**JOB**

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**Chapter Twenty Nine**

Chapters 29, 30, and 31 are one speech by Job as he longs for his past life, considers the nature of his sufferings, and then proclaims his innocence before God.

**Job 29:1-6**

*And Job again took up his discourse and said, (2) "Oh that I were as in months gone by, As in the days when God watched over me; (3) When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light I walked through darkness; (4) As I was in the prime of my days, When the friendship of God was over my tent; (5) When the Almighty was yet with me, And my children were around me; 6) When my steps were bathed in butter, And the rock poured out for me streams of oil!*

Job now takes up his treatise as he longingly looks back at what he had before his sufferings began. We might think he would be wishing that he had all of his family and possessions but we see in verse 2 that what he longs for are the times when God was watching over him. It was not because of any inherent blessings from God’s presence but just knowing that God was close to him is what he misses. This reminds us of the blessing that would later appear to Israel: *The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'* (Num 6:24-26) Although he also walked in darkness in those days he had the lamp of God shining over his head that told everyone he was under God’s guidance. God’s light then guided his steps much like:

* Psa 119:105*Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.* (Psa 119:105)
* Psa 27:1 ***A Psalm* of David.** The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?
* Psa 89:15 How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O LORD, they walk in the light of Your countenance.

He calls those the days when he was in the prime of his life and when God’s friendship was over all of his belongings. The word used for “friendship” in verse four is a very strong word implying a great intimacy. God called Abraham his friend: *"But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend,* (Isa 41:8) Charles Spurgeon wrote a book that meant a lot to me called “*Being God’s Friend*”. We should all have the goal of living life here as God’s friend. Job was also enjoying blessings from God such as his children being around him and we can all envision times when the children might be playing games, laughing, and enjoying being with their father. Having his steps bathed in butter means that he had plenty of food and drink to enjoy. The oil would be olive oil that was used for cooking, fuel, and for anointing the skin and to say that it comes from the rock implies that such is from God. Paul tells us that the Jews would later drink from the rock when they were lead out of captivity: *and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.* (1 Cor 10:4)

**Job 29:7-10**

*"When I went out to the gate of the city, When I took my seat in the square, (8) The young men saw me and hid themselves, And the old men arose and stood. (9) "The princes stopped talking And put their hands on their mouths; (10) The voice of the nobles was hushed, And their tongue stuck to their palate.*

Continuing his nostalgia, he remembers times when he was doing business in the city gate. We should visualize a very important man coming into the town square and purposefully taking his seat in an important place. He tells how the young men would hide themselves as they considered themselves unworthy to be in his presence. Even the older men stood up as a sign of respect when he entered. The princes would cease talking and put their hands over their mouths to indicate that everyone should also cease talking to allow him to speak as he desired. Even the nobles would stop talking as if their tongues were stuck to the top of their mouth. I just tried holding my tongue to the top of my mouth and can understand how that is evidence of not being able to speak a word. All of this is understandable since we already know that Job was the greatest man in the region*: His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.* (Job 1:3)

**Job 29:11-17**

*"For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, (12) Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper. (13) "The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow's heart sing for joy. (14) "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. (15) "I was eyes to the blind And feet to the lame. (16) "I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know. (17) "I broke the jaws of the wicked And snatched the prey from his teeth.*

Job now elaborates on why the people respected him so much due to his social benevolence. As people heard him speak they referred to him as blessed by God and when people actually saw him the vision brought forth memories of all he had done for many people. He then gives some details of what he is remembered for. He gave to those poor people who cried out for help and to the orphans who had nobody to help them. He gave comfort to those who were dying and brought joy to the widows. He purposely acted righteously and all who saw him thought of him as being totally clothed with such that was available for those in need. He provided needed vision for those who were blind and he provided transportation to those who were lame. He provided fatherly support for those in need and became the arbitrator for legal issues dealing with people he did not know. Such people could have been those visitors to the city who had no advocate and were in some sort of trouble. He also took down the wicked, took away whatever they had stolen, and returned the stolen goods to those from whom it was taken.

