

Job Chapter 27

Verses 1-23

In Job's summary response to his three friends, he still clings to his claim of "righteousness", although now placed in the context of divine judgment.

The wicked are those who separate themselves from faith in the LORD and a fear of the LORD; Job does not qualify.

(In verses 1-12), Job turned from speaking about God (26:5-14), to defending his righteousness.

Job 27:1 "Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,"

Job may have paused here for Zophar to speak.

Since the latter declined, Job continued with two replies, apparently directed against all three friends.

Verse 1 begins: "Moreover Job continued his parable" (better, "discourse").

Verses 2-6

Job took the most solemn oath possible ("As God liveth"), delivering an ultimatum to his friends as he proceeded to express his lifelong commitment to God (Psalm 37:4).

Job 27:2 "[As] God liveth, [who] hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, [who] hath vexed my soul;"

"Who hath taken away my judgment":

God did not speak to declare Job innocent.

Compare the treatment of Christ in (Isa. 53:8 and Acts 8:33).

The parable in the verse above, was speaking of a deliberate statement by Job of the things he had observed.

We see (in verse 2 above), a recognition of God as the One who exists.

"As God liveth":

This was a statement that many of the men of God had used.

It was an expression of the truthfulness of what they were about to say.

Job had questioned his own judgement.

The Almighty was the One that Job believed had brought these calamities upon him.

He had no bitterness toward God, but against his own self.

He had stated previously that though God slay him, he would still trust Him.

He called Him his Redeemer.

Job did not understand what was happening to him, but he trusted that God had it under control.

Verses 3-6

Job affirmed his true and steadfast devotion to righteous living, no matter what happened.

He refused to live with a guilty conscience (verse 6b).

This was no brash claim, because God had recognized Job's virtue (1:8; 2:3).

Job 27:3 "All the while my breath [is] in me, and the spirit of God [is] in my nostrils;"

So long the oath of God would be upon him, or he bound himself under it.

"And the spirit of God is in my nostrils":

Which signifies the same thing.

The breath of a man is his spirit, and this is of God, the Father of spirits.

He first breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul or spirit (Gen. 2:7).

It is he that gives life and breath to every man (Acts 17:25), and continues it as long as he pleases, which is a very precarious thing.

For it is in his nostrils, where it is drawn to and fro and soon and easily stopped.

Nor will it always continue, it will some time not be, it will go forth, and then man dies, and returns to the earth Eccl. 12:7).

But as long as there is breath there is life; so that to say this is the same as to say, as long as I live, or have a being (Psalm 104:33).

And while that continued, Job looked upon himself under the oath he had taken by the living God.

Job 27:4 "My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit."

These words contain Job's oath.

He swears that he is sincere and speaks truly (compare Job 6:28).

The words refer to his utterances in general, especially in regard to himself.

But naturally in the main, as the relationship requires, to his assertions in regard to his innocence of wrong-doing (Job 27:5-6).

"My lips shall not speak wickedness":

Nothing shall induce him, Job says, to speak knowingly wicked words.

"Nor my tongue utter deceit":

Neither will he be induced, whatever happens, to utter untruth.

A confession of guilt, such as his friends have endeavored to exhort from him, would be both wicked and false.

"While breath was in him" from verse 3, meant that he was alive.

God breathed the breath of life in man, and he became a living soul.

The breath that is within us is our life.

He was saying, that as long as he lived, he would not speak wickedness.

Job was saying that his tongue would speak truth.

Job 27:5 "God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me."

To admit the wickedness with which his friends charged him would have been to justify them.

To say that they were right and he was wrong, this he resolves not to do.

"Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me":

Job was an upright man both in heart and life, through the grace of God bestowed on him and he continued in his integrity.

Notwithstanding the temptations of Satan, and his attacks upon him, and the solicitations of his wife.

And he determined through the grace of God to persist to the end of his life.

Though what he chiefly means here is, that he would not part with his character as an upright man.

Which he had always had, and God himself had bore testimony to.

He would never give up this till he gave up the ghost.

He would never suffer his integrity to be removed from him, nor remove it from himself by denying that it belonged to him.

Which his friends pushed hard upon him to do.

Job did not want to find out that his friends had been right about him.

He did not know how he could have sinned.

The sin was more of a secret to Job, than it was to the others around him.

The reason it was so secret was because it did not exist.

Job 27:6 "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach [me] so long as I live."

In spite of the loss of family, wealth and health, and the accusations of his friends, Job maintained his integrity to the end.

Job would not cease to believe, and said that he was innocent of the charges his friends had brought against him.

