

Job 27:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Analysis

My lips shall not speak wickedness (אֶם־תִּדְבַּרְנָה שִׁפְתַי עוֹלָה)—the Hebrew *avlah* (עוֹלָה) denotes injustice, unrighteousness, or moral perversity. Job vows his mouth will not compromise truth. **Nor my tongue utter deceit** (וּלְשׁוֹנִי אֶם־יִהְיֶה רִמְיָה)—*remiyyah* (רִמְיָה) means deceit, treachery, or falsehood. The parallel structure emphasizes comprehensive verbal integrity: neither substantive wickedness nor tactical deception.

This oath directly challenges his friends' implicit demand that Job confess unknown sins to satisfy their retribution theology. Job refuses false confession—he will not slander God by attributing imaginary guilt to himself, nor will he abandon truth-telling to gain social peace. This anticipates Jesus's absolute truthfulness even unto death, and James's warning that the tongue is a fire set on hell's course (James 3:6). Verbal integrity reflects spiritual reality.

Historical Context

In Ancient Near Eastern oath-taking, invoking divine witness to one's truthfulness carried ultimate seriousness. Job's vow occurs after three dialogue cycles where his friends have pressured him to admit wrongdoing. His refusal to speak falsehood, even to end suffering and social alienation, demonstrates that truth-telling is non-negotiable for the righteous.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Job's commitment to verbal integrity challenge cultures (including Christian subcultures) that value smooth speech over truthfulness?
2. In what situations are you tempted to speak 'wickedness' or 'deceit' to avoid conflict or gain acceptance?
3. How does Jesus's perfect truthfulness unto death set the standard for Christian speech in hostile environments?

Interlinear Text

אִם	תִּדְבֹּר רָנָה	שִׁפְתַי	עוֹלָה	וּלְשׁוֹנִי	אִם	יִהְיֶה
H518	shall not speak	My lips	wickedness	nor my tongue	H518	utter
	H1696	H8193	H5766	H3956		H1897

רָמָה:
deceit
H7423

Additional Cross-References

Job 13:7 (Evil): Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

Job 6:28 (Parallel theme): Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

Job 34:6 (Parallel theme): Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.

John 8:55 (Parallel theme): Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

2 Corinthians 11:10 (Parallel theme): As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

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