



THE BOOK OF JOB

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INTRODUCTION

‘Why?’ This is the most frequently asked question in every generation, by the young and old, rich, and poor, well and sick. The book of Job is an emotionally intense story of a despondent and suffering man grappling with questions, debating with himself, his fellowman, and his Maker.

To every person who has looked upon a lifeless form of a loved one and cried in anguish, why? To everyone who has experienced pain almost intolerable and asked the question, why?

To every parent who has received the dreaded message that a beloved child will never return home and has brokenheartedly questioned, why? To everyone who had despaired in disappointment over friends and loved ones and asked, why?

To all who have had their weary and wretched midnight hours. To all who have pondered the most perplexing of all questions: What is life? What is death? Will man live again? Is God aware of what we do? Does he care?

Why do the righteous suffer while the wicked often live in seeming peace and prosperity? Why do the undeserved sufferings in the world? Yes! In all these things, Job is our sympathetic and understanding friend.

THE BOOK

The Harper Bible Study says the following.

‘This epic poem has been acknowledged by many as one of the great literary works of all time. It has magnificence and sublimity which defy analysis. In scope and treatment, it moves majestically through the problem of suffering, seeking to resolve the dilemma in terms of human understanding.’

The friends of Job are skilfully depicted, and their arguments are cogently presented. Through their words, as well as the words of Job himself, one is able to classify the characters who, in some sense, are representative of men everywhere.

The author does not find his solution in the dogmatic assertions of Jobs’ friends, who short-sightedly suppose that Job has personally sinned; he comes, full circle, back to God and bows in acceptance of the will of God, which he may not always understand, for ‘we see through a glass darkly’.

Thomas Carlyle once wrote concerning the Book of Job.

‘It is the greatest thing ever written with a pen; there is nothing, I think, in the Bible or out of it with equal literary merit.’

From every viewpoint, it is incomparable. In form, there is nothing like it. It is a drama and may be divided into scenes and characters. The scenes are vivid. The characters are strong. The subjects dealt with are the most profound ever to challenge the mind of man.

Surely the opening and closing scenes are intensely dramatic and resplendent. Unlike a drama, however, the book’s major section is a poetic dialogue, externally quiet and still.

Job and his friends sit and talk. But even this part of the book may be called a psychological drama, a drama of the inner being, showing the violent upheavals possible within the human heart.

DATE

Many commentators believe that Job is the oldest book, or at least equal to Genesis, of the Old Testament books. Abraham may have been his contemporary. Liberals say he lived at the time of the Babylonian exile, and the conservatives say it around the time of Solomon.

But the above view holds no substance because fragments have been found in Paleo Hebrew before Hebrew writing. They were found with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

It was written sometime during the Patriarchal age, as there are no allusions to the Mosaic Law. If it were as late as the Babylonian exile, it would certainly mention the Law on this day.

Job acts as a priest, **Job 1:5**, and unless he was of the tribe of the Levites, that would be a mockery. The length of Job's life is typical of the patriarchs, **Job 42:16**. The Hebrew word 'Kesitah' is used in **Job 42:11**, and it means a piece of money and is only ever used in the patriarchal age, **Genesis 33:19**.

THE AUTHOR

The composition is unknown, and so, we cannot know who the author was. But like Hebrews, it does not take away from its inspiration. For what it is worth, Moses may have well written the book.

Who was Job? Where did he live? When did he live? Who wrote the book? Nobody knows for sure. But it is just as well, for his problems are universal, not confined to age or time or location. All we need to know is that the book came from God.

The book gets its name from the central character Job. This name has been understood by some to mean 'He who turns to God'. The book has been called 'a historical poem' and describes events which took place in the patriarchal age in the land of Uz, which is thought to have been in South-Eastern Edom. Job was a very wealthy man, enjoying every material blessing.

Suddenly, catastrophe overtook him, and he had to personally face the problem of human suffering. The book seeks to answer questions concerning human suffering.

It is as relevant to our times as any book that has ever been written, for we live in an age when the question is frequently posed: Why does a loving God allow suffering?

Most people think of him merely as 'that old man who had a lot of boils and a lot of patience'. Beyond that, they have given little thought to a life which can do so much to strengthen the faith, courage, and hope of every child of God.

He was remarkable, not just as seen through the book, but because we see his real life through the book. We see his wisdom in business matters, which helped to make him such a rich man. He had livestock by the thousand. And his servants were numerous of both sexes.

It is little wonder that he was given the title of the 'greatest man in the East', in **Job 1:3**. He was the father of ten children, seven boys and three girls. He functioned as a priest for his family, offering burnt sacrifices for sins. They lived in the land of Uz, somewhere east of Canaan; various locations have been suggested, Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea, Basheen, south of Damascus or in the northern part of Arabia. Wherever it was, it had to have been near a desert, yet suitable for raising animals, **Job 1:19**.

The name Job could mean ‘one persecuted’, from the Greek, or not really a full name but an Arabic root word which means ‘to repent’. Job was a blameless and upright man.

That doesn’t mean he was sinless, but the expression indicates a person who was morally balanced and spiritually mature. It is the same expression used in **Philippians 3:13**, ‘mature’.

Job was a man wholeheartedly given to pleasing God, and his attitude was deep and sincere; basically, he had a right relationship with God, which was reflected in his earthly relationships.

He feared God, in the sense that he had reverential trust in God, which of course will dominate the person’s life, **Ecclesiastes 12 / 2 Corinthians 7:1 / Psalm 111:10**. The term to fear God whenever used, is accompanied by terms that relate to the hatred of evil. And so it is with Job, he turned away from evil, **Job 1:1 / Psalm 11:1 / 1 Corinthians 6:18**, resist the devil, **James 4:7**. His outward walk reflects his inner condition.

Job 1:8 is the most beautiful description of Job, ‘the Lord’s servant’. When God is a priority in the life of a believer, then he will be a servant of God in the same way as Job was called. If God is number one in your life, service is your lifestyle.

WHY STUDY THE BOOK?

Modern scholars charge that Job was a mere fictitious character, classed as a parable, representing the distress of Israel during the Babylonian exile. But Christians must say that it is no parable but an inspired account of a real man. The main reason for studying the book is that it is inspired by God. A historical account of a man’s life who did all he could to remain faithful to God.

Job opens in a style that conforms with other Old Testament accounts and their openings and introductions: ‘In the land of Uz, there lived a man whose name was Job’, **Job 1:1**. Compare this with **1 Samuel 1:1**. The land of Uz is mentioned in **Jeremiah 25:20**, and **Lamentations 4:21**.

Job is mentioned in **Ezekiel 14:14**, being considered there as a historical person like Noah. Extra-biblical sources prove the characters were real, and the people involved in the book of Job also. Bildad was confirmed as a real man in secular writing, as with Job himself. The Tell El-Amarna tablets mention their names. They did exist.

A Babylonian text, 1500-1000BC, is titled ‘I will praise the Lord of wisdom’, which down through the centuries is referred to as the Babylonian Job. **James 5:11** documents the patriarch’s existence and asks Christians to recall the patience of Job.

Twice Job is quoted by Paul, **1 Corinthians 3:19**, **Job 5:13 / Romans 11:35 / Job 36:22**. The fact that inspired writers acknowledge him and God places him in the Scriptures is enough proof of his existence.

The book gives insight into God’s character, therefore worthy of study. We get glimpses of God being a just and living, active God, a God full of power and might, seen especially in **Job 38-39**, the creation and the sustaining of it. It shows us that God is supreme over all, even the devil, who is subject to Him, which says something of His permissive will. He will not ride roughshod over freedom of choice, and He is no respecter of persons.

To gain lessons through practice in our daily lives. Lessons on faith, perseverance, patience, and faith in God. There is some angle on suffering. It doesn’t attempt to answer the question of suffering; it can only answer some. The main theme of the book is encouragement.

OUTLINE

Job's First State. Job 1:1-5
Satan Permitted To Test His Faith. Job 1:6-2:10
A Series Of Discussions Between Job And His Three Friends.
The First Cycle Of Speeches. Job 4-14
The Second Cycle Of Speeches. Job 15-21
The Third Cycle Of Speeches. Job 22-31
The Speech Of Elihu. Job 32-37
God Talks With Job. Job 38-41
Job's Restoration. Job 42:7-12

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘In the land of Uz, there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning, he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular custom.’ Job 1:1-

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PROLOGUE

The book begins by informing us that man named Job lived in the land of Uz, [Job 1:1](#). This land was possibly in Aram and bordered Edom and Arabia, [Genesis 10:23](#) / [Jeremiah 25:20](#) / [Jeremiah 25:23](#) / [Lamentations 4:21](#). Where ever it was, it had to have been near a desert, yet suitable for raising animals, [Job 1:19](#) / [Job 31:38](#).

The name Job could mean ‘one persecuted’, from the Greek, or not really a full name but an Arabic root word which means ‘to repent’.

Job was a blameless and upright man, [Job 1:1](#), but that doesn’t mean he was sinless, [Genesis 6:9](#).

The expression indicates a person who was morally balanced and spiritually mature, [Philippians 3:6](#). It is the same expression used in [Philippians 3:13](#), ‘mature’. Job didn’t live the life of a hypocrite, [Psalm 12:2](#) / [Matthew 6:22](#) / [Acts 2:46](#); he focused on God throughout his life, [Job 2:9-10](#) / [Job 27:5](#).

The term ‘fear God’, [Job 1:1](#), whenever used, is accompanied by terms that relate to the hatred of evil. And so it is with Job; he turned away from evil, [Job 1:1](#) / [Psalm 11:1](#) / [1 Corinthians 6:18](#) / [James 4:7](#).

His outward walk reflects his inner condition. Job was interested in the spiritual welfare of others and not just himself. He did all he could to ensure his family’s well-being, both physically and spiritually.

Job went beyond duty, Job 29, and he cared for the poor, the orphans and anyone who was helpless. He went out of his way to help, beyond his duty, Luke 17:10. No matter what we sacrifice for the Lord, we are only just doing our duty. He had seven sons and three daughters, Job 1:2.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The same number was given to him again after these were lost, and his severe trials had been endured, Job 42:13. Of his second family, the names of the daughters are mentioned, Job 42:14. Of his first, it is remarkable that neither the names of his wife, his sons, nor his daughters are recorded. The Chaldee, however, on what authority is unknown, says that the name of his wife was dîynâh, Job 2:9.’

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning the numbers seven and three.

‘These are sacred numbers indicating perfection. We are dealing with ideal history, as the rest of the numbers and other features here and in the Epilogue show.’

He was very wealthy, so wealthy he had a large number of servants, Job 1:2-3, and he is described as the greatest man among all the people of the East, Job 1:3. Job’s wealth didn’t interfere with his worship of God, because the love of wealth alone can be a danger, Proverbs 30:8 / Matthew 19:23-24 / 1 Timothy 6:6-10. But men like Job and Abraham prove that prosperity can be handled if God comes as a priority.

Although the KJV doesn’t use the word ‘birthdays’, the NIV does, Job 1:4. The text implies that Job’s four sons celebrated their birthdays in their homes and invited their three daughters, Job 1:4.

When the feasting was over Job arranged for them to be purified and offered sacrifices to the Lord on their behalf, just in case they had sinned, Job 1:5. Remember Job was not an Israelite, he wasn’t a priest, he acts as a priest and unless he was of the tribe of the Levites that would be a mockery.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Observe that it was not the sin offering of the Mosaic Law which Job offered, but a burnt offering wholly given to God, which was common to many peoples, Numbers 23 / Micah 6:5-8. As head of the family, Job acted as priest, just as Jethro did, Exodus 2:16 / Exodus 3:1.’

‘One day, the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.’ Job 1:6-12

The scene now changes, showing a rare glimpse into the spiritual realm as God and Satan converse.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The first interview between God and Satan. The scene in heaven is based on the conceptions of the spirit world prevailing in the author’s time, 1 Kings 22:19-22 / Zechariah 3:1-2, and introduced by him to explain the origin and purpose of Job’s trials.’

One day angels, translated ‘sons of God’ in some translations, came to present themselves before the Lord, Job 1:6. These are created beings, Colossians 1:16 / Job 5:1 / Job 15:15, and they are God’s messengers who carry out God’s will among His people on earth, Job 33:23.

As created beings, they were present when the universe was created, Job 38:7. Angels have come to give an account of themselves, Job 1:6. It's true that angels are called 'sons of God' in Job 1:6, but righteous people are also called 'sons of God' in Hosea 1:10.

Even in the New Testament, we find that Christians are called 'sons of God' through faith in Christ, Galatians 3:26. Satan has also come from roaming the earth, Job 1:6-7 / Matthew 12:24 / 1 Peter 5:8-9.

THE NAME SATAN

In the original language, the word Satan simply means an adversary, but we need to remember that this word isn't always used to mean the person of Satan. In the Old Testament, for example, we read that King David said that the sons of Zeruiah were behaving as an 'adversary to him when they advised him to kill Shimei,' 2 Samuel 19:22. Note that the word 'adversary' is the word Satan in the original language. A few years later, Solomon proclaimed that God had given him rest on every side and that there was 'neither adversary nor misfortune,' 1 Kings 5:4. Again, the Hebrew word for 'adversary' in this verse is the word Satan. This word also means to 'accuse' or 'resist.' The psalmist complained that those who rendered him evil for good were acting as 'adversaries to him,' Psalms 38:20. Again, the word Satan is used in the original language.

In the Old Testament in the King James Version, Isaiah writes, 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!' Isaiah 14:12. This is the only passage that uses the name Lucifer to refer to Satan.

This name doesn't come from Hebrew but Latin. Perhaps this translation into English was influenced by the Latin Vulgate, which uses this name. In Latin, Lucifer means 'light-bringer.' The Hebrew is 'heylel' and means 'light bearer,' 'shining one,' or 'morning star.' Many modern translations translate this as star of the morning or morning star.

In this passage, 'heylel' refers to the king of Babylon and Satan figuratively. Some believe that Lucifer was a heavenly or angelic name that was taken from Satan when he rebelled.

The Bible doesn't explicitly state this, though Satan is nowhere else referred to as Lucifer, but instead is called other names like the devil, Satan, etc. In the Old Testament, Satan as an individual is always pictured as an adversary against God's people, either by attempting to seduce them to do evil or by accusing them before God for their sins.

But in each case, Satan's power is limited, and he acts only within God's permissive will. Job 1 and Job 2, is where we first find his name being mentioned and notice that Satan can't do anything without God's permission.

HOW DID SATAN COME TO EXIST?

We must remember that God is the only eternal self-existent being represented in the Bible, Isaiah 41:4 / Isaiah 45:6-7. As we enter the New Testament, we find some text which will help us see that Satan is, in fact, a created being, Colossians 1:16-17.

When we read this text, we can't exclude the person of Satan from being included in the description of those things which were created by Jesus Christ, so the only obvious conclusion is that Satan is a created being.

WAS SATAN CREATED GOOD OR EVIL?

It's clear that since God created Satan and everything that God created was 'very good', Genesis 1:31, then we can specifically say that this included Satan, who was also created 'very good'.

He was obviously given the choice whether to do good or to do evil, just like mankind was, and he chose to do evil. We need to remember that God didn't force Satan to deceive Eve in the garden; that was Satan's decision, and he acted upon it.

And so, from this, we learn that all beings created by God were given the freedom to make the choice whether or not to obey God. As the creator of all things, God has the right to expect the obedience of those whom He created, but Satan chose to reject obedience to his creator and chose evil, and because of that, he fell and was cast down.

It is useless to speculate how Satan entered into the Lord's presence, Job 1:6-7, but we should know that the Creator allowed it. In doing so, Satan has the audacity to attack God's honour and blaspheme God's Work.

When God asked Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job?' Job 1:8, he had, Satan knew Job well, he knew his name and all about him. He couldn't deny his godliness, so he tried to discredit him by impugning his motives, Romans 8:18. Job was singled out because of his prominent righteous leadership among men, Job 1:8 / Job 1:1.

When Satan replied, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?' Job 1:9, in effect, he says, 'no wonder he worships and serves you, you have given him everything in the world Job, 1:10. Just take away all he has, and he will curse you to your face, Job 1:11.

Satan's argument is that God's men who serve Him are all prosperous and so they serve Him out of greed. If you take away all they have got, then you will see that they will be in total opposition to Him. Satan is saying that he will prove that there is no devotion for gain, and it will prove that God is not worthy of service of character alone.

However, confident in His servant's devotion, God accepted the devil's challenge, with just one restriction, 'everything he has is in your power, but on the man, himself do not lay a finger,' Job 1:12.

God gives Satan the power to work against Job but this power is still limited by God, Satan could not take Job's life. And so, Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, Job 1:12 / Job 1:6.

Satan has insulted the integrity of Job; he puts it in a subtle way, whereas he wants to say Job was bribed with riches for his devotion to God. It is a serious accusation against God, and God didn't take it seriously. He didn't have to take the challenge, but why did He? For the benefit of mankind.

By Job's severe trials, He will demonstrate such a thing as non-covetous righteousness. And to prove to Satan that there would be many more people like Job who have a true devotion to God and what He does for them.

WHO IS GOING TO CAUSE JOB'S TROUBLES?

It's very easy to say that Satan was behind all of Job's upcoming troubles, but I believe the text teaches otherwise. Satan is being used as an instrument of God, and the things which are about to happen to Job are actually done by the Lord Himself, but He uses Satan to do them.

Notice Satan says to God, 'stretch out YOUR hand, and YOU strike everything Job has,' Job 1:11. God gives Satan the power to work against Job, but this power is still limited by God, Satan could not lay a finger Job, Job 1:12. We

find Satan asking God to do the same thing in the next chapter, he asks God to ‘stretch out YOUR hand, and YOU strike his flesh and bones, Job 2:5.

God gives Satan the power to work against Job, but this power is still limited by God, Satan could not take Job’s life, Job 2:6. In other words, Satan knows he had no power to do any of the things which were about to happen to Job, without God’s permission.

Job didn’t understand why all this trouble came upon him, but he did recognise that God was the one behind his troubles. Notice he says at the end of his first set of trials, the LORD GAVE and the LORD has TAKEN AWAY, Job 1:20. In other words, he recognised that it was God who blessed him with much, and he recognised that it was God who took what he had away.

Later, in chapter two, we find his wife encouraging him to ‘curse God and die’, Job 2:9, but notice his response, ‘shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’ Job 2:10.

Once again, he recognises that God can not only bring good but also trouble. And the main piece of evidence that Job knew that it was actually God who was causing all his troubles is found at the end of the book in these words, ‘they comforted and consoled him over ALL THE TROUBLE THE LORD HAD BROUGHT ON HIM,’ Job 42:11. The conflict begins, and God gives them permission to take away the hedge from Job. Only externally and not the man himself.

Davidson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Between Job 1:12 and Job 1:13, there is an interval, an ominous stillness like that which precedes the storm. The poet has drawn aside the curtain to us, and we know what is impending. Job knows nothing.’

‘One day, when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were ploughing, and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them, and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.’ Job 1:13-22

Notice the tempter stayed in the background and sent others to do his work. Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, then a messenger came to Job, Job 1:13. Suddenly and unexpectedly, he brought forth calamities upon the unsuspecting man in quick succession.

The Sabeans were Arabian people who lived in the southwestern part of Arabia, the area of modern-day Yemen, and they stole Job’s oxen and donkeys, Job 1:14-15. The messenger says that Job’s servants were killed but somehow managed to escape to tell Job about it, Job 1:15.

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and tells him that lightning killed his sheep and his servants but somehow this messenger too managed to escape to tell Job about it, Job 1:16.

And then another messenger appears and tell Job that the Chaldeans who were evidently traders and marauders had carried away his camels and killed his servants but he too, somehow managed to escape to tell Job about it, Job 1:17.

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and tells him his sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, Job 1:4 / Job 1:13, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house, the house collapsed on his children and they ended up dead but once again, this messenger somehow manages to escape to tell Job about it, Job 1:18-19.

Satan has planned his system of attacks and followed them through to the end, and for Job, that plan is increasingly painful. Satan must have observed the order of what meant most in Job's life. In four rapid blows, one after the other, each deeper into the soul of Job.

The first three blows would have made Job financially bankrupt. Satan destroys all his material possessions, and so, Job, who was once wealthy, is now a pauper. In the fourth blow, Satan kills all ten of his children.

They are the most dear to him, and now he has to bury all his ten children. This means that there is no heir left to carry on his name or his material prosperity. Job had lost all his possessions and family, except for his wife.

This dismantling of Job happens all in one day. Satan doesn't waste any time in doing so; he attacks all at once. He probably hoped Job would break under the weight of grief, and please note that Job wasn't a stoic; he was devastated. He got up, tore his robes and shaved his head, [Job 1:20](#) / [Isaiah 15:2](#) / [Ezekiel 7:18](#) / [Amos 8:10](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'Tearing the robe has always been an Eastern sign of mourning, as was also shaving the head or pulling out the hair, [Jeremiah 7:29](#) / [Micah 1:16](#).'

Job also falls down and worships God, saying that he came into this world with nothing, all he had God gave him, and that's how he will leave, with nothing, [Job 1:20-21](#) / [Psalms 139:15](#) / [1 Timothy 6:7](#). God's sovereignty is recognised by Job, and notice Job doesn't complain or blame God but finds some time to praise Him.

Job's devotion to God is proven to be genuine, and in times of great trial, the true nature of his faith is manifested. Satan's slander is exposed, and his plan backfires, and so, Job justifies God's confidence in him, [Job 1:22](#) / [Job 1:8](#).

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

'On another day, the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." "Skin for skin!"

Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as

he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.' [Job 2:1-10](#)

On another day the angels, [Job 2:1](#), translated 'sons of God' in some translations came to present themselves before the Lord, [Job 1:6](#). These are created beings, [Colossians 1:16](#) / [Job 5:1](#) / [Job 15:15](#), and they are His messengers who carry out God's will among His people on earth, [Job 33:23](#). As created beings, they were present when the universe was created, [Job 38:7](#).

Angels have come to give an account of themselves, [Job 2:1](#). It's true that angels are called 'sons of God' in [Job 2:1](#) / [Job 1:6](#), but righteous people are also called, 'sons of God' in [Hosea 1:10](#). Even in the New Testament, we find that Christians are called 'sons of God' through faith in Christ, [Galatians 3:26](#).

Satan has also come from roaming the earth, [Job 2:2](#) / [Job 1:6-7](#). Satan, [Matthew 12:24](#) / [1 Peter 5:8-9](#), comes before the Lord again, [Job 2:1](#) / [Job 1:6](#), and is now reminded of his defeat, [Job 1:22](#).

It is useless to speculate how Satan entered into the Lord's presence, [Job 2:1](#) / [Job 1:6-7](#), but we should know that the Creator allowed it. Once again, we read that the Creator allowed him to come, and in doing so, Satan, once again, has the audacity to attack God's honour and blaspheme God's Work, [Job 1:7-11](#).

God asked Satan once again, 'Have you considered my servant Job?' [Job 2:3](#) / [Job 1:8](#). Job was singled out because of his prominent righteous leadership among men, [Job 2:3](#) / [Job 1:8](#). Every life is an object of interest in heaven. God is keenly aware of each of us, knowing us by name, [Genesis 21:17](#) / [Isaiah 45:4](#).

We should never think that God is too busy running the universe to know His servants personally. He follows every detail of our lives and is as concerned with us as He is with the battle with Satan, as He was with Job's life. No mother, feeling the pulse, watching the fever, only too eager for the health of a beloved, is more solicitous over a child's welfare than He.

Satan virtually admitted his first defeat and asked permission to test further. He tries to rationalise and says his previous tests, [Job 1:13-20](#), weren't severe enough. Job hasn't been touched himself, hence the words, 'skin for skin', [Job 2:4](#).

These words are an ancient proverbial saying that can't be determined; however, the meaning could possibly be understood to refer to Satan's statement, 'all that a man has he will give for his life', [Job 2:4](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'The precise meaning of the proverb is uncertain, but the general meaning seems to be that as long as a man does not suffer in his own person, he will gladly bear the sacrifice of everything else 'skin for skin'.'

Therefore Satan challenges God anew and says to God, touch his bones and flesh and you will see his true colours, [Job 2:5](#). The Lord isn't afraid to let Job be put to the test and He gives permission to Satan to do his destroying work, [Job 2:6](#).

One restriction is given, however, and that is Job's life must not be taken, [Job 2:6](#) / [2 Timothy 2:13](#). If his life had been taken there would have been no victory either for God or Satan, for right or wrong.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following.

'God's faithfulness cannot fail even if, as Satan hints, Job's should do so, [2 Timothy 2:13](#). There was one who cared for Job's life more than he cared for it himself.'

Then Satan sets out his afflictions on Job, and notice there are two sets of trials that come in two areas of Job's life.

1. Physical.

He is stricken with sore boils all over, [Job 2:7](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:35](#). It could have been leprosy or elephantiasis, that is, worms blocking the lymphatic system resulting in swelling and skin eruptions which is incurable and characterised by boils, itching, a drastic change in his appearance, the darkness of the eyes, that is, tiredness, [Job 16:16](#), and corroding bones and annoying pains, [Job 30:17](#).

The indication is that this condition continued for months on end. Job takes a piece of broken pottery and scrapes himself with it and sits upon the ashes, [Job 2:8](#). This may be a reference to the city dump, his home area or somewhere where no one could see him.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'Tradition places him on a dunghill, like the 'Mizbeleh' or mound of refuse found outside an Eastern town or village where lepers and other outcasts sit, and men sometimes meet to talk.'

As he sat in the ashes and scraped himself with a broken piece of pottery in a futile effort to alleviate his suffering, we see an unexcelled picture of complete despair, sorrow, pain, and heartache.

2. Mental cruelty.

As the sufferer sat among the ashes, Satan dealt his masterstroke. He used Job's wife as his helper and worked from within the family, [Job 2:9](#) / [Micah 7:6](#) / [Matthew 10:36](#). Ah! That was the blow!

She was the one person who could have been a source of strength to her husband, but instead, she suggested, 'Why don't you renounce God and die?' [Job 2:9](#).

From that time on, nobody wanted to know the man. He was deserted by his wife; this was the hardest to take as she is in the family. She only comes to ridicule him 'Are you still maintaining your integrity?' Then her advice is 'curse God and die!' [Job 2:9](#).

Satan was restricted from taking Job's life, but that didn't mean Job couldn't take his own life. Satan's character is low, and he uses all foul methods. As far as Job's wife is concerned, remember, she too had lost everything, her security in life. She isn't of his high spiritual calibre; she doesn't have the same strength of faith and dedication to God.

She implicates what Satan wants Job to say about God. For Job's wife, things have gone too far; it is time we left God, but being away from God means we will die.

His response is made with amazing self-control. His reply is almost sarcastic; he more or less says to his wife, 'shut up, stupid woman, don't speak like an unbeliever', [Job 2:10](#) / [Psalm 14](#).

Why was Job harsh to his wife? Job still holds his integrity after he suffered without cause, which is the same word for 'not'. God makes a play on words and throws the matter back in Satan's face.

All too often, people praise God in good times but curse Him in bad times, [Job 2:10](#). Job knew that he had to accept the bad with the good, in reference to having faith in God. She is rebuked and reminded of God's sovereignty and again the Holy Spirit tells us that Job remained strong in God and didn't lose his faith, [Job 2:10](#).

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following.

'There is a sublime contrast between the temptation of Job and the temptation of Christ, [Matthew 26:39-42](#) / [Hebrews 5:8](#).'

'When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathise with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognise him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him because they saw how great his suffering was.' [Job 2:11-13](#)

Eliphaz came from Teman, [Job 2:11](#), an area that is generally referred to as Edom, [Genesis 36:4](#) / [Genesis 36:10-12](#) / [Jeremiah 49:7](#). Bildad came from Shuah, [Job 2:11](#), an area that is commonly believed to be southeast of Palestine, [Genesis 25:1-6](#). Zophar came from Naamath, [Job 2:11](#), an area in northwest Arabia.

Some people believed that Job's three friends arrived as a planned visit to see Job; the visit had a good motive. It is a credit to their friendship that they travelled from their homes to find and see Job, [Job 2:11](#).

They are friends in prosperity and adversity. They were obviously sympathetic people who could be touched by the adversity of others, [Romans 12:15](#). The visit was intended for comfort.

It appears that this ailment disfigured him to such an extent that his three friends didn't initially recognise him, [Job 2:12](#) / [Job 7:4-5](#) / [Job 7:14](#) / [Job 30:17](#) / [Job 30:30](#).

As the friends approached, they became hysterical, [Job 2:12](#) / [Genesis 27:38](#). They were so overcome by his ailment that they tore their clothes and sprinkled dust on their heads, [Job 2:12](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning the sprinkling of dust on the head.

‘This was generally done when lying prostrate on the ground, Lamentations 2:10, but the words ‘toward heaven’ suggest that they were standing. They throw dust in the air, which falls on their heads.’

They sat down with him on the ground, and they showed all the signs of mourning, but for seven days they never spoke, Job 2:13. Seven days was a traditional way to mourn for someone who was already dead, 1 Samuel 31:13 / Ezekiel 3:15.

They couldn’t say anything; they were so taken aback, or perhaps they were meditating on what he had done for these sufferings to come upon him. Sometimes silence is the best sympathy.

The Talmud says that consolers are not permitted to speak until the bereaved open the conversation. In the next chapter, we read that Job finally speaks, as Satan prepares a new temptation for him.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said: “May the day of my birth perish, and the night that said, ‘A boy is conceived!’ That day—may it turn to darkness; may God above not care about it; may no light shine on it. May gloom and utter darkness claim it once more; may a cloud settle over it; may blackness overwhelm it. That night—may thick darkness seize it; may it not be included among the days of the year nor be entered in any of the months. May that night be barren; may no shout of joy be heard in it. May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan. May its morning stars become dark; may it wait for daylight in vain and not see the first rays of dawn, for it did not shut the doors of the womb on me to hide trouble from my eyes.’ Job 3:1-10

JOB SPEAKS

If an enemy slanders us, it hurts, but it hurts a thousand times more when brethren or close friends say we are guilty of a crime we never committed. Here we have the lowest level in Job’s condition.

In the first trial, he still worshipped God, Job 1:20-21; in the second trial, he did not sin with his lips, Job 2:10, but from now on, he cannot be submissive any longer.

If his theology is correct, then he is the worst of sinners, but he knows he is not, and if he listens to the testimonies of his heart, that he is a sinner, then his whole theology that he has built his life upon must be wrong. That theology, in part, is this: only things like this happen to the sinful and the wicked, John 9:2. It is the same theology that his friends hold as well.

