

## CbC to Feb. 15

February 9 Su Reading A40 — Job 29 — The Good Old Days

Audio link: [Job 29 \(ESV\)](#)

**Giving Up or Going On?** — Job looked back with sadness on his earlier days of wealth, relationships, respect, and helping others. It is somewhat like getting old. I look back on the days when I used to be able to do things physically that I cannot do anymore. I am not able to remember things as well as I used to, and I get more easily confused now. Job was lamenting about how things used to be for him. He began by saying, “*Oh, that I were as in the months of old...*” (v. 2). He remembered times when he had “*the friendship of God*” (v. 4) that had mysteriously disappeared. His children were gone (v. 5) as was his easily gained wealth (v. 6). He used to enjoy great respect from others (vv. 7-11) because of his help for people who were needy (v. 17). Job felt like his life was over, but it wasn’t. Do you ever feel that way? Job’s life was not finished yet, and neither is yours nor mine. Even if things are not like they used to be, and even if we cannot do things others can do, God still has a plan for us where we are. Don’t stop growing! Don’t stop giving!

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February 10 M Reading A41 — Job 30 — Job Laments His Condition

Audio link: [Job 30 \(ESV\)](#)

**Excessive Misery** — This chapter reminds me of the comical song they used to sing on the Country Western TV show, “Hee Haw”:

Gloom, despair, and agony on me,  
Deep, dark depression, excessive misery.  
If it weren’t for bad luck, I’d have no luck at all.  
Gloom, despair, and agony on me.

There was no comedy, however, in Job’s situation or how he felt. People who used to be considered the lowest in society were now laughing at Job (v. 1), abhorring him (v. 10), and promoting his calamity (v. 13). He was the object of ridicule and abuse just because he was weak. Job described that physical weakness, saying that “*the pain that gnaws me takes no rest*” (v. 17). He really blamed God for his problem, saying that “*God has ... humbled me*” (v. 11) and that “*with the might of your hand you persecute me*” (v. 21). On top of that, Job said, “*I cry to you for help and you do not answer me*” (v. 20), emphasizing his feelings of isolation. It seemed so unfair because Job remembered when he was well and wealthy: “*Did I not weep for him whose day was hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy?*” (v. 25). Sometimes our circumstances seem undeserved, and sometimes they are. Job’s situation was not hopeless, however, and neither is ours, because God is on the side of those He loves: “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*” (Rom. 8:28). Like Job, we need to endure because God has something good waiting for us in the future.

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February 11 Tu Reading A42 — Job 31 — Where Have I Sinned?

Audio link: [Job 31 \(ESV\)](#)

**Categories of Sin** — In this final chapter of Job’s response to his friends, 18 times he used the conditional “*if*” to ask for evidence regarding where he had sinned. The potential categories he explored were moral impurity (vv. 1-4; 9-12), integrity (vv. 5-8), ignoring complaints (vv. 13-15), neglecting the needy (vv. 16-23; 31-32), worshiping wealth or heavenly objects (vv. 24-28), wishing punishment for enemies (vv. 29-30), and hiding sin (vv. 33-34). Do you see yourself in any of those categories? With which one do you have the greatest struggle? It would be good to bring that weakness before the Lord in prayer, asking Him to change your heart’s attitude toward it and to give you the strength and persistence you need to find victory over it. Job cried out for God to hear him and to answer him (v. 35), because he saw himself to be blameless in all these categories, and so did God. May that be true of us as well.

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**Slow to Speak** — This chapter introduces a surprise fourth person among Job's visitors, the young Elihu. His long speech matches Job's in the previous six chapters, even surpassing it by four verses. I remember that when I was a new Christian, I was positively impressed by Elihu, probably because I was young, too. I now see him in a different light. Now, he seems brash, proud, and accusing. His brashness is shown four times in the first paragraph with the expression that he "*burned with anger*" against Job and his friends. His pride is seen in his triple insistence that he would "*declare my opinion*" (vv. 6, 10, 17) and his claim, "*I do not know how to flatter*" (v. 22). His accusing attitude is shown toward his friends who could not find the wisdom to refute Job (vv. 12-13). How do we appear to others when we interact with them? Do we seem to be brash as we "burn" to share our proud opinions? Do we show disrespect by expressing our critical attitudes that belittle the opinions of others? Rather, we should take the later advice of Solomon: "*Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God ... Therefore let your words be few*" (Eccl. 5:2). Slow to speak and slow to anger.

