

Job: New European Christadelphian Commentary

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PREFACE

This commentary is based around the New European Version of the Bible, which is generally printed with brief commentary on each chapter. Charities such as Carelinks Ministries and the Christadelphian Advancement Trust endeavour to provide totally free copies worldwide according to resources and donations available to them. But there is a desire by many to go beyond those brief comments on each chapter, and delve deeper into the text. The New European Christadelphian commentary seeks to meet that need. As with all Divine things, beauty becomes the more apparent the closer we analyze. We can zoom in the scale of investigation to literally every letter of the words used by His Spirit. But that would require endless volumes. And academic analysis is no more nor less than that; we are to live by His word. This commentary seeks to achieve a balance between practical teaching on one hand, and a reasonable level of thorough consideration of the original text. On that side of things, you will observe in the commentary a common abbreviation: “s.w.”. This stands for “same word”; the same original Greek or Hebrew word translated [A] is used when translated [B]. This helps to slightly remove the mask of translation through which most Bible readers have to relate to the original text.

Are there errors of thought and intellectual process in these volumes? Surely there are. Let me know about them. But finally- don't fail to see the wood for the trees. Never let the wonder of the simple, basic Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom become obscured by all the angst over correctly interpreting this or that Bible verse. Believe it, respond to it, be baptized into Him, and let the word become flesh in you as it was so supremely in Him.

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Job

Job Chapter 1

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz- Later scripture assumes that Job was a real historical person (Ez. 14:14; James 5:11), although the entire book is poetry, and clearly isn't to be taken as real time recording of words spoken. It is a drama, concluding with a thunderstorm approaching and the revelation of God Himself. "The whole is divided into *three* parts—the prologue, poem proper, and epilogue. The *poem*, into three— (1) The dispute of Job and his three friends; (2) The address of Elihu; (3) The address of God. There are *three* series in the controversy, and in the same order. The epilogue also is threefold; Job's justification, reconciliation with his friends, restoration".

As will be noted further on this chapter, it would seem he lived in patriarchal times. This would explain why there is no reference to the exodus from Egypt, which is to be found in nearly all subsequent scripture apart from Job. Uz appears to be the relative of Abraham of Gen. 22:21. But much of scripture was rewritten under inspiration at the time of the restoration and also in Hezekiah's time. This explains why ancient Hebrew terms are used along with later Hebrew, with copious connections to the restoration prophecies of later Isaiah. And as noted on :7, there is allusion to Persian concepts too- appropriate if the book was reapplied to the Jews in Persia. Judah and Israel in captivity were struggling with the questions raised in the drama of Job; Job and his children become representative of God's people. His children suffered because of their sins. Job as the righteous remnant also suffered, but was restored. This speaks of the restoration from exile possible for Judah and Israel. They for the most part refused it. But the key was for the faithful remnant to appreciate that they too had sinned, as Job did, even though they were pleasing to God. All was under God's control; the book deconstructs the popular views of evil, a satan being, and suffering being a direct consequence of personal sin. This was required for the exiles. We note that Job is not presented as a Jew, but one of the surrounding peoples related to Abraham. The hero is not strongly Jewish and is presented without genealogy; and that was a lesson for the exiles too, for the prophetic intention was that Jews and Gentiles would repent and form a multiethnic people of God in the restored Kingdom. The name of Yahweh is likewise not mentioned until Yahweh is revealed at the very end of the book. They had effectively forgotten His Name in exile, in real spiritual terms; but through their sufferings and repentance, His Name would be revealed to them at the end.

Whose name was Job- He appears to be the "Jobab" of 1 Chron. 5, indeed the LXX states he is this person. "Job" may come from an Arabic word meaning 'repentance'; and that really is the appeal of the book, for the repentance of God's people, especially the exiles, so that God's saving purpose might be brought forward. The problem of suffering is secondary to this theme of the book.

That man was blameless- God's opinion of Job was that he was "blameless". But as the drama progresses, Bildad argues that if Job were in fact "blameless" then God would not cast him away (Job 8:20 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "blameless" (Job 9:20,21 s.w.), and yet he is driven to the conclusion that the "blameless" and sinner are "destroyed together" by God (Job 9:22 s.w.). It's quite possible that in depression and periods of suffering, we can come to have a lower view of ourselves than that which God has of us; just as at other times we can have a higher view of ourselves spiritually than we ought to. There is true guilt, the guilt which we should take, and false guilt. And Job seems to have picked up the false guilt thrown upon him by Bildad. We too need to learn this difference between false and true guilt.

And upright- God's opinion of Job was that he was "upright". But as the drama progresses, the friends argue that if Job were in fact "upright" then God would not be afflicting him (Job 4:7; 8:6 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "upright" and therefore cannot find God (Job 23:7,8 s.w.). As discussed above, he absorbs false guilt and becomes influenced by the guilt placed upon him by his religion and "friends" amongst the "sons of God".

And one who feared God- A true son of Abraham and Joseph (s.w. Gen. 22:12; 42:18). It seems Job lived in the patriarchal age. The phrase is also used about the righteous remnant amongst the captives in Babylon / Persia, for whom this book was apparently rewritten to comfort them (Is. 50:10).

And turned away from the evil- Job begins the book by being described as a man who shunned [the Hebrew word is also translated "to be without" and "to reject"] *ra*, "evil". Michel understands *ra* here to refer to 'the evil *one*', the Canaanite god of evil, whom Job disbelieved and rejected (W.L. Michel, *Job in the Light of Northwest Semitic* (Rome: Bible Institute Press, 1987) Vol. 1 p. 29). One of the many themes in Job is the deconstruction of the 'satan' myths of the time, many of which are alive and well today. See on Job 3:8. Job was aware that he had indeed "turned away from evil" and feared God; it was those things, rather than the traditional wisdom of the friends, which he came to see was the true "understanding" (Job 28:28 s.w.). The phrase is also used about the righteous remnant amongst the captives in Babylon / Persia, for whom this book was apparently rewritten to comfort them (Is. 59:15).

See on Ps. 34:14.

Job 1:2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters- Having ten children may invite us to connect Job with the ten tribe kingdom of Israel; their sufferings in captivity, along with those of Judah, elicited the kinds of questions discussed in the book of Job.

Job 1:3 His possessions also were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys and a very great household-

The lack of reference to horses would indicate that Job lived in patriarchal times, before horses were introduced to the Middle East from Asia. The huge number of camels suggests he lived near the desert, which corroborates with the reference to marauding Arab bands (:15) and a desert wind coming upon the tents (:19). This kind of internal harmony within the Biblical record is to me the greatest evidence of its veracity.

So that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east-

Job was the "greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1:3), the Hebrew implying the eldest, the most senior. The friends were older than Job, and take pleasure in reminding him of the wisdom of the 'elders'. He had risen above his place, got too great too quick, and therefore they were intent on proving to him that actually he was not so great, he had sinned, and they by their supposed wisdom and understanding were really greater than him. And they bent their theology, their guesswork as to his possible sins, to that subconscious end- of justifying themselves and pulling Job down beneath them by their interpretations of his misfortunes. What this indicates is that during their period of 'friendship' previously, they had nursed unconscious feelings of jealousy against him. The lesson for us is to re-examine our friendships, our loyalties, to see if they carry the same feature; a desire to 'be in with' the popular and the successful, to catch some reflected glory. The conversion of Job led him to understand the fickleness of his friends, and to pray for them in it.

Job 1:4 His sons went and held a feast in the house of each one on his birthday; and they sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them- Seven times a year they had these feasts "on their day" (Heb.), i.e. their birthday (Job 3:1). They each had their own houses, admittedly on the edge of the desert (:19) and were not tent dwellers.

Job 1:5 It was so, when the days of their feasting had come to an end, that Job sent and sanctified them- Perhaps the idea is that he sent for them and sanctified them.

And rose up early in the morning- The characteristic of Abraham; Job is presented as Abraham's seed.

And offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all- There were 10 children, and he offered seven times / year (:4), meaning he offered 70 sacrifices / year for them all. He is presented as carefully and generously obedient to Divine principles of sacrifice, although all those sacrifices didn't save his children from a judgment which (we can infer) they deserved. We see developing the picture of God's people being judged by their neighbours for their sins, despite their receipt of great blessing from God and the existence of a righteous remnant amongst them, represented by Job. For Judah went into captivity because of their feasting (Is. 5:12 s.w.).

For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts- The same phrase used by his wife when she urged Job to renounce God (Job 2:9). It would seem that the family had indeed done this. The sons or children (s.w.) of Israel did indeed sin and therefore went into exile (s.w. Is. 1:4).

Job did so continually- "Continually" is Heb. 'all the days', i.e. the birthdays of the sons (:4 cp. Job 3:1). There is good reason, linguistically and theologically, to think that the events of Job occurred early in spiritual history (compare the mentions of "Jobab" and some of the friends in 1 Chron. 5). There are also many links with the early chapters of Genesis. We should therefore see Satan's description of himself as being in the context of Gen. 4:12-14, where Cain is made a wanderer in the earth because of his bitter jealousy against his righteous brother. So the satan may have been another believer who was in some sense 'out of fellowship', represented by an Angel before the court of heaven, who still came to the gatherings of the believers to express his envy of Job. The reference to the sons of God coming together in worship before a priest or altar comes straight after the record of Job's children holding rather riotous birthday parties (1:4). "All the days", each day they did this, Job offered sacrifice for them; but then

"there was a day" when the sons of God came to keep a feast to Yahweh. It seems that we are led to connect the keeping of days. It could be that the sons of God were in fact Job's children. They came together to party and kill their fatted calves, and then they came together to kill their sacrifices; like Corinth, they mixed the table of the Lord with the table of their own pleasure.

LXX adds "offered sacrifices for them, according to their number, and one calf for a sin-offering for their souls", as if they really had sinned.

Sanctified them- Job prayed God would forgive his children in case they sinned. The friends mocked this in Job 5:4; 8:4; 17:5 and 20:10, saying that the children of the foolish die for their *own* sins, whereas, by implication, Job had figured that *his* prayers and sacrifices could gain *them* forgiveness. Yet in the end, Yahweh stated that Job had understood Him and His principles right, whereas the friends hadn't.

Job 1:6 Now it happened on the day when the sons of God- "Sons of God" can refer to God's people (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; 1 Jn. 3:7). Angels do not bring false accusations against believers "before the Lord" (2 Pet. 2:11) It cannot be conclusively proved that Satan was a son of God - he "came among them". The "sons of God"- the believers at that time- presented themselves before a priest or angel, perhaps at a religious feast. Someone there, maybe one of the worshippers, reflected that it was not surprising that Job was such a strong believer, seeing that God had so richly blessed him. God gave that person the power to afflict Job, to demonstrate that Job's love of God was not proportionate to the blessings God had given him. Maybe the Satan was composed of Job's three "friends" - they are rebuked at the end of the book (notice that "satan" is not rebuked by name). They were these "sons of God" who heard the reasoning of the satan, and they take over from the satan after he disappears from the story at the end of Job 2. The satan morphs into the friends. Their discussions with Job indicate that they had their doubts as to his integrity and suspected that his faith was now weak because God had taken away the blessings from him - "But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest: it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled...who ever perished (which it looked as though Job was going to), being innocent?" Eliphaz pointed out (Job 4:5 ,7).

Came to present themselves before Yahweh- "Before Yahweh" doesn't mean 'in Heaven'; the phrase is often used about appearing before Yahweh's representatives such as priests or Angels. The angel which led Israel through the wilderness was called "the Lord" because it carried God's name (Ex. 23:20,21), but it was not God himself in person (Ex. 33:20 cp. :12). Similarly, priests represent God (2 Chron. 19:6) and to come before them was to come "before the Lord" (Dt. 19:17). Cain "went out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen. 4:16) - not out of heaven but probably away from the presence of the angel - cherubim. Jesus was presented as a baby "before the Lord" (Lk. 2:22)- i.e. before the priest. How can Satan be in heaven and also on the earth in Job's time when, according to popular belief, he was thrown out at the time of Adam, or in 1914, according to the "Watchtower"? There cannot be sin or rebellion against God in heaven (Ps. 5:4,5; Hab. 1:13; Mt. 6:10; Ps. 103:19-21).

That Satan also came among them- Even if the "satan" (adversary) to Job was an angel, there is no reason to think it was sinful. An angel asked Abraham to offer Isaac to find out exactly how obedient Abraham would be, hence he said, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Gen. 22:12). Similarly the angel which guided Israel out of Egypt, "led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no" (Dt. 8:2). God himself knows all things, but the angels bring problems into the lives of their charges in order to see how they will respond. It may be possible to understand Job's satan like this. Remember that an evidently righteous angel was called a "satan" in Num. 22:22. Much has been made of the fact that in Job 1 and in Zech. 3:1,2 we read of *ha satan*, the adversary. In Hebrew as in English, the definite article is significant. If I refer to myself as a personal, specific individual / being, I say "Duncan". To speak of "the Duncan" would be a description of a function, more than a reference to my personal name. Sitting at a restaurant table, you might call out: "Waiter!", intending a specific individual. You'd only speak of "the waiter" when describing his function- e.g. "The waiter served me badly". Hebrew and English operate in the same way here. So when we read in Job 1 and Zechariah 3 of *the satan*, *ha satan*, we're not reading of 'A specific person whose personal proper name is 'Satan'. Rather we're reading of a person who *functioned as* a satan or adversary. Dianne Bergant makes the point: "The word 'satan' appears with an article indicating that here the word is a title or description and not a proper name" (Dianne Bergant, *Job, Ecclesiastes* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1982) p. 27). In other words, 'the satan' isn't the personal name of a personal being called Satan. It's a description of the function of a character, as an adversary. Note that the man

Haman is called *ho diabolos* in Esther 7:4 LXX. The Russian literary analyst Vladimir Propp has shown that all stories, folklore etc. of that time contained characters with a set function- there was the hero, the companion, the friends / bystanders, and the adversary (Vladimir Propp, *Theory And History Of Folklore*, ed. Anatoly Liberman (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1984); *Morphology Of The Folktale* (Austin: University Of Texas Press, 1968).). Whilst I accept that Job was a historical character, the way the book is written in such structured Hebrew poetry shows for sure that the events were 'written up' in story / ballad form. And so when the initial readership encountered "the adversary", *ha satan*, they wouldn't have thought of him as a cosmic being of evil. The presence of someone functioning as "the adversary" would've been quite normal to them. If we follow through the argument of the book, the logical answer of Job to the friends' allegations would have been "I'm suffering because Satan has it in for me! He's doing this, not God!". For the friends were reasoning that God was bringing such affliction into Job's life because Job was a sinner. The fact Job doesn't make this obvious retort indicates to me that "the Satan" wasn't understood by either Job nor the friends as a personal supernatural being of evil.

It must be noted that the *satan* never occurs again, under that name. The real adversary of Job was his " friends" ; and in God's final judgment, it is they who are condemned, not 'satan'. It is therefore reasonable to see a connection between the *satan* and the 'friends' of Job; they too walked to and fro in the earth in order to come to him, as it seems *satan* did at the beginning. And we pause here for another lesson. The great *satan* / adversary of Job turned out to be those he thought were his friends in the ecclesia. And so it has been, time and again, in our experience: our sorest trials often come from the words of our brethren. Without underestimating the physical affliction of Job, his real adversary was his brethren. Rather than bemoaning his physical affliction, he commented how his friends had become his *satans* (Job 19:19) And so with the Lord Jesus, whom Job so accurately typified. Again, without minimizing the material agony of His flesh, the essential piercing was from His rejection at the hands of those He died for. For other reasons to connect the *satan* with the friends, see on Job 6:19; 8:6; 12:6; 19:28.

But the "Sons of God" of Job 1:6 are interpreted as Angels in Job 38:7. There is nothing in itself wrong with an Angel being called a *satan*- we have examples of this in Num. 22:22 and 1 Chron. 21:1. We know that Angels can't sin: and yet they are limited in knowledge (e.g. Mt. 24:36). An Angel commented that now he knew that Abraham feared God, after he had seen his willingness to offer Isaac (Gen. 22:12); Israel's guardian Angel lead them through the wilderness in order to learn about Israel's spirituality (Dt. 8:2,3). God Himself, of course, already knew the hearts of men. The sons of God coming before Yahweh suggests a scene in the court of Heaven, similar to that of 2 Chron. 18:19-21, where the Angels appear before Yahweh to discuss the case of Ahab, and then one Angel is empowered by God to carry out his suggestion. Those Angels represented God's people on earth; this is why the interpretation of the *Satan* can equally apply to both the people of God at the time, gathering before a priest; and to their representative Angels gathered before the throne of God in the court of Heaven. *Satan* going out from the presence of Yahweh, empowered by Him to afflict Job, would correspond with other references to Angels 'going out' from God's presence to execute what had been agreed in the heavenly assembly (Ps. 37:36; 81:5; Zech. 2:3; 5:5; Lk. 22:22; Heb. 1:14).

In the same way as the earthly tabernacle was a pattern of the Heavenly system (Heb. 9:24), so it would appear that each of us has an Angelic representative in Heaven, appearing before the presence of God's glory in what we are invited to see as the court of Heaven. Angels can also represent a whole group – e.g., an ecclesia (Rev. 1:20). So closely identified with their charges are these Angels, that they themselves are rebuked (e.g. Rev. 2:5) – not that they sinned, of course, but because they represented those ecclesias in the Heavenly court.

Satan describes himself as going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it (1:7)- using exactly the language of Zech. 1:11 concerning the Angels. The way that the *satan* smote Job with a skin disease (Job 2:7) would suggest that he was not only a mere man; accepting an Angel-*satan* solves this problem. No unaided man could have brought a skin disease upon Job. If the *satan* refers to a righteous Angel, it is likewise easier to understand why all the problems which the *satan* brought are described as God bringing them (especially as Job may have conceived of God in terms of an Angel). It is also understandable why there is no rebuke of the *satan* at the end. For other connections between the *satan* and Angels, see on Job 1:14,16,19; 4:5; 5:7; 6:9,10; 14:3; 16:9; 19:8.

