

JOB

Author:

Unknown. See the note in the introduction to Judges concerning the authorship of the books of the Bible.

Date:

This book may have been written any time between the time of Moses and the time of Ezra, but many scholars think a date sometime close to the reign of King Solomon (970-930 BC) is most likely. The time when Job lived also cannot be stated with certainty. But most of the evidence available to us indicates a time shortly after the lifetime of Abraham. In any case, knowing who the author was and the dates could not help us to understand the spiritual lessons of this book, and this should be our main purpose in the study of it.

Themes:

Job deals with the very difficult problem of why God permits His own children who live righteous lives to suffer. What is the purpose of the troubles, pains, and disasters which come to them? Why do evil men often seem to escape these things? Is God's justice not at work among the people of the world? These are the thoughts that form the basis of the discussion that took place between Job and his friends. See the notes at 3:1,20; 4:7-9; 8:3; 18:5-21; 21:4-34; 34:10-12. We also see another significant element in this book: how Satan challenges God and attacks Job, and how God successfully repulses such a challenge and attack.

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1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. ²And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³And his possessions were seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

⁴And his sons used to go and have a feast *in the house of each one* on his day, and they would send and call for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. ⁵And it came about when *their* days of feasting had completed its cycle, that Job would send and sanctify them, and rise up early in the morning and offer burnt offerings *according to* the number

1:1 “Uz”—this land was situated somewhere east of the land of Canaan (v 3). In Jeremiah’s day it was distinguished from Edom (Jer 25:20-21), but Edomites lived there or possibly controlled it (Lam 4:21). So Uz was probably close to the borders of Edom. Teman, the region where Job’s friend Eliphaz lived, was a part of Edom.

“Blameless”—the Hebrew word is translated “perfect” in the KJV, but no man is perfect in the sense in which we use this word today. The word also means “complete”, “not lacking in any virtue”, “having integrity”, “ethically pure” (see note at Gen 17:1). This does not mean that Job was sinless. He had a sinful nature as all men have. But it does mean that he was a man who, by God’s grace and power, was full of virtues, completely equipped in every way for a righteous and holy life. God had given him victory over the sin in his nature. On our sinful nature see notes at Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Rom 3:9-19; 7:5,18; 8:3-4; Gal 5:16-17; Eph 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8.

On “blameless” (or “perfect”) see Gen 6:9; 17:1; Matt 5:48; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:13; Phil 3:12; Col 1:28; 4:12; Jam 1:4.

“Upright”—this means that he was straight in all his dealings, sincere, honest, without crookedness or guile (compare Ps 7:10; 11:2,7; 25:8; 112:2,4; 140:13; Prov 15:8; 16:17).

“Feared God”—notes at 28:28; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3-4; Prov 1:7.

“Shunned evil”—turning from evil is one sure mark of anyone who truly has the fear of God (28:28; Prov 3:7; 8:13; 16:6; 2 Cor 7:1). The character of Job seen here is an example to us all of what a man can and should be. His character was of far more value than all of his material possessions.

1:3 East here means the area lying east of Canaan, extending, perhaps, to the Euphrates river.

1:5 These words reveal the love Job had for God and for his own children, his knowledge of the sinfulness of the human heart, and his activity

of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts”. Thus Job did continually.

⁶Now a day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

⁷And the LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it”.

⁸And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that *there is* no one like him on the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”

⁹Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing?

as priest as head of the family. Note on priest at Ex 28:1; on burnt offering at Lev 1:2-3.

1:6 “A day came”—here we are given a glimpse into the unseen spiritual realm. What happened later to Job had its source there.

“Sons of God”—2:1; 38:7. Compare Gen 6:2. Here the words indicate angels. Evidently they came to stand in God’s presence to give an account of their activities and to receive further orders.

“Satan”—see note at 1 Chron 21:1. He too must come to stand before God. In some sense his activities are restricted by God’s supreme will. He is not free to do as he would like or all that he would wish to do. When God sees it is wise and just, He allows Satan (or other evil spirits or demons) to bring troubles on men and to test and try God’s people.

1:7 God knew where Satan had been. This verse suggests that Satan also is required to give an account of his activities. Satan had been roaming the earth looking for opportunities to do evil (1 Pet 5:8). He is not, like God, able to be everywhere at once.

1:8 “Job”—God is not calling attention to a person Satan has not considered. The next two verses seem to make it clear that Satan had been watching Job.

“No one like him”—according to God Himself Job was the best man on earth in his generation. We should keep this fact in mind all through our study of this book. Otherwise we will not understand it as well as we should.

1:9 This is Satan’s evaluation of the piety of the best man on earth, and so of all religious people. He is saying that men will serve and worship God only for what they can get out of it, that among the whole of mankind there is no such thing as genuine love for God or reverence for Him, that the basis of all religion is selfishness.

Unfortunately, Satan’s evaluation is correct to a large extent. Sinful men indeed think only of themselves and what they can get from God rather than how they can love, please, and serve

¹⁰Have you not made a hedge around him and around his house and around all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face”.

¹²And the LORD said to Satan, “See, all that he has *is* in your power; only do not stretch out your hand to *the man* himself”. So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house; ¹⁴and a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing, and the donkeys were feeding beside them, ¹⁵and the Sabeans attacked and took them away. Yes, they killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I

alone have escaped to tell you”.

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you”.

¹⁷While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and attacked the camels and carried them away; yes, and they killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you”.

¹⁸While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house; ¹⁹and, see, a great wind came from the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young men, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you”.

God. But God can and does work in the hearts of individuals to change them, give them a new nature, and pour his love into their inner being. Such people serve God truly and are willing to suffer the loss of all things for His sake (Mark 10:28; Luke 5:11,27,28; 14:33; Rom 5:5; Phil 3:8; Heb 10:32-34; 11:36-38).

Judging from the information we have in the Bible we can say that Satan does not want to admit this and goes on accusing and opposing God’s people (Rev 12:10), and that his aim is to get people to turn against God, reject Him, and even curse Him. They who do so are siding with Satan, though they may not even be aware of Satan’s existence. Satan hates God and wants all men to hate Him. He also hates men and wants God to hate them and judge, punish, and destroy them. **1:10-11** Satan makes his view of Job (and so of all pious people) quite clear. Job, he is saying, served and worshiped God only because of God’s material blessings and protection; take away these and Job’s piety will go with them. In the case of Job we can see that this was not true. But is it true of us? Will we lose our devotion to God if He allows disaster to come on our possessions and on our children? **1:10** “*Hedge*”— nothing can touch God’s people without God’s permission. He is a shield to them, a hedge around them—2:6; Gen 15:1; Ps 18:2; 28:7. **1:12** God accepted Satan’s challenge concerning Job. He Himself would not raise His hand against Job, but would allow Satan to put his theory to the test. God often tries His people and allows them to be tested by circumstances (notes at Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12). The result of such trials is glory to God and great honor and spiritual good to those who come through them. In other words, God uses all the accusations, opposition, and activities of Satan against Him and His people to bring good

(notes at Gen 50:20; Num 24:25; Rom 8:28). Job was God’s masterpiece of spiritual workmanship in that generation (compare Eph 2:10). God would not shield him from testing.

1:13-19 Satan now reveals what happens to possessions and persons when he is given the opportunity to injure them. He is a destroyer and a murderer (John 8:44). We have reason to believe that he would, if permitted by God, do similar things to every one of God’s people. If he does not, it is only because God still keeps His protective “fence” about them (Ps 3:3; 5:12; 32:7; Deut 33:27; John 17:15; 1 Pet 1:5). Satan, of course, may actually increase the wealth and position of those on his side, or of those who yield to his temptations for these things. But this too, as he well knows, will result in their eventual destruction.

1:14-15 The Sabeans were a nomadic tribe ranging here and there in northern Arabia.

1:16 Some scholars think the words “the fire of God” means lightning flashes. But it may have been fire that Satan caused to fall from the sky (compare Rev 13:13). In any case, the man who reported it to Job was mistaken if he thought God Himself had sent the fire.

1:17 “*Still speaking*”— no time was given Job to recover from one shock until news of another disaster was brought to him. Satan tried to overwhelm and crush him with calamities swiftly following one after the other.

“*Chaldeans*”— a people living to the east or northeast of the land of Uz.

1:19 “*A great wind*”— evidently Satan can cause destructive winds. Now the greatest blow of all falls on Job’s loving heart and stunned mind. What is the loss of all the 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys, and 7000 sheep, and 3000 camels compared with the loss of all of his ten children?

²⁰Then Job arose and tore his cloak and shaved his head, and prostrated himself on the ground and worshipped, ²¹and said, “Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD”.

²²In all this Job did not sin, or charge God foolishly.

2 There was another day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. ²And the LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” And Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it”.

³And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that *there*

1:20 In this verse and the next we have one of the great moments in the whole Bible, in the whole of human history. It should fill us with admiration. Job’s faith rises superior to all his loss and sorrow. Satan is proved a liar. And God’s work of grace in human hearts is shown to be powerful and real. Instead of uttering the curse Satan had predicted, Job praises God. Notice that Job does not blame the Sabaeans or Chaldeans or wind or fire or even Satan for his losses. He did not think these losses were the result of accidents or men’s cruelty or the powers of nature. He says God gave, God took away. He recognizes God’s sovereignty in everything. He knows the things which have happened could not happen unless God permitted them.

“*Tore...shaved*”— expressions of deep grief.

1:21 “*Naked*”— Ps 49:17; Eccl 5:15; 1 Tim 6:7.

“*Taken away*”— we have all sinned against God and so deserve nothing good from His hand. If we have anything it is because of God’s free grace. If He takes away what He lets us have for a while, there is no injustice at all in that. And Job here accepts this, even though he can see no reason why such misfortunes should come to him.

“*Blessed be the name of the LORD*”— Job revealed the truth of verses 1 and 8 by being able to praise God even in circumstances like these. Ps 33:1 (note); 50:23; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

1:22 Many there are in this world who foolishly charge God with injustice toward them when they experience losses much less than Job’s.

2:3 Job’s calamities have not changed his character in the slightest. God says he is just as good a man as he was before (1:1,8).

2:4-5 Satan’s meaning is that although Job did not curse God because of the loss of all things, this was not because he was truly devoted to God, but because he was afraid that if he cursed God, God would take his life. He is saying that every person is so selfishly concerned with his own physical well-being that he will do anything to

is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without cause”.

⁴And Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵But now stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face”.

⁶And the LORD said to Satan, “See, he is in your hands; but spare his life”.

⁷So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. ⁸And he took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself with, and sat down among the ashes.

⁹Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold on to your integrity? Curse God, and die!”

preserve it, including making a show of devotion and piety. He means that when a person’s health is gone, if he thinks God is responsible for it, he will turn against God and show that all his religion and piety was rooted only in selfishness and sin.

Satan’s estimate of man’s character in his sinful state is true. But he was wrong about Job (vs 13-15), and about other true believers. When God does His work of saving and transforming individuals He makes them willing to suffer and give up even their lives for Him (John 11:16; Acts 20:24; 21:13; Heb 11:36-38; Rev 12:11; Luke 14:26; Matt 10:38-39). It is a great glory to God to have children who will love Him in spite of personal disasters and who will endure everything for Him, even great pain and death.

2:6 Satan can do nothing to God’s people without God’s permission (1:12). Why should God give him permission? Because He knows it is better to give permission than to refuse it. This matter we may not fully understand on this earth (Isa 55:8-9; Rom 11:33-34). We must simply trust God and believe that He knows better than we do what should and should not be done or permitted.

2:7 When Satan is permitted he will do what he can to torment men. One boil on the body can be very painful. Imagine what severe and constant pains would result from burning, itching, festering sores over the whole body. Later in the book several verses reveal the intense suffering that Job experienced because of this (2:8; 3:24; 6:10; 7:4-5; 13:28; 16:8,17; 17:1; 19:20; 30:17,30).

2:8 A sign of deep mourning (42:6; Jer 6:26; Jonah 3:6). Job felt that his whole life was in ashes.

2:9 Satan now uses Job’s wife as a tool to bring his message to Job and to increase his sorrow. She wonders what use there can be in integrity and devotion to God if they do not prevent such terrible loss and sufferings as those which came to Job. When she says “curse God and die” she is expressing the hope of Satan. It is not likely that she is suggesting suicide. Possibly she supposes

¹⁰But he said to her, “You are speaking like one of the foolish women speaks. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive trouble?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

¹¹Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this trouble that had come on him, each of them came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and to comfort him.

that if Job cursed God, God would kill him and put him out of his misery.

2:10 The Hebrew word translated “foolish” means both foolish and lacking in righteous character. Job does not call his wife a foolish woman but only says she is talking like one. He knew, and we should remember, that she too had lost ten children in one day, and had been watching her husband’s intense suffering. The sudden loss of even one child sometimes makes a mother almost insane with grief.

“*Trouble*”— the Hebrew word used here has many meanings – trouble, evil, or something disagreeable, unpleasant, sad, miserable or hurtful.

“*Sin*”— Job by refusing to sin against God with his words once again proved Satan a liar and shut his mouth. Satan is defeated and appears no more in the story of Job. Job also shows that he was indeed the best human being on earth in his generation. No doubt then, as now, most people blamed God for every disaster and did not praise Him for any good they enjoyed.

2:11 As far as we can see these three men from neighboring regions came in a spirit of true friendship and with the best of motives. But they turned out to be poor comforters and only added to Job’s sorrows (16:2). We do not know how long a period of time elapsed between the onset of Job’s bodily sufferings and the visit of his friends, but in 7:3 Job speaks of months of suffering.

2:12 Could these friends have expected that the greatest man in the East (1:3) would be covered with loathsome sores and be sitting in ashes? They were stunned and overcome with grief (Josh 7:16; Neh 9:1; Lam 2:10; Ezek 27:30). Seven days was not an unusual time of mourning in ancient times (Gen 50:10; 1 Sam 31:13).

2:13 During these seven days it is likely that Job’s friends began to doubt whether he was a good and righteous man. This comes out later in their speeches. They could not understand why God would permit such disasters and suffering to come on him if he had not sinned very grievously.

3:1 From here to the end of chapter 31 we have the words of Job and his three friends concerning Job’s sufferings. They have spent seven days together, each one trying to think through the problem of why such terrible troubles have come upon him. Job

¹²And when they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept, and each of them tore his cloak and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. ¹³So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

3 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*. ²And Job spoke and said,

speaks first. For a long time he has been in constant pain, thinking about his sufferings and losses. Why has God treated me like this? What evil have I done? What hope remains for me? Is not death better than such a life? And is not being born at all not the best of all? Questions like these have troubled his mind and pressed like a great weight on his spirit. He understands nothing of what has happened and he has no answers for any of his problems.

He has, of course, no knowledge of the words spoken by Satan and by God in heaven. His friends have brought him no light, no comfort. He has lost the fellowship with God which he had long enjoyed. He prays, he cries out in his anguish of body and heart, but God is silent toward him. He is in a state of deep depression.

And remember that Job had no such promises as John 16:33; Rom 8:17-18,28; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 3:12-13; Rev 7:17; 21:3-4. These verses had not yet been written. Job did not know of the wonderful display of God’s love through the cross of Christ. That had not yet taken place. God progressively, here a little, there a little, revealed His truth in human history and Job lived toward the dawn of God’s written revelation. He had no promise of God that gave enlightenment and encouragement in his situation. He could only use his human reason to try to understand what had happened. But his reason failed to bring him any comfort. For what had happened seemed contrary to reason and all he knew about God.

Suddenly like the bursting of a dam his heart and mouth open and all his pent-up emotions, his tortured thoughts pour forth. No one should think to judge harshly what he said. The words he spoke in this chapter are the words of a man who in both body and mind is wounded almost beyond endurance. (See Job’s own comments about this in 6:2-4,11-13; 7:11.) Remember that he was the best man on earth according to God’s own word (2:3). Not one of us in his situation and in his time would have behaved or spoken better than he. Indeed would any of us have spoken as well?

Of course, a believer now with God’s full revelation of truth in the Bible, if he meets suffering and disaster, should never allow himself to use such language as Job here used. But let us keep in mind how little he had of God’s revelation.

³“May the day I was born perish, and the night *in which* it was said, ‘A male child is conceived.’

⁴May that day be darkness. May God not regard it from above, and may the light not shine on it. ⁵May darkness and the shadow of death claim it. May a cloud settle on it. May the blackness of the day terrify it. ⁶As for that night, may darkness seize it. May it not be joined to the days of the year. May it not come into the number of the months.

⁷Oh, may that night be barren. May no joyful voice come into it. ⁸May those who curse days curse it, *those* who are ready to rouse Leviathan. ⁹May the stars of its twilight be dark. May it look for light, but *have* none, *and* may it not see the dawning of the day,

¹⁰Because it did not shut up the doors of my *mother’s* womb, or hide sorrow from my eyes.

¹¹“Why did I not die at birth? *Why* did I not expire when I came out of the womb?

¹²Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts that I should suck?

¹³For now I would have been lying still and quiet; I would have been sleeping. Then

I would have been at rest,

¹⁴With kings and counsellors of the earth, who built up the ruins for themselves,

¹⁵Or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses *with* silver.

¹⁶Or *why* was I not hidden like a still-born child, like infants *who* never saw light?

¹⁷There the wicked cease *from* troubling, and there the weary are at rest.

¹⁸*There* the prisoners rest together. They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.

¹⁹The small and great are there, and the servant *is* freed from his master.

²⁰“Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter *in* soul,

²¹Who long for death, but it *does* not *come*, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures,

²²Who rejoice exceedingly *and* are glad when they can find the grave?

²³*Why is light given* to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in?

²⁴For my sighing comes before I eat, and my groans pour out like water.

²⁵For the thing which I greatly feared has

3:3 See Jeremiah’s words (Jer 20:14-18).

3:8 Note on Leviathan at 41:1.

3:11 10:18-19.

3:13-19 More than anything else Job longs for rest and quietness for body and mind. So death seemed to him sweeter than life.

3:20 Job’s question here has troubled men from the beginning of recorded history. The question is, what is the point in living when life is full of suffering and seems without hope and purpose? To Job life had become absurd and practically impossible. It was not given him to see any of the reasons for the sufferings of God’s people, as revealed in other places in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament (Deut 8:2,16; Ps 66:10-12; Prov 17:3; Rom 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:17; 12:7-10; Heb 2:10; 12:5-11; Jam 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7).

None of us fully understands God’s dealings with men, or the reasons for all the misery and suffering that come on God’s people. In the book of Job itself no reason is given. God at the end merely reveals Himself as the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of the universe. But in the light of the teachings of the Bible as a whole several reasons may be given to the question that arises about the sufferings and trials of the righteous.

These come to prove the reality of a believer’s faith and to strengthen and purify it.

They develop the great virtue of patience.

They awaken believers out of lethargy and ease and stir them up to thought, self examination, and prayer.

They aim a blow at any remaining

self-righteousness and boasting or self-indulgence in believers.

They help to break believers away from the bonds of earth and make them seek their all in God.

They help them to appreciate more fully Christ’s sufferings for them.

Patiently endured they shut Satan’s mouth and greatly glorify God.

They help to reveal and perfect the believer’s character and to make it more Christ-like.

And they work for believers an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17).

3:21-22 Job had no fear of what might lay beyond death. His conscience did not accuse him about anything. He was not afraid to stand before God and give an account of his life. Longings for death are not uncommon even among the best of God’s people (see Num 11:15; 1 Kings 19:4; Jer 20:14-18; Jonah 4:8; Phil 1:23). See notes on fear of death at Ps 55:4-5; and 116:15. But suicide was a sin not even to be considered. Suicide is the same as murder.

3:23 “*Hedged in*” – in Hebrew the same expression used in 1:10 appears with an entirely different meaning. Job means that he can see no way out of his difficulties and sorrows. He feels utterly bewildered, shut in a narrow place and in the dark (19:8; Lam 3:5).

3:25 Job is probably not referring to the sudden loss of children, property, and health – see 29:18-20. The fear he had may have come after those calamities, and may have been the fear of completely losing God’s fellowship and the

come on me, and what I was afraid of has come to me.

²“I am not at ease; I have no rest; I am not quiet, for turmoil has come”.

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

²“If one attempts a word with you, will you be grieved? But who can keep himself from speaking?”

³Look, you have instructed many, and have strengthened weak hands.

⁴Your words have held up him who was falling, and you have strengthened feeble knees.

⁵But now it has come on you, and you faint. It touches you, and you are troubled.

⁶Is not your fear of God your confidence, your hope, and the uprightness of your ways?

⁷“Please remember, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous

light of God’s countenance. To a man like Job in those circumstances this would have been a great fear indeed, and he thought this fear was being fulfilled.

3:26 “*Turmoil*” – the Hebrew word indicates inner trouble, mental agitation, restlessness of heart, not outward turmoil.

4:1 Apparently Eliphaz was the leading spokesman for the three friends of Job. He speaks first, and he uses “we” in 5:27, indicating that the other two shared his opinions. Also he has far more to say than the other two combined. Eliphaz came from Teman, a place later renowned for wisdom (Jer 49:7; Oba 1:8-9). According to Elihu, who appears toward the end of the book, these three friends are old and wise (32:6; 34:2). Certainly much of what they say is true and good, and some of their remarks and words of advice would no doubt have fit the case of many people. But, for the most part, their words were not appropriate for Job’s case. Actually they misjudged Job altogether and could bring no answer to his problem and no comfort to his heart. It will take some wisdom on our part to discern what is true and good in the speeches of these friends, and what is mistaken.

4:2-6 Eliphaz begins very politely. He sees Job’s great suffering and does not wish to add to it. But he feels some things must be said even though they may cause Job more pain. Eliphaz soon reveals that he has strong doubts about Job’s character and piety. Job, he says, taught others but could not teach himself. And if Job’s piety is real why has he abandoned all hope and confidence? He does not yet say that Job’s piety is not real (as he does later – 15:4-6; 22:4-6). But plainly he doubts it.

ever cut off?

⁸As I have seen, those who plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

⁹By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed.

¹⁰The roaring of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken.

¹¹The old lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

¹²“Now a word was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a whisper of it.

¹³In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men,

¹⁴Fear and trembling came on me, which made all my bones shake.

¹⁵Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my body stood up.

¹⁶It stood still, but I could not discern its shape. An image was before my eyes. *There was silence; and I heard a voice, saying,*

4:7-9 Eliphaz reveals here what he believes is God’s principle of governing the world – if God sends great calamities it is because of great guilt on the part of those who suffer them. Job’s ten children were not innocent and upright, Eliphaz thinks, and that is why they were destroyed. He is willing for the time to give Job the benefit of the doubt – since Job hasn’t perished yet he may not have sinned so greatly as to be worthy of destruction.

