
JOB 30: 1 "But now those who are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs.

Job proceeds to lament the change of his former condition, and the contempt into which his adversity had brought him, Job 30:1-15. Pathetically describes the afflictions of his body and mind, vv. 16-31.

Verse 1

But now they that are younger than I have me in derision - Compare this with Job 29:8, where he speaks of the respect he had from the youth while in the days of his prosperity. Now he is no longer affluent, and they are no longer respectful.

Dogs of my flock - Persons who were not deemed sufficiently respectable to be trusted with the care of those dogs which were the guardians of my flocks. Not confidential enough to be made shepherds, ass-keepers, or camel-drivers; nor even to have the care of the dogs by which the flocks were guarded. This saying is what we call an expression of sovereign contempt.

JOB 30: 2 Of what use is the strength of their hands to me, men in whom ripe age has perished?

Verse 2

The strength of their hands profit me - He is speaking here of the fathers of these young men. What was the strength of their hands to me? Their old age also has perished. The sense of which I believe to be this: I have never esteemed their strength even in their most vigorous youth, nor their conduct, nor their counsel even in old age. They were never good for any thing, either young or old. As their youth was without profit, so their old age was without honor. See Calmet. Mr. Good contends that the words are Arabic, and should be translated according to the meaning in that language, and the first clause of the third verse joined to the latter clause of the second, without which no good meaning can be elicited so as to keep properly close to the letter. I shall give the Hebrew text, Mr. Good's Arabic, and its translation: -

The Hebrew text is this: - כלח עליו אבד כלח עליו אבד כלח עליו אבד becheser ubechaphan galmud.

The Arabic version which he translates thus: - "With whom crabbed looks are perpetual,
From hunger and flinty famine."

This translation is very little distant from the import of the present Hebrew text, if it may be called Hebrew, when the principal words are pure Arabic, and the others constructively so.

JOB 30: 3 They are gaunt from lack and famine. They gnaw the dry ground, in the gloom of waste and desolation.

Verse 3

Fleeing into the wilderness - Seeking something to sustain life even in the barren desert. This shows the extreme of want, when the desert is supposed to be the only place where any thing to sustain life can possibly be found.

JOB 30: 4 They pluck salt herbs by the bushes. The roots of the broom are their food.

Verse 4

Who cut up mallows by the bushes - מלוח *malluach*, which we translate mallows, comes from מלח *melach*, salt; some herb or shrub of a salt nature, sea-purslane, or the *salsaria*, *salsola*, or saltwort. Bochart says it is the *άλμωος* of the Greeks, and the *halimus* of the Romans. Some translate it nettles. The Syriac and Arabic omit the whole verse. The *halimus*, or *atriplex halimus*, grows near the sea in different countries, and is found in Spain, America, England, and Barbary. The *salsaria*, *salsola*, or saltwort, is an extensive genus of plants, several common to Asia, and not a few indigenous to a dry and sandy soil.

And juniper roots for their meat - רתמים *rethamim*. This is variously translated juniper, broom, furze, gorse, or whin. It is supposed to derive its name from the toughness of its twigs, as רתם *ratham* signifies to bind; and this answers well enough to the broom. *Genista quoque vinculi usum praestat*, "The broom serves for bands," says Pliny, *Hist. Nat. lib. xxiv., c. 9*. But how can it be said that the roots of this shrub were eaten? I do not find any evidence from Asiatic writers that the roots of the juniper tree were an article of food; and some have supposed, because of this want of evidence, that the word לחמם *lachmam*, for their bread, should be understood thus, to bake their bread, because it is well known that the wood of the juniper gives an intense heat, and the coals of it endure a long time; and therefore we find coals of juniper, גחלי רתמים *gachaley rethamim*, used *Psa 120:4* to express severe and enduring punishment. But that the roots of the juniper were used for food in the northern countries, among the Goths, we have a positive testimony from Olaus Magnus, himself a Goth, and archbishop of Upsal, in *lib. vii., c. 4*, of his *Hist. de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*. Speaking of the great number of different trees in their woods, he says: "There is a great plenty of beech trees in all the northern parts, the virtue whereof is this: that, being cut between the bark and the wood, they send forth a juice that is good for drink. The fruit of them in famine serves for bread, and their bark for clothing. Likewise also the berries of the juniper, yea, even the roots of this tree are eaten for bread, as holy Job testifies, though it is difficult to come at them by reason of their prickles: in these prickles, or thorns, live coals will last a whole year. If the inhabitants do not quench them, when winds arise they set the woods on fire, and destroy all the circumjacent fields." In this account both the properties of the juniper tree, referred to by Job and David, are mentioned by the Gothic prelate. They use its berries and roots for food, and its wood for fire.