After seven days and in despair because of his situation, Satan prepares a new temptation for him. Job broke the silence by cursing the day he was born, Job 3:1 / Psalms 139:13-16, in numerous ways.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was thought that the days of the year had an existence of their own, so that any given day would come round again in its turn. Hence Job is not cursing a day which long ago ceased to be, but one which year by year comes back to blight the happiness of others as it blighted his, Job 3:5.’

He personifies the day and night, Job 3:2-3. God originally brought the light into existence out of darkness, Genesis 1:3, and so, Job wishes that his life remained shrouded in darkness, Job 3:3-6.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 3:6.

‘The ancients believed in lucky and unlucky days. Let this day ruin no more lives; it has ruined enough.’

Keil, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job’s trust in God is not destroyed, but it is overcast with thick clouds of melancholy and doubt.’

As far as his birthdate is concerned, he would prefer if there were no such day, Job 3:7. The firm moorings of life are gone, and his ship is adrift. He even calls on the mythology of his day to come forth and curse all that pertained to his existence, Job 3:8.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Let those who proclaim days unlucky or accursed curse that day as preeminently so, or let them recollect that day as a standard or sample of cursing. ‘Let it be as cursed as Job’s birth day.’

Job cries out of his soul because he doesn’t know what is happening to him, Job 3:8. So there is a striking resemblance between Job here and Jeremiah, Jeremiah 20:14.

Although both wish they were never born, they never contemplate suicide. They may question God’s wisdom, but they won’t opt to take the precious life that God has given them.

The word, ‘Leviathan’, Job 3:8, is used five times in the Old Testament, Job 41:1 / Psalms 74:14 / Psalms 104:26 / Isaiah 27:1. They are large aquatic animals, sea monsters.

Some biblical scholars say that they were real animals, others assume it is a mythical animal, basing their assumptions on old Canaanite and Phoenician literature in which a similar creature was known as Lothan, one capable of destroying world order, and it was only the experts in magic that were able to conjure it up.

Job says, May its morning stars become dark, may it wait for daylight in vain and not see the first rays of dawn, for it did not shut the doors of the womb on him to hide trouble from his eyes, Job 3:9-10.

‘Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb? Why were there knees to receive me and breasts that I might be nursed? For now, I would be lying in peace; I would be asleep and at rest with kings and rulers of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins, with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver. Or why was I not hidden away in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day? There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest. Captives also enjoy their ease; they no longer hear the slave driver’s shout. The small and the great are there, and the slaves are freed from their owners.’ Job 3:11-19

Job wished that he had died at birth and that he had not been put on his father’s knees, Genesis 50:23, and his mother never nursed him, Job 3:11-12.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was usual for the newborn child to be laid on its father’s knees in token of ownership. If he suffered it to remain, he pledged himself to bring it up.’

Death is described as lying down, being quiet or at rest, Job 3:13. Death in the Bible is spoken of as sleep, John 11:11-16 / 1 Thessalonians 4:14. The term sleep, Job 3:13, is used to describe death in the body. Only the body sleeps in death, Daniel 12:2.

It is clear that a part of a person that is placed in the ground sleeps; the body sleeps in death, not the spirit. In the New Testament, the word for sleep is ‘koimaomai’, which literally means to lie down.

The word ‘koimeterion’ is used for strangers coming to lie down for the night at an inn. The Old Testament’s understanding of death is not as full as the New Testament’s, because of what is revealed in the New Testament, 2 Timothy 1:9-10.

In the Old Testament, references to ‘Sheol’ are used in the sense of the grave. It comes from a root word meaning to penetrate or go down deep. When Job or his friends talk about death, they mean you are free from pain and misery; they mean no more life.

So far as the early Hebrews understood, life ended in the grave, at death, Genesis 37:35 / Ecclesiastes 9:5 / 1 Samuel 28:19. In death, kings and princes lie in rest from their burdens of leadership, Job 3:14-15.

If the day of his birth cannot be blotted out, then he wishes he was stillborn, Job 3:16. If he could suffer death, then he too would be at rest from his burdens like the wicked, Job 3:17. Even prisoners are free in prison from those who oppressed them outside prison, Job 3:18.

In death, the slave is free from the demands of his master, Job 3:19. Notice again that Job never thought about suicide, he understood that it was God who gives and takes, Job 1:21.

‘Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure, who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave? Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? For sighing has become my daily food; my groans pour out like water. What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.’ Job 3:20-26

Now Job asks the question, ‘Why me, Lord?’ Notice he connects light and life, Job 3:20 / Psalms 36:9 / John 1:4. He sees himself as a man groping in darkness, not knowing where he is going or what he is about, Job 3:20-22.

He questions the purpose of life and feels hedged in, Job 3:23, he feels hemmed in, in turmoil and misery. Earlier, Satan accused God of making a hedge around Job, Job 1:10.

Now, Job uses the same terminology to blame God for the first time, for his hedged position, Job 3:23. He is struggling with his faith and begins to question his faith. If he hasn’t done so before now, Job has certainly sinned with his lips now.

Job says that sighing has become his daily food and his groans pour out like water, Job 3:24 / Psalms 42:3. What he feared has come upon him and what he dreaded has happened to him, Job 3:25 / Proverbs 28:14.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 3:25.

‘It means that he had always had in remembrance the uncertainty and instability of earthly things, and yet he had been overtaken by a calamity that mocked his carefulness and exceeded his apprehensions.’

He has no peace, no quietness, no rest, only turmoil, Job 3:26. We can sympathise with Job, but his complaint is rash and abruptly spoken without much thought.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The passionate complaints and longings for death in this chapter testify to the agitation of Job’s soul. There are signs of impatience and resentment at God’s dealings, which shock his friends and evidently influence the tone of their language towards him in the debate which follows.’

We must remember there’s nothing wrong with questioning God, but our questioning mustn’t be rash or sinful. Although Satan is introduced as an adversary in the life of the Christian, 1 Peter 5:8, we must never forget that it is God who is controlling our existence and the existence of the universe, Genesis 18:25 / Ephesians 1:11-12.

The desperate utterances of Job here are not inspired by God, but they are an inspired record of what Job and his friends thought and said. What they say is not from God because they are not consistent with the truth, and sometimes they may even border on blasphemy.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: “If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed. Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?” Job 4:1-6

ELIPHAZ FIRST SPEECH

This chapter begins with the first cycle of speeches. Eliphaz emphasises God’s holiness and goodness. Bildad emphasises God’s righteousness, and Zophar emphasises God’s wisdom. There is nothing much known of any of them. The theme of most of what they have to say is the nature of God.

It is believed by many that Eliphaz spoke first because he was the oldest of the friends, or the wisest. He uses a diplomatic approach, hesitating to talk to Job for fear of offence, but it doesn’t stop him from saying eventually what he wants to say.

He felt that Job’s outburst of complaint couldn’t go unanswered, hence why he rebuked Job for being impatient, Job 4:1-2. He has a short introduction, and he recalls Job’s good old days and reminds him that he had given comfort to others by strengthening their faltering knees, Job 4:3-4.

Now Eliphaz mentions the shoe is on the other foot, that is, he forgot the advice he gave to others, Job 4:5-6. Job revered God, Job 1:9 / Exodus 14:31 / Leviticus 19:14 / Leviticus 19:32 / Leviticus 25:17 / Ecclesiastes 12:13, and so, this should be his confidence before God.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Eliphaz is greatly struck with the reverse in Job’s fortunes. He who had been the great comforter of those in distress is now overcome by his own troubles. Observe that Eliphaz quite underrates their severity, and ignores the wonderful resignation Job has displayed.’

‘Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more. The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken. The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.’ Job 4:7-11

Eliphaz now begins his theological argument: the innocent and the upright do not perish, Job 4:7. In other words, you reap what you sow, Galatians 6:7. The reaping is not always fully accomplished in this life.

Smith, in his commentary, says the following.

‘You see, already he’s beginning to get the knife out. ‘Job, you’re not innocent. What innocent man ever perished?’ Well, let me tell you this. Many innocent men have perished. There’s not really good logic to what Eliphaz is saying at all.

In fact, the most innocent of all men was crucified. So there really isn’t sound wisdom in what Eliphaz is saying. It’s just the argumentations of men which often lack real wisdom.’

Eliphaz concluded that there was sin in the life of Job because of all the evil that had come upon him, [Job 4:8-9](#).

Notice that the wicked are compared to the lion, [Job 4:10](#) / [Psalms 22:13](#).

Although the lion had a great roar and was fierce, when his teeth were broken, he starved to death, [Job 4:11](#). The cubs then scatter and starve because they had no one to provide them with food, [Job 4:11](#). Eliphaz is saying that Job, the lion, has been broken and is facing destruction.

‘A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it. Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people, fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end. It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice: ‘Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker? If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth! Between dawn and dusk, they are broken to pieces; unnoticed, they perish forever. Are not the cords of their tent pulled up, so that they die without wisdom?’ [Job 4:12-21](#)

This argument is supported by a fright vision he said he experienced, [Job 4:12-13](#). In his vision, he was fearful, and the fear made him tremble and made all his bones shake, [Job 4:14](#).

In his vision, a spirit glided past his face, and the hair on his body stood on end, [Job 4:15](#). Many commentators doubt this vision, but people chosen of God had visions, [Jeremiah 1:4](#) / [Jeremiah 2:1](#) / [Jeremiah 2:4](#).

When the vision stopped, he couldn’t tell what it was, [Job 4:16](#). A form stood before his eyes, and he heard a hushed voice asking can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker? [Job 4:17](#).

The contents of this revelation are basically this: ‘Is a man more just than God?’ The implied answer is that no one is mortal, but God is eternal. God is just in sending affliction on evil men because God is just. To bring suffering upon a man without cause is unjust. This is the theory of retribution.

No matter what God does, it cannot be said to be unjust. Eliphaz, therefore, would have to be claiming God is unjust if Job is innocent, and so, he concludes that Job is a sinner.

The whole design of his argument is to get Job to extract a verdict of guilty upon himself. He becomes bolder and says he is so sure of Job’s guilt that no one could stand in his defence, not even the angels, [Job 4:18](#). He argued that even the angels can’t be compared to the righteousness of God and so, are charged with an error in comparison to the purity of God, [Job 4:18](#).

If angels aren’t considered pure before God, then certainly mortal man, who is the product of clay, shouldn’t be considered pure before God. Just like a moth, [Job 4:19](#), our lives on earth are crushed, and we pass away, [Job 4:20](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:7](#) / [2 Corinthians 5:1](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If spiritual beings like the angels were imperfect, how much more men with material bodies?’

It’s in death that we are plucked up like a tent peg, [Job 4:21](#), that is, that which we have acquired in life is torn from us by death. The falling tent is a figure of collapse and death.

Because Eliphaz claims he is a wise man and seeks God, he claims that God's goodness should motivate Job to repentance, in saying that he is a sinner and is wrong.

One of the thoughts of Eliphaz is that material possessions and prosperity follow the upright, and adversity comes upon sinners. Eliphaz hasn't finished speaking yet; he really goes to town with Job, as the saying goes in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

‘Call if you will, but who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn? Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple. I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed. His children are far from safety, crushed in court without a defender. The hungry consume his harvest, taking it even from among thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth. For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground. Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.’ Job 5:1-7

ELIPHAZ CONTINUES HIS SPEECH

Eliphaz now asks Job to call out to see if anyone would answer and listen to his complaint against God, [Job 5:1](#). Everyone had turned away from him. Job couldn't even turn to the holy ones, [Job 5:1](#), that is, angels, who were commissioned by God to help the righteous on earth, [Hebrews 1:14](#). Eliphaz basically rebuked Job and told him there was no one to help him.

He says resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple, [Job 5:2](#), and notice he says that he himself has seen a fool taking root, and suddenly his house was cursed, [Job 5:3](#). In other words, he says if Job continues to worry about his present condition, [Matthew 6:25](#), then he will surely make it worse.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘At first, Eliphaz was inclined to envy the prosperity of the wicked, but in a moment, he sees there is no room for envy. He would not accept their position at any price, so sudden and sure was their downfall.’

Eliphaz says that the person he has seen saw their children crushed in court without a defender, [Job 5:4](#). Judgments were sought from courts, the city gates, [Genesis 23:10](#) / [Deuteronomy 21:19](#) / [Deuteronomy 25:6-7](#) / [Ruth 4:1-12](#) / [Psalm 127:5](#) / [Proverbs 22:22](#), but the children of the wicked had no security; the courts would make judgments against them.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Targum says, They shall be bruised in the gate of hell, in the day of the great judgment. There is reference here to a custom which I have often had occasion to notice that in the Eastern countries the courthouse, or tribunal of justice, was at the GATE of the city, here the magistrates attended, and hither the plaintiff and defendant came for justice.’

The hungry steal the crops of the wicked, even though the crops struggled to survive among the thorns, Job 5:5. Deceivers scheme to relieve the wicked of their possessions, Job 5:5. Man himself must take responsibility for the trouble that he creates for himself. Eliphaz, like the Jews, erroneously believed that disasters and calamities, Job 5:6-7, were invariably due to the sin of those who suffered such things, John 9:2.

‘But if I were you, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. He provides rain for the earth; he sends water on the countryside. The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety. He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success. He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away. Darkness comes upon them in the daytime; at noon, they grope as in the night. He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth; he saves them from the clutches of the powerful. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.’ Job 5:8-16

Because Eliphaz came to the conclusion that Job was suffering because of sin, he now comes up with a solution to his problem. Job must seek God in order to be relieved of his suffering, Job 5:8.

God is the One who performs wonders that cannot be fathomed and miracles that cannot be counted, Job 5:9. God is the One who provides rain for the earth and sends water on the countryside, Job 5:10 / Matthew 5:45.

Eliphaz is thinking his way because He is the one who lifts up the fallen, Job 5:11, and works in the lives of those who seek Him, then the solution for Job’s problems was that he should turn to the Lord. Eliphaz also argued that God would work against the wicked in order to bring calamity into their lives, Job 5:12.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 5:13.

‘This passage is quoted by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:19, with the usual formula in referring to the Old Testament, ‘for it is written’, showing that he regarded it as a part of the inspired oracles of God. The word ‘wise’ here undoubtedly means cunning, astute, crafty, and designing. It cannot mean those who are truly wise in the Scripture sense, but the meaning is that those who form plans that they expect to accomplish by cunning and craft, are often the victims of their own designs. The same sentiment not unfrequently occurs in the Scriptures and elsewhere, and has all the aspect of being a proverb, Psalms 7:15.’

Eliphaz says darkness comes upon them in the daytime and at noon they grope as in the night, Job 5:14. God saves the needy from the sword in their mouth and saves them from the clutches of the powerful, Job 5:15. So the poor have hope and injustice shuts its mouth, Job 5:16.

‘Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal. From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will touch you. In famine, he will deliver you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. You will be protected from the lash of the tongue and need not fear when destruction comes. You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the wild animals. For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing. You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth. You will come to the grave in full vigour, like sheaves gathered in season. “We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself.” Job 5:17-27

Eliphaz is certainly coming across as someone who thinks he knows it all. It’s very true that God corrects those whom He loves, Job 5:17, but it isn’t true that we can know every time someone suffers that they are being corrected by the Lord.

When affliction comes our way, we must trust God because it is God who strengthens the righteous and heals their affliction. For God wounds but he also binds up, He injures, but His hands also heal, Job 5:18.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 5:19.

‘The numbers six and seven are put here for many. Though several troubles should come upon thee all at once, and there should be no hope, humanly speaking, yet God would rid thee out of them all, for he saves as well from many

as from few. We may also understand the words, He who hath been thy deliverer in past troubles, will not deny his help in those which are to come.’

Eliphaz goes on to list several difficult situations that could come upon the righteous. He describes in some detail all the blessings of restoration that would come to Job’s life if he would only repent and turn to God. In famine God will deliver you from death and in battle from the stroke of the sword, [Job 5:20](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 5:21](#).

‘Perhaps no evil is more dreadful than the scourge of the tongue, evil-speaking, detraction, backbiting, calumny, slander, tale-bearing, whispering, and scandalising, are some of the terms which we use when endeavouring to express the baleful influence and effects of that member, which is a world of fire, kindled from the nethermost hell. The Scripture abounds with invectives and execrations against it, [Psalms 31:20](#) / [Psalms 52:2-4](#) / [Proverbs 12:18](#) / [Proverbs 14:3](#) / [James 3:1-8](#).’

Eliphaz says you will laugh at destruction and famine and need not fear the wild animals, [Job 5:22](#). For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you, [Job 5:23](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 5:23](#).

‘His land will be free from stones, a part of the general thought of being at peace with all creation, [Proverbs 16:7](#). For the idea of a sympathy between man and nature see, [Romans 8:19](#).’

You will know that your tent is secure and you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing, [Job 5:24](#). What kind of friend would say to someone who has just lost their children, ‘you will know that your children will be many and your descendants like the grass of the earth’, [Job 5:25](#).

The problem was, that he thought Job was sinful, when in fact he wasn’t because when all this is over, Job was indeed blessed with more children and he was rewarded with double possessions, [Job 42:12-17](#), because he was right, it was Eliphaz who was wrong.

Eliphaz concluded that Job should listen to this tried and tested advice in order to deliver himself from his affliction, [Job 5:27](#). What Job needed most of all at this point was to be loved and understood; he didn’t need to hear some theological, doctrinal argument as to why he was suffering.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Job replied: “If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas—no wonder my words have been impetuous. The arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their poison; God’s terrors are marshalled against me. Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass, or an ox bellow when it has fodder? Is tasteless food eaten without salt, or is there flavour in the sap of the mallow? I refuse to touch it; such food makes me ill.’ [Job 6:1-7](#)

JOB’S RESPONSE

It appears that Job addresses all three of his friends. He is really upset, and he gives an explanation of his complaint. He says no one understands or could weigh the anguish he is experiencing, [Job 6:1-3](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job wished to be dealt with according to justice; as he was willing that his sins, if they could be proved, should be weighed against his sufferings; and if this could not be done, he wished that his sufferings and his complaints might be weighed together and it would then be seen that, bitter as his complaint had been, it was little when compared with the distress which occasioned it.’

He admits he has spoken rashly, [Job 6:3](#), and he knows from what his friends have said that he would have to admit that he committed some large sin, but he hasn’t, so he won’t admit to having done anything. He hasn’t sinned, so why is it happening? He may have spoken rashly, but he sees no other sin.

God has fired arrows into him for no apparent reason, [Job 6:4](#). Job felt that God had launched this attack against him, but he couldn’t understand why. He gets stronger and says his friends are like animals needing comfort, [Job 6:5](#).

Braying and lowing, [Job 6:5](#), are the results of dissatisfaction in the life of an animal, so he claimed the right to voice his dissatisfaction in reference to his predicament.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is because he feels that his troubles are due to God that he is almost beside himself since he cannot understand their motive. In [Job 3](#), he had not charged God with being the author of his sorrows.’

Job asks if tasteless food is eaten without salt or if there is flavour in the sap of the mallow? [Job 6:6](#). He refuses to touch it because such food makes him ill, [Job 6:7](#).

If the friends could only see the totality of his suffering, but his friends simply can’t understand his condition. Job argued that they would conclude that he was not complaining without cause.

‘Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for, that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut off my life! Then I would still have this consolation—my joy in unrelenting pain—that I had not denied the words of the Holy One. “What strength do I have, that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient? Do I have the strength of stone? Is my flesh bronze? Do I have any power to help myself now that success has been driven from me?” [Job 6:8-13](#)

Then he turns to God and cries out to Him, [Job 6:8](#). The content of this prayer is not good; he prays for death, [Job 6:9](#), and anticipates no joy afterwards. He said he had a right to desire happiness in his existence.

He gives the reason as to why he isn’t afraid to die; he thought death would bring him peace. He says he would still have this consolation, his joy in unrelenting pain, that he hadn’t denied the words of the Holy One, [Job 6:10](#).

Job asks, What strength do I have that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient? [Job 6:11](#). Since Job was human, he wasn’t like stone or bronze, [Job 6:12](#), he wondered how much longer he could endure his present physical state, [Job 6:13](#).

The Tyndale commentary says the following.

‘What Job is saying in this and the next verse is that ‘I am a human. I am a weak, frail, faltering human. I am not made of brass or stone; this is more than I can bear. Therefore, I pray for God to take me home. Job’s resources were all spent, he had no endurance left.’

Job wonders how long he can bear to be patient. He may be directly attacking his three friends here because anything he turns to is taken away, [Job 6:13](#). He came to the conclusion that because he had no hope for this life and no purpose for living, he may as well be dead, [Romans 8:24-25](#).

‘Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams, as the streams that overflow when darkened by thawing ice and swollen with melting snow, but that stop flowing in the dry season, and in the heat vanish from their channels. Caravans turn aside from their routes; they go off into the wasteland and perish. The caravans of Tema look for water, the travelling merchants of Sheba look in hope. They are distressed because they had been confident; they arrive there, only to be

disappointed. Now you, too, have proved to be of no help; you see something dreadful and are afraid. Have I ever said, ‘Give something on my behalf, pay a ransom for me from your wealth, deliver me from the hand of the enemy, rescue me from the clutches of the ruthless?’” Job 6:14-23

Here Job now reproaches his friends because they have shown him no proper kindness, Job 6:14, especially at this time when his faith is being greatly tested. Surely he should have received some words of encouragement from them. I guess they are what are called fair-weather friends.

Job describes his friends as undependable, as intermittent streams, as the streams that overflow, Job 6:15. When darkened by thawing ice and swollen with melting snow, but that stop flowing in the dry season and in the heat vanish from their channels, Job 6:16-17.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He represents the waters as being sometimes suddenly frozen, their foam being turned into the semblance of snow or hoar-frost: when the heat comes, they are speedily liquefied, and the evaporation is so strong from the heat, and the absorption so powerful from the sand, that they soon disappear.’

His disappointment in his friends is portrayed as those in trading caravans who followed a path that was to lead to water, Job 6:18-19, but the path led to despair, Job 6:20, for there was no water awaiting thirsty souls.

He says in some way they are frightened of him because of his position, Job 6:21. It appears that his situation in life has been turned into an opportunity for them to expose their jealousy concerning his former prosperity, Job 6:22-23. DeHoff, in his commentary, says the following.

‘When Job was in prosperity, his friends were loyal to him, when he was struck down with suffering, they rejected him.’

‘Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have been wrong. How painful are honest words! But what do your arguments prove? Do you mean to correct what I say, and treat my desperate words as wind? You would even cast lots for the fatherless and barter away your friend. “But now be so kind as to look at me. Would I lie to your face? Relent, do not be unjust; reconsider, for my integrity is at stake. Is there any wickedness on my lips? Can my mouth not discern malice?” Job 6:24-30

Job now issues the challenge, if they are so wise, then what is the terrible sin he committed, Job 6:24. He knows how painful honest words are, and so he asks his friends what do your arguments prove? Job 6:25.

He asks do you mean to correct what I say, and treat my desperate words as wind? Job 6:26. Reproof without proof is meaningless and perhaps dangerous, 1 Timothy 5:19.

Job goes over the top, he says they are heartless as those who cast lots for the fatherless and barter away their friend, Job 6:27. He expected that his friends who came to him would bring words of comfort and exhortation but because his friends brought only words of judgment, he too had resorted to such words in order to counter the accusations that were made against him. After this, they surely got the point.

He then appeals to their sympathy and sincerity, Job 6:28-30. It is not their fault that he is experiencing these difficulties, so who is? Wicked men do reap what they sow, Galatians 6:7-8, but Job wasn’t reaping from what he had sown in wickedness.

Coffman, in his commentary, gives the following paraphrase of Job 6:24-30.

‘Look, if I am a sinner, tell me what it was in which I sinned. Would I lie to you? Look me in the eye. Don’t get up and leave me. Stay here and help me. Am I so ignorant that I don’t know what sin is?’ No matter what you think, my trouble is not caused by my wickedness. You have criticised my words, but it is silly to make a case based on the words of a man who is suffering desperately. Allowances must be made for words uttered in deep distress. Reconsider my case, for my cause is righteous.’

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

‘Do not mortals have hard service on earth? Are not their days like those of hired labourers? Like a slave longing for the evening shadows, or a hired labourer waiting to be paid, so I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of misery have been assigned to me. When I lie down, I think, ‘How long before I get up?’ The night drags on, and I toss and turn until dawn. My body is clothed with worms and scabs, my skin is broken and festering. “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they come to an end without hope. Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath; my eyes will never see happiness again. The eye that now sees me will see me no longer; you will look for me, but I will be no more. As a cloud vanishes and is gone, so one who goes down to the grave does not return. He will never come to his house again; his place will know him no more.’ Job 7:1-10

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS RESPONSE

Job now turns Eliphaz’s argument right around, to turn it against him and God. In effect, what he is saying is that God is my enemy. He describes his life as a hard and painful servitude, Job 7:1-2, and all there was to look forward to was the end of life.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As the labourer longs for the weary day to end and to receive his wages, so Job bemoans the length of his sufferings and sighs for death to end them.’

Months of misery are aggravated by the torture of his disease, and he is not getting much sleep, Job 7:3-5. He describes the brevity of life, days are swifter than the weaver’s shuttle, Job 7:6.

The final thing being without hope is death, Job 7:7-9, but later he will regret what he has said. Like a cloud, it was vanishing away and headed for the grave, Job 7:9 / Job 3:15-19.

The dead don’t return to the living, Job 7:9, and so, the dead are forgotten by the living, Job 7:10. He wants to be left alone because his days are up, and he still felt that death was an option in order to be delivered from his suffering.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Human life is a state of probation, a time of exercise to train us for eternal life. It is warfare; we are enlisted in the Church Militant and must accomplish our time of service. And there is no discharge in that war, Ecclesiastes 8:8.’

‘Therefore, I will not keep silent; I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I the sea, or the monster of the deep, that you put me under guard? When I think my bed will comfort me and my couch will ease my complaint, even then, you frighten me with dreams and terrify me with visions, so that I prefer strangling and death, rather than this body of mine. I despise my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone; my days have no meaning. “What is mankind that you make so much of them, that you give them so much attention, that you examine them every morning and test them every moment? Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant? If I have sinned, what have I done to you, you who sees everything we do? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my offences and forgive my sins? For I will soon lie down in the dust; you will search for me, but I will be no more.” Job 7:11-21

Job now turns to bring his case before God. He won’t keep silent, but he will speak out in the anguish of his spirit and will complain in the bitterness of his soul, Job 7:11.

He more or less says to God, ‘Why do you keep harassing me and watching me? ‘Am I a monster that you have to do this to?’, [Job 7:12](#). He questioned why God would allow him to live since his plight was so miserable in life.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Babylonians told the myth of the dragon Tiamat, who waged war against heaven and was slain by the God Marduk. This myth is referred to here, but in a form which represented the monster, not as slain, but imprisoned and kept under strict observation. The sea needs to be held down lest it flood the earth or smite the sky, [Job 38:8-11](#); the dragon must be watched lest it burst its bonds. Is Job as formidable as they that God should watch him as closely?’ Job says that God even pursues him in his dreams and visions, [Job 7:13-14](#). He prefers strangling and death, rather than his body, [Job 7:15](#). He despises his life and wouldn’t want to live forever, and asks God to leave him alone because his life has no meaning, [Job 7:16](#). He felt that God was constantly afflicting him and so, questioned why he was being tormented.

In [Psalm 8:4](#), the palmist asks, ‘what is man that you make so much of him’, but here, the contrast is vivid, [Job 7:17](#). Job says what is there about man that makes God hound him so much, [Job 7:17](#). God doesn’t look away long enough for Him to even leave him alone, even for an instant, [Job 7:18-19](#).

Job is worked up so much, that he challenges God, he asks if he has sinned, ‘show me, show everyone what I have done’, [Job 7:20](#). He sees himself as a target and even if he has sinned so badly why doesn’t God take away the consequences, [Job 7:21](#).

If he has sinned, why has God had not forgiven him of his sin, [Job 7:21](#). He says soon he will be gone and he will not be able to be kicked around anymore, [Job 7:21](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job does not contemplate suicide. The case of Ahithophel, [2 Samuel 17:23](#), is the only bona fide case of suicide in the Old Testament. The instances of two warriors resorting to suicide, [Judges 9:54](#) / [1 Samuel 31:4](#), in order to escape dishonour are not quite the same as deliberate and premeditated suicide.’

Job speaks disrespectfully and stupidly, and he is desperate and doesn’t have the understanding that he will have later. He still saw God as a God of love, [1 John 4:8](#) / [1 John 4:16](#), but he pleads that God seeks him out urgently before he died, [Job 7:21](#). Job appears to believe that if he did die, he would be beyond God’s reach.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job believes that one day God will turn to him once more in love, but then it will be too late. The faint hope expressed here gradually becomes a conviction, [Job 13:15-18](#) / [Job 14:13-15](#) / [Job 16:19-21](#) / [Job 19:23-27](#).’

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: “How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. But if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state. Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be.’ [Job 8:1-7](#)

BILDAD'S RESPONSE

It appears that Job is stopped dead by Bildad. Bildad prides himself on being a philosopher who has inherited the wisdom of the fathers of antiquity. Like the proverbial 'bull in a China shop', he rushes straight in and attacks Job. The overall thrust of his speech is this: 'Job, you are a hypocrite, and I've never met somebody as vain and proud or stubborn as you.'

Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

'Job's friends, like the messengers of his disasters, followed each other in rapid succession, the messengers with evil tidings, and his friends with harsh censures, perhaps both the messengers and the friends being unaware of how effectively they fitted into the design of Satan. The messengers were calculated to drive Job from his integrity, and the friends, chosen by the evil one, sought to drive him from the comfort of that integrity.'

Bildad more or less calls Job a hot air balloon, 'keep up pretence', [Job 8:1-2](#). He says he accused God and everybody but himself. His theories are the same as Eliphaz's.

God is just and righteous in all his dealings with men, even if he should afflict pain in some way, [Job 8:3](#). He rebuked Job for what he said in the last speech since Job had assumed that he was right, [Job 6:29-30](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'Can there be injustice with God, as Job seems to think is possible? Bildad thinks the All-powerful must in the nature of things, be righteous. Job does not deny the omnipotence, but he questions the righteousness.'

He states the theory of retribution and states that Eliphaz is right. With Bildad, it is a foregone conclusion that whoever God afflicts is a sinful man, [Job 8:4](#) / [Luke 13:4](#) / [John 9:2-3](#).