The main point of all these statements is that he not only wore the vestiges of a ruler (v 14) but his outward actions were those of a righteous ruler who really was what he purported to be. He was truly the benevolent ruler to which all should aspire and not just acting the part. Would that we all had such leaders! He showed compassion to all in need with no restrictions or returned favors. This is not to be viewed as some self-righteous statement but an actual remembrance of his actions as a blameless and upright man (1:1, 8; 2:3). He is the most grateful for the virtues with which God had blessed him so that he could bless others. We see again how Job foreshadows the One coming later except that Job performed no miracles:

* Luke 7:11-15 *Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. (12) Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. (13) When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." (14) And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" (15) The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.*
* Mark 7:24-30 *Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice. (25) But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. (26) Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. (27) And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." (28) But she answered and \*said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." (29) And He said to her, "Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." (30) And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.*

**Job 29:18-20**

*"Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand. (19) 'My root is spread out to the waters, And dew lies all night on my branch. (20) 'My glory is ever new with me, And my bow is renewed in my hand.'*

At this earlier time in his life Job thought that he would live a very long life surrounded by his family in the comfort of his house. He thought of his life as having roots that was continually fed by water so that he would continue living like expressed later by Jeremiah: *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD And whose trust is the LORD. (8) "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit.* (Jer 17:7-8). His nights were spent in pleasant sleep as he was invigorated each night much like dew coming on tree branches. He felt as though his honor and reputation would continually last and that he would remain a vigorous hunter throughout his life. These expectations of Job in his early life were probably based upon a philosophy and theology much like his friends in that they expected the universe to be an orderly place where those who are righteous are rewarded accordingly. Such thoughts are then probably reflected later by the Jews in their desire for a just king who would rule forever as expressed by Solomon in Psalm 72 and especially in the verses:

* Psa 72:2 *May he judge Your people with righteousness And Your afflicted with justice.*
* Psa 72:4 *May he vindicate the afflicted of the people, Save the children of the needy And crush the oppressor.*
* Psa 72:6-7 *May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, Like showers that water the earth. (7) In his days may the righteous flourish, And abundance of peace till the moon is no more.*
* Psa 72:13 *He will have compassion on the poor and needy, And the lives of the needy he will save.*
* Psa 72:17 *May his name endure forever; May his name increase as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by him; Let all nations call him blessed.*

**Job 29:21-25**

*"To me they listened and waited, And kept silent for my counsel. (22) "After my words they did not speak again, And my speech dropped on them. (23) "They waited for me as for the rain, And opened their mouth as for the spring rain. (24) "I smiled on them when they did not believe, And the light of my face they did not cast down. (25) "I chose a way for them and sat as chief, And dwelt as a king among the troops, As one who comforted the mourners.*

He now returns to the message of verses 7-11 as he reminisces about his time in the gate. All there would listen to him and keep silent waiting for his counsel. There was only acceptance and no argument about what he had said as his speech flowed over them. All the other people at the gate waited for his wisdom that was needed for their function much as rain was needed for crops to properly develop. They were like little chicks whose beaks were held open to receive the spring rain. His smile would carry a blessing on them even if they did not totally accept what he had to say and their unbelief did not damage his countenance so that he exuded confidence that was inspiring to all. He was the planner for the group who dictated paths for various projects. He was definitely the king among all the leaders and he was also the one who comforted those who mourned.

Job had a great past and we can look forward to a great future when we rule with Christ:

1Co 6:2-*3 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? (3) Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?*

This next chapter will provide a considerable contrast to the memories presented here and somewhat represent the trials and tribulations we go through in this life. But we have a great promise from our Lord that one day we will be forever with Him.

