

Job 31:1 ¶ I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

Job 31:2 For what portion of God *is there* from above? and *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

Job 31:3 *Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?*

Isn't it interesting that Job declared publicly that he had purposed not to look upon a girl with lust? (The context helps define the word "think," meaning "to care for, to consider with full attention.") It seems he was already aware in his heart that this would be wrong, just as Jesus said.

Matthew 5:28 "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Job knew that to do so could lead to wicked action and make him subject to God's judgment, something he wanted to avoid.

Oh that Christian men were so careful to recognize that truth today!

Job 31:4 **Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?**

Job realized that God knew everything he did, even to his very steps. Nothing he did was hidden from God. As I have continued to grow in my faith, this truth has given me great comfort and great motivation. I still "forget" at times and grieve that I have grieved my Savior. Still, I take comfort in knowing that He is always ready to forgive me and help me strive to do better going forward. I know he wants me to "come forth as gold."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I liked Coffman's comment: "If today men wonder why immorality and vicious crimes are destroying our society, let them read the answer here. Men are no longer fully aware that God sees and knows their deeds, and that eternal punishment shall eventually reward the reprobate. Men may avoid or deceive policemen, judges and human law-enforcement systems; but they shall not be able to avoid or frustrate their eventual judgment by the Creator."

Job 31:5 **If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;**

Job 31:6 **Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.**

Job 31:7 **If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;**

Job 31:8 **Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.**

I think Job is saying in these verses that he would accept God's judgment should he be proven guilty of immorality, deceit, or turning away from God's will and

walking according to his eyes and the desires of the flesh. Implied—but I am innocent.

Job 31:9 ¶ If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;

Job 31:10 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

Job 31:11 For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

Job 31:12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

Job's declarations become stronger. He says that if he has allowed a woman to lure him into sin, his wife should be given as a concubine to another since that would be a heinous crime, one that should be punished with destruction and the loss of everything. Implied—but I am innocent.

The Jewish Study Bible offers this insight: "Committing adultery with another man's wife is an offense against that man's property in ancient Near Eastern law. In 'measure-for-measure' penalties, or the law of *talion*, found in the Bible and the ancient Near East, if a man injures or mistreats a member of another man's family, the comparable member of the criminal's family is similarly injured or mistreated. There is, however, no biblical law stating that an adulterer's wife may be sexually used by the man whose own wife engaged in the adulterous relationship. Job is merely speaking rhetorically here, to show how innocent of wrongdoing he is. He invokes the principle of *talion* against himself in the following vv. as well, for the same reason."

Job 31:13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

Job 31:14 What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

Job 31:15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

Job knew that if he wronged his servants, he would be accountable before God with no justifiable defense. He knew that God created each person in the womb and that every life is important to Him. Implied—and I respect that truth. That is a truth very prominent in scripture.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Ezekiel 33:11 "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live...."

Luke 15:7 "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth...."

This is yet another section that makes me think the psalmist was well versed in the book of Job.

*Psalms 139:13–16 “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast **covered me in my mother’s womb**. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the **lowest parts** [Hebrew word referencing the womb] of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”*

Though Job did not know about the cross, this section made me think about the old saying, “The ground is level at the foot of the cross.”

I liked this comment from Guzik: “The goodness of a man or a woman is often best indicated by how they treat those thought to be *inferior* to them, not how they treat their peers or those thought to be superior to them.”

Job 31:16 ¶ If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

Job 31:17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

Job 31:18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with* a father, and I have guided her from my mother’s womb;)

Job 31:19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

Job 31:20 If his loins have not blessed me, and *if* he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

Job 31:21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:

Job 31:22 *Then* let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

Job continues to list things that, had he done them, would call for severe judgment—e.g., withholding help to the poor and helpless, enjoying the bounty of his crops knowing that others around him were going hungry, not providing clothing to those in need of it while enjoying the warm clothes provided by the wool of his sheep, or using his position to take advantage of the fatherless. Implied—I am innocent of such actions.

Job 31:23 For destruction *from* God *was* a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

This verse makes no implications. Job declared unequivocally that his fear of God kept him from doing any such wicked things.

Job 31:24 ¶ If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;

Job 31:25 If I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because mine hand had gotten much;

Job 31:26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking *in* brightness;

Job 31:27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:

Job 31:28 This also *were* an iniquity *to be punished by the judge*: for I should have denied the God *that is* above.

Job mentions his wealth and declares that if it had made him proud or caused him to turn to worship of idols (often represented by heavenly bodies), he deserved to be judged. In that case, his heart would have proven unfaithful to God. Implied—but I am innocent.

Once again the Jewish Study Bible offers insight on verses 26-27: "...blowing a kiss into one or both palms, a gesture of worship frequently illustrated pictorially on cylinder seals from ancient Mesopotamia."

Job 31:29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

Job 31:30 Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.

Job knew that even rejoicing in the misfortune or ruin of his enemy or taking pride in the fact that he was so good in comparison was wrong. Implied—I have not done this. He had never let a curse pass his lips against such a person.

Job 31:31 If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

Job 31:32 The stranger did not lodge in the street: *but* I opened my doors to the traveller.

Job is basically saying that no traveler was ever turned away from his door who needed food or a place to sleep.

Job 31:33 ¶ If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

Job 31:34 Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, *and* went not out of the door?

Though formed as a question, Job is stating that he had no hidden sins that he was afraid others might discover and cause him shame.

Job 31:35 Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire *is*, *that* the Almighty would answer me, and *that* mine adversary had written a book.

Job 31:36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, *and* bind it *as* a crown to me.

Job 31:37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

Still, Job longs for a hearing. He wants God to tell him why he is being judged. He would like an opportunity to testify on his own behalf.

Job 31:38 If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

Job 31:39 If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

Job 31:40 Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

Once again Job basically declares that he is ready to accept the consequences for sin in his life if only he knew of such sin.

Job has no more to say.

I really liked Ray Stedman's summary statement at this point in his commentary. These are a few of my favorite excerpts from that summary: "Job at this point has learned that his theology is too small for his God. That is true of many of us. We think we know the Bible, we think we have got God boxed in and we understand how he is going to act. And just as surely as we do, God is going to do something that will not fit our theology.... Job's view of himself is woefully inadequate. He has been defending himself, he has been going back and thinking of all his good deeds.... The one thing God teaches us by these pressures and problems of life is to understand that there are depths of sin within us that we are not yet aware of.... As long as a man is defending himself, God will not defend him. There is a theme that runs all through the Bible from beginning to end that says, 'As long as you justify yourself, God will never justify you.' And as long as Job thinks he has some righteous ground on which to stand, God's silence remains. This is true in our lives as well. That is why Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount by saying, 'Blessed is the man who is poor in spirit' (Matthew 5:3), who is bankrupt in himself, who has come to the end. When we shut up and stop defending and justifying ourselves, God will rise to take up our cause."