

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 30

1 **“But now**

those younger than I
mock me,

Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.

2

“Indeed, what good was the strength of their hands to me?
Vigor had perished from them.

3

“From want and famine they are gaunt
Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation,
Who pluck mallow by the bushes,

4

And whose food is the root of the broom shrub.

5

“They are driven from the community;
They shout against them as against a thief,

6

So that they dwell in dreadful valleys,
In holes of the earth and of the rocks.

7

“Among the bushes they cry out;
Under the nettles they are gathered together.

8

“Fools, even those without a name,
They were scourged from the land.

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.

16 **“And now**

my soul is poured out within me;

- Days of affliction have seized me.
- 17 “At night it pierces my bones within me,
And my gnawing pains take no rest.
- 18 “By a great force my garment is distorted;
It binds me about as the collar of my coat.
- 19 “He has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.
- 20 “I cry out to You for help,
but You do not answer me;
I stand up,
and You turn Your attention against me.
- 21 “You have become cruel to me;
With the might of Your hand You persecute me.
- 22 “You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride;
And You dissolve me in a storm.
- 23 “For I know that You will bring me to death
- 24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand,
Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help?
- 25 “Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard?
Was not my soul grieved for the needy?
- 26 “When I expected good,
then evil came;
When I waited for light,
then darkness came.
- 27 “I am seething within and cannot relax;
Days of affliction confront me.
- 28 “I go about mourning without comfort;
I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help.
- 29 “I have become a brother to jackals
And a companion of ostriches.
- 30 “My skin turns black on me,
And my bones burn with fever.
- 31 “Therefore my harp is turned to mourning,
And my flute to the sound of those who weep.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 30 1 “But now those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock. 2 “Indeed, what good was the strength of their hands to me? Vigor had perished from them. 3 “From want and famine they are gaunt Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation, 4 Who pluck mallow by the bushes, And whose food is the root of the broom shrub. 5 “They are driven from the community; They shout against them as against a thief, 6 So that they dwell in dreadful valleys, In holes of the earth and of the rocks. 7 “Among the bushes they cry out; Under the nettles they are gathered together. 8 “Fools, even those without a name, They were scourged from the land. 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. 16 “And now my soul is poured out within me; Days of affliction have seized me. 17 “At night it pierces my bones within me, And my gnawing pains take no rest. 18 “By a great force my garment is distorted; It binds me about as the collar of my coat. 19 “He has cast me into the mire, And I have become like dust and ashes. 20 “I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. 21 “You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me. 22 “You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; And You dissolve me in a storm. 23 “For I know that You will bring me to death And to the house of meeting for all living. 24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help? 25 “Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? 26 “When I expected good, then evil came; When I waited for light, then darkness came. 27 “I am seething within and cannot relax; Days of affliction confront me. 28 “I go about mourning without comfort; I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help. 29 “I have become a brother to jackals And a companion of ostriches. 30 “My skin turns black on me, And my bones burn with fever. 31 “Therefore my harp is turned to mourning, And my flute to the sound of those who weep.

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- 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)
 - D. Job’s concluding soliloquy (chaps. 29–31)
 - 1. Job’s past glory (chap. 29)
 - 2. Job’s present gloom (chap. 30)
 - 3. Job’s oath of innocence (chap. 31)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. Job Considers the Fathers of Those Who Ridicule Him As Worthless 30:1–8
- II. Job Describes the Attacks of Those Who Mock Him 30:9–15
- III. Job Accuses God of Attacking Him 30:16–26
- IV. Job Cries for Help, But None Comes 30:27–31

The Outline Bible

- 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. The Present Abusive Situation (30:1–31)
 - A. Abuse from Men (30:1–15)
 - 1. His Worthless Mockers (30:1–8)
 - 2. Their Hostile Deeds (30:9–15)
 - B. Abuse from God (30:16–19)
 - C. Address to God (30:20–23)
 - D. Lamentation (30:24–31)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. Job Looks Around at God's Judgment (30)
 - A. "I have no respect" (30:1–15, see 29:7–11)
 - B. "I have no blessing" (30:16–23, see 29:2–6)
 - C. "I have no help" (30:24–25, see 29:12–17)
 - D. "I have no future" (30:26–28, see 29:18–20)
 - E. "I have no ministry" (30:29–31, see 29:21–25)

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)

- I. Redemptive Suffering Turns God's Order Upside Down (1-15)
 - A. A Portrait of the Mockers (1-8)
 - B. The Substance and Significance of Their Mockery (9-15)
- II. Redemptive Suffering is Absolutely Necessary (16-31)
 - A. Redemptive Suffering Is So Necessary That There Must Be No Answer From God to Job's Cries (16-23)
 - B. Redemptive Suffering Is So Necessary That Job Needs to Endure Unjust Suffering (24-31)