It has been correctly observed that we don't read of 'Satan' after the prologue to Job. Instead we read only of God bringing the afflictions into Job's life. But the friends, and Job himself, struggle to explain those afflictions in terms

of the current ideas in the surrounding world. This may not be immediately evident, because the Hebrew of Job is notoriously hard to translate. But closer attention to the text reveals that there is repeated mention of the various beings and forces of evil which were thought to be in competition with God. It seems that the story of Job originated very early in Biblical history, in the times of the patriarchs. And yet the book has many connections with the latter half of Isaiah – just take a glance down the marginal cross references in Job, and see how often the later chapters of Isaiah are referenced. My suggestion is that the book was rewritten and edited [under Divine inspiration] during the captivity in Babylon, as a message especially relevant for the Jewish exiles as they struggled with the temptation to accept Babylonian mythological explanations of evil. This would explain the allusions to both early Canaanite and later Babylonian views of the ‘Satan’ figure. And we recall from Is. 45:5–7 how Israel’s God was at pains to remind the exiles of His omnipotence, that He is the only God and source of power in creation, and that both good and disaster, light and darkness, are ultimately His creation; and the surrounding Gentile myths about these things were totally wrong. This is in fact the theme of the book of Job. Susan Garrett points out how Babylonian views of a dualistic cosmos, with God creating good and the ‘Satan’ figure creating evil, began to influence Jewish thought. She shares my view that the purpose of the book of Job was to counter this: “The story of Job checked an escalation in the power and authority that were ascribed to the Satan-figure, by the repeated and unambiguous assertions in Job 1–2 that Satan had obtained the authority to test Job from none other than God” (Susan Garrett, *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) p. 49).

The references to ‘Satan’-like beings and related myths in the book of Job is in order to ultimately deconstruct them as false, and to re-iterate the utter omnipotence of Yahweh as the only source of power, the only God. And this of course we would expect from an Old Testament, God-inspired book. It’s been suggested by literary critics that the prologue which mentions Satan (Job chapters 1 and 2) and epilogue (Job 42:7–17) were likely written before the poetic discourses – they appear to be “an Israelite revision of an older Canaanite or Edomite epic poem expressing their views on the age-old problem of evil” (Douglas Wingeier, *What About the Devil? A Study of Satan in the Bible and Christian Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006) p. 15. More documentation of this is to be found in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Buttrick, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954) Vol. 3 pp. 878,879). Thus those ideas are alluded to and deconstructed – God is presented as all powerful, and the ‘Satan’ beliefs as untrue.

Job 1:7 Yahweh said to Satan, Where have you come from? Then Satan answered Yahweh and said, From going back and forth in the earth, and from walking up and down in it- There is no implication that he was doing anything sinful. Zech. 1:11 implies that this is a Hebraism for observing. The references to 'wandering about on the face of the earth' have great similarities with the language used to describe the Persian empire's spies, called "The King's Eye"- a kind of agent of the King who wandered around picking up information and reporting back to him. But of course, "The King's Eye" was on the King's side and not working against him! (More documentation of this in Rivkah Kluger, *The Satan Of The Old Testament* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967). This view is confirmed in other research by Harry Torczyner, *The Book Of Job* (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sefer, 1981) pp. 38-45. Note that Torczyner also interprets the Satan as being in God's service, and not in opposition to Him: "The figure and role of the Satan derives from the Persian secret service... We now understand that there are in God's service, as in that of any earthly king, secret roving officials, who go and come and report to him on the doings of his subjects"). Satan's walking / running "to and fro in the earth / land" and reporting back to God about an individual is thus very much taken from the Persian idea of the King's "evil eye", "the eye of the King", a kind of *agent provocateur*, a secret police-type agent, travelling around the Kingdom and reporting back to the King about suspect individuals. It also has an evident connection with the Zechariah passages which speaks of the Angels in the time of the exile and restoration from Persia "running to and fro in the earth" on God's behalf (Zech. 1:10,11; 4:10). The implication of course was that God and His Angels, and not the Persian King and his agents, were the ones really in control of the land. It's maybe significant that the Septuagint translates "going to and fro" in Job 1:7 with the word *peripatei*- and we find the same word in 1 Pet. 5:8 about the adversary of the early Christians 'going about' seeking them- a reference to the agents of the Roman and Jewish systems. I have elsewhere demonstrated that much of the Hebrew Bible was rewritten [under Divine inspiration] in Babylon, to bring out relevant issues for the Jewish exiles in Babylon. This includes the book of Job. It can be understood as an allegory- Job, the suffering servant of the Lord, becomes a type of Israel, the suffering servant of Isaiah's later prophecies. There are many links between Isaiah's prophecies and Job- a glance down the margin of most reference Bibles will indicate that. Just as the returning exiles faced 'satans' in the form of local Arabic opposition, so did Job. The Zechariah 3:1,2 passage uses the word 'satan' to describe this opposition to the returned exiles. Note that both Zechariah 3 and Job 1 use the idea of a Heavenly court. As God put a fence around Job (Job 1:10), so He was a "wall of fire" to the returning exiles (Zech. 2:5). And his final triumph and restoration, by God's grace, was intended as a prototype for Judah in captivity. J.B. Russell

mentions a Babylonian document consisting of a dialogue between a sufferer and his friend (J.B. Russell, *The Devil* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) p. 87). Perhaps the re-writing of the book of Job during Judah's captivity in Babylon was intended as a counter to this, explaining Yahweh's perspective on suffering.

Eliphaz reminds Job that the wicked of Noah's time were destroyed by a flood, implying that the sudden calamities of Job's life were like the flood, thus equating him with the world at Noah's time. Jude, Daniel, Peter and the Lord Jesus all interpret that world as representing apostate Jewry in the first century, destroyed by the "flood" of AD70. It is therefore interesting that 1 Pet.5:8,9, concerning the Jewish devil walking around seeking to draw away Christians, is quoting the Septuagint of Job 1:7, suggesting Job's satan is also to be linked with the Jewish satan.

Job's satan was perhaps not simply a sceptical worshipper who had these questions and was represented by an Angel in the court of heaven; but also an Angel wanting for himself to find out more about Job, not understanding how a man with all the blessings Job had could sincerely worship God. God therefore gave this Angel the power needed to try Job to see whether this was the case. The idea of an Angel being called a satan (adversary) is familiar to us in Num. 22:22 where the Angel stood in the way of Balaam for an adversary. The fact the Angel brought the trials would explain why all through the book the trials are credited to God. Satan coming "from going back and forth in the earth" (Job 1:7) would connect with the descriptions of the Angels being God's eyes going to and fro in the earth (Zech. 1:11). Job 1:16 describing God sending a flame of fire to minister one of the trials is understood in the Angel context when one recalls that He "makes His ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. 104:4). The series of "messengers" who come to Job announcing the trials (Job 1:14) may possibly also be Angels, or Angels controlling human messengers on earth. Job associates his trials with God's eyes being upon him (e. g. Job 7:8) and we have seen that the eyes of God seems to be a synonym for the Angels.

Job 1:8 Yahweh said to Satan, Have you considered my servant, Job? For there is none like him in the land, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil- Notice that Satan had to get power from God (Job 2:3-6); he had none in his own right, indeed, God brought Job to Satan's notice (1:8). Job comments about God being the source of his sufferings: "If it be not he, who then is it?" (Job 9:24 RV). Job didn't believe anyone apart from God was responsible.

God knew what the satan Angel's response would be to His question. Thus God guides an Angel to think about a believer- or person- in order to further that Angel's spiritual education. This is still necessary, despite them having "had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" previously. The knowledge of good and evil which the Angels have is exactly the same as we have- "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" the Angels lamented in Eden (Gen. 3:22). Despite our experience of life, we appreciate pitifully little how God works through evil. Some can scarcely comprehend it, especially if they have no knowledge of the Truth. Yet by nature they have some dull concept of it- and it is this dim concept which the Angels possessed in Eden, which was shared with us by Adam's eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thus we can understand why the Angels need to be educated like this.

The tragedy was that those taken into captivity weren't reformed by their sufferings, and now their children likewise refused to "take it to heart" and repent (Is. 42:25 s.w.). Here we have another connection between Isaiah and Job, the book which appears to have been rewritten for the exiles with Job as representative of both the exiles and the righteous servant. "Have you considered My servant..." (Job 1:8) is the same phrase in Is. 42:25 "take it to heart". The book of Job was therefore written as a way of appealing for the repentance of the exiles and for them to contextualize their own sufferings.

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered Yahweh and said, Does Job fear God for nothing?- The returned exiles refused to serve God for nothing (s.w. Mal. 1:10). But the final investigation of the book of Job revealed that Job was prepared to serve God for nothing, just because He was God and he was His servant; and not because he expected any reward or material advantage. Job is therefore set up to the exiles as the embodiment and personification of who they should have become. But they refused to respond. The sufferings which came upon Judah were to reveal whether they would serve God for nothing; and Mal. 1:10 makes it clear they didn't.

Job 1:10 Haven't You made a hedge around him and around his family, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land- LXX "blessed the works of his hands, and multiplied his cattle upon the land?" - an allusion to the promises of blessing and multiplication of Abraham's seed, of whom Job was presented as being representative. In Job 10:11,12 Job complains "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved My spirit". "Fenced" is the same word as "hedge" when Satan complains that God has made a hedge about Job (Job 1:10). Job appears to be aware of the conversation between the Satan and the Lord. It therefore makes sense to understand that the gathering of the sons of God and 'Satan' was a gathering of the people of God, including the friends and Job, and the conversation was heard by all. Job is therefore saying that actually the only hedge or fence he has is his own physical body. Job seems to be saying 'You say I'm hedged about with blessings. But now the only hedge I've got is this sick body. The only help you give me now is to give me my spirit to keep me alive, only so you can torment me more'. Understandable, if faulty, reasoning in Job's situation.

Job 1:11 But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has, and he will renounce You to Your face- See on Job 30:24. The same phrase for putting forth the hand is used of how God put forth His hand against Judah and sent them into exile (Ez. 10:7; 14:13). The 'touching' of Job uses the word used of the 'touching' of Judah by their invaders and abusers (Is. 8:8; Jer. 4:10; 12:14; Ez. 7:12). And it is used of how the suffering servant of Is. 53:4 was considered "stricken" or 'touched' by God after the pattern of Job. That suffering servant represented the faithful remnant at the restoration, and then when they ultimately failed to be as intended, it was all more fully reapplied to the Lord Jesus. Several times the friends refer to how Job has been touched by God; the parallels between the Satan and the friends will be noted throughout the book. The Satan clearly influenced the friends to think likewise, and they effectively become the Satan. And it is therefore they and not 'Satan' who are rebuked at the end of the book.

Job 1:12 Yahweh said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power. Only on himself don't put forth your hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Yahweh- See on Is. 37:36, where an Angel likewise goes forth from Yahweh. I have suggested above that the Satan refers to both one or some amongst the "sons of God", perhaps the friends; and also to the Angel who represented them in the heavenly throne room. For there is no indication that anything Satan did was sinful; Angels don't sin. Satan never actually says or does anything wrong; he simply makes the observation that there may well be a relationship between Job's service of God and the material blessing which God has given him. He is then empowered by God to bring calamities into Job's life. Time and again it is stressed, really stressed, that God brought the problems upon Job, not Satan independently (Job 1:12,16; 2:3,10; 6:4; 8:4; 19:21; 42:18).

The going forth from the presence of Yahweh continues the allusion to the court of Heaven, which is implied by the sons of God, the Angels representing their charges on earth, coming before God. The 'Satan' figure is not in itself evil, but could refer to an Angel [a 'good' one, as I submit there are no 'sinful' Angels], or an Angel representative of a fellow worshipper on earth. The debates in Heaven between the Angels, the will of God as articulated there, is then reflected and carried out on earth – rather like how in Daniel 1–6 we have events on earth described in historical terms, and then we are given an insight into what's been going on in Heaven in Daniel 7–12. Yet the court / legal language continues throughout the book – e.g. Job is "perfect", i.e. legally blameless. Job appeals for 'witnesses' (Job 9:33–35; 16:18–22; 19:20–27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a 'case' with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29–31 is effectively Job's declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job's earlier plea: "Sleeplessly I wait for His reply" (Job 16:22). It's as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of 'Satan', suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about 'Satan' figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the "holy ones", had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: "To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job's guilt] is true" (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters. Job perhaps perceived this, even though the vision of the court of Heaven in chapters 1 and 2 was presumably unknown to him as he endured his sufferings; for in response to the

friends' wrong judgment of him, he comments that "God covers the faces of the judges of the earth" (Job 9:24). The final summing up speeches from both God and Job simply emphasize the omnipotence of God; how ultimately *He* has been the adversary to Job, and there is no room in the cosmos of His creation for any other power, especially any of the various personal 'Satan' figures believed in by the worlds of both Canaan and Babylon. The heavenly court of "sons of God" is paralleled with all the stars in Job 38:7. Bear in mind that the stars were understood as pagan deities. The whole pagan understanding of the cosmos is being deconstructed. The stars are paralleled with the Angelic sons of God who are all totally under God's control; they are *His* Heavenly court.

The legal language of the book of Job has far reaching implications. We have noted the many connections between Job and the latter part of Isaiah, where again there is the impression of 'God in the dock', a cosmic trial of truth. The gods of the nations are invited to present their best cases, to demonstrate their reality against the claims of Yahweh, Israel's God, to be the only true God. In this trial, the suffering servant is the witness used by God. And this in turn is the basis for the same lawsuit motif in the Gospel of John, where the witness is the Lord Jesus as the suffering servant, and by extension all those in Him ⁽³⁾. Indeed there appear to be seven witnesses in John: John the Baptist (Jn. 1:7), Jesus Himself (Jn. 3:11), the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:39), God Himself (Jn. 5:32), the miracles (Jn. 5:36), the Old Testament (Jn. 5:39) and the crowd (Jn. 12:17). John presents the cross as the decisive verdict, linking back to a similar verdict pronounced in Isaiah, which in turn has as its basis the final verdict of Yahweh in support of Job against the beliefs of the friends in the various 'Satan' gods of Canaan and Babylonia.

Job 1:13 It fell on a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house- Usually Job went and offered sin offerings for his children after these parties. But the disaster came exactly whilst they were partying. This would invite us to see this as judgment upon them, looking ahead to the judgment of the children ["sons"] of Israel.

Job 1:14 that there came a messenger to Job and said, The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys feeding beside them- A *malak* came with news of the calamities brought by the satan (Angel). It would be understandable if that *malak* should have been translated 'Angel' seeing there is so much other Angelic language in this area. See on Job 1:6,7. We see again a connection to the work of a Satan Angel.

Job 1:15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them away. Yes, they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword- The Sabeans are literally 'those of Sheba'. The same word is used by Job when he reflects upon the disaster at the hands of "the troops of Tema... the companies of Sheba" (see on Job 6:19). It seems therefore that there were people from Tema involved. And Eliphaz was from Teman (Job 2:11). Again we have a hint that these Sabeans and associated Temanites were somehow involved with the Temanite "friend" of Job, Eliphaz. The friends were in some form the Satan. In the restoration context, all the people of Sheba would repent and come to Zion (Is. 60:6 s.w.). The former enemies of God's people were to repent and join them.

And I alone have escaped to tell you- It has been suggested that the prologue to Job is in fact a literary device to place theological problems before us, e.g. of the relationship between service of God and receipt of blessing, and sin and suffering. But we must remember that later Scripture takes the experiences of Job as literal, and Job himself as a real historical person. However, it is not impossible that the account of the conversation between God and the satan was not a literal occurrence, but simply a way of setting up the problems which the historical narrative then addresses. It's worth meditating on this one. The three different messengers come and tell Job of the various disasters and conclude with the same rubric "and I alone have escaped to tell you". This is surely a theatrical presentation rather than a literal transcription of actual speech which historically occurred; my friend Steve Cook has suggested, quoting Jewish sources, that Job may well be the very earliest extant theatrical drama script of ancient literature. Job being drama would explain why the book is written as poetry. This approach also assists us in understanding how Job was told by a messenger that his sons had all died, and then at the end of the book he appears to be given his sons back again. If the messenger wasn't telling the truth, but was just part of the plot, the mechanism to present the theological problem, then this is understandable. The use of "the satan" would therefore not be referring to any cosmic being, but rather to a *role*. It has been observed: "In biblical sources the Hebrew term the

satan describes an adversarial role. It is not the name of a particular character” (Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Random House, 1996) p. 39). And again: “[*ha-satan*] is not the personal name Satan but a role specification meaning “the accuser/adversary/doubter”” (N.C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (London: S.C.M., 1985) p.89). The 'satan' or adversary was not therefore necessarily sinful: “As he first appears in the Hebrew Bible, Satan is not necessarily evil, much less opposed to God. On the contrary, he appears in the book of Numbers and in Job as one of God’s obedient servants” (Pagels, *op cit.* p. 39). He is “subject to God’s control and was used by God to accomplish his purposes... [there is] a pronounced emphasis on his subordination” to God (S.H.T. Page, “Satan: God’s Servant” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*; Sept. 2007 Vol. 50 No. 3 p. 449).

The Sabaeans of 1:15 were probably the descendants of Sheba, Abraham's grandson (Gen. 25:1-3). For his children to grow into a separate tribe, the events of Job must have happened some generations before the Law was given.

Job 1:16 While he was still speaking, there also came another and said, The fire of God has fallen from the sky- As noted on :13,19, this is the language of judgment. Job's children were indeed guilty of serious sin, and all Job's animal sacrifices couldn't save them from that judgment. At the end of the book, the friends are also liable to Divine judgment, but are saved not by sacrifice or ritual but by prayer. This all looks forward to the failure of Mosaic ritual to save; whereas a righteous mediator, the Lord Jesus, is the One who can save. See on :20.