Since Job had argued that man is shaped in life by unbearable trials that are brought on him by God, [Job 7:1-7](#) / [Job 7:17-18](#), Bildad says that God was just in whatever He did in the life of man.

He leads down a bad path, and he points to Job's children and says that they died because they were sinners too, [Job 8:4](#). Those words must have hurt Job deeply. He uses the argument to demonstrate Job's unrighteousness, [Job 8:5](#).

Since God is the Almighty, then everything that comes from Him is just. Bildad concluded that if Job repented, then God would restore Job's blessings beyond what he had, [Job 8:6](#).

Bildad says he should turn to God, [Job 8:5](#), or the same fate will happen to him, [Job 8:6](#). He uses the same faulty argument that prosperity means righteousness, [Job 8:7](#). As far as he is concerned, Job was a big sinner, because he can see how bad Job is struck by bankruptcy.

'Ask the former generation and find out what their ancestors learned, for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow. Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?' [Job 8:8-10](#)

Bildad now challenges Job to consider the past experiences of man that would confirm the exhortations that he was giving to Job, [Job 8:8](#). All wisdom from the past may well be wrong, [Job 8:8](#).

If this man thought Eliphaz was too easy on Job, he wasn't going to be. Following the principle of cause and effect, every effect is caused by a cause. This is true, but in Job's case, it doesn't apply, [Job 42:10-17](#).

He says that he was right, simply because the advice he was giving was found in the traditional teachings of the society in which they all lived, [Job 8:9-10](#). However, his assumption was wrong because the antiquity of teaching does not prove that a particular teaching is right.

'Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. What

they trust in is fragile; what they rely on is a spider's web. They lean on the web, but it gives way; they cling to it, but it does not hold. They are like a well-watered plant in the sunshine, spreading its shoots over the garden; it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks and looks for a place among the stones. But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you.' Surely its life withers away, and from the soil other plants grow. "Surely God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hands of evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Your enemies will be clothed in shame, and the tents of the wicked will be no more." Job 8:11-22

The papyrus plant grows while in the presence of water but when the water is removed, it withers, [Job 8:11](#). Man's life is like the reeds, while alive the plant spreads its roots among the rocks in order to survive, [Job 8:12](#). Bildad says such is the destiny of all who forget God, so perishes the hope of the godless, [Job 8:13](#).

The hope of an ungodly man is as flimsy as a spider's web, [Job 8:14](#), that is, there is no support, [Job 8:15](#). Green plants prosper in the sun but if uprooted they die, [Job 8:16-18](#), but when dead, it is no longer remembered and another plant takes its place, [Job 8:19](#) / [Job 7:13](#). The point is that Job was once prosperous but because of that, he was uprooted.

Bildad contends that God will not cast away a perfect man, [Job 8:20](#) / [Matthew 27:43](#). Looking at him, he says he was cast away from God, so therefore he is unrighteous. He says if Job would only repent, then His mouth would be filled with laughter and his lips with shouts of joy, [Job 8:21](#).

Notice Bildad says, your enemies will be clothed in shame, [Job 8:22](#). By the time we get to the end of the book of Job, he himself would be one of those who are clothed in shame. All these accusations are in conflict with what God has said about Job, [Job 1:8](#) / [Job 2:3](#).

Keil, in his commentary, says the following.

'Bildad's tragic mistake lay in this, that he thought his commonplace utterances were sufficient to explain all the mysteries of life.'

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

'Then Job replied: "Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can mere mortals prove their innocence before God? Though they wished to dispute with him, they could not answer him one time out of a thousand. His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed? He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. He speaks to the sun, and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars. He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades, and the constellations of the south. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. When he passes me, I cannot see him; when he goes by, I cannot perceive him. If he snatches away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?'" God does not restrain his anger; even the cohorts of Rahab cowered at his feet.' Job 9:1-13

JOB'S RESPONSE

The things Job says here are true, [Job 9:1-2](#), but they are almost said sarcastically. Job admits that man is not ‘just’ before God, [Job 9:2](#) / [Romans 3:23](#). He sees himself being tormented by God, so how can man have a fair deal anyway?

When man stands before God, he will always be the loser. He uses courtroom imagery to say that their arguments would not stand up in a court, [Job 9:3-4](#). There was some truth in the argument of Eliphaz and Bildad, but the punishment for sinful actions isn’t directly from God, [Galatians 6:7-10](#).

Job praises some of the virtues of God; there is nobody who can contend against God because there is nobody wiser or stronger, [Job 9:3-4](#). This is evidenced by God’s operations in nature. He removes mountains, [Job 9:5](#), and scales the earth, [Job 9:6](#). He praises God’s strength, invincibility, and power, [Job 9:7](#) / [Isaiah 40:26](#).

The International Critical Commentary says the following, concerning [Job 9:7](#).

‘The word here has the meaning of ‘to beam’ or ‘to shine forth’ and is not confined to the literal rising of the sun. It refers to abnormal obscuration of the sun, such as that caused by heavy thunderstorms, dust storms, or eclipses.’

It’s only God who stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea, [Job 9:8](#). God is the creator of Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, [Job 9:9](#), which are the constellations of stars. The Bear is Ursa Major, generally known as the Great Dipper. Orion dominates the winter skies, and the Pleiades are those of the spring.

Job’s conclusion was that God’s doings were beyond the perception of man, [Job 9:10](#). He says all these are truths, but he doesn’t stop and think that this same God is working in his life for something in Job’s eyes are blinded by anguish, [Job 9:11](#).

He says nothing of the moral virtues of God, His holiness and purity. Perhaps he wasn’t ready to admit those in praise. Job continues his claim and says no man can complain because God will not stop His anger, [Job 9:12](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning Rahab, [Job 9:13](#).

‘The reference here is to an ancient Babylonian myth. Rahab here, like the dragon in [Isaiah 51:9](#), is the ancient mythological name of Tiamat, the original Chaos, whom God conquered in the Creation. Job’s argument here is that, in spite of his certainty that it is not his wickedness that has resulted in his distress, he nevertheless feels that he is too weak to contend with God about the matter. ‘If great dragons like the helpers of Rahab were utterly crushed and destroyed by God, how could any mortal man hope to contend with God, regardless of the justice of his case?’

‘How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words to argue with him? Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy. Even if I summoned him and he responded, I do not believe he would give me a hearing.’ [Job 9:14-16](#)

If Job went to court, he would lose, [Job 9:14](#). In other words, Job says he couldn’t refute God if God had a charge against him, [Job 9:15](#). Job said he would be surprised if God would even consider this plea.

He says God wouldn’t listen to his argument anyway, [Job 9:16](#). Job’s point is that God is so great in comparison to man that we wonder why He would consider the dilemma of anyone.

‘He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds for no reason. He would not let me catch my breath but would overwhelm me with misery. If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty! And if it is a matter of justice, who can challenge him? Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty. “Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself; I despise my own life. It is all the same; that is why I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’” [Job 9:17-22](#)

Here we get a poor, resentful picture of Job as he says he would get an impartial judgement, [Job 9:17](#). Job’s point is that though man would approach unto God with perfection, he would still be only as a breath of wind that quickly vanishes away, [Job 9:18](#).

If one approached God with strength, he would be crushed, [Job 9:19](#). If someone tried to justify themselves before God, they would be legally condemned because no man is without sin before God, [Job 9:20](#) / [Romans 3:23](#).

Although Job is blameless, Job 1:8 / Job 2:3, he had no concern for himself and despised his own life, Job 9:21. It makes no difference to Job because according to Job God destroys both the blameless and the wicked, Job 9:22. We can look retrospectively at God and understand how Job's understanding and knowledge of God are so limited. Even the best men and women can weaken and utter foolish things. But even if you felt like Job, it doesn't mean you are without hope.

‘When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent. When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it? “My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy. They skim past like boats of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey.’ Job 9:23-26

Job says when a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent, Job 9:23. When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges, and then he asks if it is not he, then who is it? Job 9:24. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God gave unto men the freedom of the will, and therefore, when evil men will do that which is contrary to God's will, they are, of course, permitted to do it. It was that freedom of the human will that led to Adam's election to forsake the government of God and accept in its place the government of the devil. The scholars who do not understand that will never be able to make any sense out of Job. Due to Satan and to wicked men who follow him, countless things contrary to God's will occur constantly. Yes, God could prevent such things, but not within the context of the freedom of the human will.’

Job now turns to the brevity of his life, and he uses three figures to do this. His life was fleeing away faster than a runner, Job 9:25, swifter than the fastest ship, Job 9:26, and quicker than the eagle that swoops down upon its prey, Job 9:26.

‘If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile,’ I still dread all my sufferings, for I know you will not hold me innocent. Since I am already found guilty, why should I struggle in vain? Even if I washed myself with soap and my hands with cleansing powder, you would plunge me into a slime pit so that even my clothes would detest me. “He is not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. If only there were someone to mediate between us, someone to bring us together, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.’ Job 9:27-35

Job knows that if he stopped complaining and smiled, Job 9:27, he would still be held accountable for his behaviour. Because he knew that he wouldn't stand innocent before God, he remained fearful when considering his complaints, Job 9:28-29.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Since God is determined to hold Job guilty, it is useless for him to try to establish his innocence. I am afraid of all my sorrows because they seem to be evidence of God's anger. Apparently, there were times when the pain was less acute, but the cheerfulness he might have felt was checked by the knowledge that it would come back again.’

He knows even if he cleansed himself with soap, Job 9:30, he still wouldn't be innocent. If he were to cleanse himself, God would still plunge him into the filth of the ditch, Job 9:31. There is no man in the same position as him to go to court, Job 9:32, and act as a mediator for him, Job 9:33-34, because there isn't a mediator he is distraught. Job sees the need for this mediator between God and man, 1 Timothy 2:5. If he had a mediator, then he would speak up without fear of him, but because he doesn't have a mediator, he can't.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This passage is the first occurrence of the idea of intervention on his behalf, which takes more definite shape in Job 16:19, and Job 19:25-27. But in those passages, Job advances to the thought that, since he has no umpire to vindicate him, God Himself will be his umpire and vindicate Job even against Himself. This longing of pious men of old for some mediator who would bring about peace between them and God has been satisfied in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, both God and man.’

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

‘I loathe my very life; therefore, I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul. I say to God: Do not declare me guilty, but tell me what charges you have against me. Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked? Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a mortal sees? Are your days like those of a mortal or your years like those of a strong man, that you must search out my faults and probe after my sin, though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand? “Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you moulded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.’ Job 10:1-12

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS RESPONSE

Job loathes his life, and because of that, he will give free rein to his complaint and speak out in the bitterness of his soul, Job 10:2. Because Job had by this time reasoned that he was guilty of something, He now begins by asking God to stop tormenting him or show him his sin, Job 10:2.

Even though the questions seem like insults, Job asserted that it wasn’t logical for God to oppress that which He created, Job 10:3, and at the same time shine with favour on the wicked.

He asks, Does God have eyes of flesh?, Job 10:4, God is spirit, John 4:24. ‘Eyes’ is a metaphor that refers to God’s knowledge of Job’s predicament. He asks God if His days are like those of a mortal or your years like those of a strong man, that He must search out his faults and probe after Job’s sin, Job 10:5-6.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Observe that Job cannot altogether give up his conviction that God must be really just, although the reason of his suffering causes him the greatest perplexity.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 10:7.

‘This is not a contradiction of what Job had just said in Job 10:6. Some sin, unknown to himself, Job freely admitted; but wicked, he was not!’

He says that no one can deliver him, Job 10:7. God could, but please note that Job didn’t question the existence of an all-powerful and benevolent God. Notice Job says man is like a vessel of clay, shaped by a potter, Job 10:8-9. Job knows that God is the Potter and he is the clay, Psalms 139:14, and he knows that man comes from the dust of the earth, Genesis 2:7 / Psalms 103:14.

He praises God for His creation, Job 10:8, but in the next breath charges God as being inconsistent, Job 10:9. Man is like cheese, poured out by a cheesemaker Job 10:10, and man is like a garment, woven by a weaver, Job 10:11. He thinks that God is trying to destroy him, Job 2:6, hence why Job questioned why God would have created man in the first place. The answer is in the fact that God is a God of love, 1 John 4:8 / 1 John 4:16. We cannot point the finger at God and say you don't know what it is like because He does.

In other words, he still didn't trust that God would do what is right, Genesis 18:25. Because he was frustrated with his life and didn't understand what was going on, he only sought to understand the plan of God in reference to his existence and suffering. The answer to Job's supposed predicament is in the fact that God can do all that can be done, Job 10:12.

‘But this is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind: If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offence go unpunished. If I am guilty—woe to me! Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction. If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me. You bring new witnesses against me and increase your anger toward me; your forces come against me, wave upon wave. “Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave! Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and utter darkness, to the land of deepest night, of utter darkness and disorder, where even the light is like darkness.” Job 10:13-22

Remember, Job has no idea that Satan is the one behind his suffering, and so, he now seeks to understand the concealed purposes of God, Job 10:13. What confuses him is that, regardless of his righteous living, he had to suffer such great trouble in his life, Job 10:14-15 / John 16:33 / 2 Timothy 3:12.

Job began to conclude that God's infliction in his life was His judgment, that he was in some way guilty, Job 10:15. If God had inflicted him because of some guilt, then he questioned why God created him in the first place, Romans 8:18. He feels like he's being hunted down, being stalked like a lion, Job 10:16.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As the hunters attack the king of beasts in the forest, so my friends attack me. They assail me on every side.’

Job then goes back to his death wish, Job 10:17-22, but in the end, he wants God to simply leave him alone. Notice the words he uses to describe how he is feeling. He says God brings new witnesses against him, increases His anger toward him and His forces come against him wave upon wave, Job 10:17.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the witnesses, Job 10:17.

‘This appears to be a reference to Job's friends, whose words certainly were, in a sense, witnesses against Job. In view of all this, Job again renewed his appeal for God to let him die.’

Job asks why then did God bring him out of the womb? He wished he had died before any eye saw him, Job 10:18.

He wished he had never been born or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave, Job 10:19.

He asks, are not his few days almost over? And asks God to turn away from him, Psalms 39:13, so he can have a moment's joy before he goes to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and utter darkness, to the land of deepest night, of utter darkness and disorder, where even the light is like darkness, Job 10:20-22.

Mason, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Finally, he resorts to using no less than four different Hebrew words for ‘darkness,’ translated variously as ‘midnight black,’ ‘the shadow of death,’ ‘the land of murk and chaos,’ ‘where confusion reigns,’ ‘where light itself is like the dead of night,’ and so on. Job masses these words together, piling one on top of another for a cumulative effect as solemn and impressive as anything in Shakespeare.’

Job must have been glad God didn't leave him alone or let him die.

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Zophar the Naamathite replied: “Are all these words to go unanswered? Is this talker to be vindicated? Will your idle talk reduce others to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock? You say to God, ‘My beliefs are flawless, and I am pure in your sight.’ Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.” Job 11:1-6

ZOPHAR’S RESPONSE

Zophar explodes into his argument on Job, [Job 11:1](#). As Eliphaz and Bildad did, Zophar also comes forth to defend the justice of God. In a nutshell, he is saying, ‘Shame on you, Job, what talk is this?’

Zophar falls into the trap when many are challenged, and that is, instead of getting down and giving a rational, subjective answer, he attacks them; it is a sinful reaction.

He begins name-calling; he calls Job a babbler, [Job 11:2](#). Not only that, but he also mocks Job’s words, calling him a joker and empty talker and a hypocrite, [Job 11:3](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 11:3](#).

‘This is a very severe reproof, and not justified by the occasion.’

He seems to be one excited with emotion; if steam were logic, he would be an Aristotle. He laughs in Job’s face and denies that Job is seen pure in the eyes of God, [Job 11:4](#) / [Job 42:7](#).

New Layman’s Bible Commentary says the following, concerning [Job 11:4](#).

‘Job had not promulgated any new doctrine, but Zophar’s point in this seems to be that, in rejecting the theology of his friends, Job was implicitly claiming to have a superior understanding.’

He wishes God would come, [Job 11:5](#), as Job himself wants him to, but he says Job would be exposed then and his wisdom would be seen to be folly, [Job 11:6](#). He says if God were to do that, he would stop moaning because what he says is that Job is getting less than he really deserves, [Job 11:6](#). He had no proof of any sin in Job’s life but still asserted his accusations against him.

‘Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea. “If he comes along and confines you in prison and convenes a court, who can oppose him? Surely he recognises deceivers; and when he sees evil, does he not take note? But the witless can no more become wise than a wild donkey’s colt can be born human.” Job 11:7-12

Zophar now goes on to present a marvellous picture of God’s wisdom and perfection. He asks Job if he can fathom the mysteries of God. Can he probe the limits of the Almighty? [Job 11:7](#).

They are higher than the heavens above, what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below. What can you know? [Job 11:8](#). Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea, [Job 11:9](#).

He is accurate in what he says here; unfortunately, his application of what he says is based on another theological premise that is wrong, that is, if you sin, you suffer, if you don't sin, you prosper. He says Job, in comparison to God, cannot do anything or know anything because mere mortals never reach the perfect level of God, Isaiah 55:8-9.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The things Zophar said in this passage were just as applicable to himself as they were to Job, but men with a plank in their own eye love to gouge for the mote in their brother's eye. In the last analysis, God Himself finally opened his lips, as Zophar suggested in Job 11:5, flatly declaring that Zophar and Job's other friends had not spoken ‘that which was right’ about God, Job 42:7. How wrong he was!’

If God came along and arrested people and put them on trial, nobody could stop Him anyway, Job 11:10, nor could anyone argue with what is wrong and make it right, Job 11:11. God knows everything; He knows the sins they commit, he says to Job, Job 11:11.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He sees as well what is in man, as what man does; and of his actions and propensities he cannot be an indifferent spectator.’

Zophar proverbially calls Job a stupid or vain man who can no more become wise than a donkey be born human, Job 11:12. From Zophar's point of view, he says before someone like you, that is Job, will have understanding, a man will give birth to a colt, Job 11:12.

‘Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then, free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear. You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning. You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favour. But the eyes of the wicked will fail, and escape will elude them; their hope will become a dying gasp.’ Job 11:13-20

Here, he appears to be the least considerate of Job's three friends, with his insults to Job put aside. His theme is good, but the application is bad. He stresses, like the rest, that Job brings all out in the open and repents, Job 11:13-14 / Job 7:20 / Proverbs 16:1. He even gives a stirring review of what repentance involves.

1. Change of mind, set the heart right, Job 11:13 / Job 5:17-27.
2. Ask God for forgiveness, stretch out your hand towards Him, Job 11:13 / 1 Timothy 2:8.
3. And finally, reform conduct, Job 11:14 / Luke 19:8.

Morgan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If Zophar was rough of manner, his desire and hope for Job may be observed, for his description of the prosperity which will come if he but set his heart right is longer and more beautiful than that of either Eliphaz or Bildad.’

For the rest of the chapter, he predicts the great prosperity that will be Job's again if he listens to his advice, Job 11:15-19. Also by implication, he gives a warning, Job 11:20.

If you don't repent, there will be no hope, no way of escape, Job 11:20. He says Job will be destroyed because he is guilty and doesn't want to do anything about it.

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Job replied: “Doubtless you are the only people who matter, and wisdom will die with you! But I have a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Who does not know all these things?” Job 12:1-3

JOB’S RESPONSE

Job opens his speech by mocking his friend’s self-assumed wisdom, [Job 12:1-3](#). His friends have not spared the rod of their tongue on him, so why should I withhold from them? No doubt he put it this way, ‘you are the people, the know-all and wisdom is with them alone. You have spoken but said nothing new, strange, or startling.’

His friends had claimed a special understanding and knowledge of God, but failed to point out the sin that would justify his suffering. He says he is fully aware of all they have told him and what makes them so different from him.

In fact, in ridicule, he says no one knows these words of wisdom; he says their theory does not fit the facts. The irony of Job’s meeting with his three friends was that they actually didn’t know God, or else they would have been merciful to him in his dilemma.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job pointed out that much of what they had said about God was common knowledge, [Job 5:9-10](#) / [Job 8:13-19](#) / [Job 11:7-9](#).’

‘I have become a laughingstock to my friends, though I called on God and he answered—a mere laughingstock, though righteous and blameless! Those who are at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping. The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are secure—those God has in his hand.’ Job 12:4-6

Job says he’s being persecuted for something he hasn’t done, and that’s why he’s the laughing stock, the biggest joke, [Job 12:4](#). To his friends, he gives this subtle dig and begins to wrestle with everything.

How can this happen to him and be in harmony with true morality? It is alright for people to sit back and look at him and say what he has or did, but why don’t you put yourself in Job’s shoes? [Job 12:5](#).

The Wycliffe Commentary says the following.

‘In sheer exasperation, Job here bewails the situation. He knows that he is a godly man of great wisdom and understanding, but here he is treated like a criminal and a simpleton, solely upon the basis of his friends’ theory, a theory that is flatly contradicted by the fact that known robbers are prospering while he is reduced to mockery.’

Even those who are dead set against God see better days than he does, [Job 12:6](#) / [Jeremiah 12](#) / [Habakkuk 1:11-16](#). His friends laughed because they saw the supposed uselessness of his righteous living.

‘But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you, or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food? Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding? “To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his. What he tears down cannot be rebuilt; those he imprisons cannot be released. If he holds back the waters, there is drought; if he lets them loose, they devastate the land. To him belong strength and insight; both deceived and deceiver are his. He leads rulers away stripped and makes fools of judges. He takes off the shackles put on by kings and ties a loincloth around their waist. He leads priests away, stripped, and overthrows officials long established. He silences the lips of trusted advisers and takes away the discernment of elders. He pours contempt on nobles and disarms the mighty. He reveals the deep things of

darkness and brings utter darkness into the light. He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them. He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason; he makes them wander in a trackless waste. They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards.’ Job 12:7-25

Job now advises the three to just sit and be quiet because they know nothing. Job’s friends gained their knowledge of God by observing the wonders of the physical world in which they lived, [Job 12:7-8](#) / [Psalm 8](#) / [Romans 1:20](#).

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 12:9](#).

‘This is the only place in the dialogue parts of Job in which the sacred name of Jehovah is found, and Job’s very use of the word in such a context is the clearest evidence of the superior knowledge that he claims. None of his friends makes use of the name, but Job uses it here, and shows thereby his knowledge of the covenant name.’

All nature knows its wisdom, and he proves his argument, [Job 12:9-10](#). Job is saying that his friends do not have the market cornered on wisdom, [Job 11:7-12](#). Job appears to be presenting a contrast between the shallow wisdom of the aged man, [Job 12:12](#), the traditions of the day and the wisdom and supreme sovereignty of God, [Job 12:13-22](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Absolute power and wisdom are inherent in God, not acquired by pains and years as man acquires such power and wisdom as he possesses.’

Some commentators suggest that these are further sarcastic remarks he is making, [Job 5:18-26](#). They see Job as saying the world is filled with outrageous acts of intervention by God. So who knows what God is doing anyway or what He is up to. Whatever way you look at it, He demolishes the stand of his so-called counsellors.

In essence, what he says is that if you follow your theological system, then all the righteous nations ought to be blessed by God, [Job 12:23-24](#). But as he points out history, he destroys that argument, [Job 12:25](#). God’s rain falls on the field of both the righteous and wicked, [Matthew 5:45](#).

If the righteous prospered above the wicked, then one would think that judges, kings, princes, and elders would prosper more than the wicked. But even these officials are stripped and made fools by God. They grope around in the darkness, [Deuteronomy 28:28-29](#), and stagger around like drunkards, [Psalms 107:27](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Notice how many times God’s wisdom is mentioned here, along with the corollary in each instance that, counsellors and judges, [Job 12:17](#), kings, [Job 12:18](#), priests and the mighty, [Job 12:19](#), the trusty and the elders, [Job 12:20](#), the princes and the strong, [Job 12:21](#), and the chiefs of the people of the earth, [Job 12:24](#), indeed ALL of the men of the whole earth who might have been accounted wise, without exception, when their wisdom was considered along with God’s true wisdom, their true status is described here by Job as ‘stripped’, naked, deceived, deceivers, fools, helpless, having their bonds or belts loosed, overthrown, held in contempt, with their speech removed, and their understanding taken away. Such words as these should certainly have exploded the myth that old men were wise!’

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

‘My eyes have seen all this, my ears have heard and understood it. What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God. You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you! If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom. Hear now

my argument; listen to the pleas of my lips. Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf? Will you speak deceitfully for him? Will you show him partiality? Will you argue the case for God? Would it turn out well if he examined you? Could you deceive him as you might deceive a mortal? He would surely call you to account if you secretly showed partiality. Would not his splendour terrify you? Would not the dread of him fall on you? Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defences are defences of clay.' Job 13:1-12

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS RESPONSE

Job comes right out and shows his resentment toward his three friends, Job 13:1-2. He refutes what they called him and basically says, I am not stupid, you are no different than I am. I know all this, so if I lack all this wisdom or understanding, I'll take my case to a higher court, Job 13:3.

His friends had spoken falsely because they claimed to be speaking on behalf of God. Job says they are just covering things they don't understand, and as a result, they are hiding the truth. Practically, they cannot help; they are like doctors of no value, Job 13:4.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following.

'He now retorts upon his friends in terms not more deferential than their own, and calls them scrapers together, or patchers up, of falsehood, and physicians who are powerless to heal, or even to understand the case. He feels that they have failed miserably and utterly to understand him.'

He says to them, do you want to know what wisdom is, then shut up, Job 13:5 / Proverbs 17:28. Job is now in the driving seat, and he ridicules their ability to decipher the will and workings of God, Job 13:6.

As Job sees it, they have taken up Job's case for him without even an understanding of God. How would you do if the spotlight was on you, would you stand before God? he basically asks, Job 13:7.

If we take a closer look at the Old Testament, we find that the Hebrew word for 'Presence', Exodus 33:14 / Deuteronomy 4:37, and 'Person', Job 13:8, KJV, are actually plural.

If we take a closer look at the words 'Creator, Ecclesiastes 12:1; Maker, Job 35:10; and Husband, Isaiah 54:5, in the Hebrew, you will find that they are actually plural. In relation to the Trinity, we see that this refers to a multi-personal being.

He asks them if they would argue the case for God? Job 13:8.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'Does God require His actions to be defended by their untruths and servile flattery?' The friends condemned Job unjustly in order to uphold God's justice. They were special pleaders for God because they wanted to curry favour with Him.'

Would it turn out well if he examined them? Could they deceive God as they might deceive a mortal? Job 13:9. Job tells them that God would surely call them to account if they secretly showed partiality, Job 13:10.

He continues with the questions and asks, would God's splendour not terrify them? Would not the dread of God fall on them? Job 13:11. He tells them their maxims are proverbs of ashes and their defences are defences of clay, Job 13:12.

Job is basically telling them, whatever the consequences may be, he is willing to suffer, even to the point of death, and he is willing to do that, so that the situation he finds himself in will be understood.

'Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may. Why do I put myself in jeopardy and take my life in my hands? Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before him! Listen carefully to what I say; let my words

ring in your ears. Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die.’ Job 13:13-19

Job sees his situation as one of despair, and in it, he thrusts out. He tells them to shut up and let him speak, then let come to me what may, Job 13:13. He then asks why does he put himself in jeopardy and take his life in his hands? Job 13:14.

Since Job’s answer to his misery was death, then without losing anything but his life, he turned to address God with his complaints. He says though God slays him, yet he will hope in Him and he will surely defend his ways to His face, Job 13:15.

He feels if he could even bring his case before God that alone would be vindication because his view is that the ungodly wouldn’t even have the chance to stand before God, he says he can because he is a righteous man, Job 13:16 / Psalms 27:1. Job was determined to maintain his faithfulness regardless of the loss of his life.

The International Critical Commentary says the following.

‘The fact that Job can conscientiously maintain his integrity before God is his ground of hope that he will eventually enjoy salvation; the reason behind this hope lies in Job’s conviction that God knows and will publish his innocence, and that he knows that a godless man would not thus of his own accord approach God to argue for his integrity.’

No matter what he says, he will speak out to defend himself. God will ultimately vindicate him, Job 13:18. Job’s salvation was in the fact that he could state his case before God with a clear conscience. He was so passionate about taking his case directly to God that he thought he would die if he didn’t, Job 13:19.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 13:19.

‘A marvellous confession, equivalent to, if I give up my faith in Him who is my salvation, and my personal innocence, which goes hand-in-hand therewith, I shall perish. To give up my innocence is to give up Him in whom I hold my innocence, and in whom I live.’

‘Only grant me these two things, God, and then I will not hide from you: Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. Then summon me, and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply to me. How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offence and my sin. Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy? Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff? For you write down bitter things against me and make me reap the sins of my youth. You fasten my feet in shackles; you keep close watch on all my paths by putting marks on the soles of my feet. “So man wastes away like something rotten, like a garment eaten by moths.’ Job 13:20-28

Job hasn’t hesitated to address God; he’s happy to go to court with God, Job 9:34-35, if He agrees with two conditions, Job 13:20.

1. God will withdraw His hand away from him, Job 13:21, that is, take away the punishment.
2. God will not overpower him, Job 13:21, which is understandable.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

1. How can a man stand in a court of justice and plead for his life when under grievous bodily affliction? Withdraw thy hand far from me.

2. Is it to be expected that a man can be sufficiently recollected and in self-possession, to plead for his life when he is overwhelmed with the awful appearance of the judge, the splendour of the court and the various ensigns of justice? Let not thy dread make me afraid.’

If God agrees to those, God will be the prosecution and Job will defend himself, Job 13:22. As before, he pleads with God, Job 13:23, and says stop treating me as if I am your enemy, Job 13:24-25.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 13:25.

‘His confession of sin here approaches even to what the Psalmist describes as the condition of the ungodly, Psalms 1:4.’

He knows he has done nothing wrong, John 8:46, and so, so he accuses God of writing poison pen letters against him, Job 13:26. If his friends were correct, that suffering is the direct result of God’s punishment, then Job wanted to know the sin that caused him such great grief, John 8:46.

If he died, he first wanted to know the sin that caused so much suffering to come into his life. Job felt that he was in stocks, Job 13:27 / Psalms 88:8 / Psalms 142:7, guarded by God who wouldn’t release him from either his misery or life.

His life was rotting away, Job 13:28; he feels that God had brought him into the bondage of his sufferings, and thus he was as worthless as a moth-eaten garment, Job 13:28.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

‘Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble. They spring up like flowers and wither away; like fleeting shadows, they do not endure. Do you fix your eye on them? Will you bring them before you for judgment? Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! A person’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed. So look away from him and let him alone, till he has put in his time like a hired labourer. “At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old in the ground, and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep.’ Job 14:1-12

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS RESPONSE

This chapter is a repetition of what Job has said before. For a short time, he forgets about his predicament and turns to his friends, and now he is back to his predicament ‘woe is me’.

