

Job's Last Defense

Chapter Thirty-One

Job 31:1-4

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does not he see my ways and number all my steps?”

Job's Proclaimed His Innocence

- In this chapter Job makes a final statement to his three friends concerning his innocence.
- Job continued to assert his innocence before God and in this chapter he recorded righteous works that he had done in his defense.
- A phrase used 17 times in chapter 31, is “**if I...**”.
- Job said in effect “if I have not been righteous in my actions before God and man then let God intervene and impose a curse which Job had designated upon himself.

- Job's theology at this time in his story was founded upon his performance: **Does not He see my ways.**
- Job believed that his good deeds had out weighed any evil deed that he might have done therefore Job did not deserve calamity from God.
- Job said that **calamity was for the unrighteous and disasters for the workers of iniquity.**
- Job wondered that if God saw his ways and how pure he was in his good deeds then how could God not vindicate him because **calamity was for the unrighteous and workers of iniquity.**

- “The material is similar in form, if not in content, to the negative confession given by the deceased who stands before Osiris in the Egyptian Book of the Dead... Under oath **the subject lists the evil things he has not done with the hope he will be vindicated** and pass through the portals unscathed.”-Smick, Elmer
- “It is an oath of clearance in the form of a negative confession. The procedure was well known in ancient jurisprudence. A crime could be disowned by calling down a curse on oneself if one had committed it.”- Andersen, Francis

Job's Deeds Were Righteous

- This chapter is one of the most amazing accounts in the Bible of what it looks like to be a righteous person and walk in God's way.
- Job gives a list of his deeds that probably gained God's description of him as "blameless and upright" (1:1).
- This chapter helps us understand better why God could boast about Job to Satan (1:8; 2:3).

- “The chapter that we now open breathes, almost or quite throughout, a spirit that belongs rather to the New than to the Old Covenant. It is a practical anticipation of much of the teaching that was to come from Him Who ‘sat down and taught’ His disciples on the mountain. It is the picture of **one perfect and upright, who feared God, and eschewed evil.**”-Bradley, George
- God had Job’s obedience to do righteous deeds but God wanted Job’s heart to understand His grace.

- Paul was blameless (Philippians 3:6) but after his experience with Jesus he proclaimed, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, **who loved me and gave himself for me**. ”-**Galatians 2:20**
- Before his experience with Jesus and the grace of God Paul’s relationship with God was grounded upon his good deeds and what he could do for God and his faith was in himself and the Law. After his encounter with Jesus he proclaimed, “ I **am** the chief sinner” (1 Tim. 1:15).
- “**For me** is very emphatic. It is not enough to regard Christ as having died for the salvation of the world; **each man must claim the effect and possession of this grace for himself personally.**”- Calvin, John

Covenant Of The Eyes

- Job said that he had **made a covenant with eyes** not to **gaze** at a virgin.
- Bullinger says that the Hebrew does not literally say that Job made a **covenant with his eyes**. “Not ‘made with’... The covenant here was made with God, against his eyes, which are regarded as an enemy likely to lead him astray.”
- The key word is “gaze” which means to look steadily and intently or to dwell upon.
- Job showed self control over his desires.

- "The making of a covenant with his eyes is not merely a promise not to lust after a girl [though it includes that]. The sin he has in mind is far more fundamental, or it would not have commanded this position in the poem. Job is emphatically denying an insidious and widespread form of idolatry: devotion to the *betula*, 'the maiden,' the goddess of fertility. This Venus of the Semitic world was variously known as the Maiden Anat in Ugaritic, Ashtoreth in preexilic Israel, and Ishtar in Babylonian sources, wherein she is described as 'laden with vitality, charm and voluptuousness.' She is probably the 'Queen of Heaven' mentioned in Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:16-19."-Smick, Elmer

- “if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above.”-Job 31:26-28

Stele of Nabonidus



Star and Crescent of Harran coin



Ancient Persian Moon-goddess



The Ishtar Eggs



Job 31:5-8

“If I have walked with falsehood and my foot has hastened to deceit; Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity! If my step has turned aside from the way and my heart has gone after my eyes, and if any spot has stuck to my hands, then let me sow, and another eat, and let what grows for me be rooted out.”

No Falsehood

- Job proclaimed the he had not **walked with falsehood**.
- Job walked with integrity in his business practice by being honest and truthful with others.
- The self curse of crop failure (Job 31:8) suggests that verse 5 refers to shady business practices.” – Andersen, Francis

Job Had Not Turned Away

- Job was confident that he had never turned his **eyes** away from God's path so much so that he cursed himself if he were not true.
- The confidence Job had in calling curses upon himself if he were not truthful is impressive. It is as if he said to his friends, "Do you think that I am trying to make out before God that I am what I have not been? Would I talk to God with what would be blatant insolence if I had not the facts to back me up?"-Chambers, Oswald
- "Those that would keep their hearts pure must guard their eyes, which are both the **outlets and inlets** of uncleanness."-Henry, Matthew

Job 31:9-12

“If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor’s door, then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down on her. For that would be a heinous crime; that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges; for that would be a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn to the root all my increase.”

