

The Book of JOB

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book bears as its title the name of its chief character—Job, Heb. *'Iyyob*.

2. Authorship. Early Jewish tradition, though not unanimously, assigned the authorship of the book to Moses. The Babylonian Talmud claims, “Moses wrote his own book, and the passages about Balaam and Job” (*Baba Bathra*, 14b, 15a). This assertion is rejected by most modern scholars as well as by many of earlier date. Some of these suggest Elihu, Solomon, and Ezra as possible authors. Others believe the book to be the work of an unnamed author, perhaps of the time of Solomon, or of the time of David, or of the era of the Captivity. All of these claims that have been developed at length by various authors are conjectural, with insufficient evidence, either internal or external, for positive identification.

There remains much to support the tradition that ascribes the book to Moses. Moses spent 40 years in Midian, which would give him ample background for the strong Arabic flavor that is evident throughout the book. Moses’ Egyptian background also explains the allusions to Egyptian life and practice that occur in the book. The picture of God as creator and sustainer fits well with the creation narrative preserved in another book written by Moses (see Ed 159).

Some scholars object to Mosaic authorship on the grounds of dissimilarity of style between Job and other books attributed to Moses. The argument from style is a tenuous one. Naming Moses as author of the book of Job does not preclude the possibility that much of the material may have already been in written form—penned, perhaps, by the hand of Job himself. The subject matter of Job is altogether different from that of the other books of Moses, and would require different treatment. On the other hand, striking similarities of style can be demonstrated. For instance, certain words used in the book of Job appear also in the Pentateuch, but nowhere else in the Old Testament; many other words common to both Job and the Pentateuch are seldom used by other Bible writers.

The title *'El-Shaddai*, “the Almighty” (see Vol. I, p. 171), is used 31 times in the book of Job and 6 times in the book of Genesis, but occurs in this particular form nowhere else in the Bible.

3. Historical Setting. The book of Job is a poem of human experience, with a prophet of God as its author. The above comments reveal the approximate time of the writing of the book—during Moses’ sojourn in Midian. Job may have been a contemporary of Moses.

This concept regarding the date of authorship reveals why the book makes no mention of the Exodus or of events following it. These events had not yet occurred. Scholars who seek to place Job in the time of Solomon or later must explain the absence of all such historical allusions in Job. The similarity between Job and the wisdom literature does not indicate that Job copied the style of Solomon or his contemporaries. It is as reasonable to assume that Solomon was influenced by such a masterpiece as Job as to assume the opposite. We need not take either position.

The obvious setting of Job is that of Arabian Desert culture. Strangely enough, it is not an Israelitish setting. There were worshipers of God outside the confines of Abraham’s descendants. The setting is not political, military, or ecclesiastical. Rather, Job emerges from a domestic background, common to his age. He was a wealthy

landowner, honored and loved by his countrymen. He can be identified with no dynasty or ruling clan. He stands out, a lone, majestic figure in history, important because of his personal experience rather than because of his relationship to his time or to his contemporaries.

4. Theme. This is the story of a man finding his way back to normal life after a series of terrible, unexplainable reverses. The elements in the background that make the situation dramatic are (1) the contrast between Job's prosperity and his degradation, (2) the suddenness of his calamity, (3) the problem posed by the philosophy of suffering common in his day, (4) the cruelty of his friends, (5) the depth of his discouragement, (6) the gradual ascent to trust in God, (7) the dramatic appearance of God, (8) the repentance of Job, (9) the humiliation of his friends, (10) the restoration of Job.

No single statement is sufficient to cover the complex teaching of the book. Many minor themes fit into the larger theme, making the book as a whole resemble a symphony of ideas. One of the grandest contributions of the book is its picture of God. Never have the glory and profundity of God been more eloquently expressed, except in the person of Jesus Christ Himself. Satan tries to impugn God, circumstances tempt Job to doubt God's love, friends misinterpret God; yet, in the end, God reveals Himself so magnificently that Job is led to exclaim, "Now mine eye seeth thee" (ch. 42:5). It is significant that, even in the depths of his sorrow, Job mourns more over what seems to him his loss of God than he does over the loss of property and family. God stands at the center of the book, sometimes hidden by clouds of misunderstanding, but finally vindicated as a just and loving Creator.

The problem of suffering also looms large in the book. The reader of the narrative is acquainted from the outset with the reason for Job's misfortunes. Job was not aware of Satan's intrigues against him. On the contrary, Job and his friends were steeped in a tradition that claimed that suffering was always punishment for specific sin. Job was not aware of such sin, and was faced with the predicament of finding an explanation for his misfortune. Over the obstacles of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, placed in his path by the current tradition, Job had to make his way from despair to confidence.

In his sickness Job was brought face to face with death. He was thus led to ponder the condition of man after death. Job considered death a sleep (ch. 14:12), with a resurrection beyond (vs. 14, 15). The presence of this statement has been a stumbling block to commentators who believe in the conscious state of the dead. Many fanciful interpretations have been made of Job's references to the future life, though such references are in full harmony with the teaching of other scriptures.

Another secondary theme is the personification of Wisdom. As Solomon did later, Job extolled wisdom as the greatest good. Both writers associate wisdom with "the fear of the Lord" (Job 28:28; Prov. 15:33).

In interpreting the book of Job, distinction must be made between those ideas that express divine truth and the statements of personal feeling and opinion that are expressed by the various characters in the narrative. For example, the philosophy of suffering set forth by the friends of Job is not correct. It reflects the faulty thinking of the times. The bitter speeches are not in harmony with God's will. Inspiration has recorded the mistaken notions of certain men, but that does not make these ideas correct. The reader of Job must always distinguish between the truths that God is teaching and the faulty ideas often

expressed by the finite speakers. To use a statement from Bildad, for example, to establish a doctrine is to follow a questionable principle of interpretation.

In the comment on the book alternate interpretations are given certain passages. The principal reason for this is the obscurity of the Hebrew text. Often Hebrew words have several meanings. These meanings are frequently quite dissimilar—even opposite. In some cases a statement may be interpreted in several ways. In such instances variant possible interpretations are given. At times the Hebrew is so obscure that conjecture is involved. These problems, however, do not materially affect the over-all meaning of the text.

The amazing feature of Job is the literary skill with which the theme is developed. Prof. George Foot Moore of Harvard University speaks of the composition as the greatest work of Hebrew literature that has come down to us, and one of the greatest poetical works of the world's literature. Another eulogist calls it "The Matterhorn of the Old Testament."

The book of Job cannot be well understood without attention to its design. The book is obviously a poem. The basis of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. This is a poetic form in which an idea is expressed in two short sentences. Sometimes the two sentences are almost identical, as in ch. 3:25. Sometimes the second expression is an amplification of the first and adds an additional thought (see ch. 5:12). For a discussion of Hebrew parallelisms see pp. 24–27.

The book has three divisions: prologue, poem, epilogue. The poem is divided into three parts: the dialogues between Job and his friends, Elihu's speech, God's intervention. In Job's arguments with his friends there are three cycles, each of which contains three speeches by Job and one each by the friends (except for the absence of Zophar's speech in the third cycle). In Job's final address there are three speeches. God is introduced as making three addresses. The epilogue is divided into three parts. This design may be carried even into the construction of some of the individual speeches in the book. Such an arrangement is in no way surprising; it is in perfect accord with the genius of Hebrew poetry. (See on ch. 27:13 for the view that Zophar made a third address.)

A word is in order regarding repetition in the book of Job. The average reader is impressed—and sometimes discouraged—by the many instances of repetition of the same idea. It must be remembered that all the speeches of Job's friends were intended to prove one idea—that misfortune should be construed as punishment. Elihu also developed one main theme—that misfortune should be construed as discipline. Job, on the other hand, was aiming at one objective—the vindication of his challenged integrity. In each instance every resource is exploited toward the proving of the case. This leads to the expression of the same thought in many different settings—for example, each of the friends covers the same ground, emphasizes the same ideas, and frequently employs the same expressions.

It should be observed that the prevalence of repetition ceases when God begins to speak. The speeches of the friends have been compared to so many wheels revolving on the same axle. Their sameness makes this comparison apt. Elihu's speech represents the pent-up emotion of a young man enthusiastic over what he considers a great idea. God's speeches are different. They are in a class by themselves. All the way through the divine utterances there is progress. Every phrase is full of meaning. God's speeches are a clear revelation of the divine One, who is using the objects of creation as a medium of

expression. These facts must be recognized by the student of Job in order that the outline of the book may be correctly interpreted.

5. Outline.

- I. Prose Prelude, 1:1 to 2:13.
 - A. Job and his family, 1:1–5.
 - B. Satan obtains permission to afflict Job, 1:6–12.
 - C. Satan afflicts Job, 1:13–19.
 - D. Job's resignation, 1:20–22.
 - E. Satan afflicts Job with disease, 2:1–10.
 - F. The arrival of the three friends, 2:11–13.
- II. The Dialogues Between Job and His Friends, 3:1 to 31:40.
 - A. The first cycle, 3:1 to 11:20.
 1. Job's first speech: his deep discouragement, 3:1–26.
 2. Eliphaz' speech: Job reproved, 4:1 to 5:27.
 3. Job's second speech: the seriousness of his affliction, 6:1 to 7:21.
 4. Bildad's speech: Job accused of being a sinner, 8:1–22.
 5. Job's third speech: complaint regarding God's dealings with him, 9:1 to 10:22.
 6. Zophar's speech: an appeal for repentance, 11:1–20.
 - B. The second cycle, 12:1 to 20:29.
 1. Job's first speech: he maintains his integrity, 12:1 to 14:22.
 2. Eliphaz' speech: he reproves Job for impiety, 15:1–35.
 3. Job's second speech: he accuses his friends of being unmerciful, 16:1 to 17:16.
 4. Bildad's speech: he insists that calamity overtakes the wicked, 18:1–21.
 5. Job's third speech: he expresses his belief in the resurrection, 19:1–29.
 6. Zophar's speech: he describes the present and future punishment of the wicked, 20:1–29.
 - C. The third cycle, 21:1 to 31:40.
 1. Job's first speech: he maintains that the wicked sometimes prosper, 21:1–34.
 2. Eliphaz' speech: he urges Job to repent, 22:1–30.
 3. Job's second speech: he expresses his longing for an opportunity to appear before God, 23:1 to 24:25.
 4. Bildad's speech: he asserts that man cannot be justified before God, 25:1–6.
 5. Job's third and longest speech: he reviews his experience and maintains his innocence, 26:1 to 31:40.
- III. The Speeches of Elihu, 32:1 to 37:24.
 - A. Introduction and first speech: he presents a new philosophy of suffering, 32:1 to 33:33.
 - B. Second speech: he endeavors to vindicate God, 34:1–37.
 - C. Third speech: he reasons God has not heeded Job, 35:1–16.
 - D. Fourth speech: he presents the God of the thunderstorm, 36:1 to 37:24.
- IV. God's Answer, 38:1 to 41:34.
 - A. First address: the physical universe reveals God, 38:1–41.
 - B. Second address: animal life reveals God, 39:1–30.
 - C. Third address: behemoth and leviathan reveal God, 40:1 to 41:34.
- V. Prose Postlude, 42:1–17.
 - A. Job's acknowledgment of God, 42:1–6.
 - B. Job prays for his friends, 42:7–9.
 - C. Job's restoration, 42:10–17.

CHAPTER 1

1 *The holiness, riches, and religious care of Job for his children. 6 Satan, appearing before God, by calumny obtaineth leave to tempt Job. 13 Understanding of the loss of his goods and children, in his mourning he blesseth God.*

1. Uz. This geographical location has not been positively identified. According to Lam. 4:21 “the land of Uz” in Jeremiah’s day was either equated with Edom, or else the “daughter of Edom” was dwelling away from home in a land that perhaps had been conquered by Edom. The latter is probably correct, for “the land of Uz” and Edom are separately listed in a long catalogue of nations that were to suffer divine vengeance (Jer. 25:20, 21). However, the scant Scriptural data regarding the residence of Job’s companions, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (Job 2:11), seem to indicate that they came from somewhere in the vicinity of Edom. For example, Eliphaz was a Temanite. Edom and Teman are listed in a way that closely connects the two (see Jer. 49:7, 20; Eze. 25:13; Amos 1:11, 2; Obadiah 8, 9). Bildad’s tribe, comprising the Shuhites, probably sprang from Keturah, Abraham’s concubine (Gen. 25:2). Buz, the home of Job’s fourth companion, Elihu (Job 32:2), is also connected with Tema, Eliphaz’ home town (see Jer. 25:23).

Despite these evidences that point toward the Edomite area as the location of Uz, other factors have led some to different conclusions. The LXX for Uz has *Ausites*, said to be an area in the northern part of the Arabian Desert between Palestine and the Euphrates River. Gesenius defends this locality as the Uz of Job 1:1. Its proximity to Chaldea, whence the marauding bands came that carried away Job’s camels (v. 17), tends to give credence to this theory. On the other hand, the testimony of the LXX cannot always be relied on, as, for example, the statement in the appendix to the LXX of Job which claims that Job was one of the kings of Edom.

Other traditions, preserved by the Arabs, place Uz in the vicinity of Damascus. In fact, a location 40 mi. southwest of Damascus still bears the name Deir Eiyub, perpetuating the name of Job. This location and the north Arabian location have been defended inasmuch as Job is spoken of as the greatest of the “men of the east” (v. 3). It is assumed that this term applies to territory east of Palestine. The vicinity of Edom thus would not qualify geographically. On the other hand, if we take the position that Moses is the author of the book (see Introduction, p. 493), his geographical orientation may have been that of Egypt or Midian rather than Palestine.

There is little further in the book itself to aid in identifying Uz. Job’s sons and daughters lived in an area where a “great wind from the wilderness” struck them (v. 19). They lived in a cultivated area where “oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them” (v. 14). The home of Job was in or near a city (ch. 29:7). The picture, fragmentary as it is, seems to be that of a marginal area of farms and cities on the edge of a desert. Such a situation would not be uncommon in many parts of the East.

Job. Heb. *’Iyyob*, which some regard as from the root *’ayab*, meaning “to be hostile,” “to treat as an enemy.” Hence “Job” may mean “the assailed one.” Gesenius suggests that the primary idea of *’ayab* may be that of breathing, blowing, or puffing upon anyone, as expressive of anger or hatred. However, it cannot be established that the name “Job” comes from this root. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon in the Scriptures for a man’s name to describe his major characteristic. These names were bestowed, doubtless, in later

life, as was the name “Israel” (Gen. 32:28). The name “Job” is unknown elsewhere in Hebrew literature, but occurs in the Amarna Letters of the 14th century B.C., under the form *Ayyâb*. The name is also attested in cuneiform documents from Mari, where it is written *Ayyâbum*. The “Job” of Gen. 46:13 is not from the Heb. *’Iyyob* but from *Yob*.

In Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D.C., is the famous statue of grief by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. It is intended to be an embodiment of all human grief. Regarding it a French critic said, “I know of no work so profound in sentiment, so exalted in its art, and executed by methods so simple and broad.” The Bible has its “embodiment of grief” in the person of Job. Paraphrasing the art critic, there is nothing more profound in sentiment or more exalted in its art than this book.

Perfect. Heb. *tam*. This word does not necessarily imply absolute sinlessness. It signifies, rather, completeness, integrity, sincerity, but in a relative sense. The man who is “perfect” in the sight of God is the man who has reached the degree of development that Heaven expects of him at any given time. The Hebrew term *tam* is equivalent to the Greek *teleios*, which is often translated “perfect” in the NT but which is better translated “full grown” or “mature” (see 1 Cor. 14:20, where *teleioi* is translated “men” in contrast with “children”). It is difficult to find one word that is adequate as a translation of *tam*. Some translators, following the LXX, have used the word “blameless.” This does not seem sufficient to imply the positive connotation of wholeness and entirety present in *tam*.

Upright. Heb. *yashar*, “straight,” “level,” “just,” “right.”

Feared God. A common Biblical expression denoting loyalty and devotion to God. Here a contrast is intended between Job, who was true to God, and those who were worshipers of other deities.

Eschewed. Literally, “turned aside.” The idea is that of avoiding evil, turning away from it as from the presence of danger. The four ideas included in this verse are not mere repetitions to impress upon the reader that Job was a good man. Rather, they complement one another in forming a total picture of an outstanding character.

3. Substance. Heb. *miqneh*, “cattle,” from the root *qanah*, “to acquire property.” The wealth of the East was largely counted in terms of cattle.

Sheep. Heb. *so’n*, a word referring to both sheep and goats. These animals provided food and clothing.

Camels. These made commerce possible with remote areas.

Asses. The usual domestic beasts of burden.

Great household. The many servants who performed the labor.

4. Feasted. Literally, “made a banquet.” The Hebrew word for “banquet” comes from a root meaning “to drink,” thus indicating an occasion for drinking.

His day. Many have conjectured that this expression might refer to birthdays, drawing the inference from ch. 3:1, where Job is said to have “cursed his day.” Others have imagined that these sons and daughters feasted every day and that this description is symbolic of their wealth. Still others have thought that the customary feast days are alluded to. The matter cannot be decided with finality.

5. Were gone about. Or, “had made the round,” or “completed the circle.” The picture is that of a cycle of days, following each other in rotation.

Sanctified them. As the patriarchal priest of the household, he “consecrated” his children. It seems that Job summoned his children to appear at his house, where some form of religious ceremony was conducted.

My sons have sinned. The sons apparently were living lives of carefree luxury. Job, in his spiritual sensitivity, recognized their dangers, and implored divine forgiveness in their behalf. The sin that Job feared in his sons, strangely enough, was the same sin that he himself was later tempted to commit. They were tempted by ease; he was tempted by hardship.

Cursed. Heb. *barak*, more than 200 times translated “to bless.” But here and in Job 1:11; 2:5, 9; 1 Kings 21:10, 13, the required meaning seems to be the exact opposite. Rather than to assign directly to *barak* opposite meanings, many scholars prefer to regard the use here as a euphemism. Others translate *barak* by its usual meaning “to bless” and translate *’Elohim* “gods” instead of “God,” thus implying that the sons blessed false deities. It appears, however, that “curse” is intended and that *’Elohim* means the true God. Words with exactly opposite meanings are found also in other ancient languages such as Egyptian.

Continually. Literally, “all the days.” Though a man of wealth and influence, Job did not permit his responsibilities to diminish his concern for his children, whom he continually held before his God.

6. There was a day. Jewish tradition suggests that this “day” was the Jewish religious New Year. Some Christian interpreters see in this phrase the yearly day of judgment. There is no need to have this day synchronize with any human festivity. It seems unnecessary that God’s appointments with His celestial beings should fit into earthly calculations. The phrase obviously implies that the meeting was held at God’s appointed time (see ch. 2:1).

Sons of God. The LXX translates the phrase, “angels of God.” Evidently angels are meant (see DA 834; GC 518; 6T 456). Angels, like men, are created beings (Col. 1:16), and in this sense sons of God.

Before the Lord. The place is not specified and hence cannot be known. It does not appear reasonable that the scene took place in heaven itself, for Satan was excluded from its precincts (Rev. 12:7–9; SR 26, 27). He did have a degree of access to other worlds (see EW 290).

Satan. Heb. *haśśatan*, literally, “the adversary.” From this comes the verb *śatan*, “to be an adversary” or “to act as an adversary.” Verb and noun occur together in Zech. 3:1, which reads literally, “the adversary standing at his right hand to oppose him.” The English word “Satan” comes directly from the Hebrew. Satan is not one of the “sons of God.” He came among them, but he was not one of them (see GC 518).

7. Going to and fro. Heb. *shut*, “to go about” or “to rove about.” For example, the word is used to describe the search for manna (Num. 11:8), the taking of a census (2 Sam. 24:2), and the search for a good man (Jer. 5:1).

Walking up and down. Compare the expression, “Your adversary the devil ... walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

9. For nought. Heb. *chinnam*, “gratis,” “for nothing,” “unreservedly,” “in vain.” The same word is used in ch. 2:3, where the Lord said to Satan, “thou movedst me against him, to destroy him *without cause*”; and again in ch. 9:17, where Job complains that God multiplied his wounds “*without cause*.”

Satan insinuated that Job served God from selfish motives—for the material gain that God permitted to accrue as an inducement and a reward for his service. He attempted to deny that true religion springs from love and an intelligent appreciation of God’s character, that true worshipers love religion for its own sake—not for reward; that they serve God because such service is right in itself, and not merely because heaven is full of glory; and that they love God because He is worthy of their affections and confidence, and not merely because He blesses them.

10. About his house. Satan mentions three items that are protectively hedged in: Job himself, his house, and his possessions. Misfortune struck, first his possessions (vs. 15–17), then his house (vs. 18, 19), and finally Job himself (ch. 2:7, 8).

Substance. Heb. *miqneh*. See on v. 3.

Increased. Heb. *paraş*, “to break through,” “to burst out.” *Paraş* is used in the expression “thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Prov. 3:10). Job’s prosperity was phenomenal.

11. But. Heb. *’ulam*. A strong adversative to emphasize the contrast between Job’s present felicity and his predicted attitude under adversity. The Hebrew may be translated emphatically, “surely he will curse thee.” See on v. 5 regarding “curse” as a translation of *barak*.

12. In thy power. God accepted the challenge. He lifted His protection from Job’s possessions, permitting Job to demonstrate that he was equal to the test. The Lord desired to show that men will serve Him from pure love. It was necessary to prove Satan’s sneer unjust. Yet through it all God would overrule for purposes of mercy (see DA 471).

13. There was a day. See on v. 6; cf. ch. 2:1. These three passages, introduced by the same time clause, present the setting for three successive scenes. The first and third of these scenes took place at an unknown site, perhaps in the celestial realm (see on v. 6), the one now under consideration, on earth. The scene opens with one of the customary feasts of Job’s children, this time at the home of the oldest brother. The lives of the children are carefree and happy, the life of Job, tranquil.

14. Were plowing. This indicates that the day was not a general holiday.

15. The Sabeans. Perhaps descendants of Cush (Gen. 10:7), or of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:3). The Sabeans have been identified as living in various sections of Arabia. Hence the location of the land of Uz (see on v. 1) cannot be determined by locating the Sabeans.

16. The fire of God. The LXX omits “of God.” This fire is considered by many commentators to be lightning, but such an assumption is not necessary. Whatever the destructive agent was, the ancients would regard it as coming from God. The facts of the great controversy, so strikingly demonstrated in the present experience, were not understood, and men attributed to God that which was often the work of the adversary. Even with the mischievous devices of Satan revealed, acts that God permits are often attributed to God.

17. The Chaldeans. Heb. *Kašdim*. The LXX reads “the horsemen,” but this is probably interpretative to indicate that the translators thought the roving bands of *Kašdim* used cavalry.

Fell upon. Or, “made a raid upon.” Such raids have always been common in Arabia and other parts of the Near East.

19. From the wilderness. Literally, “from beyond the wilderness.” The expression seems to describe a wind sweeping across the desert and coming with full force upon the inhabited area. The first and third tragedies were perpetrated by rapacious men—the Sabeans and the Chaldeans. The second and fourth tragedies resulted from fire and wind—agencies beyond human control.

Young men. Heb. *ne‘arim*, literally, “boys,” “youth.” Ages from infancy (Ex. 2:6) to young manhood may be comprehended. *Ne‘arim* is translated “servants” In Job 1:15, 16, 17. In v. 19 it includes the sons and daughters (v. 18) and the servants who attended them.

Job was given no opportunity to recover his equilibrium between blows. The poignancy of the tragedies were accentuated by the ruthless timing of the events. In a few short minutes his world collapsed.

20. Rent his mantle. The customary gestures of grief (see Gen. 37:29, 34; 44:13; 1 Kings 21:27; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 47:5).

Worshipped. Heb. *shachah*, “to bow down,” “to prostrate oneself.” Job might have cursed the Sabeans and the Chaldeans. He might have cursed the fire and the wind. He might have cursed the God who allowed such catastrophes. Instead, he “worshipped.” Compare the experience of David, who, after the death of his child, “came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped” (2 Sam. 12:20).

21. Return thither. The language here must not be forced. It is poetry, not prose. It is simply a poetic way of saying that man leaves this world as naked and helpless as he entered it. Job was not here speaking in the technical language of theology or metaphysics or physiology.

The Lord gave. This statement has become the classic expression of Christian resignation. Ever since the Fall, Satan has maligned God’s character. Worse still, he has sought to make it appear that the evil deeds he has done should be charged against God (see GC 534).

Blessed. Job’s conduct was a dramatic denial of Satan’s insinuation (v. 11). To the question, “Does Job fear God without regard for selfish gain?” Job gave the answer “Yes.” Satan was perplexed. He had seen many who would have cursed God under similar circumstances—but Job’s attitude was inexplicable.

Fire raged over the parish of a German pastor, laying in ruins his home and the homes of his people. Then death claimed his wife and children. Disease laid him prostrate; then blindness overtook him. Under this avalanche of trouble, he dictated these words:

“My Jesus, as Thou wilt;
O may Thy will be mine!
Into Thy hand of love
I would my all resign.”

22. *Nor charged God foolishly.* The expression in Hebrew is idiomatic. Literally, “did not ascribe to God *tiphlah*.” *Tiphlah* seems to refer to that which is out of harmony with the character of God. In his reaction to the initial tragedy, Job said nothing he need later regret; he did not stoop to self-pity or melodramatic mourning; he kept his head when lesser men would have disintegrated under the staggering blows.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 DA 834; GC 518
7 MYP 51; 1T 341; 5T 294
8–12, Ed 155
9, 10 GC 513
10 GC 589
12 3T 311
12–19 GC 589
21 LS 253; 1T 110, 111

CHAPTER 2

1 *Satan appearing again before God obtaineth further leave to tempt Job. 7 He smiteth him with sore boils. 9 Job reproveth his wife, moving him to curse God. 11 His three friends condole with him in silence.*

1. *To present themselves.* See on ch. 1:6.

2. *Going to and fro.* See on ch. 1:7.

3. *An upright man.* See on ch. 1:1, 7.

Integrity. Heb. *tummah*. This word comes from the same root as the word translated “perfect” in this verse, and in ch. 1:1, 8. The idea is that of completeness (see on ch. 1:1).

To destroy him. Literally, “to swallow him up,” “to engulf.” The LXX for “him” reads “his possessions.”

Without cause. Heb. *chinnam*. Translated “for nought” (see on ch. 1:9).

4. *Skin for skin.* This expression has provoked much discussion among commentators. The saying, evidently proverbial, may have had its origin in the language of barter or exchange, signifying that a man would give up one thing for another, or one piece of property of less value in order to save a greater. In like manner he would be willing to surrender everything, in order that his life, the most valuable object, might be preserved. Satan is trying to show that a test of sufficient severity had not been imposed on Job to reveal his actual character. He advances the theory that every man has his price. Job’s integrity had demonstrated that a man may lose his property and still serve God; but Satan was not willing to admit that a man will maintain his loyalty to God if his life is placed in jeopardy. Compare Matt. 6:25.

6. *Save.* Heb. *shamar*, “to keep,” “to watch,” “to preserve.”

Life. Heb. *nephesh*, frequently translated “soul,” but here the meaning of physical life is definitely intended.

7. *Boils.* Heb. *shechin*, from a root that means, “to be hot,” “to be inflamed.” The word is used for the boils of the Egyptian plagues (Ex. 9:9), the eruptions of leprosy (Lev. 13:20), and for Hezekiah’s disease (2 Kings 20:7). The same disease may not be described in every case. Many have attempted to diagnose Job’s disease from the various symptoms indicated (Job 7:4, 5, 14; 17:1; 19:17–20; 30:17–19, 30). Some have assumed

that Job's boils were the purulent skin tumors commonly known today. Others have thought that Job was afflicted with elephantiasis. This disease takes its name from the appearance of the affected parts, which are covered with a knotty and fissured bark like the hide of an elephant. It is precarious to try to diagnose the disease of a man who lived 3,500 years ago, when our only information consists of a few nontechnical observations recorded in a book that is largely poetic. In the first place, it cannot safely be assumed that all the diseases of today are identical with those of Job's day. Second, the symptoms are too vague to warrant a conclusion. Third, it is not even certain that Satan's affliction of Job followed the plan of any then-known or now-known disease. It is sufficient to see Job as a great sufferer without trying to diagnose his specific ailment.

8. *A potsherd.* A piece of broken pottery, evidently used to relieve the violent itching, and perhaps to remove the discharge and crust from the eruptions.

Sat down among the ashes. A customary symbol of grief (see Isa. 58:5; Jer. 6:26; Jonah 3:6). For this clause the LXX reads, "sat upon a dung-heap outside the city," but this translation may be interpretative.

9. *His wife.* The Targum gives her name as Dinah, from which some have concluded that Job was the son-in-law of Jacob. This is, of course, only tradition.

Integrity. See on ch. 2:3.

Curse God. Job's wife tries to persuade Job to do what Satan wanted him to do. She says in effect, "What good is your virtue doing you? You might as well curse God and take the consequences." The LXX greatly enlarges the speech of Job's wife: "And when much time had passed, his wife said to him, How long wilt thou hold out, saying, Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance? for, behold, thy memorial is abolished from the earth, even thy sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows; and thou thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pangs which now beset me: but say some word against the Lord, and die."

The origin of the above statement is uncertain. It is not in any Hebrew manuscript now extant, and there are reasons for doubting whether it was in the earliest manuscripts of the LXX.

10. *Foolish.* Heb. *nebalah*. Not weakness of reason but religious and moral insensibility.

Receive evil. Here, again, is the complete resignation previously expressed in ch. 1:21. Job's question may be paraphrased as follows, "Should we receive all God's benefits as a matter of course and then complain when He sends affliction?"

11. *Eliphaz the Temanite.* See on ch. 1:1. One of Esau's sons was named Eliphaz. He, in turn, had a son named Teman (Gen. 36:11). Teman is named as a geographical location connected with Edom in Jer. 49:7; Eze. 25:13; Amos 1:11, 12; Obadiah 8, 9. There seems to be no definite information as to what part of Edom was the home of the Temanites.

Bildad the Shuhite. Commentators have connected Bildad with Shuah, the brother of Midian (Gen. 25:2), whose descendants were believed to have lived somewhere in the Edomite area. However, the inscriptions now point to *Shûkhu* on the middle Euphrates as the likely origin of Bildad.

Zophar the Naamathite. The name Zophar is otherwise unknown. There was a town of Naamah in southwest Judah (Joshua 15:41) to which Zophar may have belonged.

Made an appointment. The circumstances here mentioned suggest the lapse of considerable time since the calamities had overtaken Job. It would take time for word of his plight to reach these three friends. Then there had to be further time for the three men to communicate with one another and make their appointment. After that they had to travel to Job's home in the land of Uz. This passage of time helps to explain Job's change of attitude from the calm resignation of ch. 2:10 to the deep discouragement of ch. 3. The initial blows of tragedy appeared not to be as damaging to Job's morale as were the weeks of constant suffering of body and distress of mind that followed.

To mourn. Literally, "to shake the head as an expression of pity," "to make gestures of grief." Sometimes translated "to bemoan" (Job 42:11; Jer. 15:5; Jer. 16:5; etc.).

To comfort. Heb. *nacham*, related to a cognate Arabic root meaning "to breathe heavily."

12. Knew him not. Job was so marred by his affliction that he was not recognizable. His friends could not control their emotions when they saw his condition. They not only wept, which is the natural reaction to sorrow; they also observed expressions of grief customary in the East—tearing their robes and sprinkling dust or ashes on their heads (see Joshua 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12).

13. None spake a word. Some have observed that among the Jews and among Orientals generally it was a matter of decorum, dictated by a fine and true feeling, not to speak to a person in deep affliction until he gave an intimation of a desire to be comforted. If so, then as long as Job kept silence, his friends would refrain from conversation.

Unto him. This statement implies that they were free to discuss matters between themselves or with the servants who attended Job.

Grief. Literally, "pain," either physical or mental. Here probably both.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5–7DA 471; Ed 155

7 PP 129

7–10AA 575; 3T 311; 4T 525

CHAPTER 3

1 *Job curses the day and services of his birth.* 13 *The ease of death.* 20 *He complaineth of life, because of his anguish.*

1. Cursed his day. The word translated "cursed" is from *qalal*, a common term for cursing, and not *barak* as in chs. 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9 (see on ch. 1:5). The passing weeks had apparently reduced Job from an attitude of calm resignation to one of deep despair. Compare Jeremiah's cursing of the day of his birth in similar language (Jer. 20:14–18).

2. Spake. Heb. *'anah*, generally translated "to answer." Here it means "to respond to an occasion," "to speak in view of circumstances" (see Deut. 26:5; Isa. 14:10; Zech. 3:4). This verse ends the prose introduction to the book of Job.

Chapter 3:3–26 presents the first poem. It is divided into the three stanzas, vs. 3–10; 11–19; and 20–26. In the first stanza Job curses the day of his birth and the night of his conception. In the second he expresses the wish that he had died before birth. The third

stanza asks the question, Why does God compel men to live when they would rather die? His execrations are solemn, deep, and sublime. These poetic statements do not lend themselves to minute technical analysis. Job is not presenting logic. Rather, he is pouring out the impassioned feelings of a suffering soul.

Let the day perish. A poetic way of saying, “I wish I had never been born.” “Day” is here personified.

The night. “Night” is also personified. A simpler rendering would be “the night which said” (see RSV).

Man child. Heb. *geber*, “a man,” emphasized as being strong, distinguished from women and children. It is not the ordinary word to designate the male sex, which would be *zakar*. *Geber* is here poetically employed. As the announcement of the conception is made by the personified “night,” so the individual who was conceived is considered, not in the ordinary sense of a child, but as the man Job eventually was to become. The LXX makes the night that of Job’s birth rather than that of his conception. The reason is presumably to avoid the difficulty of announcing the sex of the child on the night of conception. However, by poetic fancy such knowledge is here ascribed to the night.

4. That day. Verses 4 and 5 curse the day of birth, vs. 6–10 the night of conception.

Darkness. The most dramatic curse that could be pronounced upon a day, because darkness is the opposite of day.

Regard it. Literally, “inquire after it.” God is the One who gives to the day its light. He is now called upon to pass it by.

Light shine. Emphasis is achieved by the reiteration.

5. The shadow of death. Heb. *šalmaweth*. Some scholars change the vowel pointings to read *šalmuth*, and translate it “deep darkness” (see RSV). *Šalmuth* is regarded as the strongest word in the Hebrew language expressing the idea of darkness (see Job 10:21, 22; 12:22; 16:16; 24:17; 34:22; Isa. 9:2; Jer. 2:6; Amos 5:8). Other scholars see insufficient reason for departing from the traditional vowel pointings, which are supported by the LXX, and retain the translation “shadow of death.”

Stain. From the Heb. *ga’al*, “to redeem,” “to act as kinsman.” Here probably in the sense of “to claim.” The word also has the meaning, “to stain” or “to pollute.” Both meanings give sense to the passage, but the former gives the more vivid imagery. The night, as next of kin to the day, would immediately upon the arrival of day claim it for itself. For a discussion of the meaning of *ga’al* in this sense see on Ruth 2:20.

Cloud. Let clouds, condensed, compacted, heaped together, settle down upon it. This is another way of expressing the idea of darkness that the poet is endeavoring to stress.

Blackness of the day. Probably a reference to eclipses, tornadoes, or sandstorms such as would darken a day.

6. That night. The night of Job’s conception (v. 3).

Darkness. Heb. *’ophel*, sometimes used to express the darkness of the underworld (see ch. 10:22).

Be joined. Literally, “rejoice.” The translation “be joined” requires a change of vowels in the Hebrew verb. Such a change is supported by Symmachus’ version of the LXX. However, the literal rendering is perfectly intelligible, and there seems to be insufficient reason to depart from it.

Let it not come. Job would banish from the records the night of his conception.

7. Solitary. Literally, “barren,” “hard,” “sterile.” Let that night be as destitute of good as a bare rock is of verdure.

8. Let them curse. This is a very puzzling text. Many commentators believe that Job was invoking the aid of sorcerers, “cursers of the day,” individuals who claimed to be able to bring curses on specific days. If this interpretation is correct, it does not follow that Job believed in such sorcerers. He merely recognized their existence, and in the language of poetry, he wished that there might be heaped on the night of his conception not only real evils but those that were imaginary. Clarke sees in the “cursers of the day” those who detest the day—those who hate daylight, such as adulterers, murderers, thieves, and bandits, for whose practices the night is more fitting.

Mourning. Literally, “leviathan.” The sentence should read, “who are ready to rouse up leviathan.” Those who apply the first line of the verse to the sorcerers see in the added line a further reference to the power of these sorcerers to rouse up leviathan. Ancient mythology had a great dragon who was the enemy of the sun and moon, and who was supposed to have power over eclipses. It seems unreasonable to believe that Job had any faith in such powers. If he is referring to mythology, he is doing so only to provide a vivid poetic figure.

9. Stars of the twilight. The word “twilight” may refer either to evening or to morning twilight; here, to the latter.

Dawning of the day. Literally, “eyelids of the dawn.”

10. My mother’s womb. Literally, “my womb,” that is, the womb that bare me. The night is here pictured as having the power to prevent conception.

11. Why? A repeated question of Job as it is of all sufferers throughout the ages. But in this case, Job is not asking why he was caused to suffer; he asks, rather, why he did not die in infancy. He is not so much seeking an answer as he is expressing his deep despair.

Give up the ghost. Literally, “die,” or “expire.” The expression “to give up the ghost” is an interpretative translation reflecting the theology of the translators regarding the nature of man. In most instances the expression translates a Hebrew or Greek word meaning simply “to expire” (see Gen. 25:8, 17; 49:33; Mark 15:37; Acts 5:5, 10). On the other hand “to give up the ghost [spirit]” is a literal translation of the Greek in Matt. 27:50.

12. Prevent. The word carries the obsolete meaning, “to anticipate,” or “to go before” (see 1 Thess. 4:15). A better translation of the form of the Hebrew verb here used would be “to meet,” “to confront,” “to receive.” Job was probably asking, “Why did my mother take me onto her lap?”

13. Slept. Job pictures death as quiet, restful sleep (see Ps. 13:3; John 11:11; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:14). He is not in this present passage looking forward to the life following the resurrection. He is simply contrasting his present sufferings with the repose he might enjoy if he were dead.

14. With kings. Job contrasts his miserable condition with the dignity of death. His thought has been well expressed in Bryant’s “Thanatopsis”:

“Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,

The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulcher.”

Desolate places. Brevity makes the discovery of the exact meaning of this expression difficult. Some see in the clause the idea of kings building monuments for themselves by rebuilding ruined, desolate cities (see Isa. 61:4; Eze. 36:10, 33; Mal. 1:4); others, the erecting of edifices that have since become desolate. Others believe that the term is an ironical designation of splendid palaces which, notwithstanding their grandeur, must at last fall in ruins.

16. Hidden untimely birth. Previously Job had asked, “Why did I not die at birth?” (see on v. 11).

17. Troubling. Literally, “raging,” “excitement.” The word describes the unrest, the agitation, the inward raging, that characterize the wicked. The word comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to be agitated,” “to quiver,” “to quake” (see Deut. 2:25; Prov. 29:9; Isa. 5:25). Job 3:17–19 does not refer to the future life. It describes the oblivion of the grave. The agitation, the weariness, the galling servitude of life, are swallowed up in dreamless sleep. While this is a beautiful thought, the Christian must see beyond the grave to the resurrection and immortality. Job later expresses this greater hope (ch. 14:14, 15).

18. Prisoners. Or, “bondmen.” Here those who work at enforced labor and are constantly under the lash of the “oppressor” are indicated. The word translated “oppressor” is the one rendered “taskmaster” in Ex. 3:7; 5:6, 10, 13, 14.

19. The small and great. The equality of all ages in death is beautifully portrayed in Bryant’s “Thanatopsis”:

“... As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life’s green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.”

20. Wherefore? More simply, “Why?” This expression introduces the third stanza of Job’s lament. He has been meditating on the quiet serenity of death. Now his thoughts return to his own misery, and he repeats the age-old question, “Why?” The stanza is the picture of a man earnestly longing for death, but doomed to live on and on. The experience has its modern counterpart in the cancer sufferer who wastes away during long, agonizing, futile months before death ultimately provides release. Now, as then, the question is often asked, “Why?”

Light. See v. 16. Light seems to be used here as a figure of life.

Bitter in soul. Heb. *mare nephesh*. The combination of these Hebrew words is variously translated: “angry” (Judges 18:25), “in bitterness of soul” (1 Sam. 1:10), “discontented” (1 Sam. 22:2), “soul [was] grieved” (1 Sam. 30:6), “chafed in [their] minds” (2 Sam. 17:8). The expression here is plural. Job is thinking, not alone of himself, but of other sufferers as well.

23. Hid. Job feels thwarted. He knows not what way to turn.

Hedged in. Satan had claimed that God had built a hedge of protection around Job (ch. 1:10). Now Job claims that God has built a hedge of affliction about him.

24. Before I eat. Literally, “before my bread.” The meaning is uncertain. Some translate the phrase, but with doubtful authority, “instead of my food.” Others have suggested the following readings: “takes the place of my daily food,” “in the manner of my food,” “when I begin to eat.” Some have supposed that Job’s condition made eating painful; others that sighing was as constant as his daily food. The poetic nature of the passage makes the latter explanation seem more probable.

Roarings. Or, “groanings,” “sighings.” These expressions of Job’s grief are like a continuous stream of water.

25. The thing. Does this imply that Job had harbored a fear of disaster before trouble struck him? This deduction is not necessary. Translated literally, the text reads: “For I fear a fear, and it cometh upon me; and that which I dread cometh unto me.” It seems that Job is describing his experience after his troubles began. Each catastrophe increases his fear of further trouble; and in each case, so it appears, further trouble comes.

26. Trouble. See on v. 17.

It must not be concluded that Job’s statements of ch. 3 represent a laudable reaction to calamity. This poem contains much of complaint and bitterness that, under the circumstances, may be forgiven but not approved. The fact that Job did complain of his lot makes him seem closer to humanity than if he had been unperturbed by his misfortunes. Job was spiritually great, not because he was never discouraged, but because he eventually found his way out of discouragement. If we wish to see a perfect example of fortitude under suffering, we must look at Jesus, not at Job. Job, in his suffering, cursed the day of his birth; Jesus said, “For this cause came I unto this hour” (John 12:27). In this world of sin perfection of character comes only through suffering (see on Heb. 2:10; 1 Peter 4:13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 PK 162; 3T 262

CHAPTER 4

1 *Eliphaz reproveth Job for want of religion. 7 He teacheth God’s judgments to be not for the righteous, but for the wicked. 12 His fearful vision, to humble the excellency of creatures before God.*

1. Eliphaz. The first of the friends to reply to Job. His statements are more profound than those of his companions. Perhaps he was the oldest of the group. He summarizes with great clarity the prevailing attitude current in his day regarding the relationship between suffering and sin. There is some truth in Eliphaz’ speech. He reveals keen insight, but he lacks warmth and sympathy, and completely misses the mark in his appraisal of Job’s situation. Eliphaz is an example of how sincere people who fail to understand God and His attitude toward man may mishandle profound truths.

2. Assay to commune. Eliphaz begins his speech with a question. Such a form is frequently used in Job (see chs. 8:2; 11:2; 15:2; 18:2; 22:2). It is difficult to be sure whether the tone of Eliphaz’ question is apologetic or mildly sarcastic.

Grieved. Literally, “be wearied,” “be impatient.” The same word is translated “faintest” in v. 5.

Withhold himself. Eliphaz has observed Job’s affliction and listened to Job’s complaint. He feels he can keep quiet no longer. He evidently came to the scene with a

well-defined philosophy regarding suffering. Now he attempts to interpret Job's plight in the light of this philosophy. He appears determined, at all costs, to protect his preconceived ideas.

3. Instructed. Perhaps here in a moral sense, teaching others to regard afflictions as corrective chastenings.

Weak hands. Literally, "the hands hanging down." A sign of despondency and discouragement. Eliphaz pays tribute to Job's endeavors in behalf of his fellow men.

4. Falling. Or, "stumbling," "staggering," "tottering."

Feeble knees. Or, "bowing knees"; knees unable to carry the weight of a heavy load. Job had been successful in bringing help to discouraged, afflicted people. He had no doubt pointed such people to God, and his counsel had been effective in their behalf.