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:

- II. Job's Present Passion (chapter 30)
 - A. Ridiculed by the Children of Delinquent Fathers (1-15)
 - B. Punished by God (16-19)
 - C. Ignored by God (20-23)
 - D. Job's Lament (24-31)
 - 1. Life is Unfair (24-26)
 - 2. Life is Painful (27-31)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- II. Job's Present Passion (chapter 30)
 - A. Job Claims He's Ridiculed by Irresponsible Men (1-15)
 - B. Job Thinks He's Being Punished by God (16-19)
 - C. Job Thinks He's Being Ignored by God (20-23)
 - D. Job Laments to the Minor Key of His Life (24-31)
 - 1. The Lyrics of an Unfair Life (24-26)
 - 2. The Lyrics of a Painful Life (27-31)

Closing Points:

The Song of Jesus:

- 1. Job was mocked by sinners (v. 9).
 - 1a. Jesus was mocked by sinners (Matt. 26:68; 27:39-43).
- 2. Job was spit upon (v. 10).
 - 2a. Jesus was spit upon (Matt. 26:67; 27:30).
- 3. Job was afflicted by God (v. 11).
 - 3a. Jesus was afflicted by God (Isaiah 53:4).
- 4. Job felt the weight of delayed prayer (v. 20a).
 - 4a. Jesus felt the weight of delayed prayer (Mark 14:36).
- 5. Job felt forsaken in his sin (v. 22; cf. v. 28).
 - 5a. Jesus was forsaken for our sin (Psalm 22:1; cf. Matt. 27:46).

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job's present affliction

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): suffered at the hands of miserable men and an invisible God.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job now suffers at the hands of men and God

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: When living in the minor key sing the blues with clarity

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Job's Defense Rests (Part 3): Singing in the Minor Key

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

** See Exegetical Notes from Chapter 29 **

Job bewailed his present misery, which contrasted so starkly with his pre-disease days. He now was disrespected socially (vv. 1–15), in pain physically (vv. 16–19), abandoned spiritually (vv. 20–23), opposed socially (vv. 24–26), and exhausted physically and emotionally (vv. 27–31). [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), 752]

Job begins by complaining of the mistreatment he now receives at the hands of young men or children whose fathers were worthless people. Job attacks the fathers and ridicules them as worthless people in these verses. These fathers have produced sons who have not been taught, and so they disregarded the law as expressed in Exodus 13:8; Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:7, 20–25; Proverbs 3:12; 4:1. They are no doubt the very people who received just judgments when Job was their ruler (29:21–25). Job’s scorn of the fathers is insulting to both the sons and their fathers. [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 537]

In this second movement of Job’s final speech, the accent moves from his contemplation of his former existence in chap. 29 to his depiction of his present circumstances. It is suffused with strong feelings; almost every verse contains an expression of Job’s present bitterness. In his former life, when the protection of God was over him (29:4), he was in control and he was honored. Today, now that God has thrown him into the mire (30:19) and has turned cruel to him (30:21), he is without power and he has become an object of scorn. Three times he begins this complaint, each time with “And now” (vv 1, 9, 16), as if the contrast is only now being borne in upon him.

This movement of the speech has three distinct sections: his account of his present dishonor (vv 1–15), a description of his inner suffering which turns into a direct address to God (vv 16–23), and a lament (vv 24–31). [David J. A. Clines, *Job 21–37*, vol. 18a, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 995–996]

VERSES 30:1-8

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 “But now those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock. 2 “Indeed, what good was the strength of their hands to me? Vigor had perished from them. 3 “From want and famine they are gaunt Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation, 4 Who pluck mallow by the bushes, And whose food is the root of the broom shrub. 5 “They are driven from the community; They shout against them as against a thief, 6 So that they dwell in dreadful valleys, In holes of the earth and of the rocks. 7 “Among the bushes they cry out; Under the nettles they are gathered together. 8 “Fools, even those without a name, They were scourged from the land.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 “But now they laugh at me, men who are younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock. 2 What could I gain from the strength of their hands, men whose vigor is gone? 3 Through want and hard hunger they gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation; 4 they pick saltwort and the leaves of bushes, and the roots of the broom tree for their food. 5 They are driven out from human company; they shout after them as after a thief. 6 In the gullies of the torrents they must dwell, in holes of the earth and of the rocks. 7 Among the bushes they bray; under the nettles they huddle together. 8 A senseless, a nameless brood, they have been whipped out of the land.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 But now they mock me, men younger than I am, whose fathers I would have refused to put with my sheep dogs. 2 What use to me was the strength of their hands? Their vigor had left them. 3 Emaciated from poverty and hunger, they gnawed the dry land, the desolate wasteland by night. 4 They plucked mallow among the shrubs, and the roots of the broom tree were their food. 5 They were expelled from human society; people shouted at them as if they were thieves. 6 They are living on the slopes of the wadis, among the rocks and in holes in the ground. 7 They bray among the shrubs; they huddle beneath the thistles. 8 Foolish men, without even a name. They were forced to leave the land.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 “But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs. 2 Of what use was the strength of their hands to me, since their vigor had gone from them? 3 Haggard from want and hunger, they roamed the parched land in desolate wastelands at night. 4 In the brush they gathered salt herbs, and their food was the root of the broom bush. 5 They were banished from human society, shouted at as if they were thieves. 6 They were forced to live in the dry stream beds, among the rocks and in holes in the ground. 7 They brayed among the bushes and huddled in the undergrowth. 8 A base and nameless brood, they were driven out of the land.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 “But now those younger than I mock me, whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.

