

## Introduction

The most often quoted verse from Job is found in this chapter, but the whole context of the rest of the chapter is rarely presented. The ray of hope in v.25 is surrounded by the more common themes found in Job of criticism of friends, complaints to God, and personal despair. This verse is not an aberration or even something akin to hypocrisy but a valuable example that in times of extreme trials and suffering there will still be legitimate expressions of faith and hope. In Romans 8 the Apostle Paul discusses in detail the perceived contradiction of living by the Spirit but still being influenced by the flesh. This is the best explanation of believers' behavior when they are found trying out Job's shoes, that true faith is often in conflict with the influence of the flesh. Spiritually we are aware of things which our fleshly side uses to attack our endurance and are authentic beliefs in spite of all that is taking place.

## Read verses 1-6

**Q: What is the list of terms which Job uses to describe the so-called comfort his friends have provided so dare?**

<sup>1</sup>Then Job responded,  
<sup>2</sup>"How long will you torment me  
 And crush me with words?  
<sup>3</sup>These ten times you have  
 insulted me;  
 You are not ashamed to wrong  
 me.  
<sup>4</sup>Even if I have truly erred,  
 My error lodges with me.  
<sup>5</sup>If indeed you vaunt yourselves  
 against me  
 And prove my disgrace to me,  
<sup>6</sup>Know then that God has  
 wronged me  
 And has closed His net around  
 me.

- (v.2) "*torment me*": The Hebrew stresses mental sorrow in affliction.
- (v.2) "*crush me*": The Hebrew describes something broken into pieces.
- (v.3) "*insulted me*": This is not name-calling as the Hebrew describes the kind of disgrace which leads to public humiliation.
- (v.3) "*wrong me*": This is the one and only time in Scripture we find this word, which seems to describe a kind of public attack.

This list combines into a picture of something which is being inflicted publicly on Job rather than more privately just between friends. But his response cannot be mistaken for anything but a rebuttal to what his friends think they are doing and its true effect on Job.

**Application:** *This is what takes place among Christians today. Instead of visiting or calling an individual personally and conducting the exchange in private, the issues are taken directly to the public through social media or online forums and websites. Everything is conducted in a public arena in the view of the whole world. The Matthew 18 process taught by Jesus is scuttled from the outset.*

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Matthew 18:15-17

**Q: How does Job summarize the net effect of these behaviors as the primary intention of his friends?**

A: “...you vaunt yourselves against me...” (v.5) This unmistakably describes their true motives as rooted in self-promotion. The goal of these behaviors is for Job’s friends to elevate themselves at his expense.

**Application:** This is the motivation of the “Internet Christian” who wants everyone to know how many they are targeting so as to glorify their self.

**Q: What is telling in v.4?**

A: Job once again does not deny the possibility of sin.

**Q: What is the meaning of being caught in God’s net when applied to his friends?**

A: Job is stipulating that his situation is a matter of God’s sovereign intervention in his life, but his friends seem intent on placing Job in their own net. Job acknowledges the hand of God while rejecting the hand of man.

**Application:** Job’s point is that fellow believers are not **called** to speak exclusively of **sin** in another in nothing but terms of **condemnation**, but of **restoration**.

**Read verses 7-12**

**Q: What is this describing in detail which was introduced in v.6?**

A: The “net” which God has thrown around Job.

- (v.8) It has blocked his way.
- (v.10) It impedes him on every side.
- (v.12) It surrounds his tent, the very place where he lives.

**Observation:** In the next passage we will see how God’s net separates Job from all personal relationships.

**Q: What are the basic actions God’s net has resulted in which make it distinct from man’s net?**

- (v. 8) “...I cannot pass...”
- (v.9) “...stripped my honor...”
- (v.10) “...breaks me down on every side...”

7“Behold, I cry, ‘Violence!’ but I get no answer;  
I shout for help, but there is no justice.  
8He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass,  
And He has put darkness on my paths.  
9He has stripped my honor from me  
And removed the crown from my head.  
10He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone;  
And He has uprooted my hope like a tree.  
11He has also kindled His anger against me  
And considered me as His enemy.  
12His troops come together,  
And build up their way against me  
And camp around my tent.