5. But now. The situation has changed. Job can no longer take an objective attitude toward affliction. Personal experience is called upon to test the former theories.

Faintest. Or, "are wearied," "are impatient" (see on v. 2).

Troubled. Or, "disturbed," "dismayed," "frightened." Eliphaz makes a significant observation. People who endeavor to help others to bear their afflictions well should be an example of fortitude in trial. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether Job had ever had occasion to encourage a person whose condition was as serious as his own. Eliphaz seems to fail to recognize that in a few days Job had suffered more reverses than the average man is called upon to meet in a lifetime. To Eliphaz' legal mind, trouble is trouble, and Job, who had lost all, is expected to meet his sorrow with the same fortitude as another man who, for example, might have lost one of his children.

6. They fear. Evidently the fear of God. The clause may be translated, "Is not the fear [of God] your confidence?"

Uprightness. Or, "integrity," "perfection." The Hebrew word thus translated is from the same root as the one rendered "perfect" in ch. 1:1. To balance the verse this second line should be translated "[Is not] your hope the integrity of your ways?" Eliphaz refers to two of Job's great virtues, his fear of God and his integrity. Are not these sufficient in the hour of trial?

7. Who ever perished, being innocent? Verses 7–11 state the philosophy that suffering is the direct punishment for specific sin.

8. Plow iniquity. The intended conclusion was inescapable that Job was reaping as he had sown.

9. Breath of his nostrils. A poetic figure attributing human characteristics to God.

10. Lion. Verses 10 and 11 describe five classes of lions that cover the entire range from the whelp to the old, helpless beast. The picture suggests the breaking up of a den of lions. The illustration is significant in a country where lions are numerous. In the minds of the people lions were synonymous with violence and destructiveness. Eliphaz is pointing to the destruction of all classes of wicked men, young and old, weak or strong, even as a group of lions is dispersed. Eliphaz may have been alluding to the family of Job.

12. Thing. Heb. *dabar*, most frequently translated "word," and preferably so here.

Little. Heb. *shemeš*, "a whisper." In one of the most vivid passages of the book Eliphaz describes what he claims to be a divine revelation.

13. Thoughts. Literally, "disquieting thoughts," "excited thoughts." The darkness of night provided the eerie atmosphere for what follows.

14. Bones. Forming the supporting structure to the human frame, bones are, by figure, often closely associated with inward emotions (see Prov. 3:8; 12:4; 15:30; 17:22; Job 30:30; Ps. 31:10).

Shake. Applied to the bones figuratively in the sense noted above.

16. Discern the form. We have no assurance that this was a genuine revelation. Eliphaz apparently believed in its validity. The Bible nowhere even suggests that he possessed the prophetic gift.

17. Mortal man. Heb. *'enosh*. The two English words translate a single Hebrew word.

'Enosh means simply “man” or “mankind.” It is translated “man” 31 times, “men” 7 times, “another” once, and in connection with other nouns, “familiar” once, and “stranger” once. Only here is it translated with the descriptive adjective “mortal.” The translation is interpretative in that it supplies an adjective where the original has none. The interpretation is selective because it chooses one of the many attributes of the human family, each of which would have equal validity if an adjective needed to be supplied. Such, however, is not essential. The text, therefore, does not lend support to the doctrine of the mortality of man. However, the clear proof of man’s mortality is found in numerous scriptures (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; etc.).

It is possible that the translation “mortal man” has come to us through the medium of the LXX. In Job 4:17 that version translates *'enosh* by *brotos*, which properly means “mortal man.” However, the LXX has *brotos* also in chs. 9:2; 10:4; 15:14; 25:4; 28:4, 13; 32:8; 33:12; 36:25; in none of which the KJV renders *'enosh* as “mortal man.”

Furthermore, the LXX does not consistently translate *'enosh* by *brotos*, even in the book of Job (see the LXX of chs. 5:17; 7:1, 17; 10:5; 14:19; 25:6; 33:26).

More just. Many translators render this verse, “Can a mortal man be righteous before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?” The Hebrew allows either translation. The use of “before” rather than “more than” seems to strengthen the meaning of the verse. Not only is man unable to surpass God in righteousness and purity; he actually is unable to be just and pure in the sight of God.

18. Servants. Here evidently heavenly beings, for they are contrasted with members of the human race (v. 19). It is not to be concluded that these beings are sinful. In their measure they are perfect, but their holiness is as nothing compared with the infinite perfection of God. The history of rebellion in heaven indicates that even the heavenly beings could be influenced by temptation and were capable of rebellion against God. Compare Rev. 12:3, 4.

Folly. Literally, “error.”

19. How much less. Eliphaz is contrasting man with the heavenly beings and stressing man’s frailty.

Crushed before the moth. Perhaps the meaning is “like the moth,” or “sooner or easier than the moth.” Some paraphrase it, “as though they were moths.”

21. Excellency. Heb. *yether*, meaning also “cord” or “string.” The verb translated “doth go away” has the basic meaning of “to pull up or out,” and hence to set out on a journey. Therefore some translators render this verse thus: “If their tent-cord is plucked

up within them, do they not die, and that without wisdom?” (RSV). According to this translation, *yether* refers to the rope that holds up a tent.

The revelation that Eliphaz describes may be summarized as a glimpse of the greatness and goodness of God in contrast with the sinfulness and frailty of man. But his statements are not tempered with sympathy, kindness, and human understanding. Job needs to be told *how* he can maintain his trust in God amid terrible suffering. Eliphaz merely tells him what he already knows—that he should trust in God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 5T 489
1

The Book of JOB INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book bears as its title the name of its chief character—Job, Heb. *ʾIyyob*.

2. Authorship. Early Jewish tradition, though not unanimously, assigned the authorship of the book to Moses. The Babylonian Talmud claims, “Moses wrote his own book, and the passages about Balaam and Job” (*Baba Bathra*, 14b, 15a). This assertion is rejected by most modern scholars as well as by many of earlier date. Some of these suggest Elihu, Solomon, and Ezra as possible authors. Others believe the book to be the work of an unnamed author, perhaps of the time of Solomon, or of the time of David, or of the era of the Captivity. All of these claims that have been developed at length by various authors are conjectural, with insufficient evidence, either internal or external, for positive identification.

There remains much to support the tradition that ascribes the book to Moses. Moses spent 40 years in Midian, which would give him ample background for the strong Arabic flavor that is evident throughout the book. Moses’ Egyptian background also explains the allusions to Egyptian life and practice that occur in the book. The picture of God as creator and sustainer fits well with the creation narrative preserved in another book written by Moses (see Ed 159).

Some scholars object to Mosaic authorship on the grounds of dissimilarity of style between Job and other books attributed to Moses. The argument from style is a tenuous one. Naming Moses as author of the book of Job does not preclude the possibility that much of the material may have already been in written form—penned, perhaps, by the hand of Job himself. The subject matter of Job is altogether different from that of the other books of Moses, and would require different treatment. On the other hand, striking similarities of style can be demonstrated. For instance, certain words used in the book of Job appear also in the Pentateuch, but nowhere else in the Old Testament; many other words common to both Job and the Pentateuch are seldom used by other Bible writers. The title *ʾEl-Shaddai*, “the Almighty” (see Vol. I, p. 171), is used 31 times in the book of Job and 6 times in the book of Genesis, but occurs in this particular form nowhere else in the Bible.

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

3. Historical Setting. The book of Job is a poem of human experience, with a prophet of God as its author. The above comments reveal the approximate time of the writing of the book—during Moses' sojourn in Midian. Job may have been a contemporary of Moses.

This concept regarding the date of authorship reveals why the book makes no mention of the Exodus or of events following it. These events had not yet occurred. Scholars who seek to place Job in the time of Solomon or later must explain the absence of all such historical allusions in Job. The similarity between Job and the wisdom literature does not indicate that Job copied the style of Solomon or his contemporaries. It is as reasonable to assume that Solomon was influenced by such a masterpiece as Job as to assume the opposite. We need not take either position.

The obvious setting of Job is that of Arabian Desert culture. Strangely enough, it is not an Israelitish setting. There were worshipers of God outside the confines of Abraham's descendants. The setting is not political, military, or ecclesiastical. Rather, Job emerges from a domestic background, common to his age. He was a wealthy landowner, honored and loved by his countrymen. He can be identified with no dynasty or ruling clan. He stands out, a lone, majestic figure in history, important because of his personal experience rather than because of his relationship to his time or to his contemporaries.

4. Theme. This is the story of a man finding his way back to normal life after a series of terrible, unexplainable reverses. The elements in the background that make the situation dramatic are (1) the contrast between Job's prosperity and his degradation, (2) the suddenness of his calamity, (3) the problem posed by the philosophy of suffering common in his day, (4) the cruelty of his friends, (5) the depth of his discouragement, (6) the gradual ascent to trust in God, (7) the dramatic appearance of God, (8) the repentance of Job, (9) the humiliation of his friends, (10) the restoration of Job.

No single statement is sufficient to cover the complex teaching of the book. Many minor themes fit into the larger theme, making the book as a whole resemble a symphony of ideas. One of the grandest contributions of the book is its picture of God. Never have the glory and profundity of God been more eloquently expressed, except in the person of Jesus Christ Himself. Satan tries to impugn God, circumstances tempt Job to doubt God's love, friends misinterpret God; yet, in the end, God reveals Himself so magnificently that Job is led to exclaim, "Now mine eye seeth thee" (ch. 42:5). It is significant that, even in the depths of his sorrow, Job mourns more over what seems to him his loss of God than he does over the loss of property and family. God stands at the center of the book, sometimes hidden by clouds of misunderstanding, but finally vindicated as a just and loving Creator.

The problem of suffering also looms large in the book. The reader of the narrative is acquainted from the outset with the reason for Job's misfortunes. Job was not aware of Satan's intrigues against him. On the contrary, Job and his friends were steeped in a tradition that claimed that suffering was always punishment for specific sin. Job was not aware of such sin, and was faced with the predicament of finding an explanation for his misfortune. Over the obstacles of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, placed in his path by the current tradition, Job had to make his way from despair to confidence.

In his sickness Job was brought face to face with death. He was thus led to ponder the condition of man after death. Job considered death a sleep (ch. 14:12), with a resurrection

beyond (vs. 14, 15). The presence of this statement has been a stumbling block to commentators who believe in the conscious state of the dead. Many fanciful interpretations have been made of Job's references to the future life, though such references are in full harmony with the teaching of other scriptures.

Another secondary theme is the personification of Wisdom. As Solomon did later, Job extolled wisdom as the greatest good. Both writers associate wisdom with "the fear of the Lord" (Job 28:28; Prov. 15:33).

In interpreting the book of Job, distinction must be made between those ideas that express divine truth and the statements of personal feeling and opinion that are expressed by the various characters in the narrative. For example, the philosophy of suffering set forth by the friends of Job is not correct. It reflects the faulty thinking of the times. The bitter speeches are not in harmony with God's will. Inspiration has recorded the mistaken notions of certain men, but that does not make these ideas correct. The reader of Job must always distinguish between the truths that God is teaching and the faulty ideas often expressed by the finite speakers. To use a statement from Bildad, for example, to establish a doctrine is to follow a questionable principle of interpretation.

In the comment on the book alternate interpretations are given certain passages. The principal reason for this is the obscurity of the Hebrew text. Often Hebrew words have several meanings. These meanings are frequently quite dissimilar—even opposite. In some cases a statement may be interpreted in several ways. In such instances variant possible interpretations are given. At times the Hebrew is so obscure that conjecture is involved. These problems, however, do not materially affect the over-all meaning of the text.

The amazing feature of Job is the literary skill with which the theme is developed. Prof. George Foot Moore of Harvard University speaks of the composition as the greatest work of Hebrew literature that has come down to us, and one of the greatest poetical works of the world's literature. Another eulogist calls it "The Matterhorn of the Old Testament."

The book of Job cannot be well understood without attention to its design. The book is obviously a poem. The basis of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. This is a poetic form in which an idea is expressed in two short sentences. Sometimes the two sentences are almost identical, as in ch. 3:25. Sometimes the second expression is an amplification of the first and adds an additional thought (see ch. 5:12). For a discussion of Hebrew parallelisms see pp. 24–27.

The book has three divisions: prologue, poem, epilogue. The poem is divided into three parts: the dialogues between Job and his friends, Elihu's speech, God's intervention. In Job's arguments with his friends there are three cycles, each of which contains three speeches by Job and one each by the friends (except for the absence of Zophar's speech in the third cycle). In Job's final address there are three speeches. God is introduced as making three addresses. The epilogue is divided into three parts. This design may be carried even into the construction of some of the individual speeches in the book. Such an arrangement is in no way surprising; it is in perfect accord with the genius of Hebrew poetry. (See on ch. 27:13 for the view that Zophar made a third address.)

A word is in order regarding repetition in the book of Job. The average reader is impressed—and sometimes discouraged—by the many instances of repetition of the same

idea. It must be remembered that all the speeches of Job's friends were intended to prove one idea—that misfortune should be construed as punishment. Elihu also developed one main theme—that misfortune should be construed as discipline. Job, on the other hand, was aiming at one objective—the vindication of his challenged integrity. In each instance every resource is exploited toward the proving of the case. This leads to the expression of the same thought in many different settings—for example, each of the friends covers the same ground, emphasizes the same ideas, and frequently employs the same expressions.

It should be observed that the prevalence of repetition ceases when God begins to speak. The speeches of the friends have been compared to so many wheels revolving on the same axle. Their sameness makes this comparison apt. Elihu's speech represents the pent-up emotion of a young man enthusiastic over what he considers a great idea. God's speeches are different. They are in a class by themselves. All the way through the divine utterances there is progress. Every phrase is full of meaning. God's speeches are a clear revelation of the divine One, who is using the objects of creation as a medium of expression. These facts must be recognized by the student of Job in order that the outline of the book may be correctly interpreted.

5. Outline.

- I. Prose Prelude, 1:1 to 2:13.
 - A. Job and his family, 1:1–5.
 - B. Satan obtains permission to afflict Job, 1:6–12.
 - C. Satan afflicts Job, 1:13–19.
 - D. Job's resignation, 1:20–22.
 - E. Satan afflicts Job with disease, 2:1–10.
 - F. The arrival of the three friends, 2:11–13.
- II. The Dialogues Between Job and His Friends, 3:1 to 31:40.
 - A. The first cycle, 3:1 to 11:20.
 1. Job's first speech: his deep discouragement, 3:1–26.
 2. Eliphaz' speech: Job reproved, 4:1 to 5:27.
 3. Job's second speech: the seriousness of his affliction, 6:1 to 7:21.
 4. Bildad's speech: Job accused of being a sinner, 8:1–22.
 5. Job's third speech: complaint regarding God's dealings with him, 9:1 to 10:22.
 6. Zophar's speech: an appeal for repentance, 11:1–20.
 - B. The second cycle, 12:1 to 20:29.
 1. Job's first speech: he maintains his integrity, 12:1 to 14:22.
 2. Eliphaz' speech: he reproves Job for impiety, 15:1–35.
 3. Job's second speech: he accuses his friends of being unmerciful, 16:1 to 17:16.
 4. Bildad's speech: he insists that calamity overtakes the wicked, 18:1–21.
 5. Job's third speech: he expresses his belief in the resurrection, 19:1–29.
 6. Zophar's speech: he describes the present and future punishment of the wicked, 20:1–29.
 - C. The third cycle, 21:1 to 31:40.
 1. Job's first speech: he maintains that the wicked sometimes prosper, 21:1–34.
 2. Eliphaz' speech: he urges Job to repent, 22:1–30.
 3. Job's second speech: he expresses his longing for an opportunity to appear before God, 23:1 to 24:25.
 4. Bildad's speech: he asserts that man cannot be justified before God, 25:1–6.

5. Job's third and longest speech: he reviews his experience and maintains his innocence, 26:1 to 31:40.
- III. The Speeches of Elihu, 32:1 to 37:24.
 - A. Introduction and first speech: he presents a new philosophy of suffering, 32:1 to 33:33.
 - B. Second speech: he endeavors to vindicate God, 34:1–37.
 - C. Third speech: he reasons God has not heeded Job, 35:1–16.
 - D. Fourth speech: he presents the God of the thunderstorm, 36:1 to 37:24.
- IV. God's Answer, 38:1 to 41:34.
 - A. First address: the physical universe reveals God, 38:1–41.
 - B. Second address: animal life reveals God, 39:1–30.
 - C. Third address: behemoth and leviathan reveal God, 40:1 to 41:34.
- V. Prose Postlude, 42:1–17.
 - A. Job's acknowledgment of God, 42:1–6.
 - B. Job prays for his friends, 42:7–9.
 - C. Job's restoration, 42:10–17.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 *The holiness, riches, and religious care of Job for his children. 6 Satan, appearing before God, by calumny obtaineth leave to tempt Job. 13 Understanding of the loss of his goods and children, in his mourning he blesseth God.*

1. Uz. This geographical location has not been positively identified. According to Lam. 4:21 “the land of Uz” in Jeremiah’s day was either equated with Edom, or else the “daughter of Edom” was dwelling away from home in a land that perhaps had been conquered by Edom. The latter is probably correct, for “the land of Uz” and Edom are separately listed in a long catalogue of nations that were to suffer divine vengeance (Jer. 25:20, 21). However, the scant Scriptural data regarding the residence of Job’s companions, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (Job 2:11), seem to indicate that they came from somewhere in the vicinity of Edom. For example, Eliphaz was a Temanite. Edom and Teman are listed in a way that closely connects the two (see Jer. 49:7, 20; Eze. 25:13; Amos 1:11, 2; Obadiah 8, 9). Bildad’s tribe, comprising the Shuhites, probably sprang from Keturah, Abraham’s concubine (Gen. 25:2). Buz, the home of Job’s fourth companion, Elihu (Job 32:2), is also connected with Tema, Eliphaz’ home town (see Jer. 25:23).

Despite these evidences that point toward the Edomite area as the location of Uz, other factors have led some to different conclusions. The LXX for Uz has *Ausites*, said to be an area in the northern part of the Arabian Desert between Palestine and the Euphrates River. Gesenius defends this locality as the Uz of Job 1:1. Its proximity to Chaldea, whence the marauding bands came that carried away Job’s camels (v. 17), tends to give credence to this theory. On the other hand, the testimony of the LXX cannot always be relied on, as, for example, the statement in the appendix to the LXX of Job which claims that Job was one of the kings of Edom.

Other traditions, preserved by the Arabs, place Uz in the vicinity of Damascus. In fact, a location 40 mi. southwest of Damascus still bears the name Deir Eiyub, perpetuating the name of Job. This location and the north Arabian location have been defended inasmuch as Job is spoken of as the greatest of the “men of the east” (v. 3). It is assumed that this term applies to territory east of Palestine. The vicinity of Edom thus would not qualify geographically. On the other hand, if we take the position that Moses is

the author of the book (see Introduction, p. 493), his geographical orientation may have been that of Egypt or Midian rather than Palestine.

There is little further in the book itself to aid in identifying Uz. Job's sons and daughters lived in an area where a "great wind from the wilderness" struck them (v. 19). They lived in a cultivated area where "oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them" (v. 14). The home of Job was in or near a city (ch. 29:7). The picture, fragmentary as it is, seems to be that of a marginal area of farms and cities on the edge of a desert. Such a situation would not be uncommon in many parts of the East.

Job. Heb. *'Iyyob*, which some regard as from the root *'ayab*, meaning "to be hostile," "to treat as an enemy." Hence "Job" may mean "the assailed one." Gesenius suggests that the primary idea of *'ayab* may be that of breathing, blowing, or puffing upon anyone, as expressive of anger or hatred. However, it cannot be established that the name "Job" comes from this root. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon in the Scriptures for a man's name to describe his major characteristic. These names were bestowed, doubtless, in later life, as was the name "Israel" (Gen. 32:28). The name "Job" is unknown elsewhere in Hebrew literature, but occurs in the Amarna Letters of the 14th century B.C., under the form *Ayyâb*. The name is also attested in cuneiform documents from Mari, where it is written *Ayyâbum*. The "Job" of Gen. 46:13 is not from the Heb. *'Iyyob* but from *Yob*.

In Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D.C., is the famous statue of grief by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. It is intended to be an embodiment of all human grief. Regarding it a French critic said, "I know of no work so profound in sentiment, so exalted in its art, and executed by methods so simple and broad." The Bible has its "embodiment of grief" in the person of Job. Paraphrasing the art critic, there is nothing more profound in sentiment or more exalted in its art than this book.

Perfect. Heb. *tam*. This word does not necessarily imply absolute sinlessness. It signifies, rather, completeness, integrity, sincerity, but in a relative sense. The man who is "perfect" in the sight of God is the man who has reached the degree of development that Heaven expects of him at any given time. The Hebrew term *tam* is equivalent to the Greek *teleios*, which is often translated "perfect" in the NT but which is better translated "full grown" or "mature" (see 1 Cor. 14:20, where *teleioi* is translated "men" in contrast with "children"). It is difficult to find one word that is adequate as a translation of *tam*. Some translators, following the LXX, have used the word "blameless." This does not seem sufficient to imply the positive connotation of wholeness and entirety present in *tam*.

Upright. Heb. *yashar*, "straight," "level," "just," "right."

Feared God. A common Biblical expression denoting loyalty and devotion to God. Here a contrast is intended between Job, who was true to God, and those who were worshipers of other deities.

Eschewed. Literally, "turned aside." The idea is that of avoiding evil, turning away from it as from the presence of danger. The four ideas included in this verse are not mere repetitions to impress upon the reader that Job was a good man. Rather, they complement one another in forming a total picture of an outstanding character.

3. Substance. Heb. *miqneh*, “cattle,” from the root *qanah*, “to acquire property.” The wealth of the East was largely counted in terms of cattle.

Sheep. Heb. *so’n*, a word referring to both sheep and goats. These animals provided food and clothing.

Camels. These made commerce possible with remote areas.

Asses. The usual domestic beasts of burden.

Great household. The many servants who performed the labor.

4. Feasted. Literally, “made a banquet.” The Hebrew word for “banquet” comes from a root meaning “to drink,” thus indicating an occasion for drinking.

His day. Many have conjectured that this expression might refer to birthdays, drawing the inference from ch. 3:1, where Job is said to have “cursed his day.” Others have imagined that these sons and daughters feasted every day and that this description is symbolic of their wealth. Still others have thought that the customary feast days are alluded to. The matter cannot be decided with finality.

5. Were gone about. Or, “had made the round,” or “completed the circle.” The picture is that of a cycle of days, following each other in rotation.

Sanctified them. As the patriarchal priest of the household, he “consecrated” his children. It seems that Job summoned his children to appear at his house, where some form of religious ceremony was conducted.

My sons have sinned. The sons apparently were living lives of carefree luxury. Job, in his spiritual sensitivity, recognized their dangers, and implored divine forgiveness in their behalf. The sin that Job feared in his sons, strangely enough, was the same sin that he himself was later tempted to commit. They were tempted by ease; he was tempted by hardship.

Cursed. Heb. *barak*, more than 200 times translated “to bless.” But here and in Job 1:11; 2:5, 9; 1 Kings 21:10, 13, the required meaning seems to be the exact opposite. Rather than to assign directly to *barak* opposite meanings, many scholars prefer to regard the use here as a euphemism. Others translate *barak* by its usual meaning “to bless” and translate *’Elohim* “gods” instead of “God,” thus implying that the sons blessed false deities. It appears, however, that “curse” is intended and that *’Elohim* means the true God. Words with exactly opposite meanings are found also in other ancient languages such as Egyptian.

Continually. Literally, “all the days.” Though a man of wealth and influence, Job did not permit his responsibilities to diminish his concern for his children, whom he continually held before his God.

6. There was a day. Jewish tradition suggests that this “day” was the Jewish religious New Year. Some Christian interpreters see in this phrase the yearly day of judgment. There is no need to have this day synchronize with any human festivity. It seems unnecessary that God’s appointments with His celestial beings should fit into earthly calculations. The phrase obviously implies that the meeting was held at God’s appointed time (see ch. 2:1).

Sons of God. The LXX translates the phrase, “angels of God.” Evidently angels are meant (see DA 834; GC 518; 6T 456). Angels, like men, are created beings (Col. 1:16), and in this sense sons of God.

Before the Lord. The place is not specified and hence cannot be known. It does not appear reasonable that the scene took place in heaven itself, for Satan was excluded from its precincts (Rev. 12:7–9; SR 26, 27). He did have a degree of access to other worlds (see EW 290).

Satan. Heb. *haśśatan*, literally, “the adversary.” From this comes the verb *śatan*, “to be an adversary” or “to act as an adversary.” Verb and noun occur together in Zech. 3:1, which reads literally, “the adversary standing at his right hand to oppose him.” The English word “Satan” comes directly from the Hebrew. Satan is not one of the “sons of God.” He came among them, but he was not one of them (see GC 518).

7. Going to and fro. Heb. *shut*, “to go about” or “to rove about.” For example, the word is used to describe the search for manna (Num. 11:8), the taking of a census (2 Sam. 24:2), and the search for a good man (Jer. 5:1).

Walking up and down. Compare the expression, “Your adversary the devil ... walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

9. For nought. Heb. *chinnam*, “gratis,” “for nothing,” “unreservedly,” “in vain.” The same word is used in ch. 2:3, where the Lord said to Satan, “thou movedst me against him, to destroy him *without cause*”; and again in ch. 9:17, where Job complains that God multiplied his wounds “*without cause*.”

Satan insinuated that Job served God from selfish motives—for the material gain that God permitted to accrue as an inducement and a reward for his service. He attempted to deny that true religion springs from love and an intelligent appreciation of God’s character, that true worshipers love religion for its own sake—not for reward; that they serve God because such service is right in itself, and not merely because heaven is full of glory; and that they love God because He is worthy of their affections and confidence, and not merely because He blesses them.

10. About his house. Satan mentions three items that are protectively hedged in: Job himself, his house, and his possessions. Misfortune struck, first his possessions (vs. 15–17), then his house (vs. 18, 19), and finally Job himself (ch. 2:7, 8).

Substance. Heb. *miqneh*. See on v. 3.

Increased. Heb. *paraş*, “to break through,” “to burst out.” *Paraş* is used in the expression “thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Prov. 3:10). Job’s prosperity was phenomenal.

11. But. Heb. *’ulam*. A strong adversative to emphasize the contrast between Job’s present felicity and his predicted attitude under adversity. The Hebrew may be translated emphatically, “surely he will curse thee.” See on v. 5 regarding “curse” as a translation of *barak*.

12. In thy power. God accepted the challenge. He lifted His protection from Job’s possessions, permitting Job to demonstrate that he was equal to the test. The Lord desired to show that men will serve Him from pure love. It was necessary to prove Satan’s sneer unjust. Yet through it all God would overrule for purposes of mercy (see DA 471).

13. There was a day. See on v. 6; cf. ch. 2:1. These three passages, introduced by the same time clause, present the setting for three successive scenes. The first and third of these scenes took place at an unknown site, perhaps in the celestial realm (see on v. 6), the one now under consideration, on earth. The scene opens with one of the customary

feasts of Job's children, this time at the home of the oldest brother. The lives of the children are carefree and happy, the life of Job, tranquil.

14. Were plowing. This indicates that the day was not a general holiday.

15. The Sabeans. Perhaps descendants of Cush (Gen. 10:7), or of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:3). The Sabeans have been identified as living in various sections of Arabia. Hence the location of the land of Uz (see on v. 1) cannot be determined by locating the Sabeans.

16. The fire of God. The LXX omits "of God." This fire is considered by many commentators to be lightning, but such an assumption is not necessary. Whatever the destructive agent was, the ancients would regard it as coming from God. The facts of the great controversy, so strikingly demonstrated in the present experience, were not understood, and men attributed to God that which was often the work of the adversary. Even with the mischievous devices of Satan revealed, acts that God permits are often attributed to God.

17. The Chaldeans. Heb. *Kašdim*. The LXX reads "the horsemen," but this is probably interpretative to indicate that the translators thought the roving bands of *Kašdim* used cavalry.

Fell upon. Or, "made a raid upon." Such raids have always been common in Arabia and other parts of the Near East.

19. From the wilderness. Literally, "from beyond the wilderness." The expression seems to describe a wind sweeping across the desert and coming with full force upon the inhabited area. The first and third tragedies were perpetrated by rapacious men—the Sabeans and the Chaldeans. The second and fourth tragedies resulted from fire and wind—agencies beyond human control.

Young men. Heb. *ne'arim*, literally, "boys," "youth." Ages from infancy (Ex. 2:6) to young manhood may be comprehended. *Ne'arim* is translated "servants" in Job 1:15, 16, 17. In v. 19 it includes the sons and daughters (v. 18) and the servants who attended them.

Job was given no opportunity to recover his equilibrium between blows. The poignancy of the tragedies were accentuated by the ruthless timing of the events. In a few short minutes his world collapsed.

20. Rent his mantle. The customary gestures of grief (see Gen. 37:29, 34; 44:13; 1 Kings 21:27; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 47:5).

Worshipped. Heb. *shachah*, "to bow down," "to prostrate oneself." Job might have cursed the Sabeans and the Chaldeans. He might have cursed the fire and the wind. He might have cursed the God who allowed such catastrophes. Instead, he "worshipped." Compare the experience of David, who, after the death of his child, "came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped" (2 Sam. 12:20).

21. Return thither. The language here must not be forced. It is poetry, not prose. It is simply a poetic way of saying that man leaves this world as naked and helpless as he entered it. Job was not here speaking in the technical language of theology or metaphysics or physiology.

The Lord gave. This statement has become the classic expression of Christian resignation. Ever since the Fall, Satan has maligned God's character. Worse still, he has

sought to make it appear that the evil deeds he has done should be charged against God (see GC 534).

Blessed. Job's conduct was a dramatic denial of Satan's insinuation (v. 11). To the question, "Does Job fear God without regard for selfish gain?" Job gave the answer "Yes." Satan was perplexed. He had seen many who would have cursed God under similar circumstances—but Job's attitude was inexplicable.

Fire raged over the parish of a German pastor, laying in ruins his home and the homes of his people. Then death claimed his wife and children. Disease laid him prostrate; then blindness overtook him. Under this avalanche of trouble, he dictated these words:

"My Jesus, as Thou wilt;
O may Thy will be mine!
Into Thy hand of love
I would my all resign."

22. Nor charged God foolishly. The expression in Hebrew is idiomatic. Literally, "did not ascribe to God *tiphlah*." *Tiphlah* seems to refer to that which is out of harmony with the character of God. In his reaction to the initial tragedy, Job said nothing he need later regret; he did not stoop to self-pity or melodramatic mourning; he kept his head when lesser men would have disintegrated under the staggering blows.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 6 DA 834; GC 518
- 7 MYP 51; 1T 341; 5T 294
- 8–12, Ed 155
- 9, 10 GC 513
- 10 GC 589
- 12 3T 311
- 12–19 GC 589
- 21 LS 253; 1T 110, 111

CHAPTER 2

1 *Satan appearing again before God obtaineth further leave to tempt Job. 7 He smiteth him with sore boils. 9 Job reproveth his wife, moving him to curse God. 11 His three friends condole with him in silence.*

1. To present themselves. See on ch. 1:6.

2. Going to and fro. See on ch. 1:7.

3. An upright man. See on ch. 1:1, 7.

Integrity. Heb. *tummah*. This word comes from the same root as the word translated "perfect" in this verse, and in ch. 1:1, 8. The idea is that of completeness (see on ch. 1:1).

To destroy him. Literally, "to swallow him up," "to engulf." The LXX for "him" reads "his possessions."

Without cause. Heb. *chinnam*. Translated "for nought" (see on ch. 1:9).

4. Skin for skin. This expression has provoked much discussion among commentators. The saying, evidently proverbial, may have had its origin in the language of barter or exchange, signifying that a man would give up one thing for another, or one piece of property of less value in order to save a greater. In like manner he would be willing to surrender everything, in order that his life, the most valuable object, might be preserved. Satan is trying to show that a test of sufficient severity had not been imposed

on Job to reveal his actual character. He advances the theory that every man has his price. Job's integrity had demonstrated that a man may lose his property and still serve God; but Satan was not willing to admit that a man will maintain his loyalty to God if his life is placed in jeopardy. Compare Matt. 6:25.

6. Save. Heb. *shamar*, "to keep," "to watch," "to preserve."

Life. Heb. *nephesh*, frequently translated "soul," but here the meaning of physical life is definitely intended.

7. Boils. Heb. *shechin*, from a root that means, "to be hot," "to be inflamed." The word is used for the boils of the Egyptian plagues (Ex. 9:9), the eruptions of leprosy (Lev. 13:20), and for Hezekiah's disease (2 Kings 20:7). The same disease may not be described in every case. Many have attempted to diagnose Job's disease from the various symptoms indicated (Job 7:4, 5, 14; 17:1; 19:17–20; 30:17–19, 30). Some have assumed that Job's boils were the purulent skin tumors commonly known today. Others have thought that Job was afflicted with elephantiasis. This disease takes its name from the appearance of the affected parts, which are covered with a knotty and fissured bark like the hide of an elephant. It is precarious to try to diagnose the disease of a man who lived 3,500 years ago, when our only information consists of a few nontechnical observations recorded in a book that is largely poetic. In the first place, it cannot safely be assumed that all the diseases of today are identical with those of Job's day. Second, the symptoms are too vague to warrant a conclusion. Third, it is not even certain that Satan's affliction of Job followed the plan of any then-known or now-known disease. It is sufficient to see Job as a great sufferer without trying to diagnose his specific ailment.

8. A potsherd. A piece of broken pottery, evidently used to relieve the violent itching, and perhaps to remove the discharge and crust from the eruptions.

Sat down among the ashes. A customary symbol of grief (see Isa. 58:5; Jer. 6:26; Jonah 3:6). For this clause the LXX reads, "sat upon a dung-heap outside the city," but this translation may be interpretative.

9. His wife. The Targum gives her name as Dinah, from which some have concluded that Job was the son-in-law of Jacob. This is, of course, only tradition.

Integrity. See on ch. 2:3.

Curse God. Job's wife tries to persuade Job to do what Satan wanted him to do. She says in effect, "What good is your virtue doing you? You might as well curse God and take the consequences." The LXX greatly enlarges the speech of Job's wife: "And when much time had passed, his wife said to him, How long wilt thou hold out, saying, Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance? for, behold, thy memorial is abolished from the earth, even thy sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows; and thou thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pangs which now beset me: but say some word against the Lord, and die."

The origin of the above statement is uncertain. It is not in any Hebrew manuscript now extant, and there are reasons for doubting whether it was in the earliest manuscripts of the LXX.

10. Foolish. Heb. *nebalah*. Not weakness of reason but religious and moral insensibility.

Receive evil. Here, again, is the complete resignation previously expressed in ch. 1:21. Job's question may be paraphrased as follows, "Should we receive all God's benefits as a matter of course and then complain when He sends affliction?"

11. Eliphaz the Temanite. See on ch. 1:1. One of Esau's sons was named Eliphaz. He, in turn, had a son named Teman (Gen. 36:11). Teman is named as a geographical location connected with Edom in Jer. 49:7; Eze. 25:13; Amos 1:11, 12; Obadiah 8, 9. There seems to be no definite information as to what part of Edom was the home of the Temanites.

Bildad the Shuhite. Commentators have connected Bildad with Shuah, the brother of Midian (Gen. 25:2), whose descendants were believed to have lived somewhere in the Edomite area. However, the inscriptions now point to *Shûkhu* on the middle Euphrates as the likely origin of Bildad.

Zophar the Naamathite. The name Zophar is otherwise unknown. There was a town of Naamah in southwest Judah (Joshua 15:41) to which Zophar may have belonged.

Made an appointment. The circumstances here mentioned suggest the lapse of considerable time since the calamities had overtaken Job. It would take time for word of his plight to reach these three friends. Then there had to be further time for the three men to communicate with one another and make their appointment. After that they had to travel to Job's home in the land of Uz. This passage of time helps to explain Job's change of attitude from the calm resignation of ch. 2:10 to the deep discouragement of ch. 3. The initial blows of tragedy appeared not to be as damaging to Job's morale as were the weeks of constant suffering of body and distress of mind that followed.

To mourn. Literally, "to shake the head as an expression of pity," "to make gestures of grief." Sometimes translated "to bemoan" (Job 42:11; Jer. 15:5; Jer. 16:5; etc.).

To comfort. Heb. *nacham*, related to a cognate Arabic root meaning "to breathe heavily."

12. Knew him not. Job was so marred by his affliction that he was not recognizable. His friends could not control their emotions when they saw his condition. They not only wept, which is the natural reaction to sorrow; they also observed expressions of grief customary in the East—tearing their robes and sprinkling dust or ashes on their heads (see Joshua 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12).

13. None spake a word. Some have observed that among the Jews and among Orientals generally it was a matter of decorum, dictated by a fine and true feeling, not to speak to a person in deep affliction until he gave an intimation of a desire to be comforted. If so, then as long as Job kept silence, his friends would refrain from conversation.

Unto him. This statement implies that they were free to discuss matters between themselves or with the servants who attended Job.

Grief. Literally, "pain," either physical or mental. Here probably both.

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5–7DA 471; Ed 155

7 PP 129

7–10AA 575; 3T 311; 4T 525

CHAPTER 3

1 *Job curses the day and services of his birth.* 13 *The ease of death.* 20 *He complaineth of life, because of his anguish.*

1. Cursed his day. The word translated “cursed” is from *qalal*, a common term for cursing, and not *barak* as in chs. 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9 (see on ch. 1:5). The passing weeks had apparently reduced Job from an attitude of calm resignation to one of deep despair. Compare Jeremiah’s cursing of the day of his birth in similar language (Jer. 20:14–18).

2. Spake. Heb. *‘anah*, generally translated “to answer.” Here it means “to respond to an occasion,” “to speak in view of circumstances” (see Deut. 26:5; Isa. 14:10; Zech. 3:4). This verse ends the prose introduction to the book of Job.

Chapter 3:3–26 presents the first poem. It is divided into the three stanzas, vs. 3–10; 11–19; and 20–26. In the first stanza Job curses the day of his birth and the night of his conception. In the second he expresses the wish that he had died before birth. The third stanza asks the question, Why does God compel men to live when they would rather die? His execrations are solemn, deep, and sublime. These poetic statements do not lend themselves to minute technical analysis. Job is not presenting logic. Rather, he is pouring out the impassioned feelings of a suffering soul.

Let the day perish. A poetic way of saying, “I wish I had never been born.” “Day” is here personified.

The night. “Night” is also personified. A simpler rendering would be “the night which said” (see RSV).

Man child. Heb. *geber*, “a man,” emphasized as being strong, distinguished from women and children. It is not the ordinary word to designate the male sex, which would be *zakar*. *Geber* is here poetically employed. As the announcement of the conception is made by the personified “night,” so the individual who was conceived is considered, not in the ordinary sense of a child, but as the man Job eventually was to become. The LXX makes the night that of Job’s birth rather than that of his conception. The reason is presumably to avoid the difficulty of announcing the sex of the child on the night of conception. However, by poetic fancy such knowledge is here ascribed to the night.

4. That day. Verses 4 and 5 curse the day of birth, vs. 6–10 the night of conception.

Darkness. The most dramatic curse that could be pronounced upon a day, because darkness is the opposite of day.

Regard it. Literally, “inquire after it.” God is the One who gives to the day its light. He is now called upon to pass it by.

Light shine. Emphasis is achieved by the reiteration.

5. The shadow of death. Heb. *šalmaweth*. Some scholars change the vowel pointings to read *šalmuth*, and translate it “deep darkness” (see RSV). *Šalmuth* is regarded as the strongest word in the Hebrew language expressing the idea of darkness (see Job 10:21, 22; 12:22; 16:16; 24:17; 34:22; Isa. 9:2; Jer. 2:6; Amos 5:8). Other scholars see insufficient reason for departing from the traditional vowel pointings, which are supported by the LXX, and retain the translation “shadow of death.”

Stain. From the Heb. *ga’al*, “to redeem,” “to act as kinsman.” Here probably in the sense of “to claim.” The word also has the meaning, “to stain” or “to pollute.” Both

meanings give sense to the passage, but the former gives the more vivid imagery. The night, as next of kin to the day, would immediately upon the arrival of day claim it for itself. For a discussion of the meaning of *ga'al* in this sense see on Ruth 2:20.

Cloud. Let clouds, condensed, compacted, heaped together, settle down upon it. This is another way of expressing the idea of darkness that the poet is endeavoring to stress.

Blackness of the day. Probably a reference to eclipses, tornadoes, or sandstorms such as would darken a day.

6. That night. The night of Job's conception (v. 3).

Darkness. Heb. *'ophel*, sometimes used to express the darkness of the underworld (see ch. 10:22).

Be joined. Literally, "rejoice." The translation "be joined" requires a change of vowels in the Hebrew verb. Such a change is supported by Symmachus' version of the LXX. However, the literal rendering is perfectly intelligible, and there seems to be insufficient reason to depart from it.

Let it not come. Job would banish from the records the night of his conception.

7. Solitary. Literally, "barren," "hard," "sterile." Let that night be as destitute of good as a bare rock is of verdure.

8. Let them curse. This is a very puzzling text. Many commentators believe that Job was invoking the aid of sorcerers, "cursers of the day," individuals who claimed to be able to bring curses on specific days. If this interpretation is correct, it does not follow that Job believed in such sorcerers. He merely recognized their existence, and in the language of poetry, he wished that there might be heaped on the night of his conception not only real evils but those that were imaginary. Clarke sees in the "cursers of the day" those who detest the day—those who hate daylight, such as adulterers, murderers, thieves, and bandits, for whose practices the night is more fitting.

Mourning. Literally, "leviathan." The sentence should read, "who are ready to rouse up leviathan." Those who apply the first line of the verse to the sorcerers see in the added line a further reference to the power of these sorcerers to rouse up leviathan. Ancient mythology had a great dragon who was the enemy of the sun and moon, and who was supposed to have power over eclipses. It seems unreasonable to believe that Job had any faith in such powers. If he is referring to mythology, he is doing so only to provide a vivid poetic figure.

9. Stars of the twilight. The word "twilight" may refer either to evening or to morning twilight; here, to the latter.

Dawning of the day. Literally, "eyelids of the dawn."

10. My mother's womb. Literally, "my womb," that is, the womb that bare me. The night is here pictured as having the power to prevent conception.

11. Why? A repeated question of Job as it is of all sufferers throughout the ages. But in this case, Job is not asking why he was caused to suffer; he asks, rather, why he did not die in infancy. He is not so much seeking an answer as he is expressing his deep despair.

Give up the ghost. Literally, "die," or "expire." The expression "to give up the ghost" is an interpretative translation reflecting the theology of the translators regarding the nature of man. In most instances the expression translates a Hebrew or Greek word meaning simply "to expire" (see Gen. 25:8, 17; 49:33; Mark 15:37; Acts 5:5, 10). On the other hand "to give up the ghost [spirit]" is a literal translation of the Greek in Matt. 27:50.

12. Prevent. The word carries the obsolete meaning, “to anticipate,” or “to go before” (see 1 Thess. 4:15). A better translation of the form of the Hebrew verb here used would be “to meet,” “to confront,” “to receive.” Job was probably asking, “Why did my mother take me onto her lap?”

13. Slept. Job pictures death as quiet, restful sleep (see Ps. 13:3; John 11:11; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:14). He is not in this present passage looking forward to the life following the resurrection. He is simply contrasting his present sufferings with the repose he might enjoy if he were dead.

14. With kings. Job contrasts his miserable condition with the dignity of death. His thought has been well expressed in Bryant’s “Thanatopsis”:

“Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulcher.”

Desolate places. Brevity makes the discovery of the exact meaning of this expression difficult. Some see in the clause the idea of kings building monuments for themselves by rebuilding ruined, desolate cities (see Isa. 61:4; Eze. 36:10, 33; Mal. 1:4); others, the erecting of edifices that have since become desolate. Others believe that the term is an ironical designation of splendid palaces which, notwithstanding their grandeur, must at last fall in ruins.

