

24:1-17 Where is Divine Justice? The wicked thrive! (continued)

1. Rashi to 24:13

הרשעים האלה הם דור המבול שמרדו באור, בשביל המטר שהיה עולה מן הארץ ולא היו צריכים לכלום:

These wicked people are the generation of the flood, who rebelled against the Light, because of the rain which ascended from the ground such that they needed nothing.

2. Metzudat David to 24:13

והם האנשים אשר יתגבר בהם חולי השחורה אשר ימאסו לשבת במקום האור כ"א בחשך ישבו

These are the people whose black illness grows in them, who hate to sit in illuminated places, but will only sit in the dark.

24:18-25 ???

3. Approach 1: The wicked don't suffer (Ralbag, Artscroll)

- 24:18 He flees capture, into the wild
- 24:19-20 He dies quickly and sweetly
- 24:21-24 He harms the vulnerable and the powerful
- 24:25 Prove me wrong!

4. Approach 2: Gd assists the wicked (Daat Mikra)

- 24:18-19 There are many wicked people, everywhere
- 24:20-21 Wicked people do terrible things to the vulnerable
- 24:22-24 And Gd supports them
- 24:25 Prove me wrong!

5. Approach 3: The wicked will suffer (Everyone else)

- 24:18-20 Wicked people will suffer
- 24:21-22 Wicked people do terrible things to the vulnerable and the mighty
- 24:23-24 Gd will bring down wicked people
- 24:25 Prove me wrong!

6. Table of explanations for Approach 3

1. Drop it; go with Approach 1 or 2
2. The text is corrupted
3. Job is issuing a curse; may this happen to wicked people!
4. Job is being sarcastic
5. Job is expressing the contradiction himself
6. Job is sincere

7. Carol Newsom, The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations, pages 161, 165

The presence of these words in Job's mouth seems to many commentators so out of place that they propose that the third cycle of speeches has been disturbed, either through accident or by a pious scribe who wished to mute Job's heterodoxy by giving him some "proper" sentiments. According to many versions of this theory, the material in 24:18-25 and 27:21-23 originally formed part of the speeches of Bildad and Zophar. The difficulty, however, is that no textual evidence exists to support such a theory. It is simply a desperate gesture in response to an interpretive embarrassment. As scholars have become more reticent about rewriting the text before interpreting it, there has been an increased tendency to interpret these portions of the text as Job's own words...

Those critics who appeal to a theory of textual tampering abandon the interpretive task too quickly. Moreover, they construct an insufficiently complex character for Job.

## 8. Daat Mikra to 24:18

מכאן ועד סוף המענה הלשון קשה מאד, ונאמרו פירושים רבים ושונים על הפסוקים האלה. כאן נפרש שהענין מדבר במעשי הרשעים. ובהערות נביא פירושים שהענין מדבר בקללות שאיוב מקלל את הרשעים.

From here to the end of the speech, the language is very difficult; many and varied explanations have been given for these verses. Here we will explain that it speaks of the deeds of the wicked; in the footnotes we will bring explanations which show that it speaks of curses with which Job curses the wicked.

## 9. Carol Newsom, The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations, page 166-167

One can imagine the friends whispering together in confusion: "That's what *we* said. But he can't mean what it sounds like he's saying. He can't mean what we meant. What does he mean by saying that?" What had been the conflict between two positions in a wisdom dialogue, representing alternative constructions of the world, has now become a conflict located within the speech of a single person, though not, to borrow Bakhtin's terminology, within a single consciousness. Job preserves the recognizably alien form, the words of another, to represent a measure of distance as well as a measure of appropriation. He does not mean the same thing as the friends do, even if he speaks just like them...

Job's exploration of the legal metaphor enabled him to envision as a real possibility both Gd's recognition of the claims of justice and Gd's violent repudiation of them. Analogously, Job can imagine the working out of justice against evildoers, even as he knows the realities of injustice...

Job does not simply wish to say that life is experience as contradiction. He forces those who listen to him into a painful cognitive dissonance, a loss of mastery, that is an echo, however faint, of what Job has experienced of the world.

## 10. Talmud, Sotah 5a

דרש רב עזירא - זמנין אמר לה משמיה דרב אסי וזמנין אמר לה משמיה דרב אמי - כל אדם שיש בו גסות הרוח לסוף מתמעט, שנאמר "רומו מעט." ושמא תאמר ישנו בעולם, ת"ל "ואיננו". ואם חוזר בו, נאסף בזמנו כאברהם אבינו, שנאמר "והומכו ככל יקפצון" - כאברהם יצחק ויעקב דכתיב בהו "בכל" "מכל" "כל". ואם לאו, "וכראש שבולת ימלו."

Rav Avira taught – sometimes in the name of Rav Asi and sometimes in the name of Rav Ami: Anyone who is arrogant will be reduced in the end, as it says, "They become high – they become small." And lest you say they remain in the world, it says, "And they are gone." But if he recants, he will die at his proper time like our patriarch Avraham, as it says, "And they become low, like all [ko] they will be grabbed up" – like Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov regarding whom the text says *Bakol, MiKol, Kol*. And if not, "Like the head of a stalk they will be crushed."