

Job 31 – “Sex, Money and Politics: Job’s Signature”  
Psalm 7  
Matthew 5:14-20, 27-30, 38-42; 6:19-24; 7:12-20

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Job 31 uses a common theme in wisdom literature –  
the use of body parts:

There are six references to the eyes or seeing,  
six references to the feet or walking,  
eight to the hands, shoulder, arm, etc.,  
seven to the mouth or eating/kissing,  
four to the heart or bosom,  
three to the womb,

in all, there are more than forty references to body parts or bodily actions in the chapter.

I have suggested throughout this series that through the wisdom debate  
Job became convinced that there must be some sort of resurrection.  
And so he concludes his final speech  
with a robustly bodily conclusion.

Hear now the Word of our God, from Job 31.

Job 31 is in the form of an oath.  
At the conclusion of his lawsuit before God  
Job swears that everything he has said is true.  
Everything he has done is honorable.  
He calls down curses on himself if he is not telling the truth.

And God wants us to believe Job.  
God himself at the beginning of Job asked,  
“Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth,  
a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” (1:8)

Job’s wife had her doubts:  
“Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.” (2:9)

Now in his final speech, Job has a last opportunity to curse God and die!  
But instead he maintains his innocence, and calls down curses on himself if he is guilty.

Our Psalm of response is Psalm 7 –  
a Psalm that opens with a similar self-maledictory oath –  
an oath that calls down curses on myself if I am guilty.  
Psalm 7 then goes on to ask God to judge justly –  
to deliver the righteous and judge the guilty according to their own deeds.

Sing Psalm 7

Read Matthew 5:14-20, 27-30, 38-42; 6:19-24; 7:12-20

Many have pointed out the connections between Job 31 and the Sermon on the Mount.

Job is not content to demonstrate that he is innocent of major outward sins.

Job wants to show that he has internalized the law of God.

It is only his outward actions that conform to God's standard,  
but even his inward disposition.

The book of Job is structured in threes:

there are three friends;

and the three friends engage in three rounds of three speeches;

and after the three rounds of three speeches,

there are three soliloquies (Job, Elihu, and God).

And there are three parts to Job's soliloquy:

first, he reflects in chapter 29 on what life was like in the days of God's favor –

he had the friendship of God

and the honor of men.

Then in chapter 30 he speaks of how everything has changed:

now he is mocked and derided by men,

and is forsaken by God.

And finally, in chapter 31,

he swears an oath to confirm all that he has said.

And, perhaps not surprisingly there are three parts to chapter 31:

Job speaks first of his sexual fidelity,

then of his economic fidelity,

and finally of his political fidelity.

Of course, it may be more of a modern distinction

to distinguish between the economic and the political –

perhaps the more ancient way to put it

is that Job speaks of the three blessings of Abraham:

the blessings of the seed, of the land, and of the blessing to the nations –

once again demonstrating that Job is all that Israel was supposed to be!

### **1. Sex and Seed: Fidelity in Eye, Foot, and Heart (31:1-12)**

#### **a. A Covenant with My Eyes – Because God Sees My Ways (v1-4)**

*"I have made a covenant with my eyes;*

*how then could I gaze at a virgin?*

<sup>2</sup> *What would be my portion from God above*

*and my heritage from the Almighty on high?*

<sup>3</sup> *Is not calamity for the unrighteous,*

*and disaster for the workers of iniquity?*

<sup>4</sup> *Does not he see my ways*

*and number all my steps?*

Job starts by saying,

“I have made a covenant with my eyes.”

The preposition is important here because it affects the meaning.

In Hebrew you can either make a covenant with,

or you can make a covenant to.

If you make a covenant with, then it suggests a covenant of equals.

If you make a covenant “to”,

then it signifies that the greater imposed the covenant on the lesser.

The preposition here is “to” (not with).

Job did not discuss this with his eyes to find out what his eyes wanted.

He imposed a covenant upon his eyes!

You can’t negotiate with your eyes.

And because of this covenant that Job has imposed on his eyes, he adds:

How then could I gaze at a virgin?

The word translated “gaze” is a very important word in Job.

It means to discern, to understand or to consider.

(No, it is not the word that God uses when he asks,

“Have you considered my servant Job?”

but both words are frequently used within the same wisdom contexts).