16. Hidden untimely birth. Previously Job had asked, “Why did I not die at birth?” (see on v. 11).

17. Troubling. Literally, “raging,” “excitement.” The word describes the unrest, the agitation, the inward raging, that characterize the wicked. The word comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to be agitated,” “to quiver,” “to quake” (see Deut. 2:25; Prov. 29:9; Isa. 5:25). Job 3:17–19 does not refer to the future life. It describes the oblivion of the grave. The agitation, the weariness, the galling servitude of life, are swallowed up in dreamless sleep. While this is a beautiful thought, the Christian must see beyond the grave to the resurrection and immortality. Job later expresses this greater hope (ch. 14:14, 15).

18. Prisoners. Or, “bondmen.” Here those who work at enforced labor and are constantly under the lash of the “oppressor” are indicated. The word translated “oppressor” is the one rendered “taskmaster” in Ex. 3:7; 5:6, 10, 13, 14.

19. The small and great. The equality of all ages in death is beautifully portrayed in Bryant’s “Thanatopsis”:

“... As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life’s green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.”

20. *Wherefore?* More simply, “Why?” This expression introduces the third stanza of Job’s lament. He has been meditating on the quiet serenity of death. Now his thoughts return to his own misery, and he repeats the age-old question, “Why?” The stanza is the picture of a man earnestly longing for death, but doomed to live on and on. The experience has its modern counterpart in the cancer sufferer who wastes away during long, agonizing, futile months before death ultimately provides release. Now, as then, the question is often asked, “Why?”

Light. See v. 16. Light seems to be used here as a figure of life.

Bitter in soul. Heb. *mare nephesh*. The combination of these Hebrew words is variously translated: “angry” (Judges 18:25), “in bitterness of soul” (1 Sam. 1:10), “discontented” (1 Sam. 22:2), “soul [was] grieved” (1 Sam. 30:6), “chafed in [their] minds” (2 Sam. 17:8). The expression here is plural. Job is thinking, not alone of himself, but of other sufferers as well.

23. *Hid.* Job feels thwarted. He knows not what way to turn.

Hedged in. Satan had claimed that God had built a hedge of protection around Job (ch. 1:10). Now Job claims that God has built a hedge of affliction about him.

24. *Before I eat.* Literally, “before my bread.” The meaning is uncertain. Some translate the phrase, but with doubtful authority, “instead of my food.” Others have suggested the following readings: “takes the place of my daily food,” “in the manner of my food,” “when I begin to eat.” Some have supposed that Job’s condition made eating painful; others that sighing was as constant as his daily food. The poetic nature of the passage makes the latter explanation seem more probable.

Roarings. Or, “groanings,” “sighings.” These expressions of Job’s grief are like a continuous stream of water.

25. *The thing.* Does this imply that Job had harbored a fear of disaster before trouble struck him? This deduction is not necessary. Translated literally, the text reads: “For I fear a fear, and it cometh upon me; and that which I dread cometh unto me.” It seems that Job is describing his experience after his troubles began. Each catastrophe increases his fear of further trouble; and in each case, so it appears, further trouble comes.

26. *Trouble.* See on v. 17.

It must not be concluded that Job’s statements of ch. 3 represent a laudable reaction to calamity. This poem contains much of complaint and bitterness that, under the circumstances, may be forgiven but not approved. The fact that Job did complain of his lot makes him seem closer to humanity than if he had been unperturbed by his misfortunes. Job was spiritually great, not because he was never discouraged, but because he eventually found his way out of discouragement. If we wish to see a perfect example of fortitude under suffering, we must look at Jesus, not at Job. Job, in his suffering, cursed the day of his birth; Jesus said, “For this cause came I unto this hour” (John 12:27). In this world of sin perfection of character comes only through suffering (see on Heb. 2:10; 1 Peter 4:13).

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3 PK 162; 3T 262

CHAPTER 4

1 *Eliphaz reproveth Job for want of religion. 7 He teacheth God’s judgments to be not for the righteous, but for the wicked. 12 His fearful vision, to humble the excellency of creatures before God.*

1. Eliphaz. The first of the friends to reply to Job. His statements are more profound than those of his companions. Perhaps he was the oldest of the group. He summarizes with great clarity the prevailing attitude current in his day regarding the relationship between suffering and sin. There is some truth in Eliphaz' speech. He reveals keen insight, but he lacks warmth and sympathy, and completely misses the mark in his appraisal of Job's situation. Eliphaz is an example of how sincere people who fail to understand God and His attitude toward man may mishandle profound truths.

2. Assay to commune. Eliphaz begins his speech with a question. Such a form is frequently used in Job (see chs. 8:2; 11:2; 15:2; 18:2; 22:2). It is difficult to be sure whether the tone of Eliphaz' question is apologetic or mildly sarcastic.

Grieved. Literally, "be wearied," "be impatient." The same word is translated "faintest" in v. 5.

Withhold himself. Eliphaz has observed Job's affliction and listened to Job's complaint. He feels he can keep quiet no longer. He evidently came to the scene with a well-defined philosophy regarding suffering. Now he attempts to interpret Job's plight in the light of this philosophy. He appears determined, at all costs, to protect his preconceived ideas.

3. Instructed. Perhaps here in a moral sense, teaching others to regard afflictions as corrective chastenings.

Weak hands. Literally, "the hands hanging down." A sign of despondency and discouragement. Eliphaz pays tribute to Job's endeavors in behalf of his fellow men.

4. Falling. Or, "stumbling," "staggering," "tottering."

Feeble knees. Or, "bowing knees"; knees unable to carry the weight of a heavy load. Job had been successful in bringing help to discouraged, afflicted people. He had no doubt pointed such people to God, and his counsel had been effective in their behalf.

5. But now. The situation has changed. Job can no longer take an objective attitude toward affliction. Personal experience is called upon to test the former theories.

Faintest. Or, "are wearied," "are impatient" (see on v. 2).

Troubled. Or, "disturbed," "dismayed," "frightened." Eliphaz makes a significant observation. People who endeavor to help others to bear their afflictions well should be an example of fortitude in trial. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether Job had ever had occasion to encourage a person whose condition was as serious as his own. Eliphaz seems to fail to recognize that in a few days Job had suffered more reverses than the average man is called upon to meet in a lifetime. To Eliphaz' legal mind, trouble is trouble, and Job, who had lost all, is expected to meet his sorrow with the same fortitude as another man who, for example, might have lost one of his children.

6. They fear. Evidently the fear of God. The clause may be translated, "Is not the fear [of God] your confidence?"

Uprightness. Or, "integrity," "perfection." The Hebrew word thus translated is from the same root as the one rendered "perfect" in ch. 1:1. To balance the verse this second line should be translated "[Is not] your hope the integrity of your ways?" Eliphaz refers to two of Job's great virtues, his fear of God and his integrity. Are not these sufficient in the hour of trial?

7. Who ever perished, being innocent? Verses 7-11 state the philosophy that suffering is the direct punishment for specific sin.

8. Plow iniquity. The intended conclusion was inescapable that Job was reaping as he had sown.

9. Breath of his nostrils. A poetic figure attributing human characteristics to God.

10. Lion. Verses 10 and 11 describe five classes of lions that cover the entire range from the whelp to the old, helpless beast. The picture suggests the breaking up of a den of lions. The illustration is significant in a country where lions are numerous. In the minds of the people lions were synonymous with violence and destructiveness. Eliphaz is pointing to the destruction of all classes of wicked men, young and old, weak or strong, even as a group of lions is dispersed. Eliphaz may have been alluding to the family of Job.

12. Thing. Heb. *dabar*, most frequently translated “word,” and preferably so here.

Little. Heb. *shemeš*, “a whisper.” In one of the most vivid passages of the book Eliphaz describes what he claims to be a divine revelation.

13. Thoughts. Literally, “disquieting thoughts,” “excited thoughts.” The darkness of night provided the eerie atmosphere for what follows.

14. Bones. Forming the supporting structure to the human frame, bones are, by figure, often closely associated with inward emotions (see Prov. 3:8; 12:4; 15:30; 17:22; Job 30:30; Ps. 31:10).

Shake. Applied to the bones figuratively in the sense noted above.

16. Discern the form. We have no assurance that this was a genuine revelation. Eliphaz apparently believed in its validity. The Bible nowhere even suggests that he possessed the prophetic gift.

17. Mortal man. Heb. *'enosh*. The two English words translate a single Hebrew word. *'Enosh* means simply “man” or “mankind.” It is translated “man” 31 times, “men” 7 times, “another” once, and in connection with other nouns, “familiar” once, and “stranger” once. Only here is it translated with the descriptive adjective “mortal.” The translation is interpretative in that it supplies an adjective where the original has none. The interpretation is selective because it chooses one of the many attributes of the human family, each of which would have equal validity if an adjective needed to be supplied. Such, however, is not essential. The text, therefore, does not lend support to the doctrine of the mortality of man. However, the clear proof of man’s mortality is found in numerous scriptures (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; etc.).

It is possible that the translation “mortal man” has come to us through the medium of the LXX. In Job 4:17 that version translates *'enosh* by *brotos*, which properly means “mortal man.” However, the LXX has *brotos* also in chs. 9:2; 10:4; 15:14; 25:4; 28:4, 13; 32:8; 33:12; 36:25; in none of which the KJV renders *'enosh* as “mortal man.”

Furthermore, the LXX does not consistently translate *'enosh* by *brotos*, even in the book of Job (see the LXX of chs. 5:17; 7:1, 17; 10:5; 14:19; 25:6; 33:26).

More just. Many translators render this verse, “Can a mortal man be righteous before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?” The Hebrew allows either translation. The use of “before” rather than “more than” seems to strengthen the meaning of the verse. Not only is man unable to surpass God in righteousness and purity; he actually is unable to be just and pure in the sight of God.

18. Servants. Here evidently heavenly beings, for they are contrasted with members of the human race (v. 19). It is not to be concluded that these beings are sinful. In their measure they are perfect, but their holiness is as nothing compared with the infinite perfection of God. The history of rebellion in heaven indicates that even the heavenly beings could be influenced by temptation and were capable of rebellion against God. Compare Rev. 12:3, 4.

Folly. Literally, “error.”

19. How much less. Eliphaz is contrasting man with the heavenly beings and stressing man’s frailty.

Crushed before the moth. Perhaps the meaning is “like the moth,” or “sooner or easier than the moth.” Some paraphrase it, “as though they were moths.”

21. Excellency. Heb. *yether*, meaning also “cord” or “string.” The verb translated “doth go away” has the basic meaning of “to pull up or out,” and hence to set out on a journey. Therefore some translators render this verse thus: “If their tent-cord is plucked up within them, do they not die, and that without wisdom?” (RSV). According to this translation, *yether* refers to the rope that holds up a tent.

The revelation that Eliphaz describes may be summarized as a glimpse of the greatness and goodness of God in contrast with the sinfulness and frailty of man. But his statements are not tempered with sympathy, kindness, and human understanding. Job needs to be told *how* he can maintain his trust in God amid terrible suffering. Eliphaz merely tells him what he already knows—that he should trust in God.

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3 5T 489
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CHAPTER 5

1 *The harm of inconsideration.* 3 *The end of the wicked is misery.* 6 *God is to be regarded in affliction.* 17 *The happy end of God’s correction.*

1. Call now. In other words, “if you turn away from God and reproach Him, what aid can you invoke?”

Saints. Literally, “holy ones.” Here probably angels are meant (see Dan. 8:13; Zech. 14:5), but it must not be assumed that invocation of angels is endorsed. Eliphaz is no authority on religious questions.

2. Wrath. Or, “vexation.” Eliphaz implies that Job, like a fool, was permitting his vexation to destroy him. To this Job replied, “Oh that my grief [vexation] were thoroughly weighed” (ch. 6:2).

Envy. Or, “jealousy,” “passionate anger” (Prov. 14:30; Isa. 42:13).

Silly one. Better, “simple.”

3. Taking root. Eliphaz admits that the wicked may “take root” and prosper, but he does not believe such prosperity will be permanent.

I cursed. That is, I pronounced it accursed, knowing that the curse of God was resting upon it.

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4. Crushed in the gate. The gate of the ancient city was the place where the court of justice convened. The expression may be equivalent to “deprived of their rights in the court of judgment” (see Prov. 22:22). Some see in this verse an allusion to the death of Job’s children.

5. The thorns. Even the thorn hedge around the field does not protect the crop of the fool from the bands of hungry marauders.

The robber. Heb. *šammim*. A word of doubtful meaning, probably “a snare,” “a trap.” A slight variation in the Hebrew vowels allows the translation “thirsty.” Such a rendering would improve the parallelism with “hungry” in the first line of the verse. This rendering is supported by two Greek versions, also the Syriac and the Vulgate. See Vol. I, pp. 34, 35.

Swalloweth up. Or, “pant after,” “long for.”

Their substance. A covert reference to Job’s great material losses.

6. Of the dust. See ch. 4:8, to which Eliphaz may be alluding. Sorrow and trouble, he asserts, do not grow like weeds out of the ground. The soil must be prepared and the evil seed implanted. Man is naturally sinful; therefore it is natural for him to suffer.

7. Sparks. Literally, “sons of the flame.” All men sin; therefore it is as natural for them to experience trouble as it is for sparks to fly upward. Why should Job complain of his lot so bitterly when sorrow is the common lot of all mankind? Eliphaz fails to recognize that stating a reason for trouble does not comfort the sufferer. The human heart is not healed by a knowledge of the inevitability of trouble any more than sin is forgiven by a knowledge of the universality of sin.

8. Seek unto God. “If I were you,” Eliphaz is saying, “I would cease complaining and seek God. Rather than wish for death, I would place my trust in Him.” It is easy for a person to assume that he would meet adversity more bravely than another. Actual experience sometimes betrays weakness in those who are most confident. Eliphaz was correct in what he said, but Job later evaluated its appropriateness in these words: “miserable comforters are ye all” (ch. 16:2).

9. Great things. In vs. 9–16 Eliphaz speaks of the hand of God in human events. He was unaware of the presence and operations of the great adversary, at whose door must be laid the responsibility of all earth’s suffering and woe.

12. Disappointeth. See Ps. 33:10; Isa. 8:10.

13. He taketh the wise. This is the only text in the book of Job that is quoted in the NT (1 Cor. 3:19). Paul probably translated the text directly from the Hebrew, or used some manuscript of the LXX not now extant. He expresses a thought similar to that of the LXX but makes use of different words.

Froward. Or, “wily.”

Carried headlong. Literally, “is hurried,” that is, “brought to a quick end” (RSV).

15. The poor. The Hebrew text reads literally, “But he saveth from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty, the needy.” The text does not follow the regular parallelism. Various revisions have been suggested to preserve the poetic meter, but none of these versions adds much to the understanding of the passage. God is pictured as a defender of the needy against his oppressor.

17. Happy. Verses 17–27 probably constitute the supreme passage among all the statements of Job’s friends; yet it is based on the assumption that Job was suffering punishment for sin.

Correcteth. Or, “reproves.” The idea that God’s reproof is a favor is found in other scriptures (see Ps. 94:12; Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5–11).

18. He maketh sore. See Deut. 32:39; Hosea 6:1.

19. Six troubles: yea, in seven. An expression found also in Ugaritic poetry. These numbers should not be taken literally. Six means many—seven means more. This is a poetic way of saying that God will deliver from all trouble (see Amos 1:3–11 for an example of similar numbering).

21. Scourge of the tongue. Calumny and abuse.

23. In league. A poetic figure. The animate (the beasts) and the inanimate (the stones) would be at peace with the servant of God.

24. Tabernacle. Or, “tent.”

Sin. Heb. *chata’*, which may also be translated “to miss [a way or goal]” (see Judges 20:16). Hence the line may be rendered, “You shall inspect your fold and miss nothing” (RSV).

25. Thy seed. To be blessed with many descendants was accepted as a sign of divine favor.

26. Full age. Another sign of divine favor. Despite Job’s serious physical condition, his friend holds before him the hope of longevity.

Like as a shock of corn. Compare Milton:

“So mayest thou live; till like ripe fruit,
thou drop
Into thy mother’s lap; or be with ease
Gathered, not harshly plucked; for death
mature.”

27. So it is. Eliphaz was convinced that his observations and conclusions were correct, and urged Job to accept his counsel and to act upon it.

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3 FE 348

18 PK 435

CHAPTER 6

1 *Job sheweth that his complaints are not causeless.* 8 *He wisheth for death, wherein he is assured of comfort.* 14 *He reproveth his friends of unkindness.*

1. Job answered. Chapters 6 and 7 record Job’s reply to Eliphaz. His first response is to justify the bitterness of his complaint. However, the tone of his discourse changes. Instead of the almost feverish, doubting agony of the initial utterance he exhibits a spirit that may be characterized as mild, plaintive, and in some measure composed.

2. Grief. Heb. *ka’aś*, literally, “vexation,” or “impatience.” *Ka’aś* is translated “wrath” in ch. 5:2. Eliphaz had criticized Job for his “vexation.” Job begins his defense by referring to this accusation.

Weighed. Job expresses the wish that balances might be provided and his vexation be placed over against his calamity. Bitter as his complaint had been, he felt that it was small compared with the distress that occasioned it.

3. Sand of the sea. A simile describing, in this case, great weight (see Prov. 27:3). Job concedes a certain extravagance in his language, but he feels that his rash words are justified by his terrible suffering.

4. Arrows of the Almighty. A figurative expression describing calamities generally (see Deut. 32:23; Ps. 7:13; 38:2; Eze. 5:16). Job here specifically names God as the author of his trouble. This thought seems greatly to add to his suffering, for he cannot understand why God should treat him thus.

Poison. It was common in some countries for warriors to fight with arrows dipped in poison (see Ps. 7:13). Instead of “the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit,” the clause may be translated “the poison whereof my spirit drinketh.”

Array. A picture representing Job’s evils arrayed against him like the forces of a hostile enemy.

5. When he hath grass. The braying of asses or the lowing of oxen indicates that some need of these animals has not been met. Similarly, Job’s complaints stem from what he considers to be a legitimate cause.

6. Unsavoury. Or, “tasteless,” “insipid,” “unseasoned.” Job considers his complaints a justifiable expression of repugnance at the diet on which he has been called to subsist.

White of an egg. Heb. *rir challamuth*, the meaning of which is obscure. *Rir* means slimy juice or saliva (see 1 Sam. 21:13). *Challamuth* is taken by some to refer to a plant with thick, slimy juice, called purslane. The rabbis take *challamuth* to refer to the yolk of an egg, and hence *rir* to the slimy part of the egg, namely the white. Since *challamuth* occurs only here, it is difficult to arrive at its meaning with any degree of certainty.

8. My request. The longing for death (ch. 3:11–19).

The thing that I long for. Literally, “my expectation,” or “my wish.”

9. Destroy. Literally, “crush.”

Cut me off. See Isa. 38:12. The idea seems to be that of cutting off the thread of life as the weaver cuts the finished material from the loom.

10. Comfort. There is something pathetic about the earnestness of Job’s longing for death. If he had been a pagan, he might have talked of suicide. His attitude toward life precludes such an idea. He must depend on God to order his life. He must submit to God, although he feels that his troubles are God’s arrows, tipped with venom. Even though he desires death, he shows not the slightest evidence of taking the matter in his own hands.

Harden myself. The meaning of this clause is uncertain. The word here translated “harden” does not occur elsewhere in the Bible. The LXX renders it “leap,” but with an entirely different context, rendering the verse, “Let the grave be my city, upon the walls of which I have leaped. I will not shrink from it; for I have not denied the holy words of my God.”

Concealed. Or, “disowned.” Job has no fear of death. He has confidence in his innocence. He is conscious of no denial of God.

11. My strength. Eliphaz has predicted a happier future (ch. 5:17–27). Job replies, “I do not have enough strength to wait for such promised blessings.”

Mine end. Is there sufficient purpose in further prolonging such a miserable existence?

12. Stones. To endure for an extended period such affliction would require a body of brass and the strength of stone.

13. My help in me. More literally, “Is it not true that there is no help in me?” The question is an acknowledgment of Job’s feeling of utter frustration.

14. Afflicted. The Hebrew of this verse is obscure. Some see in it the thought that friends should show gentleness to the despairing, even though the sufferer may have forsaken the fear of the Almighty. If this is the intent of his words, it must not be concluded that Job hereby admits apostasy. The last phrase must be considered as hypothetical, that is, even if he had renounced God, his friends should not forsake him.

Others, from the ideas suggested by the Syriac, Vulgate, and the Targums, give this translation: “He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty” (RSV). Both translations make sense and fit the context.

15. My brethren. Job compares his friends to a stream which is swollen and turbulent in winter, when its waters are not so sorely needed, but which dries up and disappears in the heat of summer. These streams, known as wadis, are common in the Eastern countries. The fullness, strength, and noise of these temporary streams in winter are compared to the attitude of Job’s friends toward him in the days of his prosperity. The drying up of the waters at the approach of summer is compared to the failure of these friends in time of affliction.

16. Which are blackish. Probably referring to the spring, when melting ice and snow send dark turbulent waters down the ravines.

17. They vanish. When the water is needed, in the heat of the summer, the streams disappear.

18. Paths. Heb. *’orchoth*, correctly rendered “paths,” or “roads,” and as such would refer to the streams winding into the desert and losing themselves in the sands. A slightly different vocalization of the Hebrew yields the translation “caravans” (see Isa. 21:13, where the word is rendered “travelling companies”). The figure, then, would show these caravans turning aside to find water in the river beds, and finding none, perishing of thirst in the barren wastes. See Vol. I, pp. 44, 45.

19. Troops. Heb. *’orchoth*, the same word that is employed in v. 18. If the caravan idea is not present in v. 18, it is definitely introduced here.

Tema. A well-known oasis in northwest Arabia.

Looked. The picture is of caravans approaching the wadis, eagerly hoping to find water.

20. Confounded. Literally, “put to shame” (see Ps. 6:10; 22:5; 25:2, 3, 20). The word is also used in the sense of disappointment (see Isa. 1:29; Jer. 2:36).

21. Nothing. This is a translation of the marginal reading of the Hebrew Bible. The text as it stands reads “to him,” or “to it,” the meaning of which is uncertain. The LXX has “to me,” in this context: “but ye have come to me without pity.” Job makes sure that his friends understand his illustration. He is disappointed when he comes to them for comfort and finds none. They are like the dry beds where refreshing streams should have flowed.

Casting down. Literally, “terror.” Job penetrates to the motives of his friends. They had come with good intentions, meaning to comfort and console him, but when they saw his condition, they feared to show too much friendliness. They regarded him as an object of divine vengeance and were afraid lest, if they showed him sympathy, they might incur punishment.

22. Bring unto me. Job is not pleading for material benefits from his friends.

23. Deliver me. Job is not asking for vengeance upon his enemies, nor that his friends retrieve his stolen property.

24. Teach me. Eliphaz had insinuated that Job had sinned. However, no specific accusations had been made regarding Job's life. True, his friends found fault with his words, but these merely reflected his despair. Job challenged his friends to present concrete evidence as proof that his suffering was a direct punishment for sin.

25. Right words. Literally, "words of uprightness."

What doth your arguing reprove? Literally, "What does your reproving reprove?" Job argues that words that proceed from sincerity are effective. But, he asks, what force do your words have? Your reasoning is defective because your premises are false.

26. Reprove words. Job says, in effect: "Will you fasten on my words, spoken in the excitement of passion, rather than on the fact of my blameless conduct?"

As wind. Literally, "for the wind." Job recognizes that his words have been expressions of despair. The text as it stands suggest that, like the wind, his speeches have been characterized by sound and fury rather than by calm trust and judgment. The literal translation suggests that his words were intended to be picked up and carried away by the wind, not to be taken as requiring reproof.

27. Overwhelm. Literally, "cause to fall [upon]." The expression is used for "casting lots," and probably has such a meaning here. Lots are cast upon the orphan children who are being sold as slaves to pay the debts of their deceased father. The words are a harsh indictment of the friends.

28. Look upon me. "Look me in the eye," Job says, "and judge from my countenance whether I am telling the truth." Job's conscious innocence expresses itself in this challenge.

29. Return. Or, "turn," that is, "change your attitude." You have unfairly assumed my guilt. Job is urging his friends to seek other explanations for his calamity. He insists that a further investigation would vindicate his righteousness.

30. My taste. Job is endeavoring to vindicate the soundness of his moral judgments. His sincerity cannot be doubted, but in placing too much confidence in his own sense of values, Job was on dangerous ground. God alone is competent to estimate man's moral and spiritual worth. Job later admitted that he had uttered that which he understood not (ch. 42:3).

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2 PK 162; 5T 313

4 AA 45; PK 435

8-10PK 163

CHAPTER 7

1 *Job excuseth his desire of death.* 12 *He complaineth of his own restlessness,* 17 *and God's watchfulness.*

1. An appointed time. Literally, "war," "warfare." Job's description of life stands in marked contrast with Eliphaz' fascinating picture in ch. 5:17-27. Job maintains that it is as natural and proper for man in his circumstances to wish to be released by death as for a soldier to desire that his term of service be accomplished (see Job 14:14; Isa. 40:2).

2. Desireth the shadow. As a servant looks impatiently for the shades of the evening, when he will be dismissed from toil, so Job fervently longs for death.

3. Made to possess. Or, "made to inherit." Job was not able to fill the long months with any good. This does not necessarily imply that his illness had been in progress for months. He may have looked forward to the days ahead.

4. When shall I arise? Anyone who has suffered serious illness can appreciate Job's reference to his long, seemingly interminable nights of pain and restlessness.

5. Worms. Worms breed in his sores. Crusts form over the eruptions. The ulcers break open and a discharge of a loathsome character occurs.

6. Weaver's shuttle. He does not here refer so much to the rapidity with which his days were passing away as to the fact that they would soon be gone.

Without hope. Job does not share the hope that Eliphaz holds out (ch. 5:17–27). He sees no hope but death.

7. Remember. Here begins an address to God that continues to the end of the present speech (v. 21). Job lifts his eyes and his heart to his Maker, and urges reasons why God should terminate the life of His despairing servant.

8. Eye. Note the repetition of this word in vs. 7 and 8. First, Job mentions "mine eye," then "the eye of him that hath seen me," referring to his fellow men, then "thine eyes," in reference to the eyes of God.

I am not. Literally, "nothingness of me." Job is speaking of death (see v. 9).

9. As the cloud. Job compares death to the disappearance of a cloud in the sky as its moisture is absorbed into the air about it.

Grave. Heb. *she'ol*. The figurative realm of the dead, where the dead are pictured as sleeping and resting together (see ch. 3:13–19).

Come up no more. This statement is not a denial of the resurrection. Its meaning is restricted by the observation of the next verse. The dead rise no more to return to their former households. Even taken independently the Hebrew words translated "shall come up no more" do not express finality, but simply incomplete action.

11. I will not refrain. Job's suffering is so intense that he feels justified in uninhibited complaint (see Ps. 55:2; 77:3; 142:2).

12. A sea. Job asks, Am I like a raging and tumultuous sea that it is necessary to restrain and confine me?

Whale. Heb. *tannin*, "sea monster" (see on Gen. 1:21), "dragon" (LXX). Possibly the crocodile. Job inquires, Am I like a dangerous monster that has to be kept under guard?

14. Thou scarest me. When Job seeks comfort in rest and sleep, he is terrified by his dreams. He places upon God the responsibility for this condition.

15. Strangling. It is possible that a sense of choking may have accompanied Job's affliction. At any rate, he considers strangling as more desirable than life.

My life. Literally, "my bones," an expression probably equivalent to "a living skeleton."

16. Loathe. Heb. *ma'as*, "to reject," "to despise," "to refuse." Probably "my life" should be supplied as the object (see ch. 9:21, where *ma'as* is translated "despise" and "my life" occurs in the text).

Let me alone. These were audacious words for any mortal to speak to God. Job is in the depth of despair. He feels that the Almighty has singled him out and pleads for freedom from divine interference. How different he would have felt if he could have looked behind the scenes and could have seen his heavenly Father looking down on him with tender pity and steadfast love. God was suffering with His servant, but Job did not know it.

Vanity. Literally, “breath,” “vapor,” a figure of that which is transitory. Job considers his life as of little value. He was unable to appreciate his tremendous worth in the sight of God.

17. What is man? The psalmist uses similar words in a framework that extols God’s love and care (Ps. 8:3–8). Job, in his suffering, distorts the unsleeping care of God into unwelcome meddling. Job is saying in effect to God, “Why do you annoy man with your tests and trials? Look the other way. Give me time to ‘swallow down my spittle’” (Job 7:19). Unseemly words, yet God did not strike Job down for his audacious declaration.

20. I have sinned. Probably not a confession, but intended in the sense of, “though I have sinned,” or “granted I have sinned.”

Preserver. Or, “watcher.” Here not in a good sense but the thought seems to be, “What if I have sinned—what difference does it make to Thee, Thou watcher of men?”

Mark. Heb. *miphga’*, something to strike against. Some interpret the word as “target.” Others see the idea of “stumbling block” or “obstacle.”

Against thee. Literally, “with respect to thee,” that is, Job considered himself an object for God to strike against.

Burden to myself. The LXX reads “burden to thee.” Jewish tradition claims that this was the original meaning, but that it was corrected by the scribes because it seemed impious.

21. Pardon. Job feels that in a short time he will die—“sleep in the dust”—therefore why should not God pardon him? What advantage is it to God to torment him, when life has so nearly ebbed away? If pardon does not come speedily, it will be too late.

There are those who believe that vs. 20 and 21 were addressed, not to God, but to Eliphaz. According to this view, Job turned to Eliphaz and said in effect, “You say I must have been a sinner. What then? I have not sinned against you, O you spy upon mankind! Why have you set me up as a mark to shoot at? Why am I become a burden to you? Why not rather overlook my transgressions and pass by my iniquity? Tomorrow, perhaps, I shall be sought in vain!” Such an interpretation is possible, but a shift in the person addressed is not obvious in the text.

Job’s speech, recorded in chs. 6 and 7, exhibits certain perils: (1) The danger of too much emphasis on the vanity of life. Men should remember their great value in the sight of God. (2) The danger of unrestrained expression of emotion. When Job removed his inhibitions, he complained in bitterness, questioned with irreverence, accused with rashness, and begged with impatience. (3) The tendency of the human heart, when blinded by grief or agitated by passion, to misconstrue God’s dealings. (4) The certainty that good men may have much of the old unrenowned nature in them lying unsuspected until occasion calls it forth. One would hardly have anticipated Job’s outburst of passion.

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11, 15, 16 PK 163

CHAPTER 8

1 *Bildad sheweth God’s justice in dealing with men according to their works. 8 He allegeth antiquity to prove the certain destruction of the hypocrite. 20 He applieth God’s just dealing to Job.*

1. Bildad. This chapter contains Bildad’s response to Job’s speech of chs. 6 and 7. Bildad does not refer to Job’s expressions of despair (ch. 6:1–13), nor to his tirade against his friends (ch. 6:14–30). He deals, rather, with Job’s criticism of God. Where Eliphaz

had supported his argument by a vision that he declared was from God (ch. 4:13), Bildad appeals for support to the wisdom of the ancients.

2. *How long?* The friends had doubtless hoped that the argument of Eliphaz would silence Job. They are amazed that he continued to pour out an unabated tempest of words.

A strong wind. Job had referred to his own speeches as “wind” (ch. 6:26), and Bildad seems to pick up the figure. On this point he agreed with Job!

3. *Pervert judgment.* Bildad attempts a defense of the justice of God. He is correct in his *respect* for God’s justice, but wrong in his *understanding* of God’s justice. He believes that justice demands specific punishment for sins in this life. He assumes that Job is the object of such justice.

4. *Thy children.* The severest of Job’s losses was that of his children. Bildad leveled an unkind thrust at Job by inferring that his children died because they were sinners. Year after year Job had offered sacrifices in behalf of his sons (ch. 1:5). Bildad was wrong in his assumption. Calamity does not prove guilt on the part of its victims (see Luke 13:1–5; John 9:2, 3).

5. *If thou wouldst seek.* Bildad seems to be saying, “Your children are dead because of their sins, but *you* are alive. If you will seek God and live right, God may yet remedy your condition.”

Betimes. This adverb is employed to bring out more clearly the meaning of the Hebrew verb *shachar*, which means “to seek diligently,” or “to seek early in the morning” (see Job 24:5; Ps. 63:1; Prov. 7:15; Prov. 8:17; Isa. 26:9; Hosea 5:15).

6. *Upright.* God had declared Job upright (ch. 1:8). Bildad exhibited the fallibility of human judgment when he declared Job to be otherwise. The cold and unfeeling insinuations of this critic must have tried Job’s patience severely.

7. *Thy latter end.* Bildad joins Eliphaz in predicting the return of prosperity for Job on the basis of repentance. It is difficult to believe that either “comforter” put much faith in the prospect. There may have been an implied sarcasm in Bildad’s words. “If you were as innocent as you claim to be,” Bildad seems to say, “you would be confident of your future. If you are not confident, you must be conscious of guilt.” Unwittingly, Bildad predicts the actual outcome of Job’s experience (see ch. 42:12).

8. *The search of their fathers.* Or, “the research of the fathers.” In every age men have appealed to the wisdom of their ancestors. Bildad brings to bear upon Job the traditions of their common past.

9. *Of yesterday.* We must, Bildad implies, depend on the philosophy of the past.

Shadow. See Ps. 102:11; 109:23.

10. *Teach thee.* Bildad obviously regarded Job as an unwilling pupil, but hoped that he would listen to the voices from the past. Some believe that Bildad referred to patriarchs of the ancient world, who lived very long lives, and thus had opportunity to acquire much wisdom.

11. *Rush.* Heb. *gome’*, generally taken to refer to the papyrus, a tall reed that grew to twice the height of a man and had a large tuft of leaves and flowers at the top. It was abundant in ancient Egypt, and was also found in the Jordan valley.

Flag. Heb. *’achu*, “reeds,” “rushes.” These plants consume large quantities of water.

12. *It withereth.* Such plants have no self-sustaining power. They are dependent on moisture for their support. If that is withheld, they droop and die.

13. All that forget God. This verse contains the application of the parable. When God's sustaining power is withdrawn from a man, he perishes like the once luxuriant water reed. The figure illustrates the judgment that Bildad conceives as falling on the man who was at one time righteous, and therefore prosperous, but who afterward departed from God. Job could not miss the application.

Hypocrite's. Heb. *chaneph*. Literally, "godless man." The Hebrew word does not suggest the dissimulation that is implied in the English word "hypocrite," but rather denotes irreligion and profanity (see Job 13:16; 15:34; 17:8; 20:5; 27:8; 34:30; 36:13; Ps. 35:16; Prov. 11:9).

14. Whose hope. Some suppose that the quotation from the ancients closes with v. 13, and that v. 14 begins the comments of Bildad on the passage to which he has referred. Others continue the quotation to the close of v. 18, and still others to the close of v. 19.

Spider's web. Literally, "A spider's house." A symbol of frailty.

15. Upon his house. A picture of the insecurity of the godless.

Hold it fast. Or, "take a firm hold of it." The picture is that of the spider trying to support himself by holding on to his house. Job's "house" has been snatched from him. His hope has been cut off. Thus Bildad appears to class Job with the godless.

16. Green. A new illustration, that of a luxuriant creeping plant full of sap and vitality, suddenly destroyed and forgotten.

17. The heap. Heb. *gal*. Here probably a heap of stones (see Joshua 7:26; 8:29, where the word occurs with "stones").

Seeth the place of stones. The LXX reads, "shall live among the flints." The picture is probably that of the creeping plant fastening its tendrils, like ivy, to the rocks and seeming to grow from the stones themselves.

18. If he destroy him. The subject seems to be impersonal, "if someone [or thing] destroy him." A storm or some other circumstance uproots the plant and sweeps it away.

It shall deny him. The place where the plant grew is personified and is represented as denying the existence of the once thriving plant.

19. Joy of his way. An ironical statement. So ends the once joyful course of life.

Others grow. The plant is not mourned or missed. It leaves no trace. Other plants soon take its place. By the parable of the creeping plant Bildad seeks to illustrate what has happened to Job. For a time he thrived, then disaster came, and like the plant he is destroyed.

20. A perfect man. Bildad had cast doubt on Job's uprightness (v. 6). Now he challenges another of Job's outstanding characteristics (see ch. 1:1, 8). He asserts that if Job is blameless, God will bless him.

21. Fill thy mouth. Bildad does not conceive of Job's case as being hopeless. Like Eliphaz, he predicts a reversal of Job's calamity and judgment upon Job's enemies. The friends seem to have a degree of confidence in Job's basic integrity, even though they are convinced that he has committed some great sin that has been responsible for his calamity.

A comparison of Eliphaz' first discourse with Bildad's reveals that both have a censorious introduction and a conciliatory close. Both exhorted Job to go to God in penitence and in prayer for help, and held out the promise of salvation. Eliphaz reinforced his argument with an alleged divine revelation, while Bildad sought to accomplish the same results by appealing to the ancient teachers of wisdom.

CHAPTER 9

1 *Job, acknowledging God's justice, sheweth there is no contending with him.* 22 *Man's innocency is not to be condemned by afflictions.*

1. *Job answered.* Chapters 9 and 10 record Job's third speech, in which he acknowledges the omnipotence of God, and, by contrast, his own impotence. Then he launches into another melancholy complaint regarding his afflictions.

2. *It is so.* Job acknowledges the correctness of Bildad's arguments.

How should man be just? Job's problem is not the justice of God; that he acknowledges. He wants to know how he, a man, can be just before God. His circumstances incriminate him as guilty, while his conscience bears witness to his innocence. Job's question has been completely answered only in the revelation of the plan of salvation. Through the provisions of the plan it is possible for God to "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

3. *One of a thousand.* Man is no equal for God. He cannot answer His questions or His charges.

4. *Hath prospered.* Heb. *shalam*, "to be complete, sound, safe." *Shalam* is related to an Arabic root that carries the further idea of being in submission to.

5. *Removeth the mountains.* The human being looks at mountains as symbols of immense size and stability, yet God is able to remove them and turn them upside down.

6. *Shaketh the earth.* Doubtless a reference to earthquakes (1 Kings 19:11; see Ps. 104:32; Zech. 14:4, 5; Matt. 24:7).

Pillars thereof tremble. A poetic description of earthquakes. It is not necessary to find a literal explanation for the "pillars."

7. *Commandeth the sun.* God is represented as having absolute power over nature. The Scriptures frequently mention natural phenomena as a display of the power of God (see Ex. 10:21; Eze. 32:7; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12; 16:10).

8. *Spreadeth out the heavens.* See Ps. 104:2; Isa. 40:22; Jer. 10:12. The figure extols the omnipotence of God by calling attention to His handiwork.

Waves of the sea. Literally, "heights of the sea." God is pictured as one who has power to subdue the proud might of the waves.

9. *Arcturus.* Heb. 'ash ('ayish, ch. 38:32). The identification is not absolutely certain. Many think that the constellation Ursa Major, or Great Bear, is designated (see on ch. 38:32).

Orion. Heb. *kesil*, literally, "a fool," although it is not certain that the name for the constellation comes from the same root as that which yields the definition "fool." There is general agreement that *kesil* here means Orion (see on ch. 38:31).

Pleiades. Heb. *kimah*. Some interpret 'ash as Pleiades and make *kimah* refer to some other brilliant star, as Sirius. The LXX for the three Hebrew terms reads, "Pleiades, Hesperus, and Arcturus" (see on ch. 38:31).

The chambers of the south. Probably unnamed constellations in the southern heavens, or perhaps the immense spaces beyond the southern horizon.

10. *Great things.* This verse is almost verbatim that of ch. 5:9, where Eliphaz spoke. Eliphaz sees in the wonders of God's creation an expression of God's goodness, whereas

Job seems to see only the power of God. Possibly these words were common in the mouths of religious men in ancient times.

11. I see him not. A sharp line divides the visible and invisible worlds; and this line is rarely crossed. Job possibly reflects upon the claim of Eliphaz to have had a physical consciousness of the visitation of a spirit (ch. 4:15, 16), and asserts that it is otherwise with him—the spirit world passes by him, and he receives no light, no illumination, no miraculous direction from it.

Passeth on. Heb. *chalaph*, the same verb that Eliphaz used (ch. 4:15) when speaking of his spirit visitation.

I perceive him not. Eliphaz declared that he had a vivid perception of the presence of the spirit (ch. 4:15, 16), and heard its voice (ch. 4:16–21). Job here indicates that he had not been thus favored.

12. Who can hinder him? Compare chs. 11:10 and 23:13. When calamities struck Job, his response was, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (ch. 1:21). This was a response of trust. The passing of time and the impact of unremitting pain have weakened Job’s spirit. Trust has given way to a feeling of helplessness. Instead of recognizing God’s wisdom and love, he sees his own weakness. Often sudden tragedy does not break the human spirit like persistent, monotonous suffering.

13. If. There is no “if” in the Hebrew. The sentence should be rendered as a statement of fact rather than condition “God will not withdraw his anger.”

The proud helpers. Heb. *‘ozre rahab*, literally, “the helpers of Rahab.” *Rahab* occurs in ch. 26:12, where it is translated “proud,” and in Isa. 51:9, where it appears as a proper name. Some believe that *Rahab* was an ancient designation of a great power of evil. If so, Job here seems to say that God holds in subjection not only men but also beings much more powerful than man, as *Rahab* and his helpers. Since *Rahab* means pride, it would be a suitable designation of Lucifer, and “the helpers,” a designation of the beings who followed Lucifer (see Isa. 14:12–14; Rev. 12:7–9). Job, by his speeches, however, indicates that he had but a limited knowledge of the great controversy between God and Satan.

14. Answer him. Verses 14–16 suggest the language of a court of law. Job acknowledges his inability to present a successful defense.

Though I were righteous. Job recognizes the sovereignty of God. Even though he is certain of his innocence, he still appeals for mercy as he approaches his Judge.

16. Called. Heb. *qara’*. Here obviously with the meaning “to summon in a legal sense.” Job is saying, If I had challenged God to a controversy, and He had granted it, and bidden me to plead my cause at His bar, yet could I not suppose that He really meant it, and would allow me boldly to stand before Him and freely to challenge His doings. Such condescension seems inconceivable to Job.

17. Breaketh me. In vs. 17–21 Job tries to imagine what would happen if he should challenge God, and God should respond to his challenge. He pictures God as acting toward him, not as a judge, determining matters by rule of law, but as a sovereign, determining them by His own will. Job seems to lose sight of the fact that supreme sovereignty is not inconsistent with supreme love and rectitude.

Without cause. Heb. *chinnam* translated similarly in ch. 2:3, but rendered “for nought” in ch. 1:9. Job attributes to God that which was clearly the work and scheme of Satan (ch. 2:3). See on Ps. 38:3; 39:9.

18. Take my breath. God’s judgments are described as so constant and unremitting that Job cannot even “catch his breath.”

19. He is strong. Job has no question about God’s power. His sense of that power was more highly developed than his appreciation of God’s goodness.

Who shall set me a time? Or, “who will summon me?” The LXX reads, “who then shall resist his judgment?”

20. If I justify myself. The sentence is true if the words are correctly applied (see 1 Cor. 4:4). But Job was thinking of them in an entirely different light. He was brooding over the thought that the creature had no chance when opposed to the Ruler of the universe.

21. Though I were perfect. Literally, this verse reads, “I am perfect; I do not know myself; I abhor my life.” The thought seems to be that Job maintained his innocence, but he could not understand himself or his circumstances, and his conflict was so great that he despised his life.

22. One thing. Or, “one matter.” That is, all are alike in God’s sight. There is no difference between the cases of the righteous and those of the wicked.

I said it. Or, “I say.” Job is about to make a bold assertion.

He destroyeth. Job is convinced that nothing can be argued certainly about the character of a man from the divine dealings with him. God allows the righteous and the wicked to be swept away together.

23. Scourge. Job is probably referring to war, plague, or pestilence. If one of these be let loose upon men, it slays without discrimination. In such case, God does not always interpose to save the righteous.

Laugh. Or, “mock,” “deride.” An audacious, irreverent, and bitter remark that some have tried to defend on the basis that it is a rhetorical statement, but the defense seems inadequate. It is obviously one of those statements of which he later repented in “dust and ashes” (ch. 42:6).

24. If not. The clause may be translated, “If not, then who is it?” In this passage Job reflects, perhaps, the deepest discouragement and the darkest distrust observable in any of his speeches. He argues that the established condition of things in human society must be ascribed to God; there is no one else to whom it can be ascribed.