**Chapter Thirty**

**Job 30:1-8**

*"But now those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock. (2) "Indeed, what good was the strength of their hands to me? Vigor had perished from them. (3) "From want and famine they are gaunt Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation, (4) Who pluck mallow by the bushes, And whose food is the root of the broom shrub. (5) "They are driven from the community; They shout against them as against a thief, (6) So that they dwell in dreadful valleys, In holes of the earth and of the rocks. (7) "Among the bushes they cry out; Under the nettles they are gathered together. (8) "Fools, even those without a name, They were scourged from the land.*

He starts this chapter with the words “but now” and in verses 9 and 16 he starts with “and now”. These words are to contrast what his life had been with what it is like now. Previously he said that the young people stepped aside showing him respect (29:8). But now the young people mock him. And these young people are not of the most respectable families in the area. Job previously would not even hire their fathers to act as his sheep dogs or as those in charge of his sheep dogs. Those fathers were of no use to him at all since they did not have the vigor needed for any of his jobs and now their children mock him in the gate. He then further describes these people as being totally worthless to society. These people are the outcasts of society as they suffer from not having enough food and even gnaw at the ground at night by themselves. This may describe them as people who eat dirt or those who eat the grass and other useless vegetation growing in the dirt around the city. Mallow is any flowery plant of the hibiscus family and grows wild under bushes. The broom shrub is a plant that usually has yellow leaves and grows wild. Its roots do provide some nourishment:

[](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=broom+shrub&view=detailv2&&id=4DB9443CCB167FDE65B19BCF48651474AB504A6A&selectedIndex=0&ccid=Cp17/5Xw&simid=607986302818717203&thid=OIP.M0a9d7bff95f037bc895810874e4704fao0)

These people are not wanted in any community and people shout at them to leave as they would at a thief. They live in valleys where unpredictable rains cause wadis or they live in caves. They also live in the wilderness where they shout to keep people away from them. Nettles are plants whose leaves have barbs and often give rise to a very painful rash if one falls in them and these people even live under them:

[](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=nettles&id=9080AA0192CFB1A65FB64DBF303C977D6B22EDB3&FORM=IQFRBA)

But above all these people are called fools. Job is making it clear that he is not mocking some poor people just because they are poor. These people are poor because they deserve to be poor since they refuse to work. Their problem is their ethical wickedness and having no name means that they have no deserved reputation so nobody knows them personally. These are people who never worked at school and never took advantage of any opportunity given them. They are thieves and violent men who are excluded from any society. In spite of their being excluded from society, Job is even lower than they are for he is laughed at and mocked by them. Again we see that Job foreshadows One who will similarly be mocked: *The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine.* (Luke 23:36)

**Job 30:9-15**

*"And now I have become their taunt, I have even become a byword to them. (10) "They abhor me and stand aloof from me, And they do not refrain from spitting at my face. (11) "Because He has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me, They have cast off the bridle before me. (12) "On the right hand their brood arises; They thrust aside my feet and build up against me their ways of destruction. (13) "They break up my path, They profit from my destruction; No one restrains them. (14) "As through a wide breach they come, Amid the tempest they roll on. (15) "Terrors are turned against me; They pursue my honor as the wind, And my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.*

Now even these riffraff of society taunt him and he has become a byword to them. It is like they said “don’t be a Job” referring to his current state. Men had previously praised him (29:11) and now they detest him and stand aloof from him like the Pharisee over the sinner*: "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. (12) 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'* (Luke 18:11-12) They had previously covered their mouths with their hands (29:9) and now they spit in his face. Job now in verse 11 blames God for taking away his ability to hunt and afflicted him in many ways so that he receives all this horrible treatment from those people.

In verses 12-14 he uses siege warfare to describe what people are doing against him. He describes himself as a city under siege with people coming against him on the right side and they build up a siege wall against him with the goal of destruction. They put barriers in his path and take profits from their looting of his possessions with nobody trying to restrain them. They breach his walls of protection and come to take him as they come like a band of warriors. He is terrified at their attacks as they throw his honor to the wind and he no longer has any prosperity. The terrors against him have a supernatural connotation. The sufferings of Job foreshadow the sufferings of Christians who live in a sinful world ruled by Satan. We still suffer with illnesses and death because God is not yet finished and the sins of the wicked are not yet fulfilled. Many of God’s people have been killed and many more will die before God brings justice:

Rev 6:10-11 *and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (11) And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.*