He says mortals are born of a woman, their days are few and filled with trouble, Job 14:1 / Genesis 47:9. He finds it strange that divine strictness should rest on someone as frail as he is.

Job questioned why God would be so concerned with individuals who were like a blooming flower that soon passes away, Job 14:2-3 / Acts 17:26. Existence is fleshly, and he asks, Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing?, Job 14:4.

Job might simply be identifying himself with the rest of humanity. Yet in the context of where it sits, what he really is saying is that God cannot judge someone as clean as he must be, Romans 3:23.

Further to that, he says since man’s life is only a breath, Acts 17:26, and the least God can do is look away briefly and give him a rest, Job 14:5-6. He goes on, and he pictures the futility of life. He contrasts the fate of things with the fate of people. Out of the top, the fate of things to come.

Blair, in his commentary, says the following concerning the hope of a tree, Job 14:7.

‘What Job was saying here pertains exclusively to the return of men to this present life in its present form. Job was not ignorant of the resurrection hope, but a firm believer in it.’

A tree that is cut down can come back to life, Job 14:7-9.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 14:9.

‘The word here rendered ‘scent’ means properly the odour or fragrance which anything exhales or emits, Song of Songs 2:13 / Song of Songs 7:13 / Genesis 27:27. The idea is very delicate and poetic. It is designed to denote a gentle and pleasant contact, not a rush of water, by which the tree is made to live. It inhales, so to speak, the vital influence from the water, as we are refreshed and revived by grateful odoriferous when we are ready to faint.’

Although a tree can come back to life, man is just destroyed and is buried, Job 14:10. Job says as the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, so he lies down and does not rise until ‘the heavens are no more’, Job 14:11-12. These words appear to indicate that those who rest in death will not rise out of their sleep until the heavens are no more, 2 Peter 3:10-13.

We must remember, in the Old Testament, the idea of death is vague, Job 3:12-19 / Job 10:21-22 / Job 14:20-22, and the idea of eternal life is never really taught. It was Jesus who brought life and immortality to light, 2 Timothy 1:10.

‘If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me! If someone dies, will they live again? All the days of my hard service, I will wait for my renewal to come. You will call, and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made. Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offences will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin. “But as a mountain erodes and crumbles and as a rock is moved from its place, as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil, so you destroy a person’s hope. You overpower them once for all, and they are gone; you change their countenance and send them away. If their children are honoured, they do not know it; if their offspring are brought low, they do not see it. They feel but the pain of their own bodies and mourn only for themselves.” Job 14:13-22

Here Job wishes that God would hide him until His wrath has passed by, and then he could remember him again, Job 14:13. From Job’s heart escapes the deep hope felt by all mankind if a man dies shall he live again, Job 14:14.

Moffat, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job could cope if he could hope for a life after, beyond the grave. These are the words of a man who can’t let go of his faith, even though the present dealings and sufferings with him are a complete mystery to him. And as he has done before, he sees God as watching his every move. He sees God as one who pulverises the mightiest works of nature and stalks Job. How thrilled Job would have been to hear the word of Jesus ‘I am the way, the truth and the life, John 14:6.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 14:15.

‘This is language taken from courts of justice. It refers, probably, not to a future time, but to the present. It expresses a desire to come at once to trial; to have the matter adjusted before he should leave the world. He could not bear the idea of going out of the world under the imputations which were lying on him, and he asked for an opportunity to vindicate himself before his Maker, Job 9:16.’

He is certain that God will count his steps but not keep track of His sin, Job 14:16 / Job 13:27.

Andersen, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 14:17.

‘These transgressions have been sealed up in order to hide them, and not for keeping them to be used at some time of reckoning.’

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 14:18-19.

‘Under God’s visitation the hopes of men come to nought, like undermined mountains or water-worn rocks.’

Job still feels that God's rule is arbitrary and not in line with justice, Job 14:20-22. He regards his friends as ill-advised councillors, and so he wishes to speak with God personally. It would seem that Job, on the surface, was convinced by his friends that in life the good are rewarded and the evil punished.

Therefore, his own circumstance is causing him conflict, and he turns to God with a bitter complaint. And he wants to discuss things with God because He is greater and just, and at least He will listen to what he has to say.

He wants to prove that he is innocent. In doing so, before God, he thinks God will take his life, but he will accept that. Job is saying a hypocrite would want an audience with God, but he wouldn't stand a chance.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'This is indeed a sad and mournful picture of our lives upon earth. The notion that men continue to live on in the lives of their children is contradicted by the fact that whatever happens to them is unknown to the deceased. Man's brief life is subjected to the very same erosive and destructive elements in our world that can wear down the mountains, and even wash away the stones, so 'little by little, man's hope is destroyed, drop by drop'. But it should not be overlooked that Job in this paragraph is pointing men away from the prospects as they are in this life and in the direction of the eternal things of God. The man who establishes his hope in this world only is a fool. It is a race he cannot win, a hope that he shall never realise, a trial that shall never end, and a warfare that he absolutely cannot win.'

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION

'Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: "Would a wise person answer with empty notions or fill their belly with the hot east wind? Would they argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value? But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God. Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you. "Are you the first man ever born? Were you brought forth before the hills? Do you listen in on God's council? Do you have a monopoly on wisdom? What do you know that we do not know? What insights do you have that we do not have? The grey-haired and the aged are on our side, men even older than your father. Are God's consolations not enough for you, words spoken gently to you? Why has your heart carried you away, and why do your eyes flash, so that you vent your rage against God and pour out such words from your mouth? "What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water!" Job 15:1-16

ELIPHAZ'S SECOND SPEECH

Back in chapter four, Eliphaz was kind in his first speech, but here his tone definitely changes. It appears as though he's been offended by Job's words. He more or less calls Job a bag of wind, Job 15:1-2. In other words, Job's arguments hold as much substance as the wind does. Every word which comes from Job's mouth is useless, Job 15:3.

Earlier, Eliphaz claimed to have received some revelation from God, [Job 4:12-17](#), and now he asks the question, how can we think about spiritual things when we are sitting in the presence of someone who is so irreverent to God? [Job 15:4](#).

Remember Job accused his friends of this too, [Job 13:7-12](#), and now they accuse him of the same thing, [Job 42:8](#) / [Romans 3:23](#). Earlier, Job asked for proof of his sin and now Eliphaz claims his very words are proof enough that Job has a serious sin problem, [Job 15:5-6](#), and so, they don't need any more evidence to convict Job.

Eliphaz now asks Job a series of questions. Is he the first man ever born? Was he brought forth before the hills? [Job 15:7](#). Does he listen in on God's council? Does he have a monopoly on wisdom? [Job 15:8](#).

What does he know that they do not know? What insights does he have that they do not have? [Job 15:9](#). He now appeals to the voice of experience, that is, what people in the past have learned, [Job 15:10](#), and says Job needs to learn from them. Eliphaz is convinced that Job is stubborn in his refusal to respect their advice and repent, [Job 15:11-13](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 15:13](#).

'The ideas here seem to be taken from an archer, who turns his eye and his spirit-his desire-against the object which he wishes to hit; and then lets loose his arrow that it may attain the mark.'

Once again, Eliphaz asks Job a question: What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous? [Job 15:14](#). He says if God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water! [Job 15:15-16](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 15:7-16](#).

'Eliphaz claimed that all of the aged men approved of their judgment and condemnation of Job as a gross sinner, implying that the whole population of the area concurred in their evil appraisal of the situation, and he was very probably correct in that allegation.'

'Listen to me, and I will explain to you; let me tell you what I have seen, what the wise have declared, hiding nothing received from their ancestors (to whom alone the land was given when no foreigners moved among them): All his days the wicked man suffers torment, the ruthless man through all the years stored up for him. Terrifying sounds fill his ears; when all seems well, marauders attack him. He despairs of escaping the realm of darkness; he is marked for the sword. He wanders about for food like a vulture; he knows the day of darkness is at hand. Distress and anguish fill him with terror; troubles overwhelm him, like a king poised to attack, because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty, defiantly charging against him with a thick, strong shield. "Though his face is covered with fat and his waist bulges with flesh, he will inhabit ruined towns and houses where no one lives, houses crumbling to rubble. He will no longer be rich, and his wealth will not endure, nor will his possessions spread over the land. He will not escape the darkness; a flame will wither his shoots, and the breath of God's mouth will carry him away. Let him not deceive himself by trusting what is worthless, for he will get nothing in return. Before his time, he will wither, and his branches will not flourish. He will be like a vine stripped of its unripe grapes, like an olive tree shedding its blossoms. For the company of the godless will be barren, and fire will consume the tents of those who love bribes. They conceive trouble and give birth to evil; their womb fashions deceit." [Job 15:17-35](#)

Here, Eliphaz goes into a lot of detail to describe how God portrays Himself to the wicked. Some commentators believe this is a quotation from the fathers which has been handed down through time.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'Eliphaz is now about to quote a whole collection of wise sayings from the ancients, all good enough in themselves, but sinfully misapplied to the case of Job.'

He asks Job to listen to him, and he will explain to him what he has seen, [Job 15:17](#). He wants to tell Job what the wise have declared, hiding nothing received from their ancestors to whom alone the land was given when no foreigners moved among them, [Job 15:18-19](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 15:18-19](#).

‘Eliphaz refers to a time when his ancestors had not mingled with other people, who would corrupt the purity of their wise sayings. His countrymen, the Edomites, who were descended from Abraham, would have the same pride of race as their Hebrew cousins.’

He says, all his days the wicked man suffers torment, the ruthless man through all the years stored up for him, [Job 15:20](#). Eliphaz says that although the righteous are prosperous, the marauder will steal all their goods, [Job 15:20](#). Because Job is in such great distress and anguish because of his pain and since the marauders have come upon him, [Job 15:21](#). Eliphaz is probably saying that Job is a wicked man.

Darkness and destruction will overtake them, [Job 15:22-31](#), and they will die before their time, [Job 15:32](#). Eliphaz compared Job with the wicked man whose end is before its time.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The discerning reader will not overlook Eliphaz’s strategy in this evil speech. In effect, he preached Job’s funeral, mentioning all the things he could think of that would tie his description of the wicked to what had already happened to Job. The implied prophecies were that Job would never be rich, [Job 15:20](#), that he would soon die, [Job 15:30-32](#). etc. These prophecies, of course, were never fulfilled. Note particularly [Job 15:21](#) in which Eliphaz explained that God’s judgment would fall upon the wicked in the time of his ‘prosperity’, exactly as it had happened to Job. A dozen other such brutal insinuations may be detected in this shameful tirade against Job.’

Eliphaz says the wicked will be like a vine stripped of its unripe grapes, like an olive tree shedding its blossoms, [Job 15:33](#). For the company of the godless will be barren, and fire will consume the tents of those who love bribes, [Job 15:34](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job is here classed with hypocrites, or rather, the impious of all kinds. The congregation, or adath, society, of such, shall be desolate, or a barren rock, [Job 3:7](#).’

They conceive trouble and give birth to evil, and their womb fashions deceit, [Job 15:35](#) / [James 1:15](#). It’s very true that Eliphaz spoke many truths in his speech; unfortunately, he didn’t deal with Job’s main question: why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Job replied: “I have heard many things like these; you are miserable comforters, all of you! Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing? I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief. Yet if I speak, my pain is not relieved; and if I refrain, it does not go away.’ [Job 16:1-6](#)

JOB’S RESPONSE

In the previous chapter, Eliphaz argued that Job wasn't righteous, and because he was suffering, this meant that Job must be wicked, Job 15:5-6. Job, here is going to argue that he is righteous and God can do whatever He wants. Job begins by telling his friends that he is very disappointed in them; they are miserable comforters, Job 16:1-2. He tells them, he could speak like them with their long-winded speeches and arguments, if he were in their place, but he won't and wouldn't do that, Job 16:3-4. Job says his mouth would encourage them, comfort from his lips would bring them relief, Job 16:5.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job would have acted very differently, Job 4:3-4 / Job 29, giving no mere lip-comfort.’

He says when he speaks to them, his pain is not relieved, and when he remains silent, his pain does not go away, Job 16:6. In other words, Job is telling us they simply don't understand; they simply aren't capable of empathy. Instead of bringing comfort to Job in his time of affliction, they added to Job's affliction with their harsh words.

‘Surely, God, you have worn me out; you have devastated my entire household. You have shrivelled me up—and it has become a witness; my gauntness rises up and testifies against me. God assails me and tears me in his anger and gnashes his teeth at me; my opponent fastens on me his piercing eyes. People open their mouths to jeer at me; they strike my cheek in scorn and unite together against me. God has turned me over to the ungodly and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked. All was well with me, but he shattered me; he seized me by the neck and crushed me. He has made me his target; his archers surround me. Without pity, he pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the ground. Again and again, he bursts upon me; he rushes at me like a warrior. “I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust. My face is red with weeping, dark shadows ring my eyes; yet my hands have been free of violence, and my prayer is pure.’ Job 16:7-17

Notice that Job acknowledges that it is God who has struck him down, Job 16:7-8. The problem Job has is that he feels like God is treating him like His enemy. We must note that time and time again, Job appears to be missing his relationship with God more than any other thing he has already lost.

Notice the different metaphors which Job uses to describe how he feels God is treating him.

1. A wild beast, Job 16:9.
2. An adversary, Job 16:9-10.
3. A traitor, Job 16:11.
4. A wrestler, Job 16:12.
5. An archer, Job 16:12-13.
6. A warrior, Job 16:13-14.

Also notice Job's response to the way God has treated him; he has become a mourner, Job 16:15-16, and given himself over to the mercy of God. In other words, he refused to curse God.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There are magnificent overtones of Calvary itself in this remarkable chapter. Job 16:4 reveals that Job's friends ‘did shake their heads’ at him. Job said that God had ‘delivered him to the ungodly’, Job 16:11. ‘They gaped upon me with their mouth,’ Job 16:10, ‘They gather themselves together against me’, Job 16:10. ‘They have smitten (my) cheek reproachfully’, Job 16:10, ‘And have laid my horn in the dust’, Job 16:15. Now observe that all of these things were prophesied as events connected with the crucifixion of Christ in Psalm 22. He will be forsaken by God, delivered to the ungodly, Psalm 22:1. They shake their head at him, Psalm 22:7. They gape upon him, Psalm 22:13. They place him in the dust, Psalm 22:15. The evil men surround him, Psalm 22:16.’

He knows his hands haven't committed any violent acts, Job 16:17, and he prays with a pure heart, Job 16:17. Amidst all the agony of his dilemma, Job still maintained his innocence.

‘Earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry never be laid to rest! Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend, as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man, he pleads with God as one pleads for a friend. “Only a few years will pass before I take the path of no return.’ Job 16:18-22

Job now repeats his earlier argument. He wants to address God, and he doesn’t want to die without the truth being known. If blood was spilt, vengeance was to be carried out on the person who spilt the blood, [Job 16:18](#) / [Genesis 4:10-11](#) / [Ezekiel 24:7-8](#). Job here felt he was being unjustifiably killed.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Conscious of his innocence and yet of his impending death, which seems a token that he is condemned as guilty, Job invokes the earth not to conceal his blood, but to let it cry aloud for justice. The idea that the earth would not absorb innocent blood also occurs in [Genesis 4:10](#) / [Ezekiel 24:7](#) / [Ezekiel 24:8](#).’

He appeals to the earth and the heaven to be witnesses of his innocence, [Job 16:19](#), and he is pretty confident that he does have a witness, [Job 16:20](#) / [Job 19:25-27](#).

Job knew at this point he couldn’t turn to his friends to defend him, and so, in faith, he ends by focusing on God, knowing that He would be the final judge of his righteousness, [Job 16:21-22](#) / [Job 17:1-2](#) / [1 Peter 1:10-12](#).

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION

‘My spirit is broken, my days are cut short, the grave awaits me. Surely mockers surround me; my eyes must dwell on their hostility. “Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me? You have closed their minds to understanding; therefore, you will not let them triumph. If anyone denounces their friends for reward, the eyes of their children will fail.’ Job 17:1-5

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS RESPONSE

This chapter appears to be a repeat of another of Job’s main arguments, that is, ‘I want to die’. Job felt he was at the point of death, [Job 17:1](#). The phrase ‘my spirit is broken’, [Job 17:1](#), is translated as ‘my breath is corrupt’ in the KJV, which might convey the idea of Job having bad breath. The idea seems to be that Job doesn’t feel as if he will be breathing, that is, living much longer.

His friends are no longer showing any sympathy, [Job 2:11-13](#), and so, he charges his friends with mockery, [Job 17:2](#) / [Deuteronomy 19:15-21](#). He now goes on to repeat another of his arguments, that is, he wants to speak to God, [Job 17:3](#).

He wants someone to be his guarantor, [Job 17:3](#), the Hebrew literally reads ‘strike hands with’, indicating the ancient practice of confirming an agreement. Although he is at a low point because of his suffering, he asked God to guarantee his future.

He is really concerned about his friends and believes God is somehow hiding the truth from them, [Job 17:4](#).

However, that doesn’t excuse his friends from turning against him the way they have.

And so, God won’t exalt them, and their children will reap negative benefits because of their actions, [Job 17:5](#). They used Job as a reward for their own social benefit.

‘God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit. My eyes have grown dim with grief; my whole frame is but a shadow. The upright are appalled at this; the innocent are aroused against the ungodly. Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger.’ Job 17:6-9

Here it appears that Job has lost all respect from other people; he was once honoured and respected, but he has seen his reputation plunge to the point where people spit at him, [Job 17:6](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘My afflictions and calamities have become a subject of general conversation so that my poverty and affliction are proverbial. As poor as Job, as afflicted as Job, are proverbs that have even reached our times and are still in use.’

Job cries so much and sheds so many tears that he can’t see clearly anymore, and his body has wasted away into nothing but a shadow, [Job 17:7](#) / [Job 30:30](#). His friends are appalled at his appearance; they thought this should never happen to a righteous man, [Job 17:8](#).

However, a righteous man doesn’t easily give up. If he truly has clean hands, he will increase his strength, [Job 17:9](#), and become more confident in his resolve and determination to stay true to God, which is exactly what Job is doing. Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He shall take encouragement from my case, stay himself on the Lord, and thus gain strength by every blast of adversity. This is one grand use of the book of Job. It casts much light on seemingly partial displays of Divine providence, and has ever been the great textbook of godly men in a state of persecution and affliction. This is what Job seems prophetically to declare.’

‘But come on, all of you, try again! I will not find a wise man among you. My days have passed, my plans are shattered. Yet the desires of my heart turn night into day; in the face of the darkness, light is near. If the only home I hope for is the grave, if I spread out my bed in the realm of darkness, if I say to corruption, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother’ or ‘My sister,’ where then is my hope—who can see any hope for me? Will it go down to the gates of death? Will we descend together into the dust?’ Job 17:10-16

Job here challenges his friends again by telling them that there are no wise people among them, [Job 17:10](#). He challenges them in their thinking to come up with another reason as to why he is suffering. We can almost feel the despair of Job’s words as he concludes here. All his plans are shattered, which implies he has lost all hope, [Job 17:11](#). The desires of his heart turn night into day in the face of the darkness; light is near [Job 17:11-12](#). The realm of darkness, that is, the grave, was now to be his home, [Job 17:13](#), and in death, his relatives would be the worms of decay, [Job 17:14](#).

Smick, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The counsellors had said that night would be turned to day for Job if only he would get right with God, [Job 11:17](#). In [Job 17:12-16](#), Job made a parody of their advice. It was like going to the grave with the notion that all you have to do is treat it like home, where warmth and loved ones are, and it will become so.’

He asks, ‘Who can see any hope for me?’ [Job 17:15](#), he is really asking, Is there anyone who really cares about me? Does anyone really care about what I’m going through? Does anyone really want to know the truth as to why all this is happening to him?

Job is trying everything he can possibly do to convince his friends that he was innocent. He’s hoping they see that a truly innocent man wouldn’t go to all these lengths to prove his innocence if he weren’t truly innocent, [Job 17:16](#).

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: “When will you end these speeches? Be sensible, and then we can talk. Why are we regarded as cattle and considered stupid in your sight? You who tear yourself to pieces in your anger, is the earth to be abandoned for your sake? Or must the rocks be moved from their place?” Job 18:1-4

BILDAD’S SECOND RESPONSE

This is Bildad’s second speech, and as with his first speech, he isn’t very kind towards Job. He begins by accusing Job of not listening to what they are saying, [Job 18:1-2](#) / [Job 16:3](#). He accuses him of being very close-minded and arrogant, [Job 18:2](#).

Because Job didn’t repent from his supposed sin, Bildad felt that he was the true example of an unrepentant and rebellious sinner. Bildad feels insulted by Job because Job seems to think the friends are stupid, [Job 18:3](#) / [Job 17:2](#) / [Job 17:4-5](#) / [Job 17:10](#).

Back in [Job 16:9](#), Job claimed that God was ‘tearing’ him apart, and so, Bildad says, it’s nothing to do with God, it is Job himself, who is tearing himself to pieces with his uncontrolled anger, [Job 18:4](#). Bildad felt that Job was past repentance and so, this position on the part of Job had proved his guilt.

‘The lamp of a wicked man is snuffed out; the flame of his fire stops burning. The light in his tent becomes dark; the lamp beside him goes out. The vigour of his step is weakened; his own schemes throw him down. His feet thrust him into a net; he wanders into its mesh. A trap seizes him by the heel; a snare holds him fast. A noose is hidden for him on the ground; a trap lies in his path. Terrors startle him on every side and dog his every step. Calamity is hungry for him; disaster is ready for him when he falls. It eats away parts of his skin; death’s firstborn devours his limbs. He is torn from the security of his tent and marched off to the king of terrors. Fire resides in his tent; burning sulphur is scattered over his dwelling. His roots dry up below, and his branches wither above. The memory of him perishes from the earth; he has no name in the land. He is driven from light into the realm of darkness and is banished from the world. He has no offspring or descendants among his people, no survivor where once he lived. People of the west are appalled at his fate; those of the east are seized with horror. Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man; such is the place of one who does not know God.” Job 18:5-21

Notice that Bildad refers to the wicked at the start of his text, [Job 18:5](#), and the end, [Job 18:21](#). Bildad now tells Job that the wicked always suffer, [Job 18:5-6](#).

Notice the following from these verses.

1. Job hasn’t denied that the wicked suffer, but,
2. Job does deny the wicked always suffer immediately.
3. Bildad has made no attempt to understand Job’s arguments.
4. Bildad has again presumed to speak for God.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘From the beginning of the seventh verse to the end of the thirteenth, there is an allusion to the various arts and methods practised in hunting.’

1. A number of persons extend themselves in a forest, and drive the game before them, still straitening the space from a broad base to a narrow point in form of a triangle, so that the farther they go the less room have they on the right

and left, the hunters lining each side, while the drovers with their dogs are coming up behind. ‘The steps of his strength shall be straightened,’ [Job 18:7](#).

2. Nets, gins, and pitfalls are laid or formed in different places so that many are taken before they come to the point where the two lines close. ‘He is cast into a net, he walketh upon a snare, the trap is laid for him in the way, the snare in the ground,’ [Job 18:8-10](#).

3. The howling of the dogs, with the shouts of the huntsmen, fills him with dismay and causes him to run himself beyond his strength and out of breath. ‘Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet,’ [Job 18:11](#).

4. While spent with hunger and fatigue, he is entangled in the spread nets, and the huntsman either pierces him with an arrow or spear or cuts the sinews of his legs so that he is easily captured and destroyed. ‘The robbers shall prevail against him,’ [Job 18:9](#). ‘His strength is hunger-bitten, and destruction is ready at his side,’ [Job 18:12](#). This latter verse is thus paraphrased by the Chaldee, ‘let his first-born son be famished, and affliction be prepared for his wife.’

Also, notice the references which imply that Bildad is saying Job is wicked.

1. The wicked lose their strength, [Job 18:7](#) / [Job 18:12](#) / [Job 16:8](#) / [Job 19:20](#).

2. The wicked are easily frightened, [Job 18:11](#) / [Job 15:21](#).

3. The wicked are full of bodily disease, [Job 18:13](#) / [Job 16:8](#) / [Job 17:7](#).

4. The wicked are torn from their tent, [Job 18:14](#) / [Job 2:8](#).

5. The wicked have no hope, [Job 18:15-16](#) / [Job 17:15-16](#).

6. The wicked have no family, [Job 18:19](#) / [Job 1:18-19](#).

7. People are appalled at the wicked, [Job 18:20](#) / [Job 17:6](#) / [Job 19:13-19](#).

8. The wicked do not know God, [Job 18:21](#) / [Job 16:7-16](#).

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Job replied: “How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly, you attack me. If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone. If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me. “Though I cry, ‘Violence!’ I get no response; though I call for help, there is no justice. He has blocked my way so I cannot pass; he has shrouded my paths in darkness. He has stripped me of my honour and removed the crown from my head. He tears me down on every side till I am gone; he uproots my hope like a tree. His anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies. His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and encamp around my tent.’ [Job 19:1-12](#)

JOB’S RESPONSE

It’s not surprising that we find Job telling his friends that everything they have said to him so far has been really hurtful, [Job 19:1-2](#). Job says they have tormented him, crushed him with their words, [Job 19:2](#).

They have reproached him ten times, Job 19:3 / Genesis 31:7 / Numbers 14:22, which isn't literally ten times but speaks of completeness; they have completely reproached him. They have shamelessly attacked him, Job 19:3, and have not been able to prove any of their accusations against him, Job 19:4.

Job says to them, if what they are saying is true, Job 19:5, that God is punishing him for sin, then God has wronged him, Job 19:6. However, Job doesn't believe this; he believes there is another explanation for what has happened to him.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'Job maintains, rightly, that his calamities were not due to his sins, but, wrongly, that they were the result of God's unjust action.'

He goes on once again to repeat one of his five main arguments, 'I want to talk with God.' He has no idea why he is suffering, hence, why he wants to speak to God to get some answers; he believes that God has unjustly brought punishment upon him.

Job describes how he has gone from top to bottom, that is, he has been stripped of his honour, Job 19:7-9, and everyone assumed that he had sinned. Back in Job 14:7, there was hope in that the tree was only cut down, leaving the roots to produce another tree.

But here, the tree is plucked up with its roots, Job 19:10. There was no hope of another tree. He complains that God's army had been set against him, Job 19:11-12.

'He has alienated my family from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My relatives have gone away; my closest friends have forgotten me. My guests and my female servants count me a foreigner; they look on me as on a stranger. I summon my servant, but he does not answer, though I beg him with my own mouth. My breath is offensive to my wife; I am loathsome to my own family. Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me. All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me. I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.' Job 19:13-20

Here, Job again repeats another of his five arguments, 'your friends aren't helping me'. Most commentators believe this is the saddest section in all the speeches of Job because these verses tell us in a more detailed way exactly what is happening to Job.

1. His brothers and his relatives no longer have anything to do with him, Job 19:13-14 / Job 19:17.
2. His household servants ignore him, Job 19:15-16.
3. His relationship with his wife and brothers is strained, Job 19:17.
4. Children do not like him, Job 19:18.
5. Other acquaintances have become his enemies, Job 19:19.

Notice how Job is physically deteriorating; he has become but 'skin and bones', Job 19:20. He believes his life is hanging on only by the skin of his teeth, Job 13:14. He was alone in his suffering, and that loneliness brought him great despair; no one was there for him.

'Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh? "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! "If you say, 'How we will hound him, since the root of the trouble lies in him,' you should fear the sword yourselves; for wrath will bring punishment by the sword, and then you will know that there is judgment." Job 19:21-29

It's not surprising that Job now cries out for some kind of compassion from his friends, Job 19:21. Job's hope and honour are gone, and now, he's greatly discouraged.

Why are his friends treating him this way? [Job 19:22](#). Job wishes for a record of his suffering to be written on a scroll so that future generations might have a witness of his innocence, [Job 19:23](#).

The good news is that we do; God added it to his inspired Word, the Bible, so that we can read of his innocence. Job wishes that the record have the permanence of that written in rock with the lasting nature of an iron tool, [Job 19:24](#).

Job expresses his confidence that his redeemer lives, [Job 19:25](#). The redeemer was a close relative who would claim and raise up the posterity of a deceased brother, [Exodus 6:6](#) / [Exodus 15:13](#) / [Leviticus 25:25](#).

God was Job's redeemer and Job believed he would be defended and vindicated by God. By saying God will take his stand on the earth, [Job 19:25](#), Job indicates a faith that his vindication will be while the world still stands.

In [Job 19:26](#), Job is either expressing his confidence in the afterlife, believing he will see God after his flesh is gone, or he is expressing his confidence that while still in the flesh, he shall see God, which would be equal to Job's seeing his vindication while still alive.

He knows there is some kind of benefit from seeing God; the question is, when? In his lifetime or the afterlife, [1 Corinthians 15](#). Job believes he will personally experience the joy of seeing his God, which causes him to nearly faint just thinking about such a great event, [Job 19:27](#).

His friends up to this point have become self-appointed judges, juries, and executioners. However, Job once again is concerned for their eternal welfare, [Job 19:28](#).

They must be aware that they, too, will face God in judgment, [Job 19:29](#) / [Matthew 7:1](#) / [James 3:1](#). They were due the same suffering as Job for their sinful behaviour and the words they had spoken to Job.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Whether or not Job might have understood the full implications of all the wonderful revelations God gave him in these precious verses, we cannot tell. An apostle explained that the inspired writers of the Old Testament did not always know what their holy words meant, [1 Peter 1:10-12](#), but what is truly important is that we ourselves should truly understand and appreciate them. Surely, in these few verses, we have stood within the Holy of Holies of Divine Revelation.’

