–6 Job swears to his own integrity. He does this through the use of legal terms, as if he were testifying in court in his own defense. These six verses are particularly significant in the overall structure of the book, in that they are the beginning of the final speech by Job in his defense. Also Yahweh refers to this statement when he speaks later. [William David Reayburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 481]

Overview of Job's speeches in chapters 27-31:

Job's Concluding Address (Job 27:1–31:40)

The passage.—The dialogues between Job and his friends have now ended. Their arguments have all been exhausted. In fact, the third speaker, Zophar, does not speak at all in this last cycle, and after a pause, Job sums up his defense. The line of thought is difficult to trace in this concluding discourse. Some of the ideas seem to contradict what Job has said earlier. As a result some interpreters believe that portions of this passage are the words of Zophar, whose speech is missing from the third cycle. Others find certain misplaced sections which they attribute to the two other friends. However, the inconsistency in Job's speech could also be a result of the trauma of his suffering. He is not thinking clearly. His words often come in torrents. Inconsistencies are to be expected from one who is struggling with the heavy mysteries of life.

In chapter 27, Job renews his claim of innocence before God (vv. 1–6). He follows this with another dreary description of the destruction of wicked men and declares with an oath that he is not one of the wicked. Until he dies he will not admit his guilt. His conscience sustains his innocence (vv. 7–23).

In chapter 28 the theme is “wisdom cannot be attained by man.” Job uses poetic pictures to illustrate this truth. (1) Man digs for valuable treasures and precious stones and he finds them. But there is no mine from which wisdom can be uncovered and brought out (vv. 1–14). (2) Man can purchase merchandise in the marketplace, but wisdom is not for sale at any price (vv. 15–22). God created wisdom and keeps it secretly hidden from man. Man's only wisdom is to fear God (vv. 23–28).

In chapter 29, Job paints a pathetic word picture of his former prosperity and respect. He reviews with sadness the happiness he enjoyed with his family, his prosperity, his feeling of acceptance by God, and the respect and reverence shown him by his friends (vv. 2–10). He remembers that he earned their respect by benevolent and humane treatment of others (vv. 11–17). He had looked forward to the future with calm assurance (vv. 18–20). In contrast to the rejection of his three friends, he remembers his pleasant relationships with his fellowman in the past (vv. 21–25).



Chapter 30, Job reviews his present state in sharp contrast to the happy picture drawn in chapter 29.

In chapter 31 the long discourse ends with a series of protests from Job by which he clears himself of all offenses. The last verse says, “The words of Job are ended.”

[Russell H. Dilday Jr., “Job,” in *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary*, ed. H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972), 284-85]

As Job spoke to God alone in these closing chapters, he was like an attorney summarizing his arguments before a jury. He discussed his past pre-affliction glory (chap. 29), delineated his present gloom (chap. 30), and delivered his final oath of innocence (chap. 31).

(1) Job’s past glory (chap. 29). This chapter expands Job’s earlier words, “All was well with me” (16:12). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 751]

Chapters 29 and 30 form a pair. In the first Job recalled the good old days when “the LORD gave” (1:21). In the second he mourned his current wretchedness, after “the LORD has taken away” (1:21). [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 279]

The speech is formally a soliloquy.

“An utterance or discourse by a person who is talking to himself or herself or is disregarding of or oblivious to any hearers present (often used as a device in drama to disclose a character's innermost thoughts).” [Dictionary.com]

Cf. Job’s earlier soliloquy / lament in chapter 3.

**\*VERSES 29:1-6\***

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:**

1 And Job again took up his discourse and said, 2 “Oh that I were as in months gone by, As in the days when God watched over me; 3 When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light I walked through darkness; 4 As I was in the prime of my days, When the friendship of God was over my tent; 5 When the Almighty was yet with me, And my children were around me; 6 When my steps were bathed in butter, And the rock poured out for me streams of oil!

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:**

1 And Job again took up his discourse, and said: 2 “Oh, that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me, 3 when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, 4 as I was in my prime, when the friendship of God was upon my tent, 5 when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were all around me, 6 when my steps were washed with butter, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil!

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:**

1 Job continued his discourse, saying: 2 If only I could be as in months gone by, in the days when God watched over me, 3 when His lamp shone above my head, and I walked through darkness by His light! 4 I would be as I was in the days of my youth when God’s friendship rested on my tent, 5 when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me, 6 when my feet were bathed in cream and the rock poured out streams of oil for me!