Each of these saints were told to rest some more for all of plan A has not been completed. It is not that God is waiting for some fixed number of people to be martyred but rather the total plan is being unfolded and more people are to give their lives for the Gospel. But since they are told that their brothers in Christ are to be killed certainly there are still Christians on earth during these horrible times. Upon completion of the plan, God will measure out justice to those who are not His children. Praise the Lord, we receive mercy rather than the justice we deserve based upon our own works. We can only echo the words of John: *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.* (Rev 22:20)

**Job 30:16-23**

*"And now my soul is poured out within me; Days of affliction have seized me. (17) "At night it pierces my bones within me, And my gnawing pains take no rest. (18) "By a great force my garment is distorted; It binds me about as the collar of my coat. (19) "He has cast me into the mire, And I have become like dust and ashes. (20) "I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. (21) "You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me. (22) "You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; And You dissolve me in a storm. (23) "For I know that You will bring me to death And to the house of meeting for all living.*

By his soul he means his entire inner being that is poured out in anguish over his situation. His pain and sufferings have totally seized him so that he can think of nothing else. Those dealing with such situations know that the only way to deal with such is to think of something else but Job finds no such relief. Even at night his sufferings seem to pierce his bones so that there is never any rest from his pains. There is dispute about the agent involved in verse 18 since the subject is hidden within the verb. Since verse 19 refers to God casting him into the mud it may be that he means God has torn off his garment and he feels like it is choking him like a collar of a coat. Or he could be referring to another aspect of dealing with his sufferings as his garments provide no comfort and even choke him adding to his suffering. In any case, he now feels like he has been reduced to his starting materials of dust and ashes. Perhaps this is where we get “dust to dust and ashes to ashes” in our funeral speeches.

But then in verses 20 to 23 he is clearly referring to God. He sees his problem with God in two ways. First God will not answer him and second God is afflicting him. He understands his interaction with God directly opposite to the way it was previously (29:4-5). He stands in attention to making his request known to God but God just ignores him. He thinks of God as being cruel to him and using His mighty hand to persecute him. He thinks that God has lifted him up in a manner to achieve something but then brings upon him a storm to dissolve him from existence. He then concludes that God will bring him to death where all who have lived will come. We have all experienced the quiet of God in answer to our prayers when we are suffering but we have a promise that Job did not have: *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* (Rom 8:28)

**Job 30:24-31**

*"Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help? (25) "Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? (26) "When I expected good, then evil came; When I waited for light, then darkness came. (27) "I am seething within and cannot relax; Days of affliction confront me. (28) "I go about mourning without comfort; I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help. (29) "I have become a brother to jackals And a companion of ostriches. (30) "My skin turns black on me, And my bones burn with fever. (31) "Therefore my harp is turned to mourning, And my flute to the sound of those who weep.*

Job now completes his contrast with the previous chapter by stating emotionally his horrible situation. He seems to first state that obviously anyone who is in a state of ruin or in some sort of disaster would cry out for help. In verse 25 he states how he had often offered benevolence to others as he wept with them and grieved for those in need. He seems to then be asking why nobody correspondingly responded to his cries for help. He seems to still be mirroring the theology of his friends when he says that he expected good to come, perhaps because of all the good he did, but instead evil came to him. Or he might be saying that obviously others should have given him aid in his horrible state. He expected light to come upon him but instead only darkness came. In verses 27-31 he presents his case before a court as he states how he has no comfort from his pain that is worse inside than it appears from the outside. Every day he awakens to more afflictions even though he stands in the assembly crying out for help. He states that he is not being treated as a human but instead as some lowly animal. His skin is turning black and he has a raging fever. Because of all these conditions his harp only plays mourning music and his flute only plays the wailing sounds representative of his era of people in mourning over death. He seems to be in a living death.

Many centuries later the most innocent man who ever lived was sentenced as a guilty sinner and executed in a horrible fashion on a cross. He also offered up cries for help but He had to suffer so we could live.