25. My days are swifter. By three figures Job illustrates the rapidity with which his life is rushing to its end.

A post. A fast-running messenger or courier.

26. Swift ships. Or, “ships of reed.” Ships constructed for lightness and speed, but not substantial.

The eagle. Job had pointed to that which was swiftest on land, that which was swiftest in the water, and now he points to that which was swiftest in the air. He compares these things to the speed with which his life is approaching its destination.

27. My heaviness. Literally, “my face,” or “my countenance,” that is, the sorrowful countenance that Job had. He suggests an endeavor to brace up and find happiness despite his afflictions, but holds such attempts vain.

28. *Afraid.* Job's suffering was augmented by his fear that God would condemn him. Frustration, doubt, fear, preyed upon Job perhaps as much as his physical pain.

29. *If I be wicked.* Literally, "I am wicked," or, "I am guilty." That is, Job believes his sufferings show that he is accounted so.

Why then labour I? A defeatist attitude was haunting Job's thinking. Like many other sufferers, he was saying, in substance, "What's the use!"

30. *Snow water.* Symbolic of thorough cleansing.

My hands. The clause reads literally, "make my hands clean with lye [potash]."

31. *In the ditch.* It matters not, Job says, how clean and pure I endeavor to make myself, God will plunge me again into the filthy mire.

Clothes. Job's clothes are personified, and represented as abhorring him.

32. *He is not a man.* Job sees no hope of coming to an understanding with God, because of the gulf between them. God is infinite, and Job is painfully conscious of his own finite, mortal existence.

33. *Daysman.* Or, "umpire." In his argument with God, Job feels that there is no one to whom he can look as an arbiter. On one of two conditions only, he thinks, could the contest be more even between himself and God: (1) If God, divesting Himself of all His divine attributes, became man, and (2) if some umpire, or arbiter, could be found to decide the contest. Neither condition, however, did Job think possible. The gospel provides a fulfillment of both conditions. "The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both" (DA 25). Not that we need to conceive of Jesus as settling an argument between man and God, but He is the One who represents God to man, the One through whom man can understand and approach God. See Heb. 2:17, 18.

Lay his hand upon. It has been suggested that this may refer to some ancient ceremony in which, for some cause, the umpire, or arbiter, laid his hands upon both the parties in a legal dispute. It may mean that the umpire had the power of control over both parties, that it was his office to restrain them within proper limits, to check any improper expressions, and to see that the argument was fairly conducted on both sides. This figure could, of course, not be applied to God as one of the parties, though in Job's concept the application was valid.

34. *Take his rod away.* Job cringes before the chastisement of God. He is terrified. He feels that he could speak in his own defense if God would cease to inflict suffering upon him.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 GC 254

5 PP 328

9 EW 41

33 DA 25

CHAPTER 10

1 *Job, taking liberty of complaint, expostulateth with God about his afflictions. 18 He complaineth of life, and craveth a little ease before death.*

1. *Leave my complaint.* Job announces his intention to speak plainly. The three parts of the sentence have been described as "three convulsive sobs like the sparse large drops before the storm."

2. *Shew me wherefore.* Job is again raising the unanswered question, "Why?" In the verses that follow, he examines one supposition after another as to why God treats him

thus. These suppositions Job rejects as being out of harmony with God's nature. The chapter ends with Job still confused as to the intentions and purposes of God.

3. *Is it good unto thee?* That is, "Does it seem good unto thee?" Does God get any pleasure out of oppressing His creatures? God has made man. Why should He despise His workmanship?

Shine upon. Or, "glorify." "How is it," Job inquires, "that the wicked seem to be better treated than those who love God?"

4. *Eyes of flesh.* Job's second question: "Is God finite in His judgments—that He distributes rewards and punishments on the basis of a mistaken understanding of men's merits?" His friends have misjudged him; perhaps God has misjudged him also.

5. *As the days of man.* Job's third question: "Is God short-lived, therefore limited in experience and understanding? Does God expect soon to die, and therefore bear down on Job as if time were limited?"

As man's days. Heb. *kime geber*, "like the days of a strong man." The parallel expression in the preceding clause is a translation of *kime 'enosh*, "like the days of mankind."

7. *Thou knowest.* Rather, "although thou knowest."

None that can deliver. Two ideas appear throughout Job's speeches: first, his sense of innocence; and second, his sense of helplessness. Job realizes that his questions (vs. 3–6) are so obviously out of harmony with God's character that he cannot give them serious consideration. The distracted sufferer is back where he started, still faced with the taunting question, "Why?"

8. *Fashioned me.* Who makes a beautiful vase only to be destroyed? Who molds a statue from marble only to break it in pieces? Who builds a splendid edifice only to pull it down? Who plants a rare and precious flower only to have the pleasure of plucking it up?

9. *As the clay.* "Of clay" (LXX). See Job 33:6; Isa. 29:16; 45:9; Jer. 18:6; Rom. 9:20, 21.

10. *Poured me out.* This and the following verse are generally considered as descriptive of conception and embryonic development.

12. *Favour.* Heb. *chesed*. Generally translated "mercy"; frequently "kindness," or "loving-kindness"; only rarely "favor." There is no one English word that adequately translates *chesed*. The RSV renders it "steadfast love," which comes closer to the meaning of the original, though it still falls short of conveying to the reader of the English what *chesed* does to the reader of Hebrew. It is difficult to describe the character of God in human language.

Visitation. A word that describes not only the visit but also that which the visit accomplishes. Here the "visitation" represents the solicitude and care exercised toward Job. Job recognized the keeping power of God, from his conception to full manhood, but this recognition only increases the question of why God is dealing with him now so severely.

13. *These things.* Either the intricacies of Job's creation or the calamities that God had brought upon him. The latter is generally supposed.

This is with thee. That is, the intention to bring these calamities. The phrase is thought by some to introduce the verses that follow. Job is saying, if this interpretation is

correct, that in spite of God's care for him, He had entertained malignant purposes that now were finding expression.

14. Sin. Heb. *chaṭa'*, "to miss the mark," not willful rebellion, which is represented in Hebrew by the root *pasha'*. Job complains that God is too severe concerning small sins.

15. Be wicked. Or, "act wickedly." The Hebrew root from which the verb is translated indicates acts of violence, in contrast with *chaṭa'* (v. 14).

If I be righteous. Job complains that even in this case he cannot lift up his head. He suffers in spite of his righteousness and cannot vindicate himself.

16. It increaseth. Literally, "he is lifted up." The Syriac reads, "I be lifted up."

As a fierce lion. See Isa. 31:4; Jer. 25:38.

Shewest thyself marvellous. God afflicts in strange and marvelous ways, says Job.

17. Renewest thy witnesses. Each fresh calamity testifies that God is displeased with Job.

Changes and war. Literally, "changes and a host." The figure is probably that of armies, ever renewing their forces so as to maintain the pressure and momentum of their attacks.

18. Brought me forth. Job renews his lament regarding his birth (see ch. 3:1–13).

Given up the ghost. Literally, "expired" (see on ch. 3:11).

20. Let me alone. Plaintively, Job pleads for a little comfort before he dies.

21. Darkness. The idea of darkness is stressed in this and the following verse. Various Hebrew terms are employed. In v. 21 the common word for darkness is used. It is immediately followed by the word translated "shadow of death," which is poetic for the world of the dead.

22. Without any order. Nothing describes death more vividly than darkness and chaos. Conversely, there are no better symbols of life than light and organization.

A homiletical outline of ch. 10 has been suggested as follows: Verses 1–7: (1) sobbing in the ear of God, (2) pleading before the throne of God, (3) appealing to the heart of God. Verses 8–17: (1) God's former loving care, (2) God's present cruel treatment. Verses 18–22: (1) A great mercy despised, (2) a sinful regret indulged, (3) a passionate entreaty offered, (4) a dismal future depicted.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 Ed 155

CHAPTER 11

1 *Zophar reproveth Job for justifying himself. 5 God's wisdom is unsearchable. 13 The assured blessing of repentance.*

1. Zophar. Eliphaz has spoken (chs. 4 and 5), Bildad has spoken (ch. 8). Both have uttered profound sentiments, but both have clung with vigor to the philosophy that Job's sufferings are measured by his sins. Now Zophar speaks. His speech adds little that is new to the ideas expressed by his friends. He reveals a lack of sympathy, gentleness, and refinement perhaps surpassing that of either of the other speakers. Zophar's violent outburst is provoked by Job's denial of his guilt and his accusations against God. Zophar's speech may be divided into three parts: (1) the expression of a desire for such a declaration from God as would convince Job of his guilt (vs. 2–6); (2) a description intended to warn Job of God's exalted knowledge, by virtue of which he charges against

every man his sins (vs. 7–12); and (3) a stress on the necessity of repentance as the only condition of recovering his former prosperity (vs. 13–20).

2. Multitude of words. Zophar seems annoyed by the length of Job’s speech. The Orientals regarded brevity of words a distinguishing virtue (see Prov. 10:19 and Eccl. 5:2).

3. Lies. Heb. *baddim*, “empty talk” (see Isa. 16:6; Jer. 48:30; 50:36). Zophar is characterizing Job’s speech as vain talk and mockery. Job has asserted his right to complain (Job 10:1). Zophar asserts his right to answer such form of speech.

4. Doctrine. Heb. *leqach*, “instruction,” “teaching.” The word occurs in the book of Job only here and only rarely elsewhere. Zophar was probably alluding to such statements as Job’s declaration in ch. 10:7. Job had not used precisely the words Zophar here attributes to him, but Zophar is evidently summarizing Job’s contention.

I am clean. Zophar accuses Job of defending both his “doctrine” and his conduct. In a sense Job had done this very thing. He did not, however, claim to be completely without sin. He did maintain that he was not such a sinner as his friends charged. This verse reiterates the central contention between Job and his friends. Job accepted the testimony of his conscience, whereas his friends misinterpreted the testimony of his suffering.

5. God would speak. Job had wished that God might speak (ch. 6:24). Now Zophar repeats the same desire; but he is confident that if God should do so, it would be to show Job his error.

6. They are double. The Hebrew of this phrase is obscure. The LXX for this line reads, “for it shall be double of that which is with thee.” Evidently the idea is to point out the superlative character and the unfathomable nature of the wisdom of God.

God exacteth of thee less. Zophar says in effect, “If you only understood the inscrutable wisdom of God, you would see that God has caused a part of your iniquity to be forgotten. Instead of treating you, as you complained, with severity, He has by no means inflicted on you the calamities you deserve.” This is probably the most extravagant accusation yet brought against Job.

7. By searching. The sentence reads literally, “Can you find out the things to be explored about God?” The question conveys the idea of the absolute greatness and incomprehensibility of God.

8. High as heaven. Compare Eph. 3:18, where the same four dimensions are used to describe the love of God in Christ. The questions with which Zophar punctuates this majestic description of God are intended to impress upon Job the insignificance of man in contrast with the greatness of God.

9. Longer than the earth. The illustrations were far more striking in Job’s day. We have crossed the ocean—but they had not. We have explored the far corners of the earth—but they had not. They considered such exploits impossible.

10. Cut off. Literally, “pass on quickly,” “sweep on.”

Gather together. Or, “summon an assembly,” that is, for judgment. In view of God’s greatness, Zophar argues, if He chooses to advance against a man, to imprison him, and to call him to judgment, who can interfere with Him? Surely Job had no right to question God’s action against him!

11. Vain men. Zophar reminds Job that God is able to recognize men who are worthless and wicked.

12. *A wild ass's colt.* This verse is difficult. Another possible translation is, "a vain man may get understanding, and a wild ass's colt become a man." That is, a man as untractable, untamed, and stubborn as a wild ass may still be transformed into a real man. Another interpretation is suggested by the translation, "But a stupid man will get understanding, when a wild ass's colt is born a man" (RSV). According to this, there is no more hope of imparting wisdom to a vain man than of a wild ass giving birth to a human offspring. This interpretation does not appear, however, to provide the proper transition to the second division of the chapter. Zophar does not regard Job's case as utterly hopeless.

13. *If thou.* The "thou" is emphatic in the Hebrew.

Prepare thine heart. Zophar here begins his appeal by calling upon Job to repent. In doing so he uses an argument similar to that of Eliphaz (ch. 5:17–27).

Stretch out thine hands. Zophar urges Job to approach God in the attitude of supplication.

14. *Put it far away.* Zophar appeals to Job to put away sin, of which he is certain Job is guilty, as a prerequisite to the return of security and felicity.

15. *Then.* When you have repented of your sins, you will find confidence and security and absence of fear.

16. *As waters.* As a shower of rain, a pool of water, or a swollen, turbulent stream that once threatens to engulf everything soon passes away and is forgotten, so Job's present misery would fade into insignificance before the brighter tomorrow.

17. *Than the noonday.* Job had described his end as total darkness (ch. 10:22). For emphasis, he had used several words descriptive of gloom and blackness. Zophar replies by promising a future of light like that of the noonday and the morning.

18. *Secure.* The age-old yearning for security is reflected in this promise.

Dig. Heb. *chaphtar*, "to search out," "to explore." This clause may be translated, "Yea, thou shalt look about thee, and shalt take thy rest in safety."

19. *Make suit.* Zophar foresees Job again as a man of distinction, with people coming to him for counsel.

20. *The wicked.* Had Zophar ended with v. 19, Job might have taken comfort from his speech, holding out, as it did, the hope of restoration to God's favor and a return to happiness. But, as if to accentuate the unfavorable view that he takes of Job's conduct and character, he does not end with encouraging words, but appends a passage that has a ring of condemnation.

Their hope. The clause reads literally, "their hope the breathing out of their life." The hope of the righteous man *lives* until it reaches its full realization in heaven. It attends him in health and supports him in sickness; it cheers him in solitude and is his companion in society; it gives meaning to life and supports him in death. The sinner has no such hope. With him all expectation ends when the curtain of death is drawn.

Zophar's eulogy regarding God is superb. His sincerity is obvious. But he, like Job's other friends, misunderstands the providence of God. He is unable to conceive of suffering except as direct punishment for sin. He calls on Job for repentance, when he should bring him love and comfort. The speeches of Job's friends have been compared to wheels, revolving on the same axle. They vary in detail, but agree in basic sentiment.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7, 8 SC 110; 5T 698
7–9MH 430; PP 116; 8T 279
8 DA 412
15–20PK 163

CHAPTER 12

1 *Job maintaineth himself against his friends that reprove him. 7 He acknowledgeth the general doctrine of God's omnipotency.*

1. Job answered. In the present discourse, which includes chs. 12–14, Job for the first time really pours scorn upon his friends. Invective, however, appears as a secondary purpose. His main object is to justify his previous assertions: (1) that the whole course of earthly events, whether good or evil, must be attributed to God, and (2) that his sufferings entitle him to plead with God and demand to know why he is so punished.

2. No doubt. Heb. *'omnam*, “verily,” “truly,” from the same root as the word translated “amen.”

Ye are the people. This is the language of biting sarcasm. Job seems to say, “Ye are the only people who count for anything, the only people to whom attention is due and who alone ought to be allowed to speak.”

Die with you. At their death wisdom would disappear from the earth.

3. Understanding. Literally, “heart.” “Heart” is frequently used to denote the understanding, or mind. We use the expression “heart” to denote the seat of the affections and emotions. But the Hebrews thought of the heart as the seat of the understanding. Job is probably making a retort to Zophar’s thrust in ch. 11:12, if that statement is to be construed as meaning “a stupid man will get understanding when a wild ass’s colt is born a man” (see on ch. 11:12).

Inferior. Job claims to be equal to his friends in his ability to quote the sayings of the ancients; and in order to show this, he quotes a number of proverbial sayings in the verses that follow.

Such things as these. Job considered the sentiments of his friends as commonplace. He not only said that he knew those sentiments, but declared that it would be strange if anyone did not know them.

4. Who calleth upon God. It is not entirely clear to whom this statement applies. If it alludes to Job, it would refer to his past, when he was accustomed to receive answers to his prayers; if to Zophar, it would be an ironical thrust at him. Job is lamenting the fact that he, a man of upright character, who knows God, should find himself an object of ridicule.

5. He that is ready to slip. The verse reads literally, “For disaster, contempt to the thoughts of one at ease. It is set up for those who slip with their feet.” Slightly paraphrased the verse may read, “The thoughts of one at ease show contempt toward disaster. It [contempt] is prepared [or ready] for those whose feet slip.” The thought is reasonably clear. Job calls attention to the human weakness that causes men to overwhelm the unfortunate with contempt and to give to the tottering another push. Those who retain the translation “lamp,” which is possible, see the idea that when a torch is blazing it is regarded as of value; but when nearly extinguished it is regarded as worthless and cast away. So when a man is prosperous he is looked to as a guide and example; but in adversity his counsel is rejected, and he is looked upon with contempt.

6. *The tabernacles of robbers.* Better, “the tents of robbers.” Verse 5 laments the troubles of the unfortunate. This verse contrasts the apparent prosperity of the wicked. Job is insisting that God does not treat men in this world according to their real character, but that the wicked are prospered and the righteous are afflicted.

Into whose hand. The Hebrew of this line is uncertain. Some conjecturally translate it, “who bring their god in their hand,” as though they have no God but their own strong arm (see RSV).

7. *Ask now the beasts.* Job seems to be pointing out that even among the lower animals the violent are prospered and the innocent are the victims. God does not give security to the gentle, the tame, and the innocent, and punish the ferocious, the bloodthirsty, and the cruel.

9. *The hand of the Lord.* Job maintains his thesis of the arbitrary sovereignty of God. He is endeavoring to show that his misfortune is not conclusive evidence that he is wicked. Even nature, he avers, disproves such a philosophy. The term *Yahweh*, Lord, in this phrase occurs only here in the poetical portions of Job. The general designation of the Divine Being is *'Eloah*, or *'el* (see vs. 4, 6). There is no obvious explanation for this interesting variation. A number of manuscripts retain *'Eloah* here.

10. *Soul.* Heb. *nephesh*, “life” (see on 1 Kings 17:21).

11. *Ear try words.* Job seems to be making an appeal for discrimination between that which is true and false and that which is right and wrong.

12. *Length of days.* The probable connection of this verse with the preceding statement is that as the ear determines the value of words, or the palate the taste of food, so aged men have been able to acquire for themselves, in the course of a long life, a true insight into values.

13. *With him.* That is, with God. Verse 12 has mentioned the wisdom of old men. Yet the true wisdom is to be found in God alone. In the remainder of this chapter Job presents illustrations of God’s wisdom and sovereignty. His argument is: God made all things; He sustains all things; He reverses the conditions of men at His pleasure; He sets up whom He pleases, and when He chooses, He casts them down. God’s actions are contrary in many respects to what we would anticipate.

14. *He breaketh down.* Job maintains that none can repair what God pulls down. Men may build cities and towns, but God can destroy them by fire, pestilence, or earthquake. Job doubtless stresses this phase of his understanding of God’s sovereignty because in his own experiences he considered himself the object of God’s destructive activity.

He shutteth up. God has power to deprive man of his freedom.

15. *Withholdeth the waters.* Droughts and floods, are, in Job’s thinking, both evidences of the sovereignty of God. These disasters of nature were probably common to the inhabitants of Job’s country.

16. *The deceived.* All classes of men are under God’s control. He who abuses his wisdom by leading others astray, and he who uses it for their good, are in God’s hand and serve His purposes. God sets bounds beyond which man cannot go.

17. *Leadeth counsellors.* The counsels of wise and great men do not prevail against God. The word translated “spoiled” literally means “barefoot,” hence, “stripped.” The figure is probably an allusion to the practice of removing the outer garments of captives of war (see Micah 1:8).

Judges fools. God has power to defeat the counsels of men who seem most competent to give counsel. Job makes vivid the contrast between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the greatest of men.

18. Bond of kings. That by which they bind others. The last part of the verse pictures the kings, who once imprisoned others, now bound and led away as prisoners. The whole series of remarks here refers to the reverses and changes in the conditions of life.

19. Princes. Heb. *kohanim*, literally, “priests.” Even the ministers of religion were subject to the reverses that afflicted other men.

20. The trusty. God takes away the eloquence and leadership ability of those who have won reputations as counselors.

21. Weakeneth the strength. Literally, “looses the belt.” The Orientals wore loose flowing robes, which were secured by a girdle, or belt, about the loins. When they worked, ran, or traveled, their robes were girded up. To loosen the belt means to impede such activity.

22. Discovereth deep things. Obscuration is no problem for God. He can bring light even out of darkness. This text may refer to (1) God’s ability to detect plots, intrigues, and conspiracies; (2) God’s power to predict the future; or (3) God’s ability to understand man’s inmost thoughts (see Matt. 10:26).

23. Increaseth the nations. See Dan. 4:17; PK 499, 500.

24. Taketh away the heart. He frustrates the plans of the great and makes their wisdom of no significance. They become like lost travelers (see Ps. 107:4).

25. They grope in the dark. This closes the chapter, and with it the controversy in regard to Job’s command of pertinent and striking proverbial expressions. Job demonstrated that he was as familiar with proverbs respecting God as were his friends, and that he entertained as exalted ideas of the control and government of the Most High as they. The friends interpret God as rewarding men in this life according to their deeds. Job views God as governing the affairs of men from the standpoint of other criteria than their deeds. His life, he feels, has been beyond reproach.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7, 8 CG 58; Ed 117

7–98T 327

13 Ed 13, 14; 8T 327

3

CHAPTER 13

1 *Job reproveth his friends of partiality. 14 He professeth his confidence in God: 20 and intreateth to know his own sins, and God’s purpose in afflicting him.*

1. Mine eye hath seen. Verses 1 and 2 are closely connected with ch. 12, forming the natural termination to the first section of Job’s argument that God is absolutely sovereign in the affairs of men.

3. Speak to the Almighty. Zophar had expressed the wish that God might appear and speak against Job (ch. 11:5). Job would welcome the opportunity to talk things over with God.

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4. Forgers of lies. Literally, “plasterers of lies.”

Physicians of no value. They were like physicians who go forth to visit the sick, but can do nothing for them.

5. Your wisdom. See Prov. 17:28. If it be thought that Job is somewhat impatient, it must be remembered that he is confronted by three opponents, all eager to catch him in a fault, and far from mild in their reprimands.

7. For God. This phrase stands at the beginning of the Hebrew sentence, thereby indicating that it is to receive special emphasis. “For God will you maintain unjust principles?” How often unjust things have been said and done, professedly to advance the interests of God

For him. Placed, in the Hebrew, at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, like the phrase, “for God,” above.

8. Accept his person. Literally, “lift up his faces,” a Hebrew idiom for showing partiality. Job is saying, in effect, “Will you, from partiality to God, maintain unjust principle, and defend positions that are really untenable?” Job felt that his friends were injuring him, while endeavoring to vindicate God. He felt that they were acting out of mere servility to God, without an adequate understanding of the issues involved.

Contend for God. Will ye, like an unjust judge, be biased in favor of one of the parties in a dispute?

9. Search you out. Would you be able to stand the scrutiny of God?

Mocketh another. Do you think you can deceive God as you would deceive a fellow man? God is too great and wise to be deceived by flattery or by a show of reverence.

10. He will surely reprove. This prediction was later fulfilled (see ch. 42:7).

Accept persons. That is, show partiality (see on v. 8). In no circumstance is it right to show partiality, regardless of the person involved. The exact truth is to be sought after, and judgment arrived at accordingly.

11. Make you afraid. Job warns his friends of the exaltation and loftiness of God. He feels that they are exposing themselves to divine wrath by their wrong ideas.

12. Remembrances. Literally, “memorials,” here memorial sentences, pithy sayings or maxims. The quotations from the wise men of old are worth no more than ashes.

Bodies. Heb. *gabbim*, anything curved, hence applied to the back of a man (Ps. 129:3). Other meanings are “mound” (Eze. 16:24, 31, 39), “a convex projection [of a shield],” translated “bosses” (Job 15:26), or bulwarks, breastworks, as probably here. Job seems to be ridiculing the arguments of his friends, which he characterizes as breastworks of clay.

13. Hold your peace. There is a suggestion here of an attempted interruption. Job is asking for the privilege of being permitted to go on and finish his speech, let come what would. In the Hebrew the pronoun “I” is stressed, meaning “and I [not you] will speak.”

14. Take my flesh in my teeth. This is an obscure passage. The figure is thought by some to be taken from the practice of animals of carrying their prey in their teeth. Such an exposed position of the prey provokes other animals to attempt a seizure, which often results in a quarrel, and the possible loss of the prey. According to this interpretation, Job is stating that he feels his statements are leading him into danger, but he is determined to follow through, come what may.

Others point out that the clause is best explained by comparing it with the second line of the verse, “and put my life in mine hand.” This line seems to carry the idea of a calculated risk.

Still others believe that the expression is reminiscent of a primitive notion that when a man dies his soul passes out of his body through his mouth or nostrils. This would make the text equivalent to, “I am about to die.” This interpretation is far-fetched, and out of harmony with the context.

The idea of a calculated risk seems the most probable meaning of the clause. Job recognizes that he is arguing with God. He is aware of his weakness. Yet he persists in stating the case that he feels is right, regardless of the consequences. The verse reflects the moral daring of Job.

15. Trust in him. It is possible to translate the Hebrew of the first half of this verse in two different ways: (1) as here, and (2) “behold he will kill me, I have no hope.” The difference resides in the spelling of the Hebrew word *lo’*, translated “in him.” *Lo’* almost invariably means “not,” being the common Hebrew adverb of negation. To get the translation “in him,” the spelling would normally be *lo*. However, the KJV rendering is supported by the LXX, Vulgate, Syriac, and the Targums. Either the translators of the ancient versions had before them in their Hebrew text *lo*, or they regarded *lo’* as at times equivalent to *lo*. Other texts where *lo’*, “not,” is apparently written *lo*, “to him,” or its equivalent, are Ex. 21:8; Lev. 11:21; 25:30; 1 Sam. 2:3; 2 Sam. 16:18.

Accepting the wording of the KJV, we have the first rung in the ladder by which Job emerged from the abyss of despair. “From the depths of discouragement and despondency Job rose to the heights of implicit trust in the mercy and the saving power of God. Triumphant he declared: ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him’” (PK 163, 164).

Maintain mine own ways. Job repeats the resolve of vs. 13 and 14 to argue his case.

16. He also shall be. The LXX for this line reads, “This shall turn to me for salvation.”

Hypocrite. Heb. *chaneph*, a profane, irreligious, and godless man. The LXX translates the clause: “for fraud shall have no entrance before him.”

17. Hear. This text underscores what Job has said in the previous verses. He wants his friends to be aware of his trust in God as well as his intention to voice his complaint.

18. Ordered my cause. That is, “I have prepared my pleadings.”

Justified. Or, “declared to be righteous,” “vindicated.”

19. If I hold my tongue. “I must talk or I will die.” Ever since Job’s friends accused him of wickedness, he has insisted on the privilege of pleading his case before God. Things have now reached a point at which he must either speak or expire.

20. Do not two things. Job asks for two favors: (1) relief from suffering for a time at least (v. 21); (2) relief from mental and spiritual terrors (v. 21). Without the absence of physical pain and mental anguish Job feels that he would not be able to plead his case fully or fairly.

22. Let me speak. Job was ready to take the part either of the defendant or the plaintiff in his trial with God.

23. How many? Job does not claim absolute perfection, but he does maintain that his sins do not measure with his suffering. He calls upon God to enumerate his sins.

24. Hidest thou thy face? There may have been a dramatic pause following v. 23, while Job awaited God's answer regarding his sins. When God failed to answer, Job exclaimed, "Wherefore hidest thou thy face?" On the other hand Job may have merely complained that God did not accede to his requests of v. 21.

Holdest me. That is, reckonest me.

25. Break a leaf. Job compares himself to two of the least substantial and worthless objects imaginable. He cannot understand why God should frighten and pursue one so insignificant.

26. Writest. Job refers to making a record of the charges that God brought against him.

Of my youth. Job regards his affliction as the result of the sins of his youth, since he has no sins of his mature years that would incur such divine displeasure.

27. Stocks. A primitive means of punishment and imprisonment.

Lookest narrowly. Literally, "watchest."

Settest a print. Job would be confined to certain limits. God set bounds for his activity. Job is like a man imprisoned and guarded, without freedom.

28. Rotten thing. Job refers to the frailty of himself and all mankind (see v. 25). His use of the third person, "he," in referring to himself intensifies the sense of insignificance. This verse is logically connected with ch. 14, which develops the idea of the frailty of man.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

11 MH 434

15 CT 317; Ed 156; ML 328; 6T 157; 7T 275

15, 16 PK 164

CHAPTER 14

1 *Job intreateth God for favour, by the shortness of life, and certainty of death. 7 Though life once lost be irrecoverable, yet he waiteth for his change. 16 By sin the creature is subject to corruption.*

1. Of few days. Literally, "short of days" (see Ps. 90:10; Gen. 47:9).

Full of trouble. This oft-repeated text introduces an eloquent passage on the weakness and frailty of man.

2. A flower. Bible writers frequently compare life to a flower or grass (see Ps. 37:2; 90:5, 6; 103:15; Isa. 40:6; James 1:10, 11; 1 Peter 1:24).

"This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And,—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening,—nips his root,
And then he falls."—Shakespeare.

A shadow. Nothing is more unsubstantial than a shadow (see 1 Chron. 29:15; Ps. 102:11; 144:4; Eccl. 6:12).

3. Open thine eyes? That is, "Do you scrutinize such an insignificant being for the purpose of punishing him?"

Bringest me into judgment? That is, should one so frail be called to trial before one so mighty?

4. Out of an unclean? Job admits his faults, but he inquires, “How can I be expected to be faultless? I belong to a sinful race. Why, then, does God follow me with so much severity?”

5. His days are determined. The purpose of the text is to show the frailty of man. His life is limited. In a few years he passes away.

6. Turn from him. Job pleads with God to cease watching him so closely, that he may have a brief respite before departing from the earth.

Rest. Literally, “cease.” The idea is not that of rest, but of having God cease to afflict him. Job wished that God would leave him alone (ch. 10:20).

Hireling. The hireling’s real enjoyment of his day comes when the shadow of evening brings with it the rest that he covets and the wages he has earned. In like manner, Job desires for himself the satisfaction that the end of his toil and sorrow will bring.

7. A tree. Job had seen trees cut down, and he had seen them sprout again and grow up as luxuriant as before. But a man lacks even the hope a tree has.

9. Water. A season of exceptional rainfall would awaken life in the apparently dead root, and again branches would come forth.

10. Man. Heb. *geber*, “warrior,” “strong man.”

Giveth up the ghost. Literally, “die,” or “expire” (see on ch. 3:11).

Where is he? Job has difficulty penetrating the veil of the future. The details of a corporeal resurrection were not clearly unveiled until the time of Christ (see John 5:28, 29; 1 Cor. 15:12–56; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; 2 Tim. 1:10).

11. Waters fail. The figure changes. Man is not like a tree that might sprout again, but like a lake or river that dries up and disappears. The effects of death appear as final as the unchanging heavens.

13. Grave. Heb. *she’ol*. The dreamless sleep of death was not an object of dread to Job. In his condition he welcomed it. It would be a refuge from the wrath of God. See on Prov. 15:11.

Appoint me a set time. This is the turning point in the passage. Job expresses the wish that beyond the sleep of death, at a time when divine wrath had ceased, God would remember him. The human spirit cannot be satisfied with the thought of inevitable extinction. Such a thought leads to the conclusion that life is meaningless.

14. Shall he live again? Job seems to be straining his gaze toward the horizons beyond this life. The spires of that distant city of perpetual life he did not see as clearly as did the NT writers, but he did see enough to give him hope.

My appointed time. Literally, “my warfare.” The language seems to be borrowed from the life of a soldier. The warrior serves until he is discharged.

15. Thou shalt call. A description of the resurrection. As the sleeper is called to waken in the morning, so Job is confident that one day he will be called to a new life.

Have a desire. Or, “long [for].” Job believes that God will not forget His handiwork. This is the basis of his expectation of the resurrection and immortality.

16. Numberest my steps. Job has glimpsed a day when God will remember him in mercy. But the vision fades away, and Job again sees his present suffering and God scrutinizing his life.

17. Sealed up. As a treasurer counts his money, sews it securely in a bag, and places a seal on it indicating the amount, so God takes notice of Job's every sin.

Some interpret vs. 16 and 17 as a description, not of God's surveillance, but of His promise of forgiveness, and translate the verses thus:

"For then thou wouldest number my steps,
thou wouldest not keep watch over my sin;
my transgression would be sealed up in a bag,
and thou wouldest cover over my iniquity."

18. Cometh to nought. This verse begins the last stanza of Job's speech. Job has given expression to hope—even though he may have seen through a glass, darkly (see 1 Cor. 13:12). Now he accuses God of treating him in such a way in this life that hope is extinguished. The tragedies of life are compared with the falling mountain and rolling rock.

19. Destroyest the hope. As rolling rocks and raging rivers destroy the earth, so the misfortunes of life, that Job attributes to God, destroy man's hope.

20. For ever. That is, continually. The incessant afflictions ultimately result in death.

21. His sons. This text is obvious proof that Job considered death as a sleep (see on John 11:11).

22. Shall have pain. By poetic personification the body in the grave is said to have pain, and similarly the soul is said to mourn. This is a graphic picture of the ravages of death. This passage must not be interpreted to mean that the dead are capable of sensation. In poetic language intelligence, personality, and feelings are often ascribed to objects or concepts devoid of these attributes (see Judges 9:8–15).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 PP 754

4 DA 172; FE 173; MH 443; SC 20; 8T 306

10–12GC 550

13 Ed 155

14 6T 230

21 GC 550

CHAPTER 15

1 *Eliphaz reproveth Job of impiety in justifying himself. 17 He proveth by tradition the unquietness of wicked men.*

1. Then answered Eliphaz. The speeches in the book of Job divide themselves into three cycles. This chapter marks the beginning of the second cycle, which continues through ch. 21. The order in the second cycle is the same as in the first: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar speak in order, each followed by a reply from Job. This speech of Eliphaz is harsh and argumentative in tone. It divides itself into three sections: (1) a direct reproof of Job for his presumption (vs. 1–6); (2) a sarcastic reflection on him for conceit and arrogance (vs. 7–16); (3) an exposition of God's ways with man, based upon the experience of ancient sages (vs. 17–35).

2. Wise man. Each of Eliphaz' speeches begins with a question. At the beginning of Job's previous speech, Job claimed wisdom. He said, "I have understanding as well as you" (ch. 12:2). He repeats the same idea in ch. 13:2. Eliphaz challenges that wisdom with sarcasm.

Vain knowledge. Literally, “knowledge of wind.” Job had applied this figure to his own statements in ch. 6:26.

The east wind. The east wind was regarded as the worst of winds. It was a dry wind and blew across the desert with devastating effects (see Gen. 41:6, 23; Jer. 18:17; Eze. 17:10; 19:12; 27:26; Hosea 13:15).

4. Fear. That is, reverence for God. Job had been not only bold but openly irreverent in his attitude toward God (see on ch. 9:23). His self-confidence led him to challenge God and to request an opportunity to argue his case so as to show where God was unfair (ch. 13:3, 15, 22). He expressed complete confidence in his vindication (ch. 13:18). These statements Eliphaz interprets as akin to blasphemy.

Restrainest prayer. Or, “restrainest meditation,” “hinderest devout meditation.” Eliphaz believed that Job’s attitude of irreligion had an adverse effect not only upon himself but upon the spiritual life of others. If God treated the righteous and the wicked alike, the one would have little to hope for and the other, little to fear. There could be small ground of encouragement to pray to God. How could the righteous hope for His special blessing if He were disposed to treat the good and bad alike? Why was it not as well to live in sin as to be holy? How could such a God be the object of confidence or prayer? Eliphaz betrays his lack of understanding of the rewards and punishments beyond the present life. These will compensate for the inequalities of this life.

5. Thy mouth. The sentence may also be translated, “thy iniquity teaches thy mouth.” Either rendering is grammatically defensible. The latter expresses the idea that Job’s words are prompted by his sins.

Crafty. The word thus translated is from the same root as the one rendered “subtil” in Gen. 3:1.

6. Condemneth thee. Compare a similar accusation against Jesus, “He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy” (Matt. 26:65).

7. The first man. This is the first of a series of cutting questions. Eliphaz is seeking to conquer Job by scoffing and ridicule.

8. Secret. Heb. *sod*, a council, a circle of friends sitting together for familiar conversation. *Sod* is translated “assembly” in Jer. 6:11; 15:17; Eze. 13:9, and “counsel” in Jer. 23:18, 22.

Restrain wisdom. That is, do you monopolize wisdom? Job brought substantially the same charge against his friends in ch. 12:2.

9. What knowest thou? Compare the thought of ch. 13:2.

10. With us. That is, “of our party,” or “on our side.” Eliphaz wants to impress Job with the idea that all the graybeards of his time, as well as all the ancient men of past times, are on his side and think as he does. Bildad used a similar argument in ch. 8:8.

11. Consolations. Probably the prospects of divine favor Job’s friends had held out to him if he would repent (see chs. 5:18–27; 8:20–22; 11:13–19).

Secret thing. Heb. *dabar la’at*, literally, “a gentle word.” Eliphaz is probably referring to his own words and those of his friends with which they tried to convince Job of his error. He feels that Job should have been impressed by their “kind” words.

12. Wink at. Heb. *razam*, occurring only here. It is thought to refer to the flashing of the eyes. Probably Job’s eyes flashed when he listened to the accusations of his friends.

13. *Such words.* To Eliphaz and his companions, Job's complaints were the indications of a proud, rebellious, and blasphemous spirit.

14. *What is man?* This is a repetition of the thought of a statement that Eliphaz made in his first speech (see ch. 4:17–19).

15. *Saints.* Literally, “holy ones,” here evidently the angels. According to Eliphaz, even heaven and the angels appear as unclean in comparison with the infinite holiness of God.

16. *Abominable.* Man is pictured as a depraved creature who is as eager to do iniquity as a thirsty man is to find water.

17. *Hear me.* Eliphaz here introduces, with an elaborate preface (vs. 17–19), what is either a quotation from a book or a studied description by himself of the fate of the wicked. This description extends from v. 20 to the end of the chapter, and is plainly intended to apply to Job.

18. *Wise men.* See ch. 8:8–10. Again, hoary tradition is appealed to.

19. *No stranger.* Among Eastern peoples, from the earliest times, purity of race was considered as the sign of highest nobility.

20. *The wicked man.* Verses 20–35 comprise an elaborate oration, crowded with illustrations and metaphors, in which it is maintained that the wicked cannot possibly escape being miserable.

Travaileth. Job had declared, “They that provoke God are secure” (ch. 12:6). Eliphaz takes the opposite position. Both men seem to have overstated their case. Experience proves that the wicked may or may not be prosperous, and the righteous may or may not be afflicted.

21. *Dreadful sound.* Perhaps the curse of an evil conscience.

In prosperity. See Ps. 37:35, 36; 73:18–20.

22. *He believeth not.* The wicked man is in constant dread of some fearful evil. He is never secure. His mind is never calm. He lives in constant dread.

Darkness. Often used figuratively for misfortune (see vs. 23, 30; ch. 19:8).

23. *Bread.* Probably a picture of the rich oppressor, tormented by visions of famine.

24. *Trouble and anguish.* Job could scarcely escape the intended application to himself.

25. *Against God.* The defiant attitude of the wicked is here described. Is it not true, however, that to ignore God is as serious as to defy Him?

26. *He runneth upon him.* The figure here is taken from the manner in which men rushed into battle. A violent attack was usually accompanied by a shout, in an attempt to intimidate the foe.

Bosses of his bucklers. The convex projections of a shield, the part presented to an enemy.

27. *Fatness.* A picture of the luxurious and intemperate living of the wicked (see Deut. 32:15; Ps. 73:7; Jer. 5:28).

28. *Desolate cities.* The reference is probably to cities that the wicked man himself had desolated in his rapacity, or places under the curse of God, and thus destined for perpetual desolation (see Deut. 13:16; Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34). The latter describes the defiance of the wicked against God.

31. *Vanity.* Looking through the eyes of prejudice, Job's friends could see only emptiness in Job's words.

32. Accomplished. That is, the recompense shall be paid in full before payment is due.

33. Olive. Just as a tree casts off its flowers in vast numbers, in like manner the wicked man would lose all his possessions.

34. Hypocrites. An insinuation that Job is guilty of hypocrisy and corruption.

35. Conceive mischief. A change in figure (see Isa. 59:4).

CHAPTER 16

1 Job reproveth his friends of unmercifulness. 7 He sheweth the pitifulness of his case. 17 He maintaineth his innocency.

1. Job answered. The tone of Job's answer to the second speech of Eliphaz is despairing.

2. Many such things. There was nothing new in the speech, except its increased bitterness. Job had heard, many times before, all the commonplaces about the universal sinfulness of man and the invariable connection between sin and suffering. See on Ps. 38:3; 39:9.

Miserable comforters. Eliphaz had inquired, "Are the consolations [comforts] of God small with thee?" (ch. 15:11). This seemingly is Job's answer to this thrust.

3. Vain words. Literally, "words of wind." Job had begged his friends to be silent (ch. 13:5, 13). His present statement is a retort to Eliphaz, who had charged Job with uttering windy words (see ch. 15:2, 3).

What emboldeneth thee? Literally, "what pains thee?" that is, what disturbs or vexes thee?

4. Speak as ye do. There is no difficulty in finding arguments to overwhelm the afflicted. Anyone can talk when he is enjoying the blessings of life. Were the positions reversed, Job could condemn and moralize as effectively as they.

Heap up words. That is, tie words together, reciting one after another old maxims and proverbs as Job's friends had been so inclined to do.

Shake mine head. A Hebrew mode of condemnation (see Ps. 22:7; Isa. 37:22; Jer. 18:16; Matt. 27:39).

5. Strengthen you. "If I were in your place," Job declares, in effect, "I would not act as you have acted. I would comfort and encourage you."

6. Though I speak. Job's friends might bring him comfort if they would, but Job was unable to obtain any relief either by his words or by his silence.

7. Thou. The sudden change from the third person to the second person is not uncommon in Hebrew. Note a change in reverse order in vs. 8, 9. Verse 7 marks a transition. Job turns from complaints against his comforters to an enumeration of his own sufferings. His first complaint is weariness (see ch. 3:13). It was natural that he should long for rest. His second complaint is that he has lost his children and that his friends are disloyal to him. Weariness and the sense of being alone combine to bring him great suffering.

8. Filled me with wrinkles. Literally, "thou didst seize me." The verb translated by this phrase occurs only here and in ch. 22:16. Some think the Hebrew here refers to the contraction of the face in wrinkles. However, others think it may mean "drawn up," or "compressed," that is, by afflictions. Job seems to picture God as compressing him with trouble until his body shrivels and crumples up into wrinkles. This condition is interpreted by his friends as a witness against him, according to their theory of suffering.

Leanness. Job's emaciation is likewise interpreted as proof of his extreme sinfulness (see Ps. 109:24).

9. He teareth me. The picture appears to be that of a wild animal attacking its prey. It seems to Job that God is his enemy, whereas, if the facts had been known, Satan would be the one indicted (see Job 10:16; cf. Hosea 13:7).

10. They. Both God and man, Job feels, are against him (see Ps. 22:13; 35:15, 16; Micah 5:1; Matt. 27:30; Luke 22:64; John 18:22).

11. Delivered me. All that Job had suffered at the hands of men—the gibes of his “comforters,” the insults and derision of base men, the desertion of many who might have been expected to help him—all these calamities Job attributes to God Himself. In so doing, he commits a common error of mankind—that of blaming God for those evil displays of human nature that are incited by Satan.

12. His mark. Job considers himself as a target for God's arrows (see Deut. 32:23; Job 6:4; Ps. 7:13; 38:2; Lam. 3:12).

13. His archers. Job may be referring to his “friends.”

Reins. That is, the kidneys. (See on ch. 19:27).

14. Breach upon breach. The figure changes, and Job seems to be a fort that God breaks down by attack after attack until it lies in ruin.

15. Sewed sackcloth. Another transition in thought. Job turns to the consideration of how he has acted under his severe affliction. He has put on sackcloth, not for a time, merely as ordinary mourners do, but permanently, by sewing it tightly about his skin.

