

Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice

Topic 2 Content: "The Wanderer" from the *Exeter Book*

- 'Oft the lonely one
experiences compassion,
the Creator's kindness;
though he with sorrowing mind,
[5] o'er the watery way,
must long
agitate with his hands
the rime-cold sea,
go in exile tracks;
[10] his fate is full decreed.'—
So said a wanderer,
of his hardships mindful,
of hostile slaughters.
his dear friends' fall.—
[15] 'Oft I must alone,
each morn,
my care bewail:
there is now none living,
to whom my thoughts
[20] I dare
tell openly.
I in sooth know,
that it is in man
a noble quality,
[25] that he his soul's coffer
fast bind,
hold his treasure.
Strive as he will,
the weary-minded cannot
[30] fate withstand,
nor the rugged soul'd
help effect;
even the ambitious
a sad one oft
[35] in their breast's coffer
fast bind.
So I my
thoughts must,
oft miserable,
[40] from country separated,
far from my friends,
in fetters bind,
since that long ago
my bounteous patron
[45] earth's cavern cover'd,
and I abject thence
went, stricken with years.
over the billowy mass;
sad sought the hall
[50] of some munificent lord,

Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice

Topic 2 Content: "The Wanderer" from the *Exeter Book*

- where I far or near
might find
one who in the mead-hall
my kin might know,
[55] or me friendless
would comfort,
allure with pleasures.
He knows who tries,
how hapless is
[60] cure as a comrade
to him who little has
of faithful friends;
him an exile's track awaits,
not twisted gold;
[65] a trembling body,
not earth's riches:
he remembers the hall-retainers,
and receipt of treasure;
how him in youth
[70] his bounteous patron
train'd to the feast;
but pleasure all has fall'n;
for he knows who must
his dear lord's,
[75] his lov'd master's lessons
long be depriv'd of,
when sorrow and sleep
at once together
a poor solitary
[80] often bind,
that seems to him in mind,
that he his lord
embraces and kisses,
and on his knee lays
[85] hands and head,
as when he ere at times,
in former days,
his gifts enjoy 'd;
then wakes again
[90] the friendless mortal,
sees before him
fallow ways,
ocean fowls bathing,
spreading their wings,
[95] rime and snow descending.
with hail mingled;
then are the heavier
his wounds of heart,
painful after dreaming;
[100] sorrow is renew' d,

Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice

Topic 2 Content: "The Wanderer" from the *Exeter Book*

- when his friends' remembrance
through his mind passes;
when he greets with songs,
earnestly surveys
[105] the seats of men,
swims again away.
The spirit of seafarers,
brings there not many
known songs:
[110] but care is renew'd
to him who must send
very abundantly
over the billowy mass
his weary spirit;
[115] therefore I cannot think,
throughout this world,
why my mind
it saddens,
when I the chieftains' life
[120] all consider;
how they suddenly
their halls resign'd,
the proud kinsmen.
So this mid-earth
[125] every day
declines and falls;
therefore may not become wise
a man, ere he has pass'd
his share of winters in the world.
[130] The sagacious must be patient,
must not be too ardent,
nor too hurrying of fortune,
nor too faint a soldier,
nor too reckless,
[135] nor too fearful, nor too elate,
nor too greedy of money,
nor ever too vaunting,
ere he be well experienced.
A man must wait,
[140] when he a promise utters,
till that he, bold of spirit,
well know
to what his breast's thoughts
shall lead.
[145] The prudent man should understand,
how ghastly it will be,
when all this world's wealth
shall stand waste,
as now divers,
[150] over this mid-earth,

Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice

Topic 2 Content: "The Wanderer" from the *Exeter Book*

- with wind shaken
walls stand,
with rime bedeck'd:
tottering the chambers,
[155] disturb'd are the joyous halls,
the powerful lie
of joy bereft,
the noble all have fall'n,
the proud ones by the wall.
[160] Some hath war destroy'd,
borne on their journey hence;
one the fowl hath borne away
o'er the deep ocean;
one the hoar wolf
[165] by death hath separated;
one with gory countenance,
in an earth-grave
a man hath hidden.
So o'erwhelm'd this world
[170] the Creator of men,
till that of the inhabitants,
in the briefest moment,
the old works of giants
stood desolate.
[175] But he who this wall'd place
wisely devis'd,
and this dark life
profoundly contemplates,
wise in spirit,
[180] afar oft remembers
his many battles,
and these words utters:
Where is horse, where is man?
where is the treasure-giver?
[185] where are the festive sittings?
where are the joys of the hall?
Alas bright cup!
alas mail'd warrior!
alas chieftain's splendour!
[190] how the time has pass'd,
has darken'd under veil of night,
as if it had not been.
Stands now behind
the beloved warriors
[195] the wall of wonderous height,
with worm carcasses foul.
The men has swept away
the spearmen's band,
the slaughter-greedy weapon,
[200] and fate omnipotent;

Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice

Topic 2 Content: "The Wanderer" from the *Exeter Book*

and these stone shelters
storms dash,
fierce-rushing;
binds the earth
[205] the winter's violence;
then comes dusky,
darkens, the shade of night,
from the north sends
the rough hail-shower,
[210] to men's grievance.
Irksome is all
the realm of earth,
the fates' decrees change
the world under heaven:
[215] here is wealth transient,
here is a friend transient,
here is man transient.
here is a kinsman transient;
all this place of earth
[220] shall become desolate.'—
So spake a sage in mind,
sat apart in meditation.
Good is he who holds his faith.
Never his affliction too quickly should
[225] a man from his breast make known,
unless he ere the remedy can
vigorously forward.
Well it is for him who seeketh mercy,
comfort, at the Father in heaven,
[230] where all our fastness standeth.