Heb 5:7-9 *In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. (8) Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. (9) And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,*

Similarly today His disciples still suffer and even seem to not have prayers answered but the time will come when true justice will prevail forever:

Rom 8:28-32 *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (30) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. (31) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (32) He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

**Chapter Thirty One**

This is now the climax of the statements by Job regarding his guilt and innocence. It is not a self-righteous series of statements because God has already declared him innocent in 1:8 and 2:3. The material is similar to the confessions of the deceased before Osiris in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Evil things are mentioned that he has not done in the hope of being vindicated. Such statements usually start with the word “if” and then follows some appropriate punishment in line with the *Lex talionis*. In the legal mind of this era the burden of proof was with the court and so Job writes it in that manner although it is a poem and not a legal brief. He writes this poem in a chiastic structure, which consists of two ideas repeated maybe in reverse order.

**Job 31:1-3**

*"I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin? (2) "And what is the portion of God from above Or the heritage of the Almighty from on high? (3) "Is it not calamity to the unjust And disaster to those who work iniquity?*

He begins with a statement not in the-if clause format. Some have thought this is merely a covenant not to lust after a female but it is more probably deeper than that. It seems to be a vow not to participate in the widespread worship of the goddess of fertility. She was known as the Maiden Anat, Ashtoreth in pre-exilic Israel, and Ishtar in Babylonian sources. She is also known as the Queen of Heaven: *"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to spite Me.* (Jer 7:18) This covenant form is a strong way for Job to announce his allegiance to God. However Job is not an Israelite so we do not know the exact nature of the covenant. When studying Israeli covenants we are used to an outside source but this is a covenant he makes with himself. He is saying that his heart will remain pure before God.

Since he has made this covenant not to worship such a god he certainly will not then look longingly in a sexual sense at a virgin. This is not a covenant to not regard the virgin as beautiful for such is not a sin. Verses 2 and 3 state that God will judge those who worship such false gods and He will not reward anyone who worships them. He then agrees with his friends in that God will punish whoever lusts after a woman in his heart or in action. This desire for purity is similar to the statement from Paul to Timothy: *Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.* (2 Tim 2:22) Jesus also extended this sin to looking rather than just an action and this seems in line with the covenant of Job: *but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* (Matt 5:28)

**Job 31:4-6**

*"Does He not see my ways And number all my steps? (5) "If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, (6) Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity.*

Job’s desire is to be pure before the gaze of God and not just before the laws or eyes of man. He does not view his conscience as totally some inward part that is his total judge for it can be wrong. He knows that God sees all of his ways and even has an accounting of all of his steps. Job knows that he has not walked falsely in the world like many other people who pretend to be righteous. He has also not run after deceit as many have done. Many years later Belshazzar was weighed and found wanting:

Dan 5:24-28 *"Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. (25) "Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' 26) "This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE'--God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. (27) " 'TEKEL'--you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. (28) " 'PERES'--your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians."*

But Job knows that God will weigh him in accurate scales by His stands and he will found to be a man of integrity. This concept of being weighed in the scales of a god’s justice is a very old one that is prominent in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. We know that it would be impossible for Job to list all possible sins and call for God’s punishment if he has violated any of them. He is merely listing the types of guilt that he has avoided in his life. All of these carry an implicit claim of innocence.

**Job 31:7-8**

*"If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart followed my eyes, Or if any spot has stuck to my hands, (8) Let me sow and another eat, And let my crops be uprooted.*

Job then states more oath statements with the first having three components. The first statement in verses 7 and 8 are of the form: “if……”, “then……” The first one has three constituents. The **first** is a turning aside from the correct way from God’s perspective. The **second** concerns his heart being turned from righteousness by what he sees. The **third** involves any impurity that stuck to his hands or that has become an active part of his being that might involve stealing. Remember in verse one that he has made a covenant with his eyes and the part of this first oath statement concerning his heart is of primary importance to him. Many years later John would write of such lusts of the eyes: *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.* (1 John 2:16) Job states the punishment for violating these standards would be that all he sowed would be taken by someone else to eat and other of his crops would be uprooted so as to be of value to nobody. This is what has happened to Job but not because of his sins.