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- (v.11) “...considered me as His enemy.”
- (v.12) “...His troops...camp around m tent.”

**Q: Why does Job begin by shouting “Violence!”?**

A: This particular Hebrew word is the exact opposite of “justice”. It is a poetic way of stating that there is no response to his cries for justice.

**Q: How might the description in v.8 of being walled in relate to Balaam and Jeremiah?**

Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side.

Numbers 22:24

He has walled me in so that I cannot go out;  
He has made my chain heavy.

Lamentations 3:7

**Q: How might it harken back to the opening of the book of Job and Satan’s original set of accusations?**

“Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Job 1:10

**Q: What multiplier was being experienced that made being hedged in even more difficult?**

A: “Darkness”. (v.8)

**Q: How was the dual aspects of being hedged in and darkness something Job recognized from the outset?**

“Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,  
And whom God has hedged in?

Job 3:23

**Q: What does v.9 describe as being lost?**

A: Job’s self-esteem.

**Q: How do the major contrasts in v.10 combine to accurately describe both his person and hope as having left?**

A: “Breaks me down on every side” in the Hebrew portrays an idol’s altar or a building being completely dismantled, while “uprooted...like a tree” is to be completely removed and thrown away.

**Observation:** In Job 14:7 Job said there is hope for a tree that is cut down that it will sprout again, but here no such hope exists as it is completely uprooted and thrown away.

**Q: How does Job repeat the same mistake in v.11-12 as his friends have been making?**

A: Job judges God's motives according to the circumstances. We know from what was established from the outset that God is not angry with Job nor are God's forces the agents of these conditions. In the end in Job 42:7, God will clearly stipulate with whom He is angry.

It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.

Job 42:7

**Application:** Job may be more **right** more often than his friends, but he occasionally endorses the same **errors** as well. He recognizes God's **sovereignty**, but not necessarily in the **tools** by which it is dispensed.

### Read verses 13-22

**Q: As Job now describes being cut off from personal relationships, who does he specifically list in this passage?**

<sup>13</sup>“He has removed my brothers far from me,  
And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.

<sup>14</sup>My relatives have failed,  
And my intimate friends have forgotten me.

<sup>15</sup>Those who live in my house and my maids consider me a stranger.

I am a foreigner in their sight.

<sup>16</sup>I call to my servant, but he does not answer;

I have to implore him with my mouth.

<sup>17</sup>My breath is offensive to my wife,

And I am loathsome to my own brothers.

<sup>18</sup>Even young children despise me;

I rise up and they speak against me.

<sup>19</sup>All my associates abhor me,  
And those I love have turned against me.

- (v.13) “my brothers”
- (v.13) “my acquaintances”
- (v.14) “my relatives”
- (v.14) “my intimate friends”
- (v.15) “those who live in my house”
- (v.15) “my maids”
- (v.16) “my servant”
- (v.17) “my wife”
- (v.17) “my own brothers”
- (v.18) “young children”
- (v.19) “all my associates”
- (v.19) “those I love”

**Q: What are some of the accompanying actions which have resulted in Job becoming “a stranger” and complete “foreigner in their sight”?**

- (v.13) “removed...from me”
- (v.13) “completely estranged”
- (v.14) “forgotten me”
- (v.16) “does not answer”

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<sup>20</sup>My bone clings to my skin and  
my flesh,  
And I have escaped only by the  
skin of my teeth.  
<sup>21</sup>Pity me, pity me, O you my  
friends,  
For the hand of God has struck  
me.  
<sup>22</sup>Why do you persecute me as  
God does,  
And are not satisfied with my  
flesh?