Note the time change (“but now”) from chapter 29. Cf. vv. 9, 16.

Men who are younger than I translates the Hebrew phrase “those smaller than I in days,” which many translate as younger. The question is how much younger? Respect for a person’s elders was expected as proper behavior. In 29:8 young men withdrew out of respect for Job. Dhorme suggests that the reference is to the mocking shouts of children, as in the case of Elisha in 2 Kings 2:23–24 . . . [UBS Handbook Series, 537]

In biblical times dogs were mostly scavengers, never pets. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 288]

2 “Indeed, what good was the strength of their hands to me? Vigor had perished from them.

Whom is Job addressing here?

The difficulties with the present position of these verses are these: (1) It is not clear whether it is the sons (who are mocking Job) or their fathers who are the subject of the description; in v 2 it seems to be the fathers, who have most recently been mentioned in v 1c, but in v 9 the subject seems to be the sons, without any marker of transition. [David J. A. Clines, 997]

On the assumption then that these verses do belong here, we should no doubt suppose that it is the fathers of Job’s youthful scorners who are here described. Job would then be attributing to those who dishonor him fathers who have no land or resources, nameless people (v 8), perhaps mentally disturbed (see Comment on v 8), who eke out a miserable existence on the edges of the settled land. [David J. A. Clines, 998]

The subjects of the sentences through v. 7 are identified here as youngsters/little ones and in v. 8 as “a base and nameless brood.” It was this “brood” of “youths” that mocked Job and “whose fathers I would have disdained to put with sheep dogs.” [Robert L. Alden, 288]

Job disdained their fathers, which in Hebrew is “whom I would have refused . . .”; that is, “I would not have considered letting them work with my sheepdogs.” TEV and others translate this line as a fact; RSV and many others prefer a hypothetical statement with the implied meaning “Even if someone had requested me, I would not have allowed. . . .” Although sheepdogs were valued by shepherds (see Isa 56:9–11), they were also despised as being unclean animals that scavenged for their food (1 Kgs 14:11; 21:19, 23; Psa

68:23). To call a person a “dog” was a serious insult (1 Sam 17:43; 2 Sam 3:8; 16:9), and this is still true in Arabic today. [UBS Handbook, 537–538]

Note Paul in Phil. 3:2 — “dogs.”

“Job implies that these men, presumably the fathers, were physically weak and unfit for work.” [UBS Handbook, 538]

3 “From want and famine they are gaunt who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation,

And the sense of this may be “They gnawed (something, perhaps roots) in the desert, where they groped in the waste and desolation of the darkness.” Although no solution to the problems of this obscure verse can be at all certain, TEV is recommended as a meaningful attempt. The verse may also be rendered, for example, “These people were so poor and starved at night out in the deserts, that they would chew on dry roots in the ground.” [UBS Handbook, 539]

4 who pluck mallow by the bushes, and whose food is the root of the broom shrub.

It is difficult to be more specific about the identity of the one called mallow, since this is the only mention of it. It may also occur in 24:24, where RSV has also translated mallow. Most translations which mention a specific plant here identify it, as in NAB and NEB, with “saltwort,” a plant with thick, sour leaves. Pope says of this plant that its foliage “is edible but has a sour taste and would be eaten only in dire extremity.” [UBS Handbook, 539]

The Hebrew has “the root of the broom tree is their food.” RSV and Pope interpret the words “their food” to mean “to warm oneself.” The word is used in this way in Isaiah 47:14. Pope says the broom roots make good charcoal, and this is attested in Psalm 120:4, “A warrior’s sharp arrows, with glowing coals of the broom tree.” This small tree has long slender branches, small leaves, and produces a yellow flower. For illustration and technical name of the broom tree, see *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, broom,. Translators will often be required to substitute a local bush or small tree whose roots can be eaten if someone is starving. If the roots of the broom are not edible, as Pope says, this may be even more reason for Job to say that these miserable people are reduced to eating them. It is not likely that Job is congratulating them for keeping warm through the cold desert night. It seems preferable, therefore, to translate as TEV and others. [UBS Handbook, 539–540]

