

JOB 31

JOB'S LAST WORDS IN THE DEBATE

During the debate that had been going on throughout the majority of this Book, Job had often protested his integrity in general; but here he did so in particular instances – not in a way of commendation (for he did not here proclaim his good deeds); but in his own just and necessary vindication, in order to clear his name from the crimes with which his friends had falsely charged him. Job's friends had been particular in their articles of impeachment against him, but they could not prove the things whereof they accused him; and therefore, Job very solemnly called down many awful imprecations of God's wrath, if he were truly guilty of those crimes. And not only did the man of Uz acquit himself from those gross sins which lie open to the eye of the world, but he also vindicated himself from many secret sins which nobody could have charged him with – even if he *had* been guilty of them. Herein he proved that he was no hypocrite. He hated evil because he feared the Lord. His piety was at the bottom of his justice and charity, and this crowned the proof of his sincerity.

There is a great beauty in Job's expression of having made a covenant with his eyes – to preserve, under grace, the chastity of the mind and body. By the eye, the lust of the flesh is frequently excited; and our Redeemer has set it down as adultery already committed, if a man even looks on a woman with lust (Matt. 5:28). Nothing short of the grace of God can preserve the purity of the mind. Job lived as one who was always under the Divine eye. It is God Who prohibits uncleanness, immorality, and injustice; and that was the grand motive which swayed Job's mind – not what man thought, but what the Lord would think. It is from the corruption of our poor fallen nature that evil thoughts and imaginations arise in our hearts, but how infinitely precious it is to remember that the grace of Jesus is our preservative against this and every other evil! Being conscious of the uncleanness within us, let us pray for His grace to keep our hearts!

The lust of the flesh (verses 1-4, 9-12) and the love of the world (verses 24-28) are two fatal rocks upon which multitudes of souls are wrecked; and against these, Job protested that he was always careful to stand upon his guard. He declared that he never set his heart upon the wealth of this world. Through the determination to be rich, many persons have pierced themselves with many sorrows. Job carefully avoided all sinful means of getting wealth, for he dreaded forbidden profit as much as forbidden pleasure.

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Job acquits himself from sins of unchastity, fraud, and injustice – verses 1-12
- ❖ He acquits himself from severity toward his servants and the poor – verses 13-23
- ❖ He acquits himself from sins of confidence in worldly wealth, idolatry, revenge, neglect of the traveler, and oppression – verses 24-32, 38-40
- ❖ He acquits himself from hypocrisy in covering his sins, and from winking at others' sins; and he appeals to God concerning his integrity – verses 35-37



Job's conscience also gave testimony concerning his just and charitable behavior toward the poor. He spoke largely upon this subject because he was particularly accused in this matter. He was tender to all and hurtful to none. Again, the principles by which Job was restrained from being uncharitable and unmerciful were rooted in his fear and love of the Lord. He also treated his household and his servants with kindness and love, for he remembered that he himself had a Master in heaven. Even toward the worst enemy he had, Job neither desired nor delighted in his hurt. When we remember that we would be lost and undone if God was justly severe with us, it ought to remind us to be mild and gentle toward all with whom we come in contact.

The closing line of this chapter – “The words of Job are ended” – is very striking, and merits particular attention. Job turned away from man and appealed to God, and this brought the matter to a head. His friends had accused him of hypocrisy. “All right,” said Job; “let the Almighty Searcher of hearts determine this matter.” He was not looking up to God’s judgment-seat as one who was unconscious of sin. Rather, his meaning was actually quite the opposite. It was only the sin of hypocrisy that he dared to justify himself from. He said that he had not covered his transgressions, as his forefather Adam had done, when he endeavored to hide himself from the presence of the Lord, amidst the trees of the Garden of Eden. Job had told God his sins; he had made a full confession to Him of his iniquity. Yet at the same time, he did put in an appeal to the Lord against the observations of his three friends – namely, that his afflictions were the fruit of hypocrisy, for which he was now being punished. When we compare this passage with that which we have already read in chapter 9:20-21, we will be led to see that it was in this sense that the man of Uz made his appeal to the justice of God. In no other light can we possibly look at the case; for the infinite holiness and majesty of the Lord make it a solemn concern for any of the fallen race of Adam to come before Him, and much less to make an appeal to the tribunal of His justice – unless they are brought near to Him, clothed in the perfect righteousness and holiness of our Savior Jesus Christ!

As we read the conclusion of Job’s words here, let us all judge ourselves; and in matters where we are guilty, let us seek forgiveness in that blood which cleanses from all sin. May the Lord have mercy upon us, and write His laws on our hearts! May He bring our fallen natures under the training of grace. May we behold Jesus’ example of meekness and lowliness of heart; and may His Spirit rule our hearts and minds, and cause us to follow in His blessed footsteps!

Thank You, Lord, that You are faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We thank You also that under the Gospel, we enjoy infinitely more light concerning our Redeemer than Job had in his day! Amen.