

# 6

## *A Study of Job*

The Book of Job, a dramatic poem of superlative beauty, is grouped along with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. Date and authorship are uncertain. Some scholars consider it the oldest book of the Bible, written at a very early date; others place it at a date between David and Isaiah (973–740 B.C.); still others assign it to a period nearer the Exile. Modern criticism takes the view that several portions of the book, particularly the speeches of Elihu (chaps. 32–37) are later interpolations.

Job is a quest for the answer to suffering—a problem that has perplexed men since the beginning of time.

*Its theme:* Why does a righteous man suffer?

*Corollary questions:*

How will he endure under trial?

Is God's government of the world just?

Is there hope beyond the grave?

The book depicts the doctrine of original sin—a doctrine not canceled out until the Messiah taught the perfection of man as the son of God (Mt. 5:48). Throughout the book it becomes apparent that the preponderance of evidence is shifting from Job's side to God's side, and from Satan's arrogant assumption of power to the revelation of God's supremacy.

The whole assumes somewhat the form of a trial—Satan's charges, Job's complaint, the accusations and exhortations of his friends, his repeated assertion of his innocence, the speeches of the Almighty and His vindication of Job. Many terms suggestive of a court trial appear repeatedly: case (cause), defense (order one's cause), argument; complaint, judge, witness, law, surety; testify, plead for and against; condemn, acquit, pardon.

Job, a righteous man, is forced by loss and suffering to sift all his thoughts, test his faith, and come to a proper understanding of his Creator. Struggling with the

inherent sinfulness and weakness of human nature, Job swings between hope and despair as he prays for deliverance. His experience might be likened to what takes place on a threshing floor: the continuous round of trampling sheaves of ripe grain, the breaking up, the fanning out of the chaff, the sifting and gathering of the kernels.

Not understanding the reason for his affliction—Satan is tempting him—Job draws false conclusions as to the source of his suffering. His three friends who come to console him assert God is punishing him for sin, an argument he refutes passionately. Like them, he ascribes his affliction to God but, knowing his own integrity, feels his punishment is unjust. The empty arguments of his friends fail to convince him of guilt or of God’s justice, and he refuses to resign himself to unmerited suffering. So evident to his senses are the injustices and inconsistencies of human experience that he even impugns God’s moral government of the world. Repeatedly he attempts to call the Almighty to account—while at the same time his ingrained trust in God’s righteousness continually asserts itself—until out of the whirlwind of his thoughts he is humbled to a clearer recognition of his Creator’s greatness and goodness. God then vindicates Job’s righteousness and restores his health and prosperity.

Job’s anguished questions could only have their full answer in the teachings and mission of Jesus Christ, the perfect Son whom God later so completely vindicated. But Job did arrive at an exalted sense of trust based on faith and revelation, as did all the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets who pressed on in faith, not yet having received the promise (Heb. 11:39).

Job is written primarily in dialogue; the prologue and epilogue alone are prose; the dialogues are all poetry. In this study the speeches of the participants have been presented in dialogue form and have been somewhat abridged to make the major points more graphic.

Prologue

Debate: Job and His Three Friends

<i>First Cycle</i>	<i>Second Cycle</i>	<i>Third Cycle</i>
Eliphaz and Job	Eliphaz and Job	Eliphaz and Job
Bildad and Job	Bildad and Job	Bildad and Job
Zophar and Job	Zophar and Job	

Elihu’s Discourse

Dialogue: God and Job

Epilogue

[Chapters 1, 2]

## Prologue

*Job was a pious patriarch of the land of Uz (located by some scholars in the northwestern section of the Arabian Desert). "That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."*

*He was a prosperous man, with a large family and much wealth, "There were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east."*

*His piety was such that after his sons feasted in their houses he took care to sanctify them, offering burnt offerings for them continually: "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts."*

**THE ADVERSARY (AV SATAN) PRESENTS HIMSELF BEFORE GOD.** *"Now there was a day when the SONS OF GOD came to present themselves before the LORD, and SATAN came also among them."*

GOD: Whence cometh thou?