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**Put Listening First** — The prideful speech of Elihu continues in this chapter. Five times, he told Job to listen to what he had to say: "*listen to all my words*" (v. 1), "*I will answer you*" (v. 12), "*listen to me ... I will speak*" (v. 31), and "*listen to me ... and I will teach you wisdom*" (v. 33). That reminds me of the typical argument between two people when neither one is listening carefully to what the other is saying because they are thinking about how they will reply. Their purpose is winning rather than reconciling. A similar thing could be said about many of our prayers, when we are much more interested in what we want to tell God than what we want to hear from Him. It is self-centeredness and pride. What God has to say to us is much more important than what we want to say to Him. He speaks to us through His Word, and we "hear" if we search it with humility and hunger. Before we read each day, we should pray, reflecting on His goodness and requesting His guidance. His Word is truth and life.

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**What is Right?** — In the first half of this chapter, Elihu continued his desire to be heard. Each time, he suggested that if his listeners were wise, they would agree with him (vv. 2, 10, 16). It seems to be natural that everyone thinks that their own opinion is the right one. In verses 4-6, Elihu used a play on the word "*right*." First, there is absolute right: "*Let us choose what is right*" (v. 4). The words and the way of God are ultimately right, so that truth is the "*right*" we should choose. When we have differences of opinion with each other, we should first ask ourselves, "What does God say about that?" The problem comes, however, when Christians have different opinions about the meaning of what God does say regarding a particular subject of concern. Which interpretation is right? Whole denominations of churches have formed over some of these major differences of Bible-based opinion. With these differences, we need to be generous and gracious toward those who differ with us, acknowledging that significant differences do exist among godly people who are striving to please God. Second, there is also the meaning of "*right*" in the sense of righteousness. Job had declared, "*I am in the right*" (v. 5a), because he knew that he had not sinned against God. We should all be adjusting our ways to fit with how God clearly describes righteousness in His Word. The third way the word "*right*" is used in this chapter is in the sense of justice, i.e., "what I deserve." Job said that "*God has taken away my right*" (v. 5b). He felt that his blameless and upright life should have merited more favor from God than what he was seeing happening to him in his circumstances. Job felt mistreated

by God. Even though we are not as blameless as Job, we also sometimes feel that God should be treating us in a kindlier way. God is always right, however, and we are often wrong.

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February 15 Sa Reading A46 — Job 35 — Do You Matter to God?

Audio link: [Job 35 \(ESV\)](#)

**Righteousness Pleases God** — This chapter begins with Elihu zeroing in on Job's feeling that he was not receiving justice from God. Elihu said, "*I will answer you*" (v. 4), and proceeded to suggest that neither our wickedness nor our righteousness affects God. Regarding wickedness, he asked, "*if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to him?*" (v. 6), essentially saying that our sins do not negatively hurt God. This, however, goes against what Isaiah said about Israel, that "*they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy...*" (Isa. 63:10). It is also contrary to Paul's command: "*do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*" (Eph. 4:30). Our sin *does* hurt God, and that is enough reason for us to avoid it. On the positive side, Elihu also asked, "*If you are righteous, what do you give to him?*" (v. 7). Elihu doubted that God benefits by our righteousness, but that is also not true. David said of God that He has "*pleasure in uprightness*" (1 Chron. 29:17). Paul said that financial support for him from the Philippian church was "*pleasing to God*" (Phil. 4:18). It is also pleasing to God when we bear fruit in good works (Col. 1:10). Supporting aging parents "*is pleasing in the sight of God*" (1 Tim. 5:4), and Enoch's faith pleased God (Heb. 11:5). Living righteously does please God.