

# Job 29:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;

## Analysis

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**When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil**—Job employs extravagant metaphors of abundance. The Hebrew *chema* (חֵמָה), translated 'butter,' refers to cream or curds, luxury dairy products. The hyperbolic image of washing one's feet in cream depicts wealth so excessive that expensive foods become commonplace. Ancient olive oil production required significant labor, making oil a valuable commodity; the phrase **the rock poured me out rivers of oil** (*tsur* צָר, rock; *peleg* פְּלֵג, streams) suggests supernatural abundance—even barren stone yielded bounty.

This verse employs merism, using extremes (butter/oil, steps/rock) to convey totality: Job's former prosperity knew no bounds. The rock imagery recalls Moses striking the rock to produce water (Exodus 17:6), but Job's experience surpassed mere water to the more precious oil. Oil symbolized blessing, anointing, and the Spirit's presence (Psalm 23:5, 133:2). Job's language anticipates the messianic age when mountains drip with wine and hills flow with milk (Joel 3:18). His present destitution makes this memory of abundance particularly poignant—a stark before/after contrast defining the book's dramatic tension.

## Historical Context

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Job 29 is Job's final monologue before God speaks, reflecting on his former honor and prosperity before calamity struck. This nostalgic recollection dates to the patriarchal period (c. 2000-1800 BC) when wealth was measured in livestock,

servants, and agricultural yield. The ancient Near East valued hospitality and generosity as marks of a great man; Job's oil and butter abundance would have enabled lavish hospitality. Olive oil served multiple functions: cooking, lighting lamps, anointing, and medicine, making it essential to daily life and religious ritual.

## Related Passages

## **Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith**

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## **Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds**

## **Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment**

## Study Questions

1. How does Job's memory of past prosperity intensify his current suffering, and how do you handle losses that contrast sharply with former blessings?
2. What does Job's description of abundance teach about viewing material blessings as gifts meant for generous stewardship?
3. How does this verse's metaphorical language about supernatural provision point forward to God's abundant grace in Christ?

## Interlinear Text

ברוח ז	ברוח ז	בליכי	בחם ה	יצ ור	יצ ור	עד
When I washed	my steps	with butter	and the rock	poured me out		H5978
H7364	H1978	H2529	H6697	H6694		

**רִבְבָּי** שְׂמָן: rivers of oil H6388 H8081

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 81:16** (Parallel theme): He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

**Job 20:17** (Parallel theme): He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

**Genesis 49:11** (Parallel theme): Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

**Deuteronomy 33:24** (Parallel theme): And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.

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