Are Eliphaz’s views on the matter completely correct? They are not. It is true that God sometimes sends calamities on the wicked and destroys them (Gen 6:5-7; 19:24-25; 2 Chron 36:15-16). But in natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes, and in times of war, the innocent and righteous sometimes die together with the guilty and wicked. And troubles, losses, and difficulties come to both good people and bad. Indeed sometimes the wicked have less trouble on this earth than the righteous and die at ease in ripe old age (see Job’s remarks at 21:7-13).

4:8 Prov 22:8; Hos 10:13; Gal 6:7.

4:9 Isa 11:4; 30:33; 2 Thess 2:8.

4:10-11 God knows how to deal with those who are cruel and bloodthirsty as lions. Eliphaz does not yet apply this directly to Job and still may be doubting whether Job is like that. He becomes more clear in his charges against Job in his second and third speeches (chapters 15 and 22).

4:12-16 In this frightening and mysterious experience that came to him Eliphaz believes God sent him a message and that this message fits Job’s case exactly. But it did not. Just because a man thinks he has been inspired by God does not make it so.

¹⁷Can a mortal be more just than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?

¹⁸Consider, he puts no trust in his servants, and he charges his angels with error.

¹⁹How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, *who* are crushed before the moth?

²⁰They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish forever without anyone regarding *it*.

²¹Does not their abundance *which is* among them go away? They die, still without wisdom.'

5 "Call out now; is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn?

²For anger kills the foolish man, and envy slays the simple one.

³I have seen a fool taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

⁴His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate; nor *is there* anyone to rescue *them*.

⁵The hungry eat up their harvest, taking

4:17-21 The message Eliphaz gives Job is this: all are weak and sinful, including Job, and when punishment comes because of wrongdoing no one should be surprised or try to defend himself (5:1). He implies that all that has happened to Job and his family was because of some sins or other they had committed. Eliphaz believes that Job in his opening remarks (chapter 3) should have confessed his sin and begged God for mercy, instead of raging against his fate and complaining about God's dealings with him. Eliphaz is right when he says all men are sinners and that God punishes the wicked. Many verses of the Bible teach the same thing. But he is wrong in thinking that what has happened to Job was God's punishment for his sins.

4:17-21 9:2; 25:4; Gen 15:6; Rom 3:21-26; 4:5-8; Eph 1:14. (Through the Lord Jesus Christ God has made a way for men to be righteous and pure before Him).

4:19 10:9; 33:6. Words like these indicate that Job and his friends were familiar with the account of man's creation in Gen 2:7.

5:1 The meaning seems to be this: Eliphaz thinks the truth he has stated is so plain that no one should think of disputing it, and that if Job rejects it and tries to find support for his position among either men or angels, not a single one would speak on his behalf.

5:2 Eliphaz means that if Job burns with anger because of his troubles and sufferings and is envious of those not afflicted, the result will be his own destruction.

it even out of the thorns; and the robber swallows up their possessions.

⁶Although affliction does not come out of the dust, or trouble spring out of the ground,

⁷Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

⁸"As for me I would seek God, and I would commit my case to God,

⁹Who does great and unsearchable things, marvellous things without number,

¹⁰Who gives rain on the earth, and sends water on the fields,

¹¹To set on high those who are lowly, so that those who mourn are lifted to safety.

¹²He disappoints the schemes of the crafty, so that their hands cannot carry out *their* plans.

¹³He takes the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the cunning is swept away.

¹⁴They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

¹⁵But he saves the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

¹⁶So the poor have hope, and iniquity shuts its mouth.

¹⁷"See, happy *is* the man whom God

5:3-5 He describes calamities which are very much like those which came on Job, and evidently thinks Job's case may be similar to the wicked fool he refers to in v 3. Why else would he use an illustration like this? He has no idea that Job is a better man than he himself (1:8). It is remarkable that Job listened to this with patience.

5:6-7 Eliphaz means that calamities are not mere acts of nature, not accidents; they are the result of a spiritual law; troubles come because of man's birth in sin and man's sinful acts. God has linked sin and suffering together and no one can escape this law.

5:8 He states what he would do if he were in Job's situation. He evidently thinks that Job has not done so.

5:9-16 He now gives a description of God's ways with men that he thinks will make Job want to turn to God for mercy. Considering the time and place in which he lived he displays a very high view of God – He is a God who does wonders (and so could wonderfully restore the prosperity of Job – v 9); He is the God Who is a kind sovereign over His creation (v 10); He rules justly in the affairs of men to bring punishment to clever evildoers and to rescue their victims (vs 11-16). Part of verse 13 is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 3:19.

5:17-18 The truth of these verses is found in Prov 3:11-12 and Heb 12:5-6. It is a beautiful truth but it was not the truth Job needed in his situation. Job's sufferings were not a result of God's chastisement for sin. God's primary purpose in them was to prove Job's faith and integrity and

corrects. Therefore do not despise the discipline of the Almighty,

¹⁸For he injures, but binds up; he wounds, but his hands bring healing.

¹⁹He will rescue you in six troubles; yes, in seven no evil will touch you.

²⁰In famine he will redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword.

²¹You will be hidden from the lash of the tongue; nor will you be afraid of destruction when it comes.

²²You will laugh at destruction and famine; nor will you be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

²³For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field will be at peace with you.

²⁴And you will know that your tent is in peace, and you will visit your dwelling place, and will not miss anything.

²⁵And you will know that your children are many, and your offspring like the grass of the earth.

²⁶You will reach *your* grave in a full age, like a sheaf of grain comes in, in its season.

²⁷“Consider this. We have searched it out; it

is true. Hear it, and know *it is* for your good”.

6 But Job answered and said,
²“Oh, that my grief were fully weighed, and my calamity laid with it in the balances!

³For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore my words have been wild.

⁴For the arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their poison. The terrors of God set themselves in array against me.

⁵Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass? Or does an ox bellow over its fodder?

⁶Can what is unsavoury be eaten without salt? Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?

⁷My soul refuses to touch them; *they are* like disgusting food to me.

⁸Oh, that I might have my request, and that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!

⁹Oh, that it would please God to crush me! That he would let loose his hand and cut me off! ¹⁰Then I would still have comfort; yes, I would exult in unrelenting pain, for I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

¹¹“What *is* my strength, that I should

shut Satan’s mouth. In general, what use is it for preachers to have fine messages if they do not suit the condition of those who hear them?

5:17 “*Almighty*”—in Hebrew “*Shaddai*”—Gen 17:1.

5:19-26 He is saying that if Job will submit to God and meekly accept His chastisements God will rescue him from trouble (vs 19,20), restore his prosperity (vs 22-24), will give him many children in place of those he lost (vs 26), and restore him to good health (vs 18,26).

5:27 Eliphaz speaks for Bildad and Zophar also. He is very sure that he is giving Job the truth he needs to hear and apply.

6:1-3 In this answer to Eliphaz Job explains why he spoke as he did in chapter 3. He confesses that he spoke rashly. His sufferings were so great that his words were “wild”, or “impetuous”, or “incoherent” (as some other versions translate the Hebrew word in v 3). His friends should have understood this and not judged him harshly (v 26).

6:4 His sorrows, calamities, and sickness seem to him like poison-tipped arrows shot into him by God Himself. These arrows were still sticking in his wounded body and spirit. He had thought he was at peace with God and enjoyed His favor. Now it seemed quite suddenly and without reason God was at war with him. There is no indication here or anywhere in the words of Job or his friends that they thought Satan could be the one who brought those disasters on Job. Both Job and his friends believe God is punishing him. The difference between them is this: Job’s

friends believe he is being punished for some specific sins, Job believes he is being punished for no good reason at all.

Sometimes people add to their sorrows when bad things happen to them by mistakenly thinking God has turned against them. They mistake the raging of Satan for God’s anger. God loved Job very much, views him with great favor, and plans to bless him abundantly. But Job does not know this. **6:5-7** In other words, Job would not cry out and lament if there were not good reasons for it. What a wild donkey or an ox wants is food; what Job wanted was an explanation of his sufferings, some comfort for his mind and heart. But he could find nowhere a single tasty morsel of truth that could meet his need and satisfy him. How Job would have delighted to have the whole Bible! Yet many troubled Christians neglect its treasures of wisdom and understanding.

6:6 “*Taste in the white of an egg?*”—the meaning of the Hebrew words here is uncertain.

6:8-10 Since Job cannot get any answer to his problem his great desire is for one thing – death. Even in the clutches of his pain, even in death, he would have one great consolation – he had remained true to God and to all the revelation of God’s truth he had; he had openly confessed his loyalty to the Lord (1:21; 2:10).

6:11-13 Job speaks of his utter helplessness and hopelessness. Could his friends imagine he had a body that felt no pain? A mind that could hope when all grounds of hope seemed gone?

hope? And what *is* my end, that I should prolong my life?

¹²Is my strength the strength of stones? Or *is* my flesh bronze?

¹³Is it that my help is not in me? And *that* success has been driven from me?

¹⁴“To him who is afflicted kindness *should be shown* by his friend, or he may forsake the fear of the Almighty.

¹⁵My brethren have acted deceitfully, like a brook, *and* like the stream of brooks that pass away,

¹⁶Which are dark because of the ice, *and* in which snow is hidden.

¹⁷When it becomes warm, they cease to flow; when it is hot, they vanish from their place.

¹⁸The paths of their course turn aside; they go nowhere, and perish.

¹⁹The caravans of Tema look, the travelers of Sheba hope for them.

²⁰They are disappointed because they were confident. They arrive there and are confused.

²¹For now you are no *help*. You see a fearful thing and are afraid.

²²Did I say, ‘Bring *something* to me?’ Or, ‘Give a reward for me from your wealth?’

²³Or, ‘Deliver me from the enemy’s hand?’ Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?’

²⁴“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and make me understand where I have gone wrong.

²⁵How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove?

6:14-21 Now he criticizes his friends for their failure to help him. He has revealed to them his despair, but it seems to him that this has only made them turn against him. They have become accusers instead of comforters. His thirsty soul longed for refreshing, restoring truth. When his friends came he hoped for wise counsel from them. Now they appear to him like dried-up streams. Sad and desperate people could not quench their thirst from their words. He is bitterly disappointed and plainly tells them so.

6:22-24 He had not asked them to come or to give him any physical or financial help (for all we know, with the loss of all his property and health he might have needed such help, but it does not seem that they offered any). He asked them for only one thing – clear counsel that would meet his needs. He is willing to admit his sins and errors if they would point them out to him.

6:25-27 He knew the power of words spoken to

²⁶Do you intend to rebuke the words and speeches of one who is desperate, *which are like wind*?

²⁷Yes, you would overwhelm the fatherless, and dig a *pit* for your friend.

²⁸“Now therefore be pleased to look at me, for *it will be* evident to you if I am lying.

²⁹Please relent, let there be no injustice; yes, relent. My righteousness *is* in *question*.

³⁰Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern wrong things?

7 “*Is there* not a hard struggle for man on earth? And *are* his days *not* like the days of a hired man?

²As a servant earnestly desires the shade, and as a hired man looks for *the reward* of his work,

³So I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of weariness have been appointed to me.

⁴When I lie down, I say, ‘When shall I arise, and the night be gone?’ And I have my fill of tossing to and fro until dawn.

⁵My body is clothed with worms and dirty scabs. My skin is broken open, and has become loathsome.

⁶“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.

⁷Oh, remember that my life *is* a breath. My eyes will never again see *what is* good.

⁸The eyes of him who has seen me will see me no *more*; your eyes *will turn* toward me, and I *will not be*.

⁹As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave will

meet the needs of a person. He is saying they have failed to speak such words, and because they have misunderstood his words (in chapter 3), they are behaving very harshly toward him.

6:28-30 He appeals to them very earnestly to consider his righteous life and his integrity, and to stop unjustly accusing him.

7:1-6 This description of Job’s condition can be summed up in two words: misery and hopelessness. According to v 3 Job has been suffering not merely a few days but for a few months.

7:7-11 The words from v 7 to the end of this chapter Job speaks to God. He tells God plainly that he has no further hope of happiness. Only death awaits him. He knows nothing of the doctrine of the resurrection (see note on 14:7-12). He feels he has nothing to lose, so he will give full expression to his grief.

7:9 “*Grave*” – in Hebrew “*Sheol*” – note at Gen 37:35.

not come up *again*.

¹⁰He will return no more to his house, nor will his place know him any more.

¹¹“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.

¹²Am I the sea, or a sea monster, that you set a guard over me?

¹³When I say, ‘My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint’,

¹⁴Then you frighten me with dreams, and terrify me through visions,

¹⁵So that my soul chooses strangling *and* death rather than my life.

¹⁶I loathe *it*. I would not live always. Let me alone, for my days *are* empty.

¹⁷“What *is* man that you should make much of him, and that you should set your heart on him?

¹⁸And *that* you should visit him every morning, *and* test him every moment?

¹⁹Will you never turn away from me,

or let me alone until I swallow down my spittle?

²⁰I have sinned; what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you set me up as your target, so that I am a burden to myself?

²¹And why do you not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? For now I will sleep in the dust, and you will look for me in the morning, but I *will* not *be*”.

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

²“How long will you speak these *things*? And *how long will* the words of your mouth *be like* a strong wind?

³Does God pervert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?

⁴If your children sinned against him and he cast them away for their transgression,

⁵If you would seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty,

7:12 Job means that he is not some turbulent ocean or wild sea monster that needs restraining.

7:13-15 Nights instead of giving rest from suffering added to it, for when he would sleep, dreams or terrifying visions troubled him so that he again longed for death.

7:16 Job 9:21; 10:1; Eccl 2:17; 4:2-3.

7:17-19 Job's question is not, why does God have such a loving concern for man (as in Ps 8:4), but, why does God continually want to inflict pain on feeble men? Why does He examine every action and take such care to send punishment and affliction? Job felt that God's attitude toward him was hostile and wanted God to leave him alone for a while. Actually in the last part of v 18 Job comes near to the reason why calamities have come upon him – testing (compare Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12). But he does not pursue this truth. Perhaps at that time in history and without God's revelation on the subject, and in his condition, he could not have.

7:20 Job does not know of any sins he may have committed that should have brought God's judgment on him. But he asks that even if he had sinned how could that have injured God so much that he became the target for God's anger.

7:21 Job does not deny that he has sinned at times. But he wonders that there is no forgiveness. He knows he is not hardhearted and unrepentant. He believes the end of his life is near and wants assurance of forgiveness for any sins he has committed. What Job spoke about with longing we can now know that we have – Luke 24:46-47; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9.

8:1-2 Bildad thinks Job is very reckless and

impious in his words. In the speech which follows he shows he is in full agreement with Eliphaz.

8:3 He believes that Job is accusing God of injustice. This verse is the basis of all Bildad has to say – God is always working out justice in this world, rewarding the good, punishing the wicked. If disasters and suffering come to a man it is because he deserves them. For God would not punish a person unjustly. Bildad seems to think calamities and sufferings such as Job experienced could only be punishment for wrong doing. He does not understand that God may justly permit afflictions to come to a person to try him, to prove his faith and good character, and that he may allow the wicked to prosper all through life and judge and punish him after death. It is very true, of course, that God does not pervert justice. But it is impossible for men on earth, especially without the full revelation of the Bible, to understand how justice is being worked out.

All three friends of Job had very narrow, rigid, and simplistic views on the outworking of God's justice. Therefore they were sometimes harsh and lacking in sympathy. In these days if we hold the view that everyone on earth is getting just what he deserves, or that if anyone suffers it is his karma being worked out, such a view might tend to make us somewhat unfeeling toward those in misery and suffering.

8:4 With Bildad's views of justice being what they were, no doubt he believed that Job's children had sinned terribly and been destroyed because of it.

8:5 Job 5:8. Bildad apparently assumes with Eliphaz that Job had not done so.

⁶If you *have been* pure and upright, surely now he will awake for you, and restore your righteous dwelling place.

⁷Though your beginning was small, yet in the end you will increase greatly.

⁸“For please ask the former age, and consider what was searched out by their fathers;

⁹For we *are but of yesterday*, and know nothing, because our days on earth *are a shadow*.

¹⁰Will they not teach you, *and* tell you, and utter words from their heart?

¹¹Can papyrus grow up without marsh? Can the reed grow without water?

¹²While it *is still green and* not cut down, it withers before any *other* plant.

¹³So *are* the paths of all who forget God, and the hypocrite’s hope will perish.

¹⁴His hope will be cut off, and his trust *will be a spider’s web*.

¹⁵He leans against his house, but it does

not stand. He holds fast to it, but it does not endure.

¹⁶He *is green* in the sunlight, and his branch spreads out in his garden.

¹⁷His roots wrap around the *rock heap, and* sees the place of stones.

¹⁸If he is destroyed from his place, then *it* will deny him, *saying*, ‘I have not seen you.’

¹⁹See, this *is* the joy of his way, and out of the earth others will grow.

²⁰Consider, God will not cast away a blameless man, nor will he help evildoers.

²¹He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with rejoicing.

²²Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing”.

9 Then Job answered and said,

²“Indeed I know *this is* true. But how can a man be righteous before God?

³If he would dispute with him, he could

8:6-7 Since Job was not destroyed with his children it is barely possible, Bildad thinks, that Job may not be unrighteous. In such case God will restore him to blessing and prosperity. This actually happened in the case of Job (42:10-13). But in general it is not a principle that is valid in this world. Righteousness does not always result in prosperity and sinfulness does not always bring poverty. Prosperity is not necessarily a sign of God’s blessing and poverty is not necessarily a sign of God’s displeasure (see Ps 73:3,12; Luke 6:20-26; 12:33-34; 16:19-31; 18:22; 1 Tim 6:6-9,18,19; Heb 10:32-37; Jam 5:1-6; 1 Pet 4:12-16).

8:8-10 Eliphaz claimed some kind of mystical inspiration for his remarks (4:12-16). Bildad bases his remarks on tradition. He means that the views he and his friends express are not new and not merely their opinions; ancient wisdom taught the same thing. However, that which is called ancient wisdom is not necessarily wisdom, and sometimes is the opposite of wisdom.

8:11-19 The essence of what he says here is this: the wicked may be very prosperous for a little while but they will fall like withered plants. Bildad does not say Job is like the wicked people he describes, but he obviously suspects it. Why else would he use such illustrations? He meant them as a warning to Job.

8:13 “*Hypocrite*”—the Hebrew indicates a profane or godless person.

8:19 This could possibly be translated “See, all the joy it has is that from the soil other plants grow”.

8:20 Verse 3.

8:21-22 He is saying that God will do this if Job is truly righteous and will plead with God (vs 5,6).

9:2 “*True*”—it is not clear with what part of Bildad’s speech Job agrees. He may be referring to its closing words, or to the words of 8:3 which gives the essence of the speech.

“*How can a man be righteous before God?*”—this question is an extremely important one, one that is at the heart of man’s need and of God’s revelation in the Bible. But there is no answer to it in Job. It may be that Job did not expect any answer. He is simply admitting man’s general sinfulness and ignorance. He probably means something like this: “All men, including myself, are sinners. I know it well. It is impossible for anyone to stand before God and argue that he is perfectly righteous, and I am certainly not able to do so”. But there is a way for man to be perfectly righteous before God. See Gen 15:6; Rom 3:21-26; Phil 3:9.

9:3-20 If it comes to an argument with God, Job knows he has no hope of winning it. He knows himself to be too weak, too foolish, too reckless in speech, too unskilled in debate (vs 3,14-16,20). And he knows that God is the wise and powerful Creator of the universe, and can do what He pleases with His creation (vs 4-10). Job had learned some great truth about God. He looks at the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, and knows that creation is only the work of God’s hands. He knows too that there is only one true God. God, Job says in v 11, is in the universe as an invisible Spirit. Job knows also that in the affairs of men God is all-powerful (vs 12,13). Here Job probably means by this that God has taken away his children and there is nothing he or anyone else could do about it. “Bear”, etc – constellations.

not answer him one in a thousand.

⁴*He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against him, and prospered?*

⁵He removes the mountains, and they do not know. He overturns them in his anger.

⁶He shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble.

⁷He commands the sun, and it does not rise, and he seals off the stars.

⁸He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea.

⁹He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

¹⁰He does great things past finding out, yes, and wonders without number.

¹¹Lo and behold, he goes by me, and I do not see him; and he passes on, but I do not perceive him.

¹²See, if he takes away, who can hinder him? Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?'

¹³If God does not withdraw his anger, the allies of the proud cower beneath him.

¹⁴How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

¹⁵Even if I were righteous, yet I would not answer him, but I would make supplication to my judge.

¹⁶If I called, and he had answered me, yet I would not believe that he would listen to my voice.

9:13 "*The proud*"— in Hebrew "*Rahab*" — note at 26:12.

9:21-24 The words of Job in these verses (and in 19:6) are the hardest he ever spoke about God. He reaches here the lowest point of his despair, his misunderstanding of God's dealings with him. He pictures God as a cruel despot, a tyrant who acts in an arbitrary way without compassion, a God who makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

But these words do not prove that Job was a wicked man. They show what unceasing pain and sorrow and the pressure of tormenting questions can do to even the best man on earth. A desperate man, in agony of body and mind, does not speak like an unfallen angel or an untroubled saint. But notice that even now Job does not deny God, does not fall into the folly and wickedness of atheism. Satan tempts people to atheism by arguments like these: the world is full of unjust suffering and disasters coming on the innocent; if there were a God He would not permit it. Satan's way of reasoning with men is this:

¹⁷For he breaks me with a tempest, and increases my wounds without cause.

¹⁸He will not allow me to take my breath, but fills me with bitterness.

¹⁹If I speak of strength, see, he is strong; and if I speak of judgment, who will set a time for me to plead?

²⁰If I justified myself, my own mouth would condemn me. If I say, 'I am blameless', it would prove me perverse.

²¹"Even if I were blameless, yet I would not know myself; I despise my life.

²²It is all one. Therefore I said, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'

²³If the scourge suddenly kills, he laughs at the trial of the innocent.

²⁴The earth has been given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If not he, then who is it?

²⁵Now my days are swifter than a runner. They flee away, they see no good.

²⁶They pass away like swift ships, like the eagle hurrying to the prey.

²⁷If I say, 'I will forget my complaint; I will put off my sad face, and comfort myself',

²⁸I am afraid of all my pains. I know that you will not hold me innocent.

²⁹If I am wicked, then why should I labour in vain?

³⁰Even if I wash myself with snow water, and cleanse my hands with soap,

³¹Yet you will plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes will abhor me.

(a) If God existed the innocent would not suffer.

(b) The fact is the innocent do suffer.

(c) Therefore God does not exist.

Satan himself does not believe this, but he persuades some people to believe it, and convinces them that this reasoning is sound. Job does not fall into that trap, but v 24 shows how puzzled he is by the problem of evil in the world. He asks why God doesn't prevent it instead of seeming to side with it. Without the full revelation of God's truth given in the Bible neither Job nor anyone else could understand much of God's ways with men. Even those of us who know the whole Bible are sometimes much perplexed at what is going on in the world (but should never be in despair). We too, like Job, must walk by faith (2 Cor 5:7). We must look at unseen things, not things which are seen (2 Cor 4:18).