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:**

1 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 on 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.

**CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:**

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). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 751]

### **1 And Job again took up his discourse and said,**

And Job again took up his discourse, and said: see comments on 27:1. TEV says “Job began speaking again,” which it did not say in 27:1 because 27:1 was the continuation of Job’s speech begun in chapter 26. The word translated again seems to reinforce the idea that another speech or poem (chapter 28) has interrupted the speech of Job begun in chapter 26. [William David Reymond, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 521]

### **2 “Oh that I were as in months gone by, as in the days when God watched over me;**

Job wants to recapture the past: “Oh, if only I could relive the past,” “I wish I could return to my former days,” “I wish I were as I used to be,” or “If I could only be again as I used to be!” [UBS Handbook, 521]

The paralyzing past. In some ways I resent the passing of time. Note God’s sovereignty as it relates to bemoaning the past. Also the hope of eternity.

Note “WHEN God watched over me.” As if He only does during times that are good. *Watched* may mean *blessed* here.

### **3 When His lamp shone over my head, and by His light I walked through darkness;**

2 Samuel 22:29, “Yea, thou art my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness.” See also Psalm 18:28; 36:9.

Note the repeated use of the word “when.”

### **4 As I was in the prime of my days, when the friendship of God was over my tent;**

As I was in my autumn days: autumn days most likely refers to the time of harvest, when crops have reached their full maturity. NJB translates “Shall I ever see my days of harvest again ...?” FRCL has “at the time of maturity.” The thought expressed is not that of advanced age and decline, but of fruitfulness, which TEV translates “when I was prosperous,” and NEB “days of my prime.” K-B lists the word as meaning “youth,” but the sense is more equivalent to “maturity of life” in the light of Job’s children being with him in the next verse. In English autumn days or “autumn of life” is misleading, since it suggests the physical and mental decline of advancing age. Translators should use a term or expression that suggests the full vigor of life. This may be later in life in some cultures than in others. “At that time I was in the prime of life,” or “When I was a strong man,” or “When I had all my powers.” [UBS Handbook, 522]

“Tent” - better “house” (as NIV). Job was not a nomad.

Friendship:

The word is intimate (cf. 19:19 in the ESV). Cf. Psalm 25:14; Prov. 3:32. Abraham was called “the friend of God” (Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). No Job feels, wrongly, that God has become his enemy (13:24-26; 16:9-14; 19:6-12).

**5 When the Almighty [*Shaddai*] was yet with me, and my children were around me;**

Shaddai - was God no longer “Almighty” because Job suffers?

Some think “servants” or “young servants” here.

Job did not think he would outlive his children, all of them.

A line from the poem “Locksley Hall” by LORD TENNYSON:  
Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Dante: “There is no greater sorrow than to remember in misery happier times”

**6 When my steps were bathed in butter, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil!**

Rock most likely refers to the oil press, which is a hollowed-out rock where the crushed olives are pressed for their oil. [UBS]

When life was good! Note how quickly that can change. My day on Dec. 24, 2015.

**\*VERSES 29:7-17\***

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:**

7 “When I went out to the gate of the city, When I took my seat in the square, 8 The young men saw me and hid themselves, And the old men arose and stood. 9 “The princes stopped talking And put their hands on their mouths; 10 The voice of the nobles was hushed, And their tongue stuck to their palate. 11 “For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, 12 Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper. 13 “The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow’s heart sing for joy. 14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. 15 “I was eyes to the blind And feet to the lame. 16 “I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know. 17 “I broke the jaws of the wicked And snatched the prey from his teeth.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:**

7 When I went out to the gate of the city, when I prepared my seat in the square, 8 the young men saw me and withdrew, and the aged rose and stood; 9 the princes refrained from talking and laid their hand on their mouth; 10 the voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth. 11 When the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it approved, 12 because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him. 13 The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. 14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. 15 I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. 16 I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. 17 I broke the fangs of the unrighteous and made him drop his prey from his teeth.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:**

7 When I went out to the city gate and took my seat in the town square, 8 the young men saw me and withdrew, while older men stood to their feet. 9 City officials stopped talking and covered their mouths with their hands. 10 The noblemen’s voices were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. 11 When they heard me, they blessed me, and when they saw me, they spoke well of me. 12 For I rescued the poor man who cried out for help, and the fatherless child who had no one to support him. 13 The dying man blessed me, and I made the widow’s heart rejoice. 14 I clothed myself in righteousness, and it enveloped me; my just decisions were like a robe and a turban. 15 I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. 16 I was a father to the needy, and I examined the case of the stranger. 17 I shattered the fangs of the unjust and snatched the prey from his teeth.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:**

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 them. 13 The one 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.

