

JOB

Chapter 27

Job Continues: I Will Maintain My Integrity

And Job again took up his discourse, and said: “As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, 3 as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, 4 my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit. 5 Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. 6 I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days. 7 “Let my enemy be as the wicked, and let him who rises up against me be as the unrighteous. 8 For what is the hope of the godless when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life? 9 Will God hear his cry when distress comes upon him? 10 Will he take delight in the Almighty? Will he call upon God at all times? 11 I will teach you concerning the hand of God; what is with the Almighty I will not conceal. 12 Behold, all of you have seen it yourselves; why then have you become altogether vain? 13 “This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage that oppressors receive from the Almighty: 14 If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword, and his descendants have not enough bread. 15 Those who survive him the pestilence buries, and his widows do not weep. 16 Though he heap up silver like dust, and pile up clothing like clay, 17 he may pile it up, but the righteous will wear it, and the innocent will divide the silver. 18 He builds his house like a moth's, like a booth that a watchman makes. 19 He goes to bed rich, but will do so no more; he opens his eyes, and his wealth is gone. 20 Terrors overtake him like a flood; the in the night a whirlwind carries him off. 21 The east wind lifts him up and he is gone; it sweeps him out of his place. 22 It hurls at him without pity; he flees from its power in headlong flight. 23 It claps its hands at him and hisses at him from its place.

27:1–23 The dialogue-dispute section of the book begins with Job's opening lament (ch. 3), continues with the three cycles of speeches (chs. 4–14; 15–21; 22–26) and concludes with Job's closing discourse (ch. 27), in which he reasserts his own innocence (vv. 2–6) and eloquently describes the ultimate fate of the wicked (vv. 13–23). (CSB)

It is also significant that none of three friends in their speeches directly addressed God or appealed to him to hear them. We get the distinct impression that to them God was an abstract power distant from their personal lives. On the other hand Job had a close relationship with God and spoke to him in intimate terms. (PBC)

27:1 *discourse.* A speech. Job's friends remain silent, so Job continues to build his defense. (TLSB)

27:2 *As God lives.* The most solemn of oaths. (CSB)

Job swears in God's name that he will not lie. Others who spoke oaths in God's name include Abraham's servant (Gn 24:3) and Jesus (Mt 26:63–64). (TLSB)

This oath expression is an invitation to God to curse Job if what he says is not true. It also expresses Job's hope that God will hear him and render a verdict favorable to him. In the words that follow, however, Job boldly complains that God has denied him justice, and the Almighty has made him taste bitterness of soul. Those words remind us of Naomi's statement when with her daughter-in-law Ruth she returned from Moab to Bethlehem. She said: “The Almighty has

made my life bitter” and “the Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me” (Ruth 1:20,21) (PBC)

made my soul bitter. Job’s repeated complaint. Cf 7:11; 10:1; 21:25. (TLSB)

27:3 *the spirit of God.* Hbr *ruach ’eloah*; synonym for “soul” or “life.” (TLSB)

in my nostrils. Suggests that this spirit is the breath of life, not the Holy Spirit. Cf Gn 2:7. (TLSB)

Even while Job was complaining, he still confessed that God had given him life and breath. The Hebrew words translated “life” and “breath” can both be translated “breath.” They are synonyms. The first word is the same in Hebrew as the word translated “breath” in Genesis 2:7: “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.” In this chapter Job confesses that God had created him and given him life and breath. Job was no evolutionist. (PBC)

27:5 *far be it from me to say that you are right* – Several English versions translate the opening words more literally: “Far be it from me to admit you are right.” That is a strong expression. The KJV renders those words “God forbid that I should justify you.” (PBC)

you. The Hebrew for this word is plural. In his summary statement, Job once again speaks to his three friends as a group. (CSB)

Job’s friends. (TLSB)

till I die. Job vows to maintain his innocence unto death. (TLSB)

27:6 *hold fast my righteousness.* God had spoken similarly of Job (see 2:3). (CSB)

Or, “I will not let go of my righteousness.” Job does not claim to be sinless; he claims only to be innocent of the great sins of which his friends have accused him. *my heart does not reproach.* His conscience is clear. (TLSB)

27:7–8 David likewise prays for the death of his enemies. Cf Ps 5:10; 54:5. The martyrs pray similarly in Rv 6:10. Such prayers call on God to avenge those who suffer at the hands of the wicked. Cf Dt 32:43; Rm 12:19. (TLSB)