9:25-26 Job 7:6; Ps 39:5; Isa 38:12.

9:27-31 He felt God condemned him without cause and accused him though he has led a clean life. He sees no way to forget his sufferings, clear himself from condemnation and be happy.

³²For *he is* not a man like me *that* I should answer him, *and* we should come together in judgment.

³³Nor is there anyone to arbitrate between us, *that he* might lay his hand on both of us.

³⁴Let him remove his rod from me, and let not his fear terrify me.

³⁵*Then* I would speak, and not fear him. But *it is* not so with me.

10 “My soul is weary of my life. I will give full rein to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

²I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me. Show me why you contend with me.

³*Is it* good for you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands, and shine on the counsel of the wicked?

⁴Have you eyes of flesh? Or do you see as man sees?

⁵Are your days like the days of man? *Are* your years like man’s days,

⁶That you inquire about my iniquity, and search for my sin?

⁷You know that I am not wicked; and *there is* no one who can rescue from your hand.

⁸“Your hands have made me and formed me altogether; yet you destroy me.

⁹Remember, I beg you, that you have

made me like clay; and will you bring me into dust again?

¹⁰Have you not poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese?

¹¹You have clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews.

¹²You have granted me life and favour, and your care has preserved my spirit.

¹³And these *things* you have hidden in your heart. I know that this *is* with you:

¹⁴If I sin, then you take note of me, and you will not acquit me from my iniquity.

¹⁵If I am wicked, woe to me! And *if* I am righteous, I will *still* not lift up my head. I am full of shame. Therefore see my affliction,

¹⁶For it is increasing. You hunt me like a fierce lion, and again show your marvellous power against me.

¹⁷You renew your witnesses against me, and increase your indignation toward me. Changes and miserable struggle *are* my lot.

¹⁸“Why then did you bring me out of the womb? Oh, that I had expired, and no eye had seen me!

¹⁹I would have been as though I had not been. I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.

²⁰*Are* not my days few? Cease *then*, and leave me alone, that I may have a little

9:32-35 Job felt a need for someone to bring him and God together, to settle the dispute, to cause God to take away His punishing rod. In a far greater measure than Job could imagine the Lord Jesus Christ meets this need. He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5). He is the believer’s advocate in heaven (1 John 2:1). Through Him reconciliation has been made between God and man and direct access to God provided (2 Cor 5:18-19; Eph 2:17-18; Heb 10:19-22).

10:1 7:11. He has decided to hide absolutely nothing of his thoughts and feelings. He gives free expression to what many people conceal in their hearts because they are afraid to bring them out into the open. Job is not concerned with what people might think of his words. He wants only the truth.

10:2 His conscience accuses him of nothing and he wants to know what God has against him (6:24; 13:23). He does not know that God has nothing against him, but loves him and views him with favor and satisfaction.

Notice how Job in the middle of a discussion with his friends suddenly begins to speak directly to God (7:7-21; 10:2-22; 13:20—14:22; 16:7-8; 17:3-4; 30:20-23). Job’s friends never do this. Obviously Job was a man of prayer. He had the

habit of speaking to God (12:4). He pours out all his thoughts and desires at the feet of the great Creator of the universe. God would have all of us do this (Ps 62:8). He knows how some of our thoughts and questions are foolish and tainted with sin. But He understands our longings for Him and our desire for the truth, and He approves honesty of expression.

10:3 9:23-24. Job thinks that if God is so keen to punish why does He not punish the wicked who deserve it instead of people like himself who do not, in Job’s view, deserve it (compare Ps 73:3-5,12-14).

10:4-7 Job’s friends have been searching for some sin in Job that will account for the disasters which have come on him. Why, Job asks, should God seek for his sin as they did? He is aware that God knows all things. If God sees some sin in Job that merits punishment Job wants God to reveal plainly what it is.

10:8-11 Ps 119:73; 139:13-16.

10:12-17 Though God has given him life and showed him kindness it seems to Job now that all the time God was like a harsh judge looking for some excuse to punish him, like a lion pursuing him to destruction.

10:18-19 3:3,11,16.

10:20 7:16,19.

comfort,

²¹Before I go to the place from which I will not return, to the land of darkness and the shadow of death,

²²A land of darkness, like darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where even the light is like darkness.’ ”

11 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite and said,

²“Should not so many words be answered? And should a man full of talk be justified?

³Should your empty words make men keep silent? And when you mock, should no man make you ashamed?

⁴For you have said, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in your eyes.’

⁵But oh, that God would speak, and open his lips against you,

⁶And show you the secrets of wisdom, that they are double what seems to be! Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves.

⁷“Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?

10:21-22 Job had no hopes of heaven to cheer him, no verses like John 14:2-3, no descriptions like Rev 21:10-23 (what a privilege it is to live now with the whole of God’s revelation in our hands!). In the time in which Job lived not much was known about the condition of men’s spirits after death. God had revealed very little about it. Job’s view that they went to a place of utter darkness was not an uncommon one (Ps 88:10-12). Only in the New Testament do we have God’s full revelation concerning this subject (2 Tim 1:10). There we see that true believers will forever live in a place where there is no darkness at all (Rev 22:5).

11:1-3 Zophar is in full agreement with Eliphaz and Bildad. He believes that Job has grievously sinned, and that his words are vain and irreverent.

11:4 Job had not said this. Zophar thinks this is the meaning of some of the things Job had said, but to get such a meaning he had to twist Job’s words. Job had confessed his ignorance (9:2-3), and humbly revealed his desire for understanding (6:24; 10:2). He knew that at times in his life he had sinned (7:21).

11:5 Zophar’s wish is fulfilled in 38:1.

11:6 Zophar thinks that God has been merciful to Job and punished him less than he deserved.

11:7-10 He can teach Job nothing about this. Job himself has said similar things (9:4-12).

11:8 “*Than hell*”—in Hebrew “*than Sheol*”—note at Gen 37:35.

11:12 Zophar thinks it is practically impossible for a foolish man (as he thinks Job is) to become

⁸They are as high as heaven; what can you do? Deeper than hell; what can you know?

⁹Their measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

¹⁰“If he cuts off, or shuts up, or gathers together, then who can hinder him?

¹¹For he knows vain men. He also sees wickedness. Will he not then consider it?

¹²For an idiot can no more become wise than a wild donkey’s colt can be born a man!

¹³“If you prepare your heart, and stretch out your hands toward him,

¹⁴Putting iniquity far away, if it is in your hand, and not letting wickedness dwell in your tents,

¹⁵Then you would be able to lift up your face without spot; yes, you would be steadfast, and not fear,

¹⁶Because you would forget your misery, and remember it like waters that pass away.

¹⁷And your life would be brighter than noonday; you would shine forth like the morning.

¹⁸And you would be secure, because there is hope; yes, you would look around and you would rest securely.

wise. He is quite sure that a wild donkey can never become a man. The writers of the Bible all knew that men are men and animals are animals and that the one would never become the other. There is no kind of reincarnation taught in the Bible. There is never the slightest suggestion by anyone in the book of Job (or in the rest of Bible) that Job (or anyone) was possibly being punished for sins done in a former life.

The Bible is God’s revelation to men. It contains all the truth they need now to know. The Bible completely ignores the Hindu and Buddhist teaching of reincarnation. By ignoring it the Bible shows that the idea of reincarnation does not contain any truth that men need, does not explain a single thing we should know. The Bible teaches resurrection, not reincarnation. According to the Bible a person lives but once on this earth and dies but once. At the end there will be the resurrection of the dead and God’s judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 17:31; Heb 9:27). See also notes on John 3:3; 9:3.

11:13-19 He says if only Job would repent and turn to God for mercy he would be restored. He and his friends probably thought they were being very compassionate and sympathetic when they held out such hope to Job. Actually much of what they say about repentance and restoration is good. But it does not suit Job’s case (5:17-18).

11:13 He, like his friends, assumes that Job has not done so. It was a false assumption.

¹⁹Also you would lie down, without anyone making you afraid. Yes, many would beg your favour.

²⁰But the eyes of the wicked will fail, and they will not escape, and their hope *will be like* giving up one's last breath".

12 And Job answered and said, ²"No doubt you *are* the people, and wisdom will die with you!

³But I have understanding as well as you. I *am* not inferior to you; yes, who does not know such things as these?

⁴"I am like someone mocked by his neighbours, *one* who called on God, and he answered him. The just upright man *is* laughed to scorn.

⁵Someone at ease regards a lamp with contempt, as made ready for one whose feet slip.

⁶The tents of robbers prosper, and those who provoke God are secure *in* what God brings into their hands.

⁷"But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

⁸Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare it to you.

⁹Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

¹⁰In his hand *is* the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

¹¹Does not the ear test words, and the mouth taste its food?

¹²With the aged *is* wisdom, and in length

of days is understanding.

¹³"With him *is* wisdom and strength; he has counsel and understanding.

¹⁴See, he breaks down, and it cannot be rebuilt. He imprisons a man, and there can be no release.

¹⁵See, he withholds water, and the *streams* dry up; and he sends them out, and they overwhelm the earth.

¹⁶With him *are* strength and wisdom. The deceived and the deceiver *are* his.

¹⁷He leads counsellors away plundered, and makes fools of judges.

¹⁸He loosens the bonds of kings, and ties up their waist with a belt.

¹⁹He leads princes away plundered, and overthrows the mighty.

²⁰He deprives the trusted ones of speech, and takes away the understanding of the aged.

²¹He pours contempt on princes, and weakens the strength of the mighty.

²²He reveals the deep things of darkness, and brings the shadow of death to the light.

²³He increases the nations, and destroys them. He enlarges nations, and guides them.

²⁴He takes away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causes them to wander in a wilderness *where there is* no way.

²⁵They grope in the dark without light, and he makes them stagger like a drunkard.

13 "Look, my eyes have seen all *this*, my ears have heard and understood it.

²What you know, I also know. I *am* not

11:20 Zophar closes with a warning he mistakenly thinks Job much needs.

12:2-3 Now Job has heard each of his three friends speak and this is the way things seem to him: his friends are professing a great wisdom but what they say is very ordinary; they try to advise him from a superior position but are unable to say a single thing he doesn't already know, and they cannot get to the root of his problem. So he speaks these words in a very sarcastic manner. If we counsel others let us do it in such a way that we will not provoke a similar response.

12:4 Job means that it has been his custom to pray and that God has sent answers to his prayers (though God is silent now).

12:5 Job's friends are not suffering, have experienced no calamities. It is easy, he says, for them to look with contempt on him. No one who has not been through something of what Job suffered can possibly understand him. Compare 2 Cor 1:3-7.

12:6 This has been Job's view all along – God does not deal with men in this world according to their character (9:22,24; 10:3). Job's friends

believe just the opposite.

12:7-12 Job returns to the thoughts of vs 2,3. He thinks his friends, though they are old, have still much to learn and that nature could teach them. Compare Ps 19:1-4.

12:13-25 He now shows them that he knows as much about God's wisdom and power as they do. He believes, even as they do, that God is supremely wise, is the absolute sovereign ruler in all the affairs of men. (Compare Ps 33:10-11; 47:2; 115:3; 135:6; Dan 4:34-35.)

13:1-5 Job did not speak like this because he was proud and boastful. His meaning is this: "My friends, what you and I know very well is not enough to solve the problem of why awful disasters have come upon me. Stop pretending that your wisdom can give all the answers. You are like worthless doctors bringing false remedies. If you can't say something more sensible than you have so far, then please keep quiet. I will try to get an answer from God alone". The lies they made up (v 4) were the accusation of wickedness they made against him.

inferior to you.

³Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

⁴But you *are* forgers of lies. You *are* all physicians of no value.

⁵Oh, that you would altogether keep silent! That would be your wisdom.

⁶Listen now to my reasoning, and hear the pleas of my lips.

⁷Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?

⁸Will you show partiality toward his person? Will you argue for God?

⁹Would it be good if he searched you out? Or will you mock him like one man mocks another?

¹⁰He will surely rebuke you, if you secretly show partiality.

¹¹Will his excellence not make you afraid? And his dread fall on you?

¹²Your old sayings *are* proverbs of ashes; your defenses *are* defenses of clay.

¹³“Keep silent! Leave me alone, so that I can speak, and let come on me what *may*!”

¹⁴Why do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand?

¹⁵Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him; but I will defend my ways before him.

¹⁶And he *will be* my salvation; for a hypocrite does not come before him.

¹⁷Listen carefully to my speech, and *hear* my declaration with your ears.

¹⁸See now, I have prepared *my* case. I know that I will be vindicated.

¹⁹Who *is the* one who will argue *the* case with me? For now, if I hold my tongue, I will die.

²⁰“Only do not do two *things* to me, then I will not hide myself from you:

²¹Withdraw your hand far from me, and let not the dread of you make me afraid.

²²Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, and you answer me.

²³How many *are* my iniquities and sins? Cause me to know my transgression and my sin.

²⁴Why do you hide your face, and count me as your enemy?

²⁵Will you terrify a leaf driven to and fro? And will you pursue dry stubble?

²⁶For you write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.

²⁷You also put my feet in the stocks, and closely watch all my paths. You put a mark on the heels of my feet.

13:6-12 The friends seem to think they were God’s advocates to speak for Him. If this is true, Job asks, why is it necessary for them to bring false accusations against him? They are examining Job to find any faults he may have. What if God examined them in the same way? Have they no fear of the God they have been speaking so easily about? The fact is, Job could see they thought themselves better than he was. Their inmost conviction may have been something like this: “God has punished Job terribly for his sins; God has not punished us like that – indeed we are experiencing His blessings. Job must be a bad man, and we are good men, or at least not nearly as bad as he is”.

Self-righteousness is very hard to discover in one’s self, and it is very hard for others to deal with. It is one of the most difficult of sins to tear from the human heart.

13:13-19 Job is determined to speak out even if God should kill him for it. He still has hope in God that he will eventually be proved innocent. He is eager to defend himself before God and says that this very desire shows he is not a hypocrite or an evil man.

13:16 “*Hypocrite*” – the Hebrew indicates a profane or godless person.

13:20-22 Again Job stops speaking to his friends and addresses God (see 10:2). He wants very

much to meet face to face with God. He is sure he can prove his innocence. But he is filled with pain, perplexity, grief, and fear. Because of this he feels that even if he got the chance to defend himself, he would not be able to do it well. So he makes these requests.

13:22-23 In Job’s eyes he has been condemned without knowing what the charges against him are. He thinks God has become his enemy and has punished him severely (vs 26-28), and is looking for further reasons to afflict him. He wants his day in God’s court to hear all the accusations against him.

13:26 Job is sure that he has done nothing as an adult to deserve the awful disasters which have come. Searching for a reason for them he thinks it must be some sins or other he had done as a young man. But, as we know from the first two chapters of this book, in this he was mistaken. His sufferings had no connection whatever with punishment for any of his sins. However, it was right for him to review his life to see if there was any reason in him for his troubles. We should do the same thing when troubles come to us. Possibly they have come because of some sin we have committed, and if so we should know it and confess it and get forgiveness for it (Ps 77:5-6; 119:59; 139:23-24; Lam 3:4; 1 Cor 11:31).

²⁸“And *man* is consumed like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth eaten.

14 “Man *who is* born of woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble. ²He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down. And he flees like a shadow, and does not stay. ³And do you open your eyes at such a one, and bring me into judgment with yourself? ⁴Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? No one. ⁵Since his days *are* determined, the number of his months *being* with you, you have set limits that he cannot pass. ⁶Turn away from him, so that he may rest, until he has finished his day, like a hired man. ⁷“For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. ⁸Even though its root becomes old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground, ⁹*yet* at the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth branches like a plant.

¹⁰But man dies, and is laid away; yes, man breathes his last, and where *is* he?

¹¹As water disappears from the sea, and a stream becomes parched and dried up,

¹²So man lies down, and does not rise. They will not awake, or be roused out of their sleep, until the heavens *are* no more.

14:1-3 Job wonders why God bothers with a creature so frail and insignificant as man.

14:4 Man is the subject here. A holy nature cannot come from sinful humanity. Job knows very well that because he is a human being he has a sinful nature. He does not claim to be free from all that is unholy. Compare Ps 51:5; Eph 2:1-3.

14:5-6 Since man’s life is vain and empty, Job reasons, why doesn’t God leave him alone to live it the best he can without afflictions and disasters coming on him?

14:7-12 Neither Job nor his friends nor anyone else in the Bible believed in the idea of reincarnation. Note at Job 11:12. Also at that time, as far as we know, God had not yet revealed the doctrine of the resurrection of man’s body. Job thought that death was a sleep in a dark place from which there is no awakening. He had no word from God to enable him to believe otherwise.

14:13-15 As Job considers what he thinks is man’s sad fate, it seems a thought begins to form in his mind, a faint hope stirs in his heart – what if man should rise again? What if there is life after death where the innocent are vindicated, all questions answered, all problems solved? How good it would be! How much more easily he could bear the pains and sorrows of this life! The question Job asks in v 14 is answered by the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Man will live again after he has died. The Lord Jesus rose from the

¹³Oh, that you would hide me in the grave! That you would conceal me until your wrath is past! That you would appoint a set time for me, and remember me!

¹⁴If a man dies, will he live *again*? All the days of my appointed time I will wait, until my change comes.

¹⁵You will call, and I will answer you. You will long for the work of your hands.

¹⁶For now you will count my steps. Will you watch over my sin?

¹⁷My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag, and you cover my iniquity.

¹⁸But surely the falling mountain crumbles away, and the rock is moved from its place;

¹⁹Water wears away the stones, and torrents wash away the soil of the earth; so you destroy the hope of man.

²⁰You overpower him permanently, and he passes on; you change his countenance, and send him away. ²¹His sons come to honour, and he does not know *it*; and they are brought low, but he does not perceive *it*.

²²But his body will be in pain, and his soul will mourn for himself”.

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ²“Should a wise man answer

dead and the time is coming when all men shall rise (Matt 16:21; 28:1-7; John 5:28-29; 11:25; 1 Cor 15:20-25; 1 Thess 4:13-18). But Job did not have this blessed truth to cheer him.

14:13 “*Grave*” – in Hebrew “*Sheol*” – note at Gen 37:35.

14:16-22 Job’s thoughts of resurrection and the hope it stirred pass away for the moment. They are crushed beneath the weight of his painful circumstances and dark depression. But, it seems, the idea continues to work deep in his mind and comes out later with more force and assurance (19:25-27). Notice in vs 16,17 that Job admits there has been sin in his life. He does not deny it. He only denies that he has been guilty of such sin as to merit his awful calamities.

15:1 The first round of speeches has ended. The three friends have set forth their doctrine that disasters and sufferings come from God because of sin. They have called Job to repentance. But Job has maintained his innocence and insisted he has nothing of which to repent. He has accused his friends of a lack of wisdom and compassion. In his second speech Eliphaz’s language is much harsher than in his first. His accusations are much more open and bold, and there is no exhortation to repentance at the end.

15:2-3 He has abandoned the polite manner he used in his first speech (4:2-6). He now says plainly that Job’s words are nothing but hot air.

with empty knowledge, filling his belly with the east wind? ³Should he reason with unprofitable talk? Or with speeches which have no value? ⁴Yes, you are rejecting the fear of God, and are restraining prayer before God. ⁵For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. ⁶Your own mouth condemns you and not I. Yes, your own lips testify against you. ⁷“Are you the first man ever born? Or were you made before the hills? ⁸Have you heard the secret counsel of God? And do you limit wisdom to yourself? ⁹What do you know that we do not know? *What* understanding do you have that *is* not in us?

¹⁰Both the gray-haired and aged *are* with us, even older than your father.

¹¹Are the consolations of God too small for you, words *spoken* gently to you?

¹²Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash,

¹³that you should turn your spirit against God, and let *such* words go out of your mouth?

¹⁴“What *is* man, that he can be clean? And *he who is* born of woman that he can be righteous?

¹⁵Look, he puts no trust in his holy ones; indeed, the heavens are not pure in his sight.

¹⁶How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, who drinks up iniquity like water!

¹⁷“I will tell you *something*. Listen to me, and I will declare to you what I have seen,

¹⁸what wise men have told and not concealed from their fathers,

¹⁹to whom alone the land was given, when

no foreigner passed among them: ²⁰The wicked man writhes in pain all *his* days; the number of *his* years is hidden from the oppressor.

²¹Terrifying sounds *ring* in his ears. In prosperity the destroyer comes on him.

²²He does not believe that he will return from darkness, as the sword waits for him.

²³He wanders around for food, *saying* ‘Where *is it?*’ He knows that his day of darkness is already at hand.

²⁴Trouble and anguish make him afraid. They overwhelm him like a king ready for battle.

²⁵For he stretches out his hand against God and strengthens himself against the Almighty,

²⁶running at him headlong with his thick embossed shield.

²⁷“Though his fat covers his face, and *his* waist bulges with fat,

²⁸he will live in desolate cities, in houses where no man lives, which are about to become heaps of rubble.

²⁹He will not become rich; nor will his wealth continue; nor will his possessions spread in the land.

³⁰He will not depart from darkness. The flame will dry up his branches; and by the breath of *God’s* mouth he will pass away.

³¹Let him not deceive himself, trusting in emptiness. For emptiness will be his reward.

³²This will be fulfilled before his time, and his branch will not become green.

³³Like a vine he will shake off his unripe grape, and like an olive tree will shed his

15:4 He thought Job’s questioning the goodness and justice of God had this result.

15:5-6 He believed Job was trying to cover up his sins by insincerely insisting on his innocence, and that it was obvious from his defiant words against God that he was a great sinner.

15:7-10 He accuses Job of being proud of his wisdom and unwilling to humbly listen to others. He tries to bring against him the authority of men much older than he.

15:11 He calls his and his friends’ words to Job about repentance and restoration “God’s consolations” (5:8-27; 8:5-7; 11:13-19). No doubt those words were beautiful and would be full of good exhortation and comfort to a man who needed to repent of his sins and turn to God. But Job did not need to do that (he had already done so – long before this), so those words were not God’s consolations to him.

15:12-13 Certainly Job’s friends were shocked

at some of the things he dared to say to God.

15:14-16 Similar to language Eliphaz had used in his first speech (4:17-19) but stronger. These words reveal how disturbed he was by Job’s claims of innocence. The last part of v 16 in Hebrew is literally “drinks up wrong”.

15:17-19 He thinks he has a message for Job and begins with a solemn introduction.

