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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Job 31.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Job 31.

Topics.

- Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity?
- If I have considered an adulterous affair that would be a heinous crime.
- If I rejected the cause of my servants, God will judge me accordingly.
- If I have refused to help the poor and needy let God judge me accordingly.
- I have not made gold my trust or rejoiced in my abundant wealth.
- I have not worshipped the sun or the moon or been false to God.
- I have not rejoiced over the ruin of those who hate me and my enemies.
- I have given food and drink to the stranger and traveller.
- I have not hidden or kept secret my transgressions as an iniquity.
- Oh that I could stand before God as a prince and He would answer me.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

Helpful facts: before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

Job speaks

Is Not Calamity for the Unrighteous, and Disaster for the Workers of Iniquity?

Job 31:1-4 ----- ¹"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze (think in KJV) at a virgin?
²What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high?
³Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? ⁴Does not he see my ways and number all my steps?

In this context the word virgin refers to a single woman, Job is saying that he as a married man has not looked upon a woman with the thought of having an adulterous affair with her and knows if he did God would withdraw the portion of his eternal inheritance.

One of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament is: -

- You shall not commit adultery. (Exod. 20:14) (Deut. 5:18).

Under the law of the Old Testament the penalty for adultery was death.

- If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbour, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (Lev. 20:10).

Adultery destroys those who practice it: -

- He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. (Prov. 6:32).

Adultery was not only considered a serious offense before God because it involves lies, deceit and betrayal and brings hurt to the innocent partner and the children and friends and family, but also because the inheritance of Israel's land was to be passed onto their offspring and kept within the tribes of Israel. Job clearly knew the seriousness of having an adulterous affair and being a man of integrity before God would never even ponder such a thought. Some today say that men commit adultery because they cannot control their sexual urges, this maybe true of a very small percentage of men, but the primary reason most men commit adultery is because of a lack of integrity within themselves and to their wives and before God.

Job knows he is innocent of any wickedness and has not done anything deserving of such extreme calamities and afflictions. Even God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

It should be mentioned that in this context blameless does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ, if anyone of us could attain to the glorious state of living a sin-free life Christ died for no reason.

Job feels that if he had he been a wicked man then he would be deserving of the disasters he is suffering, but since he is not an ungodly man he wonders why God who, knows that he is not such a man has inflicted him and does not answer his prayer and heal him.

If I Have Considered an Adulterous Affair that would be a Heinous Crime.

Job 31:5-12 ----- 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!) ⁷if 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, ⁸then 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, ¹⁰then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down on her. ¹¹For that would be a heinous crime; that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges; ¹²for that would be a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn to the root all my increase.

Abaddon: comes from the Hebrew word (*'abaddown*) and means perishing; Hades (i.e., the grave) and utter destruction.

NOTE: contrary to Job's belief that death is a place of rest and peace (Job 3:11-19) many worldwide believe in the teaching of hell as a place not of rest and peace, but of torture and extreme suffering and pain, but consider the following verses concerning death: -

- What happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. ²⁰All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. (Eccles. 3:19-20).
- For he sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others. ¹¹Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they called lands by their own names. (Psalm 49:10-11).
- Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. ¹³This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. *Selah* (Psalm 49:12-13).

Their graves are their homes forever (Psalm 49:11) is the true teaching of the Bible, those who are judged unworthy of eternal life do not go to a place of fiery flames called hell where they are cruelly and brutally tortured by evil eternal creatures called demons and their bodies burned by fiery flames so that they suffer the worst of all agonies for all eternity. This age old traditional doctrine is not only a gross misunderstanding of Scripture, but is also a gross misrepresentation of God's character, since it portrays Him as an extremely sadistic God, especially when it is considered that even those in the secular world would not inflict such brutal and cruel torture on a human for their entire life let alone for all eternity. Added to this John tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8) (1 John 4:16).

This horrific doctrine of hell was no-doubt perpetuated in the early years of the church by religious leaders to scare the naïve into the church and has been adopted and perpetuated (without question) by their followers from generation to generation through tradition and religious institutions and organisations. Eternal life or eternal death (i.e., utter and total extinction) is the only two choices the Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation. For further information see the titles: -

- Hell or the Grave (Final destination of Humans).
- Lake of Fire.
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Job lists three sins that he seriously considered great iniquities and offences before the LORD: -

1. Lived a life of falsehood, hypocrisy and spoken deceit and lies.
2. Forsaken the laws and ways of God in his heart and mind and his outward behaviour and actions.
3. Looked upon another woman with the intention of having an adulterous affair.