Salt herbs, or saltwort, has been identified as *artiplex halimus*, an edible plant with a very sour taste. The Talmud says this plant was for the poor and those who were in danger of starving. [Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP*

Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Job 30:4]

5 “They are driven from the community; they shout against them as against a thief,

Not only are these people driven out from where others live, but at the same time people shout at them as when they shout to alert others that a thief has appeared. As after a thief is literally “like a thief.” [UBS Handbook, 540]

6 so that they dwell in dreadful valleys, in holes of the earth and of the rocks. 7 “Among the bushes they cry out; under the nettles they are gathered together. 8 “Fools, even those without a name, they were scourged from the land.

They dwell in difficult places (v. 6).

“Cry out” (v. 7) = Hebrew “bray” (as in 6:5). Maybe out of hunger.

Some have thought that the sound of animals is being ascribed to them (“hoarse cries of hunger,” says Rowley; cf. Dhorme, Hartley), but this is the only place in vv 2–8 where they would have been likened to animals, and in any case why would they be braying “under nettles”? Much more probable is the view that it is their sexual activity that is described (so Duhm, Strahan, Driver-Gray, Peake, Fohrer, Hesse): lacking houses or privacy they groan or moan (Moffatt “grunt”) in sexual pleasure among bushes in the open air, and couple upon beds no more delicious than beds of nettles. It is true that the terms “groan” (גָּהָה; in 6:5 of a hungry wild ass) and “couple” (סָפַח, lit. “are joined,” as in Isa 14:1) are not used elsewhere with these meanings, but language for sex is often quite allusive. [David J. A. Clines, 1000]

“Fools” (v. 8) same as 2:10.

Psalm 53:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God,” They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; There is no one who does good.

“Name” is used in its the sense of “fame, reputation,” and that these are people without honor. Note the importance of one’s name in antiquity.

Dishonor of the name was significant.

VERSES 30:9-15

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

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.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

9 “And now I have become their song; I am a byword to them. 10 They abhor me; they keep aloof from me; they do not hesitate to spit at the sight of me. 11 Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. 12 On my right hand the rabble rise; they push away my feet; they cast up against me their ways of destruction. 13 They break up my path; they promote my calamity; they need no one to help them. 14 As through a wide breach they come; amid the crash they roll on. 15 Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is pursued as by the wind, and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

9 Now I am mocked by their songs; I have become an object of scorn to them. 10 They despise me and keep their distance from me; they do not hesitate to spit in my face. 11 Because God has loosened my bowstring and oppressed me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. 12 The rabble rise up at my right; they trap my feet and construct their siege ramp against me. 13 They tear up my path; they contribute to my destruction, without anyone to help them. 14 They advance as through a gaping breach; they keep rolling in through the ruins. 15 Terrors are turned loose against me; they chase my dignity away like the wind, and my prosperity has passed by like a cloud.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

9 “And now those young men mock me in song; I have become a byword among them. 10 They detest me and keep their distance; they do not hesitate to spit in my face. 11 Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me, they throw off restraint in my presence. 12 On my right the tribe attacks; they lay snares for my feet, they build their siege ramps against me. 13 They break up my road; they succeed in destroying me. ‘No one can help him,’ they say. 14 They advance as through a gaping breach; amid the ruins they come rolling in. 15 Terrors overwhelm me; my dignity is driven away as by the wind, my safety vanishes like a cloud.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

9 **“And now I have become their taunt, I have even become a byword to them.**

The tables are turned . . .

“He is like a sex offender in a high-security prison full of serial murderers who regard him as worse even than they are.” [Ash, 302]

And now I have become their song: this verse repeats the thought of verse 1. The ones who do this to Job are not the miserable fathers Job depicted in verses 2–8, but their children from verse 1. FRCL makes this clear with “Now their children make up songs about me.” The word translated song here refers to the music of stringed instruments and is used in many psalm titles. In Psalm 69:12 it is used of drinking songs: “I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.” See also Lamentations 3:14, where it indicates mocking songs. In languages which do not use songs to ridicule someone, it may be necessary to say, for example, “But now their children make fun of me,” “They tell stories about me,” or “They makes jokes of me.” [UBS Handbook, 542–543]

Some translations have “song.” Could be songs or childish poetic taunts: Psalm 69:12 Those who sit in the gate talk about me, And I am the song of the drunkards.

Many scholars see this section as referring back to the children of the destitute fathers (cf. Clines).

Jesus was taunted (Mat 26:68; 27:39-43).

