

## **Day 69 - FRIDAY: January 6th**

Job 31

### **Job 31:1-40 NKJV**

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman? For what is the allotment of God from above, And the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is it not destruction for the wicked, And disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does He not see my ways, And count all my steps? "If I have walked with falsehood, Or if my foot has hastened to deceit, Let me be weighed on honest scales, That God may know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart walked after my eyes, Or if any spot adheres to my hands, Then let me sow, and another eat; Yes, let my harvest be rooted out. "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, Then let my wife grind for another, And let others bow down over her. For that would be wickedness; Yes, it would be iniquity deserving of judgment. For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction, And would root out all my increase. "If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant When they complained against me, What then shall I do when God rises up? When He punishes, how shall I answer Him? Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb? "If I have kept the poor from their desire, Or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, Or eaten my morsel by myself, So that the fatherless could not eat of it (But from my youth I reared him as a father, And from my mother's womb I guided the widow); If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, Or any poor man

without covering; If his heart 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, When I saw I had help in the gate; Then let my arm fall from my shoulder, Let my arm be torn from the socket. For destruction from God is a terror to me, And because of His magnificence I cannot endure. "If I have made gold my hope, Or said to fine gold, 'You are my confidence'; If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, And because my hand had gained much; If I have observed the sun when it shines, Or the moon moving in brightness, So that my heart has been secretly enticed, And my mouth has kissed my hand; This also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, For I would have denied God who is above. "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, Or lifted myself up when evil found him (Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for a curse on his soul); If the men of my tent have not said, 'Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?' (But no sojourner had to lodge in the street, For I have opened my doors to the traveler); If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, Because I feared the great multitude, And dreaded the contempt of families, So that I kept silence And did not go out of the door— Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my mark. Oh, that the Almighty would answer me, That my Prosecutor had written a book! Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, And bind it on me like a crown; I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him. "If my land cries out against me, And its furrows weep together; If I have eaten its fruit without money, Or caused its owners to lose their lives; Then let thistles

grow instead of wheat, And weeds instead of barley." The words of Job are ended.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

This chapter again gives us deep insight into the character of Job, from how he guards against lust and temptations in his life, to how he treated the servants that he ruled over and those who are needy around him. We further see that he didn't make money an idol, didn't get corrupted into false worship and treated enemies in a way that is remarkable. No wonder God remarked at the beginning of Job of how remarkable he was.

Notice the depth that the UCG reading plan brings out to chapter 31: "Job brings his discourse to a close. He basically places himself under an oath of innocence, inviting God to impose curses on him if he can be proven guilty. Where the New King James Version in verse 35 has the words, "Here is my mark," the NIV has "I sign now my defense." In other words, with this chapter, Job is resting his case—waiting, as the same verse explains, for God to answer him. It is clear from the chapter that Job must be extremely confident of acquittal.

*The Nelson Study Bible* states that Job's oath "bears a general similarity to the oath of clearance, widely used in ancient Mesopotamia. In this oath, an accused person would swear his innocence at a trial. However, the ethical content of Job's confession, with its emphasis on inward motivation (see vv. 1, 2, 24, 25, 33, 34) and attitude (see vv. 1, 7, 9, 26, 27, 29, 30), is unique and unparalleled until Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5-7)" (note on Job 31:1-40).

Indeed, Job in the first verse mentions having made a covenant with his eyes not to look on a young woman. The typical Hebrew word for "look" is not used here. Rather, the word here, translated "think" in the old KJV, is *biyn*, which conveys a sense of setting apart mentally

(Strong, No. 995)—really focusing. The obvious implication is that this looking is with lustful intent. Job knew it was wrong to sexually desire a woman other than his wife, as Christ would later make clear (see Matthew 5:27). In an Old Testament setting, this seems rather remarkable and demonstrates that Job well understood the spirit of God's law. He also realized that violation of even the spirit of the law would ultimately bring punishment from God (Job 31:2-3). Of course, it is not wrong to merely look at a beautiful woman. Nor is it wrong to appreciate beauty. Most likely, Job's determination was that if the sight of a woman began to entice him to lust, then he would look away and think about other things. This is the approach all of us should take. No doubt Job, in trying to understand what was happening to him, had for months been taking a sweeping personal inventory of his life—including his inward thoughts and motivations. And here we see his concluding declaration on the various aspects of his life.