SATAN: From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

GOD: Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

SATAN: Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse [RV renounce] thee to thy face.

GOD: Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.

**JOB'S LOSS.** *His livestock is stolen, his sheep destroyed by lightning, his camels carried away by the Chaldeans, his servants slain. His sons and daughters die when a great wind causes his eldest son's house to collapse upon them as they feast. JOB grieved; he "rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped."*

JOB: Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

*"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."*

**THE ADVERSARY AGAIN PRESENTS HIMSELF BEFORE GOD.** *"Again there was a day when the SONS OF GOD came to present themselves before the Lord, and SATAN came also among them to present himself before the Lord."*

GOD: From whence comest thou?

SATAN: From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

GOD: Hast thou considered my servant Job . . . still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

SATAN: Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

GOD: Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

***JOB'S AFFLICTION.** So SATAN smote JOB's body with boils "from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes."*

JOB'S WIFE: Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse [RV renounce] God, and die.

JOB: Thou speakest as one of the foolish [RV (marg.) impious] women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?

*"In all this did not Job sin with his lips."*

***JOB'S THREE FRIENDS COME TO MOURN WITH AND COMFORT HIM:** ELIPHAZ the Temanite (a descendant of Teman, a grandson of Esau), BILDAD the Shuhite (a descendant of Shuah, a son of Abraham), and ZOPHAR the Naamathite of Naamah (a tribe about which nothing is now known). "They sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great."*

## Debate: Job and His Three Friends

[Chapters 3–31]

***JOB'S COMPLAINT** (chap. 3). JOB curses the day he came forth from the womb, and thereby was destined to sorrow, oppression, misery, and despair. He longs for death.*

JOB: Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. . . . As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year. . . . Why died I not from the womb? . . .

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not. . . . Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? . . .

For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

## First Cycle of Speeches

[Chapters 4–14]

*The calamities of Job are so great his three friends conclude that his afflictions show him guilty of a sin of some sort, a sin he is compounding by his complaints against God. They doubt Job's piety and his integrity.*

**ELIPHAZ' FIRST SPEECH** (*chaps. 4, 5*). *ELIPHAZ reproves JOB for his despair. If Job is upright, will not God preserve him? (chap. 4).*

ELIPHAZ: If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking? Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. . . . But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways? Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish. . . .

*To humble Job he tells of an awesome vision in which he was shown God's righteousness and man's insignificance.*

Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. . . . Fear came upon me. . . . Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

*ELIPHAZ warns JOB against foolish, rash complaint and urges him to commit his cause to a just and righteous God. He assumes Job's sinfulness: because Job is suffering, he must be suffering as the result of some great sin. He urges Job to accept God's chastening and cites the benefits of His correction (chap. 5).*

Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one. I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation. . . .

I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number. . . .

He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. . . . But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty. . . .

Happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. . . . And thou shalt know that thy

tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

**JOB'S REPLY** (*chaps. 6, 7*). *JOB shows that his grief weighs on him heavily; his complaint is not without cause. He longs for the comfort of death. The words of his friends are without solace and he reproves their unkindness. He asks them to reconsider their unjust judgment (chap. 6).*

**JOB:** The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. . . . The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

Oh that I might have my request. . . . Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! Then should I yet have comfort. . . let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. . . .

To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: What time they wax warm, they vanish. . . .

For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid. . . .

Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove? . . .

Look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie. Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.

*In great physical suffering and dread, JOB complains of his undeserved misery and justifies his desire for death. Why is God preoccupied with testing man? Why does He not forgive—if there has been sin—since man is so small in His sight? Job cannot reconcile his suffering with the idea of God as “the preserver of men” (chap. 7).*

Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling? . . . I [am] made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. . . .

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. . . .

When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. . . .

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? . . .

I have sinned [RV If I have sinned]; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee . . . And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?

**BILDAD'S FIRST SPEECH** (*chap. 8*). BILDAD picks up the thread of Eliphaz' argument—Job is suffering because he is a sinner. He discourses on God's justice and the fate of hypocrites. Looking to JOB to repent, he prophesies Job's restoration.