Job experienced sufferings similar to those of our Lord Jesus Christ. The basest of people falsely accused Him (Matt. 26:59–64), spat upon Him (v. 67), and ridiculed Him while He was suffering (Luke 23:35–39); and He became “the song of the drunkards” (Ps. 69:12). Job didn’t know it, but he was being honored by God to share in “the fellowship of His [Christ’s] sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). Though sitting in an ash heap, Job had been promoted in the highest possible way! [Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Patient, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 115]

Filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s sufferings . . .

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.**

Note the different ways v. 11 may be translated:

“Because He has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me, they have cast off the bridle before me. [NAS95]

Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. [ESV]

Because God has loosened my bowstring and oppressed me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. [HCSB]

Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me, they throw off restraint in my presence. [NIV]

Because God has loosed my cord and humbled me: the written Hebrew text has “his cord,” and the margin has a notation that it is to be read “my cord,” which both RSV and TEV accept. The Hebrew of the verbs translated loosed and humbled are in the singular, and cast off in the next line is plural. RSV and TEV supply God as the subject of the verbs in this line. My cord is understood by some to mean “my bowstring,” as in Judges 16:7–9 “God has loosed my bowstring,” which means that God has left Job defenseless or, as TEV says, “Because God has made me weak and helpless.” The HOTTP committee was divided between choosing “my cord” or “his cord” as the better text. [UBS Handbook Series, 543–544]

The Qere of the opening words is “he has loosened my cord” (חתף ירתִי). If the cord (רתִי) is a bowstring (as in Judg 16:7, 8, 9; Ps 11:2), to loosen a warrior’s cord is to incapacitate or “disarm” (NJPS) him, since arrows can be fired only from a taut bow—such as Job had in 29:20 imagined his (metaphorical) bow would always be. Or the cord could be the cord from which the quiver hangs (so apparently LXX); loosing that cord would spill one’s arrows onto the ground. A cord could also be used for girding one’s clothes about one; loosing such a cord would be a symbol of humiliation and of loss of power (cf. loosing the belt in 12:18); so Habel. And of course a cord could also be a tent cord, and loosing a cord would signify bringing someone to death; we have already seen this image in 4:21 (where it was either the tent cord being loosed or a tent peg being pulled up); so Delitzsch, Hartley. In view of the military imagery of the subsequent verses, the first interpretation is preferable. Job is then disarmed by God, in the sense that his vital powers have been fatally weakened by God (Fohrer), and he has no longer the strength to resist the onslaughts of his critics (as he described them in v 9). [David J. A. Clines, 1003]

“String/cord” could be the bow string or the tent cord. There is also a textual problem. The Masoretic Text has ירתִי, indicating “his string” with the consonants (the kethiv) and “my string” with the vowels (the qere). The Syriac and Targum have first person. [Robert L. Alden, Footnote 33 at comment on 30:11]

“Cast off the bridle” = image of a loosed horse no longer under control. The people who disdain Job are as unbridled horses against him.

Jesus was spit upon (Matthew 26:67; 27:30).

Then, as now, to “spit” was a way of showing strong disapproval formally (Num 12:14; Deut 25:9) and informally (Job 17:6; Isa 50:6).³¹ It was almost the ultimate insult (cf. Matt 26:67; 27:30 and parallels). [Robert L. Alden, 290]

12 “On the right hand their brood arises; they thrust aside my feet and build up against me their ways of destruction.

I.e. “tripped me up” or “set snares/traps.” [cf. HCSB/NIV]

“Build up” as in mounting a siege against a city wall:

It seems that the metaphor of the besieged city begins here. Casting up (ללט) paths or ramparts is the language of the siege . . . [David J. A. Clines, 1004]

The translation of v. 12 is uncertain because of one rare word, unequal lines, and the juxtaposition of words that can be fitted together only by adding to or deleting from the Hebrew text. The rare word is translated “tribe” and is from the root *prh*, “bud/blossom,” hence “brood” or “tribe” in the sense of offspring.³⁴ The verb translated “attack” often means “arise” (cf. KJV). The middle line says only, “they throw my feet,” which the NIV alone has taken as “cast a net” or “lay snares” in order to trap something.³⁵ A literal translation of the third line is, “They build their paths of destruction against me.” The same verb, *sll*, was in a similar context in 19:12.³⁶ Whatever the details, a mob of mockers set out to undo Job, using military means, although Job was speaking metaphorically. [Robert L. Alden, 290–291]

13 “They break up my path, they profit from my destruction; no one restrains them.

“Break up my path” = prevent escape. Military tactic used by armies.

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.

Some see “terrors” here as being demonic (attacks). The word בלהות used 10x in the OT (half in Job) never is explicitly linked with demons. However,

Although the word “terrors” (*ballahot*) is grammatically feminine plural, here it takes a masculine singular verb form, suggesting that it may be a personification.⁹ The same term was used in 18:14, when Bildad spoke of a “King of Terrors” parallel to the “Firstborn” of Mot (Death) in a string of personifications. If Terrors is indeed a personal entity, “Night” in 30:17 may also be a personification parallel to Terrors, and either or both could serve as the subject of the masculine singular verbs in 30:18–19. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 317]

Are they visiting Job at the town dump? Is Job still there?

