

Job 32:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

Analysis

They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking (חָתוּ לֹא-עֲנוּ, chattu lo-'anu 'od he'tiqu mehem millim)—chatat means to be shattered, dismayed, or broken; 'anah is to answer or respond; 'ataq means to move, proceed, or depart. The phrase 'left off speaking' uses millah (words) with the sense of words departing from them—they ran out of arguments.

Elihu describes the three friends' intellectual and theological collapse. 'Amazed' (chattu) suggests they're shattered or broken—their confidence in retributive theology has been demolished by Job's integrity and arguments. They haven't been silenced by Job's superior rhetoric but by the failure of their theological framework. When your explanatory model can't account for reality, silence becomes the only honest response. This parallels Jesus silencing Sadducees (Matthew 22:34) and Peter commanding silence before mysteries beyond human comprehension (1 Peter 4:11). The friends' silence prepares for God's speeches, which will humble all human attempts to comprehend divine providence fully.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom debates could last days, with participants expected to provide satisfying explanations. The friends' silence after three rounds represents intellectual defeat. Job's unanswered challenge—'show me my sin' (13:23)—stands unrefuted. Their dismay reflects the crisis when cherished theology meets

contradictory reality. This mirrors contemporary situations where suffering defies simplistic explanations, demanding more sophisticated theological frameworks.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. When has a theological framework you held proven inadequate to explain reality you encountered?
2. What is the difference between humble silence before mystery and defeated silence after intellectual failure?
3. How should we respond when our attempts to explain God's ways are proven insufficient?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּתְּאוּ	לֹא	עָנוּ	עוֹד	וְעַתָּה יָקוּם	מִן הַנִּיחָם
They were amazed	H3808	they answered	H5750	no more they left off	H1992
H2865		H6030		H6275	
מְלִים:					
speaking					
H4405					