No Adultery

- The next thing that Job highlighted about his walk with God was his faithfulness in marriage.
- Job said that his heart had not been **enticed** toward a woman.
- It's interesting that Job understood that the heart's desires can be **enticed** into sin.

- “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”-James 1:14
- Temptation only becomes sin when we allow our desires to **control** our thoughts, words and behaviors!
- Job and James both knew that when we allow our **desires** in thought, word, and deed to be contrary to the Scriptures then that temptation has become fully-grown as sin in our life and that sin can become fully actualized as a part of our life.

- The phrase is very emphatic, taking from himself and others the vain excuses wherewith men use to palliate their sins, by pretending that they did not design the wickedness, but were merely drawn in and seduced by the strong enticements and provocations of others; all which Job supposeth, and yet nevertheless owns the great guilt of such practices even in that case, as well knowing that temptation to sin is no justification of it.”- Poole, Matthew
- Job said adultery was a **heinous crime to be punished by judges** and that would start a **fire** that would burn towards destruction and the Angel of Death, **Abaddon**.

Job 31:13-15

“If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me, what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? Did not he who made me in the womb make him And did not one fashion us in the womb?”

No Partiality

- Job said that he had not **rejected the cause** of his employees when they **brought a complaint**.
- The reason is that both Job and his employees both came from God, **made in the womb** and Job would have to answer to God if he mistreated his workers.
- “Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”-**Ephesians 6:9**
- This was both amazing and commendable in a period in history when it was common that servants and slaves were viewed as inferior next to those whom they served.

Job 31:16-23

“If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother’s womb I guided the widow, if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.”

Job Helped The Weak

- Job continued his dialogue of righteous deeds that he did and claimed that he had not **withheld anything that the poor desired.**
- Job had helped the **widow** and the **fatherless**.
- The reason Job respected human beings was because he feared **calamity from God**.

Job 31:24-28

“If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence, if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much, if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above.”

No Greed Or Idolatry

- Job stated that was not greedy because he didn't **trust** or had **confidence** in **fine gold**.
- Job also continued and proclaimed that he had not followed after other gods and therefore had not been **false to God above**.
- "The phrase [“my mouth has kissed my hand”, v. 27] reflects the apparent ancient custom of kissing the hand as a prelude to the superstitious and idolatrous act of throwing a kiss to the heavenly bodies." -Nelson's Study Bible

Job 31:29-34

“If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him I have not let my mouth sin by asking for his life with a curse, if the men of my tent have not said, ‘Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?’ The sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler, if I have concealed my transgressions as others do by hiding my iniquity in my heart, because I stood in great fear of the multitude, and the contempt of families terrified me, so that I kept silence, and did not go out of doors”

No Hate, No Hiding Sin

- As further proclamation to his personal righteousness Job claimed that he had not **rejoiced** when his enemies had suffered and been destroyed.
- Job opened the **doors** of his home for the weary **traveler**.
- Job did not hide his sin as **others** do but most translators “have concealed my transgressions as **Adam**”. **Adam** is in the original translation.
- Job insisted that he was not covering his sins **as Adam** who blamed Eve and vainly tried to cover his sin.
- “Job has never dissembled, attempting to conceal his sin ‘like Adam.’”-Andersen, Francis

Job 31:35-40

“Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me! Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary! Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown; I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him. If my land has cried out against me and its furrows have wept together, if I have eaten its yield without payment and made its owners breathe their last, let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley.” The words of Job are ended.”

Job Wants To Hear From God

- Job once again demanded to hear from God, **Oh, that I had one to hear me!** And, **let the Almighty answer me!**
- “Job strategically brought his oration to its climax with a sudden change in tone... He was now sure of his innocence, **so confident** of the truthfulness of these oaths that he affixed his signature and presented them as his defense with a challenge to God for a corresponding written indictment.”-Smick, Elmer
- Job was so confident in his final words that stated, **I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him.**
- Job carried his works as badge of honor or a trophy which he seems to feel God owed him.

- **The words of job** had **ended** but they ended with a sense of his own self righteousness being enough that God should give him an account to the reason for his calamity.
- "He is boasting of all the things that he has done. I believe he really did them, too, but he is lifted up with pride about it. That is where he is in trouble. He is constantly saying, in effect, 'I have been so good that God is unjust in treating me as He is. God is wrong.'" -McGee, J Vernon
- Job's friends believed that God always punishes sin by bringing suffering, therefore, Job was a sinner.
- Job believed that God was punishing him when he was innocent, therefore, God was unjust in His dealings with Job.