And has burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you- "The servants" is "shepherds" in LXX and GNB. Destruction of the sheep and shepherds is language elsewhere used about the suffering of Israel at the hands of the Babylonians. Job's sons were killed by wind and fire- both of which are associated with Angelic manifestation (:16,19). See on Job 1:6,7. It was the "servants" who were 'smitten with the edge of the sword' at the Babylon invasion (s.w. Jer. 21:7). Again we see how the book of Job discusses the very issues which were facing the exiles in Babylon as they reflected upon these same tragedies.

Job 1:17 While he was still speaking, there came also another and said, The Chaldeans made three bands, and swept down on the camels, and have taken them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you- "The Chaldeans" confirms that Job is being set up as representative of the exiles in Chaldea who had lost their families to the Babylonian / Chaldean invaders. See on :16; Job 19:9.

Job 1:18 While he was still speaking, there came also another and said, Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house- Again as noted on :13, the disaster came exactly whilst they were partying. This would invite us to see this as judgment upon them, looking ahead to the judgment of the children ["sons"] of Israel.

Job 1:19 and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young men, and they are dead. I alone have escaped to tell you- "Struck" is the same word as "touch" in :11. This was the hand of God 'touching' Job as Satan had requested. A wind which struck four corners of a house at the same time was a whirlwind, associated with Divine judgment and theophany.

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down on the ground and worshiped- His robe, as the head of the family, was likely of religious significance; a kind of priestly robe. And he realizes now that all such ritual has failed to save- as noted on :16. The shaved Job again becomes a picture of the shaved Judah after the Babylonian invasion (Jer. 7:29 s.w.), and of the suffering servant who was "sheared", s.w. "shaved" (Is. 53:7). The response to this shaving was to "worship" and not charge God wrongly, a lesson not learnt by the exiles, who wrongly charged God over it all (as Ez. 18 makes clear).

Job 1:21 He said, Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. Yahweh gave, and Yahweh has taken away. Blessed be the name of Yahweh- The 'taking away' is the term used of Judah's taking away into captivity (Jer. 20:5). God gave Judah a king in His anger, and took him away at the time of Zedekiah and the captivity (Hos. 13:11 s.w.). The raft of questions and mental struggles elicited by all this are those which the drama of Job will now discuss and debate. We note that Job immediately sees 'God in all this'. It wasn't that Yahweh gave,

and Satan took away. God took away as well as gave. Without his family and wealth, Job feels naked- as if he is now ready to go into the grave. But it was with that now naked man that God would work, and He does likewise with men today.

Job 1:22 In all this, Job did not sin- Job's reaction at this point was wonderful. He didn't sin in this respect; but he is later led to understand that he has indeed sinned and he accepts the call to repentance of Job 33:27. But the appeal for Job to repent and his final acceptance of it could also lead us to interpret this as meaning that Job did not consider he had sinned, when in fact he had. He would then become again representative of Judah; "Behold I will plead with you, because you say, I have not sinned" (Jer. 2:35).

Nor charge God with wrongdoing- This is legal language, as if Job did not put God in the dock and accuse Him wrongly. The idea of Israel as it were taking a court case against God recurs in the prophets. Job was their example and they largely failed to follow it.

Job Chapter 2

Job 2:1 Again it happened on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, that Satan came also among them to present himself before Yahweh- "Before Yahweh" doesn't at all have to mean this happened in Heaven itself. The phrase is used of how men come before Yahweh here on earth. Note how Job addresses the friends in Job 13:7 LXX "Do ye not speak before the Lord...". This is another hint that the friends were represented by the Satan figure of the prologue, who likewise appeared "before the Lord". Satan came amongst them, but influenced them to accept his viewpoint; or even spoke for them, until they became effectively the Satan. See on Job 13:21.

Job 2:2 Yahweh said to Satan, Where have you come from? Satan answered Yahweh and said, From going back and forth in the land, and from walking up and down in it- See the extensive discussion on Job 1:7.

Job 2:3 Yahweh said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job?- Later Job complains to God "what is man, that Thou dost magnify him? and that Thou shouldst set Thy heart upon him? (lit. 'consider him')" (Job 7:17). Thus Job sees God- whom he probably conceived of as an Angel- as considering him, whilst we are told earlier that Satan / the adversary was told to do this. A human Satan considering Job would not in itself have brought the trials, for no one human could have done all the things done to Job; and Job would not have complained so bitterly about a human being considering him.

For there is none like him in the land, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil- See on Job 1:8. The connection with Isaiah is to Is. 59:15 "Yes, truth is lacking; and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey". "He who departs from evil" is the term used about Job (s.w. Job 1:8; 2:3); and he too became a "prey" to evil. Job represents not only the exiles, but the righteous remnant amongst them who departed from evil but suffered all the same.

He still maintains his integrity- Job uses this word about himself in Job 27:6. Again we have the impression that he had been present at these discussions between the Satan and God; and the view of the Satan was in fact the view now of the friends, who effectively acted as the Satan figure who had influenced their thinking. His argument against the friends, that he did maintain his integrity still, was effectively arguing back against this position of the Satan. "Hold fast" or "maintain" is the appeal of the prophets to the exiles (s.w. Is. 27:5; 35:3; 56:4). But sadly there were none who really followed Job's example at that time. None maintained or took hold of Yahweh's righteousness (Is. 64:7 s.w.).

Although you incited Me against him, to ruin him- This is not really a rebuke; for the Satan is carefully portrayed as not actually sinning. Because God did in fact "ruin him". This 'inciting' of God reveals the sensitivity of God to human desires to understand and their wish that He would act. This is exactly what happens in our wrestlings in prayer with God. If God agrees, He "performs the counsel (advice) of His messenger" (Angels; Is. 44:26). That is in a restoration context- to encourage the early readership of Job to understand that God can be moved to respond. The Hebrew for "incite" means to prick or stimulate, s.w. "persuade"- God can be moved or provoked to action, He is sensitive to our struggles with 'the problem of evil' and His actions upon earth, just as much as human beings can provoke Him to anger.

Without cause- Job repeats this in Job 9:17. Again we have the impression that he had been present at these discussions between the Satan and God; and the view of the Satan was in fact the view now of the friends, who effectively acted as the Satan figure who had influenced their thinking. And the point is established- that suffering can come on individuals "without cause". Yet the friends spend their speeches guessing at what the cause was in Job's case. In the restoration context, the suffering servant likewise suffered "without cause" (s.w. Is. 52:3,5). That figure was clearly based upon Job, and speaks of the righteous remnant at the restoration, and finally of the Lord Jesus who was their embodiment. Jeremiah laments that he too had suffered at that time "without cause" (Lam. 3:52 s.w.); failing to perceive the lessons of the book of Job, just as we can whenever we complain that we suffer "without cause". The reality of course was that the judgments upon Judah had not been "without cause" (Ez. 14:23 s.w.). And Job finally comes to realize that although he is right before God by grace, he too is a sinner and there was "cause" in his sufferings.

Job 2:4 Satan answered Yahweh and said, Skin for skin- The idea may be that Job was willing to accept the loss of the skin of his children, as it were in exchange for his own skin being saved. But 'Skin for skin' is a human expression- maybe based on trading one animal skin for another. It is appropriate to a human being on earth; and yet as explained on Job 1:6, the human Satan had a representative Angel in Heaven who also used this phrase in reporting the man's thinking before God. This reflects the degree to which God is aware of our language and perceptions.

Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life- This is the basis of the Lord's words "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul / life?" (Mt. 16:26), even if he possesses the whole world, as the mega wealthy Job appeared to. We note that He quotes the words of the Satan with approval; again confirming the impression that the 'Satan' figure is not essentially sinful. Just as the serpent in Eden was an animal making observations, however wrongly; and sin entered the world not by the serpent but through Adam (Rom. 5:12). The serpent was part of a "very good" creation and was a-moral.

Job 2:5 But put forth Your hand now- Satan asks God: "Put forth Your hand". The hand of God is an Angelic phrase. God agrees- "he is in your hand" (:6). Thus Satan's hand is God's hand, which in practice was articulated through an Angel. Job seems to emphasize the place of God's hand in bringing his trials- Job 2:5,6,10; 6:9; 10:7; 13:21; 19:21; 27:11 AVmg; 28:9. Job in Job 12:9 feels that in the same way as God's hand had created the natural creation- and the Angels did this- so that same Angelic hand was upon him for evil. "By His Spirit (God makes His Angels spirits) He hath garnished the Heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent" (Job 26:13). Thus Job associates God's Spirit with His hand, which is Satan's hand. It seems far more fitting that this hand and spirit should be Angelic rather than human. For no one human being could bring these sufferings upon Job. The human Satan, the fellow worshipper, was reflected in an Angel in the court of Heaven. Again, it was Angelic work that formed the Heavens. Job recognized that his trials came from the hand of God, but knew that His hand would not kill him- "with Thy strong hand Thou opposeth Thyself against me... howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to (bring me to) the grave" (Job 30:21,24 AV). This was exactly the brief given to Satan- to try Job, but "preserve his life". The hand of God creating evil (Job 2:10,11) must surely refer to God's "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- in the restoration context, the people and Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7).

And touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce You to Your face- In Job 2:4-6 we have the 'Satan' commenting that Job's flesh and skin need to be harmed; but in Job 19:26 we have Job stating his faith that even though God destroys his flesh and skin, yet God shall ultimately save him. See on Job 16:14.

Job 2:6 Yahweh said to Satan, Behold, he is in your hand. Only spare his life- See on :5. In the restoration context, this was to be understood as the promise that no matter how God's people suffered, Israel would be preserved.

Job 2:7 So Satan went forth from the presence of Yahweh, and struck Job with painful sores from the sole of his foot to his head- Isaiah's description of Israel as "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness... but wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores" (Is. 1:6) is couched in this picture of Job. As if Job represents apostate Israel, although personally innocent; in the spirit of the Lord Jesus. These types of wounds made them ritually unclean. In Isaiah's first context, the suffering servant was King Hezekiah. Yet all Israel were to see themselves as 'in' him, as spiritual Israel are to see themselves as in Christ. "He was oppressed", as Israel at that time were being "oppressed" by Assyria. As they were covered in wounds and spiritual sickness (Is. 1:5,6), so the suffering servant bore their diseases and rose again in salvation victory. Significantly, Isaiah 40-53 speak of the one servant, whereas Isaiah 54-66 speak of the "servants" who fulfill in principle the work of the singular servant. The suffering servant, based upon Job, was a people embodied in the future Lord Jesus.

Job 2:8 He took for himself a potsherd to scrape himself with- The word for "potsherd", a piece of broken earthenware, is used repeatedly about Judah in exile (Is. 30:14; 45:9; Jer. 19:1; Lam. 4:2; Ez. 23:34). Job is presented as their representative.

And he sat among the ashes- Another similarity with Abraham, whose seed Job is presented as being (Gen. 18:27). The epilogue and prologue to Job are evidently related. Job begins sitting in dust and ashes and ends repenting in dust and ashes (Job 2:8; 42:6). The silence of the friends at the opening of the book is matched by the silence after God has finally spoken (Job 40:4). Job intercedes for his children (Job 1:5) and ends up interceding for his friends. Job begins with the description of being the Lord's servant; and the book concludes on the same note (Job 42:7,8). The question of course is: 'So what's the equivalent of the 'Satan' figure in the epilogue?'. The omission is intended and obvious. Ultimately the answer is the essence of the whole book: the 'Satan', the adversary, is none other than God Himself, in His love.

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him- Jewish thinking came to be influenced by Babylonian ideas of a dualistic cosmos, split between God and some 'Satan' figure. The book of Job is a corrective to this, in that it teaches that evil comes from God, and any Satan figure is under His total control. Yet a mere skim reading of the prologue to Job has led some to the very opposite conclusion. Significantly, the apostate Jewish writing *The Testament Of Job* completely twists the intent of the Biblical record, and adds into it the common misconceptions concerning Satan- e.g. it claims of Job's wife: "Satan followed her along the road, walking stealthily, and leading her astray... [Job warns her] 'Do you not see Satan standing behind you and unsettling your reasoning?'" (23:11; 26:6). These classical images of 'Satan' have to be *added in* to the Biblical record- because they are simply not there in the Biblical text. These ideas of women being easily influenced by a cosmic Satan figure are thereby deconstructed here; Job's wife is presented just as a real woman, making observations which many secular people would make.

Do you still maintain your integrity? Renounce God, and die- "Renounce" or "curse" is a word with two meanings; it can also be translated 'bless'. So she may also have been quipping that blessing God, as Job has done so far in the narrative, all the same leads to death.

The LXX at this point adds a lot more detail, which is very much the language of Lamentations concerning the Jews after the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem: "And when much time had passed, his wife said to him, How long wilt thou hold out, saying, Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance? for, behold, thy memorial is abolished from the earth, even thy sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows; and thou thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pangs which now beset me: but say some word against the Lord, and die".

Job 2:10 But he said to her, You speak as one of the foolish women would speak- "The foolish" is the term used by the restoration prophets for the unfaithful in Israel; and her perspective is therefore set up as the wrong model which they were following (Jer. 17:11; Ez. 13:3).

What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job didn't sin with his lips- The hand of God creating evil (Job 2:10,11) must surely refer to God's "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7). See on Job 1:6; 26:13; 30:21. The major theme of the book of Job is that *God* brought the problems into Job's life and that eventually they made him a more righteous person (Job 2:10; 16:11; 19:21; 23:16; 42:11). Notice that Job did not believe that only good things came from God; he nowhere complains about Satan bringing the problems. Job realized that his sufferings had made him come to know God in practice rather than just in theory - "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee" (Job 42:5). Seeing that problems make us more righteous people if we respond correctly to them (Heb. 12:5-11), why would a sinful, wicked being, who wants to turn us away from God, bring these things into our lives, when actually they only make us more righteous and closer to God?

I have pointed out that Job all through rejects the ideas promoted by the friends, the view of traditional wisdom (especially emphasized by Bildad, Job 8:8-10), that various supernatural 'Satan' monsters and figures were responsible for his experiences. Job began by saying that we receive both good and evil from God's hand (Job 2:10 cp. Is. 45:5-7). And he ends saying the same - that the Lord brought the trouble upon him (Job 42:11). He repeatedly sees God as the source of all his affliction. Hence God can say that Job has spoken about Him that which is right (Job 42:8). But Job came to realize the massive practical extent of what he had previously known in theory, what he had "by the hearing of the ear". Now his eye saw / perceived that truly no plan of God can be thwarted, by any of the various 'Satan' monsters imagined by men (Job 42:2). We too may say that we believe in the omnipotence of God; but such a belief requires us to throw out all beliefs in supernatural Satan figures. And that's

not a merely intellectual exercise; to see the tragedies and cruelties of our lives as being ultimately from God and under His control is something which shakes us to the core. See on Job 41:1.

Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come on him, they each came from his own place- I have suggested earlier that the friends were influenced by the Satan figure and effectively became the Satan to Job. They "came" to him just as the evil "came" to him.

Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite- These people are traceable in the records of the patriarchs, again suggesting an early date for the historical Job. Eliphaz and Tema are associated with the Idumeans, the people of Esau (Gen. 36:4); Shuah was one of Abraham's children by Keturah.

And they made an appointment together- They were the "sons of God" who came together on set occasions "before Yahweh" (Job 1:6); so it seems that such meetings were not uncommon for them, and perhaps they came together as it were for an extraordinary meeting, or perhaps the dialogues presented occurred at their next regular meeting.

To come to sympathize with him and to comfort him- See on Job 19:12-14. 2:11 the friends came "to mourn with him and to comfort him" , although Job said he turned to them for comfort in vain (Job 16:2). The Hebrew here in 2:11 is identical to that in Ps. 69:20, describing Christ looking in vain for comforters. Job was the prototype of Isaiah's suffering servant and thereby a type of the Lord Jesus. "Comfort" is the word Job finally uses when he says he 'repents' (Job 42:6). Perhaps their aim from the start was to lead him to the repentance they wrongly imagined he must make for the sins which they mistakenly thought lay behind his sufferings.

Job 2:12 When they lifted up their eyes from a distance and didn't recognize him- The friends "knew him not" as the Jews also did not recognize the suffering servant because of the great physical torment (Is. 52:14; 53:3). Like those who crucified Christ "they sat down" watching him; "and sitting down they watched him there".

They raised their voices and wept; and they each tore his robe, and sprinkled dust on their heads toward the sky- The descriptions of the elders of Zion sitting on the ground in mourning for Jerusalem in Lam. 2:10 recalls the friends mourning for Job- thus associating both them and Job with a condemned Israel.

Job 2:13 So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great- This great grief was intended to represent "the day of grief and of desperate sorrow" that was to come upon a condemned Judah (s.w. Is. 17:11; Jer. 15:18).

Job Chapter 3

Job 3:1 After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed the day of his birth- Job although righteous was representative of a condemned Israel, whose "days" were likewise "cursed" (s.w. Is. 65:20). This is the essence of the representative nature of the work of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant who description took Job as its prototype. He was ultimately innocent and yet representative of a cursed people, and like Job, through His intercession for sinners He could bring salvation for them.

Job 3:2 Job responded- The idea of 'response' is yet another indication that Job was present at the dialogue between God and the Satan.

Job 3:3 Let the day perish in which I was born, the night in which it was said, 'There is a boy conceived'- Heb. 'the night which said...'. He personifies darkness as a being, and sees himself as having been born out of that darkness. A great theme of the book of Job is that God brings light out of darkness, and is in control of the darkness; see on :4.