Horn. A symbol of “pride,” “dignity,” “strength.”

16. Foul. From the Hebrew root *chamar*, which here may be equivalent to an Arabic root “to be red”; hence the first half of the verse should read, “my face is red from my weeping.”

Shadow of death. The look of Job's eyes portended death.

17. Injustice. Job is denying the insinuations Eliphaz had made against him (see ch. 15:34, 35).

My prayer is pure. Job maintains not only the integrity of his actions, but also the sincerity of his prayers.

18. Cover not thou. Verses 18–22 record an impassioned plea for vindication.

My cry. Job desired that the voice of his protest should not die away unheard.

Have no place. That is, no resting place.

19. My witness. This verse presents evidence of a faint glimmer of hope in the dark night of despair. Although Job is convinced that God is afflicting him, he still maintains at least a measure of confidence in Him.

My record. Literally, “my witness,” that is, “one who witnesses.” The LXX here reads, “my advocate is on high.”

20. Unto God. God alone is Job's refuge. As hard as he thinks God has used him, he still looks to Him for vindication, support, and sympathy. He has nowhere else to turn. Despite the storms that stir the surface of his life, the depths remain in a measure unperturbed.

21. Plead for a man. Job's plea seems to be that God would pronounce him not guilty; that God would cease afflicting him and appear on his side. In v. 19 Job had called God his witness. Verse 21 seems to be a plea that God would actually bear witness in Job's behalf.

For his neighbour. Job had doubtless often appeared as a witness for a friend. Why did not God do the same in his behalf when he stood in such dire need of God's help?

22. I shall go. This verse more appropriately begins the following chapter, which opens with anticipation of the approach of death.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 TM 350; 3T 508

4, 5 3T 508

CHAPTER 17

1 *Job appealeth from men to God.* 6 *The unmerciful dealing of men with the afflicted may astonish, but not discourage the righteous.* 11 *His hope is not in life, but in death.*

1. Is corrupt. Literally, "is ruined," "is broken." The same form of the Hebrew verb occurs in Isa. 10:27, and is there translated "shall be destroyed." Instead of "my breath" (Heb. *ruchi*) we may read "my spirit."

This chapter is a continuation of Job's complaints, which began with ch. 16. Logically, this chapter division should either have been omitted or have been placed after ch. 16:21.

Extinct. Job feels he is close to death.

Graves. The LXX and the Vulgate render this word in the singular. The plural in the Hebrew may be explained by regarding it as referring to the niches commonly cut in a burial chamber to receive dead bodies.

2. Mockers. Job's friends had insisted that his life might be spared if he would repent of his sins. They even held out before him the prospects of a bright future. To Job such an outlook was so remote that it appeared as sheer mockery.

In their provocation. The word translated "provocation" comes from a root meaning, "to be rebellious." The figure seems to mean that Job could obtain no relief from these mockeries.

3. Lay down now. Or, "give now a pledge." The terms used in this verse are law terms. Job calls upon God to go into court with him. The "pledge" refers to the money that the court requires before it undertakes the investigation of the case. The whole passage would be clearer if we knew more about ancient legal practices. It seems that Job desired God to give bond that he would enter into litigation with Job on equal terms.

Surety. Probably a further legal requirement, the nature of which is not disclosed. It may refer to a pledge to each other on the part of the litigants that they will abide by the decision of the judge.

Strike hands. An expression signifying to ratify an agreement (see Prov. 6:1; 17:18).

4. Hid their heart. Job is referring to his friends. He is sure God will not permit them to triumph.

5. Speaketh flattery. This expression is thought by some to refer to those who betray their friends to the spoiler. If this is correct, Job compares his friends to people who announce the whereabouts of their neighbors to robbers, that the robbers may plunder them.

Of his children. The children suffer in the calamity that strikes the parents.

6. A byword. Job did become a byword, but not in the sense he anticipated. He bore his affliction so well that he became a byword for patience and endurance (see James 5:11).

A tabret. Heb. *topheth*, an act of spitting. Job says literally, “a spitting of the face do I become.” The translation “tabret” comes from confusing *topheth* with *toph*, a “hand drum.”

7. Mine eye. See Ps. 6:7; 31:9.

A shadow. Job is a mere skeleton, exhausted and emaciated.

8. Astonied. Upright men will marvel at how a man who is reputed to be faithful could be allowed to suffer so terribly.

Stir up himself. These same upright men will oppose the godless. Job may be referring to his friends. The inference is not clear.

9. Hold on his way. Job seems to be referring to himself and declaring that he, a righteous man, one who had been so grievously wronged, would “hold on his way.” In spite of his temptations and misfortunes, Job had a conviction that he would be able to persevere. He had settled certain things in his heart. Calamity might shake him, but it could not destroy his integrity (see 2 Cor. 4:8, 9).

10. Return. Renew your attack. Take up your old arguments. Repeat your unfeeling criticisms. You will reveal anew your lack of wisdom.

11. My days are past. Job is asking in effect, “What does it matter what happens to me now?” He feels that all hope of recovery is past. His short phrases resemble the gasps of a dying man.

12. They. That is, Job’s friends. They had tried to convince Job that day would dawn for him if he would repent (chs. 5:18–26; 8:21, 22; 11:15–19). They declare in their way what is expressed in the thought, “The darkest hour is just before the dawn.” Job had not found comfort in these assurances. They seemed to lack the ring of sincerity.

13. The grave. Heb. *she’ol*. Job looks forward with a degree of anticipation to the rest from suffering that the grave will bring.

14. Thou art my father. A highly figurative way of describing death. The gender changes from “father” to “mother” and “sister” to agree with “worm,” which is feminine.

15. My hope. The question is one of unsolved perplexity. His friends had held out hope. In view of the nearness of the grave, where is that hope?

16. Go down. There is a question as to what is the proper subject of the verb. Grammatically a feminine plural subject is demanded, but there is none present or conveniently to be supplied by the context. Some consider “bars,” a masculine noun, as the subject, and translate the clause thus: “Shall the bars of the grave go down?” Others go back to “hope,” a feminine singular (v. 15), and speak of the hope as descending to the bars of *she’ol*.

Job’s speech ends on the note of complete despair. The grave seems to be his only hope.

CHAPTER 18

1 *Bildad reproveth Job of presumption and impatience. 5 The calamities of the wicked.*

1. Then answered Bildad. Greatly irritated that Job should treat the advice of his friends with so much contempt, Bildad is no longer able to restrain his emotions. He heaps scornful abuse upon Job, and tries to terrify him into compliance. He draws a more terrible picture of the final end of the wicked than any preceding; and insinuates that Job has still worse to expect if he does not change his ways. To Bildad, Job has become a

wicked man (vs. 5, 21), an embodiment of evil. No punishment is too severe for one so reprobate.

2. *How long will it be?* Bildad reproaches Job for his many words. In his former speech he had done likewise (ch. 8:2). The reason for the second person plural in this and the following verses is not clear. Perhaps Bildad regards Job as having supporters among the lookers on, of whom there may have been several, or he is addressing not only Job but those also who believed as Job did.

Mark. That is, observe, give heed to, consider. Think a little instead of talking. Then, calmly and without hurry, we will proceed to reply to what you have said.

3. *Beasts.* Bildad may be referring to what Job said in ch. 12:7, that even the beasts could give these friends information about God. The general idea seems to be that Job had not treated their views with the regard they felt such wisdom deserved.

Vile. Job had not used this term to describe his friends. The accusation was a misrepresentation of the facts.

4. *He teareth himself.* The Hebrew language permits rapid transitions from the second to the third person, and vice versa. There may be in these words an allusion to ch. 16:9, where Job represented God as tearing him “in his wrath.”

Be forsaken for thee. Shall the course of the world be altered to meet your wishes? Job had wished for some impossible things (see ch. 3:3–6). Bildad’s reproach is not wholly unjust, but he fails to take into account the effects that Job’s suffering has had on his thinking.

5. *Shall be put out.* This verse begins a series of apparently proverbial sayings, showing that calamity is sure to overtake the wicked. The words here may refer to the customs of Arab hospitality, in which fires were kept burning for the benefit of strangers and guests (see Prov. 13:9; 24:20).

6. *His candle.* The putting out of a lamp is, to the Orientals, an image of utter desolation. The light burning in the house and the fire burning on the hearth are symbols that the fortunes of the owner are still intact. When those fortunes are broken the light goes out (see ch. 21:17).

7. *Shall be straitened.* A figurative way of saying that his sphere of activity shall be narrowed, his activities restricted, his powers confined.

His own counsel. See Job 5:13; Ps. 7:14–16; 9:16; 10:2; Hosea 10:6.

Some have seen in vs. 7–13 an allusion to various arts and methods practiced in hunting. In v. 7, a number of persons extend themselves in a forest, and drive the game before them, narrowing the space from a broad base to a narrow point. Verses 8–10 describe nets, gins, and pitfalls prepared for the prey. Verse 11, according to this theory, alludes to the howling dogs that drive the game unmercifully. Verses 12 and 13 describe the eventual capture of the victims. The interpretation appears somewhat fanciful. Bildad probably had no more in mind than to heap figures together that would emphasize the inevitability of ultimate capture.

8. *Net.* See Ps. 7:15; 9:15; 35:8; 57:6; Prov. 26:27. The wicked ruin themselves while plotting the ruin of others.

9. *Gin.* A birdtrap.

Robber. Better, “a mantrap,” such as was set to catch and hold thieves.

10. The snare. Bildad heaps together every word that he can think of that is descriptive of the art of snaring. A great variety of contrivances for snaring are represented in the early monuments.

b12. Hungerbitten. To the other sufferings of the wicked man shall be added the pangs of hunger.

13. Strength of his skin. Literally, “the parts of his skin,” that is, the limbs or members of the body.

Firstborn of death. It seems that diseases are referred to as sons of death, that is, sons causing death. In this event the “firstborn of death” would be a disease of a particularly grievous nature. There is probably a direct reference to Job and his affliction.

14. Out of his tabernacle. That is, out of his tent. The security of the home is lost.

King of terrors. Probably a reference to death.

15. It shall dwell. An obscure passage. Probably a reference to strangers dwelling in his house.

Brimstone. A possible reference to the destruction of the cities of the plain (Gen. 19:24); or it may be an allusion to the destruction of Job’s property by the so-called “fire of God” (Job 1:16); or simply a reference to brimstone as a symbol of desolation.

16. Dried up. See ch. 14:8. Another image of complete desolation.

17. Remembrance. The world will feel no loss when the wicked man is gone (see Ps. 34:16; 109:13).

In the street. That is, in the world without.

18. Into darkness. What Job represents as a welcome retreat (see chs. 10:21, 22; 17:16), whither he would gladly withdraw himself, Bildad depicts as a banishment, into which Job will be driven on account of his sins.

19. Son nor nephew. The wicked man shall be a vagabond without a home, sojourning now here, now there. Neither among his own people nor in the places of his temporary abode shall he leave any descendants. Bildad probably refers to the destruction of Job’s children.

20. They that come after. This clause has been interpreted to mean, “descendants.” The parallel clause, “they that went before,” is from the Heb. *qadam*, which may mean “to be in front,” “to be facing,” hence the interpretation, “contemporaries.” Some render the two clauses, “they from the West,” and “they from the East.” This is a possible translation, but the adjectives so translated are nowhere else used of dwellers in these areas.

21. Surely such are. Bildad adds nothing startlingly new in the outburst of denunciation found in this chapter. He expresses with fresh vehemence his conception that Job’s calamities are the result of his sins. It may be that the renewed fury of Bildad’s attack was due in part to the frustration he felt as a result of the fact that his earlier admonitions had fallen on deaf ears. Perhaps Bildad had run out of logic and was now relying on vehemence to supply the lack.

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CHAPTER 19

1 *Job, complaining of his friends’ cruelty, sheweth there is misery enough in him to feed their cruelty.* 21, 28 *He craveth pity.* 23 *He believeth the resurrection.*

1. Job answered. Job answers Bildad's second speech by protesting against the unkindness of his friends, and by once more recounting his woes.

2. Vex my soul. Job is no stoic. He is not insensible to his friends' attacks. On the contrary, their words sting him, torture him, wound his soul. Bildad's attack has been the cruelest of all. Job's reply indicates how deeply affected he really is. Bildad had asked how long it would be before Job would make an end of talking (ch. 18:2). Job counters by asking Bildad how long he will continue to hurt him.

3. Ten times. This expression is probably a round number (see on Gen. 31:7; see also Gen. 31:41; Num. 14:22; Neh. 4:12; Dan. 1:20).

Ye make yourselves strange. Heb. *tahkeru*, which occurs only here. The meaning is uncertain. Other possible meanings are "ye wrong me," "ye deal hardly with me."

4. I have erred. Not necessarily an admission of moral guilt but an acknowledgment of human limitations.

Remaineth with myself. Probably meaning "injures no one but myself."

5. Magnify yourselves. That is, set yourselves up as censors and judges.

Plead against me. The friends used Job's calamity as evidence against him.

6. God hath overthrown. Not only was Job a victim of the misunderstanding of his friends; he felt that he was also the victim of God's wrath. Bildad had made much of the snares, traps, and nets that are laid for the wicked (ch. 18:7–12). Bildad insinuated that Job had fallen into snares that he himself had laid. Job replies that the net in which he is entangled is from God.

7. I cry. From the first Job has cried out that he has been wronged (see Job 3:26; 6:29; 9:17, 22; 10:3; Jer. 20:8; Hab. 1:2). As yet, he has had no reply from God.

8. Fenced up. See Job 3:23; 13:27; Lam. 3:7, 9; Hosea 2:6. This may be a figure taken from a traveler whose way is obstructed so that he cannot make progress. Job feels that he is thwarted.

Darkness. Job feels like a man who cannot see where he is going.

9. Glory ... crown. Dignity and honor (see Prov. 17:6; Lam. 5:16; Eze. 16:12).

10. Destroyed me. Job seems to compare himself to a city, the walls of which are attacked on every side, and broken down.

Removed like a tree. Or, "torn up like a tree." Job's hope was to lead a tranquil and godly life, surrounded by his relatives and friends, until old age should come and he might descend in mature dignity to the grave. This hope had been torn up by the roots when his calamities came upon him.

11. His enemies. Job does not say that he and God are enemies, but that God treats him as if he were His enemy, and Job cannot understand why.

12. Troops. Job returns to the simile of a besieged city and represents his assailants as raising embankments to hem him in or mounds from which to destroy his defenses.

13. Brethren. Whether Job refers to his literal brothers (ch. 42:11), or whether he used the term in a figurative sense to apply to intimate friends, or those of the same rank in life, is not clear. This verse is the first of a series of expressions describing his friends and relatives and their attitude toward him. In ch. 19:13–19 the following expressions occur: "brethren," "acquaintance," "kinsfolk," "familiar friends," "they that dwell in mine house," "maids," "servant," "wife," "children," "inward friends," "they whom I loved."

14. Kinsfolk. Literally, "near ones." The word refers to nearness whether by blood, affection, or location.

Familiar friends. Compared Ps. 41:9.

15. They that dwell. Heb. *garim*, literally, “sojourners.” It may refer to guests, strangers, servants, tenants. The essential idea is that they are not permanent residents, though for a time they are inmates of the home.

I am an alien. That is, they cease to treat me as the head of the family.

16. No answer. Job had been accustomed to obedience on the part of his servants. Now they ignored him.

17. My breath is strange. Probably offensive because of his disease.

My wife. Throughout the book but one wife of Job is mentioned—a noteworthy fact, inasmuch as he most surely lived in an age when polygamy was common.

Mine own body. Literally, “my womb,” that is, the womb of his mother (see ch. 3:10). By children Job is evidently referring to his brothers and sisters.

18. Young children. Heb. *’awilim*, a word meaning either “young children” as here and in ch. 21:11, or “ungodly” as in ch. 16:11. Children are represented as withholding from Job the respect due to age.

19. Inward friends. Literally, “all the men of my counsel.”

They whom I loved. Compare Ps. 41:9; 55:12–14; Jer. 20:10. The estrangement of close friends is one of the bitterest experiences of life.

20. Cleaveth to my skin. A description of a state of severe emaciation, the result of his disease.

The skin of my teeth. A proverbial expression indicating that Job had barely escaped. Disease had preyed upon him until he was wasted away.

21. Have pity. This is one of the most touching appeals of the book. Job has shown how forsaken and alone he is. He has most eloquently portrayed his plight. Now he implores his friends for pity.

22. Persecute me. Why have you persecuted me without giving any reason for it? Why have you accused me of crimes I did not commit?

Satisfied with my flesh. An Oriental idiom meaning “Why are you always slandering me?” In Dan. 3:8 the word translated “accused” is literally, “ate fragments of.” The slanderer, the accuser, is figuratively pictured as devouring the flesh of his victim.

23. Were now written. This may refer to the words that immediately follow. This verse introduces one of the most important passages in the book.

Printed. Literally, “cut in,” “inscribe.” The translation “printed” may convey an erroneous idea, inasmuch as printing was unknown in Job’s day.

Book. Heb. *sepher*. Not necessarily an extended document. The word is used to describe a certificate of divorce (Deut. 24:1, 3), a deed of purchase (Jer. 32:11, 12), a general register (Gen. 5:1), a law book (Ex. 24:7), as well as extended accounts like the history of the kings (1 Kings 11:41).

24. Lead in the rock. Job wishes his record to be cut deep into the rock with an iron chisel, and the chiseled-out groove to be filled with lead. This very practice is now known to have been followed in ancient times, as, for instance, with the Behistun inscription (see illustration facing p. 81; see also Vol. I, pp. 98, 110).

25. My redeemer. This is one of the most frequently quoted texts in the book. It represents a significant advance in Job’s progress from despair to confidence and hope. “From the depths of discouragement and despondency Job rose to the heights of implicit

trust in the mercy and the saving power of God” (PK 163). The Hebrew word translated “redeemer,” *go’el*, is rendered “avenger,” or “revenger” (Num. 35:12, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27), and kinsman, or near kinsman (Ruth 2:20; 3:9, 12; 4:1, 3, 6, 8, 14; see on Ruth 2:20). God is frequently called *go’el* in the sense that He vindicates the rights of men and ransoms those who have come under the dominion of another (Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:24; 47:4; etc.).

Job has already expressed his desire to have an “umpire” between him and God (ch. 9:32–35). In ch. 16:19 he has declared his conviction that his “witness is in heaven.” In v. 21 of the same chapter he longs to have an advocate to plead his cause with God. In ch. 17:3 he calls upon God to be surety for him. Having recognized God as “umpire,” witness, advocate, surety, it is perfectly logical that he should arrive at the recognition of God as his redeemer. This text represents one of the OT revelations of God as man’s redeemer, a profound truth that was fully revealed to men in the person and mission of Jesus Christ.

The latter day. The meaning is that however long Job was to suffer, however protracted his calamities were, he had the utmost confidence that God would eventually vindicate him. The wording of vs. 25 and 26 indicates that the divine vindication would take place when God would “stand ... upon the earth” and when Job would “see God.” This is an unmistakable glimpse of the resurrection.

26. In my flesh. This text presents several difficulties of translation. The Hebrew has neither the “worms” nor “body.” The different English versions show an interesting variation of renderings both in their texts and in their margins. The translation that is found in the margin of the RV (quoted in Ed 156) gives a fairly literal rendering of the Hebrew: “And after my skin hath been destroyed, this shall be, even from my flesh shall I see God.” Instead of “from my flesh” some translate “without my flesh” or “away from my flesh.”

The difference arises from the possibility of assigning various definitions to the Hebrew preposition *min* rendered variously as “in” (KJV), “from” (RV), “without” (RSV). *Min* has a number of meanings: (1) “from,” expressing removal, as “from the mount” (Ex. 19:14); (2) “away from,” with the idea of separation, as “without the knowledge of the congregation [literally, “from the eyes of the congregation”]”; (3) “out of,” as “out of the water” (Ex. 2:10); (4) a variety of other meanings, such as “off,” “on the side of,” “on,” “in consequence of,” “at,” “by.” The context must decide the choice of meaning in each occurrence of the preposition.

In the text under consideration, whatever rendering is accepted, there is an indication of a belief in a corporeal resurrection, or at least not a denial of it. Translations employing the phrase “in my flesh” or “from my flesh” set forth a plain statement of such a belief. Translations supporting the reading “without my flesh” or “away from my flesh” could possibly be viewed as presenting the thought that Job expected to see God in his resurrected body, not in his present body, a view essentially parallel to the statement of Paul in 1 Cor. 15:36–50. If this was the intent of Job’s statement, he is making the significant observation that someday he will be free from his disease-ridden, pain-racked body, and that in his glorious new body he will have the privilege of seeing God (see Phil. 3:21; GC 644, 645).

27. *I shall see.* “The patriarch Job, looking down to the time of Christ’s second advent, said, ‘Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger’” (COL 421). Job indicates that in the resurrection he will retain his personal identity.

My reins. There is no “though” in the Hebrew. The sentence is detached from the foregoing. The reins were considered to be the seat of strong emotion, and Job here seems to be expressing an earnest longing for the fulfillment of the glorious events of which he had just spoken.

28. *Ye should say.* Job threatens his friends. In effect he says: “If, after what I have said, you continue bitter against me, and take counsel as to the best way of persecuting me, still assuming that I am at fault—be ye afraid” Job’s friends have pronounced repeated judgments on him. Now, with increased confidence, Job in turn threatens them with divine wrath and judgment.

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7–21Ed 156

24 CH 561; TM 430; 7T 164

25 MM 33; MYP 410; PK 264

25, 26 ML 328

25–27Ed 156; GC 299; PK 164; 2T 88

27 COL 421

CHAPTER 20

Zophar sheweth the state and portion of the wicked.

1. *Then answered Zophar.* This is Zophar’s second speech. His purpose is to show that no matter how high a wicked man may be exalted, no matter how prosperous he may become, God will humble him and cause him to suffer. The application to Job is too obvious to be overlooked. Chapter 19 has closed with a warning from the lips of Job. Zophar resents Job’s shifting the menace of punishment onto his friends, when Zophar is certain that Job alone is guilty.

2. *My thoughts.* Zophar’s thoughts are not calm reflection or profound meditation. He is agitated. His thoughts seem to be tumbling over each other for expression.

I make haste. Zophar admits his hasty and impetuous temperament.

3. *The check.* Probably Zophar refers to what Job had said at the close of his speech (ch. 19:29). Or he may refer to the rebuke of ch. 19:2. Also, he cannot have forgotten what Job had said in reply to Zophar’s former speech (ch. 12:2). Zophar is saying, in effect, “You have accused me falsely, and my resentment impels me to reply.” This verse reveals Zophar’s character; he is excitable and impetuous. He could scarcely wait until Job had finished—then he broke out hotly.

My understanding. It is not uncommon for an impetuous person to maintain that he speaks from the dictates of calm wisdom.

4. *Knowest thou not?* The question is sarcastic, as were the questions of Eliphaz (ch. 15:7–13). Zophar is saying that all history proves his point.

5. *For a moment.* This verse explains Zophar’s solution of the problem of the prosperity of the wicked. He admits that they may shout with triumph, but the joy is momentary. In part, Zophar is right; but his argument is weak in that he fails to recognize that a sinner may seem to triumph all through his mortal life (see Ps. 37:35, 36; 73:1–17). The shortness of the triumph of the wicked is one of the main topics of dispute between

Job and his opponents. Eliphaz and Bildad have both maintained the same view as Zophar (Job 4:8–11; 5:3–5; 8:11–19; 15:21, 29). Job is differently convinced. He has seen the wicked “live, become old, . . . mighty in power” (ch. 21:7). He has seen them “spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave” (ch. 21:13). He is not ready to admit the generalizations of his friends. Job shows greater insight than his friends—an insight born of suffering.

6. To the heavens. Another way of describing the heights of achievement and influence that the wicked may reach (see Ps. 73:9; Dan. 4:22).

8. As a dream. A figure of the instability of the wicked. Nothing is more unreal and fleeting than a dream.

9. The eye also. Zophar uses almost exactly the language regarding the sinner that Job had used regarding himself (Job 7:8, 10; cf. Job 8:18; Ps. 103:16).

10. Please the poor. Perhaps in the sense of being beggars of beggars.

Restore. This verse pictures the humiliation of the proud, prosperous sinner to the place where he seeks the favor of the poor and is forced to give them his wealth.

11. His bones are full. The line reads, literally, “his bones are full of his youth,” that is, full of youthful vigor. There seems to be no need to supply the words, “of the sin.” Without them the next line may be understood as saying that youthful vigor will lie down in the dust.

12. Be sweet. This verse begins a new stanza. Wickedness has its pleasure, but it is shallow and transitory.

13. Though he spare it. Wickedness tastes good. The sinner hates to part with his folly and his pleasure. He is like the child who seeks to make a piece of candy last as long as possible.

14. Is turned. Sin swallowed turns bitter and becomes like the poison of the asp.

15. Vomit them up. An expressive way of depicting the divine judgment that Zophar believes is in store for the wicked.

17. Honey and butter. Compare Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; Deut. 26:9, 15; Isa. 7:22; Joel 3:18. Prosperity was dependent upon an abundant water supply. The “butter” was probably curded milk.

18. Shall he restore. In order to compensate those whom he has robbed, the wicked man will have to give them wealth that he has earned honestly.

19. Forsaken the poor. These charges of mistreating the poor are now, for the first time, insinuated against Job. Later on, they are openly brought by Eliphaz (ch. 22:5–9). Job denies these charges (ch. 29:11–17).

20. Not feel quietness. The line reads literally, “because he knew no quietness in his belly,” that is, his rapacity was never satisfied.

Shall not save. He will not be able to retain the things accumulated by his greed.

21. Meat. Heb. *’okel*, “food.”

Look for his goods. The LXX here reads, “Therefore his good things shall not flourish.”

22. In straits. Prosperity will not exempt him from perplexity.

23. The fury. Zophar is obviously applying these words to Job. In the midst of his prosperity, Job was brought low. Zophar’s words are intended to cut deep. He tries to set forth Job as a sinner, suffering the fury of God’s wrath.

24. He shall flee. God is pictured as waging war on the sinner, who tries without success to escape.

25. Glittering sword. Heb. *baraq*, literally, “lightning,” used figuratively here of a flashing arrowhead. The graphic picture seems to be of the wicked man trying to remove an arrow from his body. The terrors of imminent death are upon him. The inference is that Job is like such a person.

26. Secret places. The sentence reads literally, “all darkness is reserved for his treasures.” The idea is probably that every kind of calamity awaits the treasures that the wicked man has gathered together and laid up for himself.

Fire not blown. This was probably a fire not kindled by human hands. Zophar may allude to the “fire of God” (ch. 1:16) that burned Job’s sheep and servants.

27. Reveal his iniquity. This is Zophar’s reply to the appeal that Job made in ch. 16:18, 19, to heaven and earth to bear witness for him. Heaven, he says, instead of speaking in his favor, will reveal his iniquity. Earth, instead of taking his part, will rise up against him.

28. Increase. God’s wrath will cause all these things to disappear like a flood that flows away.

29. This is the portion. This conclusion is similar to that which Bildad drew at the close of his speech (ch. 18:21). By this flourish Zophar intended to convey to Job the idea that he could expect no other fate than that which he was suffering.

This concludes Zophar’s contribution. He does not appear in the third round of speeches. His speech represents the narrow-minded, legalistic, critical attitude of the friends at its height. It is scarcely possible to emphasize more fearfully and graphically than Zophar does, the theory that the wicked rich man is punished by God. To Zophar, Job is a godless man, who is enduring the results of his own sins. He is guilty of unjust gain; therefore God consumes his possessions. Zophar seeks to stifle the new trust in God that Job has expressed. No suggestion of kindness or sympathy is discernible.

CHAPTER 21

4

¹ *Job sheweth that even in the judgment of man he hath reason to be grieved. 7 Sometimes the wicked do so prosper, as they despise God. 16 Sometimes their destruction is manifest. 22 The happy and unhappy are alike in death. 27 The judgment of the wicked is in another world.*

1. Job answered. This begins the third cycle of speeches (chs. 21–31), including three by Job, one by Eliphaz, and one by Bildad. Zophar is missing from this cycle.

2. Consolations. Eliphaz has spoken of his own words as the consolation of God (ch. 15:11). Job here seeks consolation in the privilege of being heard. Frequently there is more soul therapy in being listened to than in being talked to.

3. Suffer me. That is, permit me. There is an emphasis on the “I” of the first line. Job seems to imply that his opponents are not allowing him his fair share of the argument, an accusation that can hardly be justified. Since the dialogue opened, Job has had more to say than his comforters.

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 13:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Mock on. This statement may have been specifically addressed to Zophar, whose last discourse must have grieved him particularly, and who, after the rejoinder that Job now makes, has nothing more to say.

4. My complaint. Job implies that he is complaining concerning something that has a supernatural cause.

Be troubled. In view of the fact that it is God who is chastising him, why should he not be concerned?

5. Be astonished. Job is about to maintain that wicked men live long, unperturbed, prosperous lives. Knowing that this revolutionary idea will arouse horror and indignation on the part of his hearers, he prepares them for the shock.

6. I am afraid. Job himself is filled with fear when he thinks of the implications of what he is about to say. It is a serious thing to give expression to a philosophy that is out of harmony with the thinking of contemporaries.

7. Wherefore? The previous verses reveal that Job is not asking the question merely for the sake of argument. He is genuinely concerned. He has observed the success and prosperity of the wicked. Unlike his friends, he is willing to admit this strange phenomenon. But even though he admits it, he finds it hard to reconcile himself to it. Job is not the only person who has sought the answer to this perplexing question.

Become old. Zophar maintained that the triumphing of the wicked was short (ch. 20:5). With greater insight, Job sees that the prosperity of the wicked may continue throughout their lifetime.

8. Seed is established. Job's friends have maintained that the children of wicked men would be cut off (ch. 18:19). This position Job challenges.

9. Safe from fear. Job's friends had maintained the very opposite (chs. 15:21–24; 20:27, 28).

11. Children dance. A picture of carefree happiness and prosperity.

12. Timbrel. The “timbrel” was a hand drum. The harp, actually a lyre, was a simple instrument consisting of a framework of wood across which were stretched from four to seven strings. The organ was a simple reed pipe. These instruments seem to represent the original of the three types of musical instruments—percussion, string, and wind. For further information on ancient musical instruments, see pp. 29–42.

13. In a moment. The wicked live their prosperous, carefree lives, and die without suffering or prolonged illness. Job is not to be understood as meaning that this is always the experience of the wicked. But he had observed enough of life to know that this was frequently the case. This picture of life is quite at variance with that of his friends, who conceived of the wicked as invariably suffering pangs of conscience (ch. 15:20), childlessness (ch. 18:19), and tragic death (ch. 20:24).

14. Depart from us. The statements here express the philosophy of infidelity in all ages. Self-sufficient man fails to feel any need for God. He does not want to know the ways of God. He fails to recognize the authority of the Almighty. He is not interested in anything that does not promise immediate profit to himself.

16. In their hand. Some render this sentence as a question, “Is not their good in their hand?”

Counsel. The clause may be translated: “Be the counsel of the wicked far from me!” Satan had charged Job with serving God for temporal reward. Job disproved this charge by clinging to God, even though he could not understand God's ways. Now he goes

further, and declines to cast his lot with the wicked even though he recognizes that they are prosperous and he is not.

17. How oft. Bildad had said, “Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out” (ch. 18:5). Job now asks, How often does this really happen?

Distributeth sorrows. This line should probably be read as a question parallel with the first two lines of the verse. The thought then would be, “How oft does God distribute sorrows in His anger?”

18. Stubble. This verse should probably continue as part of the series of question introduced in the previous verse, and read: “How oft is it that they are as stubble?”

19. For his children. Job seems to suppose that his opponents may bring up this objection to his arguments: “‘God,’ you say, ‘punishes the wicked man by punishing his children.’”

Rewardeth him. This part of the verse seems to be Job’s reply: “Let him recompense it to themselves, that they may know it” (RSV). Job wishes that the sinners themselves, rather than their children, might feel the impact of their wicked deeds.

20. His eyes. This verse continues the thought of the previous verse, and may read: “Let their own eyes.” Job has observed that sinners die in prosperity and apparent favor, but he wishes it were not so. He is inclined to wish that his friends were right in their insistence that wickedness is recompensed in this life—but experience has taught him that they are not correct in their view.

Wrath. “Let them drink” (see Deut. 32:33; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:8).

21. In his house. Job’s friends seem to have held the idea that the children of wicked men would be punished (see on v. 19). Job replies that the wicked should suffer for their own sins, for, he says, in effect, how much do the wicked care what happens to their households after their own death? See Eze. 18:1–23.

22. Teach God knowledge. Job points to the inscrutability of the ways of God and acknowledges that it is useless for man to try to fathom or change the ways of God. This is a profound sentiment.

23. One dieth. Again Job is emphasizing the obvious fact that there is no reliable norm by which to account for suffering or freedom from suffering.

24. Breasts. Heb. *‘aṭinim*, only here in the OT. The meaning is uncertain. In the modern Hebrew, *‘aṭan* means “to put in,” such as olives in a vessel. From this some derive the meaning “pails” (see KJV margin). The LXX has “inwards,” the Syriac “sides,” that is, “flanks.” The RSV translates it, “his body full of fat.” Whatever the correct translation may be, the figure obviously denotes prosperity.

25. In the bitterness. In contrast to the prosperity of some, others die in bitterness after lives of misery. Job does not attempt to explain this anomaly of life.

26. Alike. In death, the condition of both is the same (see on ch. 3:20).

27. Wrongfully imagine. Job is aware that his friends think he is very wicked. He knows that he does not have their sympathy.

28. The house. Job’s friends had maintained that the house of the wicked would be destroyed (chs. 8:15, 22; 15:34; 18:15, 21). They were persistent in their theory. Their conclusions were made unreliable by their viewpoint, because they judged that everyone who met misfortune must be wicked.

29. Them that go. Job asks his friends to inquire of travelers who have observed many people in many countries, and see if they do not agree with him. Job was sure that

the observation of such men would reveal that many good men suffer and many wicked men prosper.

30. *Is reserved.* Heb. *yechašek*, from *chašak*, “to withhold” (see Gen. 20:6; 22:12, 16). The word is sometimes translated “to spare” (see 2 Kings 5:20; Ps. 78:50). The sentence seems to mean that the wicked are spared the troubles of this present life in view of the judgment to come, when they will receive their punishment. This observation is in harmony with the statement of Peter (2 Peter 2:9).

To the day of destruction. Some translate this, “in the day of destruction.” “To the day of wrath” they translate, “in the day of wrath.” This is done with some straining of the meaning of the Hebrew preposition *le*, which properly means “to” or “for.” The change is made in an attempt to bring the statements of this verse into harmony with the context, for it is felt that Job is still emphasizing the fact that the wicked escape trouble.

31. *Who shall declare?* While the wicked man is in power, no one dares to condemn him to his face or punish him for his wickedness.

32. *Yet.* The word translated “brought” means “to conduct,” “to bear along,” as in a procession. The idea seems to be that the wicked man dies in full honor and is borne in procession to his grave.

33. *Shall be sweet.* A figure of speech not to be construed as teaching consciousness in death (see on Ps. 146:4).

Innumerable. Ever since the murder of Cain the portals of the tomb have opened and closed in endless rhythm. There have been only two exceptions, Enoch and Elijah. The Grim Reaper will continue to take his toll until at last “death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54).

34. *In vain.* Your philosophy is wrong, Job says to his friends. Your idea of divine retribution in this life is not borne out by the facts of human experience. There is no comfort in what you say because you do not speak the truth. This chapter may be called Job’s triumph over his opponents. He is not irritable as at first. His statements are less personal and more profound. This speech is marked by earnestness, confidence, and reverence.

CHAPTER 22

- 1 *Eliphaz sheweth that man’s goodness profiteth not God. 5 He accuseth Job of divers sins. 21 He exhorteth him to repentance, with promises of mercy.*

1. *Then Eliphaz.* The distinctive feature of this third speech of Eliphaz is that he accuses Job of specific sins against his fellow men. Although Eliphaz is the kindest of the friends, he seems in this discourse to be desperate in his endeavor to defend his position. He closes this speech, as he did his first, with an appeal to Job to change his ways in order that he may be delivered from his sufferings.

2. *Profitable.* This verse contains the first of four questions that, taken together, have been viewed as a syllogism. According to such a scheme the first two questions (vs. 2, 3) constitute the major premise; the third question (v. 4), the minor premise; and the fourth question (v. 5), the conclusion. In v. 2 Eliphaz admits that a wise man may promote his own advantage, but he denies that any man can confer any favor upon God. He infers that Job considers God as under obligation to him, an inference that he believes is not justified.

3. *Is it any pleasure?* Eliphaz makes God appear extremely impersonal. He states that man's righteousness or perfection brings neither pleasure nor gain to God. He seems to be endeavoring to show that the motives that impel God to inflict suffering are neither selfish nor arbitrary. However, in endeavoring to prove his point, Eliphaz fails to do justice to the character of God. The psalmist had a more adequate conception of God (Ps. 147:11; 149:4).

4. *For fear of thee.* Two interpretations, presenting two different meanings, have been given to this passage: (1) Eliphaz is asking Job whether he thinks God is afraid of him; (2) Eliphaz is inquiring, "Is it for your fear of God that He reproves you?" The latter question implies a negative answer, "Surely not! If He reproves you, it must be because you do not fear Him. The fact that you are reproved is positive evidence of your guilt." "Fear" is used in the sense of piety: "Surely God does not afflict a man because he is pious!"

Judgment. Job had repeatedly expressed a desire to bring his case directly to God (see ch. 13:3). Eliphaz considers such an idea absurd.

5. *Wickedness great.* This is Eliphaz' introduction to an enumeration of what he considered to be Job's sins.

6. *Taken a pledge.* A "pledge" is that which is given by a debtor to a creditor for security. The crime here charged against Job was that he had exacted such pledges without just reason: that is, where there was no debt, where the debt was paid, or where the security was far beyond the value of the debt (see Neh. 5:2–11). According to the Levitical code, clothing taken as a pledge must be returned by the going down of the sun (Ex. 22:26, 27). It was also prohibited to take millstones as pledges (Deut. 24:6). Taking unfair advantage of the poor has been a common failing of mankind in all ages.

The sins of which Eliphaz accuses Job are the misdeeds that are often committed by men of wealth and influence. Most of the verbs in vs. 6–9 are in a tense that suggests the idea of frequency, indicating that Eliphaz represented these sins as Job's regular manner of life. The only evidence he had that Job had committed these sins as far as is known was the fact of his suffering. Terrible misfortune, according to Eliphaz' philosophy, implied grave sins.

7. *Water.* To give water to the thirsty was regarded in the East as one of the most elementary duties of man to his fellow men (Prov. 25:21). Isaiah commended the Temanites (Eliphaz' people) because they "brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled" (Isa. 21:14).

8. *Mighty man.* Literally, "man of arm." The "arm" in the Scripture is a symbol of power (Ps. 10:15; 89:13; 98:1; Eze. 30:21). Some take this verse as an intentional reference to Job. If such was the intent, Eliphaz meant that Job had dispossessed the poor and had taken forcible occupancy of the earth. Others believe that the "mighty" and "honourable" men may refer to Job's friends and retainers.

9. *Sent widows away.* The oppression of these classes is considered in the Scriptures as a grievous crime (Deut. 27:19; Jer. 7:6; 22:3). Job could not let such an accusation go unchallenged (see his rebuttal in Job 29:13; 31:21, 22).

10. *Therefore.* Eliphaz takes no chances on Job's misinterpreting his statements. He makes his conclusions specific. Job's misfortunes result directly, Eliphaz emphasizes, from his gross mistreatment of the weak and needy.

Snares. Compare Bildad's threat in ch. 18:8–10, and Job's own acknowledgement in ch. 19:6.

Sudden fear. See ch. 7:14; 13:21.

11. Darkness. An emblem of confusion and calamity (see chs. 19:8; 23:17).

Waters. A common Scriptural figure for calamity (see Job 27:20; Ps. 42:7; Ps. 69:1, 2; 124:4, 5; Isa. 43:2; Lam. 3:54).

Verses 10 and 11 are a transition from the accusation in the preceding section to the warning that follows.

12. In the height. Eliphaz calls attention to the transcendence and omnipotence of God. This is merely a repetition of the oft-repeated argument of Job's friends. They placed great emphasis on the sovereignty of God. To a degree many of their statements were correct, but eventually the very God whom they described in such exalted words rebuked them for what they had said (ch. 42:7). Statement of abstract facts is not sufficient. Correct application of such facts is essential. In ch. 21, Job had rested his case on observable, undeniable facts. Instead of meeting these facts, Eliphaz reproached Job for denying divine providence, and sought to obscure what God actually does, by calling attention to what God is able to do.

Many since Eliphaz' time have fallen into similar error. What God chooses to do is of infinitely greater significance than what He is theoretically able to do. Job is seeking to understand God, whereas Eliphaz is merely trying to defend God. In the long run the person who tries to make clear the mysteries of God's dealings defends God more effectively than the person who is content with mere expressions of submission. Of course the human mind cannot fathom all God's ways, but that which may be understood concerning God should be diligently sought after.

It is entirely right and proper that we should exert our best energies to understand what God has seen fit to reveal concerning His ways of dealing with His creatures. The very fact that He has seen fit to make certain information available is evidence that He intends it to be known. But man sets out on a path fraught with peril when he presumes to fathom that which God has not seen fit to reveal. Here is where many have lost their way and made shipwreck of their souls. Let us therefore be content with what God has seen fit to reveal, but diligent in our efforts to understand as much as finite minds can.

13. The dark cloud. In vs. 13 and 14 Eliphaz is putting words into Job's mouth. He did not see how Job could maintain his opinions without denying the possibility of God's awareness of conditions on this earth (see Ps. 10:11; 73:11; 94:7; Isa. 29:15; Eze. 8:12). Job is being accused of believing that God could not see through the dark clouds that surround Him (see Ps. 18:11; 97:2).

14. Circuit. Heb. *chug*, literally, "a circle," as in Isa. 40:22.

15. Hast thou marked the old way? Literally, "Wilt thou keep the old way?" Eliphaz assumes that it is Job's intention to cast his lot with those persons whose prosperous wickedness he has described in the previous chapter (vs. 7–15). Some believe there is a reference to the antediluvians (see ch. 22:16).

16. Flood. Eliphaz stresses the insecurity of the wicked.

17. Depart from us. Job had previously ascribed this saying to the prosperous wicked (ch. 21:14, 15).

For them. The LXX and the Syriac here read, "for us," thus making the sentence a further expression of arrogance.

18. Filled their houses. Perhaps the phrase is intended to be ironical: “Do you mean to say that *He* filled *their* houses with good things!” Or Eliphaz may be trying to express what seems to him the contrast between the sudden judgment that overtakes the wicked, and the long season of prosperity preceding it, which gives to them the appearance of exemption from punishment. In ch. 21 Job stressed the prosperity of the ungodly. Eliphaz stresses their sure destruction.

Counsel. The last line of v. 18 re-echoes Job’s statement in ch. 21:16. Job had used the expression after his description of the prosperous sinners. Eliphaz, having also described the wicked, among whom he apparently ranks Job, repeats the same expression in an affirmation of his piety.

19. Glad. The righteous are described as rejoicing at the destruction of the wicked. If this be an appropriate reaction, why should not Job’s friends rejoice when God chose to punish one so wicked as they supposed Job to be?

There is a legitimate sense in which good men may rejoice in the punishment of the wicked. They do not rejoice that the sin was committed. Neither do they rejoice in the misery incident to punishment. They rejoice in the fact that evil is being eradicated, that ultimately the good will triumph.

20. Our substance. Heb. *qimanu*, literally, “our uprising.” Some translate this word, “our adversaries.” They consider the verse a statement by “the innocent” of the previous verse and have them declare, “Surely they that rose up against us are cut off.” The rendering “substance” follows the LXX.

Fire. Another symbol of the destruction of the wicked.

21. Acquaint. This verse begins Eliphaz’ appeal to Job to mend his ways. Eliphaz takes it for granted that Job is a sinner, wholly unreconciled to God and unacquainted with Him. The appeal is beautiful but incorrectly applied.

Peace. See Rom. 5:1.