As through a wide breach they come: the figure of an assault on a besieged city continues. The enemy is depicted as making a hole in the city wall and pouring in, wave upon wave. . . . Through a wide breach translates the same expression found in Amos 4:3. They come refers to soldiers or enemies entering the city. [UBS Handbook, 546]

Job next charges God with similar abuses he suffered at the hands of wicked men (the “worst of the worst”).

VERSES 30:16-19

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

16 “And now my soul is poured out within me; Days of affliction have seized me. 17 “At night it pierces my bones within me, And my gnawing pains take no rest. 18 “By a great force my garment is distorted; It binds me about as the collar of my coat. 19 “He has cast me into the mire, And I have become like dust and ashes.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

16 “And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have taken hold of me. 17 The night racks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest. 18 With great force my garment is disfigured; it binds me about like the collar of my tunic. 19 God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

16 Now my life is poured out before my eyes, and days of suffering have seized me. 17 Night pierces my bones, but my gnawing pains never rest. 18 My clothing is distorted with great force; He chokes me by the neck of my garment. 19 He throws me into the mud, and I have become like dust and ashes.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

16 “And now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me. 17 Night pierces my bones; my gnawing pains never rest. 18 In his great power God becomes like clothing to me; he binds me like the neck of my garment. 19 He throws me into the mud, and I am reduced to dust and ashes.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

16 “And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have seized me.

The same Hebrew expression is found in Psalm 42:4, where the context is a sad person recalling the past and longing for God’s presence. In a similar way Job is downcast and in despair. [UBS Handbook, 548] Cf. Lam. 2:12.

17 “At night it pierces my bones within me, and my gnawing pains take no rest.

No doubt the poet was expressing severe pain in Job’s body through these figures, but it may be necessary to avoid the figures and express the idea in a general way, as does TEV, “At night my bones all ache.” [UBS Handbook, 549]

The gnawing pains never rest (stop); Job does not rest either (cf. 7:4).

18 **“By a great force my garment is distorted; it binds me about as the collar of my coat. 19
“He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.**

Job in the hands of an angry God . . .

For the eighth time, Job mentions God’s power (cf. 9:4; 10:16; 12:13; 24:22; 26:12, 14; 27:11).
Note “Shaddai” in chapter 29.

To be like dust and ashes means: (a) that he looked haggard and emaciated, ashen in color, or (b) that he actually had ashes on his sores (cf. comments on 2:8), or (c) that he felt inwardly dejected. Ironically this anticipates Job’s later words about repenting in dust and ashes (42:6). [BKC, 752]

Verse 19: Note the ashes and Job is/was sitting in at the town dump.

Anticipates Job’s repentance in 42:6: 6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.”

VERSES 30:20-23

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

20 “I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. 21 “You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me. 22 “You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; And You dissolve me in a storm. 23 “For I know that You will bring me to death And to the house of meeting for all living.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

20 I cry to you for help and you do not answer me; I stand, and you only look at me. 21 You have turned cruel to me; with the might of your hand you persecute me. 22 You lift me up on the wind; you make me ride on it, and you toss me about in the roar of the storm. 23 For I know that you will bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

20 I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; when I stand up, You merely look at me. 21 You have turned against me with cruelty; You harass me with Your strong hand. 22 You lift me up on the wind and make me ride it; You scatter me in the storm. 23 Yes, I know that You will lead me to death—the place appointed for all who live.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

20 “I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me. 21 You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me. 22 You snatch me up and drive me before the wind; you toss me about in the storm. 23 I know you will bring me down to death, to the place appointed for all the living.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

20 “I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. 21 “You have become cruel to me; with the might of Your hand You persecute me. 22 “You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; and You dissolve me in a storm. 23 “For I know that You will bring me to death and to the house of meeting for all living.

Job renews his longstanding complaint against God expressed in 13:24; 16:9; 19:11. Note how Job referred to God as his (former) friend in chapter 29.

Job is the only speaker in the book who addresses God, but it has been some time since he did that. While there have been complaints about God, speaking of him in the third person, 17:3–5 was the last section that could be labeled “address to God.” Job’s final prayer before “the words of Job are ended” (31:40) is here. [Robert L. Alden, 293]

Verse 22, cf. what Job said of the wicked's fate:

27:21 "The east wind carries him away, and he is gone, For it whirls him away from his place.

"The wind" anticipates God's response to Job "out of a whirlwind" (38:1).

Verse 23: "death" = Sheol.

Note "the house of meeting for all living" — we all have that appointment.