BILDAD: How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind? Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? . . .

If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. . . .

Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish. . . .

Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evildoers: Till he [RV He will yet] fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

**JOB'S REPLY** (*chaps. 9, 10*). JOB, while acknowledging God's justice, feels himself helpless to contend for his innocence before the invisible God whose might is so manifest throughout His creation. He asserts that God's justice is arbitrary against the innocent, and he knows of no "daysman" (mediator, arbiter) to intercede for him before God (*chap. 9*).

JOB: I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God [RV (marg.) before God]? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? . . .

Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? . . . God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him? Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. . . .

This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. . . .

If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself: I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? . . . For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

*JOB remonstrates earnestly with GOD about his affliction as he continues to seek the reason for his trial. He cannot believe the Creator takes pleasure in destroying the work of His own hands, and he asserts his innocence in the midst of his perplexity (chap. 10).*

My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? . . .

Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? . . .

If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou my affliction; For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion. . . . Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? . . .

Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. . . .

**ZOPHAR'S FIRST SPEECH** (chap. 11). ZOPHAR unfeelingly reproves JOB for affirming his innocence: does Job presume, from the imperfection of his human nature, to fathom the wisdom of the Infinite? God knows Job's sin even if Job does not.

ZOPHAR: Should a man full of talk be justified? . . . For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee. . . . Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? . . . If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

*ZOPHAR urges JOB to put away iniquity and enumerates the blessings of repentance.*

If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear. . . . And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

**JOB'S REPLY** (chaps. 12–14). JOB scorns the stale commonplaces mouthed by his friends. Their arguments have brought him neither comfort nor enlightenment, nor resolved his confusion over what appear to him marked inconsistencies in God's government of the world (chap. 12).

JOB: No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. . . .



I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn. . . . The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. . . .

Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. . . . With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. . . . He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.

*JOB holds his friends' defense of God's actions worthless and brands their arguments lies. He even calls their arguments wicked—a deceitful attempt to gain favor with GOD. JOB turns from his friends to plead his cause before God. Still convinced in his heart of God's righteousness (although he has been arguing against it) JOB turns to Him, certain that He will justify his innocence (chap. 13).*

Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. . . . Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? . . . He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons. Your remembrances [RV memorable sayings] are like unto ashes, your bodies [RV defences] to bodies of clay.

Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will. Wherefore do I . . . put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him. . . .

Behold now, I have ordered my cause [prepared my defense]; I know that I shall be justified. . . . Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee. Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid [see 9:34]. Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

*Contemplating the frailty and sinful nature of mortal man, JOB entreats GOD's forbearance in this life and voices a hope for His favor beyond the grave (chap. 14).*

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. . . .

O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

## Second Cycle of Speeches

[Chapters 15–21]

*Job's three friends, unable to draw from Job an admission of guilt, continue more vehemently their argument that the wicked are punished by God. This Job denies.*

**ELIPHAZ' SECOND SPEECH** (*chap. 15*). *ELIPHAZ sharply condemns JOB for impiety and rebukes him for presuming to reject the wisdom of his elders.*

ELIPHAZ: Should a wise man utter vain knowledge. . . . Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? . . . Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I. . . .

What understandest thou, which is not in us? With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father. Are the consolations of God small with thee? . . . Why doth thine heart carry thee away? . . . That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?

*Using Job's own words, ELIPHAZ enlarges on the sinfulness of man, and as a warning rehearses the fears and doom of the wicked.*

What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? . . .

The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor. A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him. . . . Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid. . . .

He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth. . . .

Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompence. It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green. He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

**JOB'S REPLY** (*chaps. 16, 17*). *JOB complains bitterly of the unmerciful indictment by his friends; he complains also of God's hostile treatment of him, further compounded by the mockery of his professed friends (chap. 16).*

JOB: I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. . . .

I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief. . . .

But now he [God] hath made me weary: [RSV he has] made desolate all my company. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles . . . and my leanness . . . beareth witness to my face. He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth [RV persecuted] me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth. . . .