Good. An analysis of the “good” that results from communion with God reveals that it includes the following: (1) pardon of sin, (2) assurance of salvation, (3) peace of conscience, (4) victory over sin, (5) support in trial, (6) joy of service, (7) citizenship in the kingdom of glory.

22. The law. Heb. *torah*. This is the only occurrence of the word in the book of Job. *Torah* basically means “instruction.” Part of the experience of dwelling with God is receiving His instruction and cherishing His words.

23. Built up. This seems to be a promise of rebuilding and restoration, contingent upon return to God. Some adopt the reading of the LXX and translate the first part of the sentence, “If thou shalt turn and humble thyself before the Lord.”

Thy tabernacles. Or, “thy tents.” Compare ch. 11:14, where Zophar implied the existence of ill-gotten gains in Job’s tents.

24. As dust. Either a description of the blessings that Eliphaz believed would follow Job’s repentance or a statement that gold was an inferior consideration—one that could be cast to the dust—in comparison to communion with the Almighty.

25. Defense. Heb. *beṣer*, the word translated “gold” in v. 24. The word also means “fortress,” but since it is connected so closely with the preceding thought, it is more natural to translate it “gold.” The statement would then read, “Let the Almighty be thy gold and thy precious silver.” Compare Job’s reply ch. 31:24, 25.

26. *Shalt ... have ... delight.* Instead of complaining about God, such a communion with Him would bring happiness and confidence. Compare Job's complaints about God in chs. 7:17–20; 9:17, 34; 10:15–17; 13:21; 14:6–13.

27. *He shall hear thee.* Job feels that there is a strange gulf between him and God. In previous times he had prayed, and God had heard him. Now God seems far away. Eliphaz promises that the old intimacy will be restored if Job will repent.

29. *Humble.* See Matt. 23:12.

30. *Island.* Heb. *ʾi*, at times meaning “island.” It is also a negative particle. Assigning to *ʾi* the function of the negative yields the translation “He delivers the non-innocent.” The meaning seems to be, God will deliver, at Job's request, even the guilty.

The LXX gives an altogether different sense by translating, “He shall deliver the innocent.” According to this, Eliphaz was merely affirming one of his basic promises, namely, that God prospers the upright.

It. Rather, “he.” The LXX reads “thou.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

12 MH 434

21 AA 126; Ed 14; MB 188; ML 336; 5T 742

21, 22 MH 410

22 ML 28

25–29MH 410

CHAPTER 23

1 *Job longeth to appear before God, 6 in confidence of his mercy. 8 God, who is invisible, observeth our ways. 11 Job's innocency. 13 God's decree is immutable.*

1. *Job answered.* Job replies to Eliphaz in a speech occupying two chapters (chs. 23 and 24) of 42 verses. Unlike Job's previous replies, this speech is in the form of a monologue, without direct address to the friends. He begins by justifying the vehemence of his complaints. In ch. 24 he reviews his previous arguments, maintaining that the wicked enjoy prosperity. He closes with a challenge to his opponents to disprove the truth of what he has said.

2. *Bitter.* Literally, “rebellious.” “Bitter” is the reading of the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Targums. Job does not apologize for his complaints. He acknowledges that, notwithstanding all his opponents have said about his right to complain, he still complains as bitterly as ever.

Stroke. Literally, “hand.” The expression may be translated “my hand is [lies] heavy upon my groaning,” meaning that Job tries to repress his groaning, which in no adequate measure reflects his calamities. The LXX renders the sentence, “His hand has been made heavy upon my groaning.”

3. *To his seat.* That is, to his dwelling place. Job is plagued with a sense of the remoteness and inaccessibility of God. He feels that he must somehow find God. He repeats his desire to carry his case directly to God.

5 *He would answer.* Job is weary of human reasoning. He is anxious to know God's attitude.

6. *Will he plead?* Job manifests confidence in divine justice.

7. *The righteous.* Job's conscience testifies to his basic integrity and uprightness. He feels that if he can obtain the ear of God, he will be vindicated, once and for all. His basic

complaint in vs. 1–7 is that he does not know how to find his way to God. He seems to feel that God will be kind to him, if only he can come into His presence.

8. *I go forward.* A new stanza begins here. Verses 8 and 9 graphically describe Job’s futile search for God. Job looks to all points of the compass in his search for God, but all in vain. The Oriental geographers considered themselves as facing the east instead of the north, as we do. The west was behind them. The south was on the right hand and the north on the left.

10. *Come forth.* This is one of the key verses of the book. Although Job could not seem to find God, he believed that God was aware of his ways and purposeful in His dealings with him. Job was beginning to understand that he was being tried. He still did not know of Satan’s challenge regarding him. One of the rungs of the ladder by which Job climbed from despair to faith was the recognition on his part that he was not being punished or unjustly treated, but rather was being tested that he might emerge as pure gold from a furnace.

12. *My necessary food.* Heb. *chuqqi*, literally, “my prescribed portion.” It may be food (see Gen. 47:22, where *choq* is translated “portion”), or anything else that is prescribed. *Choq* is frequently translated “statute” (Ex. 15:25, 26; 18:16; etc.), and sometimes “law” (Gen. 47:26; 1 Chron. 16:17; Ps. 94:20; 105:10). Hence some interpret the expression, “more than [or above] my own law,” meaning that he gave God’s will preference over his own inclinations. Others follow the reading of the LXX, “in my bosom.” If this is the intended figure, Job intimates that the words of God’s mouth are to him a most precious treasure. (But see a different interpretation under v. 14.)

13. *One mind.* See James 1:17. Job clearly understood the sovereignty of God.

14. *Appointed for me.* Heb. *chuqqi*, literally, “my prescribed portion.” Compare the use of this word in v. 12. The fact that the translation in v. 14 so obviously requires the sense of “appointed” rather than “bosom,” makes it seem reasonable that the same translation should be followed in both verses (see on v. 12).

15. *Troubled.* Job’s fear was provoked by his suffering and his uncertain future. One of the great purposes of the message of God to Job (chs. 38 to 41) was to dispel this fear and uncertainty. God does not leave His children in fear.

16. *Soft.* Or, “faint” (see Deut. 20:3).

17. *Darkness.* The thing that crushed Job was not so much his suffering as the thought that the God whom he had loved and served had caused the suffering to come upon him. He acknowledges the darkness that surrounds him, and wonders why God did not destroy him before his calamity, or remove it from him. He continues his complaints in ch. 24.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3–10 Ed 156

10 CH 300; Ev 632; TM 355; 1T 83; 7T 210, 274

CHAPTER 24

1 *Wickedness goeth often unpunished.* 17 *There is a secret judgment for the wicked.*

1. *Times are not hidden.* The first line of this verse may be translated, “Why are times not treasured up on the part of the Almighty?” These “times” seem to refer to special occasions when God exhibits Himself in action, vindicating the righteous and

judging sinners. Job, in his perplexity, fails to see evidence of such seasons of retribution on the part of God.

Do they that know him. That is, “Why do they that know him not see his days?” meaning, of course, days of retribution.

2. Landmarks. Job begins a recital of what appears to him to be evidence that God neither rewards the righteous nor punishes the wicked. Regarding landmarks see Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Prov. 22:28; 23:10; Hosea 5:10. Where neighboring properties were not divided by fences of any kind, as in the East generally, the only way of distinguishing between one man’s land and another’s was by landmarks, which were generally low stones placed at intervals on the boundary line. An easy form of robbery was to displace these marks, locating them farther back on the neighbor’s land.

Take away flocks. They steal the flocks of others and pasture them with their own.

3. Fatherless. See 1 Sam. 12:3. On the natural tendency of selfish men to be unkind to orphans and widows, and the regulations designed to curb this tendency see Ex. 22:22; Deut. 24:17; 27:19; Ps. 94:6; Isa. 1:23; 10:2; Jer. 5:28; Zech. 7:10. The ass of the orphan and the yoke ox of the widow are among the most valuable possessions of these unfortunates.

4. Out of the way. The wicked force poor men to turn out of the road when they are using it and to wait until they have passed. Or, the statement may mean that the wicked make the highways so dangerous with their violence that they compel the poor and needy to seek byways for safety. For protection, these poor huddle together in whatever place of refuge they can find (see ch. 30:6).

5. As wild asses in the desert. This may refer to bands of marauders scouring the desert like hordes of wild asses, or to the oppressed and needy people driven from society and compelled to seek a precarious subsistence, like the wild ass in the desert.

For a prey. That is, as food for their children. Job’s concern for the plight of the common people reflects his righteous character.

6. Vintage. The text is capable of two interpretations: (1) The “they” refers to the marauders who forage the crops for a livelihood. (2) The “they” refers to the downtrodden poor who “glean the vineyard of the wicked man” (RSV).

8. Wet with the showers. A graphic description of homeless wanderers, seeking shelter from the storm.

9. Pluck the fatherless. This is a reference to the vicious custom of taking children into slavery in satisfaction of their father’s debt (see Neh. 5:5; cf. 2 Kings 4:7).

Take a pledge. See on ch. 22:6.

10. Take away the sheaf. A picture of a hungry man carrying sheaves of grain, but not permitted to satisfy his hunger from them, is a graphic portrayal of oppression in every age. Yet God does not seem to interpose to punish those who are responsible for such cruelty, but rather to let them pursue their evil course without let or hindrance.

11. Make oil. The same unfortunates are employed on the estates of their oppressors to extract oil from the olives and wine from the grapes. They are tormented with unceasing thirst but are not allowed to satisfy their craving with the products near at hand.

12. Out of the city. Not only from deserts and farms, but also from the cities, comes the cry of the oppressed. Job’s object was to show, in opposition to the mistaken doctrine of his friends, that God does not hastily punish every evil work or reward every good one.

Vice often remains long unpunished and virtue unrewarded; therefore a man's character must not be judged by his prosperity or adversity. Herein lay the basic fault in the philosophy of Job's would-be friends, and, in fact, in that of the Jews as a nation.

13. *Against the light.* This verse begins a new section, which covers vs. 13–17, dealing with murderers, adulterers, and thieves. This type of iniquity thrives under cover of darkness. Its devotees “rebel against the light”—not only the light of day but also the light of reason, conscience, and law. They observe no moral restraints.

15. *The adulterer.* He also waits for darkness to come to seek his prey. Stealthily he disguises himself that he may not be apprehended. (see Prov. 7:8, 9).

16. *Dig through houses.* In ancient times burglary often took this form. Windows were few and high on the walls. Doors were strongly fastened with bolts and bars, but the walls, being of clay or rubble or sundried brick, were weak and easily broken down. Compare Eze. 12:5, 12.

Marked for themselves. The sentence reads literally, “by day they seal up for themselves,” that is, they shut themselves up. These criminals hate the light and love darkness.

17. *Shadow of death.* Or, “deep darkness.” When the deepest darkness of the night begins, these people enter upon their day's work. The drawing on of night is to them what daybreak is to others. This verse completes the section beginning with v. 13, which stresses the way in which the violators of the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments love darkness and hate light.

18. *Swift as the waters.* This vivid phrase may suggest the figure of a light boat, or a piece of flotsam, or any other light object that moves noiselessly along the surface of the water. The quiet, rapid movements of a thief are compared with these. Or the idea may be that the wicked will be swept away like debris on a swift-flowing river.

Their portion. That is, their manner of life, their way of obtaining a livelihood is deserving of execration.

The vineyards. Their vineyards will not produce. They have lived by plunder, and they deserve no subsistence from their wine presses.

19. *Drought and heat.* The meaning seems to be, as the heat of summer causes the snow water to disappear, so the grave consumes the wicked.

20. *Shall forget him.* To be forgotten even by one's own mother, to be food for worms, to be cut down like a tree, was the conventionally accepted idea of the fate of the wicked. In the verses preceding this section (vs. 18–20), and in the verses following, Job observes that the reality of life does not conform to this pattern.

21. *Barren.* In this new section, Job returns to his description of the oppression of the weak. Barrenness was considered one of the greatest possible misfortunes (see 1 Sam. 1:5–8). The oppression of one that was barren indicated extreme cruelty. The barren woman was an especially helpless victim of oppression, because she had no son to defend her rights. Her barrenness was commonly thought to be the result of sin and divine displeasure.

22. *Mighty.* Many take the pronoun “he” to refer to the oppressor. The text is thought to reveal that the wicked not only oppress the weak but also make life unpleasant for the mighty. Others consider “he” as referring to God: “God prolongeth the life of the mighty.” If this is the correct interpretation, it is another complaint on the part of Job regarding God's failure to punish the wicked.

23. To be in safety. God gives the wicked man security. This is Job's conviction based on his own observation.

24. They are exalted. This is Job's conclusion regarding God's dealing with the wicked. His friends affirm that they are punished for their sins in this life, and that great crimes would soon meet with great calamities. This Job denies, and says that the fact is they are exalted. Yet he knows the time will come when they will be rewarded for their evil deeds. He maintains, however, that their death may be tranquil and easy and that no extraordinary proof of divine displeasure may accompany their departure.

25. Make me a liar. Job challenges his friends to disprove his proposition. He feels that he has the backing of human experience that his friends cannot refute.

CHAPTER 25

Bildad sheweth that man cannot be justified before God.

1. Bildad. This short reply of Bildad closes what the three friends of Job had to say, for Zophar does not attempt to answer. The speech appears to be the labored effort of one who felt that he must say something, but who did not know how to meet the line of arguments Job had pursued. Far from accepting Job's challenge and grappling with the difficulty involved in the prosperity of the wicked, Bildad entirely avoids the subject and limits himself to touching briefly two old and well-worn topics—the might of God and the universal sinfulness of men. On neither of these points does he throw any fresh light. He repeats largely what Eliphaz had said in former discourses (see chs. 4:17; 15:14).

2. Dominion. Job had fully recognized God's sovereignty (ch. 23:13). However, Bildad could make such statements glibly because he was not passing through an experience like that of Job. Job was undergoing a personal test of his confidence in God. Bildad was not.

He maketh peace. This seems to point to God as the One who maintains harmony in the supernal regions.

3. Armies. The more obvious interpretation of this term is that it refers to the hosts of supernatural beings (see 2 Kings 6:16, 17; Ps. 68:17; Dan. 7:10; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22). Like armies, these hosts carry out the commands of God.

4. Can man be justified? Neither Bildad nor his friends nor Job could answer this question. Only in the gospel era did men receive a full elucidation of the principle of justification by faith (see Rom. 3:23–25; Col. 1:25–27).

5. It shineth not. Bildad is assuming that both the moon and the stars are imperfect when contrasted with God, their Creator. This being the case, how lowly should man appear! What Bildad did not know is that man, despite his frailty, is infinitely more precious in the sight of God than the inanimate works of creation.

6. That is a worm. See ch. 7:5.

These words are intended to humble Job and to impress upon him his littleness. Job needed to be encouraged rather than to be reminded of his weakness. Thus his friends end their defense of tradition—speaking of worms! In their zeal for their defense of an idea, they have failed utterly to understand either God or their suffering friend.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 MH 434

6 AA 572

CHAPTER 26

1 *Job, reproving the uncharitable spirit of Bildad, 5 acknowledgeth the power of God to be infinite and unsearchable.*

1. Job. Now begins the long discourse of Job, which ends with ch. 31. In this speech Job, after hastily brushing aside Bildad's last speech, proceeds to explain his viewpoints. He sets forth, first of all, the might and majesty of God (ch. 26:5–14). Then he deals with the questions that concern his own integrity and God's dealings with mankind. The former he still maintains. Regarding the latter, he admits that retribution comes upon the wicked at last (ch. 27). In ch. 28, after paying a deserved tribute to man's intelligence and ingenuity in regard to earthly things, he pronounces the spiritual world and the principles of the divine government to be inscrutable to him, and his only true wisdom to be right conduct. Finally he returns to his own case, and having given a description of his former, prosperous life (ch. 29) contrasted with his present, forlorn life (ch. 30), he concludes with an avowal of his integrity in all the various duties and obligations of life (ch. 31).

2. How hast thou helped? Verses 2–4 contain a series of questions intended to reveal the weak logic of Bildad's speech. This is Job's longest sustained address to one individual. Job usually addressed all three together in the second person plural. Bildad had told Job nothing that he did not already know. What good was accomplished by reminding him that he was a worm and wholly unclean?

3. Counselling. Probably an ironical comment on the thought of Bildad's brief speech. If Job were to admit lack of wisdom, what had Bildad done to supply that lack?

The thing as it is. Or, "sound knowledge," "sound counsel."

4. Whose spirit? What is the source of your authority? Surely there is no evidence of divine inspiration. Did Eliphaz prompt you (see ch. 4:17–19)?

5. Dead things. Heb. *repha'im*, a term applied (1) to an ancient race of giants (Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Deut. 3:11; Joshua 17:15), (2) to a valley outside Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8; 18:16; 2 Sam. 5:18, 22; 23:13; 1 Chron. 11:15; 14:9; Isa. 17:5), and (3) to the dead (Ps. 88:10; Prov. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Isa. 14:9; 26:14, 19). The derivation of the word is uncertain, and how the word could refer at once to a race of people and to the dead is not definitely known. Perhaps the *repha'im* that designates a race is derived from a different root than the *repha'im* that designates the dead. Some have connected the two ideas by observing that as a race the *repha'im* have become extinct and powerless. Its proud representatives lie prostrate in *she'ol*. The memory of them has become vague and shadowy. Hence they become a fit symbol of the dead.

Others derive the meaning "dead" from the root *raphah*, which means "to sink," "to relax." The dead are considered to be sunken and powerless ones.

That the *repha'im* were a race of giants is implied in Deut. 2:11, 20; 3:11, 13. The idea of stature is probably derived, not from a root meaning inherent in the word itself, but from the context.

The context of Job 26:5 seems to infer that the dead are intended. Bildad has emphasized the sovereignty of God in the heavens. Job is adding that God's power extends to the dwellers in *she'ol* (see v. 6).

Are formed. Literally, “are made to tremble,” from the root *chil*, “to tremble,” “to writhe.” In figure the dead are represented as conscious (see Isa. 14:9, 10), though not actually so (Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6).

6. Hell. Heb., *she’ol*, a figurative place where all the dead are described as gathered together (see Isa. 14:9, 10).

Destruction. Heb. *’abaddon*. A name paralleling *she’ol* and representing it as a place of ruin and destruction. The word occurs only six times in the OT (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 15:11; 27:20; cf. Rev. 9:11).

7. North. Job turns from God’s power as manifested in death and destruction to God’s power as manifested in creation. The northern heavens contained the more important constellations mentioned in the book of Job. In this text Job recognizes that these heavenly bodies are upheld by divine power (see Job 9:8; Ps. 104:2; Isa. 40:22; Isa. 44:24; Zech. 12:1).

The word translated “stretcheth out” is frequently used of pitching a tent (Gen. 12:8; 26:25; 33:19; 35:21; Judges 4:11). The heavens are conceived of as being pitched like a tent, only they have no supporting tent poles.

Empty place. Heb. *tohu*, the word translated “without form” in Gen. 1:2. Rather than visualize the earth as resting on pillars, as did some of the ancients, Job worshiped a God whose power he conceived of as supporting the earth.

8. Bindeth up the waters. The metaphor is probably drawn from the waterskins, so well known in the East, and especially in Arabia, in which water was stored. These skins were likely to be “rent,” or torn, by the weight of the liquid. Yet the clouds could carry vast amounts of water without such mishaps (see Job 38:37; Prov. 30:4).

9. He holdeth back. That is, He covereth up His throne with clouds. The significance of this statement may be that God conceals Himself from man’s physical senses. God sees fit to maintain His communion with man on a spiritual rather than on a sensuous level. Although clouds may hide His throne from sight (see 1 Kings 8:12; Ps. 18:11; 97:2), His throne exists, and will be eventually seen by the redeemed (Rev. 22:1–4).

The translation “moon” instead of “throne” (see RSV) requires a change in the pointing of the Hebrew word *kisseh* to make it read *keseh*. Vowel pointings were not introduced until about the 7th century A.D., and hence were not employed in the original documents. But as a rule the traditional spelling is accepted unless the context grammatically or otherwise clearly indicates a change. Here the context seems to be against such an alteration.

10. He hath compassed. The complete clause reads literally, “The decree of a circle upon the face of the waters.” The Syriac and Targums read, “He inscribed a circle upon the face of the waters.” The reference seems to be to the form of the horizon, which appears as a circle and seems to be marked out with a compass.

Day and night. The line reads literally, “unto the end of [boundary between] light and darkness,” that is, the horizon.

“Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God’s eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things:
One foot he centred, and the other turned

Round through the vast profundity obscure;
And said, 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world!'"
—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Book VII.

11. Pillars. This seems to be a figure of the mountains on the horizon on which the sky was thought of as resting.

12. He divideth. Heb. *raga'*, "to disturb," also "to be at rest." *Raga'* illustrates how certain words may express opposite ideas. When such words are used, the context must determine the choice of meaning. In the case under consideration either meaning makes good sense. With either definition the text reveals God's mastery over the sea.

The proud. Heb. *rahab* (see on ch. 9:13).

13. Spirit. Heb. *ruach*, which may also be rendered "wind," as in 90 cases in the OT. The context must determine the choice of meaning. At a breath from God, that is by a wind that He sends, the heavens, lately all cloud and storm, recover their serenity. Both the storm and the calm are pictured as coming from God.

Formed. Literally, "pierced."

The crooked serpent. Literally, "the fleeing serpent." Job may have had in mind the war in heaven when Satan, that "old serpent," was expelled from heaven (Rev. 12:7–9; cf. Rom. 16:20).

14. Parts. Heb. *qesoth*, "ends," "edges." Job has endeavored to portray God as the great creator and sustainer of the universe. His method has been to illustrate the power of God by referring to natural phenomena. But after he has done his best, he exclaims, "Behold, these are the mere edge of His ways." Job has been able to describe but the fringes of God's power.

Little a portion. Literally, "whisper of a word." What we know of God is merely a faint whisper.

Thunder. In contrast with the whisper, Job compares the actual power of God to thunder. He implies that he has enumerated only a small fraction of God's great works. He could hardly have chosen nobler language to express his deep feelings regarding the manner in which the divine glory surpasses human knowledge.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 Ed 132

7–14 Ed 131; 8T 282

10 AA 572; SL 53

CHAPTER 27

1 *Job protesteth his sincerity.* 8 *The hypocrite is without hope.* 11 *The blessings which the wicked have are turned into curses.*

1. Job. This chapter may be divided into three distinct parts. In the first (vs. 1–6), Job maintains his integrity and his determination to remain faithful to the end. In the second (vs. 7–12), he denounces his enemies. In the third (vs. 13–23), he returns to the consideration of God's treatment of the wicked, and admits their ultimate punishment and destruction. This speech is cast in the form of a series of proverbs he quotes, one following another.

Parable. Heb. *mashal*, used to describe (1) a proverbial statement (1 Sam. 10:12; Eze. 18:2, 3); (2) a byword (Deut. 28:37; 1 Kings 9:7); (3) a prophetic, figurative

discourse (Num. 23:7, 18; Isa. 14:4; Micah 2:4); (4) a similitude (Eze. 17:2; 20:49); (5) a poem (Num. 21:27–30); (6) short sentences of ethical wisdom (1 Kings 4:32; Prov. 10:1)). This term suggests a new trend in the words of Job. The controversial and emotional is giving way to the well-thought-out expression of deliberate judgment. Note the repetition of the term in Job 29:1.

2. As God liveth. This is the only place where Job resorts to an oath. Under the solemn circumstances of the occasion, in making his last appeal to his friends, Job thinks it appropriate to preface his remarks with an appeal to God as his witness (see Judges 8:19; Ruth 3:13; 1 Sam. 14:39; 2 Sam. 4:9; 12:5; 1 Kings 2:24; 2 Kings 5:20; 2 Chron. 18:13; Jer. 38:16). Such is Job's confidence in his own sincerity that he feels free to appeal to the God who, it has appeared, has been treating him as if he were guilty.

3. Breath. Heb. *neshamah*, from the root *nasham*, "to pant."

Spirit. Heb. *ruach*. A word sometimes synonymous with *neshamah* but having also other meanings, such as "wind" (see on ch. 26:13), and the animating principle of life (see on Eccl. 3:19).

4. Wickedness. Job's friends have tried to extort a confession of guilt from him. Job not only stands firm in the consciousness of his great integrity, but makes a definite commitment as to his future loyalty. Regardless of pressure and tradition, Job is determined to be honest.

5. Justify you. Job's friends have stoutly maintained his guilt. In strong language Job refuses to admit the correctness of their position. Some men under duress will admit wrongdoing of which they are not guilty. This Job refused steadfastly to do.

6. I hold fast. A man may lose property, family, friends, health; but still he may have one unfailing source of consolation—a clear conscience (see Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Cor. 4:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:3; 1 John 3:21).

7. Enemy. This verse, with its imprecations on Job's enemies, begins the second section of the chapter.

8. The hypocrite. Or, "the irreligious one." See Mark 8:36, 37. This statement agrees with Bildad's assertion in ch. 8:13, and with Zophar's in ch. 20:5.

9. Trouble. Conscious hypocrisy and persistent ungodliness cut a man off from God, frequently making the answer to his prayers for help impossible. Job's friends have made similar statements, applying them to Job.

10. Will he always call? The sinner prays only on extraordinary occasions. He does not maintain habits of prayer. He allows his business to break in upon his times for prayer, neglects secret devotion on the slightest pretext, and soon abandons it altogether.

11. I will teach you. See on v. 13.

12. Ye yourselves. Job does and not plan to tell his friends anything they have not had the opportunity of knowing.

13. The portion. Verses 13–23 present a problem in that they are a complete denial of Job's former position regarding the punishment of the wicked in this life (see chs. 9:22–24; 21; 24). Various attempts have been made to account for the apparent change of theory by assuming:

(1) That this passage is really an address by Zophar. This view is untenable, for to maintain it one must suppose the omission of two verses, one between vs. 10 and 11 introducing Zophar as the speaker and one at the beginning of ch. 28 reintroducing Job. It also requires the alteration of all the pronouns in vs. 11, 12, from the second person plural

to the second person singular, since Zophar would be considered as addressing these words to Job.

(2) That Job is endeavoring to retract his former statements spoken rather hastily in the heat of the controversy, and not too well considered. This view has in its favor that it retains Job as the speaker, but has against it the fact that it makes Job teach his friends that which they already believed and had repeatedly affirmed (see v. 12). It further makes him reproach his friends for the folly of not being ignorant of what they had tried to urge upon him with such persistence (see v. 13).

(3) That Job is repeating the argument he anticipates his friends will use in reply to his present speech. However, there is nothing to indicate such a purpose, and there is no rebuttal of the argument such as might be expected if Job were calling attention to an anticipated argument.

(4) That Job is speaking of the final judgment. This view is ruled out by a careful analysis of the calamities which reveals that all of them are to come in this present life. The death spoken of is the first death, not the second.

(5) That Job is here turning the weapons of his friends against them and is calling down upon them the calamities they had declared to be the doom of the wicked. This view seems to fit into the sequence of thought. Job has reaffirmed his innocency (vs. 1–6). By implication his friends are indicted, for they bring false charges against another. Job threatens them with the same terrors with which they had attempted to intimidate him. He reproaches them for their slowness of perception in not realizing that they have spoken these things against themselves. This view, like the others, is also conjectural, but it seems to require the minimum of adjustments to make it fit into the over-all picture.

14. Children. Job had lost his children, a loss that was an indication to his friends of his sinfulness. Job himself maintained that the children of the wicked prosper (ch. 21:8, 11).

15. Those that remain. The survivors will be carried off by pestilence, be buried, and forgotten (see Lev. 26:25; 2 Sam. 24:13; Jer. 14:12; 15:2).

18. Moth. A symbol of fragility, decay, and weakness.

Booth. This refers to huts, or lodges of boughs, set up in vineyards or orchards for temporary occupancy (see Isa. 1:8; Lam. 2:6). They were habitations of the weakest and frailest kind. The wicked lack stability, permanency, and security.

19. The rich. The phrase may read, “he lieth down rich.”

Shall not be gathered. The LXX reads, “shall not add,” that is, the experience will not be repeated.

He is not. Or, “it is not.” Either the man awakes to find himself undone or in the hands of murderers, or he awakes to find his treasure gone.

20. Terrors. Compare Job 18:14; 20:25; Ps. 18:4.

21. The east wind. Compare Job 1:19; 9:17; 15:2; 38:24; 27:8; 27:26. Coming from the Arabian Desert, the east wind meant heat and drought, as one coming from the west brought rain.

22. God. This word is supplied. It is reasonable to regard the storm as still the subject, “It [the storm] shall cast itself upon him, and not spare.”

23. Clap their hands. It is still not clear whether the subject of the sentence is “the east wind,” “God,” or “men.” In any case, the wicked man is the victim of mockery.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

CHAPTER 28

1 *There is a knowledge of natural things.* 12 *But wisdom is an excellent gift of God.*

1. Vein for the silver. This chapter is one of the oldest and finest pieces of natural history in the world. It is also one of the great poems of all literature. This chapter is not an argument but a meditation. Its design seems to be to show that man must accept divine providence even though he may not understand it. Job shows that man has made surprising discoveries regarding nature, yet true wisdom is found only in the fear of the Lord.

The mining of silver and gold is mentioned as an example of the skill of man. Elsewhere mining is mentioned in the OT only in Deut. 8:9, where Canaan is described as a land of iron and copper. Diodorus describes ancient mining operations thus: The shafts follow veins of quartz deep into the mountain. Fire was used to make the stone brittle, then it was hoed out by men who carried lamps. The quartz was crushed, pounded into dust, and washed until the gold remained (see Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 463 ff.). The book of Job reveals that, even in his far-off days, such arts were known (see Gen. 2:11, 12; 4:22).

2. Iron. Iron is mentioned here as an illustration of the skill and accomplishments of man (see on Gen. 4:22; cf. Num. 35:16; Deut. 27:5).

Brass. By “brass” is meant copper or bronze (see Gen. 4:22; Ex. 25:3; 26:11). The mention of “stone,” from which it is molten, shows that the metal was extracted from ore. This is proof that copper is intended. Brass is properly an alloy of copper and zinc and must be compounded. The alloy came into general use centuries later. Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, is much older. Whenever “brass” is mentioned in the OT either copper or bronze is meant.

3. An end to darkness. The reference still seems to be to the operations of mining, and the idea is that men delve into the darkest regions. They bring light—either artificial or the light of day—into regions that never before saw light.

Shadow of death. See on ch. 3:5.

4. The flood breaketh out. The meaning of this verse is not clear. Job still seems to be referring to mining operations. The obscurity may arise from an allusion to practices then understood but now unknown. The description may be of the process of sinking a shaft into a mine. The word rendered “flood” is also used to refer to a stream, brook, or wadi.

5. Cometh bread. From the art of mining, Job turns to the art of agriculture. The same earth that produces gold and silver and iron and copper also brings forth bread.

As it were fire. This phrase is very obscure. Some have conjectured that the reference is to some combustible substance similar to coal, which was dug out of the earth in some places in Arabia. If this is true, the thought would be that the same earth that produces bread, when turned over, produces fuel for fire. Others think Job is referring to the precious stones mentioned in the following verses, which might be said to glow like coals of fire.

6. Sapphires. This mineral was a semiprecious stone, probably what is known today as lapis lazuli (see Ex. 28:18).

7. No fowl knoweth. The one who searches for jewels and precious metals treads a path that is unseen by even a bird of keen vision.

8. The fierce lion. The lion that ventures into the most dangerous places in the pursuit of prey has not dared to go where man has gone in pursuit of precious stones and gold.

9. Overturneth. Mining is still under discussion. The idea is that nothing, however difficult, not even cutting down the hardest rock, deters the miner from pursuing his work.

10. Cutteth. In mining, man cuts channels for the purpose of removing water that accumulates in mines.

Precious thing. His eye is keen to observe all evidence of mineral wealth.

11. Bindeth. This may refer to creating dams, dikes, and other forms of embankment to control water in the processes of mining.

The thing. The concealed treasures, the gold and gems that are buried deep in the earth. The illustration was admirably chosen. Job's object was to show that true wisdom was not to be found by human science or by mere investigation. He selects a case, therefore, where man had shown the most skill and wisdom and where he had penetrated the farthest into darkness. He had driven his shaft through rocks, closed up gushing fountains, and laid bare the treasures that had been buried for generations. Yet all this did not enable him to understand the operations of God's government.

12. Wisdom. Job now turns to the application of his illustration. His object is to show that wisdom is not to be found in the most profound science or in the greatest accomplishments of men.

13. Price. Heb. *'erek*, properly "a valuation." The LXX reads *hodos*, "way," which is a translation of the Heb. *derek*. Either rendering makes sense.

Land. Man must look to a higher source for wisdom. True wisdom comes by divine revelation.

14. Depth. Heb. *tehom*, "deep," "sea," "abyss" (see on Gen. 1:2); sometimes used of subterranean waters (Gen. 7:11; Deut. 8:7). The idea is that the vast depths may be investigated, but true wisdom will not be found there.

15. Gold. Gold is mentioned five times in vs. 15–19. Four different Hebrew words are used, to heighten the force of the figure, indicating that there is no gold of any kind that can purchase wisdom.

16. Gold of Ophir. The word used for "gold" here is different from the word used for gold in the previous verse. Gold from Ophir was held in high estimation. On the location of Ophir see on 1 Kings 9:28.

Onyx ... sapphire. Semiprecious gems, probably not the stones that bear these names today.

17. Gold. See on v. 15.

Crystal. The Hebrew word thus translated occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It is thought to mean "glass," and here may refer to some form of rock crystal.

18. Coral. Heb. *Ra'moth*. The particular gem or precious substance here referred to is uncertain. The application of the word to coral is a rabbinical interpretation.

Pearls. This word very likely means "crystal."

Rubies. The exact identification of the gem is not known (see Prov. 3:15; 8:11; 20:15; 31:10; Lam. 4:7).

20. Whence? In view of the fact that wisdom cannot be mined or cannot be bought, where can it be found? This question, raised in v. 12, is repeated for emphasis. This is the basic question to which consideration is given in the chapter.

21. It is hid. The inhabitants of neither the earth nor the air know the answer to the question. The term “all living” may, by figure, refer to the animal kingdom, thus making a balance in the text between beasts and fowl.

22. Destruction. Heb. *'abaddon* (see on ch. 26:6). Job has spoken of the discoveries of science, but in none of them was true wisdom found. It has not been discovered in the shaft that the miner sank into the earth. It cannot be purchased with silver or gold or precious stones. Neither the birds nor the beasts know it. Now the search is taken to the confines of Destruction and Death. By personification these are represented as bringing back a vague and unsatisfying answer, “We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.”

23. God understandeth. Man has extended the investigations of science greatly beyond the limits of knowledge reached in Job’s day. He has delved into the secrets of the atom. Nevertheless Job’s statement is as true today as when it was uttered. True wisdom comes only by divine revelation.

24. He looketh. A picture of God’s omnipresence and omniscience. God’s vision is not limited or distorted. He sees that which man cannot see.

25. Wind ... waters. These, among the most uncontrollable of earth’s elements, are under the control of God. The one who weighs the winds and measures the waters is a reliable source of wisdom for mankind.

26. Decree for the rain. He who controls these elements is qualified to reveal truth to men, and can reveal the principles upon which His government is administered.

27. See it. This verse contains an impressive array of verbs that reveal God’s relation to wisdom. He understands it and reveals it. Wisdom has no other source (see Prov. 8:22–30). Wisdom is not the result of chance. It is summed up in God, since He is the First Cause.

28. Behold. Job now points his listeners to the conclusion toward which the entire chapter has been progressing. What is wisdom? The answer is given—“The fear of the Lord.” Proper recognition of God and submission to Him is the important factor. Humility, reverence, respect, adoration, faith—these are aspects of the wisdom that supersedes earthly knowledge. What is understanding? The answer is equally clear—“To depart from evil.” Understanding is more than intellectual—it is ethical. It demands a standard of living. Reverence and rectitude—these are the two great requirements of God. Micah (ch. 6:8) speaks of these two character traits as justice and mercy toward man and humility before God. Compare Matt. 22:36–40.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

10 PK 265

12–28MH 430; 8T 280

14–18COL 107

15, 16 5T 544

15–18Ed 18

16 CT 132

28 DA 89; PP 222

CHAPTER 29

Job bemoaneth himself of his former prosperity and honour.

1. Continued his parable. From his profound meditation upon the nature of true wisdom and the contrast between the accomplishments of man and the infinite knowledge of God, Job turns to another contrast which he follows through two chapters (chs. 29 and 30). This discourse presents the contrast between what Job was and what he is—between his condition in the time of his prosperity and that to which he has been reduced by his afflictions. The description of his former life in ch. 29 effectively answers the accusations of his friends regarding his character and conduct.

2. In months past. No one ever longed more deeply for the “good old days” than did Job. Few men ever suffered greater reversal of circumstances or more compelling reasons for cherishing the memory of days gone by.

Preserved. Or, “watched over.” In this expression may be seen not only a longing for past material blessings but a loneliness for the care of the God who once seemed so near him. Job’s cry is like that of an orphaned child.

3. Candle. Compare Job 18:6; 21:17; Ps. 18:28. God had been a light to Job. Suddenly that light had gone out, leaving him to grope in darkness. But he remembers the light, longs for the light, and hopes against hope that he will be able to find it again. Compare Prov. 20:27.

4. In the days of my youth. Literally, “in the days of my autumn.” Job probably refers to the days of his mature manhood, which he had reached when his calamities fell upon him.

Secret. Heb. *sod*, “counsel,” or “council,” from which is obtained the idea of intimate friendship. The LXX renders this clause, “When God took care of my house.” Job seems to picture God, as a friend, coming to his tent, and his enjoying God’s companionship and sharing God’s plans. Now, it seems, God has passed him by. He no longer understands the ways of God, and God has left him to suffer alone without an explanation of why such suffering has come upon him.

5. Yet with me. Job, through his afflictions, had come to look upon the Almighty as no longer with him (see chs. 6:4; 7:19; 9:17; 10:16).

Children. The two experiences that pained Job most are made parallel in this verse—the apparent withdrawing of the friendship of God and the loss of his children. The greatest happiness has within it the possibilities of the greatest sorrow. The greatest blessings, when they are removed, leave the greatest emptiness.

6. Butter. Butter and oil were symbols of prosperity among the Orientals. Job describes his former life as a time when milk and butter were as common as water, and when the rocky ground on which the olive trees grew poured out rivers of oil. Oil was used for food, for light, for anointing the body, and for medicinal purposes (see Deut. 32:13, 14), and was a treasured and valuable commodity.

7. To the gate. Job recalls three primary sources of his former happiness: (1) fellowship with God, (2) companionship with his children, (3) respect of his fellow men.

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 21:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

The greatest amount of attention is given in this chapter to the last of these three experiences. The gate was the place where justice was administered and public business carried on. At this place the crowds gathered, and paid respect to Job as a leader among them (see Neh. 8:1, 3, 16).

Seat. A seat would be brought out and prepared where the judges would sit to hear cases and pass judgments.

8. Young men. The whole image presents a beautiful illustration of Oriental manners and of the respect paid to a man of character and distinction. The young men withdrew to inconspicuous corners, and the old men stood up in reverent respect. The homage paid was not so much to age as to dignity.

9. The princes. These dignitaries never ventured an opinion in opposition to Job, so highly did they respect his wisdom and character (cf. ch. 21:5).

11. The ear. A personification for “those who heard me” as the eye is for “those who saw me.” This verse comprehends, in addition to the princes and nobles, the people. The common folk hailed Job as a champion and protector, and he obtained the satisfaction that comes from the sincere love of the people.

12. I delivered. This verse reveals the spirit of Job in contrast with the accusations of his friends (see ch. 22:5–10). One of the most often stressed ethical principles of the OT is justice for the poor and mercy for the helpless (see Ps. 72:12–14; Prov. 21:13; 24:11, 12; Isa. 1:17).

13. Ready to perish. He refers to the man who was falsely accused and was in danger of execution, or the man who was near death as the result of poverty and want. There is no gratitude more enthusiastic and sincere than that of a person whose benefactor has delivered him from imminent death.

Widow's heart. Job lived in a day when the survival of the helpless classes, such as widows and orphans, was dependent on the largeheartedness of sympathetic persons. There was no “welfare state,” such as exists in some lands today, to meet human need. Such men as Job brought great happiness to those whose support had been taken away.

14. Clothed. Righteousness and judgment were so much a part of Job that they became the distinctive characteristics by which the people recognized him (Isa. 61:10; cf. Ps. 109:18, 19).

15. Blind. In the days prior to modern medical science, the blind were numerous. Often they eked out an existence by begging. Job did not forget these outcasts. The figure indicates that his gifts were more than a pittance. Apparently he went as far as possible in supplying their lack. Such charity would justify him in saying that he was “eyes” to the blind and “feet” to the lame.

16. Poor. See v. 12. Job's gifts kept pace with his sympathy.

The cause which I knew not. Better, “the cause of him I knew not.” The construction is similar to that translated “the place of him that knoweth” (ch. 18:21). Job was willing to put forth effort in behalf of strangers, to see that they received justice.

17. Brake the jaws. The metaphor is taken from hunting. Job compares the wicked to a wild beast with its helpless victim in its grasp. He pictures himself as the one who rescues such victims by breaking the jaws of the beast of prey.

18. Nest. A metaphor for “dwelling place,” or “home.”

As the sand. A simile of long life.

19. My root. Job compares himself in his former prosperous state to a tree growing by the side of a river, nourished by the water that reaches its roots, and the dew on its leaves and branches (see Gen. 27:39; Ps. 1:3; 133:3; Jer. 17:8).

20. My bow. A symbol of strength (Gen. 49:24). Job was not exhausted; he continued in vigor and strength.

21. Counsel. In v. 7 Job had spoken of his office as judge. Now he refers to the position that he had occupied among his countrymen as statesman and counselor.

23. Rain. To compare Job's counsel with rain was to assign to it the very highest value. The "latter rain" refers to the spring rains that aided in bringing crops to maturity (see Vol. II, pp. 108, 109; cf. Deut. 11:14; Jer. 3:3; 5:24; Joel 2:23; Hosea 6:3).

24. If I laughed. The old Jewish commentators considered this text to mean that men so highly respected Job's importance that they could not believe it possible for him to laugh familiarly with them. A more plausible explanation is that Job cheered despondent people with friendly smiles.

My countenance. Job was able to help by his smile those who were perplexed and despondent, and despondency on the part of others was never able to cast down his countenance. He had sufficient spiritual resources to enable him to remain happy and unperturbed, though those about him were despondent.

25. Chief. This verse seems to point out Job in his civil, administrative, and domestic life. As a magistrate, he chose the way, adjusted the differences, and sat chief. As an able administrator, he dwelt as a king over an army, preserving order and discipline. As a man, he endeavored to relieve and comfort his fellow men.

Why did Job endeavor so earnestly to vindicate himself? He had been charged with enormous guilt and hypocrisy. These charges could not go unchallenged. This recital of Job's former happiness tended to emphasize, by contrast, the greatness of his misery.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4-16Ed 142

11-167T 238

12-16MB 40

15 ML 243; 3T 521, 530

15-173T 518

16 ML 244; 4T 513; 5T 151

21-25Ed 142

CHAPTER 30

1 *Job's honour is turned into extreme contempt. 15 His prosperity into calamity.*

1. But now. This is one of the most touching chapters in the book. In it Job pictures the contrast between his present and former condition.

That are younger. It seems that in Job's district there lived a vile and debased people, regarded as thieves by their neighbors, who saw in Job's calamities an opportunity to insult a member of a superior group. These people were so inferior and corrupt that they were held in lower esteem than the sheep dogs. The Orientals could scarcely use language that would express greater contempt of anyone than to call him a dog (see Deut. 23:18; 1 Sam. 17:43; 24:14; 2 Sam 3:8; 9:8; 16:9; 2 Kings 8:13).

2. Profit me. Job seems to be describing those who were reduced by degradation and poverty to the place where they were of no value to an employer. Now he himself, who

once had been honored by princes and nobles (ch. 29:9, 10), was reduced to the place where people of the most degraded ranks of life showed no respect for him.

3. *Want and famine.* In order to emphasize his own plight, Job goes into detail to show the wretchedness of these people who mock him.