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Zophar the Naamathite replied: “My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer because I am greatly disturbed. I hear a rebuke that dishonours me, and my understanding inspires me to reply. “Surely you know how it has been from of old, ever since mankind was placed on the earth, that the mirth of the wicked is brief, the joy of the godless lasts but a moment. Though the pride of the godless person reaches to the heavens and his head touches the clouds, he will perish forever, like his own dung; those who have seen him will say, ‘Where is he?’ Like a dream, he flies away, no more to be found, banished like a vision of the night. The eye that saw him will not see him again; his place will look on him no more. His children must make amends to the poor; his own hands must give back his wealth. The youthful vigour that fills his bones will lie with him in the dust. “Though evil is sweet in his mouth and he hides it under his tongue, though he cannot bear to let it go and lets it linger in his mouth, yet his food will turn sour in his stomach; it will become the venom of serpents within him. He will spit out the riches he swallowed; God will make his stomach vomit them up. He will suck the poison of serpents; the fangs of an adder will kill him. He will not enjoy the streams, the rivers flowing with honey and cream. What he toiled for, he must give back uneaten; he will not enjoy the profit from his trading. For he has oppressed the poor and left them destitute; he has seized houses he did not build. “Surely he will have no respite from his craving; he cannot save himself by his treasure. Nothing is left for him to devour; his prosperity will not endure. In the midst of his plenty, distress will overtake him; the full force of

misery will come upon him. When he has filled his belly, God will vent his burning anger against him and rain down his blows on him. Though he flees from an iron weapon, a bronze-tipped arrow pierces him. He pulls it out of his back, the gleaming point out of his liver. Terrors will come over him; total darkness lies in wait for his treasures. A fire unfanned will consume him and devour what is left in his tent. The heavens will expose his guilt; the earth will rise up against him. A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath. Such is the fate God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God." Job 20:1-29

ZOPHAR'S RESPONSE

It appears that Zophar finds that Job's words are rather insulting and degrading, [Job 20:1-3](#). It's clear that he thought that Job was still lying because Job didn't listen to the truth, well, the truth, as far as Zophar's truth is concerned. He didn't like being called an ignorant beast, [Job 12:7](#), or one who spoke with empty words, [Job 16:3](#), hence why he couldn't keep silent anymore, [Job 20:3](#).

He makes the same argument as Bildad did earlier, that is, Job needs to go back to the age-old timeless truths, [Job 20:4](#), which apparently Job has forgotten. Zophar is convinced these points are universally and unalterably true. Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'Zophar, therefore, assumes his old ground and retracts nothing of what he had said. Like many of his own complexion in the present day, he was determined to believe that his judgment was infallible and that he could not err.'

Zophar appears to be reciting to Job the wisdom of the fathers, and his presentation is divided as follows.

1. The wicked prosper only briefly, [Job 20:5-11](#).
2. God's delayed punishment is only to teach the wicked a lesson, [Job 20:12-19](#).
3. God will eventually deal justly with the wicked man, [Job 20:20-29](#).

Zophar says the triumphing of the wicked is short, [Job 20:5-11](#). He appears to think of the possibility that the wicked might do well for a short time, but God will certainly not allow him to prosper for long.

He says, while evil tastes good for a while, [Job 20:12-13](#), God will sour the sweet taste, making the consumer vomit, [Job 20:14-15](#). When they die, they take nothing with them; they partake of the delicacies of food, but it becomes as venom to their bodies, [Job 20:16](#).

Even though the wicked man has an abundance, he is always wanting more, [Job 20:17-18](#). He is never satisfied with what he has. The wealthy person may acquire a lot of wealth, but they can't enjoy it because they know that they acquired it through the hard work of the poor, or even by taking advantage of the poor, [Job 20:19](#).

However, this constant craving will create many enemies who, because he oppressed them, will come after revenge, [Job 20:20-23](#). The wicked person may oppress to the point that people take up arms against him, [Job 20:24-25](#).

Zophar more or less says that the wicked will eventually lose all they have accumulated, and because Job has lost all he has amassed, he must be wicked. God allowed Job to prosper only for a time.

The wicked person is cast into outer darkness and consumed in a fire that is not made by man, [Job 20:26](#) / [Matthew 25:41](#) / [Revelation 20:11-15](#). Earlier, Job asked for the heavens and earth to bear witness to his innocence, [Job 16:18-19](#). Here, Zophar says, they will speak, and they will probably condemn you, [Job 20:27](#).

Andersen, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 20:28](#).

'The phrase 'and his goods will flow away' is revealing, showing that Zophar focused almost entirely on the material aspect of Job's troubles, and virtually ignored the spiritual dynamic. 'He sees the carrying off of 'possessions', [Job](#)

20:28, as a judgment. The loss of fellowship with God, in this life or after it, does not strike him as a far worse fate. Yet it is precisely this loss that fills Job's mind with horror and this need that arouses his most desperate longings.' Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 20:29.

'This conclusion is similar to that which Bildad drew at the close of his speech, Job 18:21. Zophar intended, undoubtedly, that Job should apply it to himself, and that he should draw the inference that one who had been treated in this manner must be a wicked man.'

One of the saddest parts of Zophar's words is his lack of compassion for any sinner. He demonstrates no belief or hope that the wicked might turn back to God in repentance and regain His blessing. Thus, like Bildad, Zophar's merciless judgment will equally kindle the wrath of God, Job 20:29 / Job 42.

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION

'Then Job replied: "Listen carefully to my words; let this be the consolation you give me. Bear with me while I speak, and after I have spoken, mock on. "Is my complaint directed to a human being? Why should I not be impatient? Look at me and be appalled; clap your hand over your mouth. When I think about this, I am terrified; trembling seizes my body. Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? They see their children established around them, their offspring before their eyes. Their homes are safe and free from fear; the rod of God is not on them. Their bulls never fail to breed; their cows calve and do not miscarry. They send forth their children as a flock; their little ones dance about. They sing to the music of timbrel and lyre; they make merry to the sound of the pipe. They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the grave in peace. Yet they say to God, 'Leave us alone! We have no desire to know your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?' But their prosperity is not in their own hands, so I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked.'" Job 21:1-16

JOB'S RESPONSE

This is one of the shortest responses from Job, where he describes how wicked people succeed and prosper. He believes that if he can convince his friends that the wicked prosper for a long time, even up to death, then he will be able to make his point. If he can do that, then his friends would have other ideas as to why Job is suffering.

Job asks them to listen carefully to what he is about to say, Job 21:1-2. This implies that they haven't really listened to anything he has said up to this point or have not taken what he has said seriously.

He asks them to mock him, Job 21:3, only after he has said everything he is about to say. Although Job would prefer to speak to God, Job 16:20, he wants them to be quiet and give a serious reflection on his points.

As Job gets into his argument, he knows that his friends have maintained that sin produces suffering and suffering is proof of sin, Job 21:4-6. If Job can show that those who openly and blatantly sin are not punished, then their argument can't stand.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 21:6.

'Job trembles at the thought of the bold arraignment of God's government which he is about to make, or possibly at the remembrance of how unrighteous that government seems to him.'

Earlier, Zophar argued that the wicked die prematurely, [Job 20:11](#), but Job here says that the opposite is true. He says they not only live on, but they also grow in strength, [Job 21:7](#).

Earlier, Bildad argued that the wicked die without children, [Job 18:19](#), but here, Job contradicts this, demonstrating how the wicked have large and prosperous families just like anyone else, [Job 21:8](#).

Earlier, Eliphaz spoke about what happens to the house, or tent, of the wicked, saying that it is not going to stand, [Job 5:24](#). Here, Job says the direct opposite, and he demonstrates that security also belongs to the wicked, [Job 21:9](#) / [Job 12:6](#).

Notice all the positive things which happen to the wicked.

1. The wicked have prosperous flocks, [Job 21:10](#).
2. The wicked have happy, playful children, [Job 21:11-12](#).
3. The wicked have wealth, even until death, [Job 21:13](#).

Job also argues that positive things happen even though the wicked act arrogantly against God, [Job 21:14](#). If the poor pray for profit, [Job 21:15](#), and yet remain poor, then we assume that God didn't answer their prayer.

When the rich prosper but don't pray, [Job 21:16](#), then we must assume that God isn't blessing them. Notice how Job uses the word 'wicked' throughout his response, [Job 21:16-17](#) / [Job 21:7](#) / [Job 21:28](#) / [Job 21:30](#).

‘Yet how often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out? How often does calamity come upon them, the fate God allots in his anger? How often are they like straw before the wind, like chaff swept away by a gale? It is said, ‘God stores up the punishment of the wicked for their children.’ Let him repay the wicked, so that they themselves will experience it! Let their own eyes see their destruction; let them drink the cup of the wrath of the Almighty. For what do they care about the families they leave behind when their allotted months come to an end?’ [Job 21:17-21](#)

Job now asks a series of questions, designed to get his friends to come up with answers. His friends have been arguing that the wicked always suffer, but Job asks them, how often have you seen this happen? [Job 21:17-18](#). His friends have been suggesting that if the wicked person doesn't suffer for their sins, then his children will suffer, [Job 5:4](#) / [Job 20:10](#), but Job says that God would be unjust if He inflicted the children with the father's sins, [Job 21:19-20](#) / [Exodus 20:5](#) / [Jeremiah 31:29-30](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The friends may argue that retribution may, at all events, fall upon the wicked man's children. To which Job replies that the sinner ought to suffer personally. Possibly, however, we should read in the first line, ‘Let him not lay up iniquity for his children.’

Furthermore, what does a sinner care about what is to take place after he dies? [Job 21:21](#) / [2 Kings 20:18-19](#). The wicked care little for those who come after him, and so, punishment of the children of the wicked will have little consequence in reference to punishing the wicked, [Job 21:21](#).

‘Can anyone teach knowledge to God since he judges even the highest? One person dies in full vigour, completely secure and at ease, well-nourished in body, bones rich with marrow. Another dies in bitterness of soul, never having enjoyed anything good. Side by side they lie in the dust, and worms cover them both.’ [Job 21:22-26](#)

Job argues that instead of being unjust in His treatment of the wicked and their children, God knows exactly what He is doing when it comes to dealing with man, [Job 21:22-25](#). God will do what is right, [Genesis 18:25](#), and He will correctly deal with the sinner, [Ezekiel 18:20](#).

Job finishes this part of his argument by saying that no one can predict who will prosper and who will not. Death seizes both the wicked and the righteous without caring who was what, [Job 21:26](#).

‘I know full well what you are thinking, the schemes by which you would wrong me. You say, ‘Where now is the house of the great, the tents where the wicked lived?’ Have you never questioned those who travel? Have you paid no

regard to their accounts—that the wicked are spared from the day of calamity, that they are delivered from the day of wrath? Who denounces their conduct to their face? Who repays them for what they have done? They are carried to the grave, and watch is kept over their tombs. The soil in the valley is sweet to them; everyone follows after them, and a countless throng goes before them. “So how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!” Job 21:27-34

Job is a perfect example of someone who knows how to debate, that is, someone who knows other people’s arguments better than they do themselves, [Job 21:27](#). He’s listened to his friend’s arguments, [Job 18:14-18](#) / [Job 20:26-28](#), they’ve all asked, ‘where is the house of the great, the tents where the wicked lived? [Job 21:28](#). Bildad, [Job 8:22](#) / [Job 18:4](#), Eliphaz, [Job 5:24](#), and Zophar, [Job 20:26](#). They believe that the wicked suffer by losing their homes; after all, Job has lost his home, and so, by default, Job is wicked, [James 4:12](#). Job finishes his response by asking, ‘Have you never questioned those who travel? [Job 21:29](#). In other words, how much they have learned. He says, if they had asked them, they would have told them the opposite of what they believed [Job 21:30-31](#).

These travellers had seen wicked men go to the grave in peace and be buried with great ceremony, [Job 21:32-33](#). Job answered all their arguments because he had directed his answers to their conclusions, which were erroneous, [Job 21:34](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, paraphrases these verses as follows.

‘How could you say a thing like that? Ask anyone who has travelled and knows the way of the world what happens to an evil ruler. The evil flatterers that surround him would not dare accuse him of any wrongdoing, and when he dies, his body will be ceremoniously carried to a magnificent tomb, a monument will be erected, and an honour guard will stand by the grave!’

CHAPTER 22

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: “Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise person benefit him? What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were righteous? What would he gain if your ways were blameless? “Is it for your piety that he rebukes you and brings charges against you? Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless?” Job 22:1-5

ELIPHAZ’S RESPONSE

Eliphaz is so rude and arrogant towards Job here. He says that Job is so full of himself and his own great attributes that he can’t clearly see the truth. He says God has little concern for those who maintain their righteousness, [Job 22:1-4](#).

Eliphaz claims he can see in Job what Job cannot see in himself, and so, he pleads with Job to see the truth, that is, his wickedness is great, and his iniquities are without end, [Job 22:5](#). It appears that Eliphaz is going to list Job’s sins since Job himself can’t see them. In other words, Job was suffering because of his sin.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘That view expressed here by Eliphaz completely ignores God’s love of mankind, John 3:16, the passionate desire of God Himself that man should love his Creator, Mark 12:30, and the joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, Luke 15:7. It is impossible to imagine a more evil proposition than the one Eliphaz advocated here.’

‘You demanded security from your relatives for no reason; you stripped people of their clothing, leaving them naked. You gave no water to the weary, and you withheld food from the hungry, though you were a powerful man, owning land, an honoured man, living on it. And you sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless. That is why snares are all around you, why sudden peril terrifies you, why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you.’ Job 22:6-11

Here, Eliphaz accuses Job of three things.

1. Oppressing others, Job 22:6.
2. Being insensitive to the needs of others, Job 22:7.
3. Discouraging those who have come to him for help, Job 22:8-9.

As a result of these three abominable sins, sudden death surrounds Job, Job 22:10-11, and so, Eliphaz is teaching the idea of cause and effect. He does what Bildad has done, that is, to look at the effect and reason back to the cause. The problem with Eliphaz’s argument is seen in the fact that all unrighteous men perform in these areas of good works.

‘Is not God in the heights of heaven? And see how lofty are the highest stars! Yet you say, ‘What does God know? Does he judge through such darkness? Thick clouds veil him, so he does not see us as he goes about in the vaulted heavens.’ Will you keep to the old path that the wicked have trod? They were carried off before their time, their foundations washed away by a flood. They said to God, ‘Leave us alone! What can the Almighty do to us?’ Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things, so I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked. The righteous see their ruin and rejoice; the innocent mock them, saying, ‘Surely our foes are destroyed, and fire devours their wealth.’ Job 22:12-20

Eliphaz says that God’s greatness and attributes aren’t seen by the wicked, Job 22:12-14. Although God dwells in a heavenly environment, He involves Himself in the affairs of man, Job 22:15.

Job didn’t say that God is distant from the righteous; he said that God deals justly with both the righteous and wicked, Job 9:22. Eliphaz says that the wicked, like Job, are unteachable; however, the righteous are happy to be instructed by God.

The reference to the flood, Job 22:16, possibly speaks about the flood of Noah, Genesis 6:5 / Genesis 6:13 / Genesis 6:17. God brought judgment down on the wicked generation of Noah, even though they enjoyed the goodness of His creation. When the righteous see God’s assertion on the wicked, the righteous rejoice, Job 22:19-20.

‘Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way, prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you remove wickedness far from your tent and assign your nuggets to the dust, your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines, then the Almighty will be your gold, the choicest silver for you. Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God. You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfil your vows. What you decide on will be done, and light will shine on your ways. When people are brought low, and you say, ‘Lift them up!’ then he will save the downcast. He will deliver even one who is not innocent, who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.” Job 22:21-30

Notice once again that Eliphaz asks Job to repent. Although his words are wonderful, and he didn’t condemn Job in his response, they don’t apply to Job.

Eliphaz is basically accusing Job of the following.

1. Job didn’t know God, Job 22:21.
2. Job rejected God’s law, Job 22:22.
3. Job had left God, and he lived unrighteously, Job 22:23.

4. Gold was Job's treasure, Job 22:24.
5. Job loved silver, not God, Job 22:25.
6. Job didn't delight in God, Job 22:26.
7. Job's prayers were not heard, and he was not paying his vows, Job 22:27.
8. Job was in darkness, Job 22:28.
9. Job was soon to be cast down, Job 22:29.
10. Job wasn't innocent, and his dirty hands needed cleaning! Job 22:30.

With friends like these, who needs enemies!

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION

'Then Job replied: "Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say to me. Would he vigorously oppose me? No, he would not press charges against me. There the upright can establish their innocence before him, and there I would be delivered forever from my judge. "But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. "But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him; when I think of all this, I fear him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me. Yet I am not silenced by the darkness, by the thick darkness that covers my face.'" Job 23:1-17

JOB'S RESPONSE

It appears that Job didn't reply directly to Eliphaz here; he appears to reflect on his physical condition and tries to discover the meaning of his misery. Job once again wants to speak to God, Job 23:1-2, because he's become increasingly frustrated with trying to reason with his friends.

The New Century, Commentary, says the following.

'Job's friends considered his questionings regarding the government of the world, and his protestations of innocence as rebellion against God; and in these words, Job declares that he will continue to be a rebel in their eyes.'

At this point in time, he believes God would listen to him and what he has to do. He believes that God would at least pay close attention to what he has to say. Job wants to go before the judgment seat of God, Job 23:3, which is something the wicked person would never want to do, Hebrews 4:16.

He wants to present his argument to God, Job 23:4, and then silently hear God's response, Job 23:5. If he could speak to God, Job believes God would be fair with him and not overpower him, Job 23:6-7. Job's problem is that he can't find God; he's looked for Him and called for Him. He's done everything he can to find him, but he can't.

Job will go in every direction looking for God but without any success, Job 23:8-9. When people suffer in an environment where it seems that they are alone, God is working behind the scenes for their case, Romans 8:28. The good news is that Job believes he's valuable to God, and when he is tried, James 1:2-4, he will be found to be as gold, Job 23:10 / 1 Peter 1:6-9. This is because Job has faithfully walked in God's path, Job 23:12-13. Just knowing that God knows our troubles and sufferings reassures us that He is working for our case, Hebrews 11:1. Notice Job's theology which is correct, he says, God is God and He isn't going to be forced to do anything by man, Job 23:14. Job is admitting that being in the presence of such a powerful God is a little on the intimidating side, it is fearful, Job 23:15-16 / Proverbs 9:10. God didn't hide His dark mystery from Job, Job 23:17, but Job was bewildered concerning its presence in his life.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job means that his sufferings do not distress him so much as the fact that it is God who so mysteriously sends them without just cause.’

Job couldn't understand the extent of his trials and suffering that God had allowed him to go through, but he does understand that God is with him through those trials and sufferings, James 1:12.

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION

‘Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?

There are those who move boundary stones; they pasture flocks they have stolen. They drive away the orphans' donkey and take the widow's ox in pledge. They thrust the needy from the path and force all the poor of the land into hiding. Like wild donkeys in the desert, the poor go about their labour of foraging food; the wasteland provides food for their children. They gather fodder in the fields and glean in the vineyards of the wicked. Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked; they have nothing to cover themselves in the cold. They are drenched by mountain rains and hug the rocks for lack of shelter. The fatherless child is snatched from the breast; the infant of the poor is seized for a debt. Lacking clothes, they go about naked; they carry the sheaves, but still go hungry. They crush olives among the terraces; they tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst. The groans of the dying rise from the city, and the souls of the wounded cry out for help. But God charges no one with wrongdoing.’ Job 24:1-12

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS RESPONSE

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job continues to express his perplexity at the ways of Providence in the ordering of the world. The poor and the weak suffer; violence and wrong go unpunished.’

Back in Job 21, Job tried to prove that the wicked do prosper; now, he is going to speak about the other side of the same argument, that is, the suffering of the righteous.

Job hopes to prove his friends wrong in their thinking about righteousness, Job 24:1. Job says there are those who move boundary stones and they pasture flocks they have stolen, Job 24:2 / Proverbs 22:28 / Proverbs 23:10.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The law of Moses denounces curses on those who remove their neighbours’ landmarks, Deuteronomy 19:14 / Deuteronomy 27:17.’

Job says they drive away the orphans’ donkey and take the widow’s ox in pledge, Job 24:3 / Job 22:6 / 1 Samuel 12:3.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Of the orphan, who cannot protect himself, and whose only property may consist in this useful animal. Injury done to an orphan is always regarded as a crime of special magnitude, for they are unable to protect themselves, Job 22:9 / Job 22:6. The widow was dependent on her ox to till the ground, and hence, the crime of taking it away in pledge for the payment of a debt.’

They thrust the needy from the path and force all the poor of the land into hiding, Job 24:4. Like wild donkeys in the desert, the poor go about their labour of foraging food, and the wasteland provides food for their children, Job 24:5.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘They obtain subsistence for themselves and their families by plundering the caravans of the desert. The idea of Job is that they are seen by God, and yet that they are suffered to roam at large.’

They gather fodder in the fields and glean in the vineyards of the wicked, Job 24:6. Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked, and they have nothing to cover themselves in the cold, Job 24:7.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The robbers drive them away from their homes, or plunder them of their tents, and leave them to find a shelter from the storm, or at night, beneath a rock.’

They are drenched by mountain rains and hug the rocks for lack of shelter, Job 24:8. The fatherless child is snatched from the breast, and the infant of the poor is seized for a debt, Job 24:9.

The Pulpit Commentary says the following concerning.

‘Other oppressors, not of the marauding class, but dwellers in towns, Job 24:12, are so cruel that they tear the unweaned child of the debtor from the mother’s breast, as satisfaction for a debt, and carry him off into slavery. And take a pledge of the poor, literally, take in pledge that which is on the poor, in other words, their clothing. They will not lend to them on any other terms, and so force them to part with their garments and go about naked. Even Hebrew creditors seem to have done this, Exodus 22:26 / Deuteronomy 24:12 / Deuteronomy 24:13, and the Mosaic Law did not forbid the practice, but only required the creditor to let the debtor have his garment at night, that he might sleep in it, Exodus 22:27 / Deuteronomy 24:13.’

Lacking clothes, they go about naked, and they carry the sheaves, but still go hungry, Job 24:10.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job 24:10.

‘The meaning of this is that the hungry are compelled to bear the sheaf for the rich without being allowed to satisfy their hunger from it. Moses commanded that even the ox should not be muzzled that trod out the grain, Deuteronomy 25:4, but here was more aggravated cruelty than that would be, in compelling men to bear the sheaf of the harvest without allowing them even to satisfy their hunger. This is an instance of the cruelty which Job says was actually practised on the earth, and yet God did not interpose to punish it.’

They crush olives among the terraces, and they tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst, Job 24:11. Job says there are many injustices inflicted upon the righteous that God apparently does nothing to stop, Job 24:2-11.

If his friend’s arguments are correct, then that would mean that God would visibly respond to those who oppress others. In other words, God should make it known when He sits in judgment in order to hand down judgments.

However, the oppressed continue to endure many evils at the hands of wicked people. And so, with all this happening, God doesn't pay any attention, Job 24:12. The good news is that Job doesn't believe this for one moment, Job 24:2-11.

If his friends' theology is correct, then this is the only explanation for why the righteous suffer; God simply doesn't see it. Job argues that God has greater reasons for allowing the righteous to suffer, reasons not always clearly seen by men.

'There are those who rebel against the light, who do not know its ways or stay in its paths. When daylight is gone, the murderer rises up, kills the poor and needy, and in the night steals forth like a thief. The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk; he thinks, 'No eye will see me,' and he keeps his face concealed. In the dark, thieves break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, midnight is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness. "Yet they are foam on the surface of the water; their portion of the land is cursed, so that no one goes to the vineyards. As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow, so the grave snatches away those who have sinned. The womb forgets them, the worm feasts on them; the wicked are no longer remembered but are broken like a tree. They prey on the barren and childless woman, and to the widow they show no kindness.' Job 24:13-21

Job goes on to elaborate his argument by showing that the wicked aren't restrained in their evil plans. He recognises that evil exists throughout the world and he recognised there are those who oppose the light, Job 24:13 / John 3:20. Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'This whole paragraph identifies the gross wickedness of evil men as generally being perpetrated at night. This is in full harmony with the New Testament references to such sins as 'the works of darkness', Romans 13:12, 'the hidden things of darkness', 1 Corinthians 4:5, and 'the unfruitful works of darkness', Ephesians 5:11. Like certain animals of prey, such men sleep in the daytime and operate their nefarious business at night. Christians are everywhere referred to in the New Testament as the 'Children of light'.'

The wicked make their evil plans at night, Job 24:14, and believe that even God won't see what they do under the cover of darkness, Job 24:15 / Proverbs 7:8-9 / Romans 13:12-14 / Ephesians 5:8 / Ephesians 5:11 / 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5.

In the dark, thieves break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in because they want nothing to do with the light, Job 24:16. For all of them, midnight is their morning and they make friends with the terrors of darkness, Job 24:17 / John 3:19. Yet they are foam on the surface of the water and their portion of the land is cursed, so that no one goes to the vineyards, Job 24:18.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the portion of the land that is cursed.

'Their way of obtaining a livelihood is deserving of execration. The result of humble toil and honest labour may be said to be blessed, but not the property which they acquire.'

As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow, so the grave snatches away those who have sinned, Job 24:19. The womb forgets them, the worm feasts on them and the wicked are no longer remembered but are broken like a tree, Job 24:20 / Job 17:14. They prey on the barren and childless woman, and to the widow they show no kindness, Job 24:21 / 1 Samuel 1:5-8 / 1 Samuel 3:1-10.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'He shall die and be buried in the usual manner. He shall lie quietly in the grave, and there return to his native dust. He shall not be suspended on a gibbet, or torn and devoured by wild beasts, but his death and burial shall be peaceful and calm, Job 21:26 / Job 19:26. The woman who has no children to comfort or support her. He increases her calamity by acts of cruelty and oppression. To be without children, as is well known, was regarded, in the patriarchal ages, as a great calamity.'

‘But God drags away the mighty by his power; though they become established, they have no assurance of life. He may let them rest in a feeling of security, but his eyes are on their ways. For a little while, they are exalted, and then they are gone; they are brought low and gathered up like all others; they are cut off like heads of grain. “If this is not so, who can prove me false and reduce my words to nothing?” Job 24:22-25

Ultimately, God will punish the wicked; however, He may choose to delay His punishment, [Job 24:22](#). Job says that some people seem to be singled out by God, [Job 24:22](#). He prolongs the life of those individuals for a period, but eventually, they too are consumed by death, [Job 24:23-24](#).

The fact was that the wicked continue in life, they prosper and often live a good life, but their prosperity in life didn’t prove that they were righteous. Job is saying that his suffering doesn’t prove that he was unrighteous, [Job 24:25](#).

Job intends to demonstrate to his friends that he does have a balanced view concerning the wicked. He hasn’t argued that the wicked are never punished in this life; he’s only tried to point out the inconsistencies in the treatment of the wicked. He acknowledges that there are more wicked people in the world than righteous believers.

Hesser, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The big thing that Job objected to was Eliphaz’s theory that the wicked are punished at once. Job admits that if one looks at the whole picture, he will see that wickedness leads to suffering and that righteousness leads to rewards, but what puzzles Job is the exceptions, which are obviously quite numerous. Job is pointing out that in the course of things, crime brings misery to the criminal, but that God has not ordered that each crime shall bring immediate retribution.’

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: “Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven. Can his forces be numbered? On whom does his light not rise? How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot—a human being, who is only a worm!” Job 25:1-6

BILDAD’S REPLY

This is Bildad’s third and final speech, and I’m sure you’ve noted it’s only six verses long. The reason for its shortness may simply indicate that Job’s friends have given up on him, [Job 32:5](#). This brief response is the last word Job’s three friends had to say.

Bildad once again acknowledges the greatness of God, [Job 25:1-2](#) / [Hebrews 1:3](#). He says no one is in a position to oppose God, [Job 25:3](#). He speaks of the vastness of God’s angelic army, [Job 25:3](#), these are the heavenly bodies over which God has control, [Deuteronomy 4:19](#) / [Deuteronomy 17:3](#).

He speaks of the inability of man to stand before God, [Job 25:4](#). He goes on to illustrate the greatness of God while comparing God’s greatness with the worthlessness of man, [Job 25:4](#).

Bildad alternates between heavenly bodies and humanity, [Job 25:5](#). He says if the heavenly bodies are not pure, then certainly man is not either, [Job 25:5](#). I’m sure that Job wouldn’t argue with him here.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘When God viewed the Creation, He beheld everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good, [Genesis 1:31](#). This means that the stars were pure in God’s sight, thus Bildad’s word here is another example of the fact that Job’s friends had not spoken of God the things that were right, [Job 42:7](#).’

Bildad is saying that no man is just before God, and so, it’s a waste of time and sinful for Job to maintain he is righteous. Man is nothing more to God than a maggot and worm, [Job 25:6](#), which is a pathetic view of man, [Genesis 1:27](#). It’s possible that Bildad wanted Job to see just how low Job was.

Kline, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Bildad avoids Job’s challenge in the last verse of the previous chapter. Anxious, however, to say something, he repeats some of Eliphaz’s earlier remarks, [Job 4:17-21](#), and [Job 15:14-35](#). This inept repetition by Bildad indicates that Job’s philosophical friends have exhausted their resources of wisdom. Bildad’s brief and feeble effort represents their expiring breath. Zophar’s subsequent failure to speak is the silence of the vanquished.’

CHAPTER 26

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Job replied: “How you have helped the powerless! How you have saved the arm that is feeble! What advice you have offered to one without wisdom! And what great insight you have displayed! Who has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth? “The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them. The realm of the dead is naked before God; Destruction lies uncovered. He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness. The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke.’ [Job 26:1-11](#)

JOB’S RESPONSE

Job now goes ahead and rebukes his friends and tells them that they are worthless to him, [Job 26:1-2](#). He says, ‘What advice you have offered to one without wisdom, what great insight you have displayed,’ [Job 26:3](#), which is his way of mocking them. He even asks Bildad if he was inspired by his words, as Eliphaz claimed, [Job 26:4](#).

Some believed that Sheol, that is, the realm of the dead, was in the depths of the sea, [Job 26:5](#) / [Isaiah 14:9](#). Job’s point is simply this: the dead aren’t beyond the power of God; that is, no one can escape God, even in death, [Job 26:6](#). The Pulpit Commentary says the following.

‘He recognises God’s dominion as not only existing in heaven and upon earth, but under the earth as well, even over the inhabitants of Hades, spoken of here as being under the oceans.’

He argues that God’s power is undeniable and man can’t hide from Him, [Psalm 139](#). He knew the majesty and power of God, and so, what Job wanted to know was how God used His power in reference to His people.

As far as the naked human eye can see in the northern night, all we see is an empty space, Job 26:7. The earth isn't held in place by another material object, Job 26:7.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The writer seems to speak here of God stretching the vault of the northern heavens with their bright constellations above the atmosphere, and of the earth hanging unsupported, as instances of His power.’

God is able to retain the rain in the clouds without the clouds bursting from the weight, Job 26:8 / Job 38:37. He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it, Job 26:9.

He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness, Job 26:10. The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke, Job 26:11 / Job 9:6.