He knew that his righteousness was in God.

Job said he did not have a guilty conscience.

Verses 7-23

There is a severe interpretive problem in the chapter: Job seems to agree now with his friends that the wicked are punished and that they are not permitted to prosper as he had earlier alleged.

The answer to this seeming contradiction lies in the fact that much of what the friends have said is true and Job is agreeing with them; however, he does not contradict his earlier statements that they have been arbitrary and unjust in their application of their tenets.

(In 7-13), Job characterized his friends as enemies.

These three hypocrites would be judged by God and perhaps then they would realize the cruelty with which they had been treating Job.

Job 27:7 "Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous."

He could have been calling for God to judge his accusers as He judges the wicked.

Now Job was asking God to punish those who were against him.

Job's friends were in this group.

They would not accept Job's explanation that he had not sinned.

In a sense, they were the worst enemies that he had.

They had come to comfort him they said.

They cut him to pieces with accusations of wrong doing, which were not true.

Verses 8-10

Job reminded the friends that he would never be hypocritical because he understood the consequences.

Job 27:8 "For what [is] the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?"

The hypocrite and liar may get advantage in this life by his lies and his hypocrisy.

He may deceive men; he may raise himself in their opinion; and he may derive worldly advantage from having secured their approval.

But what will he have to look forward to in the end, when God taketh away (i.e. removes from earth), his soul?

Job evidently regards the soul that is "taken away" or removed from earth as still existing, still conscious, still capable of hope or of despair.

And asks what hope of a happy future could the man who had lived a hypocrite entertain, when God required his soul, and he fell under God's judgment.

The question reminds us of those words of our blessed Lord "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37).

The hypocrite may pretend to be something he is not in this life.

He may even get people to believe him, He has nothing to look forward to, because God will judge him for what he really is.

That is what happens to those we read of in the book of Matthew who proclaim to be Christians and Jesus tells them (depart from me", that He never knew them (Matt. 7:21-23).

Job 27:9 "Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?"

When any calamity comes upon him; or, when his conscience accuses him, and his guilt flies in his face?

Will God pay any regard to the cries of one who regarded him so little?

God will not hear the hypocrite in his time of trouble.

He cannot depend on God, as God could not depend on him.

Job 27:10 "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?"

When he has nothing else to delight in?

No: his delight is in the things of the world, which now sink under him.

"Will he always call upon God?"

Will he have the confidence to pray to God, and expect any comfort from him?

No, will he not rather despond in such a case, and cease to call upon him?

Certainly, those who do not delight in God will not call upon him.

This was still speaking of the hypocrite.

God will not be in fellowship with the hypocrite.

The hypocrite is not in fellowship with God either.

A hypocrite sometimes goes to church pretending to be a believer, but is really there for another reason.

They do not call on God in prayer, because they do not really believe in prayer.

Job 27:11 "I will teach you by the hand of God: [that] which [is] with the Almighty will I not conceal."

"I will teach you by the hand of God":

Job had pinpointed the issue between him and his friends.

They disagreed on the outworking of God's retribution.

They agreed that God was powerful, wise and sovereign.

But because Job knew there was no cherished sin in his life that would bring upon him such intense suffering, Job was forced to conclude that the simplistic notion, that all suffering comes from sin and all righteousness is rewarded, was wrong.

At the outset, Job himself probably believed as the comforters still did, but he had seen that his friends' limitation of God's action was drastically in need of revision; in fact, it was nonsense.

Job's comment here introduced his exposition on wisdom which follows (in Job chapter 28).

Beginning with this verse, we see a different Job than in the earlier Scriptures.

This was really the way that Job felt about the LORD all along.

The earlier statements that he made, were because he was suffering so greatly, and he had no encouragement from anyone.

He had been looking with disappointment.

The following statements he made were his true feelings however.

Job was saying that he would teach them of the LORD and His true ways.

Job 27:12 "Behold, all ye yourselves have seen [it]; why then are ye thus altogether vain?"

I speak no false or strange things.

But what is known and confirmed by your own experience, and that of others.

"Why then are ye thus altogether vain?"

In maintaining such a foolish and false opinion against your own knowledge and experience?

Why do you so obstinately defend your opinion, and not comply with mine, for the truth of which I appeal to your own consciences?

Job could not understand why anyone would not know the hand of God was in everything and everyone.

Verses 13-23

Such harsh language is similarly found in Psalms (e.g., Psalm 69:22-28).

Almost exclusively, Job quotes back to his “friends” what they had earlier spoken to him, using their own words against them.