15:20-35 There is nothing new in his message, no advance to higher ground in his argument. He describes very vividly the punishment that comes to a wicked man. He obviously wants Job to apply the lesson to himself. He mentions things that actually happened to Job or that Job revealed about himself. Compare v 20 with 2:13; v 21 with 1:14,17; v 22 with 10:20-22; v 24 with 7:13-15. Eliphaz believes Job is behaving as the man described in v 25. He is sure that Job is trusting in something altogether false – his supposed innocence. So he puts in the warning of v 31.

blossom.

³⁴For the company of hypocrites *will be barren*, and fire will consume the tents *enriched* by bribery.

³⁵They conceive trouble and give birth to evil, and their inner man prepares deceit”.

16 Then Job answered and said,
²“I have heard many such things. Miserable comforters *are* you all.

³Let windy words come to an end. What compels you to answer?

⁴I also could speak like you. If you were in my place, I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you.

⁵*But* I would strengthen you with *the words* of my mouth, and comfort from my lips would bring relief *to you*.

⁶“If I speak my grief is not relieved. And *if I* refrain, how is it eased?

⁷But now he has worn me out. You have made all my family desolate.

⁸You have shriveled me up, *which* is a witness *against me*. And my emaciation rises up and testifies against me to my face.

⁹He who hates me tears *me* in his wrath. He gnashes on me with his teeth. My enemy fastens his sharp gaze on me.

¹⁰They gape at me with their mouth. They insultingly strike me on the cheek. They gather together against me.

¹¹God has delivered me up to the ungodly, and handed me over to the wicked.

¹²I was at ease, but he shattered me. He seized *me* by my neck and shook me to pieces. He has set me up as his target.

¹³His archers surround me. He does not spare, but pierces my kidneys and pours out my gall on the ground.

¹⁴He shatters me with break after break, running at me like a warrior.

¹⁵“I have sewed sackcloth over my skin, and laid my horn in the dust.

¹⁶My face is red with weeping and the shadow of death *is* on my eyelids,

¹⁷Although my hands *are* free of violence, and my prayer *is* pure.

¹⁸“O earth, do not cover my blood, so that my cry has no place!

¹⁹Even now, see, my witness *is* in heaven, and my record *is* on high.

²⁰My friends scorn me, *but* my eye pours out *tears* to God.

²¹Oh, that someone might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleads* for his neighbour!

²²For after a few years have come, I will go on the path of no return.

17 “My breath is corrupt, my days are extinguished, the grave *is ready* for me.

²*Are not* mockers with me? My eye gazes on their provocation.

15:34 “*Hypocrites*”—the Hebrew indicates profane or godless persons.

16:1-6 Since there is nothing new in the speech of Eliphaz Job doesn’t bother to answer it. These friends came to comfort him (2:11), and it was comfort he wanted. But he got none from them. Nor, for that matter, from his own words.

16:7-8 10:2; 13:20.

16:9 10:16-17; 13:24.

16:10 Job includes his three friends in this.

16:11-12 Refers to the first two chapters of the book.

16:13-14 6:4.

16:15-16 These words all indicate intense grief and mourning (Gen 37:34; Jer 6:26; Lam 2:10; Ezek 27:30).

16:17 This he says in answer to Eliphaz’s accusation in 15:4-5.

16:18 Compare Gen 4:10. Job likens himself to an innocent man who has been murdered. He does not want the injustice he feels has been done to him to be concealed forever. He wants his cry to go on resounding everywhere until action is taken to make matters right.

16:19 Job means that God Himself is his witness and advocate. In his pain and depression he

accused God of acting unjustly toward him, of being his enemy. But in the midst of these moments the faith in God which never leaves his heart shines forth again. If God will stand on his side and witness to his innocence, then, plainly, God is not his enemy. Job is not thinking clearly and logically; his thoughts are tossed this way and that by the fact of his extremely puzzling and dreadful circumstances. Unbelief and faith in God’s justice struggle together in his mind. First one then the other gets the upper hand. He knows deep in his heart that the one true God must be just, but what has happened to him seems evidence against it.

16:21 The one who pleads for Job turns out to be God Himself (42:7). This may have been what Job had in mind. So now the believer’s advocate is God Himself—the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1).

16:22 7:21; 10:20-22.

17:1 “*My breath is corrupt*”—strange as it may seem, this could also be translated “My spirit is broken”. The Hebrew word translated “breath” also means “wind” or “spirit” and the word translated “corrupt” also has more than one meaning. See the note at Ps 14:7.

17:2 Job means his three friends.

³“Now put down a pledge for me with yourself. Who *else is there* who will give his hand *in pledge*?”

⁴For you have hidden their heart from understanding; therefore you will not exalt *them*.

⁵If one speaks flattery to *his* friends even the eyes of his children will fail.

⁶“He has made me a byword to the people, and I have become one at whom men spit.

⁷And my eye has become dim because of sorrow, and my limbs *are* like shadows.

⁸Upright *men* are astonished at this, and the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite.

⁹And the righteous will hold to his way, and the one with clean hands will become stronger and stronger.

¹⁰“But come on, all of you, *try* again! But I will not find a wise *man* among you.

¹¹My days are past, my plans are shattered, and the thoughts of my heart *are* crushed.

¹²They change night into day, and say ‘Light is near’, in the presence of darkness.

¹³If I await the grave as my house, If I make my bed in darkness,

¹⁴If I say to corruption, ‘You *are* my father!’ and to the worm, ‘My mother!’ and ‘My sister!’

¹⁵Where then *would* my hope *be*? Who could see my hope?

¹⁶It would go down with me to the gates

of death. We *would* descend together into the dust”.

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

²“How long *before* you put an end to *such* words? Use *some* understanding, and afterwards we can talk.

³Why are we regarded as beasts *and* considered brutish in your sight?

⁴You tear yourself in your anger. Will the earth be abandoned for you? Or will the rock be moved from its place?

⁵“The light of the wicked will certainly be put out; the flame of his fire will no longer shine.

⁶The light in his tent will become dark, and the lamp beside him will be put out.

⁷His strong stride will be shortened, and his own scheme will overthrow him.

⁸For he is hurled into the net by his own feet, as he walks into the snare.

⁹The trap seizes *him* by the heel, and the snare catches him.

¹⁰A noose *is* hidden for him on the ground, and a trap *awaits* him on the road.

¹¹Terrors frighten him on every side, and drives him to his feet.

¹²His strength becomes famished, and destruction *is* ready at his side.

¹³It devours parts of his skin; the firstborn of death devours his limbs.

17:3 “*With yourself*”— Job seems to be speaking to God here. God has kept his friends from understanding his true state before God. In the trial that seems to be going on to establish his guilt or innocence, Job wants justice. There is no one else to stand by him and help him to this end, so he appeals to God Himself.

17:6 30:10.

17:7 16:8,16.

17:8-9 Job knows that what has happened to him amazes the righteous, but he is confident that they will not be stumbled by it. In fact, he thinks it may well promote righteous living. This is the opposite of the opinion expressed by Eliphaz in 15:4.

17:10-16 As for himself Job questions whether there is any hope that conditions will improve for him. So it won't matter if his friends attack and accuse him again. And they are not slow to accept the invitation he gives them in v 10.

“Grave” (vs 13), “death” (v 16) – in Hebrew “*Sheol*”— note at Gen 37:35.

18:3 Bildad's pride is wounded. So he tries to hit back hard at Job.

18:4 He insists that the reason for Job's continuing

misery is in Job himself. Declaring Job innocent when he is guilty would be like completely turning upside down the natural order of the universe; God cannot be expected to act against His own laws just for the sake of one man.

18:5-21 Job's friends simply cannot believe he is innocent of great wrong doing. They ignore all he says about it. Their minds are made up and they don't want to be confused with facts. They are convinced beyond doubt that there is an unchangeable law of God at work. Their reasoning was very simple and went like this –

Great calamities are sent only on great sinners.

Great calamities have been sent on Job.

Therefore Job is a great sinner.

Let us beware lest our system of theology, like theirs, ignores some of the facts and brings us to false conclusions. In his second speech Bildad follows the lead of Eliphaz. The verses which follow are a vivid description of what happens to the wicked man. Like Eliphaz, Bildad refers to events that have taken place in Job's life (vs 11-14,19). In v 21 he is saying that Job is an evil man who does not know God.

¹⁴His security is uprooted from his tent, and he is brought before the king of terrors.

¹⁵In his tent nothing of his *will* reside; sulfur will be scattered over his dwelling.

¹⁶His roots dry up below, and his branch above will be cut off.

¹⁷The memory of him will perish from the earth, and he will have no name outside.

¹⁸He is driven from light into darkness, chased out of the world.

¹⁹He has no son or descendant among his people, nor anyone remaining in his dwelling.

²⁰*Seeing* his day those in the west are astonished, and those in the east are frightened.

²¹Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, and this *is* the place of *the one who* does not know God”.

19 Then Job answered and said,
²“How long will you torment my soul and break me in pieces with words?

³These ten times you have insulted me. You are not ashamed to wrong me.

⁴Even if I have really erred, the error remains with me *alone*.

⁵If indeed you exalt *yourselves* against me and plead my disgrace against me,

⁶Know, then, that God has wronged me, and closed his net around me.

⁷“See, I cry out about *this* wrong, but I am not heard; I cry out loudly, but *obtain* no justice.

19:1-3 These words reveal how painful to Job were the false accusations of his friends.

19:3 “*You are not ashamed to wrong me*”– the Hebrew phrase may also be translated “You make yourselves strange to me”.

19:4-5 Even if Job had sinned, it had not hurt them in any way. And it is not their business to exalt themselves as prosecutors or judges.

19:6-7 Well, he says, if they insist on judging him he will give them something to use as evidence – he will say that God has not treated him fairly, has caught him in a net like a bird; he cries for justice, for release, but his cries are in vain.

19:8-20 Job gives a list of the things he thinks God has unjustly done to him. God took away all these – light (v 8), honor (v 9), hope (v 10), God’s smile (vs 11,12), the help of brothers and friends (vs 13-15), love (vs 17-19), and health (v 20).

19:17 “*Brothers*”– the literal Hebrew is “sons of my womb”, but this cannot mean Job’s own children, for they were all dead. It must mean those who were born from the same womb as he was, his brothers.

19:21-22 Job thinks the “hand of God” has struck

⁸He has fenced up my way so that I cannot pass, and has set darkness in my paths.

⁹He has stripped me of my honour, and taken the crown *from* my head.

¹⁰He has destroyed me on every side, and I am gone. He has uprooted my hope like a tree.

¹¹His anger burns against me, and he regards me as *one of* his enemies.

¹²His troops come together and build up their way against me, and encamp around my tent.

¹³“He has removed my brothers far from me, and my acquaintances are estranged from me.

¹⁴My kinsmen have failed *me*, and my close friends have forgotten me.

¹⁵Those who live in my house and my maidservants count me a stranger. I am a foreigner in their sight.

¹⁶I call my servant, but he gives no answer. I have to beg him with my *own* mouth.

¹⁷My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am loathsome to my own brothers.

¹⁸Yes, *even* young children despise me. When I get up they speak against me.

¹⁹All my bosom friends abhor me, and those I love have turned against me.

²⁰My bones cling to my skin and my flesh, and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

²¹“Have pity on me, O my friends, have pity on me! For the hand of God has struck me.

²²Why do you persecute me like God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

²³“Oh, that my words were written down!

him. But see 1:12; 2:6. He felt so forsaken, so sad, so desperate that he appeals even to these prejudiced accusers for pity. It should have been clear to him by now that he would receive none from them.

19:23-27 We come now to some of the most beautiful and significant words in the book of Job. The harsh way Job’s family and relatives have treated him and the accusations of his friends now produce a good result. Job finds no help, no comfort in them, so he must look to God alone. Once again he finds hope and faith stirring in his heart (notes at 14:13-15,16-22; 16:19). He knows he is about to say something very important and wants his words recorded permanently (vs 23,24). In this his wish was fulfilled, for his words are forever recorded here in the Bible. In verses 25-27 Job’s faith rises to its highest point. It becomes full assurance. He uses the words “I know”.

The essence of what he knows is this: he has a living Redeemer; this Redeemer is none other than God Himself; and this Redeemer will stand on the earth at some future time and Job will see

Oh, that they were recorded in a book!

²⁴Oh, that they were permanently engraved on a stone with an iron pen and lead.

²⁵For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and *that* he will stand at last on the earth.

²⁶And after this skin of mine has been destroyed, in my flesh I will see God.

²⁷I myself will see him, and my eyes will gaze *on him*, and not another. My inner being longs *for this*.

²⁸“If you say, ‘How should we persecute him?’ seeing the root of the matter is found in me,

²⁹You yourselves should be afraid of the sword. For *God’s* wrath *brings* the

punishment of the sword, so that you may know *there is judgment*”.

20 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,

²“Therefore my *troubled* thoughts compel me to answer, and so I make haste *to speak*.

³I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me, and my understanding spirit causes me to answer.

⁴“Do you *not* know from olden times, since man was placed on earth,

⁵That the triumph of the wicked *is* brief, and the joy of the hypocrite *is* only for a moment?

Him. In Old Testament days a redeemer was one who rescued others from trouble or bondage, restored to them their lost property, took their side against oppressors and avenged them (Gen 48:16; Deut 13:5; Lev 25:25; Num 35:12; Ruth 2:20; Prov 23:11; Isa 49:25-26; Jer 50:33-34. Note at Ps 78:35). Job was probably thinking along these lines – none of his relatives was willing to come to his help (v 14), and his friends accuse instead of defending him (v 19); so God Himself will come to his aid, will vindicate him, will deliver him, will avenge his blood (16:18-19).

When did Job expect this to happen? Would it be while he was still living or after he was dead? It is hard to know because the Hebrew in v 26 is very difficult to understand. It could be translated like this: “After my skin is destroyed, apart from my body I will see God”. The Hebrew word translated “in” in some versions can mean “from within”, or sometimes it can mean “away from”. If the meaning is “away from” then Job is saying he expects to see God in a spiritual state after death. If this is the meaning then it is not clear what God standing on the earth would have to do with Job’s seeing Him.

If the Hebrew word is translated “from within” then we should look for a different meaning to Job’s words. They have been interpreted in two ways. Some scholars have thought Job meant this: While he was still living God would appear on earth; his skin by his disease is breaking up and falling away, but he will still be in the body when God comes. At the end of the book God does come and vindicates Job and gives him health and prosperity again, and possibly this is the meaning of Job’s words here. However, there is another interpretation – Job may be referring to the resurrection of the body after death; he will be able to see God because the Redeemer will come to earth and raise him to life again. The author of these notes believes this is the best interpretation of Job’s words.

In 14:14 Job asks if man will live again after he dies. God had not yet revealed to men the

answer to this question. Perhaps now God’s Spirit begins to reveal it to his suffering servant and inspires him to declare the great hope of the resurrection. He may have been led by God to say more than he fully understood himself. In any case, how he longed for the day when he would see God, whether in the body or out of the body (v 27). This testifies to the fact that he had a good conscience and was ready to meet his Maker. “*At last*” (v 25) – or “at a later time”. **19:28-29** Job now gives a warning to his friends. He is sure God will vindicate and avenge him. If they continue to accuse him they are in danger of judgment.

20:3 Job’s friends slander him and heap dishonor on him, but when he gives a comparatively mild rebuke to them (19:28-29) they are very much upset and offended.

20:4-29 Nothing Job says can overturn the false doctrine of his friends. Their minds are not ready to receive any new ideas. They are convinced they are wise men who have the answers to life’s problems. But they cannot even begin to understand a man like Job. In this second speech of Zophar he strikes the same note as in his first speech (11:6,10-12). But now, as he describes the kind of man he thinks Job is, his words are much sharper than before. He says that the history of man proves his doctrine (vs 4,5). The wicked may prosper for a time (as Job did), but he will certainly be destroyed (vs 6-11); his ill-gotten gain will perish with him (vs 12-22); God Himself will rise up against him, will expose his guilt and bring him to ruin (vs 23-29).

In this venomous speech Zophar indirectly is calling Job wicked (v 5), proud (v 6), a lover of evil (vs 12,13), an oppressor of the poor (v 19), and a covetous man (v 20). Zophar has no evidence at all that Job is like this. It is his false doctrine that assures him that Job must be like this (note on 18:5-21).

20:4 “*Man*” – or “*Adam*” – the Hebrew means both of these.

⁶Though his arrogance mounts up to the heavens, and his head reaches to the clouds,

⁷Yet he will perish forever like his own dung. Those who had seen him will say, 'Where is he?'

⁸He will fly away like a dream, and will not be found. Yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night,

⁹And the eye *which* saw him will *see him* no longer; nor will his place any longer set eyes on him.

¹⁰His children will seek the favour of the poor, and his hands will give back his wealth.

¹¹His bones are filled with youthful *vigor*, but it will lie down with him in the dust.

¹²"Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth, *though* he hides it under his tongue,

¹³*Though* he spares it and does not forsake it, but still keeps it in his mouth,

¹⁴Yet his food in his stomach will turn sour, *and become like* the venom of cobras inside him.

¹⁵He has swallowed down riches, but will vomit them up again. God will expel them from his stomach.

¹⁶He will suck the poison of cobras; the viper's tongue will kill him.

¹⁷He will not see the streams, the rivers flowing with honey and cream.

¹⁸That for which he laboured he will not give back, and will not swallow *it* down. He will get no enjoyment from the riches *obtained* from his trading.

¹⁹Because he has oppressed *and* abandoned the poor, *because* he has violently taken away a house which he did not build,

²⁰"Surely he will feel no quietness in his inner being. He will not keep anything he desires.

²¹Nothing will be left for him to eat, so his well-being will not last.

²²In the fullness of his abundance, he will experience distress. The hand of all the miserable will come against him.

²³As he is about to fill his stomach, *God* will hurl on him the fury of his wrath, will rain *it* down on him while he is eating.

²⁴He will flee from the iron weapon; a bronze bow will pierce him.

²⁵It is drawn out; it comes out of the back; yes, the glittering point goes through his gall *bladder*. Terrors *seize* him.

²⁶Total darkness *lies* in wait for his treasures. An unfanned fire will consume him. It will go ill with him who is left in his tent.

²⁷The heavens will reveal his iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him.

²⁸The increase in his house will depart, *and his possessions* will flow away in the day of *God's* wrath.

²⁹This *is* the allotment of a wicked man from God, the inheritance God appoints for him".

21 But Job answered and said,
²"Listen carefully to my words, and let this be the consolation you give.
³Bear with me so that I can speak; and after I have spoken, mock on. ⁴"As for me, is my complaint to man? And if *it were*, why should I not be impatient? ⁵Look at me and be astonished, and lay *your* hand

21:1-3 How can Job listen to such wild accusations and then reply to them? See Jam 5:11.

21:4-34 Here Job undertakes to show that the doctrine of his friends is false. It does not at all happen to the wicked as Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz say (15:20-30; 18:5-21; 20:21-29).

In vs 4-7 Job says he is terrified, not because the wicked are punished on this earth, but because they are not. And he, a man who has lived a righteous life, is, he thinks, being punished. So his complaint is not against men but against God's way of dealing with men. The wicked, he says, live on to a ripe old age, their children prosper and are happy, no rod of God comes on them.

In vs 8-12 Job thinks of the happiness of the children of the wicked (and doubtless contrasts this with the sad loss of his own children). The wicked, after a long and pleasant life, die suddenly without pain and suffering (v 13). They are so evil they do not want God and refuse to pray to Him (vs 14-16). But they rarely experience the kind of

calamities that have come on Job (vs 17,18). Job's friends suggest that the sins of evil men may be punished in their children (5:4; 20:10). In vs 19-21 Job says this would not be just.

Job tells his friends they should not try to teach God about judgment, but should learn from the facts. And the facts are that God's judgments are very mysterious; whether a man is good or bad doesn't seem to have anything to do with whether he enjoys prosperity (vs 22-27). Job's friends try to make him out to be a terrible sinner. But they ignore the facts in order to defend their idea (vs 27,28). Job says that their experience is confined to their own little circle, that even by asking travelers from other places they could learn the truth (vs 29-33). The truth is, a wicked man is sometimes spared when disasters occur in a place, and goes peacefully to the grave. Multitudes both before and after go in the same way. If Job's friends deny this fact they are speaking nonsense and lies (v 34. See what Solomon says in Eccl 7:15).

over *your* mouth. ⁶Even as I remember I am afraid, and trembling seizes my body. ⁷Why do the wicked live on, becoming old; yes, becoming mighty in power? ⁸Their children are established in their sight, with them, and their offspring before their eyes. ⁹Their houses *are* safe from fear, and the rod of God *does not come* on them.

¹⁰Their bull does not fail to breed; their cow has its calves without miscarriage.

¹¹They send out their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

¹²They take the tambourine and harp and rejoice at the sound of the flute.

¹³They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

¹⁴Yet they say to God, ‘Leave us, for we do not desire the knowledge of your ways.’

¹⁵Who *is* the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit do we have if we pray to him?’

¹⁶See, their prosperity *is not* in their hand. The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

¹⁷‘How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? *How often* does their destruction come upon them, the sorrows *God* distributes in his anger?’

¹⁸*How often* are they like straws before the wind, and like chaff that a storm carries away?’

¹⁹*It is said*, ‘God stores up the *punishment of a man’s* iniquity for his children.’ Let him repay him, so that he will know *it*.

²⁰Let his eyes see his destruction, and let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

²¹For what care *does* he *have* about his household after him, when in the number of his months *he* is cut off?

²²‘Can *anyone* teach knowledge to God,

since he judges those on high?’

²³One dies in his full strength, being completely at ease and quiet.

²⁴His chest bulges with fat, and the marrow of his bones is moist.

²⁵Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul, never having eaten with pleasure.

²⁶They lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them.

²⁷‘Look, I know your thoughts, and the schemes *by which* you would wrong me.’

²⁸For you say, ‘Where *is* the house of the nobleman, and where is the tent where the wicked lived?’

²⁹Have you not asked travelers on the way? Do you not understand the indications they *give*?’

³⁰For the wicked are reserved for the day of destruction. They will be brought out on the day of wrath.

³¹Who declares his ways to his face? And who repays him *for what* he has done?’

³²Yet he will be brought to the grave, and will remain in the tomb.

³³The clods of the valley will be pleasant to him. Everyone will follow him, just as innumerable *ones have gone* before him.

³⁴How then can you comfort me with vain *words*, since your answers contain falsehood?’

22 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, ²‘Can a man be of benefit to God, as a wise man may benefit himself? ³*Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous? Or *would he* gain *something*, if you made your ways perfect? ⁴‘Is it because of your fear *of God* that he rebukes you, that

21:12 ‘*Flute*’— the KJV has ‘organ’ here, but this cannot be right. What we call an organ had not yet been invented.

21:13 ‘*Grave*’— in Hebrew ‘Sheol’ – note at Gen 37:35.

21:24 ‘*Chest*’— the meaning of the Hebrew word here translated ‘chest’ is uncertain.