What Job is describing is the cosmology of his day. His description of the world and universe far exceeded that which had previously been given by any of his friends.

He's saying that God is in control of all things, though at this time in his sufferings, he was still wondering why God didn't intervene in order to bring him relief.

‘By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. By his breath, the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent. And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?’ Job 26:12-14

Job now makes the point that God does many things beyond the understanding of man, and therefore, could be doing something to Job that is beyond man's understanding, Job 1:6-12 / Job 2:1-6.

With His power, that is the Holy Spirit, Genesis 1:2, God is able to subdue the sea though it may rage and dismiss any supposed monsters of the sea, Job 26:12. ‘Rahab,’ was the dragon of chaos, Job 7:12 / Job 9:13. He can clear away storm clouds, Job 26:13 / Job 3:8, and God is incomprehensible and man can hear only a whisper from Him, Job 26:14.

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION

‘And Job continued his discourse: “As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made my life bitter, as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wicked, and my tongue will not utter lies. I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my innocence and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.’ Job 27:1-6

JOB'S FINAL WORD TO HIS FRIENDS

It's probable that Job here continued his response to Bildad by reaffirming his innocence.

Hesser, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Bildad had just finished, [Job 25](#); it was Zophar’s time to speak. Job waited a moment for him to begin, but when it became clear that all of his friends had been silenced, Job ‘took up his parable’, that is, ‘his weighty discourse’.’ He reassures his friends that he will claim his innocence until he dies. He called upon God as a witness to his innocence, [Job 27:1-2](#). Job’s friends would stop attacking him if only he would use the words, ‘I sinned, I repent’, [Job 27:3-4](#).

But that in itself would be sinful because Job knows of no sin he needs to repent of, [Job 27:5-6](#). He’s not going to give in to their demands for repentance when that repentance wouldn’t be true or genuine.

‘May my enemy be like the wicked, my adversary like the unjust! For what hope have the godless when they are cut off, when God takes away their life? Does God listen to their cry when distress comes upon them? Will they find delight in the Almighty? Will they call on God at all times? “I will teach you about the power of God; the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal. You have all seen this yourselves. Why then this meaningless talk? “Here is the fate God allots to the wicked, the heritage a ruthless man receives from the Almighty: However many his children, their fate is the sword; his offspring will never have enough to eat. The plague will bury those who survive him, and their widows will not weep for them. Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver. The house he builds is like a moth’s cocoon, like a hut made by a watchman. He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more; when he opens his eyes, all is gone. Terrors overtake him like a flood; a tempest snatches him away in the night. The east wind carries him off, and he is gone; it sweeps him out of his place. It hurls itself against him without mercy as he flees headlong from its power. It claps its hands in derision and hisses him out of his place.” [Job 27:7-23](#)

Job now appears to challenge his friends to consider something else, that is, what if he is right and they are wrong?

What position does that put them in with God? Would the hypocrite even call on God? [Job 27:7-8](#).

If he did, then the answer would be that God wouldn’t hear, [Job 27:9](#). Will they find delight in God and call on Him at all times? [Job 27:10](#). Job is going to teach them about the power of God, the ways of the Almighty he will not conceal, [Job 27:11](#). As far as Job is concerned, they are acting foolishly, [Job 27:12](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning Job’s friends.

‘The two great errors in their allegations were 1. That God punishes all wickedness in this life and does so immediately after the sins are committed, and 2. That any sufferer, from whatever disease or calamity, is suffering the just reward of his sins. Job never denied either that righteousness tends toward happiness, or that wickedness tends in the other direction.’

The wicked man will have children, but they will be killed, [Job 27:14](#), and those who associate with the wicked will die but will have no one to mourn their death, [Job 27:15](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘‘Death’ should here be rendered, ‘pestilence’, [Jeremiah 15:2](#) / [Jeremiah 18:21](#). In such a case, there would be only maimed funeral rites.’

Once dead, the possessions of the wicked will be consumed by others, [Job 27:16-17](#). The house of the wicked will be done away with like a moth’s cocoon, like a hut made by a watchman, [Job 27:18](#). The wicked will be consumed with death, [Job 27:19-21](#), and no one will deliver them, [Job 27:19-22](#).

As Job concludes this speech, he again demonstrates his balanced perspective concerning the wicked. When the wicked die, the living are happy, [Job 27:21](#). He is convinced they will suffer for their wickedness, but only on God’s timetable.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job in these verses agrees with his opponents that the prosperity of the wicked is not the dominant trend in the world, but there is no denial here that the wicked may indeed prosper for a season.’

CHAPTER 28

INTRODUCTION

‘There is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is smelted from ore. Mortals put an end to the darkness; they search out the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness. Far from human dwellings, they cut a shaft, in places untouched by human feet; far from other people, they dangle and sway.

The earth, from which food comes, is transformed below as by fire; lapis lazuli comes from its rocks, and its dust contains nuggets of gold. No bird of prey knows that hidden path, no falcon’s eye has seen it. Proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no lion prowls there. People assault the flinty rock with their hands and lay bare the roots of the mountains. They tunnel through the rock; their eyes see all its treasures. They search the sources of the rivers and bring hidden things to light.’ Job 28:1-11

INTERLUDE: WHERE WISDOM IS FOUND

Most commentators find it difficult to place this chapter in the context of the discussions. The content appears to be Job’s answer to the claim of his friends that wisdom had been granted to them because of their assessment of Job’s predicament.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The design is to show that we must acquiesce in the inscrutable dispensations of Divine Providence, without being able fully to understand them. The chapter also teaches that wisdom is completely beyond the reach of men unless the quest for it is carried on in the setting of the fear of the Lord.’

All commentators agree that this chapter answers the following questions: ‘Where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? The chapter begins by telling us how there are all sorts of secret things which are hidden, like precious metals, gold, and iron, [Job 28:1-2](#).

People go into the darkness of mines in order to extract ore for refinement in order to acquire gold and silver, [Job 28:3](#). They dig deep shafts, and with hanging ropes, go into the darkness of their shafts in search of the riches of the earth, [Job 28:4](#).

We can walk on top of it and don’t know it is there, [Job 28:5-6](#). Not even the birds, beasts or lions have any knowledge of what lies beneath them, [Job 28:7-8](#). This is a buried treasure.

People are also able to conquer great mountains and cut out conduits for water, [Job 28:9](#). The point is that the more we seek treasure, the less time we focus on God. In all their efforts to succeed in the material world, they won’t find wisdom, [Job 28:10-11](#). Wisdom is in reference to recognising God and His will.

Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The caverns of the earth may be discovered, but not the counsels of heaven.’

‘But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? No mortal comprehends its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. The deep says, “It is not in me”; the sea says, “It is not with me.” It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed out in silver. It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or lapis lazuli. Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold. Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies. The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it; it cannot be bought with pure gold. Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? It is

hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds in the sky. Destruction and Death say, “Only a rumour of it has reached our ears.” God understands the way to it, and he alone knows where it dwells, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. And he said to the human race, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.” Job 28:12-28

Where can wisdom be found? Job 28:12. Wisdom from God isn’t found in the material world. It’s a certainty it will not be found with man, Job 28:13; the deep doesn’t have it or the sea, Job 28:14. It’s not going to be purchased with man’s great possessions, such as gold and jewels, Job 28:15. We can’t buy wisdom with precious stones, Job 28:16-19.

The writer asks where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? Job 28:20. He says it is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds in the sky, Job 28:21.

Poole, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Man doth not see this wisdom but only so far as God is pleased to reveal it to him, and therefore he cannot declare it to others; man did not prepare, nor order, nor contrive it, and therefore no wonder if he cannot search it out.’

Even death, with its large company, that is, destruction, doesn’t know of wisdom, Job 28:22. God knows exactly where wisdom can be found, Job 28:23-27. If man can begin to fear God and depart from evil, then he can stake a claim to having some understanding, Job 28:28 / Proverbs 1:7.

Since God is the source of true wisdom, man can’t find it without first finding God, Ecclesiastes 12:13 / James 1:5 / James 3:17. Job believes sin is wrong and is a foolish act of rebellion against an all-powerful God, Job 28:28. Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning what God said to the human race.

‘This probably refers to the revelation of his will, which God gave to Adam after his fall. He had before sought for wisdom in a forbidden way. When he and Eve saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, they took and did eat, Genesis 3:6. Thus, they lost all the wisdom that they had by not setting the fear of the Lord before their eyes, and became foolish, wicked, and miserable. Hear, then, what God prescribes as a proper remedy for this dire disease: The fear of the Lord, that is, wisdom, it is thy only wisdom now to set God always before thy eyes, that thou mayest not again transgress.’

CHAPTER 29

INTRODUCTION

It may be useful to give a basic outline of the next three chapters, which are a part of Job’s final discourse.

Job’s former condition, Job 29
 Job’s present condition, Job 30
 Job’s final claim to innocence, Job 31

JOB’S FINAL DEFENCE

‘Job continued his discourse: “How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone on my head and by his light I walked through darkness! Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God’s intimate friendship blessed my house, when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me, when my path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil. “When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square, the young men saw me and stepped aside, and the old men rose to their feet; the chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands; the voices of the nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them. The one who was dying blessed me; I made the widow’s heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth. “I thought, ‘I will die in my own house, my days as numerous as the grains of sand. My roots will reach to the water, and the dew will lie all night on my branches. My glory will not fade; the bow will be ever new in my hand.’” Job 29:1-20

In this chapter, Job reflects on the days of his life and thinks about his family and possessions. He begins by speaking about the good old days when his relationship with God was strong and secure.

He says he enjoyed God’s protection, [Job 29:1-2](#), God’s guidance, [Job 29:3](#) / [Job 18:6](#), God’s friendship, [Job 29:4](#), and God’s blessings, [Job 29:5-6](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:24](#).

What happened? Why did he suddenly lose that relationship with his God? [Matthew 18:12](#) / [Matthew 25:30](#) / [Jude 13](#). Perhaps, when God finally does speak to him, he responds the way he does because he has finally re-established contact with God. Job also speaks about his position in the community, where he enjoyed an influential position as a judge, [Job 29:7](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job went with other elders to administer justice at the city gate. Observe that Job did not live in the city; his usual abode was in his camp. But he was influential in the city, just as a great Arab prince is sometimes in our own times.’

He enjoyed the respect he received from everyone, [Job 29:8](#). Job discusses the basis for this treatment, that is, he was a kind and considerate man, hence why people treated him with the utmost respect and honour, [Job 29:9-10](#).

His conduct was admirable because people liked what they saw in him and heard from him, [Job 29:11](#). He cared for the poor, [Job 29:12](#) / [Proverbs 21:13](#) / [Proverbs 24:11-12](#), and the disadvantaged, [Job 29:13](#) / [Isaiah 1:17](#).

He was righteous in conduct, [Job 29:14](#), he went out of his way to help the handicapped, [Job 29:15](#), he was a father to the needy and he took up the case of the stranger, [Job 29:16](#), and he would risk personal injury to fight the wicked, [Job 29:17](#).

All of which was probably a response to Eliphaz’s accusation back in [Job 22:5-11](#). Because of the life he led, Job felt confident and secure, and he knew he was being the kind of man God wanted him to be, [Job 29:18-20](#) / [Psalm 1:3](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning the morning dew, [Job 29:19](#).

‘The dew was an emblem of prosperity in a land where rain was infrequent, [Proverbs 19:12](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:2](#).’

We must note he isn’t being arrogant here; he simply understands that God deals favourably with those who honour Him. It brings no pleasure to God to see His children suffering.

‘People listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel. After I had spoken, they spoke no more; my words fell gently on their ears. They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain. When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them. I chose the way for them and sat as their chief; I dwelt as a king among his troops; I was like one who comforts mourners.’ Job 29:21-25

These last verses summarise the discussion, reiterating why Job had his well-deserved respect. He was the kind of man whom people greatly respected what he had to say, [Job 29:21-23](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:2](#), and they believed what he said, [Job 29:24](#).

They accepted him as a leader and followed his lead, [Job 29:25](#). Despite feeling disgraced because all these things had been taken away from him, he maintained his trust in God.

CHAPTER 30

INTRODUCTION

‘But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs. Of what use was the strength of their hands to me since their vigour had gone from them? Haggard from want and hunger, they roamed the parched land in desolate wastelands at night. In the brush, they gathered salt herbs, and their food was the root of the broom bush. They were banished from human society, shouted at as if they were thieves. They were forced to live in the dry stream beds, among the rocks and in holes in the ground. They brayed among the bushes and huddled in the undergrowth. A base and nameless brood, they were driven out of the land. “And now those young men mock me in song; I have become a byword among them. They detest me and keep their distance; they do not hesitate to spit in my face. Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me, they throw off restraint in my presence. On my right, the tribe attacks; they lay snares for my feet, they build their siege ramps against me. They break up my road; they succeed in destroying me. ‘No one can help him,’ they say. They advance as through a gaping breach; amid the ruins, they come rolling in. Terrors overwhelm me; my dignity is driven away as by the wind, my safety vanishes like a cloud.’ [Job 30:1-15](#)

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS FINAL DEFENCE

In the previous chapter, Job spoke about what God gave him, and in this chapter, he speaks about what God took away from him. Notice he begins by using the words, ‘but now’, [Job 30:1](#).

He uses these words to contrast the way things used to be. Those who were disadvantaged were the ones who greatly benefited from Job’s charity work, but now they are the very people who mock and taunt him, [Job 30:1](#). He once held a position that was envied by all, but now he was in a situation that was despised by all.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 30:1](#).

‘To have associated with my dogs in guarding my flock. That is, they were held in less esteem than his dogs. This was the lowest conceivable point of debasement. The Orientals had no language that would express greater contempt of anyone than to call him a dog, [Deuteronomy 23:18](#) / [1 Samuel 17:43](#) / [1 Samuel 24:14](#) / [2 Samuel 3:8](#) / [2 Samuel 9:8](#) / [2 Samuel 16:9](#) / [2 Kings 8:13](#) / [Isaiah 66:3](#).’

Job asks what use was the strength of their hands to me since their vigour had gone from them? [Job 30:2](#).

Watson, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 20:2-9](#).

‘These people were gaunt with hunger and vice, herded in the wilderness where alone they were allowed to exist, eating salt-wort and broom-roots for food. The appearance of one of them prompted cries of ‘thieves and robbers’. They lived in caves, and among the rocks, like wild asses, they brayed in the scrub and gathered among the nettles. Base men, children of fools, having dishonoured humanity, had been whipped out of the land. Even these abhorred Job, mocking him in song and byword, even spitting in his face.’

Job says he is a byword, [Job 30:9](#), and those he once helped are now spitting in his face, [Job 30:10](#). It’s possible he’s exaggerating with his words, but he clearly tells us why they are now treating him the way they are.

He says that ‘God has unstrung his bow’, etc, [Job 30:11](#), which probably refers to how he felt God had punished him. The disadvantaged would feel they need to treat Job in this manner.

He says that ‘God has unstrung his bow’, etc, [Job 30:11-15](#), which probably refers to how he felt God had punished him. The disadvantaged would feel they need to treat Job in this manner because he has been rejected by God, [Job 19:11-15](#), because he has been rejected by God, [Job 19:19-22](#).

‘And now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones; my gnawing pains never rest. In his great power, God becomes like clothing to me; he binds me like the neck of my garment. He throws me into the mud, and I am reduced to dust and ashes. “I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me. You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand, you attack me. You snatch me up and drive me before the wind; you toss me about in the storm. I know you will bring me down to death, to the place appointed for all the living. “Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man when he cries for help in his distress. Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness. The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me. I go about blackened, but not by the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. I have become a brother of jackals, a companion of owls. My skin grows black and peels; my body burns with fever. My lyre is tuned to mourning, and my pipe to the sound of wailing.’ [Job 30:16-31](#)

As far as Job is concerned, his physical condition is enough evidence that God has rejected him, [Job 30:16](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning his bones, [Job 30:17](#).

‘The bones are often represented in the Scriptures as the seat of acute pain, [Psalms 6:2](#) / [Psalms 22:14](#) / [Psalms 31:10](#) / [Psalms 38:3](#) / [Psalms 42:10](#) / [Proverbs 14:30](#) / [Job 20:11](#). The meaning here is that he had had shooting or piercing pains in the night, which disturbed and prevented his rest. It is mentioned as a special aggravation of his sufferings that they were ‘in the night’, a time when we expect repose.’

Physically, he’s in a lot of pain, but he’s also in a lot of pain emotionally. [Job 30:18-19](#). He cries out to God for help but receives nothing but silence, [Job 30:20](#), and he claims that God has been cruel, [Job 30:21-24](#). He’s basically asking God, Why is He treating him this way? What is the reason for it?

Job is again reminded of the treatment he has received from his fellow men. He has wept for others when he saw them suffering, [Job 30:25](#), but now, who weeps for him? When he expected men to do good towards him, he ended up waiting in vain, for the good never came, [Job 30:26](#). This is a picture of how Job is feeling.

Job mentions that his skin grows black, [Job 30:28](#), which is probably a reference to black leprosy, [Job 17:7](#). He says he stands up in the assembly and cries for help, [Job 30:28](#), and he says he has become a brother of jackals, a companion of owls, [Job 30:29](#) / [Isaiah 13:21](#) / [Isaiah 13:22](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘By my mournful and continual cry, I resemble the jackals or hyenas. To the daughters of howling, generally understood to be the ostrich, for both the jackal and the female ostrich are remarkable for their mournful cry, and their attachment to desolate places.’

The lyre was used to make cheerful sounds, but now it plays notes of lament, [Job 30:31](#) / [Isaiah 5:12](#); likewise, the pipe, [Job 30:31](#) / [Isaiah 5:12](#).

CHAPTER 31

INTRODUCTION

‘I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman. For what is our lot from God above, our heritage from the Almighty on high? Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong? Does he not see my ways and count my every step? “If I have walked with falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit—let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless—if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled, then may others eat what I have sown, and may my crops be uprooted. “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbour’s door, then may my wife grind another man’s grain, and may other men sleep with her. For that would have been wicked, a sin to be judged. It is a fire that burns to Destruction; it would have uprooted my harvest. “If I have denied justice to any of my servants, whether male or female, when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account? Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers? “If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary, if I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless—but from my youth I reared them as a father would, and from my birth I guided the widow—if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or the needy without garments, and their hearts did not bless me for warming them with the fleece from my sheep, if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, knowing that I had influence in court, then let my arm fall from the shoulder, let it be broken off at the joint. For I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendour I could not do such things.’ Job 31:1-23

JOB CONTINUES WITH HIS FINAL DEFENCE

In this chapter, we get a little glimpse of what Job believed concerning what a person does and doesn’t do. He is well aware that it’s wrong to violate laws, but he’s also aware that the failure to do good, when anyone has an opportunity to do so, is also sin, [Galatians 6:10](#) / [James 4:17](#).

As we go through this chapter, take note of the way Job uses the words ‘if’ and ‘then’. In the days of Job, someone could disown a crime by calling down a curse on themselves if they were guilty, hence why Job says, If I have done this, then may I be punished for it, [2 Samuel 3:35](#).

He begins by acknowledging he has made a covenant with his eyes [Job 31:1](#), and carefully watched his own steps, [Job 31:2-3](#), he is also fully aware that God has watched his steps too, [Job 31:4](#) / [Matthew 5:28-32](#) / [2 Peter 2:14](#).

If he has sinned, [Job 31:5](#), then he asked what blessing should he expect from God because of his sin, [Job 31:6](#). He is determined not to sin in business, [Job 31:6](#); he is determined not to sin in immorality, [Job 31:7](#), and he is also determined not to sin with people, [Job 31:8-9](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job’s saying, ‘Let me sow and let another eat,’ is only one of a whole avalanche of curses given in [Deuteronomy 28](#). This particular one is [Deuteronomy 28:30](#).’

If he was found guilty, then he was willing to give up everything, [Job 31:7-9](#), including his wife, [Job 31:10](#). She could be given to another husband to grind his grain, [Job 31:10](#) / [Ruth 1:17](#).

The Anchor Bible says the following.

‘Here the imprecatory sanction is specified, the accused adulterer asking to be repaid in kind, if it’s true, [Ruth 1:17](#).

To have one’s betrothed ravished by another man is one of the most repugnant of curses, [Deuteronomy 28:3-68](#).’

Adultery was considered by Job to be a heinous crime against another person, [Job 31:10](#), and so, this was punishable by severe judgment, [Job 31:11-12](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:30-68](#) / [Proverbs 6:24-35](#).

His mind is set on remaining pure in different areas of his life; he is determined not to sin and maintains he has been living in integrity. He is determined not to mistreat slaves, [Job 31:13-15](#) / [Ephesians 6:9](#), and he is determined not to mistreat the poor and the oppressed, [Job 31:16-22](#) / [James 1:27](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job is so conscious of his own innocence, that he is willing it should be put to the utmost proof and if found guilty, that he may be exposed to the most distressing and humiliating punishment, even to that of being deprived of his goods, bereaved of his children, his wife made a slave, and subjected to all indignities in that state.’

Job was well aware that God was a God of love and mercy, but he was also well aware that God was a God of just judgment, [Job 31:23](#) / [2 Corinthians 5:10](#).

‘If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, ‘You are my security,’ if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendour, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.’ [Job 31:24-28](#)

Job is also determined not to sin in idolatry, [Job 31:24](#); he is determined not to sin with money, [Job 31:24-25](#), that is, using money as a god. If he had made gold his god, then he would have abused the rights of others in order to acquire it. Job’s wealth didn’t come to him because he was submissive to some idol god, for it wasn’t wealth that was the goal of his life, [Jeremiah 44:17-19](#) / [Ezekiel 8:16](#).

He is also determined not to sin in worship, [Job 31:26-27](#) / [1 Kings 19:18](#) / [Hosea 13:2](#), and he denied that he worshipped the sun or moon, [2 Kings 21:3-5](#) / [Jeremiah 44:17](#) / [Ezekiel 8:16](#). In other words, he wasn’t an idolater. If he had worshipped other gods, then he would have denied the one true and living God, [Job 31:28](#).

‘If I have rejoiced at my enemy’s misfortune or gloated over the trouble that came to him—I have not allowed my mouth to sin by invoking a curse against their life—if those of my household have never said, ‘Who has not been filled with Job’s meat?’—but no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveller—if I have concealed my sin as people do, by hiding my guilt in my heart because I so feared the crowd and so dreaded the contempt of the clans that I kept silent and would not go outside. ‘(Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defence—let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing. Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown. I would give him an account of my every step; I would present it to him as to a ruler.)—“If my land cries out against me and all its furrows are wet with tears, if I have devoured its yield without payment or broken the spirit of its tenants, then let briers come up instead of wheat and stinkweed instead of barley.” The words of Job are ended.’ [Job 31:29-40](#)

Job is also determined not to sin with enemies and strangers, [Job 31:29](#) / [Ezekiel 33:11](#) / [Matthew 5:44](#) / [Romans 12:19-21](#). He didn’t curse his enemies by calling evil to come on them, [Job 31:30](#) / [Numbers 22:5-6](#) / [Proverbs 24:17-18](#) / [Proverbs 25:21-22](#).

Everyone in Job’s house had more than enough food to eat, [Job 31:31](#); no one went hungry, and there was no one who travelled who had to stay in the street, for Job was hospitable to everyone, [Job 31:22](#) / [Romans 12:13](#).

Job is also determined not to sin by committing hypocrisy, [Job 31:33-34](#). He cried out for people to listen as to why he is innocent, but no one would hear, [Job 31:35](#).

God was silent, and his friends accused him, [Job 31:35](#). If his behaviour was written down, [Job 31:35](#), he knew he would be found to be innocent, [Job 31:36](#), and he could approach God with the confidence of a ruler, [Job 31:37](#).

Job is also determined not to mistreat the land, [Job 31:38](#). He calls on the owners of the land to be a witness to him. If he had taken their produce without paying for it, [Job 31:39](#), then he assumed responsibility for his actions.

If he had, then he asked that wild weeds take over his land and consume his crops, [Job 31:40](#). The chapter ends by telling us that Job has now finished his arguments both to his friends and to God, [Job 31:40](#).

CHAPTER 32

INTRODUCTION

‘So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. But Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him. Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.’ Job 32:1-5

ELIHU INTERRUPTS JOB

Many commentators suggest that [Job 32:1-37:24](#) was written by someone else and that someone else is probably Elihu because he hasn’t said a word up until now.

This possibly suggests that he wasn’t originally a part of the group of friends that initially came to Job. Elihu was apparently present during the other speeches, although we weren’t told he was there.

The reason the three men stopped speaking is because they were unsuccessful in moving Job from this position, that is, Job was righteous in his own eyes, [Job 32:1](#).

The fourth friend of Job, Elihu, is now introduced, [Job 32:2](#). Elihu whose name means, ‘He is my God,’ was a relative to Job, [Job 1:1](#). Elihu is given a genealogy, he is a Buzite, [Job 32:2](#), which is thought by some commentators to be from Syria or perhaps Arabia, [Genesis 22:21](#) / [Jeremiah 25:23](#).

Ash, in his commentary, says the following concerning the footnote.

‘This is all the more so if the Buz here is the descendant of Abraham’s brother named in [Genesis 22:21](#).’ If this is indeed the case, then Elihu comes from a very godly pedigree reaching all the way back to the father of the Jewish nation.’

Notice the contrast between Elihu and the three men. The three men recommended that Job repent of the sin he committed before his situation, but Elihu recommends that Job repent of pride and praise the work of God and have respect for Him, [Job 32:1](#). The three claimed he suffered because he had sinned, but Elihu gets to the heart of the matter when he states he is sinning because of his suffering.

By justifying himself before God, [Job 32:2](#), Elihu saw that Job was making God the wrongdoer. As far as Elihu is concerned, either God is justified in punishing Job for wrongdoing, or God is unjustified in punishing Job and is, therefore, less than God.

He obviously doesn’t agree with his second thought, and so, he must somehow find fault with Job. Elihu points out to Job that he never once gave God the credit.

Notice we are told that he was angry four times, once with Job, [Job 32:2](#), and three times with his friends, [Job 32:3](#). The reason he was angry with Job was because he justified himself before God, [Job 32:2](#), and the reason he was angry with his friends was because they had no answer to Job’s arguments but condemned him anyway, [Job 32:3](#). It’s interesting to note that Elihu did see that the friends were unjust in their treatment of Job. If they had found fault with Job, then they would have had a basis on which to judge.

But they were completely incapable of responding to Job’s arguments, and so, since they had no response to Job’s arguments, they should have kept silent and not issued a condemnation of Job, [Job 32:3](#).

It appears that Elihu has the task of showing Job why he’s worthy to be condemned, while at the same time showing the three friends where they went wrong in their thinking.

Elihu respected the traditions of the time and had kept silent, probably because he was the youngest, Job 32:4 / 1 Timothy 4:12. Yet, in his silence, his anger and frustration were building, Job 32:5.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘How young he was, or how old they were, we cannot tell; but there was no doubt a great disparity in their ages.’

Now that the friends and apparently Job have ceased their debate, Elihu takes advantage of the opportunity to voice his arguments.

ELIHU’S SPEECH

‘So Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite, said: “I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, ‘Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.’ But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right. “Therefore, I say: Listen to me; I, too, will tell you what I know. I waited while you spoke, I listened to your reasoning; while you were searching for words, I gave you my full attention. But not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments. Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom; let God, not a man, refute him.’ But Job has not marshalled his words against me, and I will not answer him with your arguments.’ Job 32:6-14

From Job 32:6-33:33, we read Elihu’s first speech. He feels compelled to list his qualifications, which gives him a reason to speak. His introduction is quite lengthy, with Elihu not getting to his main argument until Job 33:8.

He doesn’t want his friends to think his silence was because he didn’t have anything to say; he was silent out of respect. Elihu points out that age doesn’t automatically mean wisdom, and so, Job 32:6-9, they should listen to the voice of youth, Job 32:10 / 1 Timothy 4:12.

He hadn’t spoken because of his youth, but then reasoned that since God gives wisdom, Job 32:10, he has the right to speak because God had given him special understanding.

Elihu repeats what he stated earlier and goes on to expose the thinking of the friends, and the reason for their silence, Job 32:11-12. They seemed to think it best or wise at this point to just be quiet and let God’s full wrath be poured out on Job, Job 32:13.

Elihu claims he won’t follow the same line of reasoning the friends used, and he won’t use the same foolish arguments, Job 32:14. The irony is that Elihu then proceeded to use those same arguments.

‘They are dismayed and have no more to say; words have failed them. Must I wait, now that they are silent, now that they stand there with no reply? I, too, will have my say; I, too, will tell what I know. For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me; inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst. I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. I will show no partiality, nor will I flatter anyone; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away.’ Job 32:15-22

Elihu now specifically addresses Job, but is speaking about the three friends. He notices that they have had nothing to say, Job 32:15-17, but he, on the other hand, has a wealth of wisdom to share with Job, Job 32:18.

This would give Job some hope in that he is finally going to hear someone who has something to say in response to his arguments. There was originally Job, the three friends and God; now Elihu comes into the discussions as a self-appointed arbitrator.

Elihu says he is full of words and the spirit within him compels him, and inside he is like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst, Job 32:18-19. He says he must speak and find relief; he must open his lips and reply, Job 32:20. He says he will show no partiality nor will he flatter anyone, for if he were skilled in flattery, his Maker would soon take him away, Job 32:21-22.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In this, Elihu reveals that his theological position on sin and suffering is exactly that of the three friends who have been silenced. He believes that if he should sin in flattering people, God would immediately, in this present life, punish him by taking him away from the earth. This is exactly the same error that caused Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar to brand Job as a gross sinner.’

CHAPTER 33

INTRODUCTION

‘But now, Job, listen to my words; pay attention to everything I say. I am about to open my mouth; my words are on the tip of my tongue. My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know. The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Answer me then if you can; stand up and argue your case before me. I am the same as you in God’s sight; I, too, am a piece of clay. No fear of me should alarm you, nor should my hand be heavy on you.’ Job 33:1-7

ELIHU CONTINUES WITH HIS SPEECH

Elihu begins by speaking kind words; this was something Job’s other three friends gave up a while ago. He points at truths, one of which is that none of the others has been given a chance to speak.

He singles out Job and tells him to open his ears, [Job 33:1](#), for what he says is honesty, [Job 33:2-3](#). He says the Spirit of God has made him, and the breath of the Almighty gives him life, [Job 33:4](#).

He wants Job to answer things so that he can be cleared of his charges, [Job 33:5](#). Elihu says that he and Job are both human, [Job 33:6](#), he says they both know Job’s past and now his arguments and he has been patient, he has sat and listened and will answer Job’s questions, [Job 33:7](#).