Job wanted it made clear he was not denying that the wicked are punished with severe distress, so he agreed that they suffer greatly and affirmed so in this section.

Job 27:13 "This [is] the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, [which] they shall receive of the Almighty."

Namely, that which is mentioned in the following verses.

"With God":

Either laid up with God, namely, in his counsel and appointment; or, which he shall have from God, as the next words explain it.

"And the heritage of oppressors":

Who are mighty, fierce, terrible, and mischievous, as the word *gnaritzim* (violent), implies. Whom, therefore, men cannot destroy, but God will.

"Which they shall receive of the Almighty":

These are such who are either oppressors of the poor in their natural and civil rights, taking from or denying to them what is rightfully their due.

Or oppressors of the saints in their religious rights and privileges, furious persecutors of them.

And who, being powerful, are terrible, as the word signifies: there is a "heritage", or an inheritance for those, which is entailed upon them, and will descend unto them, as the firstborn of their father the devil, as children of disobedience.

And so of wrath, and like an inheritance will endure: and this they "shall receive"; it is future, it is wrath to come, and it is certain there is no escaping it.

It is their due desert, and they shall receive it.

It is in the hands of the almighty God, and he will render it to them, and they shall most assuredly inherit it.

Job 27:14 "If his children be multiplied, [it is] for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread."

Among the items of prosperity which Job had assigned to the wicked man in one of his previous discourses (Job 21:8, 11), was a numerous and flourishing offspring.

Now he feels forced to admit that, frequently at any rate, this flourishing offspring is overtaken by calamity (Job 21:19).

"It is for the sword":

Either in predatory warfare, to which it was bred up, or as the consequence of a blood-feud inherited from its progenitor.

They who take "the sword," either in their own persons or in their posterity, "perish with the sword."

"And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread":

If they escape this fate, then mostly, they fall into poverty, and suffer want.

No one caring to relieve them, since they have an ill reputation, the memory of their parent's wickedness clinging to them long after his decease.

Job was about to tell the true way of the oppressor.

He had said earlier that it appeared they prospered in this earth.

That might have even been true, but their prosperity was short lived.

It may appear that they were blessed with many children and with wealth, but all of that disappeared.

Those who do not know God can never find peace in this life.

They go through life unsatisfied.

The thing they are seeking is God, and they are not aware of it.

Job 27:15 "Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep."

That is, as the context shows, it shall be obscure, and excite no sympathy.

Their very death shall be as it were a burial, and shall consign them to oblivion.

"His widows":

For they had many wives, either to gratify their lust, or to increase and strengthen their family and interest.

"Shall not weep":

Either because they dare not lament their death, which was entertained with public joy. Or because they were overwhelmed and astonished with the greatness and strangeness of the calamity, and therefore could not weep.

Or because they also, as well as others, groaned under their tyranny and cruelty and rejoiced in their deliverance from it.

An evil man is evil at home as well as in public.

His widow will not miss him or weep for him, because she will be free of his oppression.

Job 27:16 "Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;"

Which, as it denotes the great abundance of it collected together, so it expresses the bias and disposition of such a man's mind.

That he cannot be content without amassing great quantities of it, and also his diligence and success therein (see 1 Kings 10:27).

"And prepare raiment as the clay":

Not merely for use, but pomp and show, to fill his wardrobes with; and formerly, raiment was part of the treasure of great men.

The phrase signifies that he might have such a variety of raiment, and such large quantities of it, that he would value it no more than so much clay.

Or else that his riches, consist of what it would, be both polluting and troublesome to him.

The Septuagint version reads "gold" instead of "raiment" (as in Zech. 9:3), where like expressions are used of Tyre.

Job 27:17 "He may prepare [it], but the just shall put [it] on, and the innocent shall divide the silver."

The raiment thus accumulated shall pass from the wicked into the hands of the just, who at his death shall enter upon his inheritance (Job 20:18, 20, 28).

"And the innocent shall divide the silver":

Have a part of it at least, or divide the whole between his children, or give a part of it to the poor.

So money that is ill gotten, or ill used, is taken away and put into the hands of one that will have mercy on the poor, and liberally distribute it to them (Prov. 28:8).

Silver or any other wealth that is acquired through deceit does not last very long.

He might be very rich in things of this world, but he would die and leave it all.

Job was saying, the just shall wind up with the riches of the evil man.

Job 27:18 "He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth [that] the keeper maketh."

"House as a moth ... booth":

These are temporary dwellings which illustrate that the wicked will not live long.

A moth destroys.

It is fragile itself and lasts but for a moment in time.

The booth spoken of here, was a temporary shelter that was erected at harvest time.