JOB 30: 5 They are driven out from the midst of men. They cry after them as after a thief;

Verse 5

They were driven forth - They were persons whom no one would employ; they were driven away from the city; and if any of them appeared, the hue and cry was immediately raised up against them. The last clause Mr. Good translates, "They slunk away from them like a thief," instead of "They cried after them," etc.

JOB 30: 6 So that they dwell in frightful valleys, and in holes of the earth and of the rocks.

Verse 6

To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys - They were obliged to take shelter in the most dangerous, out-of-the-way, and unfrequented places. This is the meaning.

JOB 30: 7 Among the bushes they bray; and under the nettles they are gathered together.

Verse 7

Among the bushes they brayed - They cried out among the bushes, seeking for food, as the wild ass when he is in want of provender. Two MSS. read ינאקו yinaku, they groaned, instead of ינהקו yinhaku, they brayed.

Under the nettles - חרול charul, the briars or brambles, under the brushwood in the thickest parts of the underwood; they huddled together like wild beasts.

JOB 30: 8 They are children of fools, yes, children of base men. They were flogged out of the land.

Verse 8

Children of fools - Children of nabal; children without a name; persons of no consideration, and descendants of such.

Viler than the earth - Rather, driven out of the land; persons not fit for civil society.

JOB 30: 9 "Now I have become their song. Yes, I am a byword to them.

Verse 9

Now am I their song - I am the subject of their mirth, and serve as a proverb or by-word. They use me with every species of indignity.

JOB 30: 10 They abhor me, they stand aloof from me, and don't hesitate to spit in my face.

 Verse 10

They abhor me - What a state must civil society be in when such indignities were permitted to be offered to the aged and afflicted!

JOB 30: 11 For he has untied his cord, and afflicted me; and they have thrown off restraint before me.

Verse 11

Because he hath loosed my cord - Instead of יתרי yithri, my cord, which is the keri or marginal reading, יתרו yithro, his cord, is the reading of the text in many copies; and this reading directs us to a metaphor taken from an archer, who, observing his butt, sets his arrow on the string, draws it to a proper degree of tension, levels, and then loosing his hold, the arrow flies at the mark. He hath let loose his arrow against me; it has hit me; and I am wounded. The Vulgate understood it in this way: Pharetram enim suam aperuit. So also the Septuagint: Ανοιξας γαρ φαρετραν αυτου; "He hath opened his quiver."

They have also let loose the bridle - When they perceived that God had afflicted me, they then threw off all restraints; like headstrong horses, swallowed the bit, got the reins on their own neck, and ran off at full speed.

JOB 30: 12 On my right hand rise the rabble. They thrust aside my feet, They cast up against me their ways of destruction.

Verse 12

Upon my right hand rise the youth - The word פרחח pirschach, which we translate youth, signifies properly buds, or the buttons of trees. Mr. Good has younglings. Younkers would be better, were it not too colloquial.

They push away my feet - They trip up my heels, or they in effect trample me under their feet. They rush upon and overwhelm me. They are violently incensed against me. They roll themselves upon me, היתגלגלו hithgalgalu, velut unda impellit undam, as waves of the sea which wash the sand from under the feet, and then swamp the man to the bottom; see Job 30:14.

JOB 30: 13 They mar my path, They set forward my calamity, without anyone's help.