He first enters and establishes the areas on which he and Job agree the most, then after these points, he moves on to points of difference but even then he doesn’t want Job to feel pressurised to agree with anything he says, [Job 33:7](#).

‘But you have said in my hearing—I heard the very words—‘I am pure, I have done no wrong; I am clean and free from sin. Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy. He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths.’ “But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than any mortal. Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one’s words? For God does speak—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword. “Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones, so that their body finds food repulsive and their soul loathes the choicest meal. Their flesh wastes away to nothing, and their bones, once hidden, now stick out. They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death.’ Job 33:8-22

Elihu claims he has listened carefully to Job’s arguments [Job 33:8](#), and goes on to give a summary of them.

The WVBS outlines it as follows.

1. Job has said that he is pure and without transgression, Job 33:9 / Job 7:21 / Job 10:7 / Job 10:14 / Job 13:18 / Job 16:17.

Elihu has missed Job's point. Job has admitted transgression. What he has not admitted is committing any sin worthy of the treatment he has received.

2. Job has claimed that God has, for some unjust reason, chosen to treat him as an enemy, Job 33:10 / Job 13:24 / Job 16:9 / Job 19:11.

Elihu again has missed Job's point. Job has never accused God of injustice or malice. Job has merely pointed out that if God is punishing him for sin or the reasons the friends stated, then God is unjust. Job had lived many years as a righteous man.

We were told in Job 1:1 / Job 1:8 / Job 2:3 that he was a righteous man. Thus, Job does not know of anything he has suddenly done to merit this treatment. This is why he would argue that God is unjust if He is doing it because of sin in Job.

3. Job has claimed that God is treating him like a criminal, Job 33:11 / Job 13:27.

While it is true Job feels God is punishing him, he does not claim God is unjust for so doing. Job is merely wanting to know the reasons for being treated this way.

4. Job has claimed that God is giving him special attention, Job 33:12 / Job 14:16 / Job 24:23 / Job 28:24 / Job 31:4. Certainly, Job has maintained this point throughout his speeches. With Job, however, he is merely wondering why God deems him worthy of this negative attention when Job has enjoyed God's positive attention for so long.'

One point in which Elihu lets himself down here with his argument is his declaration that he was free from sin, Romans 3:23. He says Job's argument that God is hounding him is wrong. God doesn't have to give an account to humanity.

Job often questioned why God didn't respond to him when he called, but Elihu says that God has answered Job twice. He says that Job hasn't been able to see God's answer. He says that God told Job to repent of his sins, and if he doesn't, God will continue to punish him.

He asks Job why he complains to God that God responds to no one's words, Job 33:13, and says that God speaks in different ways and mentions dreams and visions, Job 33:14-18, which were used as an aid for God to let people know His wishes, Hebrews 1:1-3.

God also speaks through chastisement, Job 33:19-22 / Hebrews 12:7-13. Elihu is saying God isn't remote or different, and the ones who listen will be restored to health and fellowship.

'Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright, and he is gracious to that person and says to God, 'Spare them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for them—let their flesh be renewed like a child's; let them be restored as in the days of their youth'—then that person can pray to God and find favour with him, they will see God's face and shout for joy; he will restore them to full well-being. And they will go to others and say, 'I have sinned, I have perverted what is right, but I did not get what I deserved. God has delivered me from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light of life.' "God does all these things to a person—twice, even three times—to turn them back from the pit, that the light of life may shine on them. "Pay attention, Job, and listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. If you have anything to say, answer me; speak up, for I want to vindicate you. But if not, then listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom." Job 33:23-33

God also speaks through those who interpret the will of God for man, that is, angels, Job 33:23. It's the natural response of anyone who has been restored to health to be thankful, acknowledge God and praise Him for deliverance, Job 33:24-28 / 2 Peter 3:9.

Pain itself is not guaranteed to bring blessings; endurance is the key. Suffering not only strengthens but it can also teaches. Especially suffering and despair, which can so easily come before, Philippians 4:11.

People only need to say the words, ‘I have sinned’, [Job 33:27](#), and God will redeem him, [Job 33:28](#), which is exactly what Job’s three friends wanted Job to say. Instead of letting circumstances come before God, we should let God come before circumstances, [Job 33:29-30](#).

Elihu tells Job to pay attention and listen to what he has to say, if he remains silent Elihu will speak, [Job 33:31](#). If Job has anything to say, then he should do so because Elihu wants to vindicate him, [Job 33:32](#). If Job has nothing to say then he should let Elihu speak so that that he can teach him wisdom, [Job 33:33](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job responded to Elihu’s challenge in exactly the proper manner, ignoring it completely. Job was fully conscious of his absolute integrity before God, and nothing that Elihu had said or would say later moved Job in even the slightest degree from that confidence.’

CHAPTER 34

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Elihu said: “Hear my words, you wise men; listen to me, you men of learning. For the ear tests words as the tongue tastes food. Let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together what is good. “Job says, ‘I am innocent, but God denies me justice. Although I am right, I am considered a liar; although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.’ Is there anyone like Job, who drinks scorn like water? He keeps company with evildoers; he associates with the wicked. For he says, ‘There is no profit in trying to please God.’ Job 34:1-9

ELIHU CONTINUES WITH HIS SPEECH

Elihu now turns his attention to the claim that God is unjust and unfair to him, and in doing so, Elihu impresses upon Job aspects of God’s character that Job and all need to be reminded of.

Kelly, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The crowd of onlookers here is imagined, there being no reference whatever to it in the text. However, the idea that the wise men here are a different group from the three friends is supported by the fact that the tone of reproof Elihu used in addressing the three friends, [Job 32:7-22](#), is no longer present in this chapter.’

It appears that Elihu wants to win the debate and impress his friends with his ‘wisdom’ [Job 34:1-3](#) / [Job 12:11](#). He begins by attacking Job as being arrogant and ungodly, which we know Job wasn’t guilty of.

He claims that people are capable of choosing for themselves what is right, [Job 34:4](#). The implication is that he and Job’s three friends know what is right, while also knowing what Job is doing isn’t right, [Job 34:5](#) / [Job 13:18](#) / [Job 23:10-11](#). God can do no wrong and will not pervert justice, [Job 34:5-6](#). It’s clear that all the kindness Elihu showed Job earlier has now gone.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job did not claim to be absolutely perfect; he maintained only that the sufferings which he endured were no proper proof of his character, [Job 6:4](#).’

He goes on to attack the character and attitude of Job. Job has never accused God of branding him a liar, [Job 34:7](#), but Job has accused his friends of lying in their unfounded charges against him. Elihu now joins Eliphaz in claiming Job walks with the evildoers, [Job 34:8](#), and even repeats the same arrogant words they used, [Job 34:9](#) / [Job 15:16](#). Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Elihu implies that, in indulging in such reckless remarks, Job was linking himself with sinners, [Job 15:16](#).’

‘So listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong. He repays everyone for what they have done; he brings on them what their conduct deserves. It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice. Who appointed him over the earth? Who put him in charge of the whole world? If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, all humanity would perish together, and mankind would return to the dust. “If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I say. Can someone who hates justice govern? Will you condemn the just and mighty One? Is he not the One who says to kings, ‘You are worthless,’ and to nobles, ‘You are wicked,’ who shows no partiality to princes and does not favour the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands? They die in an instant, in the middle of the night; the people are shaken, and they pass away; the mighty are removed without human hand.’ [Job 34:10-20](#)

Elihu now attacks Job for claiming God acts wickedly, [Job 34:10](#), which we know Job wasn’t guilty of. God will judge according to a person’s needs, [Job 34:11](#) / [Romans 2:6](#) / [Romans 14:12](#) / [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) / [Revelation 22:12](#). The whole tone of what he said tells us that he is disgusted that Job should think God has taken away his rights, [Job 34:12](#). He receives His authority from no one, [Job 34:13](#), so even if He wanted to He could wipe the people off the face of the earth, [Job 34:14-15](#). He does a tremendous job in defending God’s justice, [Habakkuk 1:13](#) / [Psalm 92:15](#). Therefore, to even hint that God is unjust is inconsiderate, [Job 34:16-17](#) / [Genesis 18:25](#) / [Romans 3:5](#). He attacks Job for despising God’s impartiality, [Job 34:18-19](#), which we know Job wasn’t guilty of. He says what type of ruler would he be without implementing proper justice, [Job 34:18](#). God shows no partiality because He created both the rich and the poor, [Job 34:19](#), and so has the right to administer judgment as He so chooses.

According to Elihu, God doesn’t discriminate in His treatment of all men. Elihu goes too far by implying that God can do anything, even to the point of killing off all mankind, [Job 34:20](#). God can do this, but won’t because it would contradict His other promises, and so, making God a liar, [Hebrews 6:18](#).

‘His eyes are on the ways of mortals; he sees their every step. There is no deep shadow, no utter darkness, where evildoers can hide. God has no need to examine people further, that they should come before him for judgment. Without inquiry, he shatters the mighty and sets up others in their place. Because he takes note of their deeds, he overthrows them in the night, and they are crushed. He punishes them for their wickedness, where everyone can see them, because they turned from following him and had no regard for any of his ways. They caused the cry of the poor to come before him, so that he heard the cry of the needy. But if he remains silent, who can condemn him? If he hides his face, who can see him? Yet he is over individual and nation alike, to keep the godless from ruling, from laying snares for the people.’ [Job 34:21-30](#)

Elihu now attacks Job for not recognising the omniscience of God, [Job 34:21](#), which we know Job wasn’t guilty of. Nothing is hidden from God, [Job 34:22](#), and He has man’s interest at heart, [Job 34:23](#).

No one can hide from God because He is omnipresent, and so, all men are continually in His presence. Elihu basically says God hates the unjust Job, and He knows everything about him. That being the case, he need not make an investigation into Job’s case, [Job 34:23](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Elihu here continues his cruel, unjust, and relentless attack upon Job. Job had longed for an ‘umpire’ who might plead his case before God, but Elihu declares that God needs no such assistance, because he is omniscient, [Job 34:22-23](#).’

Job has asked why men don't often observe God's justice. Elihu now maintains that men continually witness the justice of God when they see others suffer, Job 34:24-30. Since God will not lay on man more than what he deserves, it is not right for one to complain, like Job, that God has worked unjustly in his case.

'Suppose someone says to God, 'I am guilty but will offend no more. Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again.' Should God then reward you on your terms when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know. "Men of understanding declare, wise men who hear me say to me, 'Job speaks without knowledge; his words lack insight.' Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man! To his sin he adds rebellion; scornfully he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God." Job 34:31-37

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

'In Job 34:31-33, Job is rebuked for presumption in criticising God's treatment of him.'

Elihu now attacks Job for being unteachable, Job 34:31-32, which we know Job wasn't guilty of. He tells the story of a man before God, Job 34:33, and he says God is obligated to operate on that level, God already knows it all, Job 34:33. This is ironic but effective in Job's case. Job hasn't rejected God's judgments; he merely wants to understand God's judgments.

Elihu says he will give Job his wisdom, Job 34:34. He claims Job has spoken without knowledge or wisdom, Job 34:35, and he doesn't know all the facts, yet he presumes to judge God.

The problem is that Job is so self-centred that he has forgotten. Elihu finishes by agreeing with a point made earlier by Eliphaz, Job 34:36-37 / Job 15:5-6. In other words, Job is proving he is a sinner by continuing to talk.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'With the whole community coming together under Elihu's extremely bitter and antagonistic speech, and presumably favouring Elihu's evil accusations against Job, we may well presume that the greatest pressure that Satan could possibly have brought against Job reached its climax in this vituperative, disgusting, egotistical and satanic assault upon Job's integrity. We praise God that Job found the grace to sit in silent contempt and repudiation of his evil speech, not deigning to take the slightest notice of it.'

CHAPTER 35

INTRODUCTION

'Then Elihu said: "Do you think this is just? You say, 'I am in the right, not God.' Yet you ask him, 'What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?' "I would like to reply to you and to your friends with you. Look up at the heavens and see; gaze at the clouds so high above you. If you sin, how does that affect him? If your sins are many, what does that do to him? If you are righteous, what do you give to him, or what does he receive from your hand? Your wickedness only affects humans like yourself, and your righteousness only other people.' Job 35:1-8

ELIHU CONTINUES WITH HIS SPEECH

Elihu says that Job said what advantage is there in being righteous if everyone gets the same treatment. Elihu claims Job said he was more righteous than God, Job 35:1-2, but Job has never said this.

He says that Job said, ‘What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?’ [Job 35:3](#). Job didn’t say this; this was credited to Job by Elihu in [Job 34:9](#). Elihu believes he is wise enough to answer all arguments, [Job 35:4](#), and he returns to a series of statements centred around the greatness of God.

Elihu invites everyone to look up to the skies, [Job 35:4-5](#). God gives us everything; He gives us the sun and the rain, [Matthew 5:45](#). Neither Job nor his friends have ever questioned this. So, what is Elihu’s point?

What can we give God anyway? It doesn’t matter if we are super righteous or a super sinner, [Job 35:6](#); we can’t give God anything. None of that is affected by a man’s righteousness or unrighteousness, [Job 35:7](#).

Human conduct only affects other people. He isn’t suggesting that God is not concerned with human behaviour, but his point is that God’s actions are self-determined, not man-centred.

In [Job 35:6](#), Elihu quotes Job’s words from [Job 7:20](#), and in [Job 35:7](#), he quotes Eliphaz’s words from [Job 22:2-3](#). However, Elihu adds to that argument. He now has Job saying that righteousness profits one no more than evil, [Job 35:7](#).

And so, Elihu uses them to announce that they are words of wickedness, [Job 35:8](#). In addition, Job’s supposed ‘righteousness’ is also virtually worthless, [Job 35:8](#).

‘People cry out under a load of oppression; they plead for relief from the arm of the powerful. But no one says, ‘Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night, who teaches us more than he teaches the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds in the sky?’ He does not answer when people cry out because of the arrogance of the wicked. Indeed, God does not listen to their empty plea; the Almighty pays no attention to it. How much less, then, will he listen when you say that you do not see him, that your case is before him and you must wait for him, and further, that his anger never punishes and he does not take the least notice of wickedness. So Job opens his mouth with empty talk; without knowledge, he multiplies words.” [Job 35:9-16](#)

Due to many difficulties, people call out to God simply out of pain, [Job 35:9](#), not out of any purpose of glorifying the master. If we take a closer look at the Old Testament, we find that the Hebrew word for ‘Presence’, [Exodus 33:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 4:37](#), and ‘Person’, [Job 13:8](#), are actually plural.

If we take a closer look at the words ‘Creator, [Ecclesiastes 12:1](#), Maker, [Job 35:10](#); and Husband, [Isaiah 54:5](#), in the Hebrew, you will find that they are actually plural. In relation to the Trinity, we see that this refers to a multi-personal being.

The idea behind the words, giving songs in the night, [Job 35:10](#), carries with it the sense of who can rejoice in hardship, [Acts 16:25](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A holy soul has continual communion with God, night and day, its happiness is great and God, from whom it comes, is the continual subject of its songs of praise.’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 35:11](#).

‘Beasts, birds, fowls, and in many cases pond-fishes, know and seem thankful to the hand that feeds them, while man, made much more noble than they, gifted with the greatest powers, privileged with the most important benefits, considers not the Lord, nor discerns the operation of his hand. Quadrupeds, reptiles, and fowls have more gratitude to their masters than man has to his God.’

Elihu now addresses one of Job’s main arguments, which is, Why does God not answer my prayers? Elihu says God doesn’t answer because of the pride of evil men, [Job 35:12](#).

He agrees that God doesn’t hear you, [Job 35:12-13](#). He accuses Job of offering to God an ‘empty cry’, [Job 35:13](#). The humble spirit will not just instinctively cry out in times of pain but will seek to be wiser as a result of the experience. It is when people cry out to God ‘It is my right to relief’ that is when they are not heard, [Job 35:13](#).

He asks Job the question, do you think God will find you if you don't try to find God? Job 35:14. In other words, he's implying that Job doesn't have a relationship with Him. But even at that, Job's case is before God, so maybe you need to be patient, Job 35:14.

He even goes so far as to suggest that God hasn't punished Job to the degree he deserves, Job 35:15. Elihu is telling Job that if he were really a godly man, then God would have answered him by now, Job 35:16.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Elihu here is charging Job with all of his irresponsible talk as being able, so to speak, because God has overlooked his arrogance, Job 35:15. However, it was not Job, but Elihu who was, Darkening counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2, according to the verdict of Almighty God Himself.'

CHAPTER 36

INTRODUCTION

'Elihu continued: "Bear with me a little longer and I will show you that there is more to be said in God's behalf. I get my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe justice to my Maker. Be assured that my words are not false; one who has perfect knowledge is with you.'" Job 36:1-4

ELIHU CONTINUES WITH HIS SPEECH

In this chapter, Elihu mentions some solid truths. Some commentators tell us that because of what he says here, he isn't condemned by God in Job 42. However, there are still some doctrinal problems with this section, and it is pure speculation as to why Elihu isn't mentioned in Job 42.

It appears that Elihu has more to say on God's behalf, thinking God needs him to take up His defence against Job, Job 36:1-2. He says he gets his knowledge from afar, and he will ascribe justice to his Maker, Job 36:3.

This was a bold assertion and one that manifested the arrogance of Elihu. God is more merciful than Job thinks, even for the wicked. God doesn't have favourites. God doesn't ignore the acts of the wicked nor the pains of any sufferer.

Notice that Elihu is so self-confident that he even claims to be perfect in knowledge, Job 36:4. How does this apply to Job? He cautions him at this point against thinking that simply crying out to God for his own strength will deliver him, and so he should give up his death wish.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Throughout this chapter, Elihu's logic is false. In the first part of it, he would prove God is just because he is Powerful, 'But power does not necessarily go with justice', and then in the latter part of this chapter and throughout Job 37, he appeals to nature. But how does the natural world support any conception whatever either of mercy or justice? 'Nature is red in tooth and fang and claw.' One cannot prove from nature that God is either just, or loving or merciful. It is only by divine revelation that such things concerning God may be known.'

It appears that Job had the opportunity to respond, but didn't respond. Job's silence is due to the fact that Elihu has struck a chord, a new cord to which at last Job's heartstrings vibrate. One thing is for sure: by his method and message, Elihu has prepared the scene for God to enter the picture.

‘God is mighty, but despises no one; he is mighty, and firm in his purpose. He does not keep the wicked alive but gives the afflicted their rights. He does not take his eyes off the righteous; he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever. But if people are bound in chains, held fast by cords of affliction, he tells them what they have done—that they have sinned arrogantly. He makes them listen to correction and commands them to repent of their evil. If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment. But if they do not listen, they will perish by the sword and die without knowledge.’ Job 36:5-12

Elihu openly defies Job’s position, while maintaining that God does allow the righteous to suffer for a short time. In doing so, he reiterates what he has said previously. God is mighty but despises no one, He is mighty, and firm in His purpose, [Job 36:5](#).

He says God doesn’t keep the wicked alive but gives the afflicted their rights, [Job 36:6](#). God doesn’t take His eyes off the righteous, he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever, [Job 36:7](#) / [Psalms 34:15](#). Yet this suffering is only to instruct them further in the ways of God.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 36:8](#).

‘That is, if the righteous are thrown into prison, and are subjected to oppressions and trials, or if they are chained down, as it were, on a bed of pain, or crushed by heavy calamities, the eye of God is still upon them. Their sufferings should not be regarded either as proof that they are hypocrites, or that God is regardless of them, and is indifferent whether people are good or evil. The true solution of the difficulty was that God was then accomplishing purposes of discipline, and that happy results would follow if they would receive affliction in a proper manner.’

He says if the righteous person submits to the circumstance that involves their suffering, [Job 36:8-9](#), God can use them to teach the righteous, especially to arrest pride, [Job 36:10](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He gives them to understand the reason why they are thus corrected, and commands them to return from those iniquities which have induced him to visit them with afflictions and distresses.’

If they obey and serve God, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment, [Job 36:11](#). He notes what happens if people don’t hear: they will die in their ignorance, [Job 36:12](#). Elihu was accusing Job of becoming angry at God’s discipline, and so, being rebellious against God by not repenting.

‘The godless in heart harbour resentment; even when he fetters them, they do not cry for help. They die in their youth, among male prostitutes of the shrines. But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction. “He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction to the comfort of your table laden with choice food. But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold of you. Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside. Would your wealth or even all your mighty efforts sustain you so you would not be in distress? Do not long for the night, to drag people away from their homes. Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction. “God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him? Who has prescribed his ways for him, or said to him, ‘You have done wrong’?”’ Job 36:13-23

He then challenges Job with several perplexing theories designed to inspire reverential fear of God. He makes an appeal to Job and says, God will deliver him if he will just open his ear to God’s instruction, [Job 36:13](#), that is, if he repents. Job’s problem, according to Elihu, is that he isn’t listening to God’s teaching.

Often it is only by hardship that God gets our attention and leads us away from sin, but the godless don’t learn from divine discipline, [Job 36:13](#); they simply become resentful and refuse to move, [Job 36:13](#), and so they die in their youth, among male prostitutes of the shrines, [Job 36:14](#) / [Psalms 55:23](#).

He says those who suffer God delivers in their suffering and speaks to them in their affliction, [Job 36:15](#). He accuses Job of judging the wicked, [Job 36:16](#), while being wicked himself, and so, now he is paying for his hypocrisy, [Job 36:17-21](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 36:16-21](#).

‘Elihu applies these remarks to Job, urging him to humble himself instead of remaining rebellious.’

Instead of receiving instruction from God through discipline, Elihu says that Job had a rebellious spirit by seeking to teach God, rather than learning submission from his suffering.

Who can teach God, who can accuse Him of anything? Job 36:22-23. The heart of what Elihu has to say is that God is exalted because of God’s power, Job 36:22, and the purpose of His operation is to teach the mind and mend it, Job 36:23.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is Elihu’s great point, that afflictions are intended to teach, to discipline, and to purify even the good.’

‘Remember to extol his work, which people have praised in song. All humanity has seen it; mortals gaze on it from afar. How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out. “He draws up the drops of water, which distil as rain to the streams; the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind. Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds, how he thunders from his pavilion? See how he scatters his lightning about him, bathing the depths of the sea. This is the way he governs the nations and provides food in abundance. He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark. His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach.’ Job 36:24-33

Elihu reminds him to magnify God, as others have done in songs of praise and look in awe at His majesty, Job 36:24. Elihu is now going to introduce the remainder of his speech with an appeal to listen to God’s instruction. He maintains that God has been trying to teach Job, but Job has been a poor student. Job needs to free himself, Elihu claims, from any thought that God has done wrong.

Elihu says all humanity has seen God’s work and mortals gaze on it from afar. How great is God, beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out, Job 36:25-26.

He more or less tells Job to stand still and consider the wonderful works of God. He tries to tell Job that God can manage without his help, he teases ‘What would you say if you were invited into the presence of God yourself?’

He refers to how Job doesn’t know anything about the pressure systems that cause warm air of the equatorial system to rise and flow towards the poles and then return to lower altitudes, Job 36:27-28.

Elihu considers the water cycle as an example of God’s greatness, Job 36:27-28. By the laws of nature that God has already laid down, He is said to draw up water and, through a cycle, returns it to earth, Ecclesiastes 1:7 / Amos 9:6 / Psalms 135:7 / Jeremiah 10:13.

God takes up where Elihu leaves off; He continues to talk about his majesty and His creation. Elihu asks who understands how God does that or how he has caused the thunder or lightning, Job 36:29-32. The behaviour of cattle in the field changes when a storm approaches, and so, their behaviour is a warning concerning an approaching storm Job 36:33.

His descriptions of God’s presence in the raging elements of nature pave the way for God to talk out of the whirlwind. These elements are used in God’s providential plans; He uses them as judgement, Psalms 18:4, or in the terms of blessing.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘And it is worthy of remark that every wicked man trembles at the noise of thunder and the flash of lightning, and considers this a treasury of Divine wrath, emphatically called among us the artillery of the skies; and whenever the noise is heard, it is considered the voice of God.’

CHAPTER 37

INTRODUCTION

‘At this, my heart pounds and leaps from its place. Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth. He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth. After that comes the sound of his roar; he thunders with his majestic voice. When his voice resounds, he holds nothing back. God’s voice thunders in marvellous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth,’ and to the rain shower, ‘Be a mighty downpour.’ So that everyone he has made may know his work, he stops all people from their labour. The animals take cover; they remain in their dens. The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. At his direction, they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them. He brings the clouds to punish people, or to water his earth and show his love.’ Job 37:1-13

ELIHU CONTINUES WITH HIS SPEECH

In this chapter, Elihu addresses many topics similar to what God Himself says in His speeches. He exalts God for His control over the storms, all of which He causes to happen for one of three reasons. 1. Correction. 2. His world, or 3. Kindness.

Elihu is basically saying that Job shouldn’t question the One who is able to control the physical universe. In other words, if God is so powerful, then Job is not in a position to question Him.

When he thinks about God’s power in creation, his heart pounds, and leaps from its place, Job 37:1. The thunder announces the presence of God, Job 37:2-5 / Psalms 29.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Nor is there a sound in nature more descriptive of, or more becoming, the majesty of God, than that of thunder. We hear the breeze in its rustling, the rain in its pattering, the hail in its rattling, the wind in its hollow howlings, the cataract in its dash, the bull in his bellowing, the lion in his roar, but we hear God, the Almighty, the Omnipresent, in the continuous peal of thunder! This sound, and this sound only, becomes the majesty of Jehovah.’

He commands the snow and the rain in order that everyone will stop and look and know His mighty power, Job 37:5-7. In the winter months, when we can’t work the land and yet things are happening, seeds under the ground are preparing for spring growth.

Elihu is saying that people may talk and see, but God is in control even during the seemingly dead winter season. Even the animals feel warned by the sound of the storm and take cover, Job 37:8. When God breathes, ice is formed and lakes are frozen over, Job 37:9-10 / Job 9:9.

In dealing with ice and snow, Elihu emphasises the helplessness of mankind. The clouds obey the will of God and scatter throughout the heavens at His command, Job 37:11-12.

He brings the clouds to punish people, or to water his earth and show His love, Job 37:13. In other words, mankind should do the same in response to the will of God.

‘Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God’s wonders. Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash? Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge? You

who swelter in your clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind, can you join him in spreading out the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze? “Tell us what we should say to him; we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness. Should he be told that I want to speak? Would anyone ask to be swallowed up? Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean. Out of the north he comes in golden splendour; God comes in awesome majesty. The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress. Therefore, people revere him, for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?” Job 37:14-24

Elihu once again appeals to Job to listen to what he is saying, [Job 37:14](#), and so, discern the instruction of God. Job has said that he wants to be instructed by God; he said he will cover his mouth and listen to God in silence, [Job 9:3](#) / [Job 9:15](#). However, he has never said, as Elihu insinuates, that he would like to teach God.

He compares Job, in his pitiful and weak condition, to the omnipotence of God. Elihu will use it as a visual aid, and so, he asks Job if he knows how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash. [Job 37:15](#) / [Genesis 9:13](#). Does Job know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge? [Job 37:16](#). He tells him he swelters in his clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind, can he join God in spreading out the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze? [Job 37:17-18](#) / [Genesis 1:6-7](#) / [Isaiah 34:4](#) / [Isaiah 40:22](#) / [Psalms 102:26](#). Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 37:19-20](#).

‘Elihu shrinks from the presumptuous thought of contending with the Almighty, such as Job had uttered.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Some of the writers assume that Elihu is here speaking of God, but back in the previous chapter, [Job 36:4](#), Elihu speaks of himself as ‘one who is perfect in knowledge.’ One of the inexcusable features of Elihu’s tirade is the unqualified arrogance and egotism of it, and it appears that Elihu is here contrasting Job’s ignorance not with God’s wisdom, but with that of Elihu!’

Elihu says the sun will once again come out, [Job 37:21](#), and so, will the truth be eventually revealed. Just as men cannot look directly into the sun on a clear day, so men cannot look upon the dazzling appearance of God, and that is what you want to do, Job. A few commentators believe a great storm is approaching, [Job 37:21](#), out of which God will eventually speak, [Job 37:22](#) / [Job 38:1](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The rushing mighty wind, for which the description of the thunder and lightning had prepared poor, confounded, astonished Job, proclaims the presence of Yahweh and out of this whirlwind, God answers for and proclaims himself! Reader, canst thou not conceive something of what these men felt? Art thou not astonished, perplexed, confounded, in reading over these descriptions of the thunder of God’s power? Prepare, then, to hear the voice of God himself out of this whirlwind.’

Elihu also says that God isn’t unjust and will not do wrongful violence to righteous men, but He will punish the wrongdoer, [Job 37:23-24](#). In other words, Elihu believes that men fear God because if they are wise of heart, God will not have any regard for them. Solomon, however, states that God’s delay in executing justice causes men not to fear Him, [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Elihu concludes by summing up the character of God as He manifests Himself to man. Though His dealings may be beyond man’s comprehension, yet He is just, as well as mighty, and will not afflict unjustly. But He expects humility, not presumption from His creatures.’

CHAPTER 38

INTRODUCTION

‘Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.” Job 38:1-3

THE LORD SPEAKS

Job wished to speak with God, Job 31:35-37, and at last, his wish comes true, but he probably now wishes it hadn't.

The four friends, and on occasion Job, haven't had all the facts together.

Their words have come from a limited understanding of things. God, however, doesn't have that problem. God speaks to him in a way he hadn't imagined it would be. The Lord spoke to Job out of a great storm, Exodus 19:16-20 / Psalms 18:8-16 / Job 36:22-37:24 / Ezekiel 1:4 / Ezekiel 1:28.

Andersen, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Job's troubles began when a great wind killed his children, Job 1:19. The Lord was in that storm, and now He speaks from the tempest, Ezekiel 1:4.’

God wants to know who it is by ignorant words that darken his counsel, Job 38:2. Who is it that is trying to make Him and His plans look foolish? Job 38:2. Job was told to be ready to answer God's demands and answer His questions, Job 38:3. Job had boldly asked to speak with God, and so, now, God gives him the opportunity.

God approaches Job with a series of more than seventy rapid-fire questions, similar to the approach of Eliphaz in Job 15:7-35, although Eliphaz's questions were malicious in intent.

It is as if the Lord hammers Job to his knees; the outcome is that Job will see himself as he never had before. God's questions are designed to emphasise two great propositions.