### **CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:**

This section has two foci: the honor Job received as a community leader and the reason for that honor, that is, his many and various deeds of charity. The hinge between these two emphases is vv. 11–12, both of which begin in Hebrew with “because/when” (kî). Some commentators and translators, unable to live with material not arranged according to modern Western standards, move vv. 21–25 to follow v. 10. Such an adjustment puts all the verses about honor together but makes the last verses before chap. 30 less appropriate. It is best to leave the verses in the order that has come down to us. [Robert L. Alden, 282]

#### **7 “When I went out to the gate of the city, When I took my seat in the square,**

Gate of the city refers to the large doors in the wall surrounding the city. Square refers to the open area inside the city wall, near the city gates, where town administration meetings (Deut 21:19), legal transactions (Ruth 4:1, 11), or markets (2 Kgs 7:1, 18) were held. [UBS]

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). [Bible Knowledge Commentary, 752]

The “square” (בוֹחַר) is an open place inside the gate of the town. When בוֹחַר is in the plural it means “streets,” as in, e.g., Amos 5:16; Prov 22:13 (see Note 29:7.b); but the parallelism with “gate” shows that we are dealing here with the main open space (surprisingly small). At Beersheba, for example, the Iron IIc city (Stratum II) had a square inside the gate, measuring about twenty by ten meters, and at Megiddo the Iron IIc city (Stratum III) had such a square about forty by twenty-five meters in size (see town plans in J. E. Stambaugh, “Cities,” ABD, 1:1031–48). In Jerusalem, we read of a square before the temple (Ezra 10:9), of one before the Water Gate (Neh 8:1, 16) and one before the Ephraim Gate (Neh 8:16), of an East Square (2 Chr 29:4), and of “the square of the gate of the city” (2 Chr 32:6). In Susa, we hear of a square before the palace (Esth 4:6). The town square was the main center of (male) social life . . . [David J. A. Clines, 985]

Cf. decisions made at the gate (Ruth 4 / Boaz, etc.).

Each day, we may suppose, Job would go out of his house to the gate of the city (see Note 29:7.a) and take up his regular seat in the town square. His right to be seated signifies his status in the community (see also v 25; on the “sitting” of a king, see M. Görg, TDOT, 6:420–38 [430–31]), higher than that of other elders, who would rise to their feet as he approached and remain standing, presumably until he has taken his seat (Davidson, Driver-Gray, Fohrer) or invites them to sit down (Dhorme). Lev 19:32 prescribes the gesture of standing up in the presence of an old man; though Job is not old, he accepts the deference due to the aged. [David J. A. Clines, 986]

### **8 The young men saw me and hid themselves, And the old men arose and stood.**

Not literally hiding themselves, but withdrawing into the background.

The merismus (see comment at 1:20) formed by “young” and “old,”<sup>7</sup> and supported by the verbs “stepped aside” (usually “hide”) and “rose,” indicates that people of all ages acknowledged Job’s stature in the community and acted appropriately. The first verb is translated “were hushed” in v. 10 where it applies to the “nobles.” [Robert L. Alden, 282]

### **9 “The princes stopped talking And put their hands on their mouths; 10 The voice of the nobles was hushed, And their tongue stuck to their palate.**

Young men hid; old men stood; prince and nobles were mute. Young were used to deferring to the older in that culture; however, the older recognized Job’s leadership and stood.

Speaking of “princes:”

In the context of a town gathering these men are city officials and other leaders, and not literally the sons of the king. The Hebrew term often translated “princes” never refers to sons of kings unless they happen to have this position of leadership. [UBS Handbook, 525]

Speaking of “nobles:”

The term suggests a leader who is below the rank of the “leaders” mentioned in verse 9. [UBS Handbook, 525]

Even the politicians! When do politicians stop talking?!