Verse 13

They mar my path - They destroy the way-marks, so that there is no safety in travelling through the deserts, the guide-posts and way-marks being gone. These may be an allusion here to a besieged

city: the besiegers strive by every means and way to distress the besieged; stopping up the fountains, breaking up the road, raising up towers to project arrows and stones into the city, called here raising up against it the ways of destruction, Job 30:12; preventing all succor and support.

They have no helper - "There is not an adviser among them." - Mr. Good. There is none to give them better instruction.

JOB 30: 14 As through a wide breach they come, in the midst of the ruin they roll themselves in.

Verse 14

They came upon me as a wide breaking in - They storm me on every side.

In the desolation they rolled themselves - When they had made the breach, they rolled in upon me as an irresistible torrent. There still appears to be an allusion to a besieged city: the sap, the breach, the storm, the flight, the pursuit, and the slaughter. See the following verse, Job 30:15 (note).

JOB 30: 15 Terrors have turned on me. They chase my honour as the wind. My welfare has passed away as a cloud.

Verse 15

Terrors are turned upon me - Defence is no longer useful; they have beat down my walls.

They pursue my soul as the wind - I seek safety in flight, my strong holds being no longer tenable; but they pursue me so swiftly, that it is impossible for me to escape. They follow me like a whirlwind; and as fast as that drives away the clouds before it, so is my prosperity destroyed. The word נדבתי nedibathi, which we translate my soul, signifies properly my nobility, my excellence: they endeavor to destroy both my reputation and my property.

JOB 30: 16 "Now my soul is poured out within me. Days of affliction have taken hold on me.

JOB 30: 17 In the night season my bones are pierced in me, and the pains that gnaw me take no rest.

JOB 30: 18 By great force is my garment disfigured. It binds me about as the collar of my coat.

Verse 18

Is my garment changed - There seem to be here plain allusions to the effect of his cruel disease; the whole body being enveloped with a kind of elephantine hide, formed by innumerable incrustations from the ulcerated surface.

It bindeth me about - There is now a new kind of covering to my body, formed by the effects of this disease; and it is not a garment which I can cast off; it is as closely attached to me as the collar of my coat. Or, my disease seizes me as a strong armed man; it has throttled me, and cast me in the mud.

This is probably an allusion to two persons struggling: the stronger seizes the other by the throat, brings him down, and treads him in the dirt.

JOB 30: 19 He has cast me into the mire. I have become like dust and ashes.

JOB 30: 20 I cry to you, and you do not answer me. I stand up, and you gaze at me.

Verse 20

I cry unto thee - I am persecuted by man, afflicted with sore disease, and apparently forsaken of God.

I stand up - Or, as some translate, "I persevere, and thou lookest upon me." Thou seest my desolate, afflicted state; but thine eye doth not affect thy heart. Thou leavest me unsupported to struggle with my adversities.

JOB 30: 21 You have turned to be cruel to me. With the might of your hand you persecute me.

Verse 21

Thou art become cruel to me - Thou appearest to treat me with cruelty. I cry for mercy, trust in thy goodness, and am still permitted to remain under my afflictions.

Thou opposest thyself - Instead of helping, thou opposest me; thou appearest as my enemy.

JOB 30: 22 You lift me up to the wind, and drive me with it. You dissolve me in the storm.

Verse 22

Thou liftest me up to the wind - Thou hast so completely stripped me of all my substance, that I am like chaff lifted up by the wind; or as a straw, the sport of every breeze; and at last carried totally away, being dissipated into particles by the continued agitation.

JOB 30: 23 For I know that you will bring me to death, To the house appointed for all living.

Verse 23

Thou wilt bring me to death - This must be the issue of my present affliction: to God alone it is possible that I should survive it.

To the house appointed for all living - Or to the house, מועד moed, the rendezvous, the place of general assembly of human beings: the great devourer in whose jaws all that have lived, now live, and shall live, must necessarily meet. " - O great man-eater!

Whose every day is carnival; not sated yet!

Unheard of epicure! without a fellow!

The veriest gluttons do not always cram!

Some intervals of abstinence are sought

To edge the appetite: thou seekest none.