1. God's sovereignty in the natural order of the universe.

2. God's sovereignty in the moral order.

Even though spoken thousands of years ago, these words have such meaning. God's questions are designed to demonstrate the concept of power. God is the One who is all-powerful, omnipotent, and therefore is in control of everything. God also has all knowledge, omniscient. Because of His great attributes, Job needs to learn to completely trust God and His ways.

Is there something Job needs to point out to God? Is there something God has missed? Since God is perfect in knowledge, nothing has happened to Job that He isn't aware of. Job probably didn't expect this type of response from God; he was probably looking for a debate, Job 40:3-5.

‘Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?’” Job 38:4-11

God now declares several aspects of His creation, all designed to contrast the knowledge and power of God with the ignorance and weakness of man.

Notice that God has power over the following in this chapter.

1. The earth, Job 38:4-7.
2. The sea, Job 38:8-11.
3. The morning, Job 38:12-15.
4. The underworld, Job 38:16-18.
5. The light, Job 38:19-21.
6. The storms, Job 38:22-30.
7. The heavens, Job 38:31-33.
8. The clouds, Job 38:34-38.

Notice that God has power over the animal kingdom, which we read about at the end of this chapter and in the next chapter.

1. Lions, Job 38:39-41.
2. Mountain goats, Job 39:1-4.
3. The wild donkey, Job 39:5-8.
4. The wild ox, Job 39:9-12.
5. The ostrich, Job 39:13-18.
6. The horse, Job 39:19-25.
7. Birds, Job 39:26-30.

God asks who put the finishing touches on earth in the beginning? Job 38:4-7. Here we read of God's power over the earth, and if Job could answer, he wouldn't have much to say because he wasn't around at the creation.

We only know what God has chosen to reveal to us. Creation is compared to a builder stretching a plumb line over a building in order to establish the perfection of what was built. The personification of stars expresses that even that which was created, including the angels, rejoiced over the creation, Job 38:7.

God has power over the sea, Job 38:8-11. God uses the figure of childbirth for the creation of the sea, Job 38:8. The Spirit of God hovered over the waters, Genesis 1:1-2.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ancients thought that the sea issued from the subterranean abyss, with which it was connected by springs in the bed of the ocean, Job 38:16 / Genesis 7:11.’

After the initial creation of all things, God then separated the waters from the dry land. The earth was first covered with a canopy of clouds in order to create a greenhouse effect of warmth throughout the surface of the world, Job 38:9-11. It's clear that Job knows nothing about all of these things.

‘Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment. The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken. “Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me if you know all this.’ Job 38:12-

18

Here we read that God has power over the morning, Job 38:12-15. The order that's evident with the sun, moon, stars, and earth is exact, and so, it demonstrates the uniformity of nature that God created among heavenly bodies.

As the sun rises, the deeds of the evil are brought to light, who says that God doesn't take into account what the wicked are doing, John 3:20. Each new day brings a message of hope, God's moral justice is good.

We also read how God has power over the underworld, Job 38:16-18. In the days of Job, no one had any idea that ocean springs and currents existed. In the days of Job, no one had any real idea about life after death, 2 Timothy 1:10, and in the days of Job, no one had any idea that the world was round. The questions continue to be framed to highlight Job's lack of knowledge and how then is he able to judge or question Him who created it.

‘What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years!

“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail, which I reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle? What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth? Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, to water a land where no one lives, an uninhabited desert, to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass? Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens when the waters become hard as stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen? “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God’s dominion over the earth? “Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water? Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’? Who gives the ibis wisdom or gives the rooster understanding? Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard, and the clods of earth stick together?” Job 38:19-38

Here read of God’s power over the light, [Job 38:19-21](#). In the days of Job, no one had any idea of the source of light from space or the limits of the darkness of space. God, using irony, says, ‘Oh Job, but you were there when I said let there be light’, [Genesis 1:3](#).

We also read how God has power over the storms, [Job 38:22-30](#). In the days of Job, no one had any idea of the nitrogen that snow brings to plant life. God uses His natural forces of snow and hail to fight against men, [Joshua 10:11](#) / [Psalms 18](#) / [Revelation 16:21](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Do not men know all about things such as these? The answer is no! And one of the greatest mysteries of the whole physical creation is mentioned in [Job 38:30](#). Let it be noted that, due to freezing, the waters become like stone. Why then, should it have been the ‘face of the deep’, the surface of ponds and rivers, that should be ‘congealed’ (margin) or frozen? That amazing phenomenon that water expands when it freezes (contrary to practically every other liquid known to men) is inexplicable. No scientist ever born failed to marvel at it! The answer lies with God alone.’

We also read how God has power over the heavens, [Job 38:31-33](#). The gracious providence of God extends beyond humankind where no human lives, [Job 38:31-33](#) / [Matthew 6:24-31](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Job 38:31-21](#).

‘Four of the great constellations that adorn the heavens are mentioned here.

1. The Pleiades are always prominent in the Spring.
2. Orion, which dominates the wintry skies.
3. Ursa Major, The Bear, or Great Dipper, prominent in the northern skies.
4. The Mazzaroth, that is, the constellations. The meaning is obscure, but it is possibly the twelve Zodiacal signs or those that dominate the southern skies.’

Significantly, the entire expanse of the starry heavens is brought into view here, the skies of summer and winter, and those of the northern and southern hemispheres. God is asking Job, do you have the power to alter the seasonal changes? The point is, if the stars operate by the laws, there has to be a lawgiver, [Job 38:33](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The laws which control the heavenly bodies are the most sublime.’

God gave stars to be as signs, [Genesis 1:24](#). Astrologers say they determine the destiny of people, [2 Kings 23:5](#) / [Isaiah 47:13-14](#) / [Jeremiah 10:21](#). Stars can serve as signs to get bearings for physical direction, and they can serve as signs that relate to faith, [Psalm 19](#) / [Romans 1:14](#) / [Psalm 8:3-4](#).

God asks, Who has endowed the heavenly elements with wisdom to do the creation's bidding, 1 Kings 17:1 / 1 Kings 18:45 / James 5:17-18. Some commentators suggest that God states that He put wisdom in man. Anything a man knows, he knows because God put it in him.

We also read how God has power over the clouds, Job 38:34-38. This is a key concept in the book, and it isn't surprising when it is found in the speeches of God. The word 'wisdom' is found in Job 38:36-37 / Job 39:17, and the word 'understanding' occurs in Job 38:4 / Job 38:36 / Job 39:17.

'Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?' Job 38:39-41

Here we read how God has power over the lions, Job 38:39-41. God is going to quiz Job on the animal kingdom here and in the next chapter. He asks Job if he installs the instincts in a lioness to hunt for her family, Job 38:39-40.

How does the raven provide food for its young when they cry out? Job 38:41 / Psalms 104:21 / Matthew 6:26. The raven was a despised bird, but it was even fed. God created the innate behaviour of animals in order that they provide food for themselves. Job has to admit that only God instilled this behaviour in animals.

CHAPTER 39

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we read that God declared several aspects of His creation, all designed to contrast the knowledge and power of God with the ignorance and weakness of man. We mentioned that God has power over the following in the previous chapter.

1. The earth, Job 38:4-7.
2. The sea, Job 38:8-11.
3. The morning, Job 38:12-15.
4. The underworld, Job 38:16-18.
5. The light, Job 38:19-21.
6. The storms, Job 38:22-30.
7. The heavens, Job 38:31-33.
8. The clouds, Job 38:34-38.

We also noted that God has power over the animal kingdom, which we read about at the end of the previous chapter and in this chapter.

1. Lions, Job 38:39-41.
2. Mountain goats, Job 39:1-4.
3. The wild donkey, Job 39:5-8.
4. The wild ox, Job 39:9-12.
5. The ostrich, Job 39:13-18.
6. The horse, Job 39:19-25.
7. Birds, Job 39:26-30.

The examples of animal life that are given in this chapter illustrate the work of God in creation. In all these questions, Job must see his ignorance in that only God knows all these things.

All animals were created to be able to exist in the wild, and so, without the caring hand of man. From the very beginning, which started with their creation. God instilled within all animal life behaviour that would be necessary for life to exist on the face of the earth.

THE LORD CONTINUES SPEAKING

‘Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth? They crouch down and bring forth their young; their labour pains are ended. Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds; they leave and do not return.’ Job 39:1-4

God begins by speaking about the wild mountain goats and reminds Job of the arrangement of growth and maturity He had engineered for the natural order, Job 39:1-4.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the wild goats, Psalms 104:18 / 1 Samuel 24:2.

‘This animal is indigenous to Arabia, is of amazing strength and agility, and considerably larger than the common goat. Its horns are very long and often bend back over the whole body of the animal, and it is said to throw itself from the tops of rocks or towers, and light upon its horns, without receiving any damage. It goes five months with the young.’

‘Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied its ropes? I gave it the wasteland as its home, the salt flats as its habitat. It laughs at the commotion in the town; it does not hear a driver’s shout. It ranges the hills for its pasture and searches for any green thing.’ Job 39:5-8

The wild donkey is a passionate animal with a love for freedom, Genesis 16:12, and it hated civilisation, Job 39:5-8. The Jews wrote poems envying the donkey and its freedom. The animal hasn’t escaped from man but has been released because God has set it free.

‘Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will it stay by your manger at night? Can you hold it to the furrow with a harness? Will it till the valleys behind you? Will you rely on it for its great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to it? Can you trust it to haul in your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?’ Job 39:9-12

The wild ox, Job 39:9-12 / Psalms 29:6 / Isaiah 34:7, or unicorn, KJV, is a one-horned animal. They translated it this way because of the one-horned ox found in paintings in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. It must have been a strong, powerful beast. There is a contrast made between the wild and the tame; this one doesn’t thresh the grain.

‘The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stork. She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them. She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she cares not that her labour was in vain, for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense. Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider.’ Job 39:13-18

Job 39:13-18 are missing in the Septuagint due to the difficulty in translating them. The KJV uses the word ‘peacock’, but it should read ostrich. An ostrich lays its eggs in the sand, and they take forty-two days to incubate, Job 39:13-18.

God illustrates the marvels of His creation by the seemingly foolish actions of the ostrich, which would leave her eggs unprotected on the ground. But even though seemingly foolish to man, the ostrich has survived throughout history.

‘Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane? Do you make it leap like a locust, striking terror with its proud snorting? It paws fiercely, rejoicing in its strength, and charges into the fray. It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; it does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against its side, along with the flashing spear and lance. In frenzied excitement, it eats up the ground; it cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. At the blast of the trumpet, it snorts, ‘Aha!’ It catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry.’ Job 39:19-25

A horse is a powerful creature and in battle is ready with nervous energy, Job 39:19-25. This type of horse a Bedlam Arab, which people would pay anything for. It is a warhorse, and it has no fear.

Sight, sound or smell doesn’t make it run; it revels in action. Man isn’t as strong as the horse, for the horse’s strength is manifested in his courage in the midst of the battle. Job is asked if he can control such an animal. Not even this animal is under man’s control.

‘Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build its nest on high? It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is its stronghold. From there, it looks for food; its eyes detect it from afar. Its young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there it is.’ Job 39:26-30

The eagle is the majestic bird of the air; it flies and lives higher than any other bird, Job 39:26-30. They can spot prey nearly three miles away. It is the only bird that can look directly into the sun and not have its sight impaired. God challenges Job to determine why birds migrate to the south and why the eagle makes her nest in the high rocks. Job couldn’t give this animal its abilities; they were all given by God.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Long before mankind discovered such a thing as the telescope, both eagles and vultures were provided with telescopic vision, an ability most certainly mentioned here. In a similar manner, long before mankind had learned anything whatever about radar, the cave-dwelling bats were created by God with built-in radar systems enabling them to hunt, find and eat millions of insects at night!’

CHAPTER 40

INTRODUCTION

‘The LORD said to Job: “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!” Job 40:1-2

THE LORD CONTINUES SPEAKING

The Lord asks Job will the faultfinder continue his accusations against me? If so, let him answer my questions, Job 40:1-2. In other words, if someone is in a position to find fault, then let him assume the position of the reprover. God is asking Job, Is there something he thinks God has failed in? Is there some element of creation which can be improved upon? If so, then God is willing to listen to the arguments, 2 Timothy 4:2-4.

JOB'S ANSWER

‘Then Job answered the LORD: “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer—twice, but I will say no more.” Job 40:3-5

Job replies and admits he has spoken rashly. He says he is weak, and he will keep his mouth shut, Job 40:3-4.

However, this silence isn't trust, and so the Lord continues. Job had wanted to speak with God, but when God invites him, Job is wisely silent, Job 40:5. Why?

The New Bible Commentary says the following.

‘Here we have a classical illustration of the results which must always follow when the silence of heaven is broken, when there is a revelation of God himself, to which men must listen in the posture of faith without which it is impossible to please God and at such times the speech of earth is stilled.’

Because Job is awe-struck by the power and greatness of God. Job has tried to maintain his humility with his friends, and now, in the presence of God, he again demonstrates his humble nature.

He isn't angry, and he shows no resentment for what has happened to him. He is thankful to have his relationship with God back and quickly recognises he is insignificant in comparison to God.

THE LORD CONTINUES SPEAKING

‘Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: “Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. “Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendour, and clothe yourself in honour and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at all who are proud and bring them low, look at all who are proud and humble them, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave.

Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.’ Job 40:6-14

God once again speaks to Job out of the storm, Job 40:6 / Exodus 19:19 / Exodus 20:18-21, and asks him questions in the areas that he had challenged God. It was while he began questioning God that Job slipped; he went past caring. The implication was that Job was more righteous than God, so God allowed Job to prove it. God is saying to Job, since he knows so much about everything and is playing at God, when Job has perfectly executed justice, then God Himself will confess how great Job is.

Man isn't in a position to understand all the ways of God; he is unable to render judgments, let alone show what is flawed in God's judgments, Job 40:7-8. Therefore, God has the right to do what He has done because His judgments are perfect. The Lord, in a short way, is telling Job that he is in no position to rule or judge the one who does, Job 40:8-9.

The International Critical Commentary says the following.

‘The argument here is that ‘The world is so large, and the circumstances and situations of individual life are so infinitely varied, that none but an omnipotent Ruler could govern them with perfect justice. Therefore, one who does not possess God's might must refrain from passing judgment upon God's justice.’

If he intends to judge and rule, he had better clothe himself with eminence and majesty, Job 40:10. As great as someone who is going to save themselves, Job 40:11-14.

Bridgeway Bible commentary says the following.

‘He asks about Job’s accusations of injustice in God. Does he still want to make God wrong merely to prove himself right? Does he want to be like God, to take God’s place and govern the moral order of the universe, to decree what is right and what is wrong, Job 40:6-9? If so, let Job clothe himself with God’s magnificent robes and sit in judgment on all who are proud and wicked. Then God will acknowledge Job’s assessment of himself as correct, Job 40:10-14.’

“Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron. It ranks first among the works of God, yet its Maker can approach it with his sword. The hills bring it their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby. Under the lotus plants it lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh. The lotuses conceal it in their shadow; the poplars by the stream surround it. A raging river does not alarm it; it is secure, though the Jordan should surge against its mouth. Can anyone capture it by the eyes, or trap it and pierce its nose?’ Job 40:15-24

God finishes His speech by mentioning two of His great creatures to demonstrate how strong He is. The Behemoth, Job 40:15-24, meaning ‘a large beast’ and the Leviathan, Job 41:1-34. The reason God mentions these two creatures is simply to let Job know that mankind is utterly incapable of controlling that which is easy for God to control.

The Behemoth is described as one of the strongest creatures of God’s creation, Job 40:15-18. They are very powerful on the land, untroubled in the water and very difficult to capture, Job 40:19-24. God’s power is seen in the power He is able to give to these creatures.

There are three interpretations of the Behemoth and the Leviathan.

1. They are mythological.

But why use imaginary animals? What difference would that make to Job?

2. They are animals with which we are familiar, as listed in most footnotes, i.e., Behemoth is a hippopotamus or elephant, and the Leviathan is a whale or crocodile.

3. They are dinosaurs.

This explanation seems to be the most logical. Since no animal exists today that would fit the description of these animals, we would assume that one of the dinosaurs that existed either previous to or at the time of Job would fit the description of both Behemoth and Leviathan. Whatever the case, Job was familiar with the animal.

CHAPTER 41

INTRODUCTION

‘Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook? Will it keep begging you for mercy? Will it speak to you with gentle words? Will it make an agreement with you for you to take it as your slave for life? Can you make a pet of it, like a bird or put it on a leash for the young women in your house? Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants?’

Job 41:1-6

THE LORD CONTINUES SPEAKING

The second beast described to Job is Leviathan, which is possibly a mythical sea monster or possibly the crocodile. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are three interpretations of the Behemoth and the Leviathan.

1. They are mythological.

But why use imaginary animals? What difference would that make to Job?

2. They are animals with which we are familiar, as listed in most footnotes, i.e., Behemoth is a hippopotamus or elephant, and the Leviathan is a whale or crocodile.

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This explanation seems to be the most logical. Since no animal exists today that would fit the description of these animals, we would assume that one of the dinosaurs that existed either previous to or at the time of Job would fit the description of both Behemoth and Leviathan. Whatever the case, Job was familiar with the animal.

God asks Job if he can catch one with a hook, as he catches a fish? Job 41:1-2. God asks Job can he make it talk, Job 41:3, or make it work for him, Job 41:4, or make a pet of it? Job 41:5.

Leviathan could never be tamed as a pet by men and led about by a rope. In other words, if man could never tame the Leviathan, then man can't control the creation.

Or can he sell it in the market? Job 41:6. The Leviathan was so big that he could never be captured and used by man for food. In other words, no one can stand against the Leviathan.

The Leviathan is the fiercest of the sea creatures, and the point is evident that God is putting Job in his place, and there is no way Job could ever handle or constrain the animal.

God says that if He can't even challenge animals, why do you challenge me? Job had assumed that he was qualified to contend with God, but as a man, Job couldn't in strength even compete with the large animals of creation.

‘Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears? If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse it. Who then is able to stand against me? Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.’ Job 41:7-11

God tells Job that even if he were able to catch one, he would be sorry, Job 41:7, and he would never do it again, Job 41:8. No matter how powerful a person was, they couldn't capture or control either the Behemoth or Leviathan.

God says nobody in their right mind would dare stir up Leviathan, and so, in the same way, nobody in their right mind would try to stand up against God, Job 41:9-11.

No one can stand before and against God, and if anyone tried to control the strength of God, they would be overcome. God owns everything, and the Leviathan's power originates from God.

‘I will not fail to speak of Leviathan's limbs, its strength, and its graceful form. Who can strip off its outer coat? Who can penetrate its double coat of armour? Who dares open the doors of its mouth, ringed about with fearsome teeth? Its back has rows of shields tightly sealed together; each is so close to the next that no air can pass between. They are joined fast to one another; they cling together and cannot be parted. Its snorting throws out flashes of light; its eyes are like the rays of dawn. Flames stream from its mouth; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke pours from its nostrils as from a boiling pot over burning reeds. Its breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from its mouth. Strength resides in its neck; dismay goes before it. The folds of its flesh are tightly joined; they are firm and immovable. Its chest is hard as rock, hard as a lower millstone. When it rises up, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before its thrashing. The sword that reaches it has no effect, nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin. Iron it treats like straw, and bronze like rotten wood. Arrows do not make it flee; slingstones are like chaff to it. A club seems to it but a piece of straw; it laughs at the rattling of the lance. Its undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. It makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. It leaves a

glistening wake behind it; one would think the deep had white hair. Nothing on earth is its equal—a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud.” Job 41:12-34

Although God is not under obligation, Job wants God to explain what he is doing in his life, but now Job is learning better. God uses this animal as an illustration of His power that is beyond the understanding of man.

God now describes some fearsome features of the Leviathan, which sounds like a lizard, [Job 41:12](#). He says its skin, that is, its armour, is thick and tough, [Job 41:13](#), its strong teeth, [Job 41:14](#), its terrible teeth, [Job 41:15-17](#).

When it blows air and water out of its nostrils, it appears to be blowing out fire and smoke, [Job 40:18-21](#). The animal is so fearfully strong that just the sight of its movements fills even the strongest with terror, [Job 40:22-25](#).

There’s nothing that can pierce its iron-like skin, [Job 40:26-29](#). When it moves from the land into the water, its movements dredge up the mud and whip up white foam on the water, [Job 40:30-32](#). The Leviathan is the king of beasts, unconquerable by human power, yet it is part of the world God has created, [Job 40:33-34](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The spray breathed through the nostrils of the crocodile is luminous in the sunshine. His eyes are compared to the dawn because they are visible from some distance underwater. When the crocodile comes up after being submerged in the water, he blows spray into the sunlight with an effect like fireworks. That impression is enhanced by the fact that his eyes shine like coals of fire through the water.’

Kelly, in his commentary, says the following.

‘All of this may be understood as an imaginative and exaggerated description of a crocodile, or as poetic imagery.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The deep in these verses is not a reference to the ocean but to the Nile River, which in ancient times was often referred to as ‘the sea’. The path that the crocodile made to shine after him appears to be a reference to the wake following the crocodile’s movement through the water, reflecting the sunlight. We also have here a reference to Leviathan’s motion in the water, which he churns up to a foam. It is generally allowed that by ‘the sea’ here is meant ‘the Nile’, as in [Isaiah 19:2](#) / [Isaiah 18:5](#) / [Nahum 3:8](#).’

The Lord introduced the creature to ask him questions about him. He is trying to teach Job that his attitude is all wrong. The point God is trying to make in talking about the Behemoth and Leviathan is Himself and His indescribable power. Why choose these animals? He picked the fiercest of both categories, land and sea animals.

CHAPTER 42

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Job replied to the LORD: “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

Job 42:1-6

JOB'S RESPONSE

As mentioned earlier, Job has often requested an opportunity to speak with God, but the question still remains: why did God answer Job in this way? The answer is not easily found, but it appears that Job was clearly satisfied with what God told him.

Slowly but surely, Job has learnt along the way and understands God's whole purpose, [Job 42:1-2](#). The purpose was that man must learn to trust, love and in a devoted way serve the Almighty, no matter what, [Romans 8:28](#). If God has to arrest man's attention by some means, then He will do it.

Job humbly affirms that God is omnipotent; he is now saying he can realise that God can do all things. Job's view that the Lord was unjust was not fair treatment. He has taken a big step closer to God because God's omnipotence cannot exist apart from His righteousness, which is not separable.

Job goes to this penetrating question, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' [Job 42:3](#) / [Job 38:2](#). He has been thinking about it and stands up and admits it.

He confesses he was very wrong to complain, [Job 42:3](#). He thought his reasoning was clear but having listened to God, he has seen it wasn't so clear, [Job 42:4](#) / [Job 38:3](#) / [Job 40:4-5](#) / [Job 40:7](#). All knowledge of God came from creation, [Romans 1:20](#), and His revelation of Himself through the fathers of families, [Hebrews 1:1-2](#).

Layman's Bible Commentary says the following.

'He can now accept the fact that God and his government of man's life, and even his distribution of rewards and retributions, are ultimately beyond man's power to comprehend.'

The eye is a much better teacher than the ear, [Job 42:5](#). What Job sees gives him a much fuller understanding and knowledge of God. Is he literally seeing God? [Job 42:5](#). No.

God answered out of the whirlwind and storm, [Job 38:1](#). Job is using the Hebrew expression 'see' to mean discern or understand. In other words, his wish has been fulfilled, [Job 19:24-27](#).

Like Job, when the book is read, we can see that there is so much that man will never understand. Job doesn't say he hates himself but that he loathes the things he has said in the past, [Job 42:6](#). He has learned a tremendously valuable lesson, that the spiritual must always take precedence over the physical, [Isaiah 6:5](#).

EPILOGUE

'After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has. So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." Job 42:7-8

God now turns to Eliphaz, [Job 42:7](#), and because he is always mentioned first in the book, this usually means that he was the oldest, [Job 2:11](#) / [Job 4:1](#) / [Job 15:1](#) / [Job 22:1](#), but the words are generally directed to all three, [Job 42:7](#). In doing this, there is tremendous encouragement, especially for Job.

The encouragement is like what the Lord did with Peter; even though he denied Him, he was always encouraged by Him. God doesn't forsake or slap Job around for his rash statements, but He gives him encouragement.

God hasn't liked what the friends have said about Him, [Job 42:7](#), because they have made God an inflexible and predictable dictator. They have presented God as one who ruthlessly pursues man in order to punish him.

Although Eliphaz and his friends are condemned by God, God does extend to them His mercy, which is something they were not willing to extend to Job. It was his friends, with all their self-confessed wisdom, who were the ones who were told to repent.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God’s anger was due to the consent of the three in becoming instruments of Satan in their efforts to force Job to renounce his integrity. If we may judge from the exceedingly large sacrifices that God required of each of them, God must have considered their sin to have been of the very greatest dimensions.’

Notice God calls Job ‘my servant’ three times, [Job 42:7](#) / [Job 42:8](#). This tells us that Job’s words were acceptable. God verifies this by saying what Job said about Him was right, [Job 42:8](#).

To think that Job even spoke more right than them, and they had a lot of good to say, but it was cancelled out by all their misconceptions. Job, in more ways than one, again became a priest. He had to offer up their sacrifices and make intercession, [Job 42:8](#) / [James 5:15-16](#).

International Critical Commentary says the following.

‘It is significant here that, Ezekiel required as burnt-offerings for the entire nation of Israel, [Ezekiel 45:22-25](#), seven bullocks and seven rams, whereas the expiatory sacrifices required by the Law for individuals were much smaller, [Leviticus 4](#).’

God accepted Job’s prayer of intercession for the three, and Job doesn’t hesitate in his prayer for them despite their behaviour earlier on, [Job 42:8](#). It is a sign of his spiritual depth and explains why God chose Job. Job forgives others as he has been forgiven, [Ephesians 4:32](#).

The friends had foolishly thought God had rejected Job and had accepted them. They also thought they were needed by God to correct Job. Now the truth is known.

Job was the one who was right, and they were the ones who were wrong. In addition, instead of Job needing them to correct him, they need Job to pray for them.

‘So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer. After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring. The LORD blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, an old man and full of years.’ [Job 42:9-17](#)

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar did what the Lord commanded them to do, but notice the words, ‘the LORD accepted Job’, [Job 42:9](#). We would have thought the text would read the Lord accepted ‘them’, but accepting Job would mean accepting them because Job is going to pray for them.

Since Job is a righteous man, his prayer is heard by God, [James 5:16](#). We must note that the restoration of Job’s fortunes didn’t come for any other reason than that he prayed for his friends.

The friends consistently maintained that God’s wrath does not turn away from the wicked, but now the friends are learning that God’s wrath can be turned away from the wicked by the prayer of a righteous man, [Genesis 18](#).

Notice that Job wouldn’t allow himself to be filled with bitterness, anger and hostility with the way they treated him, the way they crushed his spirit. Job is too great a man to hold grudges.

It was customary for relatives to bring money to the person who was restored, [Job 42:11](#) / [Genesis 33:19](#) / [Joshua 24:32](#). This is an unknown custom or tradition or perhaps an act of charity to help Job restore his estate.

The Lord blesses Job, and Job works to restore his fortune. Job was the wealthiest man of his time before, [Job 1:3](#), now he is even more so, [Job 42:12](#). Before Job had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants, [Job 1:3](#). Now he has fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys, [Job 42:12](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The prophets often allude to the double compensation in store for their afflicted people, [Isaiah 61:7](#) / [Jeremiah 16:14-18](#) / [Zechariah 9:12](#).’

Before he had ten children, [Job 1:2](#), and now Job is given ten more children, [Job 42:13](#). He had twenty children in total, ten of which were now in heaven. Of all the twenty children, only three are named: Jemimah, [Job 42:14](#), which means little dove, [Song of Songs 1:15](#).

Keziah, [Job 42:14](#), which means sweet-smelling, that is, the pleasure of a good life, [Psalms 45:8](#). Keren-Happuch, [Job 42:14](#), which means horn of pigment, that is, something which is used as eyepaint to beautify, [2 Kings 9:30](#) / [Jeremiah 4:30](#) / [Ezekiel 23:40](#).

The whole idea of the naming of his children is to show that Job has gained peace, happiness, and the good life again. His daughters were the most beautiful in the land, [Job 42:15](#). Notice that Job granted his daughters an inheritance along with their brothers, [Job 42:15](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This was an unusual privilege for women, [Numbers 27:1-11](#).’

Job’s life could equally have been doubled, too, because Job lived a hundred and forty years, [Job 42:16](#). This would mean that he was seventy years old when he was afflicted. Tradition suggests that he lived to a total age of two hundred and ten.

The Alexandrian Septuagint contains an addition to [Job 42:16](#), which says that Job died at the age of two hundred and forty. The Bible does not give his specific age when he died but says that he lived to see the fourth generation of his new descendants, and that he was ‘an old man and full of years,’ [Job 42:17](#).

The words ‘full of years’ simply means having lived to a considerable age, [Genesis 15:15](#) / [Genesis 25:8](#) / [Genesis 38:29](#) / [Psalms 91:16](#). Satan is defeated and Job lives a full life, he was once craving to die and now he has things he could never even dream about in his depression.

CONCLUSION

It is not wrong to question our faith in God because never once does God condemn Job for asking questions. If you don’t question, you will never learn. Job’s somewhat brash questioning came because of the position he was in. Until we die, we should always question and always be students.

When Job was asking these questions, we need to remember we are not dealing with a man who, when things go bad, begins to blaspheme God or wants to give up.

But we are dealing with a man who is struggling with his faith and struggling to hear more and learn more about what God wants us to do with our lives, or what God wants us to do.

Nothing is too hard for God, so we should be impressed by His power. No one on the face of this earth can attain wisdom in any degree apart from God revealing it to us through His Word, [Ecclesiastes 12:13-14](#).

God is in control, and no matter what people think or believe, God does notice the conduct of people, whether Christians or not, Proverbs 15:3, so it is best if our conduct is pleasing to Him.

Suffering is not just about the pain it can teach, but also to discipline and strengthen, James 1:2-4. It should not be seen as just punishment. We should not expect our questions to be answered immediately.

The devil is our enemy; God is not. The devil seeks to destroy the whole of humankind; he doesn't want hope and salvation for us; he wants to take us to him. No matter how bad things are, we need to learn to trust that uprightness wins in the end, 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

Unlike Job's family and friends, God will not forsake us, Hebrews 13:5. Hold no grudges but pray for everyone. It is said people often act in bitterness in the face of adversity, but we must root it out, Hebrews 12:15.