21:30 ‘*For the wicked are reserved for the day of destruction. They will be brought out on the day of wrath*’— this could possibly be translated ‘That the wicked are spared from the day of calamity, that they are delivered from the day of wrath’. This translation actually fits the context better.

21:33 ‘*As innumerable ones have gone before him*’— or ‘go before him’.

22:2-3 Eliphaz is saying that even if a man lived a righteous life it would not put God under obligation to him. God would not withhold

punishment for sin for fear of losing some benefit. **22:4-14** Eliphaz has already made up his mind. The truth of what Job said in chapter 21 should have been obvious to all, but it has no effect on Eliphaz. One idea has fastened itself in his mind – God does not send calamities on the innocent. He is so sure of this that though he does not know of any sins Job has done he is driven to invent some. In 13:4 this is just what Job said his friends were doing. These friends were all doing something God hates. It is described in Prov 17:15 – ‘He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of these are abomination to the LORD’. They were afraid of committing the first of these errors but they fell easily into the second. Later Job answers all of Eliphaz’s accusations in 29:12-17; 31:5-40.

he enters into judgment with you? ⁵Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquities without limit? ⁶For you have taken a pledge from your brother for nothing, and stripped the clothing from the naked. ⁷You have not given water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry. ⁸But this mighty man possessed the land, and this honourable man lived in it! ⁹You have sent widows away empty-handed, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

¹⁰Therefore snares surround you, and sudden terror alarms you,

¹¹Or darkness *so that* you cannot see, and a flood of waters covers you.

¹²“Is not God in the heights of heaven? And see how high are the highest stars!

¹³And you say, ‘What does God know? Can he judge through the dark clouds?’

¹⁴Thick clouds cover him so that he cannot see, and he walks above the circle of the heavens.’

¹⁵Will you keep to the old way that wicked men trod,

¹⁶Those who were cut down before their time, whose foundations were washed away by a flood?

¹⁷They said to God, ‘Leave us! What can the Almighty do for *people*?’

¹⁸Yet *it was* he who filled their houses with good *things*. So the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

¹⁹“The righteous see *all this*, and are glad. And the innocent laugh them to scorn, *saying*,

²⁰‘Surely our enemies are cut off, and fire consumes their remnant.’

²¹Become acquainted with him and be at peace. Good will come to you through that.

²²Please receive instruction from his mouth, and store up his words in your heart.

²³If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up; you will remove iniquity far from your tents.

²⁴Then you will lay *your* gold in the dust, and the *gold* of Ophir among the stones of the brook.

²⁵Yes, the Almighty will be your gold, and your choicest silver.

²⁶For then you will delight in the Almighty, and will lift your face up to God.

²⁷You will pray to him, and he will hear you; and you will pay your vows.

²⁸You will decide a thing and it will be established for you. And light will shine on your ways.

²⁹When *men* are cast down, then you will say, ‘Lifting up *will come*.’ Then *God* will save that humble person. ³⁰He will deliver even one who is not innocent; and he will be delivered because of the purity of your hands”.

23 Then Job answered and said, ²“Even today my complaint is

22:15-20 Eliphaz here probably refers to the wicked who lived in Noah’s day and were cut off in the great flood (Gen 6:5-7). He brings it forward to prove that it is not the righteous but the wicked who suffer great disasters. However, one example does not overthrow the facts as Job has stated them in chapter 21. In v 20 Eliphaz may be referring to what happened to Job’s prosperity in 1:16.

22:20 “*Enemies*”— the KJV translators put “substance” here. It seems that they got this from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), and not from the Hebrew.

22:21-30 Eliphaz may have realized that in the preceding verses he has gone too far in his accusations, and been too harsh in his condemnation of Job. Now he softens his words and gives a beautiful appeal to Job to repent and turn to God. However, just as his first appeal in chapter 5, so this one does not at all suit Job’s condition. See note on 5:17-18.

22:22 “*Instruction*”— the Hebrew word also means “law”.

22:25 “*Gold*”— the KJV has “defense” but this is not the meaning of the Hebrew word used here.

“Gold” obviously fits the context better.

22:30 “*Not*”— the KJV has “island” of the innocent, but the Hebrew also means “not”.

23:1 In this chapter also the thoughts and desires which struggle in Job’s heart are self-contradictory. He longs to be able to come into God’s presence (v 3), yet is terrified of Him (vs 15,16). He thinks if he could argue his case before God he would be proven innocent (vs 4-7); but in spite of his innocence he feels that God will go on making him suffer (vs 13-15).

Job is a mixture of faith and fear, of confidence and doubt. One idea that is prominent here is similar to that in 16:19 (see note). In answer to Eliphaz’s accusing question in 22:15 Job says he has kept in God’s way and not turned aside (vs 10-12). In v 10 Job seems almost to grasp the reason for his sufferings, as he did once before (7:18). However he quickly passes over the thought. But he is confident that whatever the test God may put on him he will remain a man of integrity and righteousness. He knew that no matter how hot the fire gold will not be damaged by it. If there is some mixture of impurity it will be separated by the heat and the gold will remain.

bitter. My hand is heavy on my groaning.
³Oh, that I knew where I might find him, *that* I might come to his seat! ⁴I would set my case before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵I would know the words he would give in answer, and understand what he would say to me. ⁶Would he oppose me with *his* great power? No, but he would give *his attention* to me. ⁷There the righteous could dispute with him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge. ⁸“Look, I go forward, but he *is* not *there*; and backward, but I do not perceive him. ⁹When he is at work on the left, I cannot see *him*; when he turns to the right I cannot see *him*.

¹⁰But he knows the way that I take. *When* he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

¹¹My foot has held to his steps; I have kept to his ways and not turned aside.

¹²Nor have I turned back from the command of his lips. I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.

¹³“But he alone *decides*, and who can change him? And *whatever* his soul desires, *that* he does.

¹⁴He carries out *what is* appointed for me. And many such *plans are* with him. ¹⁵Therefore I am fearful in his presence. When I consider, I am afraid of him.

¹⁶For God makes me faint-hearted, and the Almighty frightens me.

¹⁷Because I am not cut off from the darkness, *nor* from the dense darkness that covers my face.

24 “Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know him never see his days?

²*Some men* remove boundary stones. They take away flocks by violence and devour *them*.

³They drive away the donkey of the fatherless; they take the widow’s ox as a pledge.

24:1 Job wonders why God does not set specific times to right the wrongs that exist on earth, times to clear the righteous and punish the wicked.

24:2-4 He begins now a description of the behavior that should be judged.

24:5-12 The destitute are crushed beneath the iron heel of the wicked. Yet God, Job thinks, does nothing about it (v 12). He has set no times to bring the wicked into court. He lets them go on in their violence and oppression. He lets the innocent poor suffer and groan. These are facts which his friends can hardly deny. But they seem to close their eyes to them because they are contrary to

⁴They push the needy off the road; the poor of the earth hide themselves *from them*.

⁵Look, they go out to their work like the wild donkeys of the desert, seeking carefully for food. The wilderness *provides* food for them *and* for *their* children.

⁶They gather their fodder in the field, and glean in the vineyard of the wicked.

⁷They spend the night naked, without clothing; *they have* no covering in the cold.

⁸They are wet with mountain showers, and hug the rocks for lack of shelter.

⁹The fatherless are snatched from the breast; the *property of the poor* is taken as a pledge.

¹⁰Lacking clothing, they must go about naked; and the sheaves are taken away *from* the hungry.

¹¹They press out oil inside their walls, and tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst.

¹²Men groan in the city, and the soul of the wounded cries out. Yet God does not charge *the wicked* with wrongdoing.

¹³“They are the ones who rebel against the light; they do not know its ways, or remain in its paths.

¹⁴The murderer rises before the light and kills the poor and needy; at night he is like a thief.

¹⁵The eye of the adulterer also waits for the twilight, saying, ‘No eye will see me’, and he disguises *his* face.

¹⁶In the dark they dig into houses, *which* they had marked out for themselves in daylight. They do not know the light.

¹⁷For the morning *is* to them like the shadow of death; if *they* are recognized the terrors of the shadow of death *seize them*.

¹⁸“They *are* swift on the surface of the waters. Their portion on the earth *is* cursed; they do not face the way of the vineyards.

¹⁹As drought and heat consume snow water, the grave *consumes the one who* has sinned.

their idea of divine retribution. (If our ideas have to ignore the facts, is it not time to change our ideas?) Job, on the other hand, cries out “Where is justice? We search for it in vain in this world”. He does not realize that justice would be handed out in the next world, after death.

24:13-17 He describes the wicked as people of darkness (compare Eph 5:8-12; John 3:19-21).

24:18-21 Job admits that eventually the wicked will perish. He does not deny that at times divine retribution is at work in the world.

24:19 “*Grave*” – in Hebrew “*Sheol*” – note at Gen 37:35.

²⁰The womb will forget him. The worm will feed sweetly on him. He will no longer be remembered, and wickedness will be broken off like a tree.

²¹He mistreats the barren, childless woman, and will not do good to the widow.

²²But *God* drags away the mighty by his power. *When* he arises, no one can be sure of life.

²³*If* they are given security, they rely on it; yet his eyes are on their ways.

²⁴They are exalted for a little while, then are gone; they are brought low and taken out of the way like all *others*, cut off like heads of grain.

²⁵“Now if *this is* not so, who will make me out to be a liar, and show that my speech is worthless?”

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said

²“Dominion and awe *belong* to *God*. He makes peace in his high places. ³Is there any number to his armies? Upon whom does his light not arise? ⁴How then can a man be righteous before *God*? Or how can one born of woman be pure? ⁵In his sight, if even the moon lacks brightness, yes, if the stars are not pure, ⁶How much less man, *who is but a*

24:22-24 But often, Job says, *God* actually seems to be protecting evil men from disaster. And when they die it is in the natural course of things just as with everyone else. Like plants that develop fully ripened grain they have a full span of life before being cut off.

24:25 Job says that these are the facts. His meaning in all this, of course, is that his friends are very wrong to teach that the wicked are always punished in this life and the righteous always rewarded.

25:1-6 This is the third and last speech of Bildad. He has nothing new to say. He completely ignores the facts Job has given. Bildad has two points – *God* is very great, and compared to *God*’s holiness no created thing, and certainly not man, can be considered righteous and pure. All very true, but it does not speak to the point Job has raised. The last remarks of Bildad are in opposition to Job’s claim of righteousness (23:10-12). These are the last recorded words of Job’s three friends. They do not stop talking because they are convinced of their error, but because they see Job will not accept what they say about him.

26:1-4 In very sarcastic language Job pours scorn on Bildad. It is plain to him that Bildad is totally incapable of helping him understand anything of *God*’s ways. If we talk long enough people will find out what we are.

26:5-13 Bildad has brought up the theme of *God*’s greatness as though Job knew nothing

maggot, and a son of man, *who is a worm?*”

26 But Job answered and said, ²“How you have helped the powerless! *How* you have saved the feeble arm!

³What counsel you have given to one without wisdom! *What* abundant advice you have made known!

⁴To whom have you spoken *these* words? And whose spirit came *speaking* through you?

⁵“The dead tremble, those under the waters, and all that live in them.

⁶*Hell is* naked before him, and destruction has no covering.

⁷He stretches out the north over empty space, *and* hangs the earth on nothing.

⁸He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, but the cloud is not torn under *the weight* of them.

⁹He covers the face of his throne, *and* spreads his cloud over it.

¹⁰He draws a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness.

¹¹At his rebuke the pillars of the heavens tremble, and are appalled.

¹²He divided the sea by his power, and by his understanding struck down the proud.

¹³By his Spirit the heavens became bright. His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.

about it. Job enlarges on the same subject and far surpasses Bildad (and the other two friends) in his eloquent descriptions of *God*’s power. Bildad spoke of *God*’s sovereignty in heaven. Job says he knows *God*’s sovereignty extends even to the lowest regions of the universe – to the dead, to destruction, to Sheol (compare Isa 14:9-15). **26:6** “*Hell*” – in Hebrew “Sheol”.

“*Destruction*” – in Hebrew “Abaddon”.

26:7 Here he gives the picture of the earth hanging in space with no support. This may have been the common idea of educated men of Job’s time and place. Or it could be evidence of a revelation *God* had once given to mankind not recorded any place else in the Bible, or it might be a truth *God* had revealed directly to Job.

26:9 “*Of his throne*” – or it could be translated “the full moon”. See the note on the Hebrew language at Ps 14:7.

26:12 “*The proud*” – in Hebrew “Rahab”. The word is used six times in the Hebrew Bible. The root meaning of the word is “proud”. Sometimes, at least, the word is used as a symbolic name for Egypt (Ps 87:4), and Job may be referring to Egypt here. If not, it is not clear what he means. It is possible, as some scholars have thought, that Job is speaking of the ocean lifting itself up like a proud sea monster. The name has nothing to do with the harlot Rahab mentioned in Joshua. In Hebrew her name is spelled differently – more like Rakhab.

¹⁴See, these *are but* the edges of his ways; and how faint a whisper we hear of him! Then who can understand the thunder of his power?"

27 And Job continued his discourse and said,

²"As God lives, *who* has taken justice away from me, the Almighty, *who* has brought bitterness to my soul,

³As long as my life *is* in me, and the breath of God *is* in my nostrils,

⁴My lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will not utter deceit.

⁵Far be it from me to admit that you are

26:14 Job says God's works speak of Him. Compare Ps 19:1-4. But what men hear is only like a whisper. God's power is so great that His works which are known to us, wonderful as they are, can indicate only a tiny part of it. No one can begin to understand His omnipotence. Job obviously had very high views of the greatness of God. It is not because he is ignorant of it that he says God has unjustly sent calamities on him. **27:1** Job may have paused here so that Zophar could take his turn to speak. Zophar said nothing, so Job continued. The Hebrew word translated "discourse" or "parable" in some English versions, as a verb means to speak using poetic language or proverbs or parables.

27:2 The only time in the book Job speaks with an oath. He thinks God has denied him justice and has Himself caused his sufferings. However, notice that he does not deny God or give up faith in Him.

27:3 "Life" – or "breath" – Gen 2:7.

"Breath" – or "spirit" – the Hebrew word means several things.

27:4-6 Job is determined to state things as he believes they are. He will not try to deceive his friends to win the argument. He will not admit he is guilty of some terrible sin when he knows he is not. Even if falsely admitting it would win back his friends and God's favor he would not do it.

27:6 He knows he has lived a life of uprightness and integrity and he fully intends to go on the same way. He has lost property, family, health, the respect of his friends, and God's fellowship. One thing he is determined not to lose – his integrity. He will not start lying, deceiving, or acting wickedly. He is saying, "Though everything has gone, though I am shattered by God and despised by men, I will continue to be honest. Though I stand utterly alone and am reduced to poverty and loathsome disease, though the world mocks me, friends misunderstand me, and heaven frowns on me, I will go on being true and upright. My integrity at least I am resolved never to lose".

May God give us such men today – men who would rather lose their lives than lose their integrity! No wonder God spoke of Job as He

right. I will not put away my integrity from me until I die.

⁶I will hold fast my righteousness, and not let it go. My heart will not reproach me as long as I live.

⁷"May my enemy be like the wicked, and he who attacks me like the unrighteous.

⁸For what is the hope of the hypocrite, even though he gains *much*, if God takes away his life?

⁹Will God hear his cry when trouble comes on him?

¹⁰Will he have delight in the Almighty? Will he always call on God?

¹¹"I will teach you about the hand of God. I did in 2:3. See also Ezek 14:14.

27:8-10 Both Bildad and Zophar had used similar language about the ungodly (8:13; 20:5). Job now says he fully agrees with them.

27:8 "Hypocrite" – the Hebrew word indicates a profane or godless person.

27:11-23 Until now Job had maintained that often evil men prosper and live to a ripe old age, and that God's judgment does not always come on them in this world (21:7-13, 30-33; 24:2-12). Job now seems concerned that his friends have misunderstood him. Have they thought he was defending the wicked? Did they think he was teaching that wickedness pays and so it is better to be wicked than righteous? See how Eliphaz accuses him in 15:4.

In this chapter Job would set the record straight and try to correct any false impressions he may have created in his friends' minds. Maybe he realized that he had insisted too strongly on one side of the argument. This often happens when men argue and their emotions are stirred up. Now in vs 13-23 Job fully admits that the wicked are not immune to punishment in this world. Job's language in these verses is almost like that of his friends when they described the fate of the wicked. He seems now to take their side of the argument. But actually he is a long way from doing so.

Remember their doctrine is this: God always rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked on earth; He does not send calamities on the righteous, nor allow the wicked to escape. For the sake of argument Job is willing to admit the second of these ideas, but not the first. He will agree that disasters come on the wicked, but not that they do not come on the righteous. In agreeing with his friends' position on the fate of the wicked Job may have been inconsistent. And it may strike the reader of his words that he agreed with them too strongly. (Job could never, it seems, state anything in lukewarm language. For every idea that he expressed he used very strong terms.) But surely one thing at least resulted from these words – his friends could no longer accuse him of defending the wicked or of thinking it didn't matter whether a person was wicked or righteous.

will not conceal how *it is* with the Almighty.

¹²Look, all of you have seen *this*. Why then is your *talk* so empty?

¹³“This is what a wicked man will get from God, and the inheritance oppressors will receive from the Almighty:

¹⁴If his children increase in number, *it is* for the sword, and his offspring will not have enough bread.

¹⁵Those who are left to him will be buried in death, and his widow will not weep.

¹⁶Though he heaps up silver like dust, and accumulates garments *as abundant* as clay,

¹⁷He may accumulate them, but the righteous will wear *them*, and the innocent will divide the silver.

¹⁸The house he builds *is as fragile* as a moth, as a booth the watchman makes.

¹⁹The rich man will lie down, but not again. He opens his eyes, and he *is* no more.

²⁰Terrors overtake him like a flood; a tempest snatches him away in the night.

²¹The east wind carries him away, and he is gone; the storm sweeps him from his place.

²²It hurls itself against him and does not spare. He makes every attempt to flee from its power.

²³It *scornfully* claps its hands at him, and hisses him out of his place.

28 “There is certainly a mine for silver, and a place *where* they refine gold. ²Iron is taken out of the ground, and copper *is* smelted *from* ore. ³*Man* puts an end to darkness and searches for ore in the deepest recesses, dark as the shadow of death. ⁴He digs a shaft away from *human* habitation. *In places* forgotten by *man’s* foot, away from men, he dangles, swinging back and forth. ⁵Bread comes out of the earth, but underneath it is changed as by fire. ⁶Its

stones *are* the source of sapphires, and its dust *contains* gold. ⁷No bird knows the path there, and the falcon’s eye has not seen it.

⁸The lion’s cubs have not trodden on it, nor has the fierce lion passed along it. ⁹He puts out his hand to the flinty rock, he overturns the mountains at *their* roots.

¹⁰He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eye sees everything of value.

¹¹He dams up the streams from flowing, and brings *what is* hidden out to the light.

¹²“But where is wisdom found? And where *is* the place of understanding?

¹³Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living.

¹⁴The deep says, ‘*It is* not in me.’ And the sea says, ‘*It is* not with me.’

¹⁵It cannot be obtained for gold, nor can silver be weighed out as its price.

¹⁶It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire.

¹⁷Gold and crystal cannot equal it, nor *can it be* exchanged *for* jewels of fine gold.

¹⁸Coral or pearls are not to be mentioned, and the value of wisdom *is* above rubies.

¹⁹The topaz of Ethiopia does not equal it, nor can it be valued with pure gold.

²⁰“From where does wisdom come? And where *is* the place of understanding?

²¹It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the air.

²²Destruction and death say, ‘We have heard a report about it with our ears.’

²³God understands the way to it, and he knows its place.

²⁴For he views the ends of the earth, *and* sees under the whole heavens.

²⁵When he established a weight for the wind, and measured out the waters,

²⁶When he made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt,

28:1-28 Man makes great efforts to find precious metals and gems. He searches in barren and difficult places. But Job’s subject is wisdom – something far more valuable than gold, silver, and jewels. Where can it be found? If a man actually finds it how can he identify it? Such is Job’s theme in this chapter.

28:3 “*End to darkness*” – by the lamps the miners take into the mines.

28:4 “*Dangles, swinging*” – as the miner descends on ropes into the mine shaft.

28:5 In his search for valuable things man creates destruction inside the earth much as a fire would do.

28:7-8 Man searches for treasure in desolate

places where even birds of prey and wild beasts do not go.

28:12-13 If man understood the great worth of wisdom he would search for it with the same determination shown in searching for gems and gold.

28:15-19 Prov 3:13-14; 8:10-11,19; 16:16.

28:20-23 No living being, including man, no one in the realm of death knows where wisdom is found. Neither life nor death can teach us wisdom. Only God knows what it is, where it is, and how man can obtain it.

28:24-27 God is the only one who sees everything, and can do everything. So He alone really knows wisdom.

²⁷Then he saw *wisdom* and declared it; he prepared it, yes, he searched out its *depths*.

²⁸And to man he said, 'See, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'

29 And Job continued his discourse and said, ²"Oh, that I were as *in* months past, as in the days *when* God was watching over me,

³When his lamp shone on my head, *when* I walked *through* darkness by his light;

⁴As I was in the days of my prime, when God's nearness *remained* over my tent,

⁵When the Almighty *was* still with me, *when* my children *were* around me,

⁶When my steps were washed in cream, and the rock poured out rivers of oil for me,

⁷When I went out to the gate through the city, *when* I prepared my seat in the square.

⁸The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the aged arose *and* stood.

⁹The princes stopped talking and put *their* hand on their mouth.

¹⁰The nobles kept silent and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.

¹¹When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw *me*, it showed approval of me,

¹²Because I rescued the poor who cried out, and the fatherless, and *the one who*

had no helper.

¹³*Words of blessing* came on me from those who had been about to perish, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

¹⁴I dressed *myself* in righteousness, and it clothed me. My justice was like a robe and a turban.

¹⁵I was eyes for the blind, and feet for the lame.

¹⁶I was a father to the poor, and investigated the case I did not know.

¹⁷And I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the plunder out of his teeth.

¹⁸"Then I said, 'I will die in my nest, and cause *my* days to be as numerous as the sand.

¹⁹My roots *are* spread out by the waters, and the dew lies all night on my branches.

²⁰My glory *remains* fresh in me, and my bow is renewed in my hand.'

²¹"*People* listened to me and waited, and kept silent for my counsel.

²²After my words they did not speak again; and my words dropped on them.

²³And they waited for me as for the rain, and opened their mouth wide *as* for the spring rain.

²⁴*If I* laughed at them, they did not believe it; and they did not cause the light of my face to fail.

²⁵I chose the way for them, and sat as chief. I dwelt like a king among *his* army, like one *who* comforts mourners.