Job 3:4 Let that day be darkness. Don't let God from above seek for it, neither let the light shine on it- Job sees a chasmic difference between light and darkness; but the end of the book reveals the truth specifically taught to the exiles in Is. 45:5-7, that both light and darkness were from God.

Job 3:5 Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own. Let a cloud dwell on it. Let all that makes black the day terrify it- An allusion to the blackness caused by the desert sandstorms called "khamsin", which appeared to turn day into thick darkness. God noted that allusion, and appears at the end of the book in such a whirlwind, to reveal the light of His grace.

Job 3:6 As for that night, let thick darkness seize on it. Let it not rejoice among the days of the year. Let it not counted in the number of the months- The "thick darkness" continues the allusion to the "khamsin" whirlwind sandstorm (see on :5), which brings a palpably "thick darkness".

Job 3:7 Behold, let that night be barren. Let no joyful voice come therein- More than wishing that his existence and birth would be somehow cancelled, the desire that his day of birth be "barren" would suggest "let no one be born in it". The restoration prophecies repeatedly use the word for "joyful voice" to speak of the joy which would again come from the restoration of Zion (Is. 61:7; 65:14; Jer. 31:7 and often). The blackness of despair which Job experienced was that of the exiles, and yet it could all be turned around, as happened for Job.

Job 3:8 Let them curse it who curse the day, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan- Job says that the friends who came to mourn with him were "ready to raise up Leviathan" – or, as it can also be translated with allusion to the friends, "to raise up their mourning" (see A.V.). They thought that Leviathan, the 'Satan' figure they believed was real, could be blamed. But Job continually sees God as the ultimate source of what had happened to him, and understood the whole matter in terms of 'how can a man be just with God' rather than 'how can a man get Satan off his back?'. A key passage is Job 9:24: "If it be not he, who then is it?" (R.V.); or as the G.N.B. puts it: "If God didn't do it, who did?". After all the theories of 'Who's responsible for all this evil in Job's life?', Job concludes that the source simply has to be God – and not anyone else. See on Job 1:1; 9:24.

Job 3:9 Let the stars of its twilight be dark. Let it look for light, but have none, neither let it see the eyelids of the morning- The stars of the morning rejoiced for joy at Israel's creation (Job 38:7 s.w. :7). Job wishes this to all be somehow annulled. But God's joy in creating His people would be finally justified in His restoration of them, as happened with Job.

Job 3:10 because it didn't shut up the doors of my mother's womb, nor did it hide trouble from my eyes- "Trouble" is the word used of Joseph's "trouble" (Gen. 41:51). Job was failing to see that his trouble had marvellously passed away and he was totally restored. God would save Israel from their "trouble" if they repented (Dt. 26:7 s.w.).

"Trouble" is the word used in Is. 53:11 of the suffering servant's "travail of... soul". Again, Job was the prototype for the suffering servant.

Job 3:11 Why didn't I die from the womb? Why didn't I give up the spirit when my mother bore me?- This whole depressive lament is more or less repeated by Jeremiah when in depression (Jer. 20:17,18). We can learn from that how we should turn to Biblical precedent and example even in the darkest times of depression. But further, we see how Job's experiences are again understood as the prototype for those of the righteous remnant at the time of Judah's sufferings at the hands of the Babylonians.

Job 3:12 Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breast, that I should nurse?- Job in the nadir of depression wishes that his mother had not placed him as her newborn child on her knees, nor offered her breast to him.

Job 3:13 For now should I have lain down and been quiet. I should have slept, then I would have been at rest- If Job had died as a newborn, he felt he would have "slept". He clearly understood death as unconsciousness, which shows that even in those early days, there was a clear understanding of death amongst the believers. For almost everyone else had ideas of an immortal soul consciously surviving death. But his whole argument is that death is unconsciousness.

Job 3:14 with kings and counsellors of the earth, who built up waste places for themselves- This is rather similar to the description of Babylon's king coming to the grave with "all the kings of the nations" in Isaiah 14. The depressed Jews in exile likewise saw their destiny beyond the grave as being identical with that of their Babylonian oppressors.

Job 3:15 or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver- Their houses could refer to their burial tombs.

Job 3:16 or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been, as infants who never saw light- The description of Miriam in Num. 12:12 LXX is quoting from Job 3:16 LXX; as if both Job and Miriam represented apostate Israel.

Job 3:17 There the wicked cease from troubling. There the weary are at rest- Is. 57:20 identifies Job's troubled and 'not at rest' experience with that of the suffering, apostate Jews of the exile: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt".

Job 3:18 There the prisoners are at ease together. They don't hear the voice of the taskmaster- Job in his depression feels as Israel suffering in Egypt (Ex. 3:7; 5:6,13), considering that death was the only way out of the misery of hearing the "voice of the taskmaster". But he fails to see that out of that misery they were redeemed and restored to their land. This is alluded to when attention is drawn to how God's creations "hear not the voice, the shouts and curses of the driver" (Job 39:7). God's people didn't have to "hear" the voice of the taskmaster; there was a way of redemption offered.

Job 3:19 The small and the great are there. The servant is free from his master- Job was a master, but he now felt as a servant who wished to be free. Whose servant was he? Surely God's. Job even yearned to be free of God, a feeling he later expresses. But he never attempts to cut the ties totally; for he knows that by the nature of things, he can't. And he is later to be taught that those ties that bind were nothing less than God's love and saving grace.

Job 3:20 Why is light given- Job recognizes that the light is a gift from God, and will be brought to realize throughout the book, and especially in the speeches of God and Elihu at the end, that the darkness likewise is a gift from Him. And this was the truth which the exiles had to learn (Is. 45:5-7 is addressed to them).

To him who is in misery, life to the bitter in soul- Hezekiah, a potential fulfilment of the suffering servant who was based upon Job, was likewise given life when he was "bitter in soul" (Is. 38:15,17).

Job 3:21 who long for death, but it doesn't come; and dig for it more than for hidden treasures- Job's desire for death was not fulfilled. And this stood for all time as a lesson of how the ties that bind in life, the sense of being hedged up and tied down in an unbearable position, are in fact the ties and cords of Divine love.

Job 3:22 who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?- This was in Job's imagination. For nobody surely commits suicide with joy, and a final fear of death is part of the human condition.

Job 3:23 Why is light given- See on :20.

To a man whose way is hidden- see on Job 10:11,12; Is. 40:27. "Hidden" is "obscured" / "darkened", "placed under a cloud". Finally the cloud of the whirlwind appears at the end of the book and Job finally realizes that out of that comes the light of God's glory.

Whom God has hedged in?- Job is feeling confined, imprisoned, blocked in. But this was what happened to Judah in their judgment (Hos. 2:6); Job although righteous was the representative of Judah.

Job 3:24 For my sighing comes before I eat. My groanings are poured out like water- But Job's "sighing" came to an end when he was restored. The same word is used of how the sighing of the captives in exile (Lam. 1:4,11,21,22) would likewise end when they were restored (Is. 35:10; 51:11).

Job 3:25 For the thing which I fear comes upon me, that of which I was afraid has happened to me- Job's sufferings were a type of those of the Lord Jesus; and as for Job, so for the Lord, the sufferings of the cross were the thing which He had greatly feared all his life. Perhaps the thing which the Lord greatly feared, according to the Psalms, was feeling forsaken by God. And true enough to the Job type, this came upon Him.

Job 3:26 I was not at ease, neither was I quiet, neither had I rest; but trouble came- There are some very evident ways in which Job spiritually grew. Here he originally says that his life previous to his afflictions had not been a life of ease; but as a result of his suffering, he realized that actually it had been "at ease" (Job 16:12).

Job Chapter 4

Job 4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered- Eliphaz appears to have been the eldest. The friends speak according to age, with Elihu as the youngest coming last. The idea was clearly that the longer you lived, the more wisdom you attained; but this is deconstructed throughout the book.

Job 4:2 If someone ventures to talk with you, will you be grieved? But who can withhold himself from speaking?- Both Job and the friends, including Elihu, so often argue that they cannot but speak. Eliphaz is here saying that whether or not Job agrees that Elihu can talk, he can't withhold himself from speaking; indeed, he argues that nobody could stop themselves from talking. And yet all are brought to silence by God's display of majesty and answers at the end. The drama sets us all up to quip 'If only you had all remained silent as you were at the beginning, when you all sat with Job in silence!'. We *can* control our tongue; but all concerned seemed to think that this was just impossible, and it was part of being human to talk when provoked. But self-control *is* possible.

Job 4:3 Behold, you have instructed many, you have strengthened the weak hands- Another telling point of contact with Isaiah is found here in 4:3-5. Job had "strengthened the weak hands... and... the feeble knees. But now it (the weakness and feeble knees) is come upon thee, and thou faintest". This is picked up in Is. 35:3,4: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful (Heb. 'hasty'- both are relevant to Job) heart, Be strong... behold, your God will come". Thus Job is representative of the weak-hearted Jews in exile, and his final deliverance thus points forward to both their restoration and the final coming of the Lord to reestablish God's Kingdom on earth.

Job 4:4 Your words have supported him who was falling, you have strengthened the feeble knees- See on :4. The idea is that now Job himself had weak hands and feeble knees (:3,5), which needed strengthening. This makes him exactly correspond with the situation of the exiles in Is. 35:3,4; the good news of the gospel of restoration was to be experienced by him.

Job 4:5 But now it has come to you, and you faint. It touches you, and you are troubled- "Touch" is the word used by the satan in Job 1:11; 2:5, where satan argues that if Job is 'touched', he will renounce God. This is more evidence that the satan was the friends, on one level. When he fades from the narrative, the friends appear as it were in his place. It may be that Job's satan Angel was the Angel representing the three friends (satans) of Job. Because of His close identification with them, the satan Angel spoke their thoughts as if they were his own- compare Eliphaz's thoughts here with Satan's words of Job 1:9,10. For the connection between the satan and an Angel, see on Job 1:6.

Job 4:6 Isn't your piety your confidence?- The Hebrew can mean both "confidence" and "folly" (s.w. Ps. 85:8). The friends were convinced Job was a fake because he was suffering.

Isn't the integrity of your ways your hope?- Eliphaz seems to be restating Job's convictions, that his upright ways were what his "hope" was predicated upon. But Job through his sufferings comes to "hope" only for death (Job 6:8 s.w.), and feels he now has no "hope" (Job 7:6; 14:19; 17:15; 19:10). Bildad presses the same point as Eliphaz, suggesting that Job had only the "hope" of the hypocrite, and this "hope" would perish (Job 8:13; 27:8). Job had integrity, and on that basis he thought he had "hope". He suffered, and he lost that "hope", because he assumed that his sufferings meant that he was not in fact righteous. And yet he often reflects that he is righteous and is suffering unjustly. And so he is led to the realization that the "hope" of the righteous is by God's grace and not because of the "integrity of [Job's] ways". Judah in captivity likewise lost their "hope" (Ez. 19:5; 37:11). But the message of the restoration prophets was that "there *is* hope in your end" (Jer. 31:17); they were prisoners or exiles in "hope" (Zech. 9:12).

Job 4:7 Remember now, whoever perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright cut off?- God's opinion of Job was that he was "upright" (Job 1:1 s.w.). But as the drama progresses, the friends argue that if Job were in fact "upright" then God would not be afflicting him (Job 4:7; 8:6 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "upright" and therefore cannot find God (Job 23:7,8 s.w.). He absorbs false guilt and becomes influenced by the guilt placed upon him by his religion and "friends" amongst the "sons of God". It's quite possible that in depression and periods of suffering, we can come to have a lower view of ourselves than that which God has of us; just as at other times we can have a higher view of ourselves spiritually than we ought to. There is true guilt, the

guilt which we should take, and false guilt. And Job seems to have picked up the false guilt thrown upon him by Bildad. We too need to learn this difference between false and true guilt.

Job 4:8 According to what I have seen, those who plough iniquity and sow trouble, reap the same- Although the friends are finally rebuked for not speaking rightly about God, Paul quotes these words in Gal. 6:8. This shows that the spirit in the New Testament can at times quote words which may be out of context, and reapply them in a new context. The accusation that Job was reaping the result of his sowing of sin was wrong; but the principle is quoted with approval, that those who sow to the flesh will reap judgment. Eliphaz overlooked the fact that the final reaping was at the last day, and not in this life. Job was driven towards understanding and faith in a "last day" judgment setting things right; for he knew that he was not reaping judgment for some specific sin. He had been righteous- and yet was not reaping the results of it. So he has to conclude that the time of reaping cannot be in this life. And he progressively longs for the coming of that day. Eliphaz may also have in view the fact that it was whilst Job was literally ploughing that the judgment came (Job 1:14). See on :9.

Job 4:9 By the breath of God they perish. By the blast of His anger are they consumed- An allusion to the wind or spirit / breath of God coming from the wilderness and destroying Job's children. See on :8. This is all the language of the destruction of Judah by her enemies (Is. 30:33). Indeed Job's children had sinned, as had the sons [s.w.] / children of Israel. But this didn't mean that Job had personally sinned in such a way as to elicit this judgment. Job is to be understood as representing Judah in captivity. The fact their sons has been destroyed by the invaders was not in fact evidence that all of them had sinned. There was no guilt by association.

Job 4:10 The roaring of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion, the teeth of the young lions, are broken- This and :11 pictures a family of lions perishing. Perhaps Job is the old lion, his wife the lioness, and the cubs are his sons.

Job 4:11 The old lion perishes for lack of prey. The cubs of the lioness are scattered abroad- See on :11. Ez. 19 likes Judah at the time of Babylon's invasion as being like a family of lions which died out. Again we see how the book of Job was reapplied to the situation with Judah at the time of their exile and restoration.

Job 4:12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me; my ear received a whisper of it- This is typical of the sources of truth many turn to today. A person claims they had a secret revelation, unconfirmed by anyone else, unheard by anyone else, and incapable of any peer review. The contents of the claims are also unverifiable. But that is accepted as 'truth' by many. The book of Job concludes with God appealing to that which is before the eyes of every man- His power in creation, His way in history, the logical implications of the fact the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper, which lead to the conclusion that there must be a day of judgment to come, and that God must finally be revealed openly.

Job 4:13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men- As noted on :12, Eliphaz claims nobody else heard this message, all other men were asleep, and he implies that he must be believed. Simply on the basis of his say so. And so many are eager to do that, rather than lift their own eyes and hearts to the skies and seek God for what and how He is and has revealed Himself.

Job 4:14 fear came on me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake- This language of fear and shaking bones is that used in Ps. 53:5 about the condemned; but Eliphaz presents this as reason to accept him as telling the truth!

Job 4:15 Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my flesh stood up- It's unclear whether Eliphaz is making this up (for how can a man living before mirrors were invented, in the darkness, knows what his hair looked like)- or whether it actually happened. But we will note on :18,21 that what he says is not completely true.

Job 4:16 It stood still, but I couldn't discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes. Silence; then I heard a voice saying- Or, a still voice, recalling the voice heard by Elijah. Eliphaz admits he couldn't discern the form and appearance of whatever revealed truth to him. Yahweh's form appeared to Moses (s.w. Num. 12:8) and indeed to all concerned in the book of Job, in His final theophany in the storm and whirlwind. That was to be the source of truth-

and not the vaguely remembered, jumbled claims of a man like Eliphaz which couldn't be corroborated by his audience. The vision contrasts directly with Dt. 4:12, where Israel did *not* see any "form" but only heard a voice, the Divine word, which they were to respond to. But Eliphaz claims he saw the "form" right before his eyes. The form seemed to be more significant to him than the content, the voice of the words.

Job 4:17 'Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?'- Job did justify himself more than God (Job 32:2) and this effectively was to be read as making himself *more* righteous than God. Here we have the essence of the problem in the book of Job- not suffering *per se*, but how can man be just or right with God. The answer is given at length in Rom. 1-8- by faith in God's imputation of righteousness to us, by grace. This is how man can be "pure" before God, by His forgiveness and imputation of righteousness (s.w. Ps. 51:2,7). This question as to how to be pure before God was that asked by David, after his sin for which there was no sacrifice. And the answer was the same- to confess sin, and throw ourselves upon the grace which brings imputed righteousness to us. Job was not perfect, as he himself comes to admit; and yet he was counted righteous by God, both at the start and the end of the book. But any attempt to make ourselves righteous without this Divinely provided mechanism- is effectively to raise ourselves up above God. And that is the problem and failure of all works-based religions. The offer of being cleansed (s.w. "pure") by their maker was what the exiles were offered in the new covenant (s.w. Jer. 33:8; Ez. 36:25,33; 37:23; Mal. 3:3).

Job 4:18 Behold, He puts no trust in His servants. He charges His angels with folly- It can be argued that the book of Job is a dialogue concerning evil and suffering, with three popular views being represented by the three friends. These views are examined and corrected by the personal history of Job, as well as by the epilogue and prologue to the book. Eliphaz seems to be representative of the idea that Job is being hit by supernaturally controlled evil- Eliphaz speaks of a force of darkness (Job 22:10,11) and sinful or faulty Angels living in an unclean Heaven (Job 4:18; 15:15). Yet the *answer* to all this is that the Satan figure is under God's control, all Job's misfortunes come from God and His Angels- one of whom may have been called 'the adversary' ('Satan')- are in fact all perfectly obedient to Him and not disobedient. And finally, Eliphaz and the friends are rebuked for their various wrong understandings, with God declaring Himself supreme and ultimate sovereign. Likewise Bildad's view of Angels in Job 25:5 "The stars are not pure in God's eyes" is corrected by God in Job 38:7, when He says that "the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy".

Job 4:19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth!- Eliphaz seems to be saying that there is no way that man can ever be right with God; because, as noted on :17, he was still ignorant of the wonderful truth of imputed righteousness and justification by grace through faith. He has a very low view of human nature. Although we are indeed dust and crushed by moths as our bodies decompose, all that we posit about human nature is true of the Lord Jesus- who fully shared our nature, and yet was holy and undefiled. The Bible in fact has a far higher view of the possibilities inherent within human nature than many do today, represented as they are by the false reasoning of Eliphaz.