Methinks the countless swarms thou hast devour'd,

And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,

This, less than this, might gorge thee to the full.

But O! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more,

Like one, whole days defrauded of his meals,

On whom lank hunger lays her skinny hand,

And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings;

As if diseases, massacres, and poisons,

Famine, and war, were not thy caterers."

The Grave.

JOB 30: 24 "However doesn't one stretch out a hand in his fall? Or in his calamity therefore cry for help?"

Verse 24

He will not stretch out his hand to the grave - After all that has been said relative to the just translation and true meaning of this verse, is it not evident that it is in the mouth of Job a consolatory reflection? As if he said, Though I suffer here, I shall not suffer hereafter. Though he add stroke to stroke, so as to destroy my life, yet his displeasure shall not proceed beyond the grave.

Though they cry in his destruction - Mr. Good translates: Surely there, in its ruin, is freedom. In the sepulcher there is freedom from calamity, and rest for the weary.

JOB 30: 25 Didn't I weep for him who was in trouble? Wasn't my soul grieved for the needy?"

Verse 25

Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? - Mr. Good translates much nearer the sense of the original, לִקְשֶׁה יוֹם *liksheh yom*. "Should I not then weep for the ruthless day?" May I not lament that my sufferings are only to terminate with my life? Or, Did I not mourn for those who suffered by times of calamity? Was not my soul grieved for the poor? Did I not relieve the distressed according to my power; and did I not sympathize with the sufferer?

JOB 30: 26 When I looked for good, then evil came; When I waited for light, there came darkness.

JOB 30: 27 My heart is troubled, and doesn't rest. Days of affliction have come on me.

Verse 27

My bowels boiled - This alludes to the strong commotion in the bowels which every humane person feels at the sight of one in misery.

JOB 30: 28 I go mourning without the sun. I stand up in the assembly, and cry for help.

Verse 28

I went mourning without the sun - חַמָּה *chammah*, which we here translate the sun, comes from a root of the same letters, which signifies to hide, protect, etc., and may be translated, I went mourning without a protector or guardian; or, the word may be derived from חָם *cham*, to be hot, and here it may signify fury, rage, anger; and thus it was understood by the Vulgate: *Maerens incedebam, sine furore, I went mourning without anger*; or, as Calmet translates, *Je marchois tout triste, mais sans me laisser aller à l'emportement*; "I walked in deep sadness, but did not give way to an angry spirit." The Syriac and Arabic understood it in the same way.

JOB 30: 29 I am a brother to jackals, and a companion to ostriches.

Verse 29

I am a brother to dragons - By my mournful and continual cry I resemble תַּנִּיִּם *tannim*, the jackals or hyenas.

And a companion to owls - בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה *benoth yaanah*, to the daughters of howling: generally understood to be the ostrich; for both the jackal and the female ostrich are remarkable for their mournful cry, and for their attachment to desolate places - Dodd.

JOB 30: 30 My skin grows black and peels from me. My bones are burned with heat.

Verse 30

My skin is black - By continual exposure to the open air, and parching influence of the sun.

My bones are burned with heat - A strong expression, to point out the raging fever that was continually preying upon his vitals.

JOB 30: 31 Therefore my harp has turned to mourning, and my pipe into the voice of those who weep.

Verse 31

My harp also is turned to mourning - Instead of the harp, my only music is my own plaintive cries.

And my organ - What the עגב *uggab* was, we know not; it was most probably some sort of pipe or wind instrument. His harp, כנור *kinnor*, and his pipe, עגב *uggab*, were equally mute, or only used for mournful ditties.

This chapter is full of the most painful and pathetic sorrow; but nevertheless tempered with a calmness and humiliation of spirit, which did not appear in Job's lamentations previously to the time in which he had that remarkable revelation mentioned in the nineteenth chapter. (Job 19:25) After he was assured that his Redeemer was the living God, he submitted to his dispensations, kissed the rod, and mourned not without hope, though in deep distress, occasioned by his unremitting sufferings. If the groaning of Job was great, his stroke was certainly heavy.