“cover the mouth with the hand” is in 21:5, where it describes something Job asked his friends to do.

Job had “gravitas” that was deserved (as opposed to “charisma”).

Side note: Job feels forsaken, Christ was forsaken by the Father for us; Job was respected as a teacher, as was Jesus (Mark 1:22).

**11 “For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me,**

Verse 11 is the start of a new line of thought, namely, the good Job had done for the oppressed. [UBS]

Personification of the ear and the eye.

**12 Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper. 13 “The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow’s heart sing for joy. 14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. 15 “I was eyes to the blind And feet to the lame. 16 “I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know. 17 “I broke the jaws of the wicked And snatched the prey from his teeth.**

22:6–9 Eliphaz alleged that Job oppressed the poor.

Needy” (‘ebyôn) is a category of those exploited by the powerful (cf. 24:4, 14).

Verse 14: as a person may be noticed by extraordinary fine clothes, Job was known by his extraordinary gracious and godly behavior.

The turban, a cloth wrapped around the head, perhaps like the Arab kufiyeh, was especially the clothing of priests and kings (Zech 3:5; Ecclus 11:5; 40:4), and thus, like the mantle, no everyday article of apparel but a token of the wearer’s honor, power-dressing indeed (see also on 31:36). [David J. A. Clines, 989]

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. [Bible Knowledge Commentary, 752]

The focus of the chapter now turns from how Job was honored to why he was honored. The first two categories of beneficiaries of Job’s largess were the “poor” (‘ānî), a word Job used three times earlier as he described those violated by oppressors (24:4, 9, 12), and the “fatherless” (yātôm; cf. 24:3, 9).<sup>9</sup> In a society with no government welfare system, it was easy for those with no families to become indigent. That is one reason the Bible so often enjoined the giving of alms. [Robert L. Alden, 283]



I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: in Psalm 132:9; Isaiah 59:17, righteousness is spoken of as a garment. It is paired here with justice, as in Jeremiah 22:15; 23:5; 33:15, and means the same. The metaphor of putting on righteousness as if it were clothing may mean that Job dressed himself in the clothing (robes) worn by a leader of the community when he took his seat in the square (verse 7). In this sense the garment was the symbol of his position. Just as a person may be clothed with righteousness, he may also be clothed with shame (Psalm 132:18). For Job righteousness and justice are like a garment which, in his case, adorns him and shows that he acted rightly and justly when he made decisions in regard to the oppressed. All of this is in contrast to the unjust treatment he claims to receive from God. [UBS Handbook, 528]

Metaphorical use of words/phrases like “father to” “broke the jaw of” etc.

The background of this illustration is a wild animal tearing the flesh from its victim (cf. Prov 30:14; Ps 3:7 [8]; 58:6 [7]). The self-portrait Job painted is one of tenderness, generosity, service, justice, and bravery, an admirable assortment of attributes that all God’s people would do well to own. [Robert L. Alden, 284]

Note clothed in the righteousness of Christ . . .

**\*VERSES 29:18-20\***

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:**

18 “Then I thought, ‘I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand. 19 ‘My root is spread out to the waters, And dew lies all night on my branch. 20 ‘My glory is ever new with me, And my bow is renewed in my hand.’

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:**

18 Then I thought, ‘I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand, 19 my roots spread out to the waters, with the dew all night on my branches, 20 my glory fresh with me, and my bow ever new in my hand.’

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:**

18 So I thought: I will die in my own nest and multiply my days as the sand. 19 My roots will have access to water, and the dew will rest on my branches all night. 20 My strength will be refreshed within me, and my bow will be renewed in my hand.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:**

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 not fade; the bow will be ever new in my hand.’

**CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:**

**18 “Then I thought, ‘I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand.**

Then I thought ‘I shall die in my nest’: in my nest translates the Hebrew phrase “with my nest.” In Isaiah 16:2 the word rendered nest here has the meaning of the contents of the nest and is translated “nestlings,” that is, “baby birds.” MFT translates “I shall grow old among my brood.” That is to say, Job expected to grow old, with his children at home with him. [UBS Handbook, 531]