All through the wisdom debate, this word is used –

to consider, to understand, to perceive, to look into, to investigate –

as Job and his friends wrestle with how to understand what God was doing to Job.

Job had complained that God’s deeds were mysterious:

“He passes by me, and I see him not;

he moves on, but I do not perceive him.” (9:11)

or later,

“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there,

and backward, but I do not perceive him.” (23:8)

Here in the soliloquies it takes on even greater importance:

Job used it in chapter 30, when he says that he cried out to God,

and God only looked at him – God merely gazed at him.

Now, Job says that I have made a covenant with my eyes

so that I would not treat a virgin the way that God is treating me.

I would not look at a woman this way

because to gaze at her (to consider or contemplate her)

is not an act of love.

When you gaze at a woman (whether in person or at her picture)  
when you contemplate her for your own selfish pleasure –  
then you are not loving her.  
Some men think that the solution to lust is to try to ignore women.  
If gazing at her is sinful, then their solution is not even to look at her.  
But that is the Pharisee's answer.  
Build a fence around the law,  
so that you guarantee your fidelity to the law  
by making sure that you cannot get anywhere close to breaking it!

But that is not love!

You cannot love a person by ignoring her!

Job thinks that God is merely “gazing” at him –  
and that if God loved *him*, God would do *more* than just gaze!

And he's right! (as we'll see when God finally speaks)

Elihu will talk about this “gazing” – this “consideration” – this contemplation – as well.  
He will use the word three times in chapter 32,  
and at the end of his speech he will challenge Job to stop  
“and consider the wondrous works of God” (37:14).  
You, Job, should gaze at God and what he has done.  
Look intently and contemplate his mighty deeds.

And in chapter 38, God will agree (at least on that point) with Elihu.  
You should consider the mighty works of God.  
You *should* gaze at him.

Why the difference?

Why is it okay to contemplate God – but not a virgin?  
Because to contemplate a woman – to gaze at a virgin –  
is to enjoy her – to find your happiness and satisfaction in her.  
It is perverse.  
It is idolatry!  
You are worshiping a creature – rather than your Creator!

But to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord – to contemplate and consider him –  
that is what you were created *for*!  
The beauty of the creature is to draw your heart and mind to the Creator.

And after the Creator shows up,  
Job will conclude in chapter 42 that he had failed to *consider* God sufficiently!  
“I have uttered what I did not understand” (what I did not “consider” –  
what I did not “gaze at”).

So you should not be gazing at virgins – you cannot love them that way!  
But you should be gazing at God –  
you should consider and contemplate him and all his mighty deeds!

**b. If I Walked with Falsehood...Then Let My Children Perish (v5-8)**

<sup>5</sup> *“If I have walked with falsehood  
and my foot has hastened to deceit;  
<sup>6</sup> (Let me be weighed in a just balance,  
and let God know my integrity!)  
<sup>7</sup> if 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,  
<sup>8</sup> then let me sow, and another eat,  
and let what grows for me<sup>[a]</sup> be rooted out.*

Verses 5-8 continue to explore the theme of infidelity –  
not just sexual infidelity, but the whole theme of “walking with falsehood.”

But you can hear the same sorts of concerns as in Proverbs 5-7,  
when it talks about the foolish man whose steps “turned aside from the way”  
and his “heart has gone after his eyes.”

Job recognizes that the eyes can point in the wrong direction.  
This is why he made a covenant with his eyes!  
He notices a pretty woman – just like anyone else.

But he says that his heart has *not* gone after his eyes.  
He sees dangerous paths.  
His eyes are fully aware of (and perhaps tempted towards) deceitful ways.  
But he has stayed in the way of righteousness –  
and his heart has remained faithful to God.

And he calls down a rather ironic curse!  
He says, if I have done this,  
then “let me sow and another eat,  
and let what grows for me be rooted out.”

If you take this as a purely agricultural metaphor,  
then it has already happened!  
All of Job’s crops have been destroyed or plundered.  
But it is more likely that it refers to Job’s children:  
(the word here was used in 5:25, 21:8, and 27:14 to refer to offspring).  
And of course, that is even more ironic!  
Because this is precisely what has happened:  
Job’s offspring have been uprooted!

But Job understands that sexual sin is a sin against your children –  
it is a sin that is all about seed/offspring.

A man who sows his seed wantonly is jeopardizing his children’s inheritance.  
If I had done that, Job says, then it would make sense for my children to be uprooted.