Job considered these three to be gross iniquities that had he committed anyone of them he should not only be judged and condemned by the judges of his generation, but also condemned by God and cast into the lake of fire.

If I Rejected the Cause of My Servants, God will Judge Me Accordingly.

Job 31:13-15 ----- ¹³"If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me, ¹⁴what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? ¹⁵Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?

Job lists the fourth sin that he seriously considered A great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 4 Not showing respect to his male and female servants; not treating them with decency and fairness; not listening to them if they come to him with a complaint against Job himself.

When Job servants brought a complaint against him: (v15) he took notice, this not only shines a light upon Job's humbleness and his concern for the well-being of those who worked for him, but also highlights his lack of arrogance and the fact that he had not become puffed up in self-importance by his abundant wealth.

God fashioned me and my servant in the womb: (v14) this is the attitude we should all have toward mankind, it matters not whether a person is rich or poor, noble or lowly, male or female, a professor of law or a labourer of the land all are descendants of Eve the first woman to walk upon earth and to give birth and in this sense we are all born of the same parents into one global family and all fashioned in the womb by God and therefore despite the differences should all be treating each other with respect and decency as Job did.

If I Have Refused to Help the Poor and Needy Let God Judge Me Accordingly.

Job 31:16-22 ----- ¹⁶"If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, ¹⁷or 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), ¹⁹if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, ²⁰if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, ²¹if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, ²²then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket.

Job lists the fifth sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 5 Not sharing his food with the poor and the needy the widow and the fatherless or giving them clothing to keep them warm in the cold.

The fatherless from their mother's womb grew up with me as their father and I guided their mothers: (v18) again we see that Job though an abundantly rich and wealthy man didn't spend all his wealth on living a self-indulgent lifestyle, but used it for good, he not only cared about children who had no fathers (perhaps killed in war or died through sickness or deserted their wives) to look after them, but also helped and guided their mothers. This of course would be another reason Job was so well respected by the people who knew him and those who heard of him.

The shoulder blade and the arm: (v22) refers to the part of the arm above the elbow that is connected to the shoulder it is a dreadful calamity to have a broken arm and not have the full use of it.

Job wished if he had been guilty, his shoulder bone would separate from his shoulder which of course would mean that the arm would be useless. Such a strong wish implies an equally strong consciousness of innocence since no one in their right mind would desire such a thing unless they were certain of their innocence and their conscience gave testimony to their just and charitable behaviour toward the poor.

The strong language that Job uses also highlights his loathing of those who withheld food and clothing from the poor and needy, and did not care for the fatherless and widow (Job 31:16-22)

There maybe an allusion here to the following charge Eliphaz had previously made against Job: -

- You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed. (Job 22:9).

Eliphaz here is suggesting that the arms of the fatherless had been broken by Job or by his orders. Job perhaps in response to this cruel accusation of him is saying if such a thing were true may his own arms be broken in the same manner that it would fall powerless and useless because of the wickedness he had done to the helpless and fatherless.

In contrast to being a hard taskmaster Job was tender toward all and hurtful to no one. It is interesting to notice the principle by which Job was restrained from being uncharitable and unmerciful was that he stood in awe of the LORD and knew He would be against him if he should do wrong to the poor.

I have Not Made Gold My Trust or Rejoiced in My Abundant Wealth.

Job 31:23-25 ----- ²³For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty. ²⁴If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence, ²⁵if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much.

Job lists the sixth sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 6 Trusting in worldly riches and wealth and putting his confidence in his abundance rather than trusting in God.

