

Title: Job's Defense Rests (Part 1): A Vow of Innocence
Number: 0322Job27:1-23(27)
Text: 27.1-23
Central Idea: N/A
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{Read Text / Prayer}

Job 27 (HCSB) 1 Job continued his discourse, saying: 2 As God lives, who has deprived me of justice, and the Almighty who has made me bitter, 3 as long as my breath is still in me and the breath from God remains in my nostrils, 4 my lips will not speak unjustly, and my tongue will not utter deceit. 5 I will never affirm that you are right. I will maintain my integrity until I die. 6 I will cling to my righteousness and never let it go. My conscience will not accuse me as long as I live! 7 May my enemy be like the wicked and my opponent like the unjust. 8 For what hope does the godless man have when he is cut off, when God takes away his life? 9 Will God hear his cry when distress comes on him? 10 Will he delight in the Almighty? Will he call on God at all times? 11 I will teach you about God's power. I will not conceal what the Almighty has planned. 12 All of you have seen this for yourselves, why do you keep up this empty talk? 13 This is a wicked man's lot from God, the inheritance the ruthless receive from the Almighty. 14 Even if his children increase, they are destined for the sword; his descendants will never have enough food. 15 Those who survive him will be buried by the plague, yet their widows will not weep for them. 16 Though he piles up silver like dust and heaps up a wardrobe like clay— 17 he may heap it up, but the righteous will wear it, and the innocent will divide up his silver. 18 The house he built is like a moth's cocoon or a booth set up by a watchman.

19 He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more; when he opens his eyes, it is gone. 20 Terrors overtake him like a flood; a storm wind sweeps him away at night. 21 An east wind picks him up, and he is gone; it carries him away from his place. 22 It blasts at him without mercy, while he flees desperately from its grasp. 23 It claps its hands at him and scorns him from its place.

[i] Question: Are you a righteous person?

How would you answer that? Very few would claim that for themselves. Common response of those who think they can attain heaven on their own merit often has the words “good person” as in “I’m a good person.” But I’ve never heard someone reply, “I will go to heaven bc I’m a righteous person.”

[ii] We tend to think of righteousness in negative terms, don’t we?

“Self-righteous” is not a good thing. We don’t look at that as a virtue.

Yet Job refers to himself as being “righteous” (9:20 “I am righteous”).

Then you have 32:1 where we read that Job’s friends “stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.”

[iii] Righteousness in a courtroom setting

2 settings in t/BOJ as far as atmosphere or background. He’s sitting in the town dump (chapt. 2 - I assume he’s still there here in chapt. 27).

Don’t forget that Job is still suffering; death may not be that far away.

That’s the phys. setting. But t/symbolic setting is a courtroom.

Job is usu. t/defendant. His friends t/prosecutors. G. t/Judge.

So we have to keep in mind that for Job, “righteousness” has to be seen within that setting as in “not-guilty.”

Seems to be t/way it’s used in 9:20 ==>

9:20 “Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.

[iv] Was Job “self-righteous?”

For the most part, yes.

We’ll see that when God addresses him directly later in the book.

You have to keep t/big pic. in mind. Job has suffered great loss. He lives in a culture which believes that to suffer calamity is to be cursed by God. IOW - you must be a bad person.

Job’s not a bad person; he worships God; he’s a man of integrity.

How is he described in t/very 1st v. of t/book?

1:1 . . . blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

[v] Was Job rightly related to God?

In NT parlance “Was Job saved?”

While that issue is not so much at t/forefront in the book, no doubt the answer is yes.

[vi] Was Job saved by his righteousness / works?

No. No one was. No one is. Ever. Period.

I’m so thankful for Romans chapter 4.

What key biblical character was a contemporary of Job?

Who lived about t/same time (roughly 2000 BC)?

Abraham!

What does Paul say about Abraham in Romans 4?

Romans 4

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

As Peter, James and John met Moses & Elijah on t/Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17) so you will one day have t/opportunity to meet Job (“I endured a 3 yr. study of your book”).

[vii] Back to the book . . .

We are starting a big section this am (27-31)

27:1 “Then Job continued his discourse . . .”

31:40 “. . . The words of Job are ended.”

[viii] The dialogues between Job and his friends have now ended

Last few chapt. we’ve endured many of t/same arguments.

Bildad’s last speech consisted of a mere 6 verses.

Zophar doesn’t speak at all.

[ix] Chapters 27-31 are Job’s final defense

Chapt. 27, Job vows before God that he is innocent.