And, what is more...

**c. If My Heart Has Been Enticed...That Would Be a Heinous Crime (v9-12)**

<sup>9</sup> *“If my heart has been enticed toward a woman,  
and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door,  
<sup>10</sup> then let my wife grind for another,  
and let others bow down on her.  
<sup>11</sup> For that would be a heinous crime;  
that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges;  
<sup>12</sup> for that would be a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon,  
and it would burn to the root all my increase.*

In verse 9, many translations say “enticed by a woman” (NEB, NRSV, NIV),  
or “deceived by a woman” (KJV),

but the ESV correctly says “enticed *toward* a woman.”

Job is not so foolish as to blame the woman for a man’s being enticed.

Yes, there are women who entice men;  
but Job will not let the men off the hook!  
If your heart was faithful to God,  
then you would not be enticed!

As we saw when we went through 1 Timothy last fall,  
the Bible consistently refuses to blame women for men’s sexual transgressions.  
(Women may be guilty of their *own* sexual transgressions –  
but men cannot evade guilt by blaming women!)

But here Job says “if I have been guilty of adultery, let my wife pay for it.”

Let my wife become a slave and a prostitute.

Job is not giving us the “just penalty” for a man’s adultery.

Job is not saying that when a man commits adultery  
then his wife should become a slave and a prostitute.

Job is uttering a self-maledictory oath.

He is saying, if I am guilty, then let all these horrible things happen to me.

You can do all sorts of horrible things to me,  
and I can endure it.

But if you do something horrible to my wife –  
that hits deeper than anything else you can do.

Remember that Job has already lost his children – he has already lost his wealth –  
and even his body is wracked with agony.

There is nothing more you can do to him –  
except abuse his wife!

But think about what would have happened if Job was guilty of adultery?  
Job would have been executed (an iniquity to be punished by the judges) –  
and Job’s wife would have been subjected to humiliation.

Especially in Job’s current condition,  
her prospects for the future are bleak!

If Job was executed as an adulterer,  
it is entirely possible that her only recourse  
would have been slavery and prostitution.

We would like to think that our actions don’t have consequences –  
and certainly they don’t have consequences for other people, do they?!

But Job says that sexual infidelity is “a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon,  
and it would burn to the root all my increase.”

There is a cosmic dimension to adultery –  
the fire of unholy passion consumes everything in its path –  
and its path leads inexorably to the grave.

And so perhaps you can see how Job’s discussion of sexual sin  
moves seamlessly into a discussion of economic sin.

## **2. Economics and the Household of God: Fidelity to Those in Need (31:13-23)**

### **a. The Obligations of Privilege (v13-15)**

<sup>13</sup> *“If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant,  
when they brought a complaint against me,*

<sup>14</sup> *what then shall I do when God rises up?  
When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him?*

<sup>15</sup> *Did not he who made me in the womb make him?  
And did not one fashion us in the womb?*

Job is not a modern egalitarian!

He had servants (manservants and maidservants).

And his servants were expected to obey him and do what he said.

But this also gave Job certain obligations.

After all, as Gregory the Great pointed out

the difference between rich and poor is due solely to historical accident.

Before God, there is no difference between the master and the servant –  
and both must give an account to him in the end!

And the master will be judged more severely,

because he had the greater power – and so therefore the greater obligation.

God may have rejected my case – says Job –  
but I know that he will not reject the cause of the poor!  
And what grounds would I have for oppressing the poor?  
The same God who made me in the womb – made him in the womb –  
and therefore I should treat my servants  
as I would wish to be treated if I were a servant.

But Job goes a step further:  
in verses 16-23 he rejects the idea that his obligation is merely to “avoid doing harm.”  
If my neighbor is in need –  
and I have the opportunity and the resources to help –  
then I should be cursed by God if I fail to help!

**b. Ignoring the Poor Is Theft (v16-23)**

<sup>16</sup> *“If I have withheld anything that the poor desired,  
or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,  
<sup>17</sup> or have eaten my morsel alone,  
and the fatherless has not eaten of it  
<sup>18</sup> (for from my youth the fatherless<sup>[b]</sup> grew up with me as with a father,  
and from my mother's womb I guided the widow<sup>[c]</sup>),  
<sup>19</sup> if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,  
or the needy without covering,  
<sup>20</sup> if his body has not blessed me,<sup>[d]</sup>  
and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep,  
<sup>21</sup> if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,  
because I saw my help in the gate,  
<sup>22</sup> then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder,  
and let my arm be broken from its socket.  
<sup>23</sup> For I was in terror of calamity from God,  
and I could not have faced his majesty.*

In verse 21, he points out that he had the connections (“my help in the gate”),  
that meant that he could do whatever he wanted to the poor.  
If he had wanted to mistreat the poor,  
there was no one who would have stood against him.  
He had power, he had privilege, he had connections.