Job 4:20 Between morning and evening they are destroyed. They perish forever without any regarding it- Again, Eliphaz is wrong to assume that all men "perish forever". Job correctly reasons himself towards a belief in the resurrection of the body at the last day (Job 19:25-27). And God does indeed "regard" the death of His precious ones (Ps. 116:15).

Job 4:21 Isn't their tent cord plucked up within them? They die, and that without wisdom'- LXX "For he blows upon them, and they are withered"- the language of Isaiah concerning the perishing of the glory of Judah at the hands of the Babylonians. These words are true for the unbelievers, but are not universally true; indeed Peter appears to allude to this verse by saying that once his tent has been taken down, yet he still has the hope of eternal life at the resurrection of the body at the last day (2 Pet. 1:13,14).

Job Chapter 5

Job 5:1 Call now; is there any who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you appeal?- Eliphaz appears to believe that there are Angels or holy ones around God, but Job cannot get sympathy from any of them. This indicates that the idea of a 'court of heaven', with Angels watching events upon earth, was appreciated by these people. See on Job 1:6.

At that moment, there was indeed nobody who would answer Job nor hear his appeal. Job's desire for these things, for real spiritual friendship and an advocate in Heaven, grew so intense that he comes to visualize an ideal friend, who would not only appreciate his every grief, but who would offer more than commiseration. He came to long for one who would reconcile him with the righteousness of God. Naturally, he would have had in mind Abraham's promised seed. His mind was therefore being prepared to desire the coming of Messiah; in prospect, he was developing a personal understanding and appreciation of the Lord Jesus. In all this, Job is our glorious example. There can be very few who have not experienced the terror of complete spiritual isolation, longing for understanding and true appreciation, but finding none within the ecclesia whom they can turn to. As we look back from our traumas to the glorious reality of Christ's existence, so Job looked forward to it.

Job 5:2 For resentment kills the foolish man, and jealousy kills the simple- "Resentment" is AV "fury"; and the Hebrew translated "jealousy" is also translated "zeal". The idea could be that it is God's fury and jealousy which slays the fool, as happened in the judgment of Judah and her enemies (s.w. Is. 42:13; 59:17; Ez. 5:13; 16:38). Eliphaz sees the "fire of God" which struck Job's family as a sign that they were spiritually foolish. And he continues his allusions to Job's family in :3 and :4.

Job 5:3 I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his habitation- "The foolish" refers obliquely to Job, spreading out as a tree in his prosperity, and then having his "habitation" cursed. It was God through the Satan figure who apparently cursed or judged Job's habitation; but here Eliphaz says that he personally had done so. This continues to strengthen the hints that the friends were connected with the Satan and their forces may have been those which attacked his family.

Job 5:4 His children are far from safety. They are crushed in the gate. Neither is there any to deliver them- Job prayed God would forgive his children in case they sinned. The friends mocked this in Job 5:4; 8:4; 17:5 and 20:10, saying that the children of the foolish die for their *own* sins, whereas, by implication, Job had figured that *his* prayers and sacrifices could gain *them* forgiveness. Yet in the end, Yahweh stated that Job had understood Him and His principles right, whereas the friends hadn't. "Safety" is literally 'salvation', and Eliphaz taunts Job that those who truly seek God (:8) will indeed be saved (s.w. :11). There was none to "deliver" Job, so far as Eliphaz could see by his naked eye; but he was sure that such "deliverance" would be given to those who sought God (:19 s.w.). The exiles sought such 'salvation' or "deliverance" (s.w. Neh. 9:28), but there was "not any to deliver them" (Is. 42:22 s.w.). Job represents them; but as the story unfolds, we see that if they like Job were to resign their own righteousness, confess their sins and throw themselves upon God's grace- amazing restoration would come from the result of the "Chaldeans" who had devastated them as they had Job. The exiles too would be "delivered" (Jer. 20:13; Ez. 34:12 s.w.).

Job 5:5 whose harvest the hungry eats up, and take it even out of the thorns. They snare gapes for their substance- Here again Eliphaz wanders in his logic, assuming that Job's children had not shared their harvest with the hungry, nor allowed the poor to live by picking up stray grapes from their vineyards (as later required by the law of Moses). He assumes these sins must have happened, and likes to imagine that the invaders of Job's lands were disgruntled, hungry people. And many similar false suppositions are made by people today as they grapple with the problem of evil and personal suffering.

Job 5:6 For affliction doesn't come forth from the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground- The idea is that affliction doesn't come about as part of natural process, like plants spring out of the dust / ground. "Dust", humanity, isn't naturally born to the kind of affliction Job had experienced- according to Eliphaz. Whereas the Genesis record appears to teach the opposite; that we live in a fallen world where indeed affliction does arise as part of natural process. Eliphaz struggled to accept this, as many do today, assuming that all suffering must be the direct result of personal sin. That is simply not true to observable fact and basic human experience.

Job 5:7 but man is born to trouble, as the arrows of the sons of Resheph fly upward- Significantly, it is the friends who make allusion to the 'Satan' figures and gods as if they are real, whereas Job in his responses always denies their reality and sees God as the direct source of His sufferings. Bildad speaks of how Job's troubles are to be associated with "the king of terrors" (Job 18:14); Eliphaz blames them upon the "sons of Resheph" (Job 5:7); but Job's response is that the source of the evil in his life is ultimately from *God* and not any such being. Eliphaz there speaks of how man's trouble comes "as the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Resheph was known as "the lord of the arrow" and the Ugaritic tablets associate him with archery (William J. Fulco, *The Canaanite God Resep* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1976)). We would therefore be justified in reading in an ellipsis here: man's trouble comes "as the [arrows of] the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Job's response is that "The arrows of *the Almighty* are in me" (Job 6:4), and he lament that God is an archer using him as his target for practice (Job 7:20; 16:12,13). Job refuses to accept Eliphaz's explanation that Job is a victim of Resheph's arrows. For Job, if God is "the Almighty" then there is no space left for Resheph. Each blow he received, each arrow strike, was from God and not Resheph.

Or we can read: "Man is born unto trouble, as the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly" (AVmg.). This would be using Angel-Cherubim language to say that it is inevitable that our Angels will bring trials into our lives.

Job 5:8 But as for me, I would seek God. I would commit my cause to God- Job did indeed seek God. But the friends assume that they can infer from the reality of Job's sufferings that therefore he didn't really seek God. This is to become a major theme in the book, so relevant to those Jews in exile who struggled with the problem of evil. Experience of suffering is not to say that therefore we have specifically personally sinned, and the sufferings of the suffering servant, who was Job and ultimately the Lord Jesus, are proof enough of that.

Job 5:9 who does great things that can't be fathomed, marvellous things without number- Job was one of the earliest books of the Bible, and these words are alluded to or even quoted with affirmation by other believers (Ps. 40:5; 72:18; 77:14; 136:4). There was some truth in the words of the friends, therefore, although the problem was that they mixed aspects of truth with much wrong interpretation. But the parts which are true are shown to be so by the way the book is used in later scripture.

Job 5:10 who gives rain on the earth, and sends waters on the fields- The way that God is essentially a giver, as witnessed throughout His creation, is a reason to turn to Him. That is a truth, but Eliphaz is wrong to reason that Job has not thus turned to God because Job is suffering. See on :9.

Job 5:11 so that He sets up on high those who are low; those who mourn are exalted to safety- The idea of setting the low up on high is definitely applied to the exiles who would repent in Is. 57:15. Those who mourned for Zion would be delivered / 'saved'. All this came true in the experience of Job, and it could have done so for the exiles had they humbled themselves as Job did.

This is also quoted in Prov. 3:11, which is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Prov. 3:13-15 describes our Lord's successful finding of wisdom in the language of Job's unsuccessful search for it in Job 28:16-19, implying He found what Job and the friends did not (cp. Rom. 9:31,32). As explained on :9, the 'true' elements in the friends' speeches are confirmed as true by their usage in later scripture.

Job 5:12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands can't perform their enterprise- Eliphaz clearly

understands Job as "the crafty", as stated explicitly in Job 15:5 (s.w.). As explained on :9, the true elements in the speeches of the friends are quoted in later scripture, although the friends misuse the 'truths' they held to condemn Job. This therefore is quoted with approval in 1 Cor. 1:19. Eliphaz is explaining why he thinks Job and his view of life have been brought to nothing, and Paul uses these words about the bringing down of legalism and the Judaists. Thus Paul read Job as representative of those who were influenced by the legalism of the Judaizers. Paul continues: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" (1 Cor. 1:20). Job's constant desire to dispute with God and the friends, and the claims both he and they made to possessing wisdom, show Job was clearly in Paul's mind. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" he concludes, maybe thinking of the humbled Job and his friends.

Job 5:13 He takes the wise in their own craftiness; the counsel of the cunning is carried away headlong- This too is quoted in 1 Cor. 3:19; see on :12. We note that Paul here quotes the Hebrew text and not the LXX, even though most of his quotations from the Old Testament seem to prefer the LXX over the Hebrew (Masoretic) text. It wasn't that Paul personally picked and chose which version fitted his line of thought; he was a Divinely inspired writer, and God chose to interpret His word as He knew most appropriate.

Job 5:14 They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope at noonday as in the night- Eliphaz considers that Job was experiencing darkness at noon. And indeed he was. But in this Job looked ahead to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus on the cross. He like the Lord suffered as a sinner without having personally sinned. Job was representative of sinful Israel under judgment, for to "grope at noonday" was their punishment for breaking the covenant (s.w. Dt. 28:29).

Job 5:15 But He saves from the sword of their mouth, even the needy from the hand of the mighty- This again is directly relevant to the exiles in Babylon; if they accepted the new covenant and repented as Job did, they too would be saved "from the hand of the mighty" (s.w. Jer. 31:11).

Job 5:16 So the poor has hope, and injustice shuts her mouth- Again this was true for the exiles, "the poor", who had "the hope of Israel"- restoration and deliverance from those who had abused them as Job had been abused. Only then, in that final experience of deliverance at the restoration of the Kingdom, would injustice finally be answered. Everyone in the drama of Job, as in the world today, wanted an immediate answer and resolution of injustice. But that was not to be; it was only in the final realization of the hope of Israel that injustice would be silenced.

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects! Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty- As noted on :9, the true parts of the friends' words are confirmed in later scripture. These ideas are alluded to in Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:5; James 1:12. But again, whilst the friends have some truth, they misuse it; for Eliphaz wrongly assumes that Job is despising God's hand, and ought to be "happy" if he were a true believer. But the nature of suffering is not like that, and the picture is not so simple. The 'happiness' of God's people is only at the end, in the Kingdom, when all things are resolved (s.w. Dt. 33:29; Dan. 12:12). Or in the restoration context, when Babylon fell and God's people were restored from exile (s.w. Ps. 137:8), after they had repented- for the positive effect of "chastening" is only experienced upon repentance (Job 36:10 s.w.). Judah in exile didn't repent, and so they were left with the problem of having been 'chastened' apparently in vain. The friends also fail to realize that "chastening" may not necessarily be for our own personal sins; the suffering servant was 'chastened' not for his own sins, but to achieve our peace with God (Is. 53:5 s.w.).

Job 5:18 For He wounds, and binds up. He injures, and His hands make whole- LXX "for he causes a man to be in pain, and restores him again: he smites, and his hands heal". This is relevant to the restoration of Judah which was possible at the restoration. Judah were like Job, covered in sores, but they refused to be 'bound up' by God (Is. 1:6 s.w.). At the restoration, through the promised suffering servant, this binding up was envisaged (Is. 61:1; Ez. 34:16

s.w.)- if they "returned to the Lord" (s.w. Hos. 6:1). This is why the book of Job is really a call to repentance, and his very name is a form of the Arabic word for 'repentance'. God's ability to "make whole" and heal therefore depended upon human acceptance of it. Judah's refusal to repent precluded all this. "Make whole" is the word for "physician", and Job came to realize that his friends, his fellow worshippers, were in fact physicians of no value who could not make him whole (s.w. Job 13:4). His disillusion with the members of his religion, his brethren, led him to seek the more earnestly to God as the only one whose hands could "make whole" (s.w. "physician").

Although elsewhere Eliphaz reveals his belief in cosmic, supernatural evil, he is driven here by his own logic to accept that the source of both injury and healing is God.

Job 5:19 He will deliver you in six troubles; yes, in seven no evil shall touch you- "Touch" is the word used by the Satan in Job 1:11, again suggesting that Eliphaz and the friends were connected with the Satan, or were in fact the Satan. Ps. 91:10 seems to look back to this passage in Job 5:19: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling". Ps. 91 is Moses' encouragement to Joshua that the destroying Angel in the wilderness would not harm him, but he would be protected by the Angels who would "keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11). Thus Moses may have seen Job 5:19 to be talking about evil brought by Angels of evil (Ps. 78:49 shows his appreciation of these)- i.e. Job's Satan Angel who brought the trials.

Job 5:20 In famine He will redeem you from death; in war, from the power of the sword- Job's calamities may well have driven him to literal famine or lack of food. And again there appears to be an oblique reference back to the "war" upon Job's home encampment. Eliphaz therefore wrongly concludes that Job has not turned to God, or else he would be redeemed from the death that surrounded him. The phrase "redeem from death" is only used elsewhere in Hos. 13:14, where again we have the hope of redemption which was placed before a suffering Judah if they repented. Although Job had not personally sinned, he was representative of his suffering, sinful people. All his struggles with the injustice of it all were because he failed to realize that; and thus the representative nature of the work of the Lord Jesus is one of the major teachings of the book.

Job 5:21 You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, neither shall you be afraid of destruction when it comes- As noted on :9, the true elements in the speeches of the friends are alluded to in later scripture, in this case in Ps. 31:20. But as with many today, the friends misused what truth they held in their mistreatment and judgmental attitude towards Job. We can observe that the calamities listed by Eliphaz in :21-23 include many of the judgments which the prophets threaten upon Judah, and which were fulfilled at the Babylonian invasion (famine, war, devastation, wild animals). Job is presented as Judah's representative, and his repentance and restoration could have been theirs.

Job 5:22 At destruction and famine you shall laugh, neither shall you be afraid of the animals of the earth- LXX "wild beasts", as in :23. These are symbols of the enemies of Judah who devoured her (Ez. 14:15). The repentant daughter of Zion could have laughed at them (Ps. 2); but she failed to follow Job's path.

Job 5:23 For you shall be allied with the stones of the field. The animals of the field shall be at peace with you- The reference may be to how invaders, the wild beasts, spoiled the land by dropping stones throughout it. The idea is of peace with the natural creation as well as the invaders. This was the ultimate prophetic picture for Judah in their restored kingdom- if they repented.

Job 5:24 You shall know that your tent is in peace. You shall visit your fold, and shall miss nothing- LXX "and the provision for thy tabernacle shall not fail", perhaps connecting with how there was no provision for the temple services until the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. In the immediate context, Eliphaz has in view how the tents of Job were afflicted and the animals of his fold were stolen.

Job 5:25 You shall know also that your seed shall be great, your offspring as the grass of the earth- The way Eliphaz speaks of how Job's seed or offspring could be many or "great... as the grass of the earth" suggests the people of Job's time were familiar with the promises made to Abraham, and the concept of their being applicable to

them too. Eliphaz therefore suggests that Abraham is not in fact a true seed of Abraham because the promises were not having fulfilment in him; see on :26. But those promises have their ultimate fulfilment in the future Kingdom; whereas the friends, like many today, thought that the promised Divine blessings have to be fulfilled immediately, in this life. And if they aren't, then we must have sinned. But the promised blessings were all of grace, of faith and not works; and would be fulfilled in the future.

Job 5:26 You shall come to your grave in a full age, like a sheaf of grain comes in its season- This and :25 did come ultimately true for Job, and Eliphaz lived to see it, and to realize he had been wrong in his judgment of Job. The allusion is clearly to Abraham, whose seed Job was (Gen. 15:15; 25:8). See on :25, where Eliphaz has implied Job is not the seed of Abraham.

Job 5:27 Look this, we have examined it, so it is. Hear it, and know it for your good- LXX "but do thou reflect with thyself, if thou hast done anything wrong". The friends speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the “holy ones”, had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: “To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job’s guilt] is true” (Job 5:1,27). But we learn by the end of the book that it is God's judgment in the court of heaven which is the only judgment worth paying attention to. This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters. Job appeals for ‘witnesses’ (Job 9:33–35; 16:18–22; 19:20–27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a ‘case’ with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29–31 is effectively Job’s declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job’s earlier plea: “Sleeplessly I wait for His reply” (Job 16:22). It’s as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of ‘Satan’, suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about ‘Satan’ figures.

Job Chapter 6

Job 6:1 Then Job answered- Every time we read or hear this in the drama, we almost wish him to remain silent as the Lord did at His trial. His final silence and laying his hand upon his mouth is what the drama wishes us for him to do the longer it goes on.

Job 6:2 Oh that my anguish were weighed, and all my calamity laid in the balances!- LXX "Oh that one would indeed weigh the wrath that is upon me". This was the feeling of the exiles; that the wrath upon Israel, the "sand of the sea" (:3), was heavier than it ought to have been. And they like Job were brought to realize their sinfulness and the lightness of their judgment, having been punished, as Ezra reflected, in fact less than their iniquities deserved (Ezra 9:13). Job looked in vain for someone to understand and evaluate his sufferings. The friends had come to him to do this, but had failed. We too may tell our life story to another person for days or weeks- but they will never quite understand. Job's disappointment with human relationships led him to throw himself finally upon God; for the only one to weigh accurately his calamity was of course God.