He lays claim to a clear conscience and warns his friends about t/fate of t/wicked, even using their own words against them.

Chapt. 28 is a great discourse on wisdom.

Man digs for buried treasure and that he can find, but where can wisdom be found? Man’s only wisdom is to fear God.

Chapt. 29 Job looks back to t/happiness he enjoyed with his family, his prosperity, his feeling of acceptance by God, and the respect and reverence shown him by his friends. He treated others kindly and looked forward to t/future.

Chapt. 30, Job contrasts his suffering with t/happy picture drawn in chapter 29.

Chapt. 31 Job ends with a series of protests whereby he again claims innocence. The last verse says, “The words of Job are ended.”

[x] As far as chapter 27 . . .

Job refers to the name of God some 11 times (2,3,8,9,10,11,13). Job is

clearly focused on God to a degree that the friends cannot match. God is essentially important to Job.

While he doesn't always act like it, God is indeed his treasure.

Job's Defense Rests (Part 1): A Vow of Innocence

I. Exoneration: Job Has a Clear Conscience (27:1–6)

II. Exhortation: Job Warns His Friends (27:7–10)

III. Education: Job Desires to Instruct His Friends (27:11–12)

IV. Emulation: Job Uses His Friend's Words Against Them (27:13–23)

I. Exoneration: Job Has a Clear Conscience (27:1–6)

A. The beginning of Verse 1

1 Then Job continued his discourse and said . . .

26:1 Then Job responded,

Job in chapt. 26 was responding to Bildad (25). T/O t/book it's been Eliphaz—>Bildad—>Zophar. Here in chapt. 27 we'd expect Zophar to speak, but he doesn't.

So I think t/reason why we have these words in verse 1==>

1 Then Job continued his discourse . . .

Is bc there was a period of silence after Job finished in chapt. 26. Expected that Zophar was going to take his turn & say something (he's youngest, always spoke last). Zophar remains silent.

Can only imagine t/ facial expression he may have given (smirk; shrug). Says nothing. Nothing to add? Really angry? (cf. last speech).

1. Something else ==> Pronouns (26/27)

Chapt. 26 Job focused on Bildad. Pronouns were 2PS (“you Bildad”). Here in chapt 27 t/pns are 2PP (“you all”).

He’s responding to everyone present. Likely more than just E/B/Z.

By this time Elihu (4th friend) speaks as an eye-witness beginning in chapt. 32. Must have been present as well.

Job was a key figure in t/town so others may have gathered also.

1 Then Job continued his discourse . . .

B. Word translated “Discourse” (Heb. *mashal*)

Has been defined as “Speech designed to cause someone to reflect and come to a verdict about the subject under discussion.” [Talbert, 148]

This is Job’s final defense; he’s still hoping for a pos. verdict.

C. Job begins with a vow - an oath

2 “As God lives, who has taken away my right, And the Almighty, who has embittered my soul,

Job believes that G. has denied him (court) justice and sees God as the cause of his misery. “embittered”

(cf. Ruth 1:20 - Naomi / Mara “Almightly has dealt bitterly with me”)

1. The Authority (v. 2)

a. Job swears by the name of the living God “as God lives”

Oaths are only as good as t/authority under which they are taken.

Picture a courtroom where you are sworn in as a witness, and you’re asked, “Do you swear to tell t/truth, t/whole truth, and nothing but t/truth, so help you Geo. Washington?”

Washington had power, limited power (he’s dead).

What’s t/highest authority? Living God. The God who is eternal.

Hebrews 6:13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

In 2017 when I testified b4 t/Grand Jury as it pertained to t/Vehicular Homicide charges against t/drunk driver who hit us causing Giana’s death, as I was sworn in I placed my right hand on a Bible & vowed to tell the truth, “so help me GOD.”

For t/ancients, oaths grounded in G.’s Name were inexcusably binding
You just didn’t break them.

(Jephthah’s tragic vow in Judges 11 that cost him his daughter.)

In fact, t/thought was that you were inviting God to kill you if you violated your oath.

2. The Condition (v. 3)

3 For as long as life is in me, And the breath of God is in my nostrils, “As long as I live!”

a. You have these same 3 elements of “life” “breath” and “nostrils” in the Genesis creation account

Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

(Authority; Condition)

3. The Promise (verse 4)

4 My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.

a. Irony:

Job swears on his own righteousness using the immutable authority of the very God whose righteousness he calls into question!

(“who has taken away my right” v. 2)

(1)_Elihu later calls Job on this — as does God

40:2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? . . .”