And yet he used all these benefits for the sake of the poor.  
But who are the poor?

Remember that in chapter 30, Job spoke of the men  
“whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock.” (30:1)  
There are reprehensible people – the senseless, nameless brood – that you cannot help:  
notice, that it is not that you *should not* help them –  
you should help them if you can –

but there are people who will not let you help them!

Take the extreme example:

a man comes up to you on the street and asks for money.

He is ragged and lean, and he reeks of alcohol.

What should you do?

He plainly needs food and clothing.

So give him food and clothing!

Giving him cash would probably be the cruelest thing you could do to him.

So you offer to buy him some food and give him some clothes –  
but he refuses and says he just wants cash.

What would Job do?

One thing to remember is that Job's discussion presupposes a context  
where Job knew most of the people in the community;  
and if he did not know a person who was in need,  
he diligently investigated their situation (29:16),  
in order to help them!

Over the last few years a new organization has started in Mishawaka called "Help with Love."  
They are trying to put this into practice in coordinating the efforts of area churches.  
They have people who "investigate" the situation of those who call for help,  
and work with them to come up with a plan for how to help.  
They also connect people with area churches.

There are too many needy people in the Michiana area  
for one person (or even one church) to know everyone.

By pooling our resources – and our knowledge –  
we can do a better job of doing what Job did:  
investigating the cause of the needy!

The whole point is to minister to the whole person.

After all, Job doesn't simply say, "I fed the poor guy once" or  
"I gave the widow a Christmas basket."

But "from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father,  
and from my mother's womb I guided the widow." (31:18)

Okay, maybe that's a slight exaggeration!

But you get the point!

It's not just "I gave handouts to some poor guy and that made me feel better" –  
but *this poor man* could count on me to be there for him through thick and thin.

Of course, behind this you need to hear Job's complaint:

I was there for the poor.

But now I am the poor.

And where is God?

As he says in verse 23:

*For I was in terror of calamity from God,  
and I could not have faced his majesty.*

In part three of Job's concluding oath,  
he moves toward the political.

As we have seen, the sexual and the economic were closely linked.

In the same way, the economic and the political are intimately connected –  
and of course, at the heart of all of this is worship:

### **3. Politics and the Kingdom of God: Fidelity in Mouth, Heart, and Shoulder (31:24-40)**

#### **a. The Enticement of Idolatry (v24-28)**

<sup>24</sup> *"If I have made gold my trust  
or called fine gold my confidence,  
<sup>25</sup> if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant  
or because my hand had found much,  
<sup>26</sup> if I have looked at the sun<sup>[e]</sup> when it shone,  
or the moon moving in splendor,  
<sup>27</sup> and my heart has been secretly enticed,  
and my mouth has kissed my hand,  
<sup>28</sup> this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges,  
for I would have been false to God above.*

In biblical times the sexual, the economic, and the political  
were all bound together around worship.

Idolatrous worship regularly included fornication, finances, and politics.

Indeed, when you look at how Job describes this in verses 24-28,  
you can see how little things have really changed!

Job says that if he made gold his trust – he would have been false to God above.

The prophets closely connected idolatry and adultery.

But here we see that idolatry is also closely related to economic sin.

Paul tells us that greed "is idolatry" (Col 3).

Notice how much of the same language is used here as in the first part of the chapter:

The 'heart' is 'enticed', the 'mouth' kisses,

and the whole crime is punished like the adulterer.

But the context of this idolatrous/adulterous language  
is the sin of trusting in gold.

Job's reference to the sun and moon connects with the idolatry of his day.

And in many ancient near eastern cultures  
the worshiper would “throw a kiss” to the object of his worship.  
Since you cannot literally kiss the sun or the moon,  
throwing a kiss heavenward is the only way to kiss them!

