

JOB: Man Of God
August 24, 2005
Message 6
Scripture reading Job 29:1-6

INTRO: We have come to chapter 29 in Job. In our last message we began to consider Job's answer to Bildad. Eliphaz has spoken 3 times. Bildad has spoken 3 times. Zophar has spoken twice and after Bildad it would be his turn again. But Job takes 6 chapters to answer Bildad and then all three of his friends. The arguments of Job's friends are getting shorter and Job's answers are getting longer. And when Job is done with Bildad, Zophar has nothing more to say, neither do any of the other three friends dare speak to him.

The devil is out to get Job. Let me assure you this morning, he is out to get you too. We are in a spiritual warfare. We do well not to forget that. God has given the devil considerable rope in the life of Job and he has taken all Job's possessions, then his health and now has turned his friends against him.

Job's friends have given him a clear message. "Job, you have sinned. That is why all this is happening to you. So you ought to confess and forsake your sin and God will restore your possessions and health to you." Job has said, "I am righteous and I am suffering unjustly." Job is now answering his friends for the last time, and so strong is his message that no one has a return answer for him.

We saw in the last message that Job makes some incredible scientific statements as he encourages Bildad to learn about God from creation (Read 26:7, and 10 and comment).

Charles Ryrie suggests in his outline of this book that in chapters 27-31 Job is answering all three of his friends. That may well be. Listen to 27:1-6. Job insists that he is righteous. In chapter 28 Job then spoke of wisdom and he has asked where wisdom is to be found and of what value it is. These are hard questions indeed. His answer is that wisdom has no price. It cannot be bought. And as to where it can be found? (read 28:28).

Job will now review his former life in chapter 29. Then in chapter 30 he will paint a graphic picture of what his life is like now in comparison. In chapter 31 he will for once

and for all set the record straight with his friends that he is a righteous man.

b. Bildad continued (25:1-6)

-Job's answer to his friends 29-31

Job's past bliss (29)

Certain advertisements will give a "before and after" picture and the pictures give a clear message. Maybe it's a diet program and they show a picture of a man wearing pants that would now fit three people his size. The pictures are always the old first and then the new, the bad and then the good. Job will draw a picture of his life in 29-30 and give us a *before and after* picture, but the order is reversed. It is the good then the bad. So in 29, we have the *before* picture (read 29:1-6).

1 ¶ Job further continued his discourse, and said: 2 Oh, that I were as *in* months past, As *in* the days *when* God watched over me; 3 When His lamp shone upon my head, *And when* by His light I walked *through* darkness; 4 Just as I was in the days of my prime, When the friendly counsel of God was over my tent; 5 When the Almighty was yet with me, *When* my children were around me; 6 When my steps were bathed with cream, And the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!

What a graphic picture of a life of fulfillment and contentment. Job will now give an example of how life was:

7 ¶ "When I went out to the gate by the city, *When* I took my seat in the open square, 8 The young men saw me and hid, And the aged arose *and* stood; 9 The princes refrained from talking, And put *their* hand on their mouth; 10 The voice of nobles was hushed, And their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth. 11 When the ear heard, then it blessed me, And when the eye saw, then it approved me;

Here is the town square where the important people of town do business. There are the old and revered men and princes are there. They are talking and having a good time when Job walks in. And then all falls silent, "Oh, this is Job." And when Job spoke, every body said, "Yes. He is right!" And when people saw him they said, "Oh good, Job is here!" And to what does Job credit all this recognition?

12 Because I delivered the poor who cried out,
The fatherless and *the one who* had no helper. 13
The blessing of a perishing *man* 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 I was feet to the lame. 16
I was a father to the poor, And I searched out
the case *that* I did not know. 17 I broke the
fangs of the wicked, And plucked the victim from
his teeth.

Why did all look up to Job? Because Job always did what was right. The poor, the fatherless, those with no helper, those who were perishing, the widows, they loved Job. And the wicked? Well they feared him. If Job ever found out what they had done to the poor or the widows or the helpless, well, look out. So Job says, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban."

Everywhere he went, Job was respected. Nobody argued with Job. If Job spoke, it was well spoken. If Job disagreed, it certainly must not be good. So Job says:

18 ¶ "Then I said, 'I shall die in my nest, And multiply *my* days as the sand. 19 My root *is* spread out to the waters, And the dew lies all night on my branch. 20 My glory *is* fresh within me, And my bow is renewed in my hand.' 21 "Men listened to me and waited, And kept silence for my counsel. 22 After my words they did not speak again, And my speech settled on them as *dew*. 23 They waited for me as for the rain, And they opened their mouth wide as for the spring rain.

