



SOLUTIONS TO INJUSTICE (PT. 2)

Job and Proverbs 31

INTRODUCTION TO WISDOM LITERATURE

1. Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Psalm 1, 19:8-15; 37, 49, 73, 111, 119
2. Minimum interest in Israelite faith; Questioning attitude about life
3. Retribution Principle
4. 2 heavenly court scenes; Job1/Psa8

OUTLINE OF JOB

1. Prologue—testing of Job—1:1-2:13
2. Speeches of Job & friends—3-31.
3. Four Elihu speeches—32-37
4. Yahweh speeches—38-42
5. Epilogue—vindication of Job—42:7-17 (prose)

JOB 29-31—JOB'S FINAL ASSERTION OF INNOCENCE

Job 29 And Job again took up his discourse, and said: ²“Oh, that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me; ³ when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness; ⁴ as I was in my autumn days, when the friendship of God was upon my tent; ⁵ when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me;

⁶ when my steps were washed with milk, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil! ⁷ When I went out to the gate of the city, when I prepared my seat in the square, ⁸ the young men saw me and withdrew, and the aged rose and stood; ⁹ the princes refrained from talking, and laid their hand on their mouth; ¹⁰ the voice of the nobles was hushed, & their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

¹¹ When the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it approved; ¹² because I delivered the poor who cried, and the fatherless who had none to help him. ¹³ The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. ¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. ¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. ¹⁶ I was a father to the poor, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. ¹⁷ I broke the fangs of the unrighteous, and made him drop his prey from his teeth.

¹⁸ Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand, ¹⁹ my roots spread out to the waters, with the dew all night on my branches, ²⁰ my glory fresh with me, and my bow ever new in my hand.' ²¹ Men listened to me, and waited, and kept silence for my counsel. ²² After I spoke they did not speak again, and my word dropped upon them. ²³ They waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain. ²⁴ I smiled on them when they had no confidence; and the light of my countenance they did not cast down. ²⁵ I chose their way, and sat as chief, and I dwelt like a king among his troops, like one who comforts mourners."

Job 31 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin? ² What would be my portion from God above, and my heritage from the Almighty on high? ³ Does not calamity befall the unrighteous, and disaster the workers of iniquity? ⁴ Does not he see my ways, and number all my steps? ⁵ If I have walked with falsehood, and my foot has hastened to deceit; ⁶ (Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!) ⁷ if my step has turned aside from the way, and my heart has gone after my eyes, and if any spot has cleaved to my hands; ⁸ then let me sow, and another eat; and let what grows for me be rooted out. ⁹ If my heart has been enticed to a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door; ¹⁰ then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down upon her. ¹¹ For that would be a heinous crime; that would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges; ¹² for that would be a fire which consumes unto Abaddon, and it would burn to the root all my increase.

¹³ If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me; ¹⁴ what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? ¹⁵ Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb? ¹⁶ "If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, ¹⁷ or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it ¹⁸ (**for from his youth I reared him as a father, and from his mother's womb I guided him**); ¹⁹ if I have seen any one perish for lack of clothing, or a poor man without covering; ²⁰ if his loins have not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; ²¹ if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw help in the gate; ²² then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. ²³ For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.

²⁴ If I have made gold my trust, or called fine gold my confidence; ²⁵ if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, or because my hand had gotten much; ²⁶ if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, ²⁷ and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand; ²⁸ this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I should have been false to God above. ²⁹ "If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him that hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him ³⁰ (I have not let my mouth sin by asking for his life with a curse);

³¹ if the men of my tent have not said, 'Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?' ³² (the sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the wayfarer);

³³ if I have concealed my transgressions from men, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom, ³⁴ 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 -- ³⁵ 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! ³⁶ Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown; ³⁷ I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him. ³⁸ "If

my land has cried out against me, and its furrows have wept together;³⁹ if I have eaten its yield without payment, and caused the death of its owners;⁴⁰ let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley.” The words of Job are ended.

PROVERBS

1. 1-9—Proverbs of Solomon (extended)
2. 10-22—Proverbs of Solomon (individual)
3. 22-24—Sayings of the Wise
4. 25-29—Proverbs of Solomon (Hezekiah)
5. 30—Sayings of Agur
6. 31—Sayings of Lemuel

Proverbs 31:10-31 ¹⁰ A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. ¹² She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. ¹³ She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. ¹⁴ She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from afar. ¹⁵ She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and tasks for her maidens. ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. ¹⁷ She girds her loins with strength and makes her arms strong. ¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. ¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. ²⁰ She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy. ²¹ She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. ²² She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple. ²³ Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers girdles to the merchant. ²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ²⁹ “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

^{NRS} **Psalm 82:1** <A Psalm of Asaph.>

- ¹ God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
- ² “How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? Selah
- ³ Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.
- ⁴ Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”
- ⁵ They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk around in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ I say, “You are gods,
children of the Most High, all of you;

⁷ nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince.”

⁸ Rise up, O God, judge the earth;
for all the nations belong to you!

SOLUTIONS TO INJUSTICE

1. Listen to the vulnerable
2. Don't do for people what they can do for themselves
3. Help people in such a way that when things are better, they will think they did it themselves
4. Maintain proximity
5. Goal of justice & righteousness: the goal is not to take from the rich & give to the poor, but to make sure everybody has enough.
6. Practice a holistic gospel
7. Develop leadership
8. Make the church central