They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against

me. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. His archers compass me round about. . . . He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

*Though standing in "the shadow of death," JOB maintains his innocence and cries out to the earth not to conceal his innocent blood. In a moment of perception he asserts that his witness is in heaven, but he longs for someone who might plead his case.*

My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high [RV he that voucheth for me is on high]. My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

*JOB pleads with GOD to be a surety for him. He is facing death and his friends have failed him. He continues to question where his hope lies, seeing before him only the grave. His speech concludes on a note of despair (chap. 17).*

My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?

Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee [RV Give now a pledge, be surety for me with thyself]; who is he that will strike hands with me? For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them. . . .

He [God] hath made me also a byword of the people. . . . Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow. . . .

My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. . . . If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. . . . And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They [RV It] shall go down to the bars of the pit [RV Sheol], when our rest together is in the dust.

**BILDAD'S SECOND SPEECH** (chap. 18). *BILDAD rebukes JOB's words (which to him are presumptuous) and comfortlessly reiterates the awful calamities of the wicked.*

**BILDAD:** How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? . . . Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? He teareth himself in his anger [RV Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger]: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. . . . The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down. . . . His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. . . . His roots shall be

dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

***JOB'S REPLY** (chap. 19). JOB charges that his friends are cruel. Granted that he may have erred, nevertheless with all their words they have not yet shown him his error. He maintains that God's severity to him is unjust and has estranged him from friends and kinsmen who once held him in esteem. He craves the pity of his three companions, not their condemnation.*

JOB: How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? . . . And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself. . . .

Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath destroyed me on every side. . . . He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. . . .

He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. . . .

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God . . . ?

*JOB's hope turns again to God; he declares his conviction that his Vindicator lives and "at the latter day" will justify him, and that he himself will see his justification. He warns his three reprovers that judgment will fall upon them.*

I know that my redeemer [RV (marg.) vindicator] liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. . . .

Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

***ZOPHAR'S SECOND SPEECH** (chap. 20). Taking no note of Job's words of hope for vindication, ZOPHAR returns to the theme that the wicked man is punished by God—that the sinner's joy will be short, his life fleeting as a dream, and his ill-gotten wealth lost.*

ZOPHAR: I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; Yet he shall perish for ever. . . . He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found. . . .

He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again:

God shall cast them out of his belly. . . . That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein. . . .

The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

**JOB'S REPLY** (*chap. 21*). To JOB neither BILDAD's nor ZOPHAR's arguments concerning the punishment of the wicked are valid. He refutes their contentions by the evidence of common observation: frequently the wicked enjoy unbroken prosperity, health, and long life, even when they defy God. The question of God's moral government of the world still puzzles and dismays him since godly and ungodly alike die.

JOB: Suffer me that I may speak. . . . As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled? . . . Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them. . . . Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. . . . They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. . . . They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? . . . How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! . . .

Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. . . . And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me. . . . How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

### *Third Cycle of Speeches*

[Chapters 22–31]

*Job has not altered his position. He has rejected the charge of wickedness, maintaining his integrity. Eliphaz, unable to refute Job's reasoning, ignores his speech and now accuses Job of specific offenses that would merit such calamities as he is suffering. Bildad speaks briefly of the majesty of God; Zophar remains silent.*

**ELIPHAZ' THIRD SPEECH** (*chap. 22*). ELIPHAZ asserts that God does not profit by a man's goodness, neither does He lose by a man's sin. Convinced that God does not punish a man for his piety, ELIPHAZ dogmatically repeats his claim that Job is a sinner. He proceeds—without basis—to accuse JOB of oppressing the poor, the widow, and the fatherless.

ELIPHAZ: Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable

unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?

Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. . . . Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee. . . .

*ELIPHAZ softens his indictment with promises of God's mercy if JOB will repent.*

Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. . . . If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. . . .