24 *If I mocked at them, they did not believe it,*
And the light of my countenance they did not cast
down. 25 I chose the way for them, and sat as
chief; So I dwelt as a king in the army, As one
who comforts mourners.

Job has given us the *before* picture. Life simply
could not get much better.

Job has shown how people like the aged and
princes respected him in the past. Now he will
show how people of lowest stature treat him like
dirt. So Job said, "I shall die in my nest, And
multiply *my* days as the sand."

And all the while Job had a secret fear. Some day
he might lose all this. So when he thought his
family might have done wrong, he sacrificed on
their behalf. And in 3:4 he says, "...the thing I
greatly feared has come upon me, and what I
dreaded has happened to me." So having shown us
his past bliss, Job will now paint a picture of
his present blight in chapter 30:

1 ¶ "But now they mock at me, *men* younger than
I, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs
of my flock. 2 Indeed, what *profit* is the
strength of their hands to me? Their vigor has
perished. 3 *They are* gaunt from want and famine,
Fleeing late to the wilderness, desolate and
waste, 4 Who pluck mallow by the bushes, And
broom tree roots *for* their food. 5 They were
driven out from among *men*, They shouted at them
as *at* a thief. 6 *They had* to live in the clefts
of the valleys, *In* caves of the earth and the
rocks. 7 Among the bushes they brayed, Under the
nettles they nestled. 8 *They were* sons of fools,
Yes, sons of vile men; They were scourged from
the land. 9 "And now I am their taunting song;
Yes, I am their byword. 10 They abhor me, they
keep far from me; They do not hesitate to spit in
my face.

In time past, Job sat with the big boys, and the
big boys and the princes all looked up to Job.
The contrast is that now the lowest of the low
sing a taunting song to Job. They walk and talk

and laugh at Job. When they come near, they spit in his face. What a drastic change.

Now listen from verse 11 on, where Job places the blame for all that is happening to him:

11 Because He (God) has loosed my bowstring and afflicted me, They have cast off restraint before me. 12 At *my right hand* the rabble arises; They push away my feet, And they raise against me their ways of destruction. 13 They break up my path, They promote my calamity; They have no helper. 14 They come as broad breakers; Under the ruinous storm they roll along. 15 ¶ Terrors are turned upon me; They pursue my honor as the wind, And my prosperity has passed like a cloud. 16 "And now my soul is poured out because of my *plight*; The days of affliction take hold of me. 17 My bones are pierced in me at night, And my gnawing pains take no rest. 18 By great force my garment is disfigured; It binds me about as the collar of my coat.

Job says the wicked come at me like broad breakers; under the ruinous storm they roll along. Several years ago we took our summer holidays with some friends, Kurt and Jeanette Saffarek, on the Queen Charlotte Islands. One day we were out beachcombing and Jeanette's mom and dad were with us. Jeanette's dad was the mayor of a small inland town and he owned excavation equipment. He told us of two older men who, I believe were doing commercial halibut fishing. A storm caught them and eventually they were driven into the shore by the wind. They knew the boat would be likely be smashed and they would drown so they got out of the boat and tried to get up on shore. Well the broad breakers came at them again and again under the ruinous storm. They would just begin to scramble up the slopes when another breaker would wash them back into the sea. Only one sailer survived. This is Job's picture. The wicked keep coming at him like broad breakers.

And what does God do about it? Let's read on:

19 He has cast me into the mire, And I have become like dust and ashes. 20 "I cry out to You, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You regard me. 21 *But* You have become cruel to me; With the strength of Your hand You oppose me. 22 You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride *on it*; You spoil my success. 23 For I know *that* You will bring me to death, And to the house appointed for all living. 24 "Surely He would not stretch out *His* hand against a heap of ruins, If they cry out when He destroys *it*. 25 Have I not wept for him who was in trouble? Has *not* my soul grieved for the poor? 26 But when I looked for good, evil came *to me*; And when I waited for light, then came darkness. 27 My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; Days of affliction confront me. 28 I go about mourning, but not in the sun; I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out for help. 29 I am a brother of jackals, And a companion of ostriches. 30 My skin grows black and falls from me; My bones burn with fever. 31 My harp is *turned* to mourning, And my flute to the voice of those who weep.

What a contrasting before and after picture Job has painted for us! And now in chapter 31 he will plead his innocence and his righteousness. He will list the major failures of men and then say, "**If** I have done this **then** I deserve what I am getting. But since I have not done any of these things I do not deserve what is happening to me."

1 ¶ "I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman? 2 For what *is* the allotment of God from above, And the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? 3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked, And disaster for the workers of iniquity? 4 Does He not see my ways, And count all my steps?

