

April 1

Scriptures: Read Job 31 & 32

Key Verse: “Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my mark. Oh, that the Almighty would answer me... I” (Job 31:35)

Overview

In Job’s final protest of his innocence (chapter 31), he went so far as to call down the wrath of God upon himself if he was not telling the truth (e.g. vv. 8,10, 22, 40). In so doing, Job made solemn oaths of innocence before his three accusers and before God (compare 1 Kings 8:31-32). He wanted them to know he was undeserving of such treatment and, because of his uprightness, deserved to be justified.

Job asserted his purity of heart and mind, as well as his outward acts of kindness and fairness to all people. He demonstrated that he was a man of high morals and integrity; innocent of lust and adultery (31:1, 9), vain deceit (31: 5), and covetousness (31:7). He did not abuse his wealth and power. His servants were well treated, for he recognized the equality of all mankind (31:15). He was unselfish, generous, and helpful to the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the sojourner. He also recognized that God would one day rise up in defence of those who were oppressed, and he would be answerable to God for how he treated his fellow man; thus he reverently feared the Lord’s judgment (31:14, 23).

Job knew that God alone was worthy to be worshipped. He understood that the love of money and putting trust in one’s wealth and oneself was equal to idolatry (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10). Therefore, Job abstained from greed and from worshipping his riches, as well as keeping far from the worship of false gods or celestial bodies (31:24-28). He said that such iniquity was worthy of judgment, as it was really the denial of God “who is above” (31:28).

Job continued to defend himself by asserting he was innocent of malice toward those who hated him, and he guarded his tongue so that he would not curse their souls (31:29-30). All his close associates could vouch that Job was a truly good and hospitable man, in whom there was no hypocrisy. Unlike Adam, Job had nothing to hide in his life, but rather lived transparently and openly, so that his righteousness was clearly evident to all. He did not need to fear the close scrutiny of society, nor of God. He did not hide in shame of sin, as did Adam; rather, because of his innocence, he longed to communicate directly with God. His defence was offered up to God as a solemn, legal, and sealed document: “Here is my mark”; but Job lacked a mediator to present his case to God and thus his sadness (31:35). If he had a written indictment of the alleged charges against him, he said he would proudly adorn himself with it and confidently approach God after having been justified (31:35-37). It is only through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who turned our sadness into great joy and is ever mediating (interceding) for us before God, that we attain a right standing with God, enabling us to boldly approach Him as His children (cf. Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Heb 10:19-22).

After Job ended his speech, there was a period of silence. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did not answer Job, since they believed him to be self-righteous, and their arguments had been exhausted

and were of no avail (32:1). The fact that the debate had stopped without an adequate conclusion angered Elihu, a younger man who until this point had been a silent listener. He was apologetic for speaking so boldly to his elders, but he felt compelled by the spirit within him to speak his mind. The Lord chose to use him to bring some light on the discussion and prepare Job for God's answer from out of the whirlwind (38:1ff.). God had given Elihu wisdom which exceeded that of the sages. Wisdom, therefore, is not something gained merely with age; it is a gift of God (James 1:5).

Elihu was angry with Job for questioning God's justice, and thus judging God. He felt Job was seeking only to justify himself and his own honour rather than seeking to uphold God's honour. The Lord Himself later rebuked Job for these very things (cf. 40:8). Elihu was also angry with the three elders for not only failing to answer Job's protests, but for not adequately defending God's honour and condemning Job without proof. Elihu felt that the debaters were narrow-minded, and so with new strategy and fearless determination, he sought to enlighten them; but before he began his discourse, he promised to be impartial, since he was committed to the truth.

Prayer

Father, we ask for Your discernment and wisdom in our dealings with one another this day. Give us loving hearts and Your words of encouragement to lift the weary spirit.