Job 6:3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas- I have noted several times Job's presentation as the seed of Abraham and allusions to the promises to Abraham. We have another one here. He considers that the promises of seed like the sand of the seas were somehow outweighed by his sufferings. He felt perhaps that he was not going to inherit the promises because of his sufferings; as if they were somehow indicative that he was not the seed of Abraham. This meant that he had yet to learn that the promises to Abraham, which were the basis of the new covenant offered to the exiles, were based upon grace; and they had their ultimate fulfilment in the restored Kingdom of God on earth and the blessing of having Yahweh as a personal God- and not in the blessings of secular life.

Therefore have my words been rash- Presumably Job refers to his words recorded in Job 2 and 3. But he uses a situational ethic here- as if rash language is excusable because of the weight of suffering. When he finally places his hand upon his mouth, Job realizes that such rationalization of poor language use was inappropriate.

Job 6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me. My spirit drinks up their poison. The terrors of God set themselves in array against me- Eliphaz blames Job's troubles upon the "sons of Resheph" (Job 5:7); but Job's response is that the source of the evil in his life is ultimately from *God* and not any such being. Eliphaz there speaks of how man's trouble comes "as the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Resheph was known as "the lord of the arrow" and the Ugaritic tablets associate him with archery (William J. Fulco, *The Canaanite God Resep* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1976)). We would therefore be justified in reading in an ellipsis here: man's trouble comes "as the [arrows of] the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Job's response is that "The arrows of *the Almighty* are in me" (Job 6:4), and he laments that God is an archer using him as his target for practice (Job 7:20; 16:12,13). Job refuses to accept Eliphaz's explanation that Job is a victim of Resheph's arrows. For Job, if God is "the Almighty" then there is no space left for Resheph. Each blow he received, each arrow strike, was from God and not Resheph. The "terrors" he felt in nightmares (s.w. Job 7:14) were ultimately from God. These "terrors" appear to be psychological trauma, parallel with his "spirit" being wounded by God's arrows (Job 13:21).

Job 6:5 Does the wild donkey bray when he has grass? Or does the ox low over his fodder?- Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4).

“Wherefore I loathe my words and repent” (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; ‘I only said / did it [or didn’t do it] because...’. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins. See on :11,26.

Job 6:6 Can that which has no flavour be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?- As noted on :5, Job seems to be saying that just as you can't expect a person to eat the white of an egg without salt, so his outbursts are justifiable. But of course one can eat eggs without salt. Job at this point comes over as a spoilt child refusing any food which isn't exactly to his taste. Finally he breaks down in self-realization and repentance, realizing his words have indeed been intemperate (see on Job 40:4; 42:6).

Job 6:7 My soul refuses to touch them. They are as loathsome food to me- As explained on :5,6, Job comes over as a spoilt child refusing any food which isn't exactly to his taste. He may be twisting the Divine command to only offer sacrifice, His "food" upon His table or altar, with salt. But Job is twisting scripture.

Job 6:8 Oh that I might have my request, that God would grant the thing that I long for- This desire for death, effectively suicidal, continues the pouting and egoistic attitude noted on :6,7.

Job 6:9 even that it would please God to crush me; that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!- Job is careful not to speak of ending his own life, but he asks God to. Job appears to allude to the dialogue between God and Satan in the prologue, for he references the source of his sufferings as God's hand. Job was therefore aware of the dialogue; which makes sense, if the Satan figure was presenting the thoughts of the friends, who were the other "sons of God" of Job 1:6. Job knew what they thought of him. The LXX makes the allusion to the prologue (Job 2:6) even clearer: "Let the Lord begin and wound me, but let him not utterly destroy me". This would then read as if Job doubted whether God would keep His side of the agreement made with the Satan.

Job 6:10 Be it still my consolation, yes, let me exult throughout my unending pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One- The idea seems to be that Job longed for his death because he was comforted by the fact he had not hidden God's words; likewise he exalts in Job 27:11 (s.w.) that he has not hidden God's words. Job was a prophet and is quoted as one in James 5. He had perhaps heard God's words from a "holy one", an Angel, and had taught them to others. By implication, he assumed that after death he would receive some credit for his righteousness. He had moved on to this from a simple desire for death. But aware of his righteousness, he reasons towards a belief in some future point of reward, as this was clearly not happening in this life. This becomes developed into a belief in a day of judgment and the final manifestation of God. And this happens ahead of time, as it were, in Yahweh's final manifestation at the end of the book; but this lead Job to resign all his own righteousness. See on :13; Job 7:2.

Job 6:11 What is my strength, that I should wait further? What is my end, that I should be patient?- Job is definitely impatient and justified it as he justified his rash speaking (see on :5,12). And yet the patience of Job is quoted as proverbial (James 5:11). This may reflect how he was accounted righteous by God, and this final status was accepted by others. Or perhaps his patience refers to his endurance in faith, despite the fact that he was impatient during that endurance. He hardly comes over as patient in his speeches, but this was maybe seen as cosmetic failure compared to his final overall endurance in faith.

Job 6:12 Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brass?- His argument is that he can't be perfectly patient because that would require superhuman strength. He blames the construction of his nature for his impatience (see on :11). And finally is led to repentance for this. It's rather like an alcoholic blaming his sin on his human nature.

Job 6:13 Isn't it that I have no help in me, that wisdom is driven quite from me?- LXX "Or have I not trusted in him? but help is far from me". If the LXX is correct then we see an extension of the argument developed on :10; he

is confident that he has trusted in God, and yet no "help" from Him is forthcoming; and so he is driven to belief in a future day of Divine help, at some point after his death. That point becomes more developed in Job's understanding, as the day when God's appointed mediator shall stand upon the earth- the return of the Lord Jesus.

Job 6:14 To him who is ready to faint, kindness should be shown from his friend; even to him who forsakes the fear of the Almighty- We can limit God's plans to save others in the ecclesia by our attitude to them- even if they become atheists we are not to withdraw human friendship from them. We can make others stumble from the path to His salvation. If a brother doesn't show pity to his fellow brother, this can make the afflicted brother "forsake the fear of the Almighty" (Job 6:14 RVmg.). Or we can read with GNB "In trouble like this I need loyal friends— whether I've forsaken God or not".

Job 6:15 My brothers have dealt deceitfully as a brook, as the channel of brooks that pass away- "Deceitfully" is the word used about the exiles in Babylon (Is. 48:8) and how they treated their God and His servant (cp. Job). Job is as the righteous remnant, and the friends, the other "sons of God", as the apostate Jews, who could be saved by the intercession of the righteous.

Job 6:16 which are black by reason of the ice, in which the snow hides itself- "Black" is 'turbid'. As in winter the rivers flowed freely, so the friends had promise of help, but when the heat came, they disappeared and were nowhere to be found (:17).

Job 6:17 In the dry season, they vanish. When it is hot, they are consumed out of their place- See on :16. In Job 24:19, Job later sees the melting of the snow waters as representing the destruction of the wicked; he comes towards the conclusions that his friends, his fellow "sons of God" of Job 1:6, were in fact sinners. Job, the righteous remnant amongst the captives, were to pray for and save the unspiritual majority; but they had to be convinced of how far astray their brethren really were.

Job 6:18 The caravans that travel beside them turn aside. They go up into the waste, and perish- "Caravans" and "paths" are the same word (:19). The idea is that these friends were like caravans of travellers diverting to follow tracks towards water sources but not finding the water, because they had dried up; and they perished. This is how Job came to see the friends.

Job 6:19 The caravans of Tema looked. The companies of Sheba waited for them- He associates his deceitful brethren (:15) with the troops of Tema and the companies of Sheba which had fallen upon his cattle at Satan's behest (Job 1:15). Job knew that the friends had power over his persecutors (:24). They, Job said, had caused calamity to fall upon him, and thereby overwhelmed their one-time friend (:27 AV mg.). They thought, as Satan did, that Job's spirituality was only a sham (:28). For more evidence that the friends were the satan, see on Job 1:6. There is reason to think that Eliphaz, the leader of the friends, may have been the specific individual referred to as 'satan' in the prologue. God singles him out for especial condemnation at the end (Job 42:7). After one of Eliphaz's speeches, Job responds with what appears to be a comment upon him, rather than God: "He hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles... he teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me (surely Job speaks here about Eliphaz, not God): he gnasheth upon me... mine enemy (satan) sharpeneth his eyes upon me. They (the astonished friends?) have gaped upon me with their mouth, they have smitten me...they have gathered themselves together (as the friends did to Job) against me" (Job 16:9-11). Eliphaz was a Temanite, from where Job's afflictors came. See on :22.

Job 6:20 They were distressed because they were confident. They came there, and were confounded- LXX "They too that trust in cities and riches shall come to shame". But see on :18.

Job 6:21 For now you are nothing. You see a terror, and are afraid- LXX "But ye also have come to me without pity; so that beholding my wound ye are afraid"; GNB "You are like those streams to me, you see my fate and draw back in fear".

Job 6:22 Did I say, 'Give to me?' or, 'Offer a present for me from your substance?' - Perhaps there was the idea that Job had obtained his wealth from the friends and they were justified in seeking to take it back; see on :19.

Job 6:23 or, 'Deliver me from the adversary's hand?' or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the oppressors?' - I suggested on :19 that the friends themselves were involved in the work of the hand of the satan / adversary. But Job never asked them to 'stop'.

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my peace. Cause me to understand wherein I have erred- Job's sacrifice of a truly broken spirit was worth more than thousands of apposite words. Job had dimly imagined that this would be so: "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (6:24). When Elihu *did* teach him and show him that he was erring by *nature* rather than specific sin, Job truly held his tongue: "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth... I will not answer... I will proceed no further" (Job 40:4,5; notice the threefold repetition). This is one of several examples of Job knowing the truth in abstract theory, but not appreciating it until the mixture of reflection on his trials and Elihu / Jesus, brought it home.

Job 6:25 How forcible are words of uprightness! But your reproof, what does it reprove?- This experience led Job to long for "words of uprightness", and thereby he came to be ready for the final revelation of God's words at the end of the book. Likewise our disillusion with human words and relationships leads us to be the more eager and ready for God's revelation. The very phrase "words of uprightness" are only found when Elihu appears and claims to speak "words of uprightness" (Job 33:3).

Job 6:26 Do you intend to reprove words, since the speeches of one who is desperate are as wind?- Job seems to here place himself beyond reproof; as if he considers his desperation to mean that therefore whatever he says can't be reproved, because the weight of his sufferings meant that he was justified in saying anything. This is discussed and exemplified more on :5, and it is this continual self-justification which has to be humbled in God's final appearance at the end of the book.

Job 6:27 Yes, you would even cast lots for the fatherless, and make merchandise of your friend- See on :19. Job had worked his way up in the world (perhaps from being an orphan, "fatherless", parallel with "your friend") without consciously seeking prosperity (Job 1:10 AVmg.; Job 8:7; 31:25), and had shared his blessings with others; he realized at least in theory the weakness of his nature; and yet when he examined himself, he really didn't think he was too monstrous a sinner. The Lord Jesus likewise, the ultimate "suffering servant", was humanly fatherless.

Job 6:28 Now therefore be pleased to look at me, for surely I shall not lie to your face- It seems the friends could not look Job in the face. That may not just have been because of the awful nature of his disease, but because of a bad conscience, seeing perhaps they were behind the things which came upon Job; see on :19. This is the very picture of the suffering servant in Is. 52:14, upon whose faces men could not look.

Job 6:29 Please rethink. Let there be no injustice. Yes, think again. My cause is righteous- Job implies they were being unjust. The issue of who was "just" or not is a major theme in Job (continued in :30). In this lies the significance of the Lord's final appearance, to convict all of their sin, and teach that only His justification of men is worth anything. All self-justification is meaningless at best, and effectively putting man above God.

Job 6:30 Is there injustice on my tongue?- See on :29. Job does later repent of his words and place his hand upon his mouth. But these words on another level make him a type of the Lord Jesus, the ultimate "suffering servant", who could ask "Which of you convinces me of sin?", whose words were perfect.

Can't my taste discern mischievous things?- This could be implying that his sufferings had not robbed him of his ability to sense right and wrong. If indeed the friends were connected with the Satan figure, and were responsible for the sufferings which came upon Job (see on :19), then he may be implying that despite his illness, he is quite aware

of what is going on.

Job Chapter 7

Job 7:1 Isn't a man forced to labour on earth? Aren't his days like the days of a hired hand?- LXX "Is not the life of man upon earth a state of trial?"; GNB "Human life is like forced army service, like a life of hard manual labor".

Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration and the Kingdom are shot full of allusions back to Job. The cry that Zion's warfare or "appointed time" is now ended (Is. 40:2) is taken straight out of Job 7:1; indeed, Job 7:3-7 describes Job's haggard life in the same terms as Israel in dispersion are described in Isaiah 40. The point being, that Job's eventual re-conversion and salvation is a pattern for that of all God's people.

Job came to recognize that every moment he existed was a trial to him, sent by his satan-Angel. Thus he complained "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?" (7:1). The Hebrew for "appointed time" is exactly the same as for "host" as in hosts of Angels. This neatly connects the idea that the exact duration of his life was controlled by God's Angel-host, as was every trial which he experienced. This would be the work of the "wonderful numberer" Angel of Dan. 8:13 who controls all time periods. Job 14:13,14 says the same: "O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave... if a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come". "What is man that Thou dost magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thy heart upon him? (lit. 'consider him')" (7:17). Thus Job sees God- whom he probably conceived of as an Angel- as considering him, whilst we are told earlier that satan was told to do this. A human satan considering Job would not in itself have brought the trials, and Job would not have complained so bitterly about a human being considering him. An Angelic satan setting his heart upon Job would account for this 'considering' alone leading to the trials. If it is argued that it is a human satan who set his heart on Job here in Job 7, then the context is hard, though not impossible, to square: "Thou dost magnify man... Thou preserver of men" (v. 20,21). There is some hint of physical movement by 'God' which would seem applicable to the Angel too: "Thou shouldest visit him... depart from me... let me alone" (v. 18,19).

Job 7:2 As a servant who earnestly desires the shadow, as a hireling who looks for his wages- I noted on Job 6:10 that Job felt that he was owed wages for his good works and teaching of God's word before his calamities began. He moves on from just wanting death to concluding that righteousness must have a reward; and if not in this life, then it must come at some point after life ends. This becomes developed into a belief in a day of judgment and the final manifestation of God. And this happens ahead of time, as it were, in Yahweh's final manifestation at the end of the book; but this lead Job to resign all his own righteousness.

Job 7:3 so am I made to possess months of misery, wearisome nights are appointed to me- It is unlikely that Job's period of affliction lasted more than a year or so, and yet this is the part of his life and spiritual growth that is presented to us in such detail. At times Job thinks that he is likely to die that night; here he seems to imagine death coming after "months" of such nights. This is a realistic psychological picture of a suffering man.

Job 7:4 When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I arise, and the night be gone?' I toss and turn until the dawning of the day- This is clearly the spirit of Dt. 28:67 "In the morning you will say, I wish it were evening! and at evening you will say, I wish it were morning! for the fear of your heart which you shall fear and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see". Job is clearly representative of Israel in their suffering.

Job 7:5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust. My skin closes up, and breaks out afresh- The crusts forming over the sores appeared as "clods of dust", driving Job to appreciate his humanity as mere dust and ashes. The disease sounds like leprosy or elephantiasis, and connects him with the suffering Judah of Is. 1:6. Worms are typically associated with the decaying of a dead body, so it was as if Job experienced a living death.

Job 7:6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope- Originally, Job believed that his "hope" was predicated upon his upright ways (Job 4:6). But Job through his sufferings comes to feel he now has no "hope" (Job 7:6; 14:19; 17:15; 19:10). The friends suggest that Job had only the "hope" of the hypocrite, and this "hope" would perish (Job 4:6; 8:13; 27:8). Job had integrity, and on that basis he thought he had "hope". He suffered, and he lost that "hope", because he assumed that his sufferings meant that he was not in fact righteous. And yet he often reflects that he is righteous and is suffering unjustly. And so he is led to the realization that the "hope" of the righteous is by God's grace and not because of the "integrity of [Job's] ways". Judah in captivity likewise lost their "hope" (Ez. 19:5; 37:11). But the message of the restoration prophets was that "there *is* hope in your end" (Jer.

31:17); they were prisoners or exiles in "hope" (Zech. 9:12).

Job 7:7 Oh remember that my life is a breath. My eye shall no more see good- It's unclear whether this is addressed to the friends or to God, although I suggest on :8 that it is primarily God whom he has in view. Whatever, he is asking for pity to be shown to him because he has no "good" in front of him and his life is so short. See on Job 8:2.

Job 7:8 The eye of him who sees me shall see me no more. Your eyes shall be on me, but I shall not be- Again it is hard to know whether Job addresses God, "Him who sees me", or the friends, "your eyes...". He goes on to address God in :12. He thinks that because his own eye shall no longer see (:7), therefore their eyes would not see him. Job often refers to God's eyes, perhaps a reference to the Angels, who I suggested were representing the satan figure (the friends?) in the court of heaven; see on Job. 1:6. But he was to be taught that God doesn't see as man sees; our vision is not His.

Job 7:9 As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he who goes down to Sheol shall come up no more- That was how he felt, although already he has hinted that there must be a day of future reward after his death; and this becomes developed into a belief in a day of judgment and the final manifestation of God (Job 19:25-27).

Job 7:10 He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more- That is true, in that there is no disembodied existence after death, and the dead don't return to haunt where they had once lived. This belief in the mortality of man was in sharp distinction to the beliefs of the primitive people amongst whom Job lived, and such understanding of death as unconsciousness and inactivity has always been characteristic of God's true people.

Job 7:11 Therefore I will not keep silent. I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul- Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4). "Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; 'I only said / did it [or didn't do it] because...'. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins. See on :20.