For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

*JOB'S REPLY (chaps. 23, 24). JOB longs for access to God, whom he still cannot find. He reaffirms his confidence in God's goodness and justice (chap. 23).*

JOB: Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him. . . . I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand . . . but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

*JOB reasserts his integrity, in answer to the groundless charges of Eliphaz. He is still unable to account for his affliction.*

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

*JOB complains again of God's moral ordering of the world, perplexed that God—seeing the wicked shamelessly oppress the widow, the fatherless, the poor, and commit violent crimes openly—permits the wicked to flourish unpunished. He voices his belief that they will be judged (chap. 24).*

Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks. . . . They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge. They turn the needy out of the way. . . . They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry; Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst. Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them. . . . The murderer . . . killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight. . . .

Though it be given him [the wicked] to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his [God's] eyes are upon their ways. They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other. . . .

And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

**BILDAD'S THIRD SPEECH** (*chap. 25*). Like Eliphaz, BILDAD—unable to refute it—ignores Job's argument. Instead, he declares God's omnipotence and man's insignificance.

BILDAD: Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places. Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? . . . yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? . . .

**JOB'S REPLY** (*chaps. 26–31*). JOB rejects BILDAD's harsh words as of no help but he acknowledges God's power to be infinite and unsearchable (*chap. 26*).

JOB: How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength? How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? . . .

Hell is naked before him [God], and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north . . . and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds. . . . He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. . . . By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens. . . .

Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

*Emphatically JOB rejects again the false arguments of his opponents and asserts that as long as he lives he will hold to the position that he is innocent. This brings him a measure of hope and peace (27:1–26).*

As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

*(Verses 7–23 of chapter 27 are in the tone of the three friends. They may be a part of Zophar's speech, of which there is no record in the third cycle, or they may be Job's statement of the fate of hypocrites, which Job admits but which he feels has no application to him since he continues righteously to call upon God.)*

*JOB longs to understand the divine wisdom which governs human affairs. This he knows cannot be mined like the treasures of the earth, or found in the sea, or bought for gold. It is to be found in God; man finds it in loving God and shunning evil (chap. 28).*

JOB: Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone. . . .

But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me. . . . It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof . . . for the price of wisdom is above rubies. . . .

Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? . . . God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. . . . And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

*JOB ruminates on the false charges made by ELIPHAZ. He mourns for his former position of honor among his fellow men (chap. 29).*

Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle. . . .

When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. . . . The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. . . .

My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. . . . Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. . . . I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.



*JOB bemoans his present humiliation and suffering as despair again overtakes him (chap. 30).*

But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. . . . now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. . . .

And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. . . . By the great force of my disease is my garment changed. . . . He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me. . . . When I looked for good, then evil came unto me. . . . My bowels boiled, and rested not. . . . My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

*JOB again avows the integrity of his whole life—a life that vindicates him from all the charges made or insinuated by his opponents. His personal conduct has been blameless: he has been faithful to his wife, just to his servants, kind to the poor; he has not made wealth his hope or committed secret idolatry; neither has he been vengeful or inhospitable. He has nothing to hide (chap. 31).*

Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? . . . Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

If my step hath turned out of the way. . . . If mine heart have been deceived by a woman. . . . If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me. . . . If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof. . . . If I have seen any perish for want of clothing. . . . If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. If. . . . If. . . . If. . . .

Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me. I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

If my land cry against me . . . or [I] have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley.

The words of Job are ended.

*“So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes” (32: 1).*

[Chapters 32:6–37:24]

## Elihu's Discourse

*Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite, who has not been mentioned before but who has evidently been listening to the arguments of Job and his three friends, comes forward to reason with Job. He is a young man, with a higher conception of God and a more merciful attitude toward Job than those of Job's dogmatic friends. He is angry with Job because Job "justified himself rather than God," and with Job's friends "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job" (32:2–5).*

*Elihu feels himself divinely commissioned as a messenger to speak to Job "in God's stead." His arguments fail to advance much beyond those of Job's other accusers. Like them he accepts the premise that Job is a sinner and urges his submission to the chastening of a just God—a chastening designed to discipline and purify and bless men. Elihu points out to Job that his own doubts and rebellion are hindering his deliverance from affliction and admonishes him to "stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God." Elihu's eloquent words regarding the majesty of the Almighty are designed to persuade Job to trust his Creator.*