And Job says that idolatry also is “an iniquity to be punished by the judges.”  
We live in a culture where freedom of worship is assumed.  
But for most of human history, the link between worship and politics was assumed.  
If you worship some other god  
then you have an allegiance that disconnects you from your rulers.

Modern society has attempted to sever the connection between religion and politics,  
as it has also attempted to sever the connection between sexuality and economics.  
But Job says that his religious orientation is a public matter.  
And it is connected to how he treats others in public:

**b. Words and Deeds: Job’s Conversation and Hospitality (v29-32)**

<sup>29</sup> “If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me,  
or exulted when evil overtook him  
<sup>30</sup> (I have not let my mouth sin  
by asking for his life with a curse),  
<sup>31</sup> if the men of my tent have not said,  
‘Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?’  
<sup>32</sup> (the sojourner has not lodged in the street;  
I have opened my doors to the traveler),

Many of the Psalms rejoice at the overthrow of the wicked –  
so why does Job say that he has not rejoiced at the ruin of the one who hated him?

Job shows that he understands the purpose of the imprecatory Psalms.  
Calling upon God to destroy the wicked *does not include* personal vendettas.  
When Jesus said,  
“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’  
But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”  
He was merely saying what Job had already learned.

The Sermon on the Mount was not revealing a new law that was previously unknown.  
The Sermon on the Mount was rebuking a faulty understanding of the law!

Job says that he has never committed the sin of cursing his enemies.  
There is all the difference in the world between saying,  
“thy kingdom come” – and would you please destroy all who oppose it –  
and saying  
“my kingdom come” – and would you please destroy all who oppose it!

If anyone could have said “my kingdom come” it would have been Job.

After all, he was the servant of the LORD – blameless and upright –  
he was all that Israel was supposed to be; all that David was supposed to be.  
He may not understand *what* God is doing in history,  
but he does understand that God’s purposes for history are bigger than he is.

And so he says that he has devoted his resources for the sake of that kingdom.  
He has sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

<sup>31</sup> *if the men of my tent have not said,  
‘Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?’*

<sup>32</sup> *(the sojourner has not lodged in the street;  
I have opened my doors to the traveler),*

Job’s household can testify that everyone is welcome in his tent.

When a sojourner came to town, Job would make sure that he had a place to stay.

Our fragmented society prefers to have each family in their own massive house.

But how are you using your house?

My mother had a tiny 500-square foot apartment.

But in less than a year, she had invited every woman in her church over for tea.

At her impromptu memorial service held after church the next Sunday,

woman after woman stood up to say

that her example had challenged them to think about what they were doing  
with the 2,000 square feet that God had given them.

If she – who had nothing – could make them feel like a queen with the little that she had,  
what could they do with the much that God had given them!

How are using your resources for the sake of those in need?

Too often people think,

“I give God 10% - the rest of it is for me and my family!”

That’s not how Job thought.

All that you have is given to you by God

to use for *him* and the sake of *his kingdom*.

One 18<sup>th</sup>-century pastor recommended that his congregation

divide their expenses into necessities, conveniences and luxuries.

The first thing to do, he said, was pay for the necessities,

and the second was to get rid of the luxuries,

and then for every penny spent on conveniences, give another penny to the poor.

A 19<sup>th</sup> century Virginia pastor suggested that another area of concern

was the tendency just to throw money at those in need.

He argued that it was important to show your concern for the needy *in person*,

and commended the example of the Scottish pastor, Thomas Chalmers,

who set up diaconal ministry in Glasgow to include the whole congregation,

not just the deacons.

That's part of the reason why we are starting a round of visits  
that will include both a deacon and an elder.

We have normally sent two elders (or pastor and elder) to visit every family.

But this time we want to send an elder (or pastor) and a deacon  
in order to talk together about the diaconal needs in our families and communities,  
and to talk about how we can minister more effectively to these needs.

**c. Job's Signature: I Am Not Like Adam (v33-37)**

<sup>33</sup> *if I have concealed my transgressions as others do<sup>[f]</sup>  
by hiding my iniquity in my heart,*  
<sup>34</sup> *because 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—*  
<sup>35</sup> *Oh, that I had one to hear me!  
(Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!)  
Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary!*  
<sup>36</sup> *Surely I would carry it on my shoulder;  
I would bind it on me as a crown;*  
<sup>37</sup> *I would give him an account of all my steps;  
like a prince I would approach him.*

In verse 33, Job says,

“If I have concealed my transgressions like a man” –  
which is simply the Hebrew word “*adam*” –  
and given all the connections to Genesis 1-3 in the book of Job,  
I would be inclined to see an Adamic reference here.  
After all, Adam is famous for “hiding” from God.