Job 7:12 Am I a sea, or a sea monster, that You put a guard over me?- There are several allusions in Job to Babylonian legends concerning Marduk – indicating that the book must have been re-written in Babylon with allusion to these legends. Thus the *Enuma Elish* 4.139,140 speaks of how Marduk limited the waters of Tiamat, and set up a bar and watchmen so that the waters wouldn't go further than he permitted. But this very language is applied to God in Job 7:12 and Job 38:8–11. One of the purposes of Job was to urge Judah that Yahweh was greater than Marduk, He and not Marduk was to be Israel's God.

Job 7:13 When I say, 'My bed shall comfort me. My couch shall ease my complaint'- Sleep was no way of temporary relief. If indeed he had elephantiasis as suggested on :5, then this sleeplessness and psychological disturbance was associated with that disease.

Job 7:14 then You scare me with dreams, and terrify me through visions- "Scare" is the word elsewhere translated 'dismay', and is used of how the exiles were urged not to be dismayed but to believe that God would indeed bring them from exile to restoration in His restored Kingdom (Is. 51:7; Jer. 30:10; 46:27). Job begins by being dismayed / scared (Job 7:14), but develops to not be dismayed (Job 31:34 s.w.), following the example of the Lord's battle horse (Job 39:22).

Job 7:15 so that my soul chooses strangling, death rather than to see my bones- Clearly Job was suicidal although he later keeps himself in check, and instead pesters God to take his life. The agony in Job's bones looked forward to the experience of the Lord on the cross, where He saw His bones sticking out as He looked down upon them (Ps. 22:17).

Job 7:16 I loathe my life- This is the same word as "cast away". The grace of it all was that although he wanted to cast away his life (Job 7:16; 9:21), just as God's people cast away His covenant (Is. 8:6; 30:12; Jer. 6:19), God would not cast away His people in their exile and depression (s.w. Lev. 26:44), even if they cast him away. Job felt despised or cast away by God (Job 10:14) just as the exiles did, but this wasn't the case; God will not despise or cast away His servant people (Job 36:5; Is. 41:9; Jer. 31:37; 33:26).

I don't want to live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are but a breath- Continually, Job sees God and not any cosmic, evil 'Satan' figure as responsible for his sufferings. His momentary desire not to live forever suggests he knew that eternal life was on offer, but like the exiles, the weight of his sufferings caused him to lose interest in that hope. However we can understand him as meaning that he didn't want to live forever in this life, as he was.

Job 7:17 What is man, that You should magnify him- Job was aware of the promises to Abraham, and he uses the same word used of how the name of Abraham and his seed would be magnified (Gen. 12:2; 19:19). But in his depression and suffering, he didn't want this, just as the exiles didn't. They too had to be reminded that God would magnify Himself through them (s.w. Ez. 38:23; Joel 2:21; Mal. 1:5) just as He finally did through Job.

That You should set Your mind on him- "Hast thou considered (lit. 'set your heart upon') My servant Job..?" (Job 2:3 AV) God asked Satan initially. Later Job complains to God "what is man, that You should magnify him? that You should set Your mind on him? (lit. 'consider him')". Thus Job sees God- whom he probably conceived of as an Angel- as considering him, whilst we are told earlier that Satan / the adversary was told to do this. The human Satan considering Job would not in itself have brought the trials, the Angel representative of the Satan did; Job would not have complained so bitterly to God about a human being 'considering' him. See on Job 1:6.

Job 7:18 that You should visit him every morning, and test him every moment?- God is involved "every moment" in the life of His people; Job, presented as the suffering exiles, came to realize this (Is. 27:3 cp. Job 7:18 s.w.). God watered His vineyard "every moment" (Is. 27:3 s.w.). The testing "every moment" was the struggle of the exiles, resolved in the promise of Is. 54:7 "For a small moment have I forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather you". But even in this small moment, He was watering them and caring for them.

Job 7:19 How long will You not look away from me, nor leave me alone until I swallow down my spittle?- Again Job connects the eyes of God with his sufferings, asking God to look away from him, to thereby end the sufferings. And the eyes of God were His Angels, representing the Satan in the court of heaven (Job 1:6).

Job 7:20 If I have sinned, what do I do to You, You watcher of men?- Job is full of self-justification, as noted on :11. He now argues that the vastness of God means that He shouldn't be so sensitive to human sin. We marvel at God's total justification of Job, His imputation of righteousness, when He later states that Job had spoken rightly about Him (Job 42:7,8; although that statement may simply refer to Job's repentance). "You watcher of men" is yet another reference to God's angel-eyes every watching and noting sin; see on :19. But the idea is equally as AV "preserver" or 'keeper'. He didn't want that preserving or watching in his depression, as the exiles didn't; but the promise of the prophets was that God was indeed watching / preserving, in order to restore them- just as He did with Job (s.w. Is. 42:6; 49:8; Jer. 31:6).

Why have You set me as an archer's target for You, so that I am a burden to myself?- Eliphaz blames Job's troubles upon the "sons of Resheph" (Job 5:7); but Job's response is that the source of the evil in his life is ultimately from *God* and not any such being. Eliphaz there speaks of how man's trouble comes "as the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Resheph was known as "the lord of the arrow" and the Ugaritic tablets associate him with archery (William J. Fulco, *The Canaanite God Resep* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1976)). We would therefore be justified in reading in an ellipsis here: man's trouble comes "as the [arrows of] the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Job's response is that "The arrows of *the Almighty* are in me" (Job 6:4), and he lament that God is an archer using him as his target for practice (Job 7:20; 16:12,13). Job refuses to accept Eliphaz's explanation that Job is a victim of Resheph's arrows. For Job, if God is "the Almighty" then there is no space left for Resheph. Each blow he received, each arrow strike, was from God and not Resheph.

Job 7:21 Why do You not pardon my disobedience, and take away my iniquity?- Job argues as if God can just do this anyway; but he fails to appreciate the role of repentance. And this is a major theme of the book, and a meaning of the very name "Job".

For now shall I lie down in the dust. You will seek me diligently, but I shall not be- Job expected his death to come at any moment (AV "Thou shalt seek me in the morning"). He felt that death would mean that no matter how hard God searched, He would not find Job. But Job was to be taught that God is the God of resurrection and final judgment, and therefore death is no escape from Him.

Job Chapter 8

Job 8:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered- Bildad largely repeats the arguments of Eliphaz, although more crudely, and with more appeal to the weight of past wisdom (:8-10).

Job 8:2 How long will you speak these things? Shall the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?- This may be commentary upon Job's complaint that his life is but a breath which will soon pass (Job 7:7). The idea may be that indeed Job will soon die and will not be speaking these things for much longer; although Job considered himself just a temporary breath, his words were a mighty breath / wind because they were so serious in their accusations against God. And we learn from this that despite the frailty of the human condition, this doesn't justify wrong speaking.

Job 8:3 Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert righteousness?- The drama is set in patriarchal times, and so the allusion would be to the belief of Abraham that God as judge shall do right (Gen. 18:25), and Job was wrong to imply otherwise. Job was implying otherwise, and so we conclude that God's later statement that Job had spoken right about Him (Job 42:7,8) must simply refer to Job's repentance.

Job 8:4 If your children have sinned against him, He has delivered them into the hand of their disobedience- LXX "Sent them away to the place of their disobedience". This clearly has relevance to the exiles of Judah being sent off to Babylon, whose idols they had worshipped. Clearly Job's children had indeed sinned and been judged appropriately, and Job is here accused of wrongly justifying them- although so far, he has complained only of the injustice of his own judgments.

Job 8:5 If you want to seek God diligently, make your supplication to the Almighty- GNB "But turn now and plead with Almighty God". Bildad, as noted on :1, is just repeating the words of Eliphaz (Job 5:8). Job had turned to God when afflicted, but the friends ignored that. They liked to imagine that was just mere words; for, they apparently reasoned, if someone seeks God and has repented, then God is going to solve their material problems. This is exactly the mistaken view of many within the Pentecostal movement today.

Job 8:6 If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awaken for you, and make the habitation of your righteousness prosperous- The words of the friends suggest that their view was in fact that of the satan in the prologue. Satan obviously quibbled with God's pronouncement of Job as perfect and upright (Job 1:8). And Bildad likewise seems to allude to this when he comments concerning Job's downfall: "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee" (8:6 AV). For more connections between the friends and the satan, see on Job 1:6.

God's opinion of Job was that he was "upright" (Job 1:1 s.w.). But as the drama progresses, the friends argue that if Job were in fact "upright" then God would not be afflicting him (Job 4:7; 8:6 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "upright" and therefore cannot find God (Job 23:7,8 s.w.). He absorbs false guilt and becomes influenced by the guilt placed upon him by his religion and "friends" amongst the "sons of God". See on :20.

Job 8:7 Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would greatly increase- Job's "latter end" did increase (s.w. Job 42:12) and Bildad lived to see it, and thereby realized how wrong his judgment had been. Bildad's words may be a recognition of how Job arose to wealth from small beginnings, implying that his "latter end" would only really increase if he were repentant and Godly (:5,6). The fact Job's latter end did increase was therefore evidence that God accepted him as Godly. The same word is used of the "latter end" of Israel, which will likewise be "increased" and blessed; and could have been so for the exiles had they followed the path of Job (Is. 41:22; 46:10; Jer. 29:11; 31:17).

Job 8:8 Please inquire of past generations. Find out about the learning of their fathers- Bildad stresses the power of traditional understanding (:8-10), and one of the themes of the book is the utter failure of traditional understandings of the time compared to the ultimate reality of God and His hand in human life. Perhaps he has in view the patriarchs, beginning from Abraham. But his fathers were idolaters, and Bildad is missing the point- that the Divine truths revealed to individuals are freestanding and independent of how long they lived or to whom they have

listened.

Job 8:9 For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow- The final appeal of God demonstrates that any man can at this point know and perceive His Truth, and man is not 'without knowledge' because he is out of step with ancient gurus, or ignorant of them. Perhaps Bildad may have in view the way that lifespans were far longer in the past, and therefore he considered the patriarchs wiser. But so many people live the same year every year, and the number of years lived isn't related to their wisdom.

Job 8:10 Shall they not teach you, tell you, and utter words out of their heart?- This challenge to go and ask the old men of :8,9 may therefore be a reference to old sages who were alive at Job's time; for if the reference is to the patriarchs, then they were dead and could not have spoken to Job.

Job 8:11 Can the papyrus grow up without mire? Can the rushes grow without water?- Bildad's idea is that Job's prosperity was like a quick growing papyrus which would soon wither (:12) because it had not enough water or mud. Bildad's reasoning is wrong, but clearly the Lord quarried His parable of the sower from parts of these ideas (see on :16 also). For He speaks of the man who has no "depth of earth" as the one who responds eagerly to the word sown, but falls away "when affliction of persecution arises for the word's sake" because he has 'no root in himself' (Mk. 4:5,17). Bildad was therefore not simply saying that Job's persecution was because he had sinned; but rather he implies that Job had lost his faith after the persecution arose, because he had no real root in faith. In this Bildad was also wrong, for Job continually seeks to God in his tribulations. Behemoth was quite at home in the "mire" (s.w. Job 40:21); and the connection is in order to demonstrate that even the "mire" was created by God and just as He saved Jeremiah out of the mire of the dungeon, so He could save Job and the exiles. And the only other usage of the word is in the description of the healing of the "miry places" (Ez. 47:11) if the exiles were responsive to the prophetic call to restore the temple and city made in Ez. 40-48.

Job 8:12 While it is yet in its greenness, not cut down- "Not cut down" suggests that Job had withered even before he was "cut down", just like the papyrus which is without mud and water to sustain it (:11). The word for "cut down" is used of the cutting down of Judah (Ez. 17:4,22); Job is clearly the suffering servant who represents God's suffering people.

It withers before any other reed- "Withers" is literally 'dried up'. The theme of 'drying up' is significant. Bildad considers Job to have been 'dried up' by God's judgment (Job 8:12), and the word is used of how God withered or dried up Judah at the hands of their invaders (Jer. 12:4; 23:10; Ez. 17:9,10,24; Zech. 11:17; Lam. 4:8; Is. 40:7,8- although the prophetic word of God requiring their restoration would endure, despite their drying up). The dry bones of Judah in captivity were withered or dried up (Ez. 37:11). So Job's 'drying up' was again, a sharing in the representative suffering of God's people. Job's personal response to his 'drying up' was to reflect that God dries up waters and also sends them forth as floods (Job 12:15 s.w.); He can give and He can take, just as Job had initially realized (Job 2:10). Just as He dried up Job / Israel, so He could abundantly send forth waters; just as He did at the Red Sea. Restoration and salvation was just as easy for Him as destruction, to put it another way. The drying up of Job was also understood by him as referring to his death (Job 14:11), but God could raise him from the dead and have a desire to him again (Job 14:15). Eliphaz wrongly argues that the Divine 'drying up' of a person means permanent extinction (Job 15:30), as does Bildad (Job 18:16); but Job always sees the 'drying up' as part of a Divine action which also has a counterpart, the pouring out again of waters, or resurrection of the dried up, withered bones. Likewise Judah in captivity thought that their drying up, their dry bones, were incapable of revival (Ez. 37:11); but the message is that they could indeed be revived, and their drying up was but a presage to their eternal revival.

Job 8:13 So are the paths of all who forget God. The hope of the godless man shall perish- Given all Job's references to God, it is patently wrong to assume he was "Godless" and had 'forgotten God'; we are hereby warned as to the dangers of assuming someone is not 'of God' because of the path of logic which our theological positions have led us down. And yet there is still some truth in what Bildad says; those who "forget God" will indeed perish, and the phrase is used about Israel in Dt. 32:18; Ps. 106:21. Job was experiencing the sufferings of those who "forget God" even though he himself had most clearly not done so. In this we see the nature of representational suffering and intercession, which came true in its ultimate term in the Lord Jesus, the "suffering servant" based upon Job.

Job 8:14 whose confidence shall break apart, whose trust is in a spider's web- LXX "For his house shall be without inhabitants, and his tent shall prove a spider's web"- a reference to the collapse of the tent / house of Job's sons, killing them all.

Job 8:15 He shall lean on his house, but it shall not stand. He shall cling to it, but it shall not endure- To 'lean upon' is to trust; Job was accused of leaning upon his own large "house", his family and literal home, which had now been taken away from him. That may have been partly true; but now he 'leaned' upon God alone. And the same was intended to be true of the exiles, who had 'leaned' upon human strength, Egypt especially (Is. 30:12; 31:1 s.w.), desperately clinging on to it; but when that was removed, they were to 'lean upon' God alone (Is. 50:10 s.w.). Again, Job is Judah.

Job 8:16 He is green before the sun. His shoots go forth over his garden- The picture is of a plant which initially grows quickly and prolifically, but is planted upon rocks (:17) and the sun will soon smite it. Again, as noted on :11, the Lord constructed His parable of the sower from this. The seed sown on stony ground was the man who responds enthusiastically initially, but then fades away once persecution arises (Mk. 4:5,16,17). This was a picture of what happened to Israel; and Job was their representative, even though in the end, he was the good ground and did not faint under persecution.

Job 8:17 His roots are wrapped around the rock pile. He sees the place of stones- Roots upon stones rather than earth continues the connection with the parable of the sower; see on :16.

Job 8:18 If he is destroyed from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, 'I have not seen you' - Judah in exile felt 'destroyed from their place', but the lesson of the dialogues in Job is that the friends were seeing things as they were at the moment, and failing to understand that God had a longer term program of restoration. Job would be the pattern for the exiles to follow- and they would return to their "place".

Job 8:19 Behold, this is the joy of his way: out of the earth, others shall spring- The idea of others springing up in the place of the withered papyrus, also by the waterside, is to be found in the prophecies of the exiles' restoration (s.w. Is. 44:4; 42:9; 43:19 etc.). Bildad was wrong to think that the cut down Job could never spring up again; he would, just as the exiles likewise could have sprung up to new life in the restored kingdom. The reasoning of the friends was that of the faithless Jews in exile.

Job 8:20 Behold, God will not cast away a blameless man- Job appears to argue with this in his reply, insisting that he is not "blameless" or (AV) "perfect" (Job 9:20,21). He realizes through this false statement of Bildad's that in fact God cannot require utter perfection in order to save a man; and at the same time, He clearly blesses the sinful and brings calamity to the righteous. The conclusion therefore is that there is no direct connection between sin and present suffering; and the salvation of the righteous, none of who are "perfect", is by grace. And the narrative of the book of Job takes us beyond even that, suggesting that being blameless or perfect is only by God imputing that status to believers. For God's opinion of Job was that he *was* "blameless" (Job 1:1). But as the drama progresses, Bildad argues that if Job were in fact "blameless" then God would not cast him away (Job 8:20 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "blameless" (Job 9:20,21 s.w.), and yet he is driven to the conclusion that the "blameless" and sinner are "destroyed together" by God (Job 9:22 s.w.). It's quite possible that in depression and periods of suffering, we can come to have a lower view of ourselves than that which God has of us; just as at other times we can have a higher view of ourselves spiritually than we ought to. There is true guilt, the guilt which we should take, and false guilt. And Job seems to have picked up the false guilt thrown upon him by Bildad. We too need to learn this difference between false and true guilt. See on :6.

Neither will He uphold the evildoers- Heb. 'hold the hand of evil-doers'. And yet this was exactly what God did to sinful Judah in captivity (Is. 41:13; 42:6). That was all by grace, and grace is something which Bildad knew nothing of.

Job 8:21 He will still fill your mouth with laughter, your lips with shouting- The language of the restored exiles

having their mouths filled with laughter and singing when Yahweh brought again Zion- not because they were technically righteous, as Bildad reasoned, but by His grace.

Job 8:22 Those who hate you shall be clothed with shame. The tent of the wicked shall be no more- This was what ought to have happened to the friends, at the end. But it didn't, again by grace, because God accepted Job's intercession for them.

