

To make sense of the following post, you should probably read yesterday's!

Over the years scholars have proposed a wide range of options for interpreting this closing back and forth between God from the whirlwind and Job cowering down in awe before him. This interpretive decision is important, for in some sense the entire meaning of the poetic dialogue hinges on how we understand its climactic ending. One thing that is clear to all interpreters: the view of traditional wisdom is wrong: it is not the case that only the wicked suffer and the righteous prosper. Job really was innocent, and yet he suffered. But why? The answer depends on how we understand God's awesome appearance at the end and Job's response. Among some of the leading options of interpretation are the following.

- Job finally gets what he wants (in a good way): an encounter with God. This interpretation is true to a point, but the problem with it is that Job does not actually get what he wants, which is a chance to plead his case before God. God never gives him the chance, since he doesn't even let him talk, and he certainly does not care to hear what Job might have to say.

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