But Job says I have not concealed transgressions.

I have no hidden sins in my heart.

“Here is my signature” – in Hebrew, here is my “tav.”

“Tav” is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet,  
but here it is spelled out as a word.

The one other place where this word is used is in Ezekiel 9,  
where Ezekiel speaks of God's “mark”  
that is to be placed on those who will be spared in the coming judgment;  
It is the idea behind the “mark of the beast” in Revelation 13.

In the ancient Hebrew script that Job and Ezekiel would have used,  
the “tav” looks something like an “X” –  
or perhaps like a “t” tilted ¼ turn.

In other words to say “here is my *tav*”

is very much like the illiterate man of the 19<sup>th</sup> century putting down his “mark.”

“X” marks the spot!

Job here returns to the theme of his complaint:

if only God would hear me –  
if only God would let me know what the charges are –  
I would carry them around like a badge of honor  
because I know that I am innocent!

Job has signed his complaint.

Now he wants God to produce a document  
that demonstrates the justice of how God has been treating him.  
If God will do this,  
then Job will parade around these charges –  
either because the document will be blank (after all, Job *knows* that he is innocent),  
or because the document will vindicate and explain why Job is suffering.

**d. Even the Earth I Have Treated Honorably (v38-40)**

<sup>38</sup> *“If my land has cried out against me  
and its furrows have wept together,  
<sup>39</sup> if I have eaten its yield without payment  
and made its owners breathe their last,  
<sup>40</sup> let thorns grow instead of wheat,  
and foul weeds instead of barley.”*

Verses 38-40 seem like an odd appendage to Job’s speech.

It seems like Job should have finished with verse 37.  
But I think that there is a reason for why they appear here.

In all of Job’s statements in verses 1-34  
he is dealing with the charge of sins against humanity (or perhaps against God).  
But in verses 38-40 he is dealing with sins against the *land*.

Indeed, it is only when you realize that Job is claiming to be the new Adam  
that you can see what he is doing.

Adam sinned – and through the curse, the earth now brings forth thorns instead of wheat.  
But Job says if I have eaten its yield without payment  
and made its owners breathe their last,  
in other words, if I am like Cain who followed in the sin of Adam –  
then let thorns grow instead of wheat.

If I have failed to be what God has called Israel and David to be,  
then let the earth return to its cursed state!

Here you see the point of the self-maledictory oath.

If I am guilty, then let all of these horrible things happen to me.  
So says the innocent, suffering servant of the LORD.

In the end, of course,  
    all these horrible things will be done to Jesus – the great Suffering Servant of the Lord.  
Job will not “curse God and die,”  
    but when God came in the flesh,  
        humanity did “curse God.”  
When Jesus came to become all that Adam failed to be,  
    all that Israel and David failed to be,  
    then he also took Job’s self-maledictory oath upon himself,  
    though he was innocent – he bore our guilt.

And because he triumphed over sin and death –  
    and ascended to the right hand of the Father –  
        now in the kingdom of Jesus, the age to come has begun to dawn.  
Jesus now judges the people with righteousness,  
    and defends the cause of the poor.  
Jesus now exercises God’s dominion to the ends of the earth –  
    because he is one who delivers the needy,  
    and redeems them from oppression and violence.  
And because Jesus reigns,  
    all the earth is fruitful –  
    and indeed, all the nations are blessed.

In other words, when the exalted Servant of the LORD sits at the right hand of the Father,  
    then all the promises to Abraham – the land, the seed, and the blessing to the nations –  
    are fulfilled.

*The words of Job are ended.*

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for your glorious Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
    whom you sent as the great King to judge the nations with righteousness,  
    and to redeem the needy from oppression and violence;  
we thank you for his ascension to your right hand,  
    where he has triumphed over sin, death, and the devil forever.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord,  
    defend us from our enemies, and lead us by your Holy Spirit in the way eternal,  
    that we may fear you and turn away from evil.  
Give us eyes to see Jesus.  
Give us ears to hear what he is saying.  
And give us hearts that love you, and love one another –  
    for we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sing Psalm 72