

Job 12:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Job answered and said,

Analysis

And Job answered and said,

This brief formula introduces Job's response to Zophar's harsh accusations (Job 11), but its simplicity belies the emotional and theological weight of what follows. The Hebrew phrase vaya'an Iyyov vayomar ("And Job answered and said") appears repeatedly in Job's dialogues, marking transitions between friends' speeches and Job's replies. The verb anah (answered) often carries connotations of responding under pressure or defending oneself—Job isn't initiating conversation but reacting to attacks on his integrity.

What follows (Job 12:2-14:22) is Job's longest and most sarcastic response, beginning with biting irony: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (12:2). This introductory verse thus marks a turning point where Job's **patience with pious platitudes exhausts** and he challenges his friends' shallow theology. The formula's repetitiveness throughout the book creates rhythm while emphasizing that this is dialogue—truth emerges through struggle, not monologue. Job's willingness to keep answering, despite misunderstanding and pain, models faith that wrestles with God rather than abandoning Him.

Historical Context

The book of Job is widely considered among the Bible's oldest writings, possibly dating to the patriarchal period (2000-1800 BC) or at least reflecting that era's setting. The dialogue format mirrors ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature,

including Babylonian works like "Ludlul Bel Nemeqi" ("I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom"), which also features righteous sufferers questioning divine justice. In ancient cultures, wisdom came through oral dialogue between sages, with students learning through debate and dialectic. Job's story probably circulated orally for centuries before being written down. The formulaic introduction of speeches ("X answered and said") reflects this oral tradition, where formulas helped audiences track speakers in recited debates. The setting—patriarchal wealth measured in livestock, sacrificial worship without priests, extreme lifespan—suggests the narrative preserves authentic ancient memory even if the poetic dialogues were crafted later.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why does Scripture record Job's words when some of what he says reflects frustration and incomplete understanding?
2. What does the dialogue format teach about how God's people should pursue theological truth?
3. How does Job's willingness to keep engaging with his friends, despite their hurtful words, model faithful endurance?
4. Why is wrestling with God through questions and complaints considered faithful rather than rebellious in Job's case?
5. What does this verse's placement (before Job's sarcastic response) suggest about reaching the limits of patience with inadequate theology?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר: אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר:

answered **And Job** **and said**

H6030

H347

H559

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