

## Job Chapters 29-31 - John Karmelich

If you had a chance to summarize the important things about your life, what would you say? Would it be a speech about your children, your accomplishments, things you've struggled through, and came out the other side all the stronger? That question's key as we study these chapters. As most of realize, Job as a book is tough to get through. It seems like it's one long speech after another. The good news is we made it to the end of the great debate. It's time for Job to give his closing speech and end this! He will finish with talking about his life prior to his great loss of everything, then summarizing his life since all this occurred, and what he thinks his legacy is. It leads to my favorite question, "why should we care"? It is to consider what's important at "the end of the day". Let me continue please:

As I studied this, my first thought was, "I can never be as righteous as Job". Did the bible include all of this to give us an impossible standard to live up to? If nothing else it shows that even a person as good as Job can suffer terribly and God can use it for His glory! God doesn't expect perfection. He wants us to live as a witness for Him. When we mess up and we all do, we confess it move on, and we focus on being a good witness for Him. OK, enough preaching, back to Job!

First let's discuss how we got to this point in the book. The book opened in effect with God as He brags how proud He is of Job. Satan enters the picture to say in effect, "Job only honors You because You've blessed his life so much!" God allowed Satan to take away all Job had including his family, all he owns and his health. Job had no idea why this happened and is left suffering with no answers. Then we get a great debate between Job and three friends, who must have taken time to get there, to debate why all of this took place. The three friends essentially said, "Job you must have done something horrible, so God is punishing you!" Job refuses to lie and say, "OK, you got me there!" Instead, we get a long debate for many chapters debating Job's innocence or guilt. We are now at the end of the debate. These chapters here are in effect Job's closing arguments. The only thing we'll see Job say at the end of the book after God finally replies (coming up) is in effect, "OK God, sorry I demanded to be heard by You. After all, You made the world and I have no right to question You since You're in charge of my life!"

So that leads back to my opening question: What would you say to summarize your life? Job gives us a summary of his life prior to his tragedy in Chapter 29, what his life's like now in Chapter 30 and how he believes one should live their life in Chapter 31. As I read Chapter 31, I was convicted that I'd never be as good as Job. That isn't the point of the book. It's to understand God will do what He wants to do and we must accept it! At the same time do our best to be a witness for Him despite the things we must deal with in our lives!

If God never responds to Job's pleas, what's the point of stating all of this? It's to understand what God expects of us (to live a moral life as that's the best way to live) and be a good witness for Him. Yes, we will mess up, but since God Himself paid the price for all our sins, when we mess up, we can confess it move on and continue to be a witness for Him! With that said, here's a few details about these chapters:

In Chapter 29, Job opens by saying I wish my life was like before all this tragedy began. He didn't state he miss his family (I'm sure he did) or his health (he did) but he misses, "Communicating with God" on a regular basis. It's the sensation that we're sharing our day with God and He is guiding us to live as He desires. It doesn't mean we pray 24/7. It means we regularly think about God and realize it's His desire to guide our lives! During all Job's suffering, Job lost that feeling! Most Christians go through periods like that. I consider it times of testing when God is effectively saying, "Still trust Me, even now?"

Anyway, Job talks about how he was respected as a great man. It's interesting to me that Job never did talk about his past life till Chapter 29! He didn't talk so much about all he owned (a lot), but the fact he was a respected authority because of His relationship with God. He was in effect, "the last word" when he gave his opinion! He also talked about the fact he helped needy people who also wanted to seek the favor of God. In other words, it wasn't always about Job, but about trying to please God by doing what is the right thing! In summary it was about the positive effects of trusting God even when all goes well in one's life.

Then comes the "downer" of Chapter 30. He talks about the people who don't believe God, laughing at his situation! At least it shows that others were aware of Job's troubles besides the three men who were with him, and his wife who hasn't said a word since she told Job to curse God many chapters ago! I am fascinated by the focus on nonbelievers and the fact they mock Job during his suffering. It teaches that there is some pleasure in "sin" for a season. It also shows that Job didn't just give to all the people who asked for help. Of course, I believe we should help those in need when possible! He did recognize the difference between God fearing and those who didn't fear Him and that's the point!

The text jumps back and forth between his suffering, and how he feels abandoned by God and the way that people mocked him during this time. Chapter 30 is in effect Job's last dirge over his misery. This ends the great debate of whether or not Job committed some great sin as Job reviewed his life. What I noticed is Job refuses to abandon his love of God, in spite of the suffering he had to deal with!

Chapter 31 is in effect Job's final defense of his righteous (as God declared he was) by stating the ways he acts in life. He makes a few brags as if to say, "If I ever cheated on my wife or even looked at a girl in lust" may I be condemned. (By the way, my view on that is if one sees someone good looking, yes it ok to realize and acknowledge it mentally. It's the second look or the lust that is to be condemned!) All I'm saying is Job made it a practice through his life to not lust after another woman. He then goes on to list other issues like not helping those in true need or not helping say widows in need. He states that if he saw someone lacking clothes and didn't help (when he had money) that was a sin! He says if he did trust in gold more than God then that was a sin as well. It continues with the basic idea that he was not guilty of anything that deserved the type of suffering that he was going through!

Again, as I read this, I was convicted that I'm not that good! If you feel the same way after reading the chapter congratulations, you are normal! The point is that even if we were that "perfect" we can suffer and it may not be due to some specific sin. When I go through periods of suffering or silence, yes, the first thing I do is try to think of sins I haven't confessed! Then I figure God has some other reason that I'm going through this. My favorite prayer in tough times is, "God help me to learn what You want me to learn from all of this!"

In effect Job will get that answer as God is going to chime in for a long speech later in the book. First, we get a new speaker for a few chapters. I'll get into why that last speaker is here in the next lesson. I just want all of us to think about what's the most important things in our life if we had to give a speech describing what our life is like! Yes, it's tough to think about. My view of God's judgment is nothing I can say can make a difference other than I plead the blood of Jesus and I'm guilty of sin! In effect, this is not that kind of issue. This is Job saying I'm doing my best to live as God desires in spite of all this pain that I'm dealing with right now! With that said, I hope each of us think about our lives and what's pleasing and not pleasing to God in our lives!

If you liked this study, I wrote a more detailed account some years back with the links on this web site!  
Thanks for reading this!