Following are three great dangers for the rich, firstly, money solves most problems therefore there is the danger of trusting in money rather than trusting in God, secondly, abundance of money opens the doors to all the temptations and pleasures of the world and thirdly, great wealth allows those who have it to live an indulgent lifestyle and give all their time to enjoying the beauties and wonders of all that God has created so that they give no time to God Himself and His word. Some feel is sinful and wrong for Christians to be rich, but money is not sinful or evil it can be used for good or for bad, to help the poor or to spoil and pamper oneself in an indulgent lifestyle. It is the purpose it is used for that determines whether the money is good or bad, not the money itself. There are no-doubt certain brothers and sisters in the family of Christ who God has blessed with a business mind and the skills needed to turn everything they do into great success and great wealth.

For those who are humble before God and have the Spirit of Christ this is a great blessing since they are then not only able to extend the Kingdom of God by supporting those gifted in proclaiming the 'Good News' of the Gospel of Christ, but are also able to help the poor in ways that many of us are unable to do. When riches and abundance of money is used in this fashion it is storing up eternal treasures in heaven for those who have not set their hearts upon greed and profit, but used their blessing to advance God Kingdom and help the poor.

I Have Not Worshipped the Sun or the Moon or been False to God.

Job 31:26-28 ----- ²⁶if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, ²⁷and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, ²⁸this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above.

Job lists the seventh sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 7 Secretly giving his heart to the worship the splendour of the sun and the moon.

I have Not Rejoiced Over the Ruin of those who Hate Me and My Enemies.

Job 31:29-30 ----- ²⁹If 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).

Job lists the eighth sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 8 Rejoicing and exalting over the ruin of those who have hated him and wishing harm would come to them and even worse wishing that their lives would be taken.

God does not delight in the destruction of the wicked: the LORD is about to bring utter destruction upon the cities and land of Moab because of their wickedness, yet in the following verse Jeremiah pictures God mourning, weeping and crying over the people of Moab

- I (the LORD) wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; for the men of Kir-hareseth I mourn. (Jer. 48:25-31).

Wickedness cannot dwell with the LORD: in Psalms it is written, “You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.” (Psalm 5:4). God hates wickedness because it brings harm to innocent, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually, which means that wickedness cannot dwell with the LORD. However the LORD is patient and longsuffering giving to everyone grace and time to acknowledge God and turn from their wrong doing.

Eventually mankind's wickedness will reach a depth of cruelty, pride and evil that God is forced to intervene and judge. It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace at this present time. The following verses show that even though God is ultimately forced to judge mankind He takes no pleasure or delight in bringing suffering and sorrow to the human race.

- Have I (the LORD) any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? (Ezek. 18:23).
- For I (the LORD) have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live. (Ezek. 18:32).
- Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezek. 33:11).

This is the reason why it is so offensive to God when people, especially His people mock and scorn their enemies when they are defeated or harm has come to them. Justice must be done, but mocking and taunting those who have been punished, defeated and humbled and gloating over them when they are suffering comes from a heart full of pride, hatred and revenge none of which are of the Spirit of the LORD

I have Given Food and Drink to the Stranger and Traveller.

Job 31:31-32 ----- ³¹if 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).

Job lists the ninth sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 9 Allowing those in his household to go hungry and ignoring their needs and not welcoming the traveller and stranger into his home.

I opened my doors to the traveller: the word traveller comes from the Hebrew word (*'orach*) it literally means a well-trodden road or path or highway, but also embraces those who are travelling on the road. It mostly embraces a traveller from another nation or country or at least a great distance from their own permanent place of dwelling.

The central and crowning virtue among the Arabs to this day and among the Orientals in all ages is to open their doors to the traveller and welcome them into their home.

A traveller could arrive at any house they pleased and a mat would be immediately spread for them and coffee made, and a breakfast or dinner set before them. Even more than this upon entering a village it was common that several persons presented themselves to the traveller, each begging that they would lodge at their house, perhaps for the following two reasons: -

1. It was and still is considered an honour amongst the people of the village to offer to every traveller a secure night's shelter without receiving even the smallest return from the guest.
2. Since the only means of news was word of mouth it would have been a great time to spend over dinner and wine talking with such a traveller.

The expression, "I opened my doors to the traveller," carries the following four ideas: -

1. I will not allow a traveller to be exposed to the harsh weather conditions of the day or allow them to lie in the streets at night and suffer the cold of the night air.
2. I will welcome and show charitable hospitality, kindness and compassion to the traveller.
3. I will without distinction allow every traveller to occupy my tent and will spread my table for them.
4. According to the laws of hospitality I will allow the traveller to lodge in my house.

