

Job 29:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.

Analysis

The young men saw me, and hid themselves (bachur בָּחֹר, young men; chaba אָבָה, to hide)—not from fear but from respectful deference. Ancient Near Eastern honor culture required youth to show profound respect to elders, especially those of Job's stature. The young men withdrew from public spaces when Job approached, granting him precedence. **And the aged arose, and stood up** (yashen יָשַׁן, aged; qum קָם, to rise; amad אָמַד, to stand)—even elderly men, normally accorded seated honor, rose in Job's presence. This double deference (youth hiding, elders standing) demonstrates Job's extraordinary reputation transcending normal age-based hierarchy.

This verse reveals Job's former position as what later cultures would call a 'patriarch' or civic leader whose moral authority commanded universal respect. The contrast with Job's current state—where young men mock him (Job 30:1) and he sits among outcasts—could not be sharper. Job's lament follows the wisdom literature pattern of remembering former honor to highlight present humiliation. This public respect wasn't mere social convention but recognition of Job's righteousness, wisdom, and just governance. New Testament parallels appear in Paul's instruction to honor elders (1 Timothy 5:1) and Peter's command that younger submit to elders (1 Peter 5:5).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern societies operated on strict hierarchical principles where age, wealth, and wisdom determined social standing. Public assemblies gathered at city gates where elders adjudicated disputes and conducted civic business. Job's appearance at such gatherings produced universal deference, indicating his role as a respected judge and leader. The patriarchal period emphasized gerontocracy—rule by elders—making Job's command of respect from both youth and the aged remarkable. Eastern cultures maintained these honor codes for millennia, where physical gestures (hiding, standing) signaled social hierarchy.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What kind of character and conduct earns respect that transcends age and social position?
2. How does Job's memory of public honor contrast with Christ's willing embrace of public shame for our redemption (Philippians 2:8)?
3. In what ways can we show appropriate honor to those whose godly character warrants respect?

Interlinear Text

רָא וְנִי	נָעַר יָם	וְנָחַבְּ אוֹ	וְיִשְׁיִשִׁים	קָמוּ
saw	The young men	me and hid	themselves and the aged	arose
H7200	H5288	H2244	H3453	H6965

עָמָדוֹ:
and stood up
H5975

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:32 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.

Proverbs 16:31 (Parallel theme): The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

Romans 13:7 (Parallel theme): Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Titus 3:1 (Parallel theme): Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,