40:8 “Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?”

D. Job turns back to his friends in v. 5

5a **“Far be it from me that I should declare you right . . . [tsadiq]**

“I’m not ever going to agree w/your false accusations. In fact” ==>

5b **. . . Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.**

“Integrity” is same word God used speaking of Job in chapt. 2

Job “still holds fast his integrity.”

E. Job adds in Verse 6

6a **“I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. . . .**

Word “righteousness” here parallels t/word “integrity” (v. 5)

1. Job’s not claiming sinlessness

Nothing Job did which would deserve his suffering under t/hand of G.

2. Job alludes to his conscience (2d half of v. 6)

6b . . . **My heart does not reproach any of my days.**

Job may have been near death, but his conscience was clear.

I. Exoneration: Job Has a Clear Conscience (27:1–6)

II. Exhortation: Job Warns His Friends (27:7–10)

A. Curse or Warning?

7 **“May my enemy be as the wicked
And my opponent as the unjust.**

1. “Enemy” - To whom does Job refer? The three? Others?

2. Doesn’t this seem a little harsh? Out of character?

a. May be some cultural reasons for this

One source I read claims that in t/ANE it was not enough for t/accused to affirm innocence; there was also a corresponding practice of calling down the wrath of God on those who said they were guilty.

[Cf. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 103]

3. Consider the rest of this section: Verses 8-10

8 **“For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off, When**

God requires his life? 9 “Will God hear his cry When distress comes upon him? 10 “Will he take delight in the Almighty? Will he call on God at all times?

a. I’m thinking this may be a warning

Jonathan Edwards ==>

“Hereby Job expresses his sense of the miserableness of the state of an ungodly man, however he may seem to prosper, so that he could desire no worse misery to his worst enemy than to be as they. He [doesn’t] mean that he wished his enemy such misery, for that is contrary to what he solemnly and expressly professes and swears in the same discourse (Job 31:29). [Jonathan Edwards, The “Blank Bible”: Part 1 & Part 2, ed. Stephen J. Stein and Harry S. Stout, vol. 24, The Works of Jonathan Edwards (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 453]

31:29 “Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, Or exulted when evil befell him?

When Job says in v. 7==>

7 “May my enemy be as the wicked And my opponent as the unjust.

“Don’t be like them. Don’t be like the godless who have no hope.”

I think this fits our next point ==>

III. Education: Job Desires to Instruct His Friends (27:11–12)

You generally don't desire to teach someone you anathematize.

A. "Power" = Heb. *yad* "hand"

11 "I will instruct you in the power of God; What is with the Almighty I will not conceal.

1. I will teach you about God's power

In fact, you've already seen some of it (v. 12).

12 "Behold, all of you have seen it; Why then do you act foolishly?"

2. This future instruction ("I will instruct you" seems to point to chapter 28 (wisdom)

a. Job refers to instructing in what (v. 11)? "Power of God"

Find it noteworthy that "power" & "wisdom" are sometimes used tog. w/G. as t/subject.

Jeremiah 10:12 It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom . . .

Daniel 2:20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him.

11 "I will instruct you in the power of God; What is with the Almighty I will not conceal.

That includes chapter 28 which is all about wisdom.

I think part of Job's instruction includes vv. 13-23 (last point):

IV. Emulation: Job Uses His Friend's Words Against Them

(27:13–23)

Don't need to spend much time here. What Job says here is quite fam. Same sort of statements that have already been made by E/B/Z.

Brings up an interesting debate as some scholars think THIS section of vv. could be Zophar's last speech.

All these scholars searching for Zophar's lost speech! Rather than being content there isn't one.

Verses 13 to end of chapt. may be understood as Job summing up t/arguments that have been used against him.

In my study notes I have a list of statements by t/3 friends that sound just like what we see here in vv. 13-23.

Job may be giving his friends a warning; or may be sarcasm.

Begins with==>

A. Introductory Statement: The Wicked Man's Inheritance (v. 13)
13 **"This is the portion of a wicked man from God, And the inheritance which tyrants receive from the Almighty.**

What follows are 5 categories of woe that befall t/godless

1. Famine and War (14)

14 **"Though his sons are many, they are destined for the sword [that's war]; And his descendants will not be satisfied with bread. [that's famine]**

2. Plague and the Death of Family (15)

15 **"His survivors [the wicked man's descendants who survive war**

and famine] **[they] will be buried because of the plague, And their widows will not be able to weep.**

That's how bad it will be: widows will be so devastated, in such shock that they cannot even cry.

a. Here we have the terrifying triad of War/Famine/Plague

See that in t/demise of Israel in Judah (8th/6th c. BC);

Ezekiel 6:11 “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Clap your hand, stamp your foot and say, “Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel, which will fall by sword, famine and plague!