**Job 31:9-12**

*"If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway, (10) May my wife grind for another, And let others kneel down over her. (11) "For that would be a lustful crime; Moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges. (12) "For it would be fire that consumes to Abaddon, And would uproot all my increase.*

His next statement is very specific involving the sin of adultery. Verse nine is a parallel statement with the first having to do with being enticed by a woman and the second speaks of an action of his part of hiding near his neighbor’s door to go into this sin. As later stated by Jesus, Job knows that adultery starts in the heart: *but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* (Matt 5:28) Whether he is enticed to sin or deliberately plans such sin, both lead to this sin. The punishment he calls for the sin certainly fits the sin. He calls for his wife to work in the harvest for someone else and for other people to have sexual relations with her. He says that having his wife taken away from him to serve someone else would be an appropriate punishment for him. He states further that adultery is such an evil sin that it should be punished by judges in a court. He also states that it would serve as the fire that is consumed in Hell and that all he had (property, family, possessions, and security) would be taken away from him. This again is what happened to him but not because of this sin in his life. Later the Mosaic Law called it a capital offense: *'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.* (Lev 20:10)

**Job 31:13-15**

*"If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves When they filed a complaint against me, (14) What then could I do when God arises? And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him? (15) "Did not He who made me in the womb make him, And the same one fashion us in the womb?*

This next statement involves any justice he might have perverted against his slaves. If they filed a complaint against him in a court of law and he did not regard it with compassion and deal appropriately with it then he has committed this sin. He does not call for a specific punishment but states the he would have no recourse if God should rise against him for this sin. If he has done such then God would make him give an account and he would not be able to defend himself. The implication is that he would have to take whatever punishment God deemed appropriate. He then states that there is basically no difference between him and the slave for God made both of them in the womb. Every human should be treated with equal respect by other humans. Considering the status of slavery in OT times, it is amazing that Job had such an open attitude toward his slaves. He not only acknowledged their right to complain and go to court over mistreatment, he also regarded them as his equal before God.

**Job 31:16-20**

*"If I have kept the poor from their desire, Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, (17) Or have eaten my morsel alone, And the orphan has not shared it (18) (But from my youth he grew up with me as with a father, And from infancy I guided her), (19) If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, Or that the needy had no covering, (20) If his loins have not thanked me, And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep,*

This statement regards any actions he might have against the needy. In this statement he considers any inappropriate acts he had or actions that he did not take in dealing with the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the needy. The desire of the poor does not mean any excess but of their needs to properly survive. He also considers any needs of widows that he might have failed to provide. He considers the possibility that he might have had a lavish feast alone while some nearby orphan did not have necessary food for survival. The sentence in parenthesis may not have been in the original but it states that he took care of some orphan girl from her infancy. Verses 19 and 20 deal with the clothing needed by people for survival and not meaning any luxuriant clothing. He states that his sheep have provided clothing for the poor and their families.

**Job 31:21-23**

*If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan, Because I saw I had support in the gate, (22) Let my shoulder fall from the socket, And my arm be broken off at the elbow. (23) "For calamity from God is a terror to me, And because of His majesty I can do nothing.*

He next moves from the possibility that he was not generous to the needy to the possibility that he was actually hostile against some people who could not defend themselves. This first statement regards an act of judgment or condemnation he might have had against some orphan when he was working in the gate. Saying that he did this because he had support in the gate means that he might have acted in collaboration with some other official. The punishment he calls upon himself is that his offending arm would be broken at the elbow and his shoulder fall out of socket. Job calls for this judgment against him if he is guilty because he fears actions that God might have against him for he has no recall regarding any actions of God.

**Job 31:24-25**

*"If I have put my confidence in gold, And called fine gold my trust, (25) If I have gloated because my wealth was great, And because my hand had secured so much;*

He next addresses the possibility that he has put too much confidence in his material wealth. He had been a very wealthy man but he denies that he ever put all his trust in such. This is always a possibility for the rich as stated in:

* Psa 62:10 *Do not trust in oppression And do not vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, do not set your heart upon them.*
* Pro 11:28 *He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf.*
* Luke 16:13 *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."*

If one puts too much confidence in his wealth he can easily get to the point that he gloats over such success and does not trust totally on God. He does not list a punishment for this supposedly because he is very confident that this is something he has never done.