27:7 *let my enemies be like the wicked.* Job calls for his friends, who had falsely accused him of being wicked, to be treated as though they themselves were wicked men (cf. Ps 109:6–15; 137:8–9). (CSB)

When God’s patience with the wicked finally expires, He closes His ears to their cries for mercy. Cf 35:13; Is 1:15. (TLSB)

27:11 *I will teach you.* Job is about to remind his counselors about an issue on which they all agree: that the truly wicked deserve God’s wrath (vv. 13–23). The three friends had falsely put Job in that category. (CSB)

hand of God. God’s act of discipline and/or judgment. (TLSB)

27:13–23 A poem that dramatizes the effect of Job’s earlier call for redress (v. 7). (CSB)

27:13 Job echoes the words of Zophar in 20:29 (see note there [Like Bildad in 18:21, Zophar concludes his speech with a summary statement in which he claims that all he has said is in accord with God’s plans for judging sinners. (CSB)

that oppressors receive from the Almighty. That which the wicked shall “inherit” from God. (TLSB)

27:14 *it is for the sword* – The deeds of the wicked will adversely affect their children and the widows. Job is, of course, generalizing. We need not conclude that in every instance during this lifetime the survivors of the ungodly will meet such a fate. In many instances they do not, just as Job had previously pointed out. But unless they repent, they will suffer eternal loss. In comparison to that, any gain they might achieve in this life is insignificant. (PBC)

God elsewhere threatens to punish lawbreakers to the third and fourth generation (Ex 20:5). (TLSB)

27:15 *pestilence*. Hbr *maweth*; lit, “death.” See note, 18:13. Weapons of God’s judgment will strike those who are wicked until none survive. Similar waves of judgment occur in Ex 7:14–10:29; 12:29–32; Rv 16. (TLSB)

27:16–17 The wicked may hoard wealth for themselves, but in the day of God’s wrath, those who are righteous and innocent—the very people exploited in pursuit of wealth—will divide their goods. Cf Pr 13:22. (TLSB)

27:16 *likew dust* – There is a fascinating double meaning the word “dust.” In the OT it sometimes expresses great abundance. On one occasion God told Abraham: “I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted” (Genesis 13:16). At other times the word “dust” signifies destruction and decay, and is used in connection with death. In his psalm Moses addresses God: “You turn men back to dust, saying, ‘Return to dust, O sons of men’” (Psalm 90:3). No matter how much wealth a godless person accumulates, it will have no lasting value for him. (PBC)

27:18 *moth’s... booth*. Symbols of fragility. (CSB)

Place of the wicked is temporary. (TLSB)

In biblical time temporary shelters were erected in fields during harvest time. Isaiah compares the disobedient people of Judah to such a hut or shelter that stands desolate in a vineyard or in a melon patch (Is. 1:8). (PBC)

27:19 *goes to bed rich...wealth is gone* – In the parable of the Rich Farmer, Jesus spoke of the uncertainty of wealth and the suddenness of death. God addressed that materialistic person: “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” (Luke 12:20). Those are sobering words. (PBC)

27:20 *Terrors*. Job echoes Eliphaz’s earlier accusation, 22:10–11. (TLSB)

27:21 *east wind*. The sirocco, a hot, dusty wind that blows in from the desert, creating sleeplessness and unrest (cf 1:9). Inability to sleep gives opportunity for the consciences of the wicked to torment them and to create panic at the ominous, blowing sounds outside. (TLSB)

For the ungodly, death can only have terrors. (PBC)

27:22–23 *It*. East wind is the relentless agent of God's wrath. *headlong flight*. Running like a terrorized animal, he attempts to escape the blowing sand. *clasps ... hisses*. Taunts. Words paired because of their similar sound in Hbr. (TLSB)

27:23 *hurls at him without pity* – Here Job goes beyond his friends in the sharpness of his language. He closes this part of his speech by picturing death as an enemy that gleefully claps his hands and maliciously hisses at the evildoer when he meets his end. By making the picture even more severe than his friends had, Job emphasizes that the way of the evildoer leads to destruction. But such an evildoer he himself is not, Job firmly maintains. (PBC)

Ch 27 Job refuses to abandon his confidence. He knows and confesses “what is with the Almighty” (v 11), namely, that he will finally be vindicated (v 6), while his enemies will be swept away (vv 13–23). Job's faith in God grows stronger in the face of his difficulties, just as iron is strengthened on the anvil and in the forge. No matter what befalls him, Job entrusts all things to his Creator. • Lord, no matter what struggle we may endure in this earthly life, we know that “by God's power [we] are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Pt 1:5). Amen. (TLSB)