Fleeing. This represents the translation of the LXX. The Hebrew word thus translated occurs only twice, here and in v. 17, where the participial form is rendered “sinews.” More correctly it should read “gnawing,” which also seems to be its meaning here. These people were literally “gnawers of the desert.” They were reduced to the place where they gnawed the roots and shrubs found in the desert.

4. *Mallows.* The word thus translated is generally thought to describe a plant having small, thick, sour-tasting leaves. This plant was edible, but not desirable for food.

Juniper roots. The word rendered “juniper” occurs only here and in 1 Kings 19:4, 5 and Ps. 120:4. It is probably a species of broom plant that grows in the Jordan valley and in Arabia. It is not to be confused with the modern juniper. Bedouins often camp in a place where it grows, in order to be sheltered by it from the wind and sun. It would be used for food only by those who were reduced to the utmost penury. This is the “juniper” under which Elijah sought rest when he was fleeing from the wrath of Jezebel.

5. *Driven forth.* Outcast tribes almost invariably became robber tribes. Deprived of the ordinary sources of livelihood, they resorted to plunder and rapine. It was intensely aggravating to Job that he should be the object of ridicule by such vagrants as these.

6. *Valleys.* Western Asia is full of rocky regions, seamed with deep gorges and clefts that are pierced with caves and cracks. The area about Petra is perhaps the most remarkable of these regions, but there are many others that closely resemble it. The word rendered “cliffs” may be translated “dreadful,” giving the sense that these outcasts dwelt in the most dreadful of ravines, rugged, isolated regions otherwise inhabited only by wild beasts.

7. *Brayed.* The voices of these vagrants sounded like the braying of wild asses.

Gathered together. These people were almost less than human in their manner of life, yet Job had sunk so low that he had become the object of their ridicule. That he is not unsympathetic toward these people is indicated by his description of apparently the same group in ch. 24:4–8. He does not despise them, but he is confused and hurt by the fact that he has sunk lower than they.

8. *Base men.* Literally, “men of no name.” The entire description points to a reversion to the animal level of existence. They had no family heritage, they knew none of the better things of life, yet they were ready to mock a man who had once possessed such things.

9. *Their song.* It is a pastime of degenerate men to make up ribald songs about those whom they despise. Job was the victim of such indignities (see Job 17:6; Ps. 69:12; Lam. 3:14).

10. *They abhor me.* It is hard for Job to realize that the very people who were generally abhorred by humanity should abhor him. The lowest of men now considered themselves much higher than he.

Spit in my face. The Hebrew may mean either to spit in the face or to spit in the presence of. The former seems to be the more natural way to translate the Hebrew expression.

11. Loosed my cord. The figure seems to be of a bow. The application is not entirely clear. Job may be saying that God has loosed his bowstring, that is, has taken away his vigor. He is now the victim of his weakest enemies, who rush upon him with unbridled ferocity. They cast off all restraint arising from respect to his rank, standing, and moral worth, and treat him with every kind of indignity.

12. Youth. Heb. *pirchach*. This noun occurs nowhere else in the OT, but the root from which it is derived is common and means “to bud,” “to sprout,” “to shoot.” Hence *pirchach* has been translated “brood,” or “progeny,” and has been referred to the rabble already described.

Push away. Job seems to say, “They jostle and crowd me from the path. Once the aged and honorable rose and stood in my presence, and the youth retired to the background; but now the rabble elbow me aside. They trip me, trample me, and overwhelm me.”

13. Mar my path. That is, they break up all my plans. Job’s erstwhile friends did not prove to be friends in his hour of extremity. Instead, they were a disappointment to him. They made the burden of his suffering far greater by their lack of understanding. Instead of making his pathway more difficult they might have done the opposite. They were fair-weather friends, and now that the tempests of life bore down upon his soul they brought him no encouragement. “A friend in need is a friend indeed.”

No helper. This may mean that these people are so worthless and degraded that no one will help them.

14. Breaking in. This may refer to a break made by an enemy in the walls of a city. When such a wall fell, the attacking army would pour in (see Isa. 30:13).

15. Terrors. His misfortunes, his enemies, and even his friends conspire to fill Job’s soul with terror. The vivid contrast between the glorious past and the dismal present tends to accentuate that terror.

Soul. Heb. *nedibah*, “nobility,” “nobleness.”

As the wind. The figure reveals how ruthless was the pursuit. It is hard to find in the desert a hiding place from the wind.

Welfare. Heb. *yeshu’ah*, “salvation,” “deliverance,” here probably “prosperity.” The dissolving of a cloud before the wind is a fit symbol of the disappearance of Job’s former prosperity and well-being.

16. Poured out. Job seems to have experienced a disintegration of his life that is hard to express in words. His reverses have done something to him. He has been severely wounded, and he is not yet healed. He is crushed, battered, and worn.

17. Bones. Often represented in the Scriptures as the seat of acute pain (see Ps. 6:2; 22:14; 31:10; 38:3; 42:10; 14:30).

Sinews. Literally, “gnawers” (see on v. 3). Day and night Job suffered the ravages of unrelenting pain.

18. Garment changed. The ordinary interpretation of this passage is that, because of the nature of his malady, Job’s garment had become disfigured and filthy. It may also mean that instead of being clothed merely with an ordinary garment as heretofore, he is now clothed with a garment of loathsome ulcers—a painful garment that clings to him as closely as the collar of his tunic.

21. Cruel. This statement must be understood as reflecting the viewpoint of Job under the pressure of his suffering, and not the true character of God.

22. To the wind. Job seems to say: “I am like stubble caught up by a whirlwind and borne hither and thither until it disappears.”

23. Bring me to death. This is the language of despair. Job alternates between hope and despair.

24. To the grave. The LXX gives a very different sense: “Oh, then that I might lay hands upon myself, or at least ask another, and he should do this for me.”

25. Did not I weep? Again Job appeals on the basis of his former life. He feels justified in crying for help, because he was always compassionate toward others.

26. When I looked. Job cannot understand why, when he was so sympathetic to others, he should be forced to cope with evil and darkness.

27. Prevented me. That is, confronted me.

29. Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, also the word for jackals, as in RSV (see Ps. 44:19; Isa. 13:22; 34:13; 35:7; 43:20; Jer. 9:11; 10:22; 51:37; Micah 1:8; Mal. 1:3). Job compares his complaints to the cries of wild animals.

Owls. Preferably, “ostriches.” Job’s mourning resembled the doleful noise made by the ostrich in the lonely desert.

30. My skin is black. From these and other symptoms some have tried to diagnose Job’s disease (see ch. 2:7).

31. To mourning. What formerly gave cheerful sounds now gives only notes of plaintiveness and lamentation. This is a poignant contrast between Job’s past and his present experience.

CHAPTER 31

Job maketh a solemn protestation of his integrity in several duties.

1. I made a covenant. This chapter represents the conclusion of Job’s long speech. In ch. 29, Job has spoken of his honored public life, and of the honor that was shown him in days past. In this chapter he outlines the principles that regulate his private conduct. These principles may be outlined as follows: (1) chastity (vs. 1–4), (2) seriousness and sincerity (vs. 5, 6), (3) uprightness and purity (vs. 7, 8), (4) fidelity to the marriage vow (vs. 9–12), (5) fidelity to his servants (vs. 13–15), (6) benevolence toward the helpless (vs. 16–23), (7) freedom from covetousness and idolatry (vs. 24–28), (8) kindness to his enemies (vs. 29, 30), (9) hospitality (vs. 31, 32), (10) freedom from secret sins (vs. 33–37), (11) honesty in matters regarding property (vs. 38–40). This chapter provides an unusually comprehensive summary of the ethics of Job. It is unexcelled as an example of lofty idealism.

Think upon a maid. Literally, “think upon a virgin.” Compare Matt. 5:27, 28. Job understood that mere avoidance of the overt act of adultery was not sufficient. In order to meet God’s standard the thinking as well as the actions must be pure. Job met the problem by entering into an agreement with himself that he would not allow his mind to be responsive to the enticements of lust. In the figurative language of the text, a covenant was made between the conscience and the eyes—an agreement that imposed a definite obligation on the eyes not to gaze upon that which would suggest impure thoughts.

2. What portion? The meaning seems to be, If I were to indulge impure thoughts, what portion or inheritance could I expect from God? Job considered it presumptuous for a man to maintain an impure mind and expect the approbation and favor of God. He

possessed an ethical consciousness far in advance of that of the majority of his contemporaries or indeed of men in every age of human history.

4. See my ways. Job recognizes the all-seeing eye of God. He finds confidence in the knowledge that God is aware of his purity, and he is encouraged to continue in the paths of righteousness by the thought of his responsibility to God (see Job 34:21; Ps. 139:3; Prov. 5:21; 15:3).

5. Vanity. Job's friends have accused him repeatedly of hypocrisy (see chs. 4:7–9; 8:6; 11:4, 6, 11–14; 15:30–35; 20:5–29). This charge is easy to make and hard to refute. He feels it necessary to speak in behalf of his own integrity, and he is willing to call God to witness as to that integrity. He knows that his life is without deception or guile, and he fears no disclosures that might be made by either God or man.

6. Weighed. Job is willing that God should weigh his motives. He has nothing to hide.

7. After mine eyes. This symbol describes the struggle between the senses (eyes) and the inner thoughts (heart). Job maintains that he has not allowed his senses to control him.

Cleaved to mine hands. The familiar illustration of clean hands. Job need not be understood as claiming that there has never been any spot on his hands, but he does deny that any spot has “cleaved” to his hands.

8. Let another eat. Job names the curses that he is willing to accept if he has not been upright in the particulars named in v. 7. If Job has not been honest in his dealings with others, let him be deprived of the fruits of his own labors (see Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:33, 51; Job 5:5).

Offspring. Heb. *še'eša'ay*, either the offspring of men or the produce of the earth. For the latter use see Isa. 34:1; 42:5. To have *še'eša'ay* refer here to produce makes the two parts of the text parallel.

9. By a woman. In vs. 9–12, Job goes on record as being blameless in his relationship with women. He is here speaking of married women, in contrast with virgins (v. 1). The LXX reads, “another man's wife.” The allurements of lust are well depicted in the expression, “If mine heart have been deceived.”

Laid wait. That is, to watch when his neighbor should be away from home.

10. Let my wife grind. The condition of a female slave who ground the corn was regarded as the lowest point in domestic slavery (see Ex. 11:5; Judges 16:21; Isa. 47:2).

Bow down. This is thought by some to refer to the treatment of female slaves, making concubines of them.

11. This is an heinous crime. See Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22.

12. It is a fire. Indulgence in this sin tends to destroy everything that is good in a man. It is desolating in its effects on the life.

Root out all mine increase. It would consume wealth, either by leading to squandering and waste, or by calling down the judgments of God. Human experience reveals how immorality frequently leads to poverty (see Luke 15:11–32).

13. Of my manservant. Eliphaz had accused Job of harshness and cruelty in his relations to the weak (ch. 22:5–9). Job disproves this accusation by revealing his attitude toward his servants. Before the law, slaves had few rights, yet Job was willing to listen to the complaints of his servants and to consider their grievances.

14. When God riseth up. Job feels that he will be required to answer before God for the way he treats his servants. If he were to mistreat them, he would stand in dread of divine indignation.

15. One fashion us. This verse reveals a marvelous comprehension of the equality of mankind before God (see Acts 17:26). Job was far ahead of his age in recognizing the proper attitude of a master toward a slave. That God is the creator of all men—master and slave alike—is one of the great revelations of Scripture.

16. Withheld the poor. Verses 16–23 affirm Job’s benevolent attitude toward the helpless. Eliphaz has accused Job of mistreating the poor (ch. 22:6, 7). Job denied this claim (ch. 29:12–16). In the verses now under consideration, he repeats his denial.

Widow. See Job 22:9; cf. Job 13; see also Ex. 22:22; Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19; 26:12, 13; Ps. 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; Mal. 3:5; 1 Tim. 5:16; James 1:27. “Caused” her “eyes ... to fail” refers to unfulfilled desire, that is, the widow is prevented from receiving the object of her expectation.

17. Alone. It is an established custom among the Arabians that guests shall always receive preference, no matter how needy the family may be. To eat his morsel by himself alone, probably means to break the laws of hospitality, as well as to be unmindful of the needs of the unfortunate.

Fatherless. This last clause indicates that Job was referring specifically to those who were orphans. Sharing with these unfortunates was considered one of the basic virtues of life (see Ex. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 22:3; Eze. 22:7; Zech. 7:10). Eliphaz had specifically charged Job with oppression of the fatherless (Job 22:9), and this charge Job had denied (ch. 29:12).

18. He ... her. These two pronouns seem to refer to “the orphan” and “the widow.” The idea is that Job had always been a father to orphans and a guide to widows.

My mother’s womb. A hyperbolic expression, indicating that Job does not remember when he did not give attention to the needs of the helpless.

19. Want of clothing. Job anticipated Dorcas (Acts 9:36–42) by many centuries (see Isa. 58:7; Eze. 18:7, 16; Matt. 25:36).

20. His loins. A personification by which the part of the body that had been clothed by the benevolence of Job is supposed to express appreciation to the benefactor (see ch. 29:11, 13).

21. Lifted up my hand. Job denies ever taking advantage of the fatherless, even when he was a magistrate and had ample power to do so. There were always those who would have provided “help” to Job in wrongdoing, but even though he had power and friends and influential support, he refused to use them to the disadvantage of the poor.

22. Let mine arm fall. This verse names the curse Job is willing to accept if it can be proved he has taken advantage of the poor. Let judgment fall particularly on those parts of the body that have either done wrong or refused to do right. The strong language that Job uses reveals that he is confident of his innocence, and that he hates the offenses to which he refers.

23. Destruction from God. Job declares his fear and respect for God which he presents as reasons why he could not have been guilty of the cruel deeds charged against him.

24. Made gold my hope. Job had been rich, but he had not made gold his hope or confidence. His trust had been in God.

25. *My wealth.* See chs. 1:3; 20:15; 22:24.

26. *Beheld the sun.* A specific reference to idolatry. Sun worship was widespread in the East, and dominant in Egypt from a very early date. Worship of the moon was usually secondary to sun worship. There seemed to be a natural tendency to worship that which provided light (see Deut. 4:19; 2 Kings 23:5; Eze. 8:16).

27. *Secretly enticed.* The sin of the heart comes first. There was something enticing about the worship of the heavenly bodies, with its ritual, that appealed strongly to the natural heart.

Kissed my hand. The enticement of the heart is followed by the act of the hand. It was customary to kiss idols (1 Kings 19:18; Hosea 13:2). The heavenly bodies were so remote that the worshipers could not have access to them, so they expressed their adoration by kissing the hand. Job means to say that he never participated in such idolatry.

29. *Rejoiced.* The sentiment expressed by Job anticipates the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Many in ancient times, even as today, felt justified in rejoicing over the downfall of an enemy. Job possessed a deeper spiritual insight, and caught a glimpse of the idea of loving one's enemies (see on Matt. 5:44).

31. *My tabernacle.* The idea seems to be that Job challenges anyone to name an instance in which his generosity or hospitality was questioned.

32. *In the street.* Job further defends his reputation for hospitality. He lived up to all the demands of Eastern hospitality, remembering the stranger as well as the members of his own household. See Gen. 18:2–8.

33. *As Adam.* “Like Adam,” or “like men.” The Heb. *'adam* may mean the human race as well as be the personal name of Adam.

34. *Did I fear?* Job seems to be endeavoring to make clear that he is not deterred from doing right by the fear of others. “Was I ever prevented from doing right by the voice of a multitude? When families or tribes brought pressure on me to do wrong, did I succumb to their persuasion? Did I remain in hiding and seclusion when I should have gone out to champion a righteous cause?” Job's conscience is clear as he recalls the honesty of his dealings with people.

35. *My desire.* Heb. *tawi*. Literally, “my mark.” *Taw* is the word translated “mark” in Eze. 9:4. Many hold that the words, “behold, my desire [*taw*],” refer to Job's dramatically affixing his signature, as it were, to his appeal in this verse.

Book. Or, “document,” here, an indictment. Job seems still to be groping for a clarification of the issue between himself and God.

36. *Upon my shoulder.* Job is so confident of his innocence that if he were to receive God's indictment of him in written form, he would not hesitate to wear it on his shoulder or on his head. This is a dramatic protestation of innocence.

37. *Declare unto him.* Job had nothing to conceal from God. He is willing to divulge every act of his life. He will answer God's indictment in every detail. He can stand before God, not as a convict, but as a prince.

38. *My land cry.* Job closes his argument with an avowal regarding his honesty in property matters. Job appeals to the very earth he has cultivated to vindicate him. He wonders whether the ground has any complaint against him.

39. Without money. Job is sure that one of the common sins of many great landholders is not his. Zophar has accused him of robbery and oppression (ch. 20:12–19). So has Eliphaz (ch. 22:5–9). Such accusations Job denies emphatically.

40. Let thistles grow. If I am dishonest, says Job, let thorns and foul weeds grow instead of grain.

The words of Job. Thus closes the argument of the patriarch in his own behalf. To the very last he protests his integrity. He fluctuates between hope and despair. His attitude toward God is one of injured confidence and of seeking to be healed. Progress has been made toward a solution, but the tangled threads are not unraveled until God reveals Himself (ch. 38:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

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32 DA 500; Ed 142

CHAPTER 32

1 *Elihu is angry with Job and his three friends. 6 Because wisdom cometh not from age, he excuseth the boldness of his youth. 11 He reproveth them for not satisfying of Job. 16 His zeal to speak.*

1. Ceased to answer. Despite Job's magnificent defense, his friends gave him up as stubborn, self-willed, and self-righteous. They could not answer his arguments but they dared not compromise their traditions. Job could have satisfied them only by abject confession of sin. This he could not honestly do; therefore the discussion between Job and Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar ended in a stalemate.

2. Elihu. Information regarding Elihu is limited. He is not mentioned previously in the book, nor is he mentioned after his speech. However, more detail is given regarding his ancestry than regarding any other person mentioned in the book. Elihu is a rather common Hebrew name meaning, "He is [my] God" (see 1 Sam. 1:1; 1 Chron. 12:20; 26:7; 27:18). "Barachel," the name of his father, means "God blesses." "The Buzite" identifies Elihu as of the family of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen. 22:20, 21; cf. Gen. 11:29). Ram has been identified by some as the ancestor of David mentioned in Ruth 4:19; and in Matt. 1:3, 4, under the name "Aram." Others suppose that he was of the family of Nahor mentioned in Gen. 22:21.

Justified himself. The motive of Elihu's long speech is that of defending God. He has little to say about Job's past. He is a philosopher, intent on defending a proposition, and his thesis is, "Does a man have a right to complain against God?"

3. Found no answer. The reasons set forth by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were not adequate, as Elihu saw things. He sets out to establish what he considers an adequate philosophy to solve the riddle that has been posed by the apparent contradiction between Job's life and his sufferings. Elihu condemns Job as much as he does Job's friends, but for different reasons.

7. I said. Elihu had undergone a struggle. He wanted to talk, but good judgment and tradition told him to let those who were older be the proponents of wisdom.

8. Spirit. Here Elihu gives his reason for presuming to speak, even though he is the youngest of the group. He has concluded that understanding comes, not from age, but from the Spirit of God. Inasmuch as wisdom is a gift of God, youth may have it as well as age.

9. Great men. Or, “the many.” The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate support the reading, “the aged.”

10. Therefore. In view of the fact that wisdom is a gift of God, and is not limited to age or station, Elihu makes bold to express his opinion.

11. Waited. This verse indicates that Elihu had listened carefully to all that Job’s friends had to say.

12. Convinced. Or, “convicted.” Elihu not only means that Job was not convinced. He also means that Job’s arguments were not met by his opponents.

13. God thrusteth him down. It is not clear whether this clause is an expression of Elihu’s thought, or whether it is a part of the purported statement of Job’s friends. According to the latter view, Elihu warns the friends against excusing themselves for their failure to convince Job on the basis that only God can meet Job’s arguments. According to the former view the meaning is that only God can humble Job. The wise men have been unable to refute Job’s arguments. Their traditions and precepts have been unavailing. God will have to take a hand and accomplish what they have failed to do.

14. Against me. Elihu can approach the argument more objectively, because Job’s cutting speech has not been aimed at him. He has been a bystander, an observer.

With your speeches. Elihu plans a fresh approach. The three friends have largely repeated one another’s views. Elihu promises to contribute something new to the discussion.

15. Amazed. Elihu may be addressing Job in this statement, or he may be using the third person merely to seem less disrespectful. At any rate, he seems to be referring to the three friends. He seems to be chiding them because of their inability to meet Job’s arguments.

16. When I had waited. This may also be translated, “and shall I wait?” The impatience of young Elihu displays itself, prodding the older men because of their silence and manifesting growing ardor for the presentation of his own points of view.

17. I will answer. The decision is made. Elihu will wait no longer. He has endured the silence of the friends as long as he can.

18. Matter. Or, “words.” Compare Zophar’s statement in ch. 20:2, 3. The friends of Job had not one word more. Elihu, on the contrary, was “full of” words.

The spirit within me. Literally, “the spirit of my belly.”

19. As wine. Fermenting wine in ancient wineskins distended the container, generally made of skins, to the point of bursting (see Matt. 9:17), an apt illustration of the eagerness of expression that filled the soul of Elihu.

20. Refreshed. The inner pressure has been building up during the long speeches of the friends. The bursting point has been reached.

21. Accept. Elihu sincerely wishes to be fair. He disavows personal bias. He does not wish to be influenced by age, rank, or personal friendship. His philosophy is certain to displease some of his hearers; therefore he feels the need of making this statement relative to his objectivity.

Flattering titles. The Oriental practice of giving long and extravagant titles is well known. Flattery is condemned by Job (ch. 17:5), by the psalmist (Ps. 12:2, 3; Ps. 78:36), and by Solomon (Prov. 2:16; 7:21; 28:23).

22. My maker. Elihu feels that God would put an end to him if he were to stoop to flattery. He is true to his promise, and throughout his long discourse he cannot be accused of insincerity.

CHAPTER 33

¹ *Elihu offereth himself instead of God, with sincerity and meekness, to reason with Job. 8 He excuseth God from giving man an account of his ways, by his greatness. 14 God calleth man to repentance by visions, 19 by afflictions, 23 and by his ministry. 31 He inciteth Job to attention.*

1. Wherefore, Job. The discourse in this chapter is directed to Job. The main purpose of the chapter is to convince Job that he has erred in his views regarding affliction. The friends of Job consider affliction as punishment. Job disagreed; he seemed to consider affliction as merely an expression of divine sovereignty. Elihu feels that neither Job nor his friends have the correct answer. He believes that the true object of affliction is to purify, strengthen, improve, prove, enlighten, develop faith, and save.

4. Spirit of God. Divine energy created him and animated him (see Gen. 2:7).

5. Answer. Elihu promises that the controversy between himself and Job will be conducted along fair lines. He promises not to attempt to overwhelm Job with reproaches. He acknowledges Job's right to answer him and disagree with him.

6. In God's stead. Elihu lays claim to no superiority or nobility. He effaces himself as he attempts to build the background of his message.

7. My terror. Elihu urges Job not to be afraid of him.

My hand be heavy. Elihu does not intend to promote the argument by coercion.

8. Thou hast spoken. Elihu is reminding Job of statements he is alleged to have made. His plan seems to be to convict Job on the basis of his own statements.

9. I am clean. This is an overstatement. Job had not claimed absolute perfection (see chs. 7:20, 21; 9:28; 13:26; 14:4, 17). It is true that he maintained his innocence of the charges of gross iniquity that his friends brought against him, but he did not go to the extreme of claiming to be free from all sin.

10. His enemy. See chs. 16:9; 19:11.

11. In the stocks. See ch. 13:27.

12. God is greater. In vs. 8–11 Elihu summarizes Job's argument. Now he challenges Job's position. His first rebuttal statement is, "God is greater than man." Might does not constitute right, and it is a poor way of justifying God to urge that He is all-powerful and hence may do what He pleases.

13. Why dost thou strive? Elihu emphasizes the uselessness of contending with God. God does as He thinks best, and He does not need to explain the reasons for His actions. God is like a father, who may see reasons for his actions that he does not consider wise to disclose to his child.

14. Once. God has more than one way of speaking to man, but man does not always recognize God's voice. Job requested an answer from God (chs. 10:2; 13:22; 23:5). Elihu maintains that God is speaking to Job in various ways, which he explains in the verses to follow.

15. In a dream. See Gen. 20:3–7; 31:11, 24; 41:1–7, 25; Num. 12:6; 1 Kings 3:5; Dan. 2:1, 29; Dan. 4:5–18; Matt. 1:20; 2:13, 19).

16. Sealeth their instruction. An allowable translation. Some, probably on the basis of the LXX, which here reads, “He scares them with such fearful visions,” change the pointing of the Hebrew to give substantially this thought (see Vol. I, p. 34).

17. Withdraw man. This verse reveals the purpose of the instructions mentioned in the previous verse. God is endeavoring to turn man aside from wrongdoing and to cure his pride.

18. Keepeth back. This verse reveals yet further the purpose of divine warnings. By them, God may save a man from ruin.

19. With pain. Elihu is coming closer and closer to Job’s problem. He expresses his own comprehension of the ministry of pain. He conceives of God as being kind and loving in inflicting pain, not as a punishment but as a discipline. There seems to be a certain progression in Elihu’s discourse. First he mentions dreams, then warnings, then pain. The idea of pain as a mode of discipline was not altogether new. Eliphaz had alluded to it in ch. 5:17. Elihu, however, expanded and developed the idea as Eliphaz had not done. Regarding the discipline of affliction, see Ps. 119:67, 71, 75.

20. Abhorreth bread. The seriousness of the affliction is here alluded to. Job’s suffering had led him to the place where things that would ordinarily bring pleasure, like dainty food, had lost all their appeal.

21. Consumed away. This verse continues to describe affliction in terms understood by Job.

22. Grave. Heb. *shachath*, the word translated “pit” in v. 18. Job repeatedly expresses his feeling that death is near.

Destroyers. Literally, “those who put to death.” Probably a figurative allusion to supernatural beings, commissioned to execute judgment (see 2 Sam. 24:16, 17). Or, the expression may refer to the pains and ailments that seemed to bring life to a close.

23. Messenger. Heb. *mal’ak*, “angel,” or “messenger.” This passage (vs. 23, 24) may be considered Messianic. The language is descriptive of His work and is so used (see Ed 115; cf. PP 366).

His uprightness. That is, the way he ought to go (see John 16:8).

24. Ransom. Heb. *kopher*, from which is derived the verb *kaphar*, generally rendered “to make atonement.”

25. Shall be fresher. This text may be considered as a continuation of the words of the “messenger,” begun in v. 24, “Let his flesh become,” etc. (RSV). The chastisement having done its work, the restoration to health follows. The recovered flesh, fresher than a child’s stands in contrast with Job’s affliction (see 2 Kings 5:14).

26. He shall pray. Elihu is endeavoring to paint an encouraging picture of the results of the discipline of suffering. Communion with God, joy, righteousness, follow the bitter experience of pain and sorrow.

27. He looketh. Heb. *yashor*, which some regard as a poetic form of *yashir*, “he will sing.” but others as from *shur*, “to look,” “to behold.” The passage would then describe the joy of the restored and forgiven soul.

If any say. Preferably, “he will say.”

28. His soul. Rather, “my soul.” The verse is a continuation of man’s song of praise.

29. Oftentimes. Literally, “twice and thrice.” Elihu claims that God frequently brings affliction that glorious deliverance may result. His inference is that Job’s afflictions are disciplinary, and that they likewise can work for Job’s benefit.

31. Hold thy peace. Perhaps Job at this point showed some inclination to break the silence and answer Elihu. Not wishing to be interrupted, Elihu checked Job’s utterance. Then, wishing to be courteous, as well as to present his argument, he made the concession of the next verse.

32. Justify thee. Elihu seems to have a sincere desire that Job be declared righteous.

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CHAPTER 34

1 *Elihu accuseth Job for charging God with injustice.* 10 *God omnipotent cannot be unjust.* 31 *Man must humble himself unto God.* 34 *Elihu reproveth Job.*

2. Ye wise men. At this point Elihu turns from Job to those whom he addresses as “wise men,” or “men of understanding” (v. 10). This group may include more than the three friends. It is probable that a considerable number of influential persons had gathered to hear the discussion.

3. Trieth words. Compare ch. 12:11. Elihu is endeavoring to appeal to the spiritual discrimination of his hearers. He wants them to compare his position with that of Job, and he intends that they shall sense what seems to him the great superiority of his viewpoint.

4. Choose. This verse is an appeal on the part of Elihu to discover the real truth from among the conflicting opinions and sentiments that have been advanced.

5. Job hath said. Verses 5–9 review Job’s charges against God. Elihu states that Job charged God with afflicting him, although he was righteous. This was, in truth, the basis of Job’s problem. He could not harmonize his misfortunes with his sense of having lived righteously.

6. Should I lie? In this verse Elihu continues to quote Job as saying, “In spite of my righteous life, I am held to be a liar when I defend myself. I suffer punishment as an evildoer, though I am free from transgression.”

Wound. Literally, “arrow.” Metaphorical for the wound inflicted by God’s arrow. God has inflicted a mortal wound, yet Job is not aware of any transgression on his part.

7. What man? Elihu finds it hard to command words to express his utter detestation of Job’s impiety. In Elihu’s estimation, Job indulged in irreverence and reproach as freely as a man drinks water (see ch. 15:16).

8. With wicked men. This verse continues Elihu’s expression of horror at Job’s irreverence and reflects the attitude of Elihu rather than the actions of Job. Elihu’s philosophy of divine discipline indicated that Job must be a sinner. In this respect his ideas did not differ from those of the three friends. According to his interpretation, whether the misfortunes of Job were discipline or punishment, Job must have done something to deserve them.

9. He hath said. See ch. 9:22. Elihu’s horror at Job reaches its height in this verse. It is utterly inconceivable to Elihu that a man should feel that divine favor would not automatically follow faithful service. Actually, this quotation does not accurately state Job’s position. Job never did go so far as to state that there was no reward for right doing. He did maintain that righteous men are not always blessed, and wicked men do not

always receive immediate retribution. But Elihu's generalization, like many such statements, does violence to the real attitude of Job (see chs. 17:9; 21:9; 28:28).

10. *Hearken unto me.* Elihu has stated what he conceives to be Job's position. Now he challenges the attention of his listeners and solemnly declares that God is righteous. Elihu's statement concerning God is true, but the making of such a statement does not solve the problem at hand. Instead of meeting the facts of the case, and endeavoring to reconcile the events with God's justice, Elihu resolves the whole problem into a matter of divine sovereignty, which contributes little to the real solution of the issue.

11. *According to his ways.* This statement is true (see Rom. 2:6–10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12). It applies to man's whole conduct and to God's entire treatment of him. It may not seem true when life is surveyed in part rather than as a whole. For this reason, conclusions regarding a man's character cannot be drawn from a survey of his misfortunes.

12. *God will not do wickedly.* See v. 10.

13. *Given him a charge.* The question is asked to emphasize the fact that no one gave God His power and authority. He is the Creator, and the source of power.

14. *Gather unto himself.* Recall the breath of life He gave to the human race at creation (see Gen. 2:7).

15. *All flesh.* Elihu sets forth God's sovereign power. If God should so will, He could destroy man in a moment. No one can deny God the right to do so. Man has no claim on life. Being such a sovereign, God reserves the right to afflict His creatures if He sees best.

16. *Hear this.* Verses 1–15 were spoken to the bystanders (v. 2). Now Job is directly addressed.

17. *Hateth right.* Elihu seems to refer to the government of the universe. God is the supreme ruler, and it is inconceivable that He should hate right and love wrong.

18. *To a king.* Elihu draws an illustration from earthly royalty. Their subjects show them respect, and do not call them "wicked" (Heb. *beliyya'al*, frequently translated "Belial," meaning, literally, "a worthless fellow") or "ungodly."

19. *How much less?* If respect is due kings and princes, how much more to Him who created kings and princes?

Accepteth not. To accept the person of anyone is to treat him with special favor on account of his rank, wealth, or other considerations (see Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19; 2 Chron. 19:7; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; James 2:1, 9).

20. *Troubled at midnight.* This text points to the imminence of catastrophe. Disease, earthquake, flood, violence, fire, accident, all these killers lurk nearby. They strike when least expected—"at midnight"—and take their toll among both rich and poor.

Without hand. Literally, "not with hand," that is, not with human hands (see Dan. 8:25).

21. *His goings.* Elihu adopts a new argument. He appeals to the omniscience of God as a guarantee that He will act justly. God knows each man's ability, disposition, circumstances, and temptations. He will not make the mistake of placing undue affliction upon man.

22. *Darkness.* God's omniscience is not only a protection to the righteous; it is a source of terror to the wicked (see Ps. 139:11; Heb. 4:13).

23. *Lay upon.* This text is variously rendered. The obvious meaning of the KJV is that God will not impose upon a man more than his guilt deserves. Another possible

rendering is, "For he needs not long to regard a man in order to bring him into judgment before God." God can see man's character at a glance. Another suggested rendering is, "He needeth not to attend long to a man to bring him into judgment before God." Of necessity, human tribunals must make long and patient investigation, and then they frequently err. God knows no such necessity. Another interpretation, "For he has not appointed a time for any man to go before God in judgment" (RSV), supplies the word *mo'ed*, "time," which is, however, not necessary, since the Hebrew as it stands makes sense.

24. Without number. Or, "without searching out." There is no need for God to make a protracted search of the lives of the wicked. He sees them at once, knows all their conduct, and may proceed against them without delay (see Ps. 75:7; Dan. 2:21).

26. Open sight. God punishes the wicked openly, in the sight of their fellow men.

28. Cry of the poor. Elihu views wicked men as oppressors. Job and his friends have exchanged charges and denials concerning this point (see chs. 22:5–10; 29:12).

29. Can make trouble. Elihu stresses God's omnipotence. None can withstand God, neither man nor nation. Whether He blesses or curses, His actions are effective and incontrovertible (see Ps. 104:29; Rom. 8:31–34).

31. It is meet. This verse introduces the development of a new idea. The purpose seems to be to inspire an attitude of humility on the part of Job. The ideal reaction to suffering, as conceived by Elihu, is summarized in the four statements of the afflicted person (vs. 31, 32). Elihu wishes Job to make such statements as these rather than to defend himself and insist on his own integrity. The sentiments suggested by Elihu are noble ones, and in accord with his conception of suffering as a discipline. He does not understand, however, the real reason for Job's suffering.

33. According to thy mind. The following has been suggested as the meaning of the passage: "Should God be expected to recompense according to your wishes? Will God do what you think is right? This is a question that concerns you, not me; however, you must make your decision and express your views." The purpose of the verse seems to be an appeal to Job to make a decision. Judging by the previous statements of Elihu, the decision he is urging is that Job confess his sins, acknowledge that God is justified in His judgments, and accept his suffering as discipline. Thus far Job has refused to compromise his consciousness of integrity by such a confession.

34. Men of understanding. This verse seems to be an introduction to a quotation in v. 35. The text may be translated, "Men of understanding will say to me, yea, every wise man that heareth me will say."

35. Without knowledge. Elihu is trying to humiliate Job by reminding him how wise men look at him. To be poorly thought of by men of distinction is distressing in the extreme.

36. Because of his answers. On the basis of two Hebrew manuscripts this line may be translated, "Because of answers like [those of] wicked men." Elihu believes that Job deserves more affliction to purge him of what he, Elihu, considers his wicked ideas. The statement is harsh, and fits well into the pattern of expressions by the three friends.

37. Clappeth his hands. A mark of indignation or derision or mocking (see Num. 24:10; Job 27:23).

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CHAPTER 35

1 *Comparison is not to be made with God, because our good or evil cannot extend unto him. 9 Many cry in their afflictions, but are not heard for want of faith.*

1. **Elihu spake.** See on ch. 32:2.

2. **More than God's.** Job had made no such claims. He had questioned God's justice (chs. 9:22–24; 10:3; 12:6), but Elihu's accusation, as here rendered, contains an influence that goes beyond anything Job had intended in his speeches.

3. **What advantage?** Elihu is challenging Job's right to take the position that a righteous man may suffer the same as a sinner. Such a viewpoint is as offensive to him as to the three friends. However, he draws unwarranted inferences from Job's statements. Job did not maintain that the righteous have no ultimate advantage over the sinner. What he did insist was that the dealings of Providence in this world were not always in accordance with the character of men.

4. **I will answer.** Elihu's answer expands the argument of Eliphaz in ch. 22:2, 3.

Companions. Heb. *re'im*, translated "friends" in chs. 2:11; 19:21; 42:7. The three friends of Job are pointed out.

5. **Look unto the heavens.** The object of Elihu's statement is to show that God is so great that He cannot be affected by human conduct. The greatness of God is illustrated by the loftiness and grandeur of the heavens and the clouds.

6. **Unto him.** The argument is that the God who created the heavens is not influenced or in any way coerced by man's sin. His power is not diminished. He is not injured, nor is His dignity impaired.

7. **What gives thou him?** Conversely, Elihu maintains, man's righteousness cannot benefit God, nor does it place God under obligation to man.

8. **May hurt a man.** According to Elihu's reasoning the results of iniquity or righteousness are felt, not by God, but by man. God is so apart from the effects of either sin or righteousness that there is no reason for Him to swerve from strict justice. It would then follow that where there ought to be reward there will be, and where there ought to be punishment, there will be. Consequently, there is an advantage in being righteous. God is too exalted to modify the workings of cause and effect which, in Elihu's estimation, demand reward for the righteous and punishment for the evildoer. In other words, a man's wickedness or righteousness affects him alone, not God. Elihu's philosophy in this regard fails to consider the close tie between God and His creatures. Elihu sees God's transcendence, but he fails to see His nearness to His creatures. The gospel teaches a loving God who is affected by what His creatures do, and who deals with them on a personal basis (see Heb. 4:15).

9. **Multitude of oppression.** Elihu is confronted with the stubborn fact of oppression. He could not deny that multitudes were crying out because of the treatment they were receiving from those stronger than they. How could he fit this fact into his philosophy? Why were these oppressed people not delivered?

10. **None saith.** Elihu's contention is that the oppressed continue to suffer because they complain of their ills, but fail to call upon God with the proper spirit. If they would thus approach God, He would give them a "song in the night," or happiness in the hour of darkness and distress (see Ps. 30:5; 77:6; 90:14; 143:8). The weakness of this contention is that it presupposes that those who continue to suffer do not call upon God aright.

11. *More than the beasts.* Beasts and fowls cry instinctively under pain and affliction, but they know not how to appeal to their Creator. God has taught man to do more than complain—he is to carry his grief to God in a spirit of faith, piety, humility, and resignation. According to Elihu, if God does not answer such an appeal, the proper spirit must be lacking.

12. *They cry.* Elihu obviously has his eye on Job. God does answer a sincere cry. This is true, but does it follow that all sincere cries are immediately answered, or in the way we desire? This is an oversimplification of the problem of suffering. It shows how an apparently logical position can be extremely misleading.

Answer. Elihu sets forth that God does not answer evil men because they ask proudly, not humbly. They claim relief from suffering as a right. They approach God from selfish motives.

14. *Although.* This clause should probably be translated, “How much less when thou sayest thou canst not see him.” That is, if God will not hear an empty cry, how much less will He hear the cry of one who complains that he cannot see God. Elihu apparently refers to statements of discouragement made by Job, such as in chs. 9:11; 13:24; 23:3, 8, 9; 30:20; 33:10.

15. *Now, because.* The first part of this verse may be translated literally, “And now, because he visited not his [Job’s] anger.” The thought may be that God has not visited fresh affliction because of Job’s arrogant words. Job was thus emboldened to continue his complaints.

16. *In vain.* Elihu concludes that Job has no just cause for complaint. He implies that Job has not suffered as much as he deserves—that in fact he does not know what he is talking about. Surely no comfort could possibly come to Job from a speech like this!

CHAPTER 36

¹ *Elihu sheweth how God is just in his ways. 16 How Job’s sins hinder God’s blessings. 24 God’s works are to be magnified.*

1. *Elihu also proceeded.* Chapters 36 and 37 form a single discourse. They constitute a final appeal to Job to be resigned and patient before God.

2. *On God’s behalf.* His alleged reason for continuing his speech is that there is more that he feels constrained to say in vindication of God. Elihu feels that he is God’s defender in the case of God *versus* Job.

3. *From afar.* Elihu does not mean to repeat outworn arguments. He wants to bring his knowledge from the realm of things that have escaped their attention. Out of the wide realm of history and nature, Elihu plans to draw arguments to vindicate God’s righteousness (see ch. 8:8).

4. *Is with thee.* These words sound arrogant, but perhaps Elihu does not mean them in that way. Job had charged his friends with using unsound arguments in their defense of God (see ch. 13:7, 8). Elihu here promises that his words will be true. He will base his statements on what he regards as perfect knowledge rather than on prejudice.

5. *Is mighty.* This verse introduces the theme of Elihu’s speech, the might and the understanding of God.

6. *He preserveth not.* Elihu maintains substantially the same philosophy as Job’s three friends. He believes that God’s dealings with man in this life are determined by man’s character. Job had observed that wicked men seem to be protected against misfortune (ch. 21:7).

7. Withdraweth not. Elihu takes the position that, although the righteous are afflicted, they are not forsaken. God keeps His eye upon them, whether they be on thrones or in dungeons (v. 8). Job had intimated that God had forsaken him (ch. 29:2). This, Elihu denies (see Ps. 34:15). He believes firmly in the exaltation of the righteous.

8. Bound in fetters. See Gen. 39:20; Jer. 40:1; Dan. 3:21; Matt. 14:3; Acts 12:1–6; 16:24; 24:27.

9. He sheweth. Elihu asserts that affliction overtakes the righteous for the purpose of revealing to them the weaknesses in their character, and the nature of their transgressions.

10. Openeth. Elihu claims that God makes men willing to learn and listen by permitting afflictions to overtake them. Thus, he says, it has been with Job.

Commandeth. God's afflictions are commands to go and sin no more. Elihu is here developing his theory of suffering as disciplinary rather than penal. Instead of looking upon Job, as his other friends had—as a sinner upon whom God was taking vengeance—he regards him as a person who is being chastened in love for his faults.

11. If they obey. Elihu holds out the promise that prosperity and pleasure will follow in this life if those who are chastened respond in the right way (see Job 33:23–28; Jer. 7:23; 26:13). The return of Job's prosperity, he asserts, will be dependent on his repentance of his sins and his obedience to God. Job is under discipline. But the righteous are to expect tribulation and persecution (see John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 12:1–11; 1 Peter 4:12, 13).

12. Obey not. This verse presents the alternative to v. 11. Disobey and die, is the idea. There are elements of truth in Elihu's viewpoint.

14. They die in youth. Elihu sees an early end for the wicked. Old age was highly respected among the ancients, and to die in youth was considered a great tragedy.

Unclean. Heb. *qedeshim*, “temple-prostitutes.” The same Hebrew word occurs in Deut. 23:18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7. The idea seems to be that the godless would share the fate of the most abandoned and vile of the race. Their profession of religion would be no protection to them against their punishment.

15. In his affliction. Or, “by his affliction.” The thought seems to be that God uses affliction as a means of deliverance for the righteous (see Ps. 119:67, 71).

Openeth their ears. Ears that were deaf to the sound of God's voice become sensitive as a result of adversity.

16. Removed. Elihu is saying to Job that he too would have been delivered and restored to his prosperity if he had accepted his afflictions in a proper spirit and learned the lessons they were intended to teach him.

17. Take hold on thee. According to Elihu, Job has not responded as he should to God's discipline; therefore the judgments of God, reserved for the wicked, have come upon him.

18. There is wrath. Elihu seems to be saying, “Job, because you are angry, beware lest you suffer God's judgment for your anger. In such case, there would be no way of deliverance for you.”

19. Riches. The Hebrew word *shua'* is taken by some to refer to riches, as here; by others, to a cry for help. Both ideas are possible.

20. Desire not. An allusion to Job's repeated desire to be cut off at once and laid in the grave (see chs. 6:9; 7:15; 14:13). Elihu holds that this desire is wrong.

21. Regard not iniquity. Elihu accuses Job of choosing to give vent to complaint rather than bearing his trials with resignation.