[Job's] sufferings foreshadow the pain of a man who had to go right down to death, even death on a cross, before his cries would be answered. There is a terrible divine necessity about redemptive suffering. God is doing something so ultimately wonderful that unanswered prayer is the necessary price of achieving it, and Job begins to experience this. His prayers will be answered but only when his sufferings have achieved that for which God purposes them. In a deeper way it was the same for Jesus Christ. In a similar way it is yet the same for Christian people today; when God remains silent in answer to our urgent cries, it is not that he does not hear, but rather that it is somehow necessary for us to cry in vain and wait in hope until he achieves in us, and in his world, what he wills to achieve." [Ash, 305]

VERSES 30:24-26

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help? 25 “Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? 26 “When I expected good, then evil came; When I waited for light, then darkness came.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, and in his disaster cry for help? 25 Did not I weep for him whose day was hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? 26 But when I hoped for good, evil came, and when I waited for light, darkness came.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

24 Yet no one would stretch out his hand against a ruined man when he cries out to him for help because of his distress. 25 Have I not wept for those who have fallen on hard times? Has my soul not grieved for the needy? 26 But when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, darkness came.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

24 “Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man when he cries for help in his distress. 25 Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? 26 Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, or in his disaster therefore cry out for help?”

Translators appear to be divided into two groups: (1) those who depict Job as defending himself for not harming the unfortunate person who called out for help; and (2) those like RSV who depict Job justifying his pleas for help in the midst of his suffering. In the light of the following verse, it is preferable to follow the first group and translate, for example, “I never did anything to harm a person who was suffering, and who called out to me in his troubles.” [UBS Handbook, 553]

Because of the difficulties of this verse, versions differ in their wording and interpretation.⁵² The first line is literally, “Surely not in ruin does he stretch out a hand.” With the addition of one letter, “in ruin” becomes “on the needy.” RSV has “heap of ruins,” but NRSV has “the needy.”⁵³ The second line is literally, “If in his distress/disaster to them [feminine] a cry for help.”⁵⁴ As it stands in the NIV, Job was the

“broken man”; he cried “for help in his distress,” but God was not answering, as Job said in v. 20. [Robert L. Alden, 295]

Mark Twain wrote, “If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.”

25 “Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy?”

Job’s recitation of his deeds of kindness is reminiscent of Ps 35:13–14, where David found he was repaid evil for good and malice for charity. Though he lived centuries earlier, Job’s sympathy with suffering followed Paul’s admonition in Rom 12:15, “Mourn with those who mourn” (cf. 29:12–17). [Robert L. Alden, 296]

26 “When I expected good, then evil came; when I waited for light, then darkness came.

Job affirmed his care for the needy in chapter 29. He expected good in return, but received evil/darkness. No hard and fast rule that doing good things will keep one from suffering (as if Job thinks that because he helped the suffering, he would not suffer).

His three peers had done to Job what no one else would think of doing: they opposed him when he was broken and in ... distress. Yet Job had sympathized and grieved with people in their trouble. Hoping to get some help (good and light) from his friends Job got the opposite. [BKC, 753]

Verse 26, cf. 29:18-20.

Verse 29, some translations have “owls.” Cf. Isa. 13:21; 34:13; Micah 1:8.

VERSES 30:27-31

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

27 “I am seething within and cannot relax; Days of affliction confront me. 28 “I go about mourning without comfort; I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help. 29 “I have become a brother to jackals And a companion of ostriches. 30 “My skin turns black on me, And my bones burn with fever. 31 “Therefore my harp is turned to mourning, And my flute to the sound of those who weep.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

27 My inward parts are in turmoil and never still; days of affliction come to meet me. 28 I go about darkened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. 29 I am a brother of jackals and a companion of ostriches. 30 My skin turns black and falls from me, and my bones burn with heat. 31 My lyre is turned to mourning, and my pipe to the voice of those who weep.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

27 I am churning within and cannot rest; days of suffering confront me. 28 I walk about blackened, but not by the sun. I stood in the assembly and cried out for help. 29 I have become a brother to jackals and a companion of ostriches. 30 My skin blackens and flakes off, and my bones burn with fever. 31 My lyre is used for mourning and my flute for the sound of weeping.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

27 The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me. 28 I go about blackened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. 29 I have become a brother of jackals, a companion of owls. 30 My skin grows black and peels; my body burns with fever. 31 My lyre is tuned to mourning, and my pipe to the sound of wailing.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

27 **“I am seething within and cannot relax; days of affliction confront me.**

The first clause is literally “My bowels boil.” [cf. KJV] Bowels being a common ANE euphemism for the seat of inward emotions. Cf. Gk. *σπλάγχνα*.

28 **“I go about mourning without comfort; I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help.**

Note translation issue:

ESV I go about darkened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.

HCSB I walk about blackened, but not by the sun. I stood in the assembly and cried out for help.