*He alternately addresses the three friends and Job.*

*ELIHU has waited for his elders to speak; now he offers himself as the mediator (daysman) for whom Job had longed and presents his qualifications (32:6–33:7).*

ELIHU: I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

Behold, I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say . . . and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words: Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man. Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

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

Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches. . . . My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly. The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

*ELIHU rebukes JOB for his charge against God and remonstrates with him that God need not account to man for His ways. He declares that God instructs and chastens men to repentance for their preservation—by warning vision or by suffering and the ministry of a messenger (33:8–33).*

Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy

words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent. . . . Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy. . . .

Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not [Moffatt, God has one mode of speech; yes, and if man heeds it not, another].

In a dream, in a vision of the night. . . . Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

He is chastened also with pain upon his bed. . . . Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

Elihu refers to himself as the Divinely-sent (ch. 32:8; 33:6) "messenger," the "interpreter" to explain to Job and vindicate God's righteousness; such a one Eliphaz had denied that Job could look for (ch. 5:1), and Job (ch. 9:33) had wished for such a "daysman" or umpire between him and God. . . . Elihu, the God-sent mediator of a temporal deliverance (vv. 24–26), is a type of the God-man Jesus Christ the Mediator of eternal deliverance: "the messenger of the covenant" (Malachi 3:1).<sup>1</sup>

He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

*ELIHU contends that Job puts himself on the side of the wicked when he questions God's justice. He defends God's government of the world by declaring that the omnipotent God cannot be unjust and calls on JOB to humble himself. He accuses JOB of the added sin of rebellion in arraignment God's justice (chap. 34).*

Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. Should I lie against my right? . . . What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water? Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity. . . . For he hath said, it profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God. . . .

Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. . . .

Wilt thou condemn him that is most just? . . .

Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I. . . .

Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his

answers for wicked men. For he addeth rebellion unto his sin . . . and multiplieth his words against God.

*ELIHU enlarges on Job's presumption. He reasons that because God is so exalted Job must not make comparison between his righteousness and God's. He maintains, as had Eliphaz (22:2, 3), that God is not touched by either Job's sin or his righteousness but that Job injures himself by his sin or benefits himself and his fellow men by his righteousness (35:1–8).*

Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?

I will answer thee. . . . Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? . . . If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.

*ELIHU asserts that the cry of the oppressed often seems to go unanswered because the oppressed do not turn with humble faith to their Creator. Job's cause (judgment) is before God; therefore Job must wait patiently and with trust (35:9–16).*

By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry. . . . But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night. . . . Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him. But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger. . . . Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain. . . .

*ELIHU declares that God is just in His ways, and the purpose of His discipline is to turn men from sin. He warns JOB that his rebellion and his longing for death are hindering the flow of God's blessings (36:1–21).*

Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will . . . ascribe righteousness to my Maker. . . . he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom. . . . He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. . . . He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee. . . . Desire not the night [death],

when people are cut off in their place. Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

*As ELIHU's discourse draws to a close he enjoins JOB to magnify the marvelous works of God. His eloquence mounts as he declares the majesty and might of God in the wonders of the heavens, all of which testify to His righteous government of the world; men should therefore revere and trust Him (36:22–37:24).*

Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him? Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold. Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off. . . .

Can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise [RV thunderings] of his tabernacle? . . . great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. . . .

It [the cloud] is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them. . . . Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds. . . . Hast thou with him spread out the sky . . . ?

With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him. . . .

## Dialogue God and Job

[Chapters 38:1–42:6]

*Job makes no reply to Elibu, but Elibu's words have given him inspiration, Whereas heretofore he had thought of God as afar off and unapproachable, Job now hears God's voice addressing him out of the whirlwind and he rises to a clearer comprehension of his Creator.*

**GOD'S FIRST SPEECH** (38:1–40:2). *Here begins Job's great moment of enlightenment. GOD is about to vindicate JOB, but first He must bring His servant to a realization and acknowledgment of His omnipotence and omniscience. In language of superlative grandeur GOD reproves and silences JOB. His challenging questions cause JOB to look anew at the phenomena of the universe in which he lives and to ask if he could himself have made any of them or even "understand how they were created" (38:1–38).*

GOD: Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . .

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? . . .

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors. . . . And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days . . . ?

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? . . .

Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? . . .

Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? . . .

Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof . . . ?

Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? . . .

By what way is the light parted . . . ?

Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters . . . ?

Hath the rain a father? . . . Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? . . .

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? . . .

*GOD continues to challenge JOB. Had his wisdom brought into being the wonders of animate creation or given them their life-giving instincts? GOD's questioning brings JOB to a further recognition of the Creator's providential care and goodness (38:39–39:30).*

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions . . . ? Who provideth the raven his food? . . .

Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? . . .

Who hath sent out the wild ass free? . . . Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. . . . The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

Will the unicorn [RV wild-ox] be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? . . .

Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? . . .

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? . . .

Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

*GOD now demands an answer from JOB (40:1, 2).*

Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

**JOB'S FIRST ANSWER** (40:3–5). *The disclosure of God's greatness and care for all His creatures humbles Job and convinces him of his ignorance and presumption in impugning God's government of the world.*

JOB: Behold, I am vile [RV of small account]; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

**GOD'S SECOND SPEECH** (chaps. 40:6–41:34). *Again GOD speaks out of the whirlwind (40:6–14).*

GOD: Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath. . . . Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

*GOD declares His control over the gigantic creatures of the earth and sea. If man cannot subdue these, how can he call to account the Creator Himself (40:15–41:34)?*

Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins. . . . He moveth his tail like a cedar. . . . His bones are as strong pieces of brass. . . . He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? . . . Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? . . .

Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce [courageous] that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me? Who hath prevented me [RV first given unto me], that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about. . . . The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. . . .

Upon earth there is not his like; who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

**JOB'S SECOND ANSWER** (42:1–6). *Contritely JOB acknowledges God's omnipotence, and his heart and mind are at peace (compare Ps. 51:17; Is. 66:2). Realizing now how badly qualified he was to judge, even in regard to what had happened to himself, he candidly admits that he was guilty of the charge brought against him by the Almighty (38:2; 34:5).*

*Job had prayed "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" (23:3; compare Ps. 9:4). His continuous inner wrestling and questioning have brought him an answer to his search; he now has a clear and sensible perception of God's being and goodness.*

**JOB:** I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee [RV And that no purpose of thine can be restrained].

Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge [God's question to him (38:2)]? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me [God's words to him (38:3; 40:7)]. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

Wherefore I abhor myself [RV (marg.) loathe my words], and repent in dust and ashes.



[Chapter 42:7–17]

## Epilogue

**GOD'S VINDICATION OF JOB.** *Satan's charge has been disproved. Job has been afflicted, perplexed, tormented by human reasoning and the almost overwhelming evidence before his senses until he even longed for death; at no time has he renounced God. Upon Job's acknowledgment "now mine eye seeth thee" and his retraction of his rash words, God speaks on Job's behalf and vindicates his integrity.*

*God reproves Job's three friends for their false estimate of Job as a sinner and a hypocrite, and then commands them to humble themselves. He bids JOB to pray for them.*

GOD: My wrath is kindled against thee [Eliphaz], and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept [receive with favor]: lest I deal with you after your folly. . . .

*"So Eliphaz . . . and Bildad . . . and Zophar . . . went, and did according as the Lord commanded them."*

**GOD'S RESTORATION OF JOB.** *JOB forgives his friends; GOD restores JOB to health, usefulness, and honor, and blesses him with a double recompense.*

*"The Lord also accepted Job. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before."*

"Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house . . . every man also gave him a piece of money . . . and an earring of gold.

"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. . . .

"After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations."

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience [Moffatt, steadfastness] of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord [New English Bible, how the Lord treated him in the end]; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (Ja. 5:11)