Since God counts all my steps, surely if I had sinned He would be able to tell me what I have done wrong. Now let us look at all the "If this then that" clauses.

5 "If I have walked with falsehood, Or if my
foot has hastened to deceit, 6 Let me be weighed
on honest scales, That God may know my integrity.

7 If my step has turned from the way, Or my
heart walked after my eyes, Or if any spot
adheres to my hands, 8 *Then* let me sow, and
another eat; Yes, let my harvest be rooted out.

9 ¶ "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or
if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, 10 *Then*
let my wife grind for another, And let others bow
down over her. 11 For that *would be* wickedness;
Yes, it *would be* iniquity *deserving of* judgment.
12 For that *would be* a fire *that* consumes to
destruction, And would root out all my increase.

13 "If I have despised the cause of my male or
female servant When they complained against me,
14 What then shall I do when God rises up? When
He punishes, how shall I answer Him? 15 Did not
He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the
same One fashion us in the womb?

16 ¶ "If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,
Or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, 17 Or
eaten my morsel by myself, So that the fatherless
could not eat of it 18 (But from my youth I
reared him as a father, And from my mother's womb
I guided *the* widow);

19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of
clothing, Or any poor *man* without covering; 20
If his heart has not blessed me, And *if* he was
not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; 21 If I
have raised my hand against the fatherless, When
I saw I had help in the gate; 22 *Then* let my arm
fall from my shoulder, Let my arm be torn from
the socket. 23 For destruction *from* God *is* a
terror to me, And because of His magnificence I
cannot endure.

24 ¶ "If I have made gold my hope, Or said to
fine gold, 'You are my confidence'; 25 If I have
rejoiced because my wealth was great, And because
my hand had gained much; 26 If I have observed
the sun when it shines, Or the moon moving *in*

brightness, 27 So that my heart has been secretly enticed, And my mouth has kissed my hand; 28 This also *would be* an iniquity *deserving of* judgment, For I would have denied God *who is* above.

29 "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, Or lifted myself up when evil found him 30 (Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for a curse on his soul); 31 If the men of my tent have not said, 'Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?' 32 (*But* no sojourner had to lodge in the street, *For* I have opened my doors to the traveler); 33 ¶ If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, 34 Because I feared the great multitude, And dreaded the contempt of families, So that I kept silence *And* did not go out of the door—

Verses 35-37 are an interjection. Job can refrain no longer, and these words seem to just burst from his lips as if he can restrain himself no more (read).

35 Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my mark. *Oh, that* the Almighty would answer me, *That* my Prosecutor had written a book! 36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, *And* bind it on me *like* a crown; 37 I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him.

First Job says, "Oh that I had one to hear me!" Oh, if only I had a judge. I would put my case before him." Then he says, "Here is my mark". All the "If... then..." clauses are his mark. He would plead his righteousness before this judge and surely any just judge would see that he was not guilty. Job then points out who that judge is that he wishes he had, for he says, "Oh that the Almighty would answer me..." If He would only tell my why things are the way they are. If only He would tell me why He is doing these evil things to me. He continues, and I add the necessary words, "Oh that my Prosecutor had written a book." I wish God would write down in a book the

things that He has against me. Job then says words that indicate he has a much higher view of himself than he should have, for he says if God wrote all the things He had against Job in a book, He would proudly display this book. It would not be something he would be ashamed of and hide. In verse 37 he shows just how little fear he has that this book would reveal anything bad about him.

And now, having vented himself a little, and feeling better for it, he goes on:

38 "If my land cries out against me, And its furrows weep together; 39 If I have eaten its fruit without money, Or caused its owners to lose their lives; 40 Then let thistles grow instead of wheat, And weeds instead of barley." The words of Job are ended. (I have nothing more to say!)

Here is a summary of Job's answer to Bildad and then his three friends: "I am righteous. I have declared my case, and I am done. If you can bring anything against that, just go right ahead and do it because I am finished. The words of Job are ended." And as my mother would say, "This is it, I T E!"

CONCL: In conclusion I remind us of the testings Job has endured thus far. First he lost all his possessions, including his children. Then he lost his health. And now his friends have tormented him with accusations of harboring sin in his life. And in six chapters Job has defended himself, and with this strong word he has silenced all three of his miserable comforters as we will see in the next message.

And so, let me ask again, why might Job be the first book of God's divine revelation to man? Why might God have given this book the very first of all? What makes this book so important that it may well have been the very first book written? We are about to begin to see the answer to that question. Job, like every good book leaves the answer until the end. And like any other good book, it ends with these words, "And Job lived happily ever after."