But an alternative reading is very attractive: it has Job multiplying his days “like the phoenix,” the legendary bird that lives for 500 years (others say, variously, 540, 600, 1,000, 1,461, or even 12,994). There was a Greek saying, “to live the years of a phoenix” (Lucian, *Hermotinus* 53), and it is perhaps more realistic for Job to imagine living 500 years like a phoenix (he actually lives 200 years or so, according to 42:16) than an almost infinite number of years like sand. The legend of the phoenix was known to the Greeks and Romans, and it is encountered also in the rabbinic literature (Genesis Rabbah 19; b. Sanhedrin 108b), as well as in early Christian texts (e.g., 1 Clement 25.2; Tertullian, *De resurrectione* 13). See in general, R. van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix* according

to Classical and Early Christian Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 1972); H. Heras, “The Standard of Job’s Immortality,” CBQ 11 (1949) 263–79; M. R. Niehoff, “The Phoenix in Rabbinic Literature,” HTR 89 (1996) 245–65. It is objected against seeing the phoenix here that the myth of the phoenix also tells of its rebirth after its death, and Job of course is not thinking of any afterlife for himself. But the sole point of comparison here could well be its immensely long life, whether or not it is subsequently reborn. [David J. A. Clines, 991]

Hope for a peaceful prosperous death.

My hopes for our daughter. Chip telling me that I would someday teach her to drive. Thoughts of her marriage, grandchildren, etc.

“And I shall multiply my days as the sand” = live to a ripe old age. .

Note the soap opera “Days of Our Lives” and the theme: “Like Sands of the Hourglass, So Are the Days of Our Lives.”

As I write this, I’m listening to the 80s song “Come Sail Away” by Styx . . .

*I'm sailing away, set an open course for the virgin sea  
Cause I've got to be free, free to face the life that's ahead of me  
On board, I'm the captain, so climb aboard  
We'll search for tomorrow on every shore  
And I'll try, oh Lord, I'll try to carry on*

*I look to the sea, reflections in the waves spark my memory  
Some happy, some sad  
I think of childhood friends and the dreams we had  
We lived happily forever, so the story goes  
But somehow we missed out on that pot of gold  
But we'll try best that we can to carry on.  
1978*

Cf. The Best of Times my Senior Year theme song (1981).  
Note Francis Schaeffer who analyzed culture for meaning.

**19 ‘My root is spread out to the waters, And dew lies all night on my branch. 20 ‘My glory is ever new with me, And my bow is renewed in my hand.’**

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). [Bible Knowledge Commentary, 752]

We can’t always count on the future to be like the past.

Psalm 1:3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

“Glory” - cf. the glories of the past. Like a washed up athlete.

Note that “. . . by the end of the book of Job we find that his expectations are fulfilled to the letter: he dies an old man and full of days (42:17), surrounded by his family.” [David J. A. Clines, 990–991]

**\*VERSES 29:21-25\***

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:**

21 “To me they listened and waited, And kept silent for my counsel. 22 “After my words they did not speak again, And my speech dropped on them. 23 “They waited for me as for the rain, And opened their mouth as for the spring rain. 24 “I smiled on them when they did not believe, And the light of my face they did not cast down. 25 “I chose a way for them and sat as chief, And dwelt as a king among the troops, As one who comforted the mourners.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:**

21 “Men listened to me and waited and kept silence for my counsel. 22 After I spoke they did not speak again, and my word dropped upon them. 23 They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain. 24 I smiled on them when they had no confidence, and the light of my face they did not cast down. 25 I chose their way and sat as chief, and I lived like a king among his troops, like one who comforts mourners.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:**

21 Men listened to me with expectation, waiting silently for my advice. 22 After a word from me they did not speak again; my speech settled on them like dew. 23 They waited for me as for the rain and opened their mouths as for spring showers. 24 If I smiled at them, they couldn’t believe it; they were thrilled at the light of my countenance. 25 I directed their course and presided as chief. I lived as a king among his troops, like one who comforts those who mourn.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:**

21 “People 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.

**CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:**

In the Hebrew of verses 21–25 there is no expressed subject, and all the verbs are plural.