28:28 God has revealed to man the truth about wisdom which man could never discover by searching. Wisdom is not piling up information, or storing up facts. Wisdom is not education. There are many educated fools in this world. Wisdom is not knowing the truth about the nature of things. Wisdom is not even having true doctrines about God and man. True wisdom is a proper attitude toward God. It is related to morality and ethics. It is devotion to God and fear of offending Him. It is turning away from evil (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10; Eccl 12:13). We know from the first chapter of this book that Job had this wisdom (1:1,8). We are not told his friends had it. Of course, they thought they themselves were the wise ones and that Job did not have wisdom (11:6; 15:2-4; 18:2-3; 20:3).

29:1 Perhaps Job paused again for one of his friends to speak. If he did not, it is unclear why these words should be used here again. From their continued silence it appears that the argument is over and they have lost it. Of course, they

would not have been willing to admit this. Job now begins a lament that continues over the next two chapters (29; 30). In it he contrasts the life he once enjoyed (chapter 29) with his present pathetic condition (chapter 30).

29:2-6 Job is saying that when disasters came he was not living a sinful life, he was not without God's fellowship. He had God's light, God's presence, God's smile, God's blessings.

29:7-11 Job was a man others honored and respected. In other words, they knew he was not wicked.

29:12-17 He was respected because his deeds proved him worthy of respect. Compare this with Eliphaz's false accusations in 22:5-11.

29:18-20 He did not think calamities would come on him, because he could see no reason whatever why they should.

29:21-25 He knows that he was a leader, a counselor of others, and that he had not abused his position.

29:24 "*Did not cause the light of my face to fail*"—the meaning of the Hebrew here is uncertain.

30 “But now *those who are* younger than I mock at me, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs.

²Yes, what *could* the strength of their hands *profit* me, since their vigor was gone?

³*They were emaciated* from want and hunger, having lately fled to the desolate and waste wilderness.

⁴They plucked salt marsh plants beside the bushes, and their food *was* the root of the broom tree.

⁵They were driven out from among *the people* (who cried out after them as *after* a thief),

⁶To live among the cliffs of the ravines, *in* the caves and rocks of the land.

⁷They brayed among the bushes, and gathered together under the nettles.

⁸*These are* the sons of fools, yes, children of base men who were scourged from the land.

⁹“And now I am their *mocking* song; yes, I am their byword.

¹⁰They abhor me. They keep their distance from me, and do not hold back from spitting in my face.

¹¹Because he has loosened my bowstring and afflicted me, they have also cast off restraint in my presence.

¹²At *my right hand* the youth rise up; they push my feet away, and raise against me their destructive ways.

¹³They break up my road; without any helper, they set up calamity for me.

¹⁴They come *on me* like a wide break *in* the wall; in their ruins they come rolling in.

¹⁵Terrors are turned on me; they pursue my soul like the wind, and my prosperity has passed like a cloud.

¹⁶And now my soul is poured out within

30:1-14 Instead of the honor and respect Job once experienced he faces the scorn and opposition of base and useless men. Their fathers had been regarded by the people of that region as unfit to live there and had been driven out (vs 5,8). Now these young men spit in Job’s face and try to cause him all the trouble they can (16:10-11).
30:15-19 3:24; 6:10; 7:4-5; 13:28; 16:8,17; 17:1; 19:20.

30:20-22 Once more Job turns to God with his complaint (7:7-21; 10:2-22; 13:20; 14:22; 16:7-8; 17:3-4).

30:21 6:4; 13:24; 16:9.

30:23 9:22; 10:8.

30:24 Even if he does not fear this falling toward death (and he did not – 6:8-9; 7:15), still he will cry out for help.

30:25-26 This is his complaint all along – he

me. Days of affliction have seized me.

¹⁷At night my bones in me are pierced, and my gnawing *pains* have no rest.

¹⁸Because of their great power my clothing is changed; they bind me all around like the collar of my coat.

¹⁹He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.

²⁰I cry out to you, *O God*, but you do not hear me. I stand up, but you *just* watch me.

²¹You have become cruel to me. With your strong hand you oppose me.

²²You lift me up to the wind and make me ride *on it*, dissolving my substance.

²³For I know *that* you will bring me *to* death, and *to* the house appointed for all the living.

²⁴“But he will not stretch out *his* hand toward the grave, though they cry out at its destruction.

²⁵Did I not weep for anyone in trouble? Was my soul *not* grieved for the poor?

²⁶When I looked for good, then disaster came; and when I waited for light, darkness came.

²⁷The agitation inside me never stops. Days of affliction confront me.

²⁸I go about mourning, without *the light* of the sun. I stand up *and* cry out in the congregation.

²⁹I am a brother to jackals, and a companion of owls.

³⁰My skin on me is black, and my bones burn with heat.

³¹And my harp is *tuned* to mourning, and my flute to the sound of those who weep.

31 “I made a covenant with my eyes. How then could I *lustfully* consider a maiden?

has not been rewarded according to his deeds, but God has dealt with him unjustly. He thinks God has not treated him as well as he – Job – has treated others.

30:27 3:26.

30:29 This may refer to the piercing, mournful sounds these animals make, and perhaps to their solitariness.

30:31 Job compares his final lament to the mournful tones made by musical instruments, rising, falling, and dying away.

31:1-4 This chapter closes Job’s defense against the accusations of his friends. Here he sets forth his righteous behavior, not in a spirit of boasting but because his friends have driven him to it. See note on vs 38-40. The situation is not unlike that of Paul’s who was forced by the church at Corinth to defend himself against the

²For what does God apportion from above? And *what is* the inheritance the Almighty appoints from above?

³Is it not destruction for the wicked, and disaster for evildoers?

⁴Does he not see my ways and count all my steps?

⁵“If I have walked in falsehood, or if my foot has hurried after deceit

⁶(Let me be weighed in accurate scales, that God may know my integrity),

⁷If my step has turned out of the way, and my heart has followed my eyes, and if any stain has stuck to my hands,

⁸Then let me sow and someone else eat it, yes, let my crops be uprooted.

⁹“If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked near my neighbor’s door,

¹⁰Then may my wife grind for someone else, and may others bow down over her.

¹¹For that *would be* a wicked deed, yes, iniquity for the judges *to punish*.

¹²For that *would be* a fire that consumes to destruction, that would uproot all my increase.

¹³“If I have despised the claim of my male or female servant when they complained to me,

¹⁴Then what would I do when God rises up? And when he confronts me, what would I answer him?

¹⁵Did not he who made me in the womb, make him? Did not the same one form us in the womb?

¹⁶“If I have held back from the poor *what* they desired, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail,

¹⁷Or have eaten my morsel alone, without the fatherless eating of it,

¹⁸(But from my youth I brought him up *like* a father, and from my birth I guided *the widow*),

¹⁹If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or any poor *person* without a covering,

²⁰If he had no *reason* to bless me, and if he was *not* warmed by the fleece from my sheep,

²¹If I have raised my hand against the fatherless, when I saw support *for this* in the gate,

²²Then let my arm fall from my shoulder, and my arm be broken at the joint.

²³For destruction *from* God terrified me, and because of his majesty I could not endure.

²⁴“If I have made gold my hope, or said to fine gold, ‘*You are my confidence*’,

accusations of false teachers (2 Cor 11:21-29; 12:1-3. See also 1 Sam 12:1-3; 24:8-15; 26:17-24; Ps 17:1-5. Compare Ps 26).

Job knew that he shared in the fallen condition of all men (13:26; 14:4,16,17; 31:33). Perhaps he did not yet have that deep understanding of the depravity of human nature that some other Old Testament saints had. But he lived (probably) before God gave His law through Moses, and the law gives men a deeper knowledge of sin (Rom 7:7-9). However that may be, Job well knew that he had lived a sincere, godly, and righteous life. He is not self-righteous but has the testimony of a good conscience (compare Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Cor 1:12). So in his eyes he did not deserve the calamities that came on him, and the doctrine of his friends concerning divine retribution was hopelessly wrong. In the list of his virtues Job puts this one first. Not only had he kept himself from adultery and fornication, he had resolutely determined not even to let wrong desires form in his mind. He was very careful in the way he looked at a girl. In this he anticipated the teaching of Christ in the sermon on the mount (Matt 5:27-28). He understood that morality and purity were not merely a matter of outward acts but of the inner thoughts and desires.

31:4 The reason for his virtuous behavior was his knowledge of God. God was always in his

thoughts (vs 2,4,14,15,23,28). He feared God, wanted to please God, honored God in every sphere of his life.

31:5-8 He has led a life of complete honesty and sincerity, always holding to God’s way of holiness and virtue. He was fully aware that God hates lying and deceit.

31:9-12 He has always been faithful to his wife, never once going with another woman. He regarded adultery as a very terrible sin, which indeed it is (Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10; 1 Cor 6:9; Heb 13:4).

31:12 “*Destruction*”— in Hebrew “Abaddon”.

31:13-15 He has behaved fairly toward his servants. He recognized that in God’s sight men are men, and that no one should be treated as if belonging to an inferior caste or class. (See Eph 6:9; Col 4:1.)

31:16-23 He has treated the poor with kindness and compassion – a virtue God regards very highly indeed (Ex 22:22-27; Deut 24:17; Ps 68:5; 82:1-4; Prov 23:10-11).

31:21 “*In the gate*”— the place where the ruling body of the town met.

31:24-28 He kept himself from the idolatry of wealth, and from the worship of creation rather than the Creator. He knew that it is not possible to be true to God while worshiping anything other than God (see Ex 20:3-6; Deut 4:19; 17:2-5; Rom 1:25).

²⁵If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much,

²⁶If I looked at the shining sun or the moon moving *in* brightness,

²⁷And my heart was secretly enticed and my mouth kissed my hand *in worship*,

²⁸This also *would be* iniquity to be judged, for I would have denied God above.

²⁹“If I rejoiced at the destruction of one who hated me, or exulted when disaster found him

³⁰(But I have not allowed my mouth to sin by invoking a curse against his soul),

³¹If the men of my tent have not said, ‘Who is there *of us* who has not been satisfied with Job’s meat?’

³²(The stranger never had to spend the

31:29-30 He has not allowed the spirit of vengeance to possess him (Prov 20:22; 24:29; 25:21; Rom 12:19-21).

31:31-32 He has practiced hospitality to strangers (compare Deut 10:17-19; Heb 13:2).

31:33-34 When he sinned he did not try to cover it up but confessed and forsook it. Observe that he does not deny he has sinned. He realized that true virtue is not merely what one does or does not do when others are watching, but what one does or does not do when only God is watching. Compare Ps 90:8; 139:23-24; Matt 6:6,18; John 3:20-21; Eph 5:8-14; Heb 4:13.

31:33 “*Like Adam*” – or “like a man”. In Hebrew the word for man and for Adam is the same, and here could be translated either way.

31:35-37 Job longs for a hearing before God’s judgment seat (13:3,15,18; 16:19; 23:3-5; 24:1). He has prepared his defense. He has declared the righteous life he has lived before God and men. He desperately wants to know what God has against him. If God would write out his complaint against him Job says he would wear it like a crown where all could see it. That is, he is quite sure that God has no serious accusations to make against him. He thinks he can give even to God a good account of his whole life, could approach God with the firm, bold step of a prince. So certain is Job of his integrity.

31:35 “*My desire*” – the literal meaning of the Hebrew word is “mark”, and the sentence could be translated, “See, my mark. Oh, that the Almighty would answer me”. “Mark” possibly indicated signature, as if Job’s case is written out and he now signs it.

31:38-40 Job has an afterthought. There is one aspect of his righteousness he hasn’t mentioned – the proper way he had treated his land and those who worked for him. If he has behaved unjustly let a curse come on his land, he says. (See also vs 8,10,22.) At last he has no more to say. In legal terms, we would say the defense rests its case.

What should we think of Job’s defense? We do

not like to hear an individual telling us how good and righteous he is. Some people are quite eager for men to know their good deeds, and describe them even to God (Matt 6:2; Luke 18:9-12). So when a person speaks of his righteous life we tend to suspect that he is either ignorant of himself or is covering up some sin or is proud and boastful. But in Job’s case this was not so.

³³If I have covered my transgressions like Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom,

³⁴Because I feared the great multitude, or dreaded the contempt of families, so that I kept silent *and* did not go out the door

³⁵“(Oh, that someone would hear me! See, my desire is *that* the Almighty would answer me, and *that* my adversary would write down *the indictment in* a book!

³⁶Surely I would carry it around on my shoulder, *and* fasten it on me *like* a crown.

³⁷I would give him an account of all my steps. I would approach him like a prince),

³⁸“If my land cries out against me, or if

not like to hear an individual telling us how good and righteous he is. Some people are quite eager for men to know their good deeds, and describe them even to God (Matt 6:2; Luke 18:9-12). So when a person speaks of his righteous life we tend to suspect that he is either ignorant of himself or is covering up some sin or is proud and boastful. But in Job’s case this was not so.

Job and his friends are having a deep theological discussion which involved an important doctrine, and this discussion turns on the matter of Job’s guilt or innocence. If his life style did not merit the calamities which came on him, then the doctrine of his friends was in error. This is what Job is attempting to prove. For the sake of the truth he felt compelled to describe his righteous life as it was. And we know he did not paint a false picture, did not exaggerate his virtues.

God Himself said Job was the best man on earth in his generation (2:3. See also Ezek 14:14). So his life is a beautiful example to all of us. If we wish to have God’s approval as he did, let us live as he did. But was Job not self-righteous? Verses like 7:20,21 and 10:15 suggest otherwise. Self-righteousness is something that cleaves very naturally to man’s fallen nature, and it would not be surprising if there were some taint of it in Job. For Job had a sinful nature as all men have. But if Job was much given to self-righteousness it is hard to understand God’s unqualified approval of him in 1:8; 2:3 (in 2:3 one of the things for which God praises Job was that he maintained his integrity in spite of all that Satan had done against him).

Surely God hates self-righteousness more than we ever can. So we may judge that if Job was guilty of it he was probably less guilty of it than anyone else in his generation. And it certainly was not a dominating force in his life. And, it seems to the author of these notes, that even if there was a taint of self-righteousness in Job’s character, it is in no way central to the teaching of the book of Job.

its furrows complain,

³⁹If I have eaten its produce without cost to me, or caused its owners to lose their lives,

⁴⁰May thistles grow up instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley!" The words of Job are ended.

32 So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

²Then the anger of Elihu the son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job. His anger burned because Job justified himself rather than God.

³Also his anger was aroused against his three friends, because they had found no answer, yet had condemned Job.

⁴Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job, because they were older than he.

⁵When Elihu saw that *there* was no answer in the mouth of *these* three men, his anger was aroused.

⁶And Elihu the son of Barakel the Buzite answered and said, "I *am* young, and you are very old. Therefore I was afraid and dared not express my opinion.

⁷I told *myself* that age should speak, and advanced years should teach wisdom.

⁸But *there is* a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives him

understanding.

⁹Great men are not *always* wise; nor do the aged *always* understand justice.

¹⁰Therefore I say, Listen to me. I also will express my opinion.

¹¹Look, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, while you searched for what to say.

¹²Yes, I paid close attention to you, and, look, none of you convinced Job, or answered his words.

¹³Do not say 'We have found wisdom. God will bring him down, not man.'

¹⁴Now he has not directed *his* words against me, and I will not answer him with your words.

¹⁵"They are dismayed and give no further answer; words have failed them.

¹⁶I have been waiting, but they did not speak, but stood there *and* gave no further answer.

¹⁷I too will take my part in answering, I too will express my opinion.

¹⁸For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me *to speak*.

¹⁹Indeed my inner being *is* like wine without a vent; it is ready to burst like new wineskins.

²⁰I will speak, so that I may find relief. I will open my lips and answer.

32:1 Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have nothing more to say, concluding that Job was self-righteous.

32:2 Apparently Elihu had been present all the time the discussion had been going on. For all we know there may have been several (or many) others there also. Elihu was not an uncommon name and other Elihus are mentioned in the Bible (1 Sam 1:1; 1 Chron 12:20), but this is the one place that this particular Elihu appears. We know nothing of the Barakel or Ram mentioned here, but it is also said that Elihu was a Buzite. One person named Buz was a son of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen 22:21). If Elihu was a descendent of that Buz then he was closely related to the forefathers of the Hebrew nation.

Elihu's anger burned against Job because Job had justified himself rather than God. (See also God's question to Job in 40:8.) Job had clearly said his cause was just (10:7; 27:5-6; 31:35-37) and that God had wronged him (19:6; 27:2; 30:25-26). Job said so because in his pain and perplexity and darkness no other explanation seemed to fit the circumstances. Job had also spoken in a way that showed he believed in the justice of God (16:19; 19:23-27; 23:3-7. If Job had not been convinced of God's just character he

would not have wanted to appear before Him in judgment). As we have seen, very painful and conflicting thoughts possessed Job's mind. See note on 16:19.

32:3 Elihu was a lover of justice. If Job speaks unjustly about God his anger burns; when the three friends speak unjustly about Job his anger burns. Elihu sees clearly the fault of the friends – they condemned Job without being able to answer his arguments (v 12).

32:7 "Age" – literally "days".

"Advanced" – literally "a multitude".

32:8 Understanding does not come by mere age or experience or education, but by God's breath, God's gift. So the young may have it as well as the old, Elihu says.

32:12-17 Though the friends have failed to defeat Job in argument they must not think, he says, that every man will fail. Elihu thinks he can succeed. At v 15 he stops speaking to Job's friends and speaks about them.

32:18-20 Elihu is very excited and eager. As Job's friends spoke he kept thinking of things he would like to say. He could hardly contain any longer the words that would rush from his mouth. He was not the last to feel so in time of argument and debate.

²¹Please, I will not show favoritism to anyone, or flatter any man.

²²For I do not know how to flatter; *if I did*, my Maker would soon take me away.

33 “Therefore, Job, please hear what I have to say, and listen to all my words. ²See, now I open my mouth, the tongue in my mouth speaks. ³My words *come from* the uprightness of my heart, and my lips speak knowledge clearly. ⁴The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life. ⁵If you can answer me, set *your words* in order in front of me; take your stand. ⁶See, just like you, I *belong* to God. I too have been formed out of clay. ⁷Look, no fear of me should terrify you; nor will my hand be heavy on you. ⁸“You have certainly spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of *your words, saying*, ⁹“I am pure, without transgression. I am innocent. No

iniquity *is* in me.

¹⁰See, *God* finds occasions against me; he counts me as his enemy.

¹¹He puts my feet in the stocks; he watches all my paths.’

¹²“Look, *in* this you are not being just. I will answer you that God is greater than man.

¹³Why do you struggle against him? For he does not give an account of any of his deeds.

¹⁴For God speaks once, yes, twice, *but man* does not perceive it.

¹⁵In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, while they slumber on the bed,

¹⁶Then he opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction,

¹⁷So that he may turn a man *from his evil* behaviour and keep a man from pride.

¹⁸He keeps back his soul from the pit, and

32:21-22 Elihu has some fear of God, so refuses to take either Job’s side or that of Job’s friends. And he resolves to speak very frankly.

33:1-4 Elihu is sure he has something very important to say. He thinks he can solve the problem that has arisen over Job’s sufferings. This young man is very confident that he is wise and upright and honest (33:3; 36:3-4). But already, this early in his speech, he seems lacking in humility.

33:5-7 In 9:32-35 Job expressed a wish for someone to act as a mediator. He wanted to argue his case before God, but because of the pain and disasters that came to him he experienced much fear (13:20-22). Elihu seems to be saying here that he will act as this mediator. Job can present his case fully to him without fear.

33:6 “*Just like you, I belong to God*”—the KJV here seems a strange translation, hardly possible at all, but the Hebrew is difficult.

33:8-11 Elihu is certain Job has said some wrong things and now calls them to his attention. In the last part of v 10 and in v 11 he quotes Job’s words (13:24,27). In v 9 he gives what he thinks is the meaning of some of Job’s remarks (9:21; 10:7; 16:16; 23:10; 27:5). However, Job has never said he was holy and pure. He knew otherwise (13:26; 14:4,16,17; 31:33). Elihu, by attributing to Job’s words a meaning Job never intended, shows he will not be able to answer him. But Elihu has put his finger on the point of Job’s biggest failing in the argument with his friends – Job had spoken of God as becoming his enemy and unjustly acting as a persecutor and jailer.

33:12-13 Elihu is correct in this matter. God is far greater than any man and more just in

His dealings than any man could ever be. God does not need to give to men an account of His behavior.

33:14-30 In these verses we have Elihu’s solution to the problem that has come up about Job’s sufferings. He says that although God does not give an account of His actions He does speak to men. He speaks in dreams, especially fearful dreams, and visions (vs 15,16. See note at Num 12:6). God also speaks through chastisements and pains (vs 19-22). Eliphaz also, in his first speech, had referred to both of these (4:12-16; 5:17-18). But Elihu deals with these matters much more clearly and fully than Eliphaz. Job spoke of the fearful dreams and visions which had come to him (7:13-14), of his ceaseless pain (30:16-17), his lack of hunger (3:24), and his emaciated condition (16:8; 19:20).

Elihu uses similar language about dreams and sufferings. In other words, he wants Job to apply to himself all that he says. He tells Job what he thinks is the purpose of it all. Terrifying dreams and fearful pains are God’s messengers, he says, and God sends them for three very good reasons. God wants to turn men from evil, break their pride, and save them from destruction (vs 17,18,29,30). Evidently Elihu is sure that Job is guilty of wrongdoing and pride and needs to be saved from destruction. That is, in some measure at least, he is in agreement with the three friends. In general what Elihu says here is excellent and suitable to the condition of many people. But it did not fit Job’s case and did not solve the problem of Job’s sufferings.

33:18 “*Keeps back his soul from the pit*”—this could also be translated “or preserve him from the grave”.

his life from perishing by the sword.

¹⁹A man is also chastened by pain on his bed, by anguish in his many bones.

²⁰So that his whole being loathes bread, and his soul the choicest food.

²¹His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones, *which* were not seen, stick out.

²²Yes, his soul draws near the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

²³If there is a messenger for him, a mediator, one in a thousand, to show man God's uprightness, ²⁴Then he is gracious to him and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.'

²⁵Then his flesh will become fresher than a child's; he will return to the days of his youth.

²⁶He will pray to God, and God will show him favour. And he will see God's face with joy; for God will restore to man his righteousness.

²⁷He looks at men and *if anyone* says, 'I have sinned, and perverted *what* was right, and it was not repaid to me in equal measure'

²⁸He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life will see the light.

²⁹"See, God does all these *things*. Twice,

thrice *he does them* to a man.

³⁰To bring his soul back from the pit, that the light of life may enlighten him.

³¹Pay attention, Job; listen to me. Keep silent and I will speak.

³²If you have anything to say, answer me. Speak, for I want to justify you.

³³If not, listen to me. Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom".

34 Elihu continued his answer and said, ²"Listen to my words, you wise men, and give ear to me, you who have understanding.

³For the ear tests words as the mouth tastes food.