<sup>23</sup>“Oh that my words were  
written!  
Oh that they were inscribed in a  
book!  
<sup>24</sup>That with an iron stylus and  
lead  
They were engraved in the rock  
forever!  
<sup>25</sup>As for me, I know that my  
Redeemer lives,  
And at the last He will take His  
stand on the earth.  
<sup>26</sup>Even after my skin is  
destroyed,  
Yet from my flesh I shall see  
God;  
<sup>27</sup>Whom I myself shall behold,  
And whom my eyes will see and  
not another.  
My heart faints within me!  
<sup>28</sup>If you say, ‘How shall we  
persecute him?’  
And ‘What pretext for a case  
against him can we find?’  
<sup>29</sup>Then be afraid of the sword  
for yourselves,  
For wrath brings the  
punishment of the sword,  
So that you may know there is  
judgment.”

**Point:** While the failed attempts of his three friends to comfort him torture Job, the greater concern is for all those who have turned silent and abandoned him.

**Application:** Many consider hatred to be the opposite of love. Instead he is experiencing its true polar opposite: indifference. This is characterized by silence and lack of attention.

**Q: What is being expressed in v.20?**

A: This actually connects with v.21-22 to summarize his astonishment at his complete abandonment by everyone he knows. It is an idiomatic way of stating that his emaciated physical appearance alone should have warranted a heartfelt reaction from these people.

**Application:** When people believe a fellow believer is being **persecuted** by God, they often believe they are doing God's **will** by becoming **persecutors** themselves. If they believe God no longer **cares** for such, they will become **indifferent**.

### Read verses 23-29

**Q: Is there a difference between “written” and “inscribed”?**

- The Hebrew “*kathab*” for “written” carries with it a meaning that does not merely mean something preserved in writing, but something that is recorded or enrolled.
- The Hebrew “*chaqqaq*” for “inscribed” takes it further from something written on paper or a scroll to embedded in stone.

Together these describe what in modern terms we would call “documented” and preserved for posterity for future generations in something akin to the Library of Congress.

**Q: What might be the most important question for proper interpretation of v.23-24? What does Job want forever documented?**

A: We must decide whether Job is referring to all the words he has spoken, to just the famous statement he is about to make in the following verse, or both.

**Point:** It is this author's opinion that it is both. This is significant because while Job wants all his open-ended questions and loose ends documented for posterity, he even more so wants them qualified with the fact that his faith in the sovereignty of God is still the priority even at this unresolved point in the overall process.

**Q: Why was this an extremely important statement when Job was first distributed to believers of that time?**

A: No other books of the Bible existed, so this is the earliest documentation that a time will come when God will visit the earth. It is no longer just death and taxes which are inevitable, but a formal end to all things.

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**Q: How will the term “Redeemer” be used when the Torah is finally written and shared?**

A: The Hebrew term “ga’al” describes getting property released from hock (Lev. 19:29), or what a close friend or relative does to get someone out of slavery (Lev. 19:17-18) or out of debt (Lev. 19:25).

**Q: What might be a first-time concept in v.26-27 which will germinate as one of the major themes and theological concepts in the rest of Scripture?**

A: Resurrection. “Even after my flesh I destroyed...I shall see God”.

**Q: Why does Job occasionally express such spectacular demonstrations of faith in the midst of the expressions of despair and complaints about his friends? Is he being a hypocrite?**

A: A true hypocrite would over-emphasize such statements in an effort to cover up the whole range of what he is feeling and experiencing. This phenomenon may best be explained by the old-time axiom, “Diamonds are best displayed on black velvet”.

**Q: How might the final verses directed at Job’s friends be rendered in the New Testament?**

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.

Luke 6:37

“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

John 7:24

**Application:** Though Job would **die** and his documented and preserved testimony would stand in **silence**, he anticipated

### Overall Application

- Have we ever seen what are clear signs of God’s displeasure with someone as an invitation to join in with that displeasure? How did we determine this was God’s mind and intention in the first place?
- What happens when we side with the righteousness of God to the exclusion of His love, grace and mercy?
- Have we ever considered that our struggling brethren may endorse a wrong view of what God is doing, but earnestly believe it? How do you address that matter, or should you even try?
- How should we handle a statement of faith in the midst of cries of overwhelming suffering?