NIV I go about blackened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.

There is a division between those translations like NIV that read “black” and those that read the color figuratively as “gloom/ mourning.” [Robert L. Alden, 296]

The term “blackened” appears to refer to Job’s skin (although some argue it may refer to his garments). The term translated “blackened” is usually used for mourning, and that would make the best sense here. The same phrase is used in Psalm 38:6 where the NIV translates “mourning.” Though it could refer to the black (goatskin) sackcloth, perhaps more likely is the black soot from the ashes that a mourner puts on their head. In verse 30 the blackened (different word) skin is related to Job’s disease. [IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, Job 30:28]

As to the question of Job’s residence during this time of lament:

When we hear that he stands up in the assembly to plead for help, we learn something we have not known before, but something that we have perhaps already long suspected. Job may have taken himself to the ash heap outside the city to bewail his sufferings (2:8), and his friends may have found him there (2:12–13). But he is not living outside the city; he is still in his house with his wife and his household servants about him (19:15–17), he is still eating, and he is still, apparently, frequenting the town gate and the assembly he pictured so graphically in chap. 29. Now, of course, he says that he “stands up” (קום) in the assembly, whereas in 29:7 he had taken his seat of honor. [David J. A. Clines, 1010]

Other views that Clines rejects (not so convincingly):

(Duhm, followed by Hartley, unconvincingly argues that Job would have been barred from the assembly, and that his language here is figurative of his public lamenting on the ash heap. Delitzsch, Duhm, Hesse, and others believe that Job has become a leper and would therefore have been disbarred from the assembly; but there is nothing of that in the text [see further on v 30]. It is equally special pleading when Fedrizzi claims that the “assembly” here is simply the group of Job’s friends, or that “in the assembly” means “openly,” as Delitzsch.) [David J. A. Clines]

29 “I have become a brother to jackals and a companion of ostriches.

. . . jackals and ostriches inhabit the deserts and are known for their mournful cries. The jackal resembles the fox in appearance, but, unlike the fox, jackals go about in bands. . . . And a companion of ostriches: 39:13–18 contains a detailed description of the ostrich. [UBS Handbook, 556]

Micah 1:8 Because of this I must lament and wail, I must go barefoot and naked; I must make a lament like the jackals And a mourning like the ostriches.

To be a brother to jackals and a companion of ostriches is like calling the pit one’s father, or the worm one’s mother or sister (17:14; cf. also Ps. 88:18b). For, with only one exception, everywhere in the Hebrew Bible where jackals’ voices are mentioned they are

presented as giving forth lamentation of mourning—as though they existed to give voice to the desolation and sterility of the wilderness.” [Janzen, 209]

30 “My skin turns black on me, and my bones burn with fever.

Other translations have “falls” or “flakes” off me:

There is a real symptom of leprosy, which some translations see in this verse, the falling off of the skin (so, e.g., NEB “my blackened skin peels off”). But this view misunderstands the Hebrew: it says, literally, “my skin is black from upon me,” but that means only that his skin upon him is black (see Note 30:30.a), not that the skin is falling off. [David J. A. Clines, 1011]

These last symptoms of Job’s malady must be taken with others to complete the picture of his intense physical discomfort. He had scabs and festering sores over his entire body (7:5), malnutrition (17:7; 19:20), a repulsive appearance (19:19), bad breath (19:17), and pain day and night (30:17). Neither his condition nor his attitude toward God had improved. [Robert L. Alden, 297]

Jesus was marred physically . . .

31 “Therefore my harp is turned to mourning, and my flute to the sound of those who weep.

Idea of an instrument that has been tuned to the sound of mourning. Living in the minor key.

My lyre is turned to mourning: in 21:11–12 Job described the happiness of the children of sinners dancing to the music of harps and flutes or, as RSV says, “lyre” and “pipe.” Here the same two instruments are mentioned. [UBS Handbook, 557]

We have previously encountered the music of harp and flute in 21:12 as accompanying the merrymaking of children. But Job’s instruments are now permanently dedicated to the service of lament (לְבָא is the funeral lament in Mic 1:8); they have been “given over” to (לְ הַיָּה, lit. “become for”) funereal music, “tuned for a dirge” (NEB), or, as Moffatt has it, “my dances turn to dirges, my lyrics to laments.” In Lam 5:15, the same trope appears: “our dancing has been turned to mourning (לְבָא).” On the instruments, the harp (רִוְנָה) and the flute (בְּגִינָה), cf. on 21:12. For the flute as mourning music, cf. Jer 48:36; Matt 9:23.

Job has been mourning his dead children, so the sounds of lament and of weepers have been echoing through his house. But the music that has changed its key is more than the sound of instruments: it is the music of his life. [David J. A. Clines, 1011]

Jesus was “a man of sorrows” . . .