Job Chapter 9

Job 9:1 Then Job answered- The interpretation of this chapter depends upon discerning connections with the previous speech of Bildad.

Job 9:2 Truly I know that it is so, but how can man be just with God?- We naturally ask what Job is agreeing with. Perhaps it is simply the statements immediately preceding this, that God will not cast away the blameless [AV "perfect"] and will judge sinners (Job 8:19-21). But Job has been driven further in his thinking- as an imperfect but relatively righteous man who is suffering the apparent judgment of God. And so he asks the question which is at the root of the book: "How can man be just with God?". Paul spends Romans 1-8 discussing this question, because it is at the heart of the Christian Gospel (see on :10). His answer is that which Job finally reasons himself towards, and which is finally revealed at the end by God's answers: by God's grace, through faith in imputed righteousness.

Job 9:3 If He wishes to contend with him, he can't answer Him one time in a thousand- The idea of God in legal contention is quite a theme of the restoration prophets. And the story of Job was, I have suggested, rewritten (under inspiration) for the exiles. God had contended with Judah and found them guilty (Is. 3:13; Jer. 2:9), but He would not contend for ever (Is. 57:16). All contention or answer back against Him, counter accusing Him, placing God in the dock, was clearly wrong and useless (Is. 45:9). Instead He by grace would contend legally against the abusers of His people (Is. 49:25; 51:22; Jer. 50:34), so that the suffering servant would be justified / counted righteous by God, so that all legal contention against him was powerless (Is. 50:8). But this contention by God against Israel's enemies depended upon their repentance (Mic. 7:9). All this was finally seen in Job's experience; he was set up as a pattern for the exiles to follow, although ultimately they didn't follow it to the end.

LXX "God would not hearken to him, so that he should answer to one of his charges of a thousand". Job appeals for 'witnesses' (Job 9:33-35; 16:18-22; 19:20-27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a 'case' with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29-31 is effectively Job's declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job's earlier plea: "Sleeplessly I wait for His reply" (Job 16:22). It's as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of 'Satan', suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about 'Satan' figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the "holy ones", had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: "To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job's guilt] is true" (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters.

Job 9:4 God who is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who has hardened himself against Him, and prospered?- As explained on :3, all attempts to put God in the dock by refusing to repent, or by simply accusing Him of injustice against sinners, were therefore inappropriate and pointless. Job is effectively denying Bildad's implication that Job had "hardened himself" against God. The same word is used of Pharaoh hardening himself against Yahweh (Ex. 7:3). It was Israel who hardened themselves against God (Dt. 10:16), leading to their exile (2 Chron. 36:13; Neh. 9:29; Jer. 19:15). Job was accused of having done this and was apparently treated as if he had done so; again in the spirit of the Lord Jesus, being treated as a sinner, experiencing the judgment for sin, when personally innocent.

Job 9:5 He removes the mountains, and they don't know it, when He overturns them in His anger- "Mountains" plural can be read as an intensive plural; the one great mountain which was to be removed into exile was as it were mount Zion; and it was the house of Judah which was to be overturned- but until "He come whose right it is" (Ez. 23:25-27). The friends only dealt with present realities before their eyes, as did the exiles- they failed to see the longer term perspective. What was removed and overturned could be returned and revived. That was the Divine plan. See on :6.

Job 9:6 He shakes the earth out of its place. Its pillars tremble- Language used of the shaking of the earth and heavens of Israel and Judah at the hands of their invaders. See on :5.

Job 9:7 He commands the sun, and it doesn't rise, and seals up the stars- Language used in the apocalyptic message of darkness and destruction of the kingdom of Judah (e.g. Is. 13:10). The simple point is that all that was done by the hand of God and His word of prophetic command, and not because of supernatural forces of radical evil in the cosmos.

Job 9:8 He alone stretches out the heavens, and treads on the back of Yam- God is therefore seen as far greater than the legendary sea monster Yam; see on :24. "He *alone*" has power; He doesn't share power with any cosmic 'Satan' being, all is under His control.

Job 9:9 He makes the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the rooms of the south- The surrounding culture believed (as many do today) that the stars influence life upon earth; Job emphasizes that God is the creator of the stars, and the present tense "makes" suggests that Job even perceived that the stars were not fixed but are part on an ongoing creation- something modern cosmology has finally come to realize. "The bear", Heb. 'the fool', alludes to the myth that there had been a rebellion against God in Heaven, and 'the bear' had been chained up in the sky for all to see. Job is deconstructing these myths; quite simply, God had "made" these constellations and placed them as they are by His sovereign power.

Job 9:10 He does great things past finding out; yes, marvellous things without number- Job is moving closer to the great truths which God Himself will make explicit at His appearance at the end of the book. The friends assumed that meaning could easily be attached to event by "the wise"; whereas Job is driven to conclude by his sufferings that God's ways are "past finding out", and yet all of His ways are wonderful. I suggested on :2 that Paul's arguments in Romans 1-8 about 'how a man can be just with God' are consciously based upon the book of Job. In Romans 9-11 he cites Israel as the parade example of what he has been saying in chapters 1-8. And so it is appropriate that he concludes that section by quoting these words of Job: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past tracing out!" (Rom. 11:33). The "marvellous things" which Job sensed were somehow going on are verbalized and made explicit in Romans- they are the things of God's saving grace.

Job 9:11 Behold, He goes by me, and I don't see Him. He passes on also, but I don't perceive Him- This is not so much a glum lament as an extension of the argument of :10; God is doing wonderful things, things connected with His grace, which are beyond human comprehension. And Job cites his own lack of perception as proof enough of that.

Job 9:12 Behold, He snatches away- Perhaps a reference to the snatching away of Job's cattle. He doggedly insists that all his sufferings were from God.

Who can hinder Him?- The dramatic story of Job thrice uses the same phrase as in Is. 43:13, concluding that "who can hinder...?" God's way (Job 9:12; 11:10; 23:13). The exiles were to understand that no human opposition or discouragement can turn back or hinder God's purpose to save His people, even if they are as Job in suffering. His saving and restorative purpose will not be hindered, if we wish to identify with it.

Who will ask Him, 'What are you doing?' - It is for God to ask this of sinful man (s.w. Gen. 3:13; 4:10); but not for man to demand this of God. It is for man to ask himself "What have I done?", and repent (s.w. Jer. 8:6). And yet it could be argued that Job does indeed ask this of God, and has to lay his hand upon his mouth at the end. In the restoration context, Israel as the clay were not to ask the Divine potter "What are You doing?" (s.w. Is. 45:9). To do so would be to strive with our maker.

Job 9:13 God will not withdraw His anger. The cohorts of Rahab stoop under Him- "Rahab" is a symbol of both Egypt and Babylon. GNB "God's anger is constant. He crushed his enemies who helped Rahab, the sea monster, oppose him". This language is clearly alluding to the helpers of Tiamat in the Babylonian myth; see on :24.

Job 9:14 How much less shall I answer Him, and choose my words to argue with Him?- Job argues that God is sovereign in Heaven, with no evil rival (contrary to the view of the friends, and of many today). Therefore, who is a

single man like Job to argue back with God?

Job 9:15 Though I were righteous, yet I wouldn't answer Him. I would make supplication to my judge- LXX "For though I be righteous, he will not hearken to me: I will intreat his judgment"; GNB "Though I am innocent, all I can do is beg for mercy from God my judge". The ambiguity of the original is perhaps intentional; for Job teeters between accepting his sinfulness, and yet claiming he is without sin. See on :35 for another example.

Job 9:16 If I had called, and He had answered me, yet I wouldn't believe that He listened to my voice- Here is spiritual depression in its classic form. The cup is always seen as half empty rather than half full. Even answered prayer is seen as irrelevant and no proof that the God who appears so distant has in fact responded to little me. The weight of suffering and the sense that we are suffering at God's hand "without cause" (:17), with no discernible meaning attached to event, outweighs all the evidence of His intense love and interest in us.

Job 9:17 For He bruises me with a storm, and multiplies my wounds without cause- "Bruises" is the same word translated "bruise" in Gen. 3:15, thus implying that he is receiving the result of the covenant in Eden for no reason. Therefore he is finally led to acceptance of his sinfulness. The Lord Jesus must have been sorely tempted to adopt the same false reasoning of His great antitype, but He surely had learnt the lesson that Job like Himself was suffering as representative of God's people and not as a consequence of personal sin. The references earlier in Job 9 to God spreading out the Heavens and creating the stars show Job's mind at this time was set early in Genesis (:8-10). See on Job 10:9; 13:20-22. This is yet another lesson which comes out of Job- we are suffering the results of living in a fallen creation. The only ultimate answer to that is through the work of the seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus, and the resolution is not going to come completely in this life.

God had accused the Satan figure of wanting to have Job suffer "without cause" (Job 2:3 s.w.). And here Job repeats this. Again we have the impression that he had been present at these discussions between the Satan and God; and the view of the Satan was in fact the view now of the friends, who effectively acted as the Satan figure who had influenced their thinking. The Lord Jesus likewise suffered "without cause" (Ps. 69:4; 109:3 s.w.). Israel did suffer for a "cause" or reason- they had indeed sinned (s.w. Ez. 6:10; 14:23). Job as their representative, like the Lord Jesus, suffered those same judgments but *without* a cause.

Job 9:18 He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with bitterness- "Catch" is the usual word for "return"; the complaint is that God doesn't allow Job to die, to return his breath or spirit to Him in death. The suggestion is that because God has total control over the moment of human death, there is absolutely no point in arguing back with Him.

Job 9:19 If it is a matter of strength, behold, He is mighty! If of justice, 'Who', says He, 'will summon me?' - No human strength or argument about justice is relevant; God cannot be summoned to court by man and placed in the dock. Therefore, one can only accept His ways and trust that He is ultimately right. That isn't what Job explicitly says nor wishes to recognize at this point, but his sufferings and reflections upon them lead him to be just moments away from this conclusion. And when God expresses this more specifically at the end of the book, He is only verbalizing what Job has already come to tacitly realize. And for us too, God's revelation in His word often simply confirms the understandings He has led us to through our sufferings in life.

Job 9:20 Though I am righteous, my own mouth shall condemn me. Though I am blameless, it shall prove me perverse- This can as well be rendered as AV "Though I be blameless", i.e. 'even if I were blameless', and likewise in :21. The ambiguity of the original is perhaps intentional; for Job teeters between accepting his sinfulness, and yet claiming he is without sin. See on :11,15 for other examples. God's opinion of Job was that he was "blameless" (Job 1:1). But as the drama progresses, Bildad argues that if Job were in fact "blameless" then God would not cast him away (Job 8:20 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "blameless" (Job 9:20,21 s.w.), and yet he is driven to the conclusion that the "blameless" and sinner are "destroyed together" by God (Job 9:22 s.w.). It's quite possible that in depression and periods of suffering, we can come to have a lower view of ourselves than that which God has of us; just as at other times we can have a higher view of ourselves spiritually than we ought to. There is true guilt, the guilt which we should take, and false guilt. And Job seems to have picked up the false guilt thrown upon him by Bildad. We too need to learn this difference between false and true guilt.

Those who are sure they won't be condemned, taking the emblems with self-assurance, come together unto condemnation. Job knew this when he said that if he justifies himself, he will be condemned out of his own mouth (Job 9:20- he understood the idea of self-condemnation and judgment now). Isaiah also foresaw this, when he besought men (in the present tense): "Enter *into the rock*, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty", and then goes on to say that in the day of God's final judgment, "[the rejected] shall go *into the holes of the rock...for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His majesty* when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Is. 2:10,11,19-21). We must find a true, self-condemning humility now, unless it will be forced upon us at the judgment.

Job 9:21 I am blameless. I don't respect myself- LXX "For even if I have sinned, I know it not in my soul" may be alluded to by Paul in 1 Cor. 4:4. Even if we have a good conscience, it is not our conscience which will stand and judge us at the last day. It is before God's word that we stand or fall. Or perhaps along with GNB we can read this as simply the nadir of spiritual depression: "I am innocent, but I no longer care. I am sick of living. Nothing matters; innocent or guilty, God will destroy us".

Here and by implication in other places, Job effectively says that there is no point in serving God or striving for obedience to God. This is what the priests of Israel later said after the restoration, to whom this book was partly addressed in its later rewriting: "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" (Mal.3:14). Elihu claimed that Job "hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself in God" (Job 34:9)- i.e. keep the commands of God, seeing that the Hebrew for "delight" often occurs in the context of obedience to the word. The Malachi passage is more specifically alluding to Job 21:7,15: "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?". These are the words of Job, complaining about the prosperity of the wicked who had such an attitude, and the carefree happiness of their lives: "Their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ" (Job 21:11,12). It is in this that the Malachi context is so significant, for Mal. 3:15 continues: "We (the Israelites) call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up" . This was also Job's view. Notice that Job is probably implying that his prosperous three friends were among the wicked whom he is describing, thus associating them with the corrupt Jewish priesthood.

I despise my life- The grace of it all was that although he wanted to cast away his life (Job 7:16; 9:21), just as God's people cast away His covenant (Is. 8:6; 30:12; Jer. 6:19), God would not cast away His people in their exile and depression (s.w. Lev. 26:44), even if they cast him away. Job felt despised or cast away by God (Job 10:14) just as the exiles did, but this wasn't the case; God will not despise or cast away His servant people (Job 36:5; Is. 41:9; Jer. 31:37; 33:26).

Job 9:22 It is all the same. Therefore I say that He destroys the blameless and the wicked- This and :21 are in response to the statement in Job 8:20 "Behold, God will not cast away a blameless man". Job appears to argue with this in his reply, insisting that he is not "blameless" or (AV) "perfect" (Job 9:20,21). He realizes through this false statement of Bildad's that in fact God cannot require utter perfection in order to save a man; and at the same time, He clearly blesses the sinful and brings calamity to the righteous. The conclusion therefore is that there is no direct connection between sin and present suffering; and the salvation of the righteous, none of who are "perfect", is by grace. And the narrative of the book of Job takes us beyond even that, suggesting that being blameless or perfect is only by God imputing that status to believers. For God's opinion of Job was that he *was* "blameless" (Job 1:1). But as the drama progresses, Bildad argues that if Job were in fact "blameless" then God would not cast him away (Job 8:20 s.w.). Job absorbs this reasoning, and confesses that he is not "blameless" (Job 9:20,21 s.w.), and yet he is driven to the conclusion that the "blameless" and sinner are "destroyed together" by God (Job 9:22 s.w.). It's quite possible that in depression and periods of suffering, we can come to have a lower view of ourselves than that which God has of us; just as at other times we can have a higher view of ourselves spiritually than we ought to. There is true guilt, the guilt which we should take, and false guilt. And Job seems to have picked up the false guilt thrown upon him by Bildad. We too need to learn this difference between false and true guilt. See on Job 8:6.

Job 9:23 If the scourge kills suddenly, He will mock at the trial of the innocent- What began as what I called "the nadir of spiritual depression" in :21 now moves beyond that to outright false accusation towards God. For He does not mock at the "sudden" suffering of His people, such as Job experienced in the sudden loss of all he had. We marvel the more at God's final statement that Job had spoken rightly about Him (Job 42:7,8). That Divine comment may indeed simply be upon Job's statement of repentance. But all the same, we would expect God to clarify that was

what He intended, and to offer some note that Job has indeed falsely accused Him. But God doesn't. He doesn't need to. He has completely justified Job by faith, clothing him with imputed righteousness. And His demonstration of His ways has in any case made the required point, and Job recognized that.

Job 9:24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges- Again Job is driven towards an understanding that God will finally bring about a day of justice when He gives the earth into the hands of the righteous. He realizes that all creation is to some extent in his situation- groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God, as Paul puts it.

If it be not He, then who is it?- I noted on Job 1:1; 3:8 that a major theme in the book of Job is the deconstruction of the 'satan' myth. A key passage is Job 9:24: "If it be not he, who then is it?" (R.V.); or as the G.N.B. puts it: "If God didn't do it, who did?". After all the theories of 'Who's responsible for all this evil in Job's life?', Job concludes that the source simply has to be God – and not anyone else. If He truly is all powerful, then who else could ultimately be responsible? Job states that "the cohorts of Rahab [a Canaanite 'Satan' figure] shall stoop under [God]" (Job 9:13), clearly alluding to the helpers of Tiamat in the Babylonian myth. "God *alone* stretches out the heavens, and treads on the back of Yam" – the sea, or sea-monster (Job 9:8). See on Job 10:8.

Job 9:25 Now my days are swifter than a runner. They flee away, they see no good- Seeing no good was the punishment upon God's exiled people because of their sins (s.w. Jer. 17:6; 29:32). Again we see Job suffering the judgment of sinners when he himself had not sinned. This was exactly what happened to the Lord on the cross.

Job 9:26 they have passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that swoops on the prey- Heb. "ships of reed", alluding to the swift skiffs on the river Nile. Perceiving how quickly life has sped by is typical of the thoughts of dying men. I argued on Job 1:1 that Job was indeed a historical person, and the language he uses in his depression and illness is poetically formulated, but all the same has absolute verisimilitude to the thoughts and feelings of an actual person in his situation.

Job 9:27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face, and cheer up' - As noted on :26, these thoughts are exactly true to life of a real historical person. He realizes that putting on a brave face and forgetting his sufferings for a moment- is just not going to work. He still suffers from a nagging sense of being wrong before God (:28), and it is this which is preparing the way for his final repentance at the end of the book.

Job 9:28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that You will not hold me innocent- LXX "I quake in all my limbs". That quaking was apparently in prospect of the future judgment which he feared, although at other times Job longs for that judgment day to come. This again as noted on :26 is absolutely psychologically credible. Job may be using the term translated "innocent" in the sense of 'acquitted' as it is in Job 10:14. He fears God will not forgive him at the final judgment; and this is all part of the build up towards the final bursting of the tension at the end of the book, when God appears, condemns Job and then justifies and