**Job 29-32** - May 21st

Job’s Final Defense

**29**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.

**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.

**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.’

**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.

**30**“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 foodwas 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.  
**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.

**31**“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.  
**2**For what is our lot from God above, our heritage from the Almighty on high?  
**3**Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong?  
**4**Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

**5**“If I have walked with falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit - **6**let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless - **7**if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled,  
**8**then may others eat what I have sown, and may my crops be uprooted.

**9**“If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor’s door,  
**10**then may my wife grind another man’s grain, and may other men sleep with her.  
**11**For that would have been wicked, a sin to be judged. **12**It is a fire that burns to Destruction; it would have uprooted my harvest.

**13**“If I have denied justice to any of my servants, whether male or female, when they had a grievance against me, **4**what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account? **15**Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?

**16**“If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary,  
**17**if I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless - **18**but from my youth I reared them as a father would, and from my birth I guided the widow -   
**19**if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or the needy without garments,  
**20**and their hearts did not bless me for warming them with the fleece from my sheep,  
**21**if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, knowing that I had influence in court,  
**22**then let my arm fall from the shoulder, let it be broken off at the joint.  
**23**For I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things. **24**“If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, ‘You are my security,’  
**25**if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained,  
**26**if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor,  
**27**so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage,  
**28**then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.

**29**“If I have rejoiced at my enemy’s misfortune or gloated over the trouble that came to him - **30**I have not allowed my mouth to sin by invoking a curse against their life -   
**31**if those of my household have never said, ‘Who has not been filled with Job’s meat?’ - **32**but no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler - **33**if I have concealed my sin as people do, by hiding my guilt in my heart  
**34**because I so feared the crowd and so dreaded the contempt of the clans that I kept silent and would not go outside –

**35**(“Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense - let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put HIS indictment in writing.

**36**Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown.  
**37**I would give him an account of my every step; I would present it to Him as to a ruler.) - **38**“if my land cries out against me and all its furrows are wet with tears, **39**if I have devoured its yield without payment or broken the spirit of its tenants, **40**then let briers come up instead of wheat and stinkweed instead of barley.”

The words of Job are ended.

Elihu

**32**So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. **2**But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. **3**He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.

**4**Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he.**5**But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.

**6**So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said:

“I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. **7**I thought, ‘Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.’  
**8**But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding. **9**It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right.

**10**“Therefore I say: Listen to me; I too will tell you what I know. **11**I waited while you spoke, I listened to your reasoning; while you were searching for words, **12**I gave you my full attention. But not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments. **13**Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom; let God, not a man, refute him.’  
**14**But Job has not marshaled his words against me, and I will not answer him with your arguments. **15**“They are dismayed and have no more to say; words have failed them.  
**16**Must I wait, now that they are silent, now that they stand there with no reply?  
**17**I too will have my say; I too will tell what I know. **18**For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me; **19**inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst. **20**I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. **21**I will show no partiality, nor will I flatter anyone; **22**for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away.