In what happened to apostate Israel in AD 70. (recorded by Josephus)

See it in t/disasters described in t/BOR.

3. Sudden Loss of Wealth (16-19)

16–17 **16 “Though he piles up silver like dust And prepares garments as plentiful as the clay, 17 He may prepare it, but the just will wear it And the innocent will divide the silver.**

a. The wicked will horde their wealth only to give it up to those who are pure in God's sight

Prov. 28:8 He who increases his wealth by interest and usury Gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 . . . to the sinner [God] has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in

God's sight.

(1) This is how Israel plundered t/Egyptians (Exodus 3:22)

Exo. 3:22 "But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."

b. Verse 18 ==>

18 "He has built his house like the spider's web, Or as a hut which the watchman has made.

(1) Spider's web or moth's cocoon?

NAS has "spider's web" but this is better translated "cocoon." ("moth's cocoon"). What you have here is t/Heb. word for "moth" (t/supplied word "cocoon" is added by implication).

(2) "Hut" - used by farmers

They put up temporary booths in the middle of their fields in order to guard the crops during harvest ("watchman").

(3) Cocoons (webs) and huts are both what? Temporary

"The moth's house is a cocoon, a frail and temporary shelter, and the shack a watchman sets up only for the duration of the harvest is similarly flimsy and impermanent. Both are gone with the turn of the seasons, and, by analogy, so will the elaborate dwellings of the wicked disintegrate." [Robert L. Alden]

19 "He lies down rich, but never again; He opens his eyes, and it is no longer.

3. Sudden Loss of Wealth (16-19)

Late October 1929? Great Stock Market Crash which gave rise to The Great Depression that lasted a decade.

Will Rogers happened to be in New York on "Black Thursday," Oct. 24, 1929. In his nationally syndicated newspaper column for that day, he wrote: "When Wall Street took that tail spin, you had to stand in line to get a window to jump out of, and speculators were selling space for bodies in the East River." The New York correspondent for one of London's sensationalist tabloids wired home that lower Broadway was clogged with corpses.

Ignatz Engel was a retired cigar maker in the Bronx who invested in the market in time to be wiped out by the Crash. On Nov. 13, depressed over his losses, he lay down on a blanket in his kitchen and opened all the jets of the gas range. The next day, the president of the Rochester Gas and Electric Corp., no longer able to endure his loss of more than \$1,200,000, ended his own life using -- what else? -- gas.

A Chicago dentist snuffed himself with gas on Dec. 12; police said that he had succumbed to remorse for having persuaded his young woman assistant and laboratory aide to put all of their savings into the market in the euphoria before the Crash.

During the early hours of New Year's Day 1930 a Brooklyn broker kept his neighbor awake with whistling and hymn-singing before

turning on the gas and lying down on his bed wearing a [blue suit].

A young man named Lytle shot and killed himself in a hotel in Milwaukee, leaving behind four cents and a suicide note directing that "my body should go to science, my soul to Andrew W. Mellon and sympathy to my creditors." The note also asked that his body not be removed from the room until the rent was up.

[washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1987/10/25/the-jumpers-of-29/17deff9-f725-43b7-831b-7924ac0a1363/]

People died; families were destroyed; drunkenness was rampant, as were nervous breakdowns.

Proverbs 23:4–5 4 Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. 5 When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.

4. Natural Disaster (20-22)

20-22 20 **“Terrors overtake him like a flood; A tempest steals him away in the night. 21 “The east wind carries him away, and he is gone, For it whirls him away from his place. 22 “For it will hurl at him without sparing; He will surely try to flee from its power.**

5. Mocked by Others (23)

23 **“Men will clap their hands at him And will hiss him from his place.**

1. Famine and War (14)

2. Plague and the Death of Family (15)

3. Sudden Loss of Wealth (16-19)

4. Natural Disaster (20-22)

5. Mocked by Others (23)

B. Who does that sound like class?

Who lost his estate by way of warring marauders? Family by natural disaster? Mocked by others? Sudden loss / wealth & reputation? JOB!

1. That's what makes these verses so challenging

Is this Job speaking? Or Zophar? Or someone else?

I'm going to stick w/the ancient Massoretic Text.

No textual basis for thinking that these words are any other than Job.