⁴Let us choose for ourselves what is just, let us find out among ourselves what is good.

⁵"For Job has said, 'I am righteous, and God has taken away justice from me.

⁶Should I lie about my right? My wound is incurable, *though I am* without transgression.'

⁷What man *is* like Job, *who* drinks up scorn like water?

⁸He goes in the company of evildoers, and walks with wicked men.

⁹For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing for him to delight in God.'

"From perishing by the sword"—or "from crossing the River". See note on the Hebrew language at Ps 14:7.

33:23-30 Elihu describes a way which God may use to restore the suffering, chastised man. The language of vs 23,24 in Hebrew is difficult and obscure. We cannot be sure whether the messenger is an angel or a man, whether he is a very exceptional individual – one in a thousand, or one of many – one together with a thousand others. And we do not know to what the referred "ransom" means. Some scholars think Elihu regarded himself as the messenger; others think he means an angel from heaven; others think Elihu was unknowingly uttering a prophecy about Christ Who would come as God's messenger to men, the one Mediator between God and men, who gave Himself as a ransom to redeem men. In any case, Elihu is holding out hope to Job – if only Job listens to what God is saying to him he will regain his health, joy, and righteousness, and God's fellowship (vs 25,26). Elihu thinks that then Job will speak like the man in vs 27,28.

33:31-33 Elihu now gives Job an opportunity to answer if he wishes. Job remains silent – perhaps because he wants Elihu to continue, or perhaps because he sees Elihu has said nothing very new and that he has already given

an answer to such ideas. Elihu's confidence in his own wisdom (v 33) causes us again to doubt his humility.

34:1-4 Elihu believes his words to be so manifestly wise that if anyone has any discernment he will be forced to concede it (see 36:4).

34:5-9 He now sets forth what he thinks Job's position is. In v 5 he quotes some of Job's words (13:18; 27:2). In vs 6 and 9 he gives what he thinks is the essence of some of the things Job says. Job knew that when he claimed to live a righteous life his friends did not believe him, and that circumstances seemed to testify against him. Job never used the words of v 9, but Elihu thought he meant this from the words he did use (9:21-24; 21:7-9; 24:12).

But Job also said things that indicate he sometimes thought the opposite of this (21:14-16; 27:7-23; 28:28). Elihu is being most unfair to Job in his accusations in vs 7,8. The lover of justice (32:3) can himself be unjust. Verse 7 suggests a constant thirst for mocking. Elihu is saying Job loves to use scornful language. Zophar accused him of the same thing (11:3). Job did scorn some of his friends' remarks, but this is because he saw that they were worthy of scorn. It is clear that Elihu with all his professed wisdom did not understand Job.

¹⁰“Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God *to act wickedly*, and *from the Almighty to commit iniquity!*

¹¹For he will repay a man *according to his deeds*, and sees that everyone finds *the reward for his ways*.

¹²Yes, certainly God will not act wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice.

¹³Who put him in charge of the earth? Or who has appointed *him over the whole world?*

¹⁴If he sets his heart on it, and gathers back to himself his Spirit and his breath,

¹⁵All flesh would perish together, and man would turn again to dust.

¹⁶“Now if *you have understanding* hear this; listen to the sound of my words.

¹⁷Should one who hates the right govern? And will you condemn the most just *one?*

¹⁸*Is it proper to say to a king, ‘You are wicked?’ And to princes, ‘You are ungodly?’*

¹⁹*How much less the One* who does not show favoritism to princes, or regard the rich more than the poor! For they *are* all the work of his hands.

²⁰In a moment they die in the middle of the night, and the people are troubled and pass away, and the mighty are taken away without a hand *touching them*.

²¹“For his eyes *are* on the ways of man, and he sees all his steps.

²²*There is* no darkness or shadow of death where evildoers can hide themselves.

²³For he does not *need to lay more charges* on man, that he should go before him in judgment.

²⁴Without investigation he breaks in pieces mighty men and sets up others in their place.

²⁵For he knows their deeds, and he overturns *them* in the night, so that they are destroyed.

²⁶He strikes them down as the wicked *men* they are, openly, in the sight of others,

²⁷Because they turned back from him and would not consider any of his ways,

²⁸Causing the cry of the poor to come to him; and he heard the cry of the afflicted.

²⁹When he gives quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hides *his face*, who then can see him, whether *this is done* against a nation or against an individual?

³⁰*He does this* so that the hypocrite does not reign and the people are not ensnared.

³¹“For it is right to say to God, ‘I have borne *punishment*. I will not offend again.

³²Teach me *what* I do not see. If I have committed iniquity, I will not do so again.’

³³*Should he reward you* according to your terms, even though you refuse *his way?* You must choose, and not I. Therefore tell what you know.

³⁴Let men of understanding say to me, a wise man who listens to me,

³⁵‘Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.’

³⁶My desire *is that* Job may be tested to the

34:10-12 Elihu now begins to defend God’s justice against what he thinks are Job’s attacks. He has a very high view of God’s justice. Whatever may have happened to Job, however Job may question God’s justice, whatever may happen in the world, whatever suffering and calamities may come on men, one thing is absolutely certain – God can do no wrong. (How true this is – compare Gen 18:25; Deut 32:4; Ps 11:7; 89:14; Jer 9:24; Acts 7:31; Rev 16:7). In v 11 Elihu says that God gives to men according to their deeds. This indeed is the essence of justice and is often stated in the Bible (Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12; Jer 32:19; Ezek 33:20; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12).

However, like the three friends, Elihu assumed that this reward or punishment of deeds was taking place now in this world. He knew nothing, of course, of the judgments revealed in the New Testament (Matt 25:33-36; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15). So Elihu is really saying just what the three friends said – Job is guilty and receiving the just punishment for his bad deeds. So Elihu has not been able to give a better reason for Job’s

sufferings than they did.

34:13-15 God is the absolute sovereign of the universe and can do what He will. He does not need to give an answer to anyone.

34:14 “*On it*” – the word for “man” (KJV) is not in the Hebrew here.

34:17 Verse 5; 40:8.

34:18-30 God is completely impartial in His judgments. He sees all, knows all, and rules over all with justice.

34:23 The Hebrew of the first phrase is very obscure and so the meaning is doubtful.

34:31-33 Elihu wants Job to speak like the man in vs 31 and 32. If Job will not, Elihu is sure he cannot hope for God’s mercy.

34:34-37 Since Job refuses to be a humble penitent, confessing his sins and begging for mercy, Elihu, like the three friends, is certain that Job is a rebellious sinner. Notice v 36. Did Elihu not realize that Job had already been tried to the utmost? What more did he desire Job to suffer? Some “mediator” Elihu is proving to be! Oh, who is like Christ the Lord! (Heb 2:17-18; 4:15-16; 1 John 2:1).

utmost, for *giving* answers like wicked men.

³⁷For he adds rebellion to his sin. He *scornfully* claps *his hands* together among us, and multiplies his words against God”.

35 Elihu continued speaking and said, ²“Do you think this is just? You say, ‘My righteousness is more than God’s.’

³For you say, ‘What advantage would it be to you, what benefit would I have, *if I refrained* from sinning?’

⁴“I will answer you, and your companions with you.

⁵Look at the heavens and see, and gaze at the clouds *which* are higher than you.

⁶If you sin, what are you doing to him? Or *if* your transgressions are increased, what are you doing to him?

⁷If you are righteous, what are you giving him? Or what does he receive from your hand?

⁸Your wickedness *hurts* a man like yourself, and your righteousness *helps only* a son of man.

35:1-3 Elihu thinks he has suitably dealt with Job’s words about God’s justice. Now he takes up a second complaint he has against Job. He had already stated it in 34:9. See note there.

35:2 “*My righteousness is more than God’s*”— of course, Job never said this, but Elihu thought this was the meaning of some things he did say.

35:3 “*You*”— or “me”.

35:4-8 Man’s deeds, whether good or bad, cannot really affect God, Elihu says. God is exalted above the heavens, He is completely self-sufficient. Nothing that man does can add anything to God or take anything away from Him. He deals with men with impartial justice. He has arranged matters in such a way that man’s righteous deeds or evil deeds affect only men. For these reasons righteousness is profitable to men, and wickedness unprofitable. In this Elihu was not altogether accurate. All sins are against God (Ps 51:4); they cause Him pain and grief (Gen 6:6); eventually the Son of God would take on Himself sins punishment for all His chosen people (Isa 53:4-6), and meant sufferings and death to Him; and God gets satisfaction from the righteous deeds of His people, and their lives are significant in the unseen war going on between God and Satan (1:8-12; 2:3-6).

35:9-15 Does Job think righteousness is unprofitable because God does not hear the cries of the righteous? Evidently Elihu thinks that Job thinks so. Certainly this is an idea that Satan inserts into many people’s minds. Many true believers also are sometimes tested on this

⁹“*The people* cry out because of the many acts of oppression; they cry out because of the arm of the mighty.

¹⁰But no one says, ‘Where is God, my Maker, who gives songs in the night,

¹¹Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky?’

¹²There they cry out, but he does not answer, because of the pride of evil men.

¹³Certainly God will not listen to an empty cry; the Almighty will not pay attention to it.

¹⁴Although you say you do not see him, *yet the case for judgment is* before him, and you must wait for him.

¹⁵But now, because he has not punished in his anger, in *his* great extremity Job does not understand.

¹⁶Therefore Job opens his mouth for empty *talk*. He multiplies words without knowledge”.

36 Elihu continued and said, ²“Bear with me a little while,

point. They sometimes are tempted to think when they get no answers to their prayers that serving God is useless. Elihu says there are good reasons why God does not hear men when they cry out in their misery.

First, they do not acknowledge God as Creator and Teacher and direct their cries to Him alone (vs 10,11). They act as if they had learned no more than dumb beasts. If they humbly pray to their Maker He would give them “songs in the night” – joy in the midst of troubles.

Second, God often ignores men’s cries because they are both wicked and arrogant. So their prayers are empty and insincere (vs 12,13). In vs 14-16 Elihu applies this to Job. God, he says, is even less likely to hear Job’s pleas than those of wicked, arrogant men. Why? Because of the way Job speaks. According to Elihu, Job has fully denied God’s justice (vs 14,15); so he must be even worse than the arrogant and wicked man.

35:9 “*Teaches*”— This could also be translated “Who teaches us by the beasts of the earth and makes us wise by the birds of the air”.

35:14 “*Wait for him*”— the Hebrew here does not mean “trust thou in him” (KJV).

35:15 “*Extremity*”— the Hebrew word here also means weakness or folly or stupidity. This whole sentence in Hebrew is obscure and difficult.

35:16 See 8:2; 11:3; 12:2; 15:2-3; 16:3; 18:2-3; 26:3; 34:35; 38:2.

36:1-2 Elihu has already spoken three times (32:6; 34:1; 35:1), as often as any of the three friends. Do his hearers show signs of restlessness? Wait, he says, I have more to say on God’s behalf.

and I will show you that *there is* still more to be said on God's behalf. ³I will bring my knowledge from afar. I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. ⁴And truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge *is* with you. ⁵"See, God *is* mighty, but does not despise *anyone*; he *is* mighty in strength *and* wisdom. ⁶He does not preserve the life of the wicked, but gives the poor *their* rights. ⁷He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but *seats them* with kings on the throne; yes, he establishes them forever, and they are exalted. ⁸But if *they are* bound in fetters and held by the cords of affliction, ⁹Then he shows them their deeds, and the transgressions they have arrogantly committed.

¹⁰He also opens their ear to instruction and commands them to turn back from iniquity.

¹¹If they obey and serve *him*, they will spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

¹²But if they do not obey, they will perish by the sword, and they will die without knowledge.

¹³"But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath; they do not cry out *for his help* when he binds them.

¹⁴They die in youth, and their life *ends* among the male shrine prostitutes.

¹⁵He delivers the poor in their affliction, and opens their ears *to hear him* in oppression.

¹⁶"And also he would have brought you out of distress *into* a broad place free of restraint; and what is set on your table *would have been* full and rich.

¹⁷But *now* your *life* is full of the judgment on the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold *of you*.

¹⁸Because of *his* wrath, *beware* that he does not take you away with a blow; for a great ransom would not be able to deliver you.

¹⁹Will he esteem your riches? *No*, not gold or all the powers of strength.

²⁰Do not desire the night, when people are cut off from their places.

²¹Be careful, do not turn to iniquity, which you have preferred to affliction.

²²"See, God is exalted in his power. Who teaches like him?

²³Who can appoint his way for him, or say, 'You have done wrong?'

²⁴Remember to praise his work, which men see.

²⁵Everyone sees it; man looks on from afar.

²⁶See, God *is* great, and we do not know *him*; nor can the number of his years be searched out.

²⁷"For he draws up the drops of water; they distill as rain from the vapour,

36:3-4 He thinks he will give new truth not revealed in anything the others have said. He is sure he knows the truth and that his wisdom is very great indeed. Again he gives us good reason to doubt his humility. Is he not speaking of himself when he says "one who is perfect in knowledge is with you?" It seems so, but see 37:16.

36:5-21 In these verses Elihu has two main points. First, God wisely and impartially determines what men should experience (vs 5-9); second, God's chastening has a merciful purpose – the correction and reformation of erring men (vs 10-15. See 33:14-30). He then applies these truths to Job (vs 16-21). There is good in what he says (v 15, for example), but his remarks are not what we would expect from a person "perfect in knowledge". Concerning God's rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked in this world, he gives the same old view that both he and the three friends have presented before. He ignores, just as they did, all the facts which Job had urged against this view. And by some of his remarks he reveals again that he does not understand Job.

36:12 "Will perish by the sword" – or the Hebrew may mean "will cross the River".

36:18-20 The language of the Hebrew is difficult here and the meaning uncertain.

36:22 With this verse Elihu begins a long passage on the greatness of God which goes on to 37:24. It is full of beautiful truth. We might call it "Elihu's sermon on nature". The key verses are 36:26; and 37:5,14,19. Elihu is saying to Job "we cannot understand God's ways with His physical creation. How then can we understand His ways in His government of the world of men? They also will be mysterious and beyond our ability to grasp". How true this is! (5:9; 11:7; 15:8; Isa 55:8-9; Rom 11:33-34). But we should not think it was a truth of which Job was ignorant. Elihu wanted Job to apply this truth to himself. But was Elihu just as eager to apply it to himself? It seems he thought he knew all about God's ways with Job.

36:23 He thinks Job is trying to do this.

36:24 "Which men see" – the Hebrew could be translated "of which men sing".

36:27-33 God shows His great wisdom in the making of rain and storm, and in using them in governing earth's people (v 31).

36:27 "He draws up the drops of water" – this means that God draws the water up from the earth by the process of evaporation.

"Distill as rain from the vapour" – or "distill as rain to the streams".

²⁸Which the clouds pour out *and* let fall on man abundantly.

²⁹And can *anyone* understand how the clouds spread out, the *thundering* sound from his tent?

³⁰See, he spreads his light on it, and covers the depths of the sea.

³¹Through these things he judges the peoples *and* gives food in abundance.

³²He conceals lightning in *his* hands, and commands it to strike the mark.

³³Its sound announces it.

37 The cattle also *show* the rising *storm*.
“At this also my heart trembles and leaps from its place.

²Listen! Listen to the thunder of his voice and the sound *that* comes from his mouth.

³He sends it out under the whole heaven, and his lightning to the ends of the earth.

⁴A voice roars after it; he thunders with his majestic voice. He does not restrain the *lightning flashes* when his voice is heard.

⁵God thunders marvellously with his voice. He does great things which we cannot comprehend.

⁶For he says to the snow, ‘Be *on* the earth’, likewise to the gentle rain, and to his great strong rain.

⁷He seals the hand of every man, so that everyone will know his work.

⁸Then the beasts go into dens, and remain

in their places.

⁹From the south comes the whirlwind, and cold from the north.

¹⁰Ice is given by the breath of God, and the broad waters are frozen.

¹¹And he loads the thick cloud with moisture, and scatters his lightning *through* the cloud.

¹²By his guidance it swirls around, to do whatever he commands them over the face of the whole inhabited earth.

¹³He causes it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or as a mercy.

¹⁴“Listen to this, Job. Stand still and consider the wonderful works of God.

¹⁵Do you know how God dispatches his clouds and causes their lightning to flash?

¹⁶Do you know *how* the clouds are balanced, those wonderful works of the One who is perfect in knowledge?

¹⁷Or how your clothes are hot when he stills the earth with the south *wind*?

¹⁸Have you *joined* with him in spreading out the sky, *looking as* strong as a cast metal mirror?

¹⁹“Teach us what we should say to him, *for* we cannot put *our words* in order because of the darkness.

²⁰Should he be told that I would speak? If a man speaks, surely he will be swallowed up.

²¹And now *men* cannot look at the bright light in the clouds, but the wind passes by

36:29 “*His tent*”— here the sky is regarded as God’s tent.

36:32 “*He conceals lightning in his hands*”— the Hebrew could also be translated “He covers the clouds with lightning”.

“*To strike the mark*”— this translation of the phrase brings out the meaning of the Hebrew, while the KJV here does not.

37:1-4 Evidently, while Elihu has been speaking, a storm has come up. He compares its thunders to the roar of God’s voice.

37:5 Elihu goes on (up to v 14) to other phenomena in nature which show God’s great wisdom.

37:10 God’s breath here means the wind.

37:13 God uses climatic conditions in His wise government of the earth.

37:14-24 Elihu comes to the conclusion of all he has to say. The essence of it is this: He wants Job to recognize that God’s greatness and wisdom are unsearchable (vs 14-18), to abandon his presumptuous desire to make a case before God (vs 19,20), and reverently submit to God (v 24). Verse 23 gives the sum of his views of God. Such a God is worthy of all honor and reverence from men. Elihu speaks well of God’s greatness, of His

just and righteous character.

But what of the man and his words as a whole? We should think of him neither too highly nor too lowly. He was a man made of the same clay as Job and his friends (33:6), and he revealed in his words that this was indeed so. He was eloquent and had considerable wisdom and knowledge of God. But he seems over-confident in his own wisdom (on this see 1 Cor 8:2). He says some fine things, but he fails to understand Job or to solve the riddle of Job’s sufferings. He did not know that Job was a better man than he was himself. He seems on the whole to be superior to Job’s three friends, but he was not Job’s equal in character. We have God’s own word for this (2:3).

Like all believers Elihu was a mixture of good and bad, wisdom and ignorance. He is a reminder to us that the highest reach of man’s reason cannot comprehend the mysteries of God (1 Cor 1:25). It was good that he himself recognized this to some extent at least. His closing words beautifully lead us up to the coming of God on the scene in chapter 38. His words, possibly, have prepared the minds of Job and his friends for the words of God which follow.

and clears them away.

²²From the north comes golden *splendour*; God comes in awesome majesty.

²³The Almighty! We cannot find him. He is excellent in power, in judgment, and in abundant justice. He does not oppress.

²⁴Therefore men fear him. He does not look to anyone wise in heart”.

38 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

²“Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

³Now make yourself ready like a man, for I will question you, and you shall answer me.

37:24 “He does not look to”– or, possibly, “He does not have regard for”.

38:1 Job had expressed the desire to stand before God that he might present his case (13:3,22; 23:3-7). God now suddenly comes to him and gives him the desire of his heart. It seems fitting that God should come in the storm. A mighty storm has been blowing across Job’s life and thoughts. God has been in that storm too and has achieved His purpose. Now He comes in the clouds and thunder and speaks to His suffering servant.

We might think that God would now reveal to Job the reasons for his sufferings, or say something very comforting such as, “Job, I love you. You have passed the test I sent; you have kept your faith in me. Now I will greatly bless you”. However, God did not do this. It would seem that God had more to do in Job’s life before giving him assurance of His love.

38:2 Whom did God mean by these words? Elihu was speaking when God came in the storm and God could have meant him. It seems a fitting rebuke to one who thought too highly of his own wisdom. If God did not speak these words about Elihu then He made no comment at all about him. And it seems strange that He would completely ignore him. He spoke to the three friends in 42:7-8, and had much to say to Job. However, God may have been speaking here about Job. Job himself thought so (42:3) – but this may have been merely a mark of Job’s humility. Actually all five persons involved in the debate were there, so perhaps God meant these words as a rebuke to all of them. Maybe God put the question in an ambiguous way so that any of them who was willing to apply it to himself could do so.

God says that “counsel” has been “darkened” by foolish words. The Hebrew word translated counsel means here God’s purpose, God’s thought, God’s plan that He was fulfilling toward Job. In their ignorance of God’s ways Job, Elihu, and the other three all made this plan of God obscure. Their words, instead of bringing light

⁴“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare *it*, if you have understanding.

⁵Who determined its measurements, if you know? Or who stretched out the measuring line on it?

⁶On what are its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone,

⁷When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

⁸“Or *who* shut in the sea with doors, when it burst out, *as if* coming from the womb,

⁹When I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling bands,

¹⁰And fixed my boundaries for it, and set

on the subject, brought darkness. If we try to teach others this book, or any truth of God, we should be careful that we do not do as they did. We should never profess a knowledge we do not have, should never speak dogmatically about doubtful matters, should never think we have a monopoly on God’s truth.

38:3 “*Make yourself ready*”– the Hebrew means “gird up your loins”, but this phrase is obviously used metaphorically here. Now God speaks directly to Job. He is going to ask Job a series of questions. If Job would try to answer them he must be prepared for a very vigorous effort. Why is God asking Job these questions instead of comforting him? Job has been questioning God’s government of the world. He has expressed doubts about the justice of God’s dealings with men. Did Job think, then, that he had more wisdom than God? In the matter of ruling the world did he think he could do a better job than God?

God asks the following questions in an ironic way. We can detect, can we not, a smile behind them. He knows very well that Job cannot answer a single one of them. His purpose is to show Job his proper place. He means to shut Job’s mouth, to get him to confess he has spoken foolishly. God succeeds perfectly in this (42:3-6). Only after that does He comfort Job. Very often God must cause men to shut their mouths in order to bless them (compare Rom 3:19,21-24). Calamities did not come on Job because he was guilty of wrong doing. But after the calamities came, in his attempts to explain matters, Job at times was guilty of wrong speaking. This he had to confess and set right.

38:4 God is showing Job how little he knows. See the ironic way God repeatedly reveals Job’s lack of understanding (vs 5,18,20,21,33; 39:1,26).

38:7 These morning stars may here signify angelic beings.

“*Sons of God*”– angels. God is speaking of a time before men had been created (see also Job 1:6). Observe that the creation of earth was a source of great rejoicing in heaven.

up its bolted doors,

¹¹And said, 'You may come this far, but no farther; here your proud waves will stop?'

¹²Since *the beginning* of your days have you given commands to the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place,

¹³That it might take hold of the ends of the earth and shake the wicked out of it?

¹⁴*The earth* takes shape like clay *under* a seal, and they stand out like a garment.

