

Job 26:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?

Analysis

How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom?—Job's sarcasm is biting. The verb *ya'ats* (יָצַע, counselled) means to advise or plan, while *lo-chokmah* (לֹא חִכְמָה) literally means 'no wisdom.' Job ironically thanks Bildad for counseling the 'unwise one'—himself, according to the friends' diagnosis. **How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?** continues the irony with *hoda'ta* (הוֹדַעְתָּ, made known) and *tushiyyah* (תוֹשִׁיָּיָה), meaning sound wisdom, success, or effective working.

This rhetorical flourish exposes the friends' arrogance and ineffectiveness. They claim to possess wisdom Job lacks, yet their theology crumbles under his suffering's reality. True wisdom begins with fearing God (28:28), not mechanistic retribution theology. Paul later echoes this when he calls worldly wisdom foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:20-25). Job anticipates that Christ crucified—appearing as weakness and folly—is God's true wisdom.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom culture valued sage counsel from experienced elders. Job's three friends represent this tradition, but their failure demonstrates that conventional wisdom cannot explain all suffering. The book challenges simplistic applications of retribution theology, preparing for fuller revelation of redemptive suffering in Christ.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. When have you offered 'helpful' advice that was actually insensitive to someone's real situation?
2. How does Job's sarcasm challenge us to examine whether our theological certainties blind us to complex realities?
3. What is the difference between worldly wisdom and the wisdom that comes from fearing God?

Interlinear Text

מֶה

H4100

יְעֲצֶתָּ

How hast thou counselled

H3289

לָּל אֵל

him that hath no

H3808

חֵכְמָה הִיא

wisdom

H2451

וְתִשֵּׂהּ

the thing as it is

H8454

לְרַב

and how hast thou plentifully

H7230

הוֹדַעְתָּ:

declared

H3045