It would be torn down after harvest.

This was saying, the house of the evil man was temporary.

Job 27:19 "The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he [is] not."

That is, the wicked rich man.

And the sense is, either he shall lie down upon his bed, but shall not be gathered to rest, shall get no sleep.

The abundance of his riches, and the fear of losing them, or his life for them, will not allow him to sleep.

Or else it expresses his sudden loss of them, he "lies down" at night to take his rest, "and it is not gathered".

His riches are not gathered or taken away from him, but remain with him.

"He openeth his eyes, and he is not":

The words describe the suddenness of his destruction.

The phrase is no more remarkable than that in (2 Kings 19:35): "When they arose early in the morning behold they were all dead corpses."

It is hardly necessary to circumscribe the words, "Hardly shall the sinner open his eyes, to view his destruction, when he is swept away."

This could be a crop that the rich man had that he was too lazy to harvest.

It might even mean that while he slept, his crop died from locusts or such.

He had lain down a rich man, and when he got up all of his wealth was gone for some reason.

Job 27:20 "Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night."

(Compare Job 18:11).

Terrors sweep over the wicked man like a flood of waters, vague terrors with respect to the past, the present, and the future.

He fears the vengeance of these whom he has oppressed and injured.

The loss of his prosperity at any moment by a reverse of fortune, and a final retribution at the hand of God commensurate with his ill doings.

He is at all times uneasy.

Sometimes he experiences a sudden rush upon him of such gloomy thoughts, which overwhelm him, and sweep him away like a mighty stream.

"A tempest stealeth him away in the night":

While he is off his guard, as it were, in the night a sudden storm bursts on him and removes him from his place.

Many times the man that is wealthy cannot sleep at night for fear someone will come and take his money.

He fears robbers and a thousand other things that could cause him to lose his wealth.

He will probably die from a heart attack worrying about his money.

Job 27:21 "The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place."

I.e. some violent and terrible judgment, fitly compared to the east wind, which in those parts was most vehement and furious, and in addition, pestilent and pernicious.

Of which (see Exodus 10:13; 14:21; Psalms 48:7; 78:26; Hosea 13:15; Jonah 4:8).

“And as a storm hurleth him out of his place”:

With this, which Job says of the sinner, compare what he says of himself below:

Job 9:17 "For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause."

Job 30:22 "Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride [upon it], and dissolvent my substance."

And see his former query regarding the wicked, (Job 21:18).

Job 21:18 "They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away."

"Carrieth him away ... out of his place":

As it follows, out of his stately palace, wherein he expected to dwell for ever.

Whence he shall be carried either by an enemy, that shall take him and carry him into captivity, or by death.

This could be a real storm coming out of the east that God sent to destroy him, or it could be speaking of a storm of problems that overwhelms him.

Job 27:22 "For [God] shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand."

His darts or plagues, one after another.

"And not spare":

I.e. shall show no pity nor mercy to him, when he cries to God for it.

"He would fain flee out of his hand":

He earnestly desires and endeavors by all ways possible to escape the judgments of God, but all in vain.

This evil man might find safety from other men, but this was speaking of a judgement of God that came and did not spare him.

Job 27:23 "[Men] shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place."

"Clap their hands":

A gesture of mocking.

In token of their joy, at the removal of such a public pest and tyrant.

And by way of astonishment, as also in contempt and scorn.

All which this action signifies in Scripture.

"And shall hiss him out of his place":

In token of detestation and derision.

When the really bad troubles came on the evil man, those he had treated poorly would rejoice at his misfortune.

"They would clap their hands in joy, that God had punished him for his evil."

Job Chapter 27 Questions

1. The parable, in verse 1, was speaking of what?
2. God is recognized as the One who _____ in verse 2.
3. What was "As God liveth" an expression of?
4. Job had said "Though God slay me, yet will I _____ him".
5. What did "While breath is in him" mean?
6. As long as he lived he would not speak _____.
7. What was Job saying in verse 5?
8. Why was Job's sin a secret to himself?

9. Job did not have a guilty _____.
10. What was Job asking for in verse 7?
11. Why were Job's friends his worst enemies?
12. What is a hypocrite?
13. God will judge him for what he really _____.
14. God will not be in _____ with the hypocrite
15. Why does the hypocrite not call on God in prayer?
16. Beginning in verse 11, what was different?
17. If the wicked man's family be multiplied, it is for what?
18. What is strange about the death of the evil man?
19. What happened to the silver of the evil man?
20. What was his house compared to in verse 18?
21. What happened to him in the night?
22. When he dies what would men do?