¹⁵Their light is withheld from the wicked, and the upraised arm is broken.

¹⁶"Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?

¹⁷Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?

¹⁸Have you comprehended the wide expanse of the earth? Declare *it*, if you know all this.

¹⁹"Where *is* the way to the dwelling place of *light*? And where *does* darkness *have* its place,

²⁰That you may take it to its boundaries, and know the paths *to* its house?

²¹Do you know because you were born then, and the number of your days *is so* great?

²²"Have you entered the treasuries of the snow? Or have you seen the treasuries of the hail,

²³Which I reserve for a time of trouble, for a day of battle and war?

²⁴What is the way *to the place* where light is diffused, or the east wind *is* scattered over the earth?

²⁵Who cuts a channel for the flood, or a path for the thunderstorm,

²⁶To bring rain on the earth *where* no one *lives*, on the wilderness where no one *lives*,

²⁷To satisfy the desolate wasteland, and to cause the tender plant to bud?

²⁸Does the rain have a father? Who begets the drops of dew?

²⁹From whose womb comes the ice? And who gives birth to the frost from the heavens?

³⁰Then the waters become *hard as* stone, and the surface of the deep is frozen.

³¹"Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loosen the cords of Orion?

³²Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons, or lead out the Bear with its cubs?

³³Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Or set up its dominion on earth?

³⁴"Can you raise your voice to the clouds, so that an abundance of water may cover you?

³⁵Can you send out lightning flashes, so that they go and say to you, 'Here we are!'

³⁶Who has put wisdom in the inner being, or who has given understanding to the heart?

³⁷Who can number the clouds by *his* wisdom? Or who can tilt the water jars of heaven,

³⁸When the dust becomes hard, and the clods stick together?

³⁹"Do you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,

⁴⁰When they crouch in *their* dens, or lie in wait in *their* lairs?

⁴¹Who provides food for the raven, when its young ones cry out to God and wander around for lack of food?

38:12-35 God shows Job also how little he can do (vs 16,20,22,31,32,34). God wants Job to fully understand that he is lacking in knowledge and incapable of doing even the smallest thing God does; that his complaints have been against the all-wise, all-powerful Creator and Sovereign of the universe.

In these chapters God is showing also the folly of all men who question His wisdom, power, and ways. How many there are who know nothing, and can do nothing, who yet dare to criticize all God does! And how many others there are who look at this marvelous universe and dogmatically deny the existence of God! The arrogant ignorance of atheism! God here asks questions that should cause every human being to lay his hand on his mouth and admit his ignorance. Nature should teach us humility. Alas, many people, learning a tiny fraction of creation's mysteries, turn proud and imagine that nothing is beyond the power

of their reason.

38:31 "*The cluster of*"— or "the twinkling of", or "the chains of", or even "the beautiful". The Hebrew is obscure. Pleiades and Orion are two constellations.

38:32 "*Constellations*"— Hebrew "Mazzeroth". Some think the word indicates the morning star.

"*The Bear*"— the constellation called Ursa Major or the Big Dipper. But the meaning of the Hebrew here is unclear and several different translations have been offered.

38:36 What makes man differ from the rest of earth's creation? How is it that he has a mind that can have wisdom and understanding? God has given it to man. Wisdom does not arise and evolve out of dumb and dead matter.

38:39-41 God speaks of His wisdom and care over the whole animal creation. The implication is that if God cares about all, will He not have loving concern for men? Compare Matt 6:25-32.

39 “Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats give birth, or do you watch when the deer is in labour?”

²Can you number the months they fulfil? Or do you know the time when they give birth?

³They crouch down, they give birth to their young ones, they rid themselves of their labour pains.

⁴Their young ones flourish, they grow up in the field; *then* they go away and do not return to them.

⁵“Who has let the wild donkey go free? Who has untied the bonds of the wild donkey?”

⁶To him I have made the wilderness a home, and barren land a dwelling place.

⁷He scorns the crowded city; he does not hear the shouts of a driver.

⁸The range of the mountains *is* his pasture, and he searches for any green thing.

⁹“Will the wild ox be willing to serve you, or spend the night by your manger?”

¹⁰Can you harness the wild ox to the furrow with ropes, or will he harrow the valleys behind you?

¹¹Will you trust him because his strength *is* great, or will you leave your labour to him?

¹²Will you trust him to bring home your grain, and gather *it* to your threshing floor?

¹³“*Did you give* the noisy wings to the peacock, or wings and plumage to the ostrich?”

¹⁴She leaves her eggs on the ground and lets the sand warm them,

¹⁵And forgets that a foot may crush them, or that a wild beast may break them.

¹⁶She treats her young ones harshly, as though *they were* not hers; her labour is in vain, without fear,

¹⁷Because God has deprived her of wisdom, and has not imparted understanding to her.

39:1 This whole chapter is taken up with the theme God began in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. God is keeping a close watch on everything on earth. He treats the whole animal world with wisdom and skill. Will He do less for men, for Job? Also we can see in this chapter the mighty Creator of the universe recounting with joy some of the works of His hands. He seems to be exulting in His creation (see also Gen 1:31; Prov 8:22-31; Ps 104:31).

40:2 Job has been wanting to argue his case before God (13:3; 23:4). He thought he had a great many things to say in his defense. But in the two preceding chapters God has revealed something of His own great power and wisdom and has overwhelmed Job with questions for which he had no answer. Now God asks him if he thinks he is wise enough to give God correction and advice. Does Job wish to continue the debate? Then let him answer God now.

¹⁸When she raises herself to *full* height to run, she scorns the horse and its rider.

¹⁹“Have you given strength to the horse? Have you clothed its neck with thunder?”

²⁰Can you frighten him like a grasshopper? His majestic snorting *produces* terror.

²¹He paws the valley and rejoices in *his* strength. He goes out to meet *man's* weapons.

²²He mocks at fear and is not frightened; nor does he turn back from the sword.

²³The quiver rattles against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

²⁴He eats up the ground with fierceness and rage; nor does he come to a halt at the sound of the trumpet.

²⁵At the *blast* of the trumpets, he says ‘Aha!’ He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of the captains and the shouting.

²⁶“Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?”

²⁷At your command does the eagle soar up and make her nest on high?

²⁸She makes her dwelling on a rock and spends the nights *there* on the rocky crag, in *her* stronghold.

²⁹From there she seeks for prey; her eyes see *it* from a long distance.

³⁰Her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain *are*, there *is* she”.

40 Then the LORD continued to answer Job and said,

²“Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct *him*? Let the one who rebukes God answer it”.

³Then Job answered the LORD and said,

⁴“Look, I am insignificant. What answer can I give you? I lay my hand over my mouth.

⁵Once I have spoken, but I will not answer.

40:3-5 Job does not dare to answer. (Compare Rom 3:19.) Though his own questions about God’s justice have not been answered, he will not repeat them to God’s face (compare Rom 9:20). God’s way with him is succeeding.

40:4 “*Insignificant*”— this is a better translation of the Hebrew word for today than “vile” (KJV), which now conveys a wrong meaning. The Hebrew word means “small”, “worthy of being despised”, or “of no weight or worth”, or “insignificant”. Job is not confessing sin here or referring to his sinful nature or speaking of any vile acts. He is acknowledging his smallness and insignificance and so his inability to speak to the great Creator. God has still more to accomplish in Job before He gives him comfort and blessing. He will do His work in Job inwardly before He heals him outwardly. So He continues to speak to Job. Of

Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further”.

⁶Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

⁷“Now make yourself ready like a man. I will question you, and you instruct me.

⁸Would you indeed do away with my judgment? Would you condemn me that you may be justified?

⁹Do you have an arm like God’s, or can you thunder with a voice like his?

¹⁰Then adorn yourself *with* majesty and splendour, and clothe yourself in glory and beauty.

¹¹Scatter the fury of your wrath, and see everyone *who is* proud and humble him.

¹²Look on everyone *who is* proud and bring him low, *and* trample on the wicked in their place.

¹³Hide them together in the dust; bind their faces in the concealed *place*.

course, the very fact that God had come to him and was speaking to him must have been an indescribable comfort in itself to this sad and suffering man. Job may well have thought “Let God say anything, only let Him be here and speak!” (compare Ps 28:1).

40:7 This is 38:3 repeated.

40:8 This has been the tendency of some of the things Job has said (7:20-21; 9:22-24; 10:3; 19:6-7; 24:12; 27:2). Those who had disputed with Job did not understand the reason for his sufferings, but they thought they discerned his fault and rebuked him for it (8:3; 15:4,12,13; 34:5-6). Now God Himself puts the matter before him. This was Job’s one big error in the things he said. Job would not admit his friends were right even in this one point. But it is one thing to argue with one’s friends, quite another to stand before God. God will now bring Job to full confession and repentance for his sinful speaking.

Complaining about God’s dealings with us is the same as accusing Him of injustice. It implies we are better than He. No matter what troubles come to us God has a right to demand of us complete trust in Him, complete submission to His will, complete love and devotion. He is the great King over the universe (see note at Ps 47:2). The business of God’s people is not to question God but to glorify Him (see notes on Psalm 73). God will bring us believers (as He did Job) into situations where we cannot understand what He is doing, where His dealings with us seem contrary to reason, and where we must simply trust Him. In some way or other, and in some measure, all believers are Jobs. Have we yet learned simply to trust God as Job did, no matter what may be happening in our lives or circumstances?

40:9-14 The purpose of these words seems to be to remind Job of this truth: Job does not have the power to bring the world to judgment, so he doesn’t have the wisdom to criticize God’s

¹⁴Then I will also admit to you that your own right hand can save you.

¹⁵“Look now at the behemoth, which I made *along* with you. He eats grass like an ox.

¹⁶Now see what strength he *has* in his loins, and what power in the muscles of his belly.

¹⁷He moves his tail like a cedar. The sinews of his thighs are knit together.

¹⁸His bones *are like* strong pieces of bronze. His limbs *are like* bars of iron.

¹⁹“He *is* chief of the ways of God; the one who made him can bring near his sword.

²⁰Surely the mountains produce food for him, and all the beasts of the field play there.

²¹He lies under the lotus plants, in the hidden place of the reeds and marshlands.

²²The lotus plants conceal him *in* their shadow; the willow trees by the stream surround him.

²³See, though a river overflows him, he *is*

dealings with men.

40:15-24 From v 15 onward all God’s message to Job is taken up with a description of two beasts – “behemoth” and “leviathan”. At first, this might seem to us a very strange message to give to a man suffering in body and mind, a man who has been full of tormenting questions. But God knew He would very shortly bring Job’s sufferings to an end. He also knew that there were more important matters than answering Job’s questions. He was working to produce complete submission to Himself in Job’s heart. He wanted Job to renounce his questioning of God’s goodness, and justice, and simply trust Him fully and forever.

People sometimes think that above all else they want their questions answered. But when they come into God’s presence and submit to Him in faith they find their questions are not as important to them as they had thought.

As for the beast described in these verses (behemoth) some scholars have thought it is an elephant, others a hippopotamus. Others think it refers to some huge animal now extinct. Certainly the beast described is more like a hippopotamus than an elephant. As for it being a now extinct creature such as some kind of dinosaur – v 19 may suggest a creature somewhat grander than the hippopotamus, but there is no proof that a now extinct animal is meant. We cannot be sure whether Job knew anything about any such animal, and God is calling his attention to an animal with which he is familiar (v 15). Some scholars have suggested that possibly some types of dinosaurs were on the ark with Noah and so were in existence after the flood, and that they could have been alive on the earth until Job’s day. This may have been so, but as far as the author of these notes is aware, there is as yet no fully satisfactory evidence either for or against this view.

not alarmed; he is confident even though the Jordan should pour into his mouth.

²⁴Who can catch him about the eyes, or pierce his nose with a trap?

41 “Can you draw out the leviathan with a hook, or catch his tongue with a rope you lower?

²Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook?

³Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you?

⁴Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever?

⁵Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you keep him on a leash for your maids?

⁶Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they divide him up among the merchants?

⁷Can you fill his hide with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears?

⁸If you put your hand on him, you will remember the battle, and not do so again.

⁹See, hope about him is in vain; the mere sight of him will bring you down.

¹⁰“No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him up. Who then is able to stand against me?”

¹¹Who has previously given to me, that I should repay him? Everything under the heavens is mine.

¹²I will not keep silent about his limbs, his strength, or his graceful proportions.

¹³Who can take off his outer coat? Who can approach him with his double bridle?

¹⁴Who can open the doors of his face, with his terrible teeth all around?

¹⁵His scales are his pride, tightly sealed together.

¹⁶They are so close to each other that no air gets between them.

¹⁷They are joined to each other; they stick

together, so that they cannot be separated.

¹⁸A light flashes out when he sneezes, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.

¹⁹From his mouth issue burning torches; sparks of fire leap out.

²⁰Smoke issues from his nostrils, as from a boiling pot over burning reeds.

²¹His breath sets coals on fire, and a flame comes from his mouth.

²²Strength lodges in his neck, and dismay dances before him.

²³The folds of his flesh are joined together; on him they are firm and immovable.

²⁴His heart is as hard as a stone; yes, as hard as the lower millstone.

²⁵When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid. Because of his crashing about they get out of the way.

²⁶The sword that reaches him cannot prove itself; nor can the spear, the dart or the javelin.

²⁷He regards iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood.

²⁸The arrow cannot make him flee; stones from slings are like stubble to him.

²⁹Darts are regarded as straw. He laughs at the shaking of a spear.

³⁰His underside is like sharp pieces of pottery; on the mire he spreads out like a threshing sledge.

³¹He makes the deep boil like a pot; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.

³²He leaves a shining wake behind him; one might think the deep has white hair.

³³On earth there is nothing like him; he has been made fearless.

³⁴He looks down on all that is high; he is king over all the children of pride”.

42 Then Job answered the LORD and said, ²“I know that you can do

41:1 “Leviathan”—there has been much speculation about this animal also. Most scholars think a huge crocodile is meant. The sea water crocodile is the largest of all reptiles in the world at present. It can grow to a length of 8 meters or even more. In Ps 104:25-26 “Leviathan” is said to be in the sea. Perhaps this is the “leviathan” described here in Job. It seems that the description here is in very poetic language. It may be interesting to speculate what animals are meant in these two chapters, but it does not seem important to the author of these notes to determine exactly what ones are meant. The important thing is to understand what message God is giving to Job (and to us). And that message is the same whether the animals are of the sort known to us today, or some kind of dinosaurs or other animals unknown to us now. The essence of God’s

message appears particularly in vs 10,11. Men who fear to stand before some of God’s creatures should not think it a light matter to stand before God Himself the Creator of everything. No man can demand anything of God. God is not under obligation to anyone. All things and all men are His property. He does not owe anyone an explanation of His ways. See Rom 11:33-35.

41:34 “All the children of pride”—in the context of the debate between Job and the four others, and the appearance of what looks suspiciously like pride at times in all of them, God’s mention of pride here may not be without significance.

42:2 Job fully understands that God can conceive and carry out any plan He wants. He has learned the lesson from God’s sermon on nature and applied it to his own sufferings and trials.

everything, and *that* no purpose can be withheld from you. ³ You asked, ‘Who is this who darkens counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have spoken things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ Listen, I pray you,

42:3 The first part of v 3 was spoken by God in 38:2. Job now quotes it and applies it to himself. He confesses what all the speakers should have confessed – indeed what all men who dispute about God and His ways have reason to confess. Men so lightly and presumptuously speak of mysteries far beyond their understanding. If they want God’s blessing they must humble themselves like Job and repent of their foolishness and sinful speaking.

42:4 Job is probably referring to God’s words in 38:3; and 40:7 addressed to himself. Job now finds that he has nothing to give as an answer but the following two verses, and no question at all.

42:5 God may or may not have appeared in some form of glory in the storm clouds. In any case Job means something more than an outward view of God’s glory. He speaks of an inner perception, an enlightenment of the eyes of the mind. It was not any argument, not even any presentation of truth alone which brought Job to repentance. It was a new and deeper experience of God Himself. So it is with all men who are brought to full submission to God. In God’s presence truths in the mind become the deep knowledge of spiritual experience.

42:6 The first part of v 6 has no object in Hebrew – it is simply “I despise”, or “I reject”. Does he mean he despises his former opinions and complaints? Does he mean he abhors everything about himself? Or is he saying he renounces, rejects himself (as in Luke 9:23)? Probably all of that. A man humbly experiencing God’s presence and God’s rebuke can no longer have the same high regard for himself, his opinions, deeds, and spiritual attainments that he had before that. Job repents. Of what? Not of his previous righteous life – his need of repentance did not have to do with that. And God never rebuked him for a thing in it. This was one way God vindicated Job before men.

Job repents of the foolish and sinful things he has said about God’s justice. He repents that he ever allowed his pains and perplexities to cause a word of complaint against God to come from his lips. He repents in dust and ashes – figurative of complete abandonment to repentance. He now sits spiritually in the ash heap in which his body sat (2:8). Job has learned more about himself, more of his weakness and foolishness, through this experience – a very important thing for all of us to learn. He has also learned more of God – and this is the most important kind of learning for any of us. Any event or experience which comes from His hand to bring us this kind of knowledge is worth whatever it costs us, whether it be loss of property, loss of children, loss of reputation, or loss of all things. See John 17:3.

42:7 God now raises Job from the “dust and ashes” and vindicates him before his friends. By “vindicate”

and I will speak. *You said*, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ ⁵ I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you. ⁶ Therefore I despise *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes”.

⁷ And this is what happened after the

it is not meant that God declares Job to be sinless or faultless, but that God stands by His suffering servant and reveals him to be a man of uprightness and integrity, who feared God and shunned evil (1:8). This is the same kind of vindication for which David prayed when he was unjustly slandered and accused – see Ps 26:1; 35:24; 43:1.

Here God calls Job His servant (four times in vs 7,8 – as if He loved to dwell on the idea and emphasize it). He did not call the others His servants. He says He is angry with them. He doesn’t say He is angry with Job. He says Job spoke to Him (or about Him) the right thing. He says they did not.

What is the right thing or things Job spoke? The views of scholars on this depend, in some measure, on how they translate one Hebrew word (*elai*) in this sentence. Some scholars translate like this: “You have not spoken what is right concerning me as my servant Job has”. This would mean that Job’s theory of how God dealt with mankind in general was more accurate than the theory of his friends.

However, others translate “You have not spoken that which is right to me”. It is possible to translate this Hebrew word either way, but the usual meaning of it and the usual way of translating it in the Old Testament is “to me”. For example, in Isaiah it is translated “to me” a number of times, but never “of me” or “concerning me” (Isa 8:3,11; 21:11; 36:7; 37:21; 51:1). In the context of this chapter also it seems better to translate it “to me” (twice in this same verse, verse 7, part of that same Hebrew word is translated “to” – “to Job” and “to Eliphaz”. Nowhere else in Job is *elai* translated “of me”, or “concerning me”).

If we accept the translation “to me” (as the evidence suggests we should do), we will understand that God is commending Job, not for what he said in the debate with his friends, but for what he said directly to God in 40:3-5 and 42:1-6. In those verses Job admitted his ignorance, and his inability and unworthiness to speak about God or to God, and he repents of the things he had said. His friends did not do so. Probably they did not realize until this moment how mistaken they had been in some of the things they had said, and how much they needed to confess it as Job did. God commended Job’s repentance and confession. After all, why would God commend Job for saying those other things which Job himself saw were wrong? But Job’s confession of wrong speaking was pleasing to God. It is just the sort of confession that many philosophers and theologians (and many ordinary people who argue about God) need to make. Until they admit their ignorance and repent of their false and dogmatic utterances about God they will not know God’s blessing.

LORD had spoken those words to Job: the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is burning against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken to me *what is* right, as my servant Job *has*.⁸ Therefore take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves; and my servant Job will pray for you, for I will accept him. Otherwise I will deal with you *as your* foolishness *deserves*; because you have not spoken to me *what is* right, as my servant Job *has*”.

⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; and the LORD accepted Job.

¹⁰And the LORD restored the well-being of Job, when he prayed for his friends. Also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

¹¹Then all his brothers and all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances

before, came to him and ate food with him in his house. And they consoled him and comforted him about the whole disaster that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each one a gold ring.

¹²So the LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his first; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

¹³He also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. ¹⁵In all the land no women could be found as beautiful as the daughters of Job. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

¹⁶After this Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his grandsons to four generations. ¹⁷So Job died, old and full of days.

42:8 Can we imagine a better way than this to humble Job’s friends and vindicate Job? Job must act as a priestly intercessor and mediator for his friends or God will not accept them. Observe that they have been guilty of “folly” (or “evil” – the Hebrew word means both), but Job is God’s servant. They condemned Job, but now find that they were worthy of condemnation.

42:9 “*Did*” – it speaks well for the friends that they were willing to humble themselves and obey God. Job was willing to forgive their cruel and false accusations against him and pray for them (compare Matt 5:44; Luke 6:28; 23:34; Acts 7:60; Rom 12:14; 1 Pet 3:9). In the whole book of Job there is no indication that they ever prayed for him. If they had, perhaps their speeches would have been quite different.

42:10 Another way God chose to vindicate Job was to make him prosperous again. He revealed His love for Job by a method his friends, relatives, and neighbors, and the whole world could understand. In Old Testament days God often blessed His faithful people with material prosperity. In these New Testament days God may not at all reward faithfulness under trial by giving prosperity. Christians are taught to desire and expect their vindication and rewards in the next world, not in this one. And the privilege of suffering loss and pain for Christ is as much a mark of favor as riches could ever be (Matt 6:19-21; Luke 6:20-22; 12:33-34; 18:22; 1 Tim 6:6-9,18,19; Heb 10:32-37; 1 Pet 4:12-16). At the second coming of Christ all things will be made right.

“*Restored the well-being of*” – the Hebrew also means “turned the captivity of”.

42:11 19:13-14.

“*A piece of silver*” – in Hebrew “a kesitah”. Neither the weight nor value of this ancient unit of money is known to us.

42:12 Verse 10.

42:13 God did not give Job twice as many children as before. There was no need. The ten children who had died (1:2,18,19) were not permanently lost as the sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys were. The ten dead children were still in God’s keeping.

42:16-17 When calamity struck, Job had ten grown children. Afterwards he lived 140 years more. His many years of life place him possibly in the general era of Abraham. Abraham lived 175 years (Gen 25:7). After Abraham the ordinary life span of men became less.

Through the outer devastating events and inner agonizing experiences that Job endured there came to him a deeper knowledge both of himself and of God. And this, of course, was of immense spiritual value to him. The direct knowledge of God is the highest and best knowledge possible to man. Should we not think that this is one purpose God had in mind when He permitted all that came to Job? And should we not think, we who trust God as Job did, that every event in our own lives and every difficult and painful experience we go through are for the same great purpose? Surely such things are included in the promise of Rom 8:28.

