



Eternal PERSPECTIVE

Job

BIBLE TEXT | JOB 31:1-40

1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?

2 What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high?

3 Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity?

4 Does not he see my ways and number all my steps?

5 "If I have walked with falsehood and my foot has hastened to deceit;

6 (Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!)

7 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,

8 then let me sow, and another eat, and let what grows for me be rooted out.

9 "If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door,

10 then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down on her.

11 For that would be a heinous crime; that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges;

12 for that would be a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn to the root all my increase.

13 "If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me,

14 what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him?

15 Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?

16 "If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,

17 or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it

18 (for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow),

19 if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering,

20 if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep,

21 if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate,

22 then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket.

23 For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.

24 "If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence,

25 if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much,

26 if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor,

27 and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand,

28 this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above.

29 "If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him

30 (I have not let my mouth sin by asking for his life with a curse),



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31 if the men of my tent have not said, 'Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?'

32 (the sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler),

33 if I have concealed my transgressions as others do by hiding my iniquity in my heart,

34 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—

35 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!

36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown;

37 I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him.

38 "If my land has cried out against me and its furrows have wept together,

39 if I have eaten its yield without payment and made its owners breathe their last,

40 let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley."

DEVOTIONAL FOR JOB 31:1-40

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Let's test our familiarity with Scripture, shall we? "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery in his heart." "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn." "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret." "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and money." "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Without looking, do you know where these verses are found? Here's a hint: Matthew...

Yes, those verses all come out of one, very well known sermon that Jesus gave in Matthew 5-7: The Sermon on the Mount. Did you happen to see any similarities in some of those verses and the ones that Job spoke here in chapter 31?

You are probably about to see my "geek side" come out in this devotional, but think about this with me for a moment. Most scholars would date the Book of Job before Moses, which would mean that Job did not even have the Ten Commandments. In this chapter, Job is making a defense for his innocence of sin, but I think it's interesting that Job did not just stop at the obvious sins. He didn't just say, "Well, I never had a physical affair with another woman."



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Instead, he addressed his heart: "If my HEART has been enticed toward a woman... that would be a heinous crime" (Job 31:9-11). In Job's argument, he was not even guilty of gazing at another woman (verse 1), much less having an emotional or physical affair with one (verse 9). He understood long before The Sermon on the Mount, that sin began in the heart and mind (James 1:14-15). He understood that "everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). As he continued his argument in this chapter, we see Job's deep understanding of sin and righteousness. He didn't just offer the poor some breadcrumbs; he did not "withhold anything that the poor desired" (verse 16). He didn't just restrain himself from retaliation; he did not even rejoice over the suffering of his enemies (verse 29; Matthew 5:44). Can you say the same?

This was Jesus' entire point in The Sermon on the Mount. It isn't enough to outwardly keep the Ten Commandments if inwardly we are seething with hatred, green with envy, or indulging in lustful thoughts. Sin begins in our hearts and the Lord knows all of it; nothing is hidden from Him (Psalm 139:2-4; 11-12; 23-24). Job understood this.

The problem in chapter 31 was not Job's understanding of sin and righteousness. It was not that he had sinned and was being punished, for we know he was blameless and upright (1:1,8). Job's problem was his lack of trust and understanding of God in his current situation. God was not Job's adversary (verse 35), though he certainly had one (1 Peter 5:8-9). The other problem was that Job lived in a broken world, marred by sin, like we do today. But unlike in Job's time, because of Christ, we have been freed from the bondage of sin and brokenness. Our righteousness is no longer dependent upon keeping the law perfectly, even within our hearts. Christ has set us free (Romans 8:1-4)!

Questions:

1. Where do you struggle most with sin in your mind and heart?
2. Have you confessed sin within your mind or heart lately? Why or why not? (Read James 1:14-15 & 5:16.)
3. Have you been set free from the bondage of sin and death by believing in Christ? If not, please reach out to pastor@stonepointchurch.com. Someone would love to share how. If yes, share that good news with someone else!