22. God exalteth. This has been called the keynote of Elihu's whole discourse. He is endeavoring to build up the idea of God as a great teacher (see chs. 33:14, 16; 35:11; 36:10). His providences are supposed to be considered as lessons that, if taken to heart, will result in prosperity, but if rejected will result in adversity.

23. Who hath enjoined? While God is the all-perfect teacher, there are some who would seek to instruct Him, to dictate the course He ought to pursue, and to improve and amend His universe. Elihu infers that something of this spirit has appeared in Job's remonstrances (see chs. 9:22–24; 10:3; 12:20–25; 16:11–17). Job came perilously near to accusing God of injustice. He had given excuse for Elihu to make such accusations.

24. Magnify his work. Rather than accuse God, Job should praise Him, even as others who sing His praises.

26. God is great. The greatness of God and the frailty of man are contrasted in this verse.

27. Pour down rain. Elihu appeals to nature in vindication of the greatness of God. He describes the phenomena of evaporation and distillation that make rain possible.

29. Noise. Elihu is evidently introducing a description of a thunderstorm.

30. Light. Here probably a reference to lightning.

31. By them. Probably the antecedent is "clouds." By His clouds God is said to work two opposite effects. On the one hand, He executes judgments upon the peoples, destroying their crops, causing widespread ruin, smiting and slaying with lightning. On the other hand, He gives food in abundance, making vegetation possible by the showers of rain that the clouds supply.

32. Commandeth it. The figure of speech seems to be that God takes the lightning in His hands and directs it as He pleases. The expression, "not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt," is the translation of the Hebrew preposition *be*, "by" or "with," and a single word *maphgia*, "an assailant." Some change the Masoretic pointing to read *miphga*, "a mark."

33. The noise. The crash of thunder.

The cattle also. A literal translation of the Masoretic text is, "the cattle also concerning that which goeth up [or him that goeth up]." The KJV is a faithful rendering of the Hebrew as here found, interpreting "that which goeth up" to be vapor, evidently from the context. But the meaning is obscure. Some have, by a change of the Masoretic pointings, obtained very different readings, for example, "who is jealous with anger against iniquity" (RSV). Such variant readings are, of course, purely conjectural.

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CHAPTER 37

1 *God is to be feared because of his great works. 15 His wisdom is unsearchable in them.*

1. At this also. There is no natural division between chs. 36 and 37. Elihu continues the figure of a thunderstorm as a means of describing God's power. He says that his heart trembles as he hears the thunder and sees the lightning flash across the sky.

2. Noise of his voice. Elihu is using a figure of speech. He does not mean that the thunder is actually God's voice (see Ps. 77:18; 104:7).

5. Great things. This verse ends the parable of the thunderstorm. In this piece of vivid description Elihu is trying to overwhelm Job with a sense of the majesty and the might of God.

7. He sealeth up. This may refer to the cessation of out-of-door labor in the wintertime, due to snow, ice, and heavy rains. This pause in man's activity gives occasion for reflection and thus encourages a clearer knowledge of God.

8. Go into dens. This verse tends to substantiate the interpretation of v. 7. It is in the wintertime that the beasts hibernate. This, likewise, is to Elihu a proof of the wisdom of God. He provided that the animals might be protected from the cold, and be able to subsist on small quantities of food during the season when food would be scarce.

9. Out of the south. Literally, "out of the chamber," that is, the storehouse where God is pictured as keeping His tempests (see Job 38:22; Ps. 135:7).

Out of the north. Literally, "out of the scatterers." These seem to be the violent winds that drive away the clouds and bring a clear, frosty atmosphere.

Elihu is emphasizing that all these things are under the control of God, and that these natural phenomena prove His greatness.

10. Is straitened. Literally, "in constraint," that is, frozen solid (see Ps. 147:16–18).

11. He wearieth. Literally, "he burdeneth." That is, He burdens the cloud with moisture. Rain is one of the chief concerns in these dry countries. It is God who gives the moisture-laden clouds that provide water for the thirsty land.

His bright cloud. Literally, "the cloud of his light." As if, perhaps, lightning were stored up in a cloud. Or the expression may mean, "the clouds on which His sunlight rests."

12. It. The "cloud" is the most obvious antecedent.

Counsels. Heb. *tachbuloth*, "guidance," "direction." God guides the clouds and the lightnings, turning them round and round, directing them according to His will.

15. When God disposed. Elihu asks Job if he knows how God gives His orders and arranges for the course and sequence of natural events.

16. Balancings. The phenomenon of the clouds poised in the sky, heavy with rain yet without support, provoked Elihu's wonder (see ch. 26:8).

Knowledge. Natural phenomena indicate the limitless knowledge of God. The inference is that Job should not be critical of a God who reveals His omniscience by such wonderful works.

19. Teach us. This sounds like irony. Elihu is saying to Job, If you are so wise, teach us how to approach such a great God, for we are in darkness.

20. If a man speak. Job had expressed the wish that God would hear him and answer him. Elihu, intending to rebuke this presumption, yet shrinking from doing so directly, puts himself in Job's place and asks, Would it be fitting that I should demand to speak with God? If not, it cannot be fitting that Job should do so.

21. Bright light. Probably the sun. Men cannot look at the dazzling sun. How much less would they be able to face God.

22. Fair weather. Heb. *zahab*, literally, "gold."

24. Fear him. Elihu ends his speech with a parting thrust at Job to the effect that God does not respect conceited men.

Wise of heart. That is, conceited. To be sure, what Elihu states as a principle is true. It is folly for a man to think of matching his puny wisdom with that of God. Elihu's error

is in attempting to apply the principle to Job. The trouble with Elihu and the other protagonists was that they presumed to pass judgment on Job.

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5–24MH 434

14–16ML 112

16 CG 46; Ed 15, 21; MM 7; PP 50

CHAPTER 38

1 *God challengeth Job to answer. 4 God, by his mighty works, convinceth Job of ignorance, 31 and of imbecility.*

1. The Lord. God's answer to Job occupies four chapters (38–41), broken in the middle by a short confession on Job's part (ch. 40:3–5). Chapters 38 and 39 are closely connected, and constitute an appeal to Job, in view of his ignorance of God's natural creation. God is endeavoring to broaden Job's concept of the Deity. These two chapters may be subdivided as follows:

The creation of the world (ch. 38:4–7); the sea (vs. 8–11); the dawn (vs. 12–15); other earthly phenomena such as the secrets of the sea, light and darkness, snow, hail, floods, rain, lightning, thunder, ice, dew, frost (vs. 16–30); the stars and the clouds (vs. 31–38); the animal world (ch. 38:39 to 39:30).

Answered Job. God does not vindicate Job at once. His divine purpose is not to settle an argument, but to reveal Himself. Neither does He explain to Job the reason for his suffering. A clear understanding of God is superior in importance to an unfolding of all the reasons for divine providence. God does not explain why the wicked prosper or why the righteous suffer. He says nothing about the future world, or future compensation for present inequalities. God simply reveals Himself—His goodness, His power, His wisdom—and He intends that this revelation shall answer Job's problems.

God's reply acquaints Job not merely with facts but with God. This approach was so effective that Job's response was, "Now mine eye seeth thee" (ch. 42:5). When Job saw God, his perplexities disappeared. Only God could provide this kind of solution for his problems. There is a profundity about God's way of answering Job's questions that challenges the deepest thought.

2. Who is this? It is not clear whether God is referring to Job or to Elihu. In favor of interpreting the statement as referring to Elihu are the following: (1) It seems inconsistent for God to say in this instance that Job had darkened counsel by "words without knowledge" and then in ch. 42:7 for Him to say that the friends had not spoken right "as my servant Job hath." (2) Elihu spoke immediately before God appeared, and it would not be inconsistent that God should wave aside his arguments, along with those of the other friends, before addressing Job. In favor of considering the statement as referring to Job are the following: (1) The speech is directed to Job (see chs. 38:1; 40:1, 6; 42:7). (2) Job appears to apply the comment to himself (ch. 42:3).

3. Gird up. God is now addressing Job. Job wanted to question God, but God takes the initiative and announces to him that he is about to be questioned (see chs. 9:32–35; 13:3, 18–22; 23:4–7; 31:35). To "gird up the loins" is a phrase that alludes to the ancient mode of dress. The loose, flowing robe that was commonly worn was fastened with a girdle when men ran or labored or engaged in conflict. The idea here is, "make thyself as strong and vigorous as possible. Be prepared to put forth the highest effort."

4. Foundations. The figure of the earth having foundations is frequently employed (see Ps. 102:25; 104:5; Prov. 8:29; Isa. 48:13; 51:13, 16; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 1:10).

Declare. These expressions have the effect of showing Job how limited his knowledge really was.

5. If thou knowest. Or, “for thou knowest.” The purpose of the statement is obviously to help Job to readjust his thinking.

Stretched the line. A figure taken from the erection of a building. A Divine Architect laid out the plan of the earth.

6. Fastened. Literally, “sunk.” A figure referring to the sinking, or settling down, of a foundation stone until it becomes solid. God asks Job upon what the world rests. The figure must not be pressed into literality.

7. Morning stars. Here apparently synonymous with “sons of God.” For the identity of the “sons of God” see on ch. 1:6.

Shouted for joy. Three times the angels are said to “shout for joy,” at creation, redemption, and the re-creation of the earth (see 6T 456: PP 65; 8T 42).

8 Sea. From the earth God transfers Job’s attention to the sea as the second great wonder of creation (see Gen. 1:9, 10; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 104:24, 25).

Issued out. God compares the creation of the sea to the birth of an infant. The verse calls attention to two evidences of God’s power—first, the creation of the sea, and second, the limiting of the sea within its borders.

9. Cloud. The infant sea, just born, is represented as clothed with a cloud and swaddled in thick darkness.

10. Brake up. The LXX here reads, “I set bounds to it.”

11. Hitherto. The beautiful poetic structure of these lines possesses a special appeal for those who love the sea.

12. Morning. From the sea, God turns to the sunrise. The daybreak is a constantly recurring miracle, and Job is asked whether he exercises any control over it.

Dayspring. That is, “dawn.”

13. Shaken out of it. The idea seems to be that the dawn seizes hold of the earth, and shakes the wicked out of it. This vivid figure refers to the fact that the wicked hate light (see ch. 24:16, 17). When sunrise comes, they disappear.

14. Turned. Or, “transforms itself.”

As clay. As the seal changes the clay from a dull, shapeless lump to a figured surface, so the coming of the dawn changes the earth from an indistinct mass to an object having form and color.

As a garment. Sunrise causes the earth to take on form and color, like the richly embroidered pattern on a garment. The hills, trees, flowers, houses, and fields become prominent and beautiful, whereas during the night the earth seemed desolate and uninteresting.

15. Their light is withholden. Daylight brings no joy to the wicked. Darkness within causes them to seek escape from light without. Detection and punishment fall upon them when daylight breaks.

High arm. The arm raised to commit some violent act is “broken” by the coming of light. Lawless activity is checked.

16. Springs of the sea. Job is asked whether he has been where the sea has its source.

Depth. The unexplored caverns at the bottom of the sea are unknown and unexplored by Job.

17. Gates of death. See Ps. 107:18; cf. Isa. 38:10; Rev. 20:14.

18. Breadth of the earth. Job's world was small. He had probably traveled within the radius of only a few miles. When God asked him whether he comprehended the expanse of the earth, the thought must have been overwhelming to him.

19. Where light dwelleth. Job is challenged to explain the phenomena of light and darkness.

20. To the house thereof. Light and darkness are personified and conceived of as residing in dwellings. When night falls light returns to its abode, and darkness walks forth. In the morning, darkness goes to its abode and light walks forth.

21. Knowest thou? The LXX connects this verse with the preceding thus: "If thou couldest bring me to their utmost boundaries, and if also thou knowest their paths; I know then that thou wert born at that time, and the number of thy years is great." The Hebrew of v. 21 is ambiguous and may be translated either as a question or as an affirmative statement as follows: "Thou knowest, because thou wast born then; and the number of thy days is great." Since the affirmative statement represents such an extreme form of irony, it is probably better to retain the interrogative form or adopt the idea suggested by the LXX. Compare the ironical question of Eliphaz (ch. 15:7).

22. Snow. Such natural phenomena as snow and hail were mysteries to man for many ages, but they were not mysteries to God.

23. Reserved. Hail is reckoned throughout the Scriptures as an instrument of divine judgment (see Ex. 9:18–29; Joshua 10:11; Ps. 18:12, 13; 78:47, 48; 105:32; Isa. 30:30; Eze. 13:11, 13; Rev. 11:19; 16:21).

24. By what way? Many of God's questions go back to the basic question of origins. Job's philosophic problem was that he did not understand the source of his trouble.

25. Divided a watercourse. Or, "cleft a channel." The channels that carried off the overflow from violent rains had not been plowed by man and his beasts of burden.

Way for the lightning. No man can chart the course of a thunderbolt.

26. Where no man is. God's providence does not stop with supplying the wants of men, but has tender regard for animal life as well.

31. Canst thou? God turns the attention of Job from the created wonders of earth to the splendors of the heavens. Pointing to several brilliant, familiar constellations, God inquires whether Job thinks himself able to guide them in their courses across the sky.

Pleiades. Heb. *kimah*, perhaps a designation for the Pleiades, from the Arabic root *kum*, meaning "group," or "herd." In Amos 5:8 *kimah* is translated "seven stars" and is again mentioned together with Orion, an adjacent constellation in the winter sky. From the most ancient times men have regarded the Pleiades, a brilliant star cluster in the constellation Taurus (the Bull), the most beautiful and fascinating display in the sky. Tennyson described them as a swarm of fireflies caught in a silver braid. Even through small telescopes the scintillating beauty of this cluster strikes the observer with the same sense of awe and wonder that comes over one who gazes into the vast depths of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River.

The word translated "sweet influences," Heb. *ma'adannoth*, seems to mean "bonds," or "fetters." The RSV translation, "chains," would thus render the thought of the original

more closely. Perhaps *ma'adannoth* refers to the forces of gravity that hold the individual members of the cluster together in their flight through space. It is known that these stars compose a closely associated physical group and pursue parallel courses. Some have suggested that *ma'adannoth* refers to the conspicuous nebulosity in which the Pleiades are immersed. This nebulous material, illuminated by the stars immersed in it as if it were gas in a neon tube, is clearly visible even with a low-powered telescope, and on a photographic plate makes the Pleiades an object of beauty unequalled in the heavens. However, appealing as this explanation is, it should be remembered that Job could not see the nebulosity. It is therefore more probable that God would direct Job's attention to something he could see, and that *ma'adannoth* refers to the "chains" of gravity that hold the members of this exquisite cluster together in their journey through space.

Orion. This identification is considered certain. But what is meant by the "bands," or "cords," of Orion is not clear. Some have suggested that the word translated "bands" designates the three stars popularly known as the "belt" of Orion. Though apparently close together in the sky, these stars are not members of a cluster like the Pleiades. Actually, they are traveling in different directions at great velocity. This suggestion would be in harmony with the obvious contrast of the text between the "binding" of the Pleiades and the "loosing" of Orion.

32. Mazzaroth. Not knowing what the word thus rendered means, the translators simply transliterated it into English. The margin offers the translation "the twelve signs [of the Zodiac]." These 12 "signs," or constellation—Aries (Ram), Taurus (Bull), Gemini (Twins), Cancer (Crab), Leo (Lion), Virgo (Virgin), Libra (Balance), Scorpio (Scorpion), Sagittarius (Archer), Capricornus (Goat), Aquarius (Water Bearer), and Pisces (Fishes)—belt the celestial equator and thus mark the path through which the sun appears to travel in its circuit of the starry heavens during the course of a year. Because *mazzaroth* is from a root meaning "to shine," or "to be bright," Lange translates it, "the bright stars."

Arcturus. Generally thought to refer to the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear, rather than to Arcturus, though neither identification is positive. If Arcturus is here designated, "his sons" would be the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which form part of the neighboring constellation Ursa Major. The word Arcturus is from two Greek words, *arktos*, "bear," and *ouros*, "guard." Being the brightest star in the constellation Bötes, Arcturus is sometimes pictured as a hunter, or "bear driver," who, with his hunting dogs (the nearby constellation Canes Venatici) on leash, appears to be chasing the Great Bear around and around the northern heavens. Those who favor the rendering "Arcturus" point to the remarkably great "proper motion" of this star, that is, to its apparent motion in relation to neighboring stars, as making it appropriate to the words of Job 38:32. If, on the other hand, reference is to the constellation Ursa Major, "his sons" would be the various stars of that group. It has been pointed out that the stars forming the Big Dipper, while appearing relatively close together in the sky, are actually not members of a true cluster, but are rushing apart in different directions at tremendous speeds.

36. Inward parts. This text is perfectly plain as it reads, but the difficulty of accounting for a sudden transition from clouds and celestial phenomena in vs. 34, 35 to man and then back to clouds in v. 37 has led many to attempt to discover other meanings

for the Hebrew words translated “inward parts” and “heart.” The RSV renders them “clouds” and “mists.” These definitions are only conjectural.

37. Clouds. The clouds, like the sands of the seashore, are beyond statistical computation.

Stay the bottles. Literally, “cause the bottles to lie,” that is, tip them so that the contents run out.

38. Groweth into hardness. This verse completes the thought of the previous figure. When the ground is hard and baked, who can persuade the clouds to pour water upon it?

39. Lion. The picture changes again. Logically, ch. 39, which is a discussion of the animal kingdom, should begin at this point. God is asking Job whether he could succeed were he given the responsibility of feeding a family of lions. Divinely implanted instincts lead the animals to do what it would be difficult or impossible for man to do.

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- 1 PK 164
- 2 MH 442; 1T 330
- 3 3T 509
- 4–27Ed 159
- 4 EW 217; GC 455
- 6, 7 GC 455; ML 140
- 7 DA 281, 769; Ed 22, 161; EW 217; FE 375; GC 511; MB 78; ML 348; MM 215; PK 732; PP 47, 65; TM 136; 6T 349, 456; 8T 42, 197
- 11 AA 572; ML 336; MM 143; PP 97, 694; SL 53, 55; 4T 287
- 22, 23 PP 509
- 31 EW 41
- 31, 32 Ed 160; GW 14
- 41 LS 230
- 6

CHAPTER 39

1 *Of the wild goats and hinds.* 5 *Of the wild ass.* 9 *The unicorn.* 13 *The peacock, stork, and ostrich.* 19 *The horse.* 26 *The hawk.* 27 *The eagle.*

1. Knowest thou? God continues to present to Job the divine description of the wonders of the animal creation that begins in ch. 38:39. Such expressions as “knowest thou” emphasize Job’s ignorance in contrast with God’s wisdom. Man is not even able to understand those things that God is capable of creating.

Wild goats. These were very wild animals, and inhabited remote, rocky regions. Their nature made it impossible for men to become acquainted with their habits. Yet God, as the Creator, knew every detail regarding them.

Hinds. Compare Ps. 29:9. The term may refer either to the female of the wild goat species, the application thus making the second line of the text a repetition of the first, or to the deer.

2. Number the months. The gestation period of animals like the wild goat was probably not known to man, since such animals could neither be domesticated nor

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 29:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

carefully observed. Every birth, even though it be of a wild animal, is an evidence of the life-giving power of the Creator.

4. Young ones. The self-reliance of the young of wild animals is remarkable. “In good liking” means healthy and strong (see Dan. 1:10).

Grow up with corn. In the open fields these young animals grow up and soon leave their mothers. These remarkable phenomena are in no way dependent on the wisdom or planning of man. Instead, they reveal the amazing planning of an intelligent and loving God.

5. Wild ass. See on ch. 11:12. This animal is said to be different in spirit, energy, agility, and appearance from the domestic animal of that name. In his wildness he is entirely outside the orbit of man’s influence. Anyone who considers the habits of such a creature cannot but wonder at the creative knowledge responsible for such beauty, agility, and self-reliance. This seems to be the lesson that God is trying to teach Job.

6. Barren land. Heb. *melechah*, literally, “saltiness,” “barrenness,” here referring to the salt plains. *Melechah* is translated “salt land” in Jer. 17:6. God created the wild ass so that it might dwell comfortably in arid, treeless wastes where man and his domesticated animals could scarcely survive.

7. Crying of the driver. The domesticated ass is directed by man, but the commands of the driver mean nothing to the wild ass, the child of the treeless plains. He will not be curbed in his limitless freedom.

8. His pasture. The rocky ranges are the wild ass’s source of food. He survives where many another animal would starve. Whence does this beast receive his unusual abilities? Not from man, but from God.

9. Unicorn. Heb. *rem*, elsewhere *re’em*, occurring 9 times in the OT. From the various descriptions of this animal it is thought to designate the wild ox (see Num. 23:22; 24:8; Deut. 33:17; Ps. 22:21; 29:6; 92:10). The wild bull often found on Assyrian monuments was known as *rīmu*. The animal was probably similar to those which Caesar found in Gaul and which he described as follows: “These uri are scarcely less than elephants in size, but in their nature, color and form are bulls. Great is their strength and great their speed. Nor do they spare man nor beast, when once they have caught sight of him. ... Even when they are young, they cannot be habituated to man and made tractable. The size and shape of their horns are very different from those of our oxen” (*De bello Gallico* vi. 28). It is commonly believed that the contrast between the wild ox and the tame ox in vs. 9–12 is comparable to the contrast between the wild ass and the tame ass in vs. 5–8.

Serve thee. The tame ox would pull the plow, but the wild ox could not be used for such purposes.

By thy crib. The wild ox could not be kept in a domestic environment. His nature was different. Who endowed him with such different characteristics, even though outwardly he might resemble his tame brother? The answer is—God.

11. Wilt thou trust him? The wild ox cannot be depended on. His strength cannot be harnessed for man’s purposes. The variance in nature is divinely implanted, and resists all efforts toward change.

12. *Bring home thy seed.* The dependability of the tame ox is proverbial. Job knows well that the wild ox is entirely dissimilar in this respect. Can Job explain the reasons for the difference? Such knowledge is beyond his grasp.

13. *Peacocks.* The Hebrew of this verse is difficult to translate. It is generally thought that the ostrich is referred to rather than the peacock. The ostrich was common in Job's country.

From the alternative reading given in the margin of the second clause, "the feathers of the stork and ostrich," some have concluded that God is contrasting the stork and the ostrich, as He contrasted the tame and wild ass and the tame and wild ox. The stork is a bird that can fly easily and gracefully. The ostrich has large wings that flap while the bird runs, but these wings will scarcely lift the heavy creature off the ground. There is also a marked difference in the habits of the two birds. The stork is kind to its young, but the ostrich seems to have little regard for its young. This characteristic is developed in subsequent verses of the chapter. The idea seems to be that God, in His providence, endowed the various creatures with differing characteristics. These variations cannot be explained or controlled by man.

Other attempts to translate the extremely obscure second line are, "but are they the pinions and plumage of love?" (RSV), and "but are her pinions and feathers kindly?" (RV).

14. *Leaveth her eggs.* Ostriches lay their eggs in the sand to be warmed by the sun. The females of a group use one nest, one staying with the eggs part of the day while the others wander in search of food. The male incubates the eggs at night.

15. *Forgetteth.* The female roams unconcerned about her eggs. Later all the chicks run with the whole group. This may account for her indifference to her young.

16. *Hardened.* The ostrich seems to lack sufficient intelligence to show concern about her offspring (see Lam. 4:3).

In vain. Even though her eggs are broken, and she has no little ones, she remains unconcerned.

17. *Deprived her.* In making this creature, God apparently saw fit to endow the ostrich with limited intelligence. He does not give His reasons for so doing, and such reasons man cannot fathom. There is an Arab proverb, "As stupid as an ostrich."

God speaks of Himself here in the third person perhaps for emphasis.

18. *Scorneth the horse.* Despite her stupidity and her lack of concern for her young, the ostrich has been endowed by God with a remarkable ability for speedy travel. It is well known that the bird can outrun the fastest horse.

19. *Horse.* Verses 19–25 describe the war horse. The following quotation from Virgil resembles this vivid picture:

"But, at the clash of arms, his ear afar
Drinks the deep sound and vibrates to the war;
Flames from each nostril roll in gathered stream,
His quivering limbs with restless motion gleam;
O'er his right shoulder, floating full and fair,
Sweeps his thick mane and spreads his pomp of hair;
Swift works his double spine, and earth around
Rings to his solid hoof that wears the ground."

Thunder. Heb. *ra'mah*, the meaning of which is uncertain. Some have taken the word to designate the mane of the horse. *Ra'mah* is the feminine form of the word translated "thunder" in v. 25, but it is doubtful that the feminine form has the same meaning as the masculine. The picture is that of the excitement and eagerness of the war horse when, with arched neck, he charges into the battle.

21. He paweth. The picture of a horse pawing eagerly to be off to battle.

The armed men. Literally, "equipment," "weapons," "armory."

22. Mocketh at fear. His rider may be frightened, but not he. The sword does not terrorize him.

24. Swalloweth the ground. A vivid way of describing the rapidity with which a trained war horse covers the ground.

25. Ha, ha. Perhaps a description of the horse's snort or neigh; or it may figuratively describe the horse as uttering an expression of satisfaction when he hears the war trumpet.

Thunder. Compare Isa. 5:28–30. Lange has described the Arab horse thus: "Although docile as a lamb and requiring no other guide than the halter, when the Arab mare hears the war-cry of the tribe and sees the quivering spear of her rider, her eyes glitter with fire, her blood-red nostrils open wide, her neck is nobly arched, and her tail and mane are raised and spread out to the wind."

26. Hawk. From the charging war horse, God transfers Job's attention to the migrating hawk. Has Job implanted the instinct that causes the bird to seek warmer climate in the winter? Again he is confronted with an example of God's unfathomable wisdom.

27. On high. The eagle has always been noted for the great heights to which it ascends. Has Job instructed these birds to find high pinnacles for their homes?

28. On the rock. No place is too rugged or inaccessible to be the home of an eagle.

29. From thence. Eagles, noted for their keenness of vision, sense the presence of prey from an incredible distance, and swoop down from their high nests to seize their victim. Who gave them these remarkable instincts, completely beyond anything known to man?

30. There is she. See Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37.

The phenomena mentioned illustrate the power and goodness of God. All that man has discovered about nature since Job's time only tends to substantiate the same power and goodness.

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CHAPTER 40

1 *Job humbleth himself to God.* 6 *God stirreth him up to shew his righteousness, power, and wisdom.* 15 *Of the behemoth.*

1. Answered Job. Verses 1–5 of this chapter mark a brief interlude in God's address to Job. It seems as if God is giving Job an opportunity to make a complete surrender at this point.

2. Contendeth. God's question to Job revolves around four verbs, "contendeth," "instruct," "reproveth," "answer." Job has heard the profound questions of chs. 38 and 39. Now the question comes to him, Can he, the faultfinder, the contender, instruct the

God of all nature? The answer that Job will give is obvious, in view of the revelations of the previous two chapters. Job is pointedly challenged to defend his endeavors to instruct God. Satan predicted that Job would curse God. This he had not done. But he had erred in trying to tell God what to do.

Job had expressed himself as anxious to argue his case with God. He seemed to feel that, somehow, God did not quite understand. Now, after God has given a new revelation of His wisdom, Job is asked whether he still feels himself qualified to be the plaintiff in a case against God.

3. Job answered. Job had anticipated such an opportunity as this—an opportunity to lay his case directly before God. This is his long-awaited occasion. What would he do with it?

4. I am vile. Instead of saying, “I am innocent,” as he had intended to say, he replies, “I am vile.” God’s revelation has changed his entire attitude toward himself and toward God. A similar conviction dawns upon all men who arrive at a proper appreciation of God.

What shall I answer? The Job who was so anxious to present his case to God has no answer.

Mine hand. Compare chs. 21:5; 29:9.

5. I will not answer. This verse is an acknowledgement on Job’s part of the futility of his arguments.

6. Answered the Lord. Apparently Job needs further instruction. From the whirlwind returns the divine voice. If God’s motive had been to abash Job, He would not need to say more. Already Job has admitted his littleness, and has promised to say no more. But God’s primary purpose is not to embarrass Job, but to lead him to a new experience.

7. Gird up. See on ch. 38:3.

8. Disannul my judgment. Will you maintain that I have not been just and fair? Will you condemn My conduct in order to justify yourself? Job had come perilously near doing this very thing.

9. An arm like God. See Deut. 5:15; 7:19; Ps. 89:13; Isa. 51:9. God reminds Job that it is foolish for him to condemn God, because he is so weak in comparison with God. Job cannot act nor speak in a manner comparable to that of God.

10. Majesty. This text names four attributes of God: majesty, excellency, glory, and beauty (see Ps. 93:1; 104:1, 2). Job is challenged to clothe himself with these attributes, for only then would he be on an equality with God so as to be able to reason with Him on comparable terms.

11. Abase him. Job is challenged to see what he can do about transgression and transgressors.

13. Bind their faces. This may refer to an ancient custom regarding the disposal of the dead. It is known that in the preservation of mummies, the entire body was wrapped, including the face.

14. Can save thee. When Job can take to himself the attributes of God, when he can abase the proud and the wicked, when he can reduce to the grave the workers of iniquity, then will God acknowledge that he is able to save himself.

15. Behemoth. This name is a transliteration of the Hebrew. It is the plural form of the common Hebrew word *behemah*, translated “cattle” (Gen. 1:24, 25; etc.), or beast (Gen. 8:20; 36:6; etc.). It seems here to be used as an intensive plural referring to a

mammoth beast. Most authorities think that the term refers to the hippopotamus. However, there are those who refer it to (1) the elephant, (2) some extinct species, (3) an emblematic representation.

With thee. God was the creator of this beast as well as of Job.

Eateth grass. The animal referred to as a *behemoth* was apparently herbivorous.

17. Like a cedar. The slender tail of the elephant does not fit this description. The tail of the hippopotamus is thick, short, and muscular.

Stones. Or, “thighs.”

19. Chief. Heb. *re’shith*. The word may mean first in time or first in rank. The latter presumably applies here.

His sword to approach. This clause may be translated: “He that made him hath furnished him with his sword.” Thus “sword” may be taken to refer to the sharp teeth of the hippopotamus, which are said to be very efficient both for eating and for defense. The KJV translation conveys the idea that only the one who made behemoth can slay him.

20. Mountains. The hills on either side of the river—if the hippopotamus is behemoth (see on v. 15). Otherwise, the picture would be that of a beast roaming over the mountains (see Ps. 104:14).

21. Shady trees. Heb. *še’elim*, believed to be a kind of lotus. Behemoth was apparently an aquatic animal.

22. Willows. This is a further description of aquatic life.

23. Drinketh up a river. The LXX here translates, “If there should be a flood he will not perceive it.” The picture is of a beast so accustomed to water as to be unperturbed by floods or rushing streams. This, of course, suggests the hippopotamus.

Jordan. Here probably used in the sense of any large river.

24. With his eyes. The first clause of the verse may be translated, “He taketh him in his eyes [that is, in his sight].”

CHAPTER 41

Of God’s great power in the leviathan.

1. Leviathan. A transliteration of the Heb. *liwyathan*. *Liwyathan* is also translated “their mourning” (see on ch. 3:8; see also Ps. 74:14; Ps. 104:26; Isa. 27:1). The creature is represented as wild, fierce, and ungovernable, having a mouth of large size and armed with a formidable array of teeth. The body is covered with scales set near together, like a coat of mail. Whether Job is here describing the crocodile, as many commentators think, or some monster now extinct, cannot be established.

With a cord. Wild animals were often led along by a rope attached to their mouths, as Assyrian sculptures reveal. God asks whether the great leviathan can be caught with a fishhook or led along by tying a rope around its jaw. This question, like others that have preceded, accentuates the weakness of man compared with the creative power of God.

2. Hook. Literally, “a rush,” either one used as a cord or a cord spun from rush fiber.

Thorn. This seems to refer to a hook or ring such as was used for keeping fish captive under water or for bringing prisoners of rank before the monarchs who had captured them (see 2 Kings 19:28; 2 Chron. 33:11 [“among the thorns” should probably be rendered “with hooks”]; Amos 4:2).

3. Many supplications. Could anyone imagine the mighty leviathan begging Job for mercy!

4. Make a covenant. Ironically, God asks whether Job can make leviathan his slave (see Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:17).

5. Play with him. Ancient inscriptions reveal that the Egyptians, and other ancient peoples, were fond of pet animals. Dogs, antelopes, leopards, monkeys, and birds of various kinds were all domesticated. A tame crocodile would be a most extraordinary pet! The “maidens” would surely object to such an idea! Sarcasm is used to emphasize the ways in which leviathan was superior to man.

6. Companions. Literally, “partners.” The word may refer to a group of people joined together for any purpose, either friendship or business.

Make a banquet. Heb. *karah*. This word has three basic meanings: “to dig,” “to trade,” “to give a feast.” Here, “to trade” seems to be the most appropriate definition, especially if “companions” indicate a partnership of fishermen.

Among the merchants. The crocodile was never used as an article of trade.

7. Fill his skin. This verse alludes to the thick, nearly impenetrable skin of the animal. Harpoons and spears could be used to capture the hippopotamus, but the crocodile was well protected against such methods of attack.

8. Do no more. The mere thought of the battle deters one from taking further steps.

9. The hope of him. Apparently the hope of capturing or killing the monster. The very sight of leviathan would intimidate man. The strength of leviathan was so overwhelmingly superior to that of man that the beast was left to sleep undisturbed on the sandbanks along the rivers.

10. Stand before me. This verse contains the point of the entire argument. A creature that God has made is so formidable that man dares not “stir him up.” How, then, dares any man to contend with the Creator? This is doubtless intended as a rebuke to Job for his rashness in desiring to argue with God.

According to the Targums and a number of Hebrew manuscripts the last line of this text reads, “Who then is able to stand before him?” However, the LXX and the other ancient versions all support the reading “me.”

11. Who hath prevented? The thought of the text seems to be, “Who hath placed Me under obligation to him that I should repay him?” The argument is, If man cannot control such creatures as leviathan, how can he expect to force the hand of the Creator for special favors? The allusion seems to be to Job’s repeated demands for a hearing (chs. 9:34, 35; 13:3, 22; 23:3–7). God resists every challenge that He justify Himself. He is not in debt to any of His creatures.

Is mine. God reminds Job of His ownership of the universe.

12. His parts. God returns to a fuller and more detailed description of leviathan.

13. Discover. Literally, “uncover.”

Face of his garment. Or, “his outer covering.” This seems to refer to his scaly outer coat.

Double bridle. The meaning of this figure is not clear. Some take the sentence to mean, “Who would dare try to place a bridle on him, as on a horse?” Others believe that the “double bridle” refers to his double row of teeth, and that God is asking if anyone would dare come within the range of these teeth. Others adopt a reading based on the LXX, which has, “Who can enter within the fold of his breast-plate?”

14. Who can open? If leviathan chooses to keep his mouth closed, who would have the courage or the strength to open it?

15. Scales. Literally, “shields.” The scales are represented as so many shields.

18. Neesings. Old English for “sneezings.” When the crocodile, turned toward the sun with open jaws, is excited to sneezing, the water gushing from his mouth glistens brilliantly in the sunlight.

Eyes. The small eyes of the crocodile possess a catlike sparkle that has been widely observed.

19. Burning lamps. The language of this verse is highly figurative. It seems to describe the impression of the monster on the minds of the observers. The snorting, spouting, and splashing of the beast in the sparkling sunlight suggests the idea of lamps and sparks.

20. Smoke. This verse and v. 21 continue the figurative picture of v. 19.

22. Neck. As the strength of “behemoth” is in his loins (ch. 40:16), so the strength of leviathan is in his neck.

Sorrow is turned. This line reads literally, “and before him dances dismay.” The idea is that everything trembles before him. Wherever he goes he causes terror. People take flight in panic.

23. Flakes of his flesh. Literally, “the fallings of his flesh,” probably those parts that hang down, as under the chin.

24. As firm as a stone. Probably referring to the disposition of the leviathan.

Nether millstone. The lower millstone. It was larger and harder than the upper.

25. They purify themselves. Better, “they are beside themselves.”

26. Cannot hold. No weapon known to Job was effective against this creature.

27. Iron. Iron and bronze were the most effective metals for implements of warfare known to Job, but they were like straw or rotten wood in dealing with leviathan.

28. Arrow. Leviathan is not afraid of the puny inventions of men.

30. Sharp stones. Literally, “sharp pieces of potsherd.” The meaning is that the underparts of the animal were covered with scales like pieces of broken pottery.

Sharp pointed things. Imprints on the mudbanks where the animal lies.

31. Boil like a pot. This describes the appearance of the water when lashed by leviathan.

Ointment. This may refer to a peculiar, musklike smell said to be characteristic of the crocodile.

32. Hoary. The white foam in the creature’s wake makes the water look as if it had grown old and put on white hairs.

34. King. However proud other beasts may be, they must submit to him.

CHAPTER 42

1 Job submitteth himself unto God. 7 God, preferring Job’s cause, maketh his friends submit themselves, and accepteth him. 10 He magnifieth and blesseth Job. 16 Job’s age and death.

1. Job answered. Job has been steadily climbing the long ladder from despair to faith. He has received a revelation of God such as few men have ever experienced. God has spoken to him in parables taken from nature. Job has listened to the voice of Him whom he now knows he can love and trust. It is Job’s turn to talk. What he says is recorded in vs. 2–6.

2. Thou canst. Job acknowledges God’s omnipotence.

Can be withholden. Job acknowledges God’s omniscience (see Ps. 44:21; 139:2).

3. *Who is he?* This question repeats in almost identical words the query of God in ch. 38:2. Whether that query referred to Elihu or to Job cannot be definitely established (see on ch. 38:2). Job now applies it to himself. His first acknowledgment is of the limits of his knowledge. His conclusions were based on ignorance; hence, though he may have been sincere, he was wrong.

Which I knew not. How inadequate partial knowledge appears when the light of greater truth shines upon it! When Job made his complaints, his reasoning seemed to him unassailable. He felt that his attitude was amply justified. But when he came to understand God more fully, his former reasoning lost its cogency. Human reason has so often proved itself fallible. Ideas that seem like great wisdom today, may turn out to be sheer nonsense tomorrow.

Job's willingness to admit his ignorance is commendable. He does not try to excuse himself or to defend his position. He is as honest in confession as he was in argument. This trait is part of the integrity with which the record credits Job from the start (ch. 1:1).

4. *I will speak.* As in v. 3 Job referred to the question of ch. 38:2, so he now repeats the question of ch. 38:3. He is ready to meet God's challenge. He is prepared to speak. He knows, at last, what he wishes to say.

5. *But now.* Job admits that his previous knowledge of God was based on hearsay. Now he has achieved a firsthand knowledge. The most important lesson of the book of Job is found in this text. In this statement Job reveals the transition from a religious experience shaped by tradition to an experience based on personal communion with God. According to the tradition in which he had been reared, the righteous were not supposed to suffer. From his youth up Job had *heard* that God would deliver the righteous from all evil in this present life. But when he met suffering he was thrown into confusion, because it was contrary to what he had *heard* about God. His confusion was augmented by the attitude of his friends. Now Job has *seen* God. He knows that God possesses infinite power and graciousness, and he also knows that, even though he may suffer, he is God's child. God has made no attempt to explain to him *why* he suffers, but he is convinced that, whatever the reason, he need have no misgivings.

Job's experience has taught him the meaning of faith. His vision of God has enabled him to surrender to the divine will. His commitment to God is now unaffected by his circumstances. He no longer expects temporal blessings as an evidence of Heaven's favor. His relationship to God is now on a firmer, more dependable basis than before. Job finds a solution to his problems when he discovers that God is not limited by the traditions men have developed concerning Him. This broader understanding that Job reveals when he says, "Now mine eye seeth thee," is akin to the experience of faith that is emphasized so strongly throughout the Scriptures, especially in the Gospel of John and the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians (John 1:12-17; Rom. 8:1-8; Gal. 4:3-7).

6. *Repent.* Job was presumably still sitting on the ash heap on which he had thrown himself when his disease first smote him (ch. 2:8). His friends had urged him to repent, but their appeal was based on the assumption that he had committed sins of which he was not guilty. His eventual repentance was for his mistaken attitude toward God. Compare Job's repentance with that of Peter (Luke 5:8), and of Isaiah (Isa. 6:5). In each case the manifestation of God achieved what no argument based on human tradition could accomplish.

7. *My wrath is kindled.* This verse begins the closing prose portion of the book. God turns His attention to the three friends of Job, addressing Eliphaz apparently as the leader of the trio. God had rebuked Job for his lack of understanding, but He indicates anger at the friends for their failure to speak that which was “right.” This raises the interesting question of the difference between the errors of Job and the errors of his friends. An analysis discloses that Job erred because of suffering, pressure, discouragement, and despair. He was the victim of a distressing situation that he could not understand. His statements were sometimes petulant, sometimes almost sacrilegious. However, all the way through he maintained a basic trust in God. The friends were not suffering as Job was. Their wrong words were the expression of a false philosophy. They allowed tradition to overshadow sympathy. They felt that they were justified in harshness because their conception of God seemed to demand such an attitude. Eliphaz and his friends have many counterparts in modern times—good men, yes, but with wrong ideas that they feel conscience-bound to defend. Job made mistakes, but, compared with his friends, he spoke “the thing that is right.” His pitiable cries of despair were more pleasing to God than the cold logic of his friends.

8. *Pray for you.* An example of intercessory prayer (see James 5:16; 1 John 5:16). God sometimes sees fit to bestow His forgiveness and His blessings in response to intercessory prayer. In this case the significance of such prayer is enhanced by the fact that Job is praying for those who have not treated him fairly or kindly.

Folly. God thus characterizes the speeches of the friends. How foolish man’s traditions and pet ideas appear to God. How surprised Eliphaz and his companions must have been in view of having made such a point of vindicating God! Men must learn that they best vindicate God by representing Him as He is, a God of love and mercy.

9. *Accepted Job.* The man whom they had endeavored to set right became their intercessor for salvation and repentance. This is a dramatic contrast. God accepted Job’s prayer in their behalf. It would be interesting, if it could be known, whether these three men revised their philosophy of life in harmony with what God was endeavoring to teach them.

10. *Turned the captivity.* The NT teaches that the forgiveness of God is granted in proportion to the extent to which men forgive each other (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; 18:32–35). This principle seems to have been anticipated in Job’s experience. It is when he prays for his friends that his fortunes change. This is not to be interpreted as meaning that intercessory prayer, however sincere, will guarantee material prosperity. The book of Job, as a whole, disproves this assumption. This experience does show God’s approval of the man who will pray for those who have despitely used him.

11. *Brethren.* Job’s kindred had forgotten, forsaken, and turned against him (ch. 19:13, 14, 19). Now that his fortunes have been reversed, they come to help him celebrate. They seemed unwilling to risk their sympathy until they had evidence that things were coming out all right. In this trait they reflect a common human failing.

Money. Heb. *qešīṭah*, occurring only here and in Gen. 33:19 and Joshua 24:32. The *qešīṭah* was probably a measure of weight. There is an indication here of the antiquity of the book.

Earring. Heb. *nezem*, used for various types of rings as well as earrings (see Gen. 24:47; 35:4; Judges 8:24, 25; Prov. 11:22 [translated “jewel”]; 25:12; Isa. 3:21; Hosea 2:13).

12. The Lord blessed. All three their friends had predicted that if Job would repent, he would be blessed (chs. 5:18–26; 8:20, 21; 11:13–19). Their predictions came true; but Job’s repentance was of a very different nature from what they envisioned; and it is certain they never anticipated that they themselves would be called upon to repent of their mistaken opinions and conduct.

16. Lived Job. The man who was so sure that the grave was just ahead of him continued to live for nearly another century and a half! The life that had seemed blasted, bloomed again in greater brilliance than before. The blessings that had seemed to be gone forever, returned, more wonderful than ever. Property, family, friends, reputation, were his again. But even greater than these blessings was the memory of an experience in which he had come face to face with God, and had learned lessons more valuable than material possessions. These lessons, God in His providence saw fit to share with all humanity, and so the book of Job was preserved as one of the great spiritual heritages from a far-distant past. It is our privilege today to learn from the experience of Job lessons of trust and confidence in God.

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6 GC 471; 3T 509

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⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Job 39:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.