Hospitality of this kind was especially important during these ancient times, because there were very few public inns provided for the convenience of such travellers.

The apostle Peter wrote: -

- Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9).

Peter shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that hospitality is a Christian duty.

I have Not Hidden or Kept Secret My Transgressions as an Iniquity.

Job 31:33-34 ----- ³³if I have concealed my transgressions as others do by hiding my iniquity in my bosom,
³⁴because 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.

Job lists the tenth sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

- 10 Not acknowledging his transgressions and iniquities, because of fear of being rejected by those around him and instead live as a hypocrite and pretender.

Fear of being rejected by peers and others is a danger for all, but especially the faithful. This is because there is a temptation to pretend to be far holier than they actually are by putting on a false front of righteousness to be accepted, but to live this way is not only living a lie and hypocrisy, but is also living a lifestyle that is not true to ourselves or honest before God.

Confessing our transgressions: does not mean we should go about telling everyone our flaws and faults especially those like Job's three so called friends (Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad) who even though they had no evidence aggressively set about to prove Job was a wicked and corrupt man even though they had no outward proof that he was, but instead share them with those who we trust and who we know will encourage and support us and honestly and with grace and compassion guide us in the Lord.

Contempt of the multitudes terrified me so that I did not go outdoors: (v34) this is a common problem with those who suffer deep depression, they fear what others will think of them, but this is a lack of trust in God and looking to man's approval rather than God's approval.

Following are two ways to overcome this fear: -

1. To endeavour to live in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith with the confidence that all who live in this manner will not only be part of his treasured possession, but also hear their Master say, "Well done good and faithful servant."
2. To always keep the following thought uppermost in our minds, "If our Saviour and King who ascended from the bloodstained cross of Calvary thinks we are worthy to give his life for, why would we worry what others think of us?"

Added to this if Christ thinks we are worthy so too will all those who belong to his global and eternal family. The only people who will reject, mock and scorn those who are living in this way will be people who neither we nor God or the Lord Jesus Christ will want as their friends. Should anyone living in this manner feel they are rejected by other faithful believers they are either listening to lies in their head or to those confessing to be Christians, but are trusting in their own self-righteousness and not in Christ's righteousness and God's grace.

Oh that I Could Stand Before God as a Prince and He would Answer Me.

Job 31:35-37 ----- ³⁵Oh, that I (Job) had one to hear me! (Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!)
Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary! ³⁶Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown; ³⁷I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him.

The King James Bible says: -

- Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. ³⁶Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me. ³⁷I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

Oh that one would hear me: (v35) carries the following idea, "O that I might have my own case heard in a court of law and examined by an honest judge without impartially." In contrast firstly, to his three friends who he called miserable counsellors who speak falsehood and many words in the wind and secondly in contrast to having ordinary people that come out of curiosity to hear what he had to say as many bystanders would have been doing.

Here is my signature: (v35) the word signature comes from the Hebrew word (*tav*) it literally means a mark and by implication a signature. It carries the idea of imprinting a mark upon a thing. It most likely had its origin from the fact that some mark was affixed to legal letters which sealed and certified it to be the real document of the writer. With this in mind the expression, "Here is my signature," (v35) carries the following three ideas: -

1. Here is my mark, my signature, my declaration, which I am ready to pledge and agree with when I stand on trial.
2. Here is the mark of my signature the mark of my seal to the truth of the statements I have made in my defence.
3. Here is my signature to the plea I have given signed by my own hand.

Let the Almighty answer me: (v35) carries the following idea: let me be judged by the Almighty who is my witness and answer for me according to my testimony and true character. Either by God hearing Job himself, or by appointing some impartial person to judge whether he was the hypocrite and wicked man that his three friends (Eliphaz Zophar and Bildad) accused him of being or was the innocent and upright man he claimed he was. The following statements of Job show that this was the wish he had often expressed: -

- Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason my case with God. (Job 13:3).
- Though he slay me, I will trust in him; yet I will maintain my ways before him. (Job 13:15).
- I have prepared my case; I know that I shall be justified. (Job 13:18).
- Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, and you reply to me. (Job 13:22).