**Job 31:26-28**

*If I have looked at the sun when it shone Or the moon going in splendor, (27) And my heart became secretly enticed, And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, (28) That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, For I would have denied God above.*

He next moves to astrology of which many people were participants then and now. “Looked at” means to worship the lights in the sky and not just to admire or even seriously contemplate. This becomes a problem when one’s heart becomes enticed by them even if only done secretly. Throwing a kiss at them is a sign of open worship as they become objects that are worshiped. In the time of Elijah, he was concerned that he might be alone worshiping God but God assured him that some had not worshiped false gods: *"Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."* (1 Kings 19:18) Job again does not call for a punishment upon himself for he is convinced he has worshiped God alone.

**Job 31:29-30**

*"Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, Or exulted when evil befell him? (30) "No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for his life in a curse.*

He next states that he had not rejoiced at the defeats of his enemies or triumphed when some evil overtook them. This is a tough one for most people to admit. When someone who has done great evil to you is defeated or if it seems that justice has come upon them even in the form of some evil it is difficult to not rejoice. He states in verse 30 that he has not even acted against them by calling down a curse upon them to take their life. Proverbs teaches us the same and even states that because of this action God may remove his punishment from the enemy:

Pro 24:17-18 *Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; (18) Or the LORD will see it and be displeased, And turn His anger away from him.*

Righteous people certainly want to see the evil receive proper punishment but we should never gloat over such happening. Proper judgment belongs only to the Lord. Only He can see all possible ramifications of such judgments on other people and our gloating might cause some consequences on the innocent that we could not foresee.

**Job 31:31-32**

*"Have the men of my tent not said, 'Who can find one who has not been satisfied with his meat'? (32) "The alien has not lodged outside, For I have opened my doors to the traveler.*

These verses taken together focus attention on Job’s hospitality to strangers. There is certainly one good reason for such a practice: *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.* (Heb13:2) He always has his door open to strangers as all of the people of his household could have testified. Again no punishment is mentioned since he is positive that he has never refused hospitality to aliens.

**Job 31:33-34**

*"Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, (34) Because I feared the great multitude, And the contempt of families terrified me, And kept silent and did not go out of doors?*

Next he states the he has not practiced hypocrisy. A person who claims to have integrity certainly would not practice such. He uses the example of Adam who tried to hide his sin:

Gen 3:8-11 *They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (9) Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" (10) He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." (11) And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"*

Certainly people have tried to hide their sins from God ever since. There are many reasons that people practice hypocrisy and he mentions some. But he feared the reactions of many people and especially of his families if such hypocrisy had been revealed. If he had sinned and covered it up like David did initially regarding his adultery with Bathsheba he would now be very embarrassed. He does not claim to have been sinless but he does say that he has a clear conscience before God.

**Job 31:35-40**

*"Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, (36) Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. (37) "I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him.*

Job is now so sure of his innocence before God that he brings this to a close by adding his signature like he would in filing a court appeal. The word “signature” is the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet (taw) and signifies the end as well as his innocence. He is still not sure that God will hear him but he asks for an answer from Him. He says that his adversaries have wrongly indicted him for sins but he will wear that as a platelet on his shoulder and bind it as a crown on his head. Surely a guilty person would not walk around with a list of all his sins on his shoulder and head so he is again stating his innocence. In verse 37 he says that he can present to God all the steps of his life in a clear conscience and he would approach God like a prince would approach a king. This is a bit audacious for there is no other statement in Scripture about a creature appearing before God as a prince. But Job has run out of patience with all of the accusations of his friends and the silence of God. But God will answer!

**Job 31:38-40**

*"If my land cries out against me, And its furrows weep together; (39) If I have eaten its fruit without money, Or have caused its owners to lose their lives, (40) Let briars grow instead of wheat, And stinkweed instead of barley." The words of Job are ended.*

He ends his lament by asking for the land to witness against him if he has committed any of the aforementioned sins. He in essence is asking for creation to witness against him much like at the sin of Adam as he asks for briars and stinkweed to grow instead of the crops he planted: *"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;* (Gen 3:18)