Besides avoiding sexual lust, we see that Job was not a person of falsehood and deceit (verse 5). In verse 7 he says that his heart has not walked after his eyes, probably meaning here that he has not been motivated by "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) in coveting things he sees. Job then remarks further on his commitment to not even entertain adulterous thoughts, much less act on them or to even allow himself to be in a compromising or tempting situation (Job 31:9).

In verses 13-15 Job addresses his treatment of his servants. Though a great ruler, Job's approach and reasoning here is again remarkable. He realized that it was important to properly esteem them or he would face divine retribution. Moreover, he saw that this esteem was utterly legitimate. Unlike other rulers of his day, Job would well agree with the words in the U.S. Declaration of Independence defying Old World aristocracy: "All men are created equal." Since God made all people, all people must be respected for that very fact—and they must all be treated

according to the standards God has given for dealing with all other human beings.

In verses 16-23, Job comments on his treatment of the needy—the poor, widows and orphans. Again, as in the previous chapter, he rebuts Eliphaz's specific accusations against him in 22:5-9. In verses 24-25, Job rejects his friends' earlier implied accusations that he was motivated by greed and wealth or made proud by it (see Job 20:18-22; Job 22:23-26). In verses 26-28 of chapter 31, Job maintains that he has not observed the sun and moon and been motivated to kiss his hand, referring to "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*, note on verse 27).

In verse 29-30, we may again be surprised at Job's "New Testament approach" to dealing with enemies—not cursing them or gloating over their misfortunes. Yet we should realize that this approach is mentioned in the Old Testament as well as the New (compare Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 24:17-18; Matthew 5:43-47; Romans 12:17-21).

Interestingly, Job understood these principles before Exodus and Proverbs were written. It is not improbable that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were familiar with these concepts.

In verses 31-32 we see that Job freely shared his food and home with his servants and all who came his way.

The translation of verse 33 is disputed since the word *adam* can mean the first man Adam or man in general. So Job could be saying either "If I have covered my transgressions as Adam did..." (compare NKJV) or "If I have covered my transgressions as men do..." (compare NIV). The latter seems more likely since the first man Adam was not motivated by fear of contempt from groups of people (compare verse 34). In any case, Job's point here is that he has not been hiding secret sins.

In verse 35, as already noted, Job essentially declares that he rests his case. Note again the NIV rendering, along with the end of the verse: "I sign now my defense—let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing." Job says he would then carry the list of accusations to God and answer every one, approaching God boldly as a prince would (verses 36-37).

Finally, Job remembers one more area in which he might be accused—his stewardship over the land God had entrusted to his care. Here, too, Job is confident of his innocence (verses 38-40). And with this statement, Job ends his words.

His three friends have no more to say either. They are convinced that Job is a hopeless cause because he remains righteous or innocent in his own eyes (Job 32:1). Their mistake of course is that Job has accurately detailed the course of his life—he has not committed some great sin to bring his suffering as they believe. There is a problem with Job's self-proclaimed innocence, though they are far from comprehending it, as we will see.

With all fallen silent, what will happen next? How will God answer?"

[END]

As this chapter and section is over, I stand in awe from a human standpoint on what a remarkable man Job was. We learn so much from Job about how God works with his people but in these last few chapters, especially this one, I've learned so much from Job's example of being a blameless and upright man. May God through His Holy Spirit give each of us the strength, determination and wisdom to imitate Job as he imitated the God Family.