Eliphaz Zophar Bildad and even Elihu wrongly and harshly accused Job of being a wicked and corrupt man even though they had no outward evidence or proof that

he was. They based their entire argument and theology on the principal expressed in the following verse: -

- The LORD'S curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. (Proverbs 3:33).

This proverb is true in the sense that those who do good and do what is right will certainly live a far more peaceful and trouble free life than those who live a life of wrong-doing and crime, but it cannot be used as a dogmatic statement to say that the righteous and the innocent will never suffer affliction or sorrow. Many things are spoken as the general rule of the whole matter, but in this fallen and corrupted world there are always exceptions to the general rule of everything. Based upon this principal Job's counsellors reasoned that Job's afflictions and suffering were proof that he was a wicked and corrupt man who had some secret or hidden sin.

- Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! (Job 19:23).

Job wished that he might get his case fairly before God, to answer to what he had said and will say, in his own defence; this is a request he had made before, and now repeats it, because he feels assured if there was a fair investigation into his case God would give him a favourable verdict

Oh, that my adversary had written a book: (v35) the word book in this verse comes from the Hebrew word (*cepher*) it literally means writing (the art or a document) and by implication a book. It can embrace a bill or book of evidence; a book of learning; a letter or register and scroll. The word adversary in this verse comes from the Hebrew word (*'iysh*) it literally means a man it can refer to a man as an individual or to a number of men.

There are different ideas amongst theologians as to who the adversary in these verses refer to. The two most common thoughts are Job's three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad Zophar) especially Eliphaz since he appears to be the head of the group or God. Since both have a reasonable amount of support we will look at each one separately.

1. **Eliphaz, Bildad Zophar:** since the Hebrew word adversary in these verses means man and can apply to an individual man or a group of men the adversary would most likely refer to every man who accused and contended against Job and especially Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar who without any evidence accused him of being a wicked and corrupt man even though they had no outward evidence to support such a wild claim.

In this scenario Job's statement, "Here is my signature and indictment let the Almighty answer me," (v35) is taken to mean that Job wished he had a written letter from Eliphaz, Bildad Zophar and Elihu (his adversary) explaining in detail what evidence they had against him to prove that he was the wicked and corrupt man they claimed he was. Job would then go through it point by point proving his innocence and sign the document himself to present to the Almighty to be the judge between him and his adversaries.

Job knew God would judge without partiality and was confident he would get a favourable verdict and therefore he would wear the document as his crown since it would prove him innocent of his adversaries' charges.

2. **God the Almighty:** the adversary refers to God in this scenario Job's statement, "Here is my signature and indictment let the Almighty answer me," (v35) is taken to mean that Job wished he had a written letter signed by God explaining what He had against him. It is true that throughout Job's speeches he does speak of God as being his adversary as the following verses show: -

- I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me. (Job 10:2).
- He has torn me in his wrath and hated me; he has gnashed his teeth at me; my adversary sharpens his eyes against me. (Job 16:9).

But there is a difference, Job saw God as his adversary in the sense that it was God who brought calamity, ruin and affliction upon him, this is why he said, "Though he slay me, I will hope in him (Job 13:15), but he did not see God as his accuser in the sense of considering him to be a wicked and evil man. We know God never thought of Job in this way because we are told at the beginning of the book that God Himself said, "Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

Added to this at the end of the book God said to Eliphaz Bildad and Zophar (Job 42:9) "My anger burns against you for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has (Job 42:7) and God blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. (Job 42:12). Job obviously knew he was innocent of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar's accusations and that God was clearly aware of the life he had lived and therefore also knew he was innocent of their charges against him.

With these facts in mind it is far more likely that Job wished that his adversary (referring to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) and perhaps Eliphaz as the head of his adversaries had written a book detailing all the wrong-doing they had accused Job of and desired that the Almighty would stand up as his witness and testify on Job's behalf of his innocence proving that Jobs adversaries and accusers were wrong in their accusations that he was a wicked and corrupt man.

The book: Job's desire was that a book of the charges against him had been written by his adversary so that he would have their accusation written in black and white before him so he could go through them one by one and deal with them accordingly and answer it point by point. Job was fully confident that had his adversary written such a book he would have had sufficient evidence of his innocence to vindicate himself and prove that his adversary was wrong and if God acted as his witness He would justify and testify to his innocence.

Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary: (v35) carries the idea of having a statement that accuses Job of wrongdoing. Job's wish was that whatever it was that his adversary had against him was written into a book so that it could be clearly known what was alleged against him and easily and fairly investigated so that he could give a full answer to every charge and prove himself innocent of its charges.

Carry it on his shoulder: (v36) Job had such confidence that should God's testimony on his behalf be recorded in the book it would be in his favour and clearly prove that the charge by his adversaries that he was a hypocrite, wicked and corrupt man was wrong. Therefore he would triumphantly wear the book on his shoulders as a trophy and badge of honour and make an open show of it.

NOTE: this is not about inward sin (as many assume), but about outward behaviour. Job didn't trust in his own self-effort or good works to be counted righteous by God and saved to eternal life, but upon his Redeemer, we know this because in chapter nineteen Job said: -

- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).

The only reason anyone trusts in a Redeemer is because they are fully aware that they cannot save themselves or attain to the perfect demands of the law and the pure Holiness of God. Added to this Job said: -

- Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, God would prove me perverse. (Job 9:20).

Though I am in the right refers to him being right in saying that outwardly and in his behaviour he was not a wicked and corrupt man, but even though Job knew this to be true he was also fully aware (as are all the faithful) that should he stand before the Holiness of God and be judged he would not be able to justify himself.

If Job (or any of us) could attain to the glorious state of living a sin free life Christ died for no reason. Though God Himself said Job was a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3) and Job himself knew he was not a wicked and corrupt man that his accusers claimed.

He was nevertheless aware that if God did examine him inwardly he would not be counted as a man that was blameless or righteous. Job knew that sin dwelt within his fallen corrupt body and because of this set his faith upon his Redeemer and Saviour the Messiah the Christ. (Job 19:25-26) and not on his own good works and godly outward behaviour.

Wear it as a crown: (v36) rather than being ashamed and fearful of such a book Job would wear it as a king does his crown; which is an ornament of honour. Like a king he would not only glory rejoice and triumph in it, but also openly expose it to be read by all knowing that the groundless and false accusation recorded in it would have been proven to be false and therefore such a book would only serve to prove that he was the blameless and righteous man God Himself said he was. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

It should be mentioned that in this context blameless does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ, if anyone of us could attain to the glorious state of living a sin-free life Christ death serves no purpose. Christ didn't die so that we could attain to the perfection that the law demands or the perfect Holiness of God, but because it is impossible for us to do so.

If I Have Eaten the Fruit of My Land without Payment Let Thorns Grow.

Job 31:38-40 ----- ³⁸"If my land has cried out against me and its furrows have wept together, ³⁹if I have eaten its yield without payment and made its owners breathe their last, ⁴⁰let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley." The words of Job are ended.

Job lists the eleventh sin that he seriously considered a great iniquity and offence before the LORD: -

11 Eating the food that his land yields without paying those who work the land a fair wage for their labour and thereby forcing them to work long hours because of the meagre and miserable wages and forcing them to work under harsh weather conditions (especially when they are weak and feeble) so that they die in his fields.

Let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley: (v40) Job is prepared to accept from the hand of God that all the good seed that he had sowed and the wheat and barley he had planted would be overrun by thorns, bramble bushes or thistles and all types of harmful weeds and bring all his crops and fruits to ruin if what he had said was not true and if he was as guilty of the crimes his adversary had accused him of. Job is so confident of his complete innocence, that he is able to say before the LORD that he would be willing to have his whole land overrun with noxious weeds if he was guilty.

The words of Job are ended: (v40) not all his words since he does say more to God when God answers him out of a whirlwind (Job 38:1) and challenges him to answer a number of questions to see if he can prove Him wrong, and condemn Him and show that he is in the right. (Job 40:6-9). But it is the last words of Job to his three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) in in the controversy and vindication of himself. The remainder of the book is occupied primarily with the speech of Elihu, and with the address which God Himself makes. The statement, "The words of Job are ended," may have been added by Job himself or by Moses who it is supposed wrote the book; or by some other hand at the time of revision of the books of the Old Testament when they were put together and in order.

End.