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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Job 29.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Job 29.

Topics.

- Oh, that I were by God's light as in my prime, when His friendship was joy.
- Princes and nobles hushed and called me blessed and approved.
- I delivered the poor; I caused the widow's to sing; I administered justice.
- I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days my glory fresh with me.
- Men listened and kept silence and waited for my counsel.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

Helpful facts: before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

Job speaks

Oh, that I were by God's Light as in My Prime, when His Friendship was Joy.

Job 29:1-5 ----- ¹And 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, ³when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, ⁴as I was in my prime, when the friendship of God was upon my tent, ⁵when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were all around me, ⁶when my steps were washed with butter, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil!

Job continues his conversation from the previous chapter wishing he was as he was in the days prior to his calamity and afflictions when he was blessed and believed God was with him and was not struck with confusion and bewilderment as he now is.

When the Almighty was yet with me: (v5) this does not mean Job believed God had forsaken him, we know this because in verse ten Job said: -

- God has granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit.
¹³Yet these things you hid in your heart. (Job 10:12-13).

These verses give us a beautiful insight into Job's great faith, even in all his suffering he is able to say God has preserved his spirit and given him steadfast love, yet He has kept His steadfast love hidden from him. This is a fascinating insight into Job's faith, he credits God for all his loss, agonising suffering, and his despair and does not feel God's love in his innermost being, but despite this he knows God loves him and is keeping his spirit (meaning keeping him alive).

This shines a brilliant spotlight upon Job's great faith and that it soars far beyond his emotions and troubling circumstances. The expression, "When the Almighty was yet with me," carries the idea that God had stopped blessing him and not that he had forsaken him.

Princes and Nobles Hushed and Called Me Blessed and Approved.

Job 29:7-11 ----- ⁷When I went out to the gate of the city, when I prepared my seat in the square, ⁸the young men saw me and withdrew, and the aged rose and stood; ⁹the princes refrained from talking and laid their hand on their mouth; ¹⁰the voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth. ¹¹When the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it approved.

The following statements: -

- Young men saw me and withdrew and the aged rose and stood.
- Princes and nobles refrained from talking and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.

Shine a spotlight upon the great respect, esteem and honour Job had not only amongst the young, but also amongst the aged even God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

When people heard of Job they called him blessed and approved of his blessings meaning they did not resent or despise him. This no doubt is because from his great wealth he gave to the poor and the needy.

It is interesting to notice: even though Job had suffered great calamities and was still suffering affliction and could not feel God's love within; his faith in God and his salvation was not dented. We know this because in chapter nineteen he says: -

- I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:25-27).

Sadly some today do not perceive the love of God and because of this lack of perception of God's love and grace tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world.

When anyone today who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with his royal and majestic robe of righteousness so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions.

This truth should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ since it is certain if God was prepared to sacrifice his Son for us, while we were indifferent and apathetic toward Him and uninterested and unconcerned about what honoured Him and what didn't He will with great joy do everything to keep us for eternal life now we love His Son. (He does this by daily lavishing us with grace)

I Delivered the Poor; I caused Widow's to Sing; I Administered Justice.

Job 29:12-17 ----- ¹²because I (Job) delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him. ¹³The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. ¹⁴I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. ¹⁵I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. ¹⁶I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. ¹⁷I broke the fangs of the unrighteous and made him drop his prey from his teeth.

The following list show why Job would have been held in great respect and honour amongst those who knew him and amongst his community.

- He helped the poor and the fatherless child (v12).
- He financially helped widows when their husbands died (v13).
- He did what was right and good and administered honest justice (v14).
- He helped the blind and those who were crippled (v15).
- He acted as a just lawyer to those he did not know the law (v16).
- He punished the wicked and made them return what they had taken to its rightful owner (v17).

This is obviously why God said that Job was a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth that held fast his integrity as Job did. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

NOTE: it should be mentioned that in this context blameless does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ. If we could attain to the glorious state of living a sin-free life Christ died for no reason.

I shall Die in My Nest, and Multiply My days My Glory Fresh with Me.

Job 29:18-20 ----- ¹⁸Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand, ¹⁹my roots spread out to the waters, with the dew all night on my branches, ²⁰my glory fresh with me, and my bow ever new in my hand.'

Job here reflects back to the beginning of the chapter where he expressed how he wished he was back in the years of his prime when life was blessed and he lived at ease. In these verses he is basically saying back in the good old days he thought he would continue to increase his riches and his wealth and his trading across the land and the waters and his offspring would multiply and he would die in his home at a ripe old age and leave all that he had established for an inheritance in tack and not brought to ruin as it now is.

Men Listened and Kept Silence and Waited for My Counsel.

Job 29:21-25 ----- ²¹"Men listened to me and waited and kept silence for my counsel. ²²After I spoke they did not speak again, and my word dropped upon them. ²³They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain. ²⁴I smiled on them when they had no confidence, and the light of my face they did not cast down. ²⁵I chose their way and sat as chief, and I lived like a king among his troops, like one who comforts mourners.

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight upon the foolishness of Job's three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar). When Job was in his prime people cued up and waited to hear his counsel, they stood in silence and listened, why, because they unlike (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) recognised his wisdom. The book of proverbs calls everyone to seek after wisdom and do whatever it takes to find it, one of the great aspects of wisdom is knowing when to listen and when to speak, clearly those who knew Job knew if they were in his presence it was time to listen and not speak.

Not listening is a common human trait, in my last few years of my Christian faith I have met people who have an interest in God and a little knowledge of the Bible and they talk and talk about what they know and though I am interested I think to myself, "why wouldn't you ask me questions?" I remember when I was a new convert, I listened to anyone who stood in front of me who I knew had far better knowledge than I did, if they stopped talking I asked another question, this is the attitude of those who came before Job.

People driven by pride are only interested in showing off their knowledge, they learn not because they desire to help and comfort others, but to give themselves a greater sense of spiritual superiority. They attend Bible meetings not so much to teach others (although they do), but their underlying motive is to show off their knowledge. Job's friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) were of this prideful spirit, in all their conversations with Job. They never showed any compassion toward him or offered one word of comfort. Their sole focus was upon proving that Job was a wicked man and that their theology was right and his was wrong.

They waited for me as for the spring rain: (v23) the most common means of work during Job's generation was farming and agriculture (i.e., living off the land) so rain was one of the most valued things in their lives, it determined whether they would prosper or come to ruin. This highlights the value they put on the wisdom and counsel of Job.

I smiled on them when they had no confidence: (v24) unlike Job's friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) Job lifted up, encouraged, inspired, comforted, reassured and supported those who lacked confidence and self-worth.

I chose their way and sat as chief: (v25) this statement shines a light upon the following two things: -

1. Job not only encouraged and comforted those that came to him, but also guided them in the way they should go.
2. Those who knew Job respected his authority and trusted his counsel.

I lived like a king among his troops, like one who comforts mourners: (v25) this is a picture of king being surrounded by a mighty and loyal army who are at the ready to protect their king. The picture presented here is that prior to Job's calamities and afflictions he was surrounded by friends who would willingly help and protect him.

End.