

August 16th

Chapter 27, Job's continued second response & Zophar's response in the 3rd cycle (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Job's speech in response to Bildad is 27: 1-12, Zophar's speech is 27: 13-23. Job's speech is especially important as it brings back themes from chapters 1 – 2, points forward to Job's climactic final speech in chapters 29-31, and God quotes this speech of Job's when God finally speaks in chapter 40.

“As God lives” is Job's great oath. It is obvious to Job that God DOES live, God's existence is that of which Job is ultimately sure of. Therefore, swearing by God's living presence is Job's seal for his own truth. The spirit of God, which has filled our nostrils at birth since the time of creation, is what Jewish theology asserts is what gives humans life. Job swears by all of this that there is no falsehood in him. He swears to cling fast to his own integrity until the day of his death. Job's oath creates an unprecedented situation: God is the guarantour of the oath (meaning God will punish Job if he is lying), and yet Job also casts God as his legal enemy. Job wishes for God, his enemy, to experience some measure of the suffering which he himself has experienced for the ways in which God has wronged a man of integrity and righteousness.

Zophar begins speaking in vs. 13 about that which awaits the wicked: destruction of families, loss of inheritance, devastation of families, unforeseen terrors, and ruin from the east wind. This recalls Zophar's speech in chapter 20, where he spoke of the inevitable disaster awaiting the wicked. Vs. 20-23 is especially troubling, as this is reminiscent of how Job's children died.

Chapter 28, Anonymous Poem on Wisdom (Learn, Read, Discuss)

This poem is original to the book of Job, heightening the drama by slowing down the action to ponder the deep questions already raised. The poem hints at that which we likely already know: none of the speeches we've heard so far have offered a satisfactory answer to Job's problems. The answer, the Truth, must come from a non-human source.

Vs 1-11 describe humanity's search for the resources of great value. Human beings go to incredible lengths and depths (especially during this time period) to discover gold and sapphires and iron. Human ingenuity knows

no bounds when searching for that of financial value. Vs. 12 shifts the conversation: therefore, should we not also search for wisdom (the MOST valuable treasure) with the same ingenuity? The poet says that humans do not know the way of wisdom, for it is not found in the material, physical world. Wisdom is priceless, it cannot be bought with precious resources. It is more valuable than pearls. Even “eagle eye” birds cannot see wisdom. But God alone understands the way and the place of wisdom. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” When looking at the conclusion in this poem, in light of chapters 1 & 2, Job most definitely fears the Lord and departs from evil, therefore he is wise.