**21 “To me they listened and waited, And kept silent for my counsel. 22 “After my words they did not speak again, And my speech dropped on them. 23 “They waited for me as for the rain, And opened their mouth as for the spring rain.**

So TEV “My words sank in like drops of rain” conveys the idea accurately and in a pleasing manner. This line may be rendered, for example, “my words were pleasant to them like drops of rain” or “my words fell on them like rain drops on dry ground.” [UBS Handbook, 534]

They waited for me as for the rain: in line a the word translated rain is a general term, and in line b spring rain translates a specific term for the rain that falls in March and April and is essential for the young plants which will face dry periods during the summer growing season. Accordingly these rains are sometimes translated “the latter rains.” [UBS Handbook, 534]

Opened their mouths = expectation/desire for rain (analogous to Job’s wisdom).

**24 “I smiled on them when they did not believe, And the light of my face they did not cast down.**

It is hard to say, but the best interpretation (see Note 29:24.c) seems to be that when he smiled on them in approval they could hardly believe their good fortune, since they never expected any opinion of theirs to merit his acceptance. It is unlikely that the friendlier, but tamer, interpretation of RSV, for example (“I smiled on them when they had no confidence”), is correct, since the verb אָמַן in the hiphil usually means “believe” and not “trust, be confident.” Job represents his fellows as a very docile lot. [David J. A. Clines, 994]

. . . and that the meaning here is “they would not believe it”; that is, “If I smiled on them, they could not believe it.” This is the thought expressed by Pope, Habel, BJ, NJB, NJV, TOB, FRCL, SPCL, NIV. Following this line of interpretation, we may have to make some adjustment that will make clear that the smile was an unexpected reward. Accordingly we may sometimes translate “If I smiled at them, they could hardly believe it because they did not expect it.” [UBS Handbook Series, 535]

Both lines could be read differently. Instead of “they scarcely believed it,” one could translate “them who had no faith” (cf. ASV, RSV, NASB, NRSV). The second stich reads literally, “And the light of my face they did not make to fall.” That could be paraphrased as “they encouraged me,” or as Gordis has it, “They did nothing to cause me displeasure.”<sup>16</sup> Since the context speaks of the benefit Job was to others, the NIV is preferable because it keeps the action moving outward from Job. [Robert L. Alden, 286]

HCSB: “If I smiled at them, they couldn’t believe it; they were thrilled at the light of my countenance.” Cf. NIV.

**25 “I chose a way for them and sat as chief, And dwelt as a king among the troops, As one who comforted the mourners.**

Although the technical word for early rains is not in this verse, the first rains of autumn are undoubtedly what is referred to in line a. After four months of drought, such precipitation was greeted with great rejoicing. The “spring rain” or the “latter rains” mark the end of the wet season and fall around Easter time. Since people knew how long it would be before they saw rain again, these last rains too were met with unusual

appreciation. So were Job's words welcomed and appreciated by his hearers (cf. Deut 32:2). [Robert L. Alden, 285–286]

I chose their way expresses the thought of Job making the decisions affecting the lives of his people as he guided and directed them. And sat as chief: this phrase, which states Job's position of authority, may best be placed at the beginning of the line, before what he does as chief; for example, "I was their leader and showed them the way" or "I was the one who led them and made their decisions." [UBS Handbook Series, 535]

Job comforted those who grieved, another area in which his friends failed.

Job has been honest, generous, disciplined; he rescued the poor; helped the blind, comforted those who mourned; he made a covenant with his eyes, 'not to look lustfully at a virgin' (31:1); he was host to countless strangers; he made sure he never rejoiced over the misfortune of another; he never trusted in his own wealth. He frankly feared God (31:23). And he is utterly determined to maintain that his own integrity totally precludes the possibility that his sufferings constitute punishment for sin." [D.A. Carson, How Long O Lord, 147]

Back to the description of Job:

1:1, 3b 1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. 3b . . . and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

That has all changed now. Not only the blessings of prosperity (children) but his standing.

Job 19:17 "My breath is offensive to my wife, And I am loathsome to my own brothers. 30:1 "But now those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.

Job 30:9–15 9 "And now I have become their taunt, I have even become a byword to them. 10 "They abhor me and stand aloof from me, And they do not refrain from spitting at my face. 11 "Because He has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me, They have cast off the bridle before me. 12 "On the right hand their brood arises; They thrust aside my feet and build up against me their ways of destruction. 13 "They break up my path, They profit from my destruction; No one restrains them. 14 "As through a wide breach they come, Amid the tempest they roll on. 15 "Terrors are turned against me; They pursue my honor as the wind, And my prosperity has passed away like a cloud. His 3 closest friends are against him. His reputation has been spoiled.