What's the tone? Is Job being sarcastic?

Purpose? Is Job saying that these things do happen to the wicked, even though he claims innocence?

C. I'm going to call these verses Proverbial Eschatological Metaphor

1. Proverbial

It is often true that those who sow wickedness get suffering in return.

Should be natural that t/hoard of t/wicked falls down upon them while t/righteous are blessed.

Proverbial bc this isn't always t/case.

2. Metaphor

Bc we know that calamity doesn't always befall wicked people in this

life. But these words could be a metaphor for t/curse they are under.

3. Eschatological

In that vv. 13-23 will be realized in the future Kingdom Age.

Job's Defense Rests (Part 1): A Vow of Innocence

Deo Volente, we will see that Job has much more to say.

Here are my final thoughts (x4)

1. Beware of Giving Bad Counsel

We all give advice or counsel to others. Be careful you don't fall prey to t/inexcusable mistakes Job's friends made.

1. They did not express any sympathy for Job.

Not only for what he went through, but for his continued agony.

2. There's no evidence that they prayed for him.

3. They talked too much and listened too little.

4. They were defensive and argumentative

5. They assumed they knew the cause of Job's problems

6. They also assumed they had the answers.

2. Keep a good conscience (cf. v. 6)

Your conscience is how your heart reacts to what you do or think.

Inward barometer. To violate your conscience is to violate your heart.

Conscience can be wrong. That is, what we think is right or wrong may itself be inaccurate. But as rule it's good not to violate your

conscience.

Years ago I heard a story about a pastor who was invited by some other ministers to go golfing on Sunday afternoon. The man was hesitant; he didn't feel that engaging such recreation was right on the Lord's Day. But his friends convinced him to go. As he was out on the course, someone a ways away yelled out "fore!" as a golf ball sailed through the air and it hit him on the head. I don't think there's anything wrong w/golfing on Sunday (so long as you're not missing church). But if there was any doubt in that man's mind, it was erased by a golf ball.

There was a time when I thought all alcohol consumption was wrong. For me to have any kind of drink would have violated my conscience. My view on that has changed over t/years.

Look forward to putting down a good ale w/Martin Luther some day.

Also have to be careful that what is a conscience matter for us in an area of Xn liberty doesn't get absolutized as binding on everyone.

How often have I seen a brother/sister claim that what violates their conscience should violate mine as well, if only I was as spiritual as they. R.C. Sproul called this the "Tyranny of the Weaker Brother."

3. Treasure the Right Things

19 "He lies down rich, but never again; He opens his eyes, and it is no longer."

Luke 12:16–21 16 [Jesus] them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself,

saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’ 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

3. Treasure the Right Things

Jesus also said, “Where your treasure is; there your heart will be also.”

“Our obedience is God’s pleasure when it proves that God is our treasure.” — John Piper.

4. Have as a Goal to Die Well

Was such an emphasis among Xns of past generations. Esp. Puritans.

In t/modern west we don’t experience death like others of history did.

One of t/things that greatly ministered to me after t/loss of Giana was how common it used to be for parents to bury their children.

Through his first marriage, John Owen had eleven children, all of whom died young. Don’t take modern medicine for granted.

God may pull t/plug as He desires.

Is your conscience clear enough for you do die well?

What unresolved sins have you been harboring?

Anger? Unforgiveness? Laziness? Greed? Neglect? Illicit Fantasies?

“Dying well is one of the good works to which Christians are called, and Christ will enable us who serve him to die well, however gruesome the physical process itself. And dying thus, in Christ, through Christ, and with Christ, will be a spiritual blossoming. As being born into this temporal world was our initial birthday, and as being born into God’s spiritual kingdom was our second birthday, being born through physical death into the eternal world will be our third birthday.” [Packer, J. I. 2001. *God’s Plans for You*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books]

It is impossible to die well if you are not a born-again believer in X.

W. R. Inge, the famed ‘Gloomy Dean’ of St. Paul's Cathedral, at age 93 told a London Daily Express interviewer:

I have tried to solve three problems: the problem of eternity, the problem of human personality and the problem of evil. I have failed. I have solved none of them, and I know no more now than when I started. And I believe no one ever will solve them I know as much about the after life as you—nothing. I don't even know that there is one—in the sense in which the church teaches it. I have no vision of ‘heaven’ or a ‘welcoming God.’ I do not know what I shall find. I must wait and see.

Dean Inge did not have long to wait; eight months later he died.

Lk. 12:20 “. . . You fool! This very night your soul is required of you!