



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the
second Sunday before Lent.

The Collect.

O LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter 31 is one of the longest to this point and cannot sensibly be covered in a brief devotion verse by verse; so I will attempt to distill the sense of the whole in summaries of the salient points therein.

Job 31

King James Version (KJV)

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

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

3 Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?

4 Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit;

- 6** Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity.
- 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;
- 8** Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.
- 9** If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;
- 10** Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.
- 11** For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.
- 12** For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.
- 13** If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;
- 14** What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?
- 15** Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?
- 16** If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
- 17** Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;
- 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;)
- 19** If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;
- 20** If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
- 21** If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:
- 22** Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.
- 23** For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.
- 24** If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence;
- 25** If I rejoice because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much;
- 26** If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;
- 27** And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:
- 28** This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have

denied the God that is above.

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

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

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

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

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

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?

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.

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

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

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

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

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

The very first verse introduces us to the theme of this chapter: *1. I made a covenant with mine eyes* (Job 31:1a) Here Job states the covenant that he made in his youth to avoid sins that his eyes and senses might induce. "...*why then should I think upon a maid.*" (Job 31:1b) Sensual sins are the most besetting and most powerful. If our eyes are blind to the chocolate cake, we shall never over indulge it. Our eyes make us more aware of the opportunity to sin. All that we see we may believe can be ours, but there are some things that are unprofitable and even sinful for us to behold in hunger and envy. Forget not that it was the EYE that most led Eve to sin before the Ill-Natured Tree at Eden. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat* (Gen 3:6) Of course, she was led to the temptation of sight first by the lesser sense of hearing, but it was the appearance of the fruit that settle the sordid affair. So Job is saying that we must, in making a covenant with our senses, set walls and ramparts about our physical senses for these are the gateways to our spiritual fortresses.

Job provides us a glimpse of his moral method of living in the past. Of course he runs off a laundry list all the laws and regulations for morality that he has set upon his life. It was a sad description of legalism in some sense though moral righteousness is never to be condemned; yet our righteous living is not righteous in the eyes of God for it cannot be. So Job, in a sense, is saying: Look, Lord, I have done everything right – kept your laws, kept from sins of passion, kept from greed, etc. Why should I experience this terrible tribulation? Job has developed a set of "New Year's" resolutions

that he considers comprehensive, but no set of resolutions can cover ever eventuality or opportunity for sin. Even in a sense of absent-mindedness, our minds may be distracted by the passing of a beautiful lady, or handsome young gentleman. It is for this reason that our Prayer of General Confession includes sins of omission as well as sins of commission. Man simply cannot be "good enough" to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Only in swearing an oath of allegiance and dependency upon the King of that Kingdom (Jesus Christ) can we gain admittance.

Next Job asks a question of profound implications, in my humble interpretation. *What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?* (Job 31:14-15) Before delving into the deeper and prophetic meaning, let us first observe that, first of all, we shall all answer to God at some point of His own choosing. The same whop fashion and began a life in the womb is the same who fashioned our own substance unseen. He is the Same who fashioned every body and soul that has ever lived. Where shall we stand at that Day of the Lord if we have destroyed in the womb that which the Lord has commenced to create? Shall the abortionist not be relegated to the hottest dens of Hell? But may I ask you, Friend, what will you do when God rises in judgment of all your hidden and secret sins? Will they be covered by the Risen Lord? The promise of the coming Seed had already been made when Job spoke these words; but now we have an even greater certainty in the accomplished fact. We shall have less reason to complain of our straights than Job had for he had less certain knowledge of the Risen Christ – he saw with eyes of faith. Job wonders what account he shall give at that great moment. What account will YOU render? There is one Creator and He offers the same miracle and opportunity to life that all receive. Will you be guilty of terminating that miracle of God? By the way, since we all have the same Creator, we also share a common nature. Because of the Adamic Fall, we have a SIN nature whether we like to hear that or not.

At verse 16, Job initiates a series of questions that prove the timeless principles of true religion expressed by James: *16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; 17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; 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;) 19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; 20 If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; 21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:*

(Job 31:16-21) Compare these entreaties with what James describes as true religion: *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* (James 1:26-27) These are sins of omission mentioned by Job and they bear the same penalty as sins of commission.

In verse 24 through 28, Job denies the love of money as his love. *24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; 25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; 26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: 28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.* (Job 31:24-28) I need not remind the readers of these lengthy devotions that money, in and of itself,

is not evil. But the LOVE of money is the root of all evil. (see 1st Timothy 6:10) Job also addresses, not only the idolatry of money, gold, and silver; but idolatry of beauty itself as a god. To be tempted at the beauty of a glorious sunrise without knowing it is God's beauty, or the blessing of a bright moon at night, to worship these creatures instead of their Creator, is idolatry. *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.* (Job 31:30) Modern preachers are known to claim to put a curse on those who refuse to follow the desires of the so-called "anointed of God." Such ministers will occupy the lowest rent district of Hell itself.

Job undertakes now to address 'hidden sins.' But wait! Are there any sins hidden from God who knows all, sees all, and hears all? To hide sin is yet another sin multiplying sin on sin. Remember the old adage that you must tell a hundred lies to cover the first one? *If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom* (Job 31:33) Was Adam able to cover his sin in the Garden with a flimsy fig leaf? So are our attempts to hide our sins from God as flimsy as fig leaves.

Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended. (Job 31:40) Job says that if he has failed in any of the failures to look after the neighbor, the widow, the orphan, or to clothe the naked, then let the same curse that God levied on Adam come to bear upon him. Guess what – it DID! "...*cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.* (Gen 3:17-18) Is Job too blind to see that the curse he mentioned has fallen around his own neck? Are you, as well, too blind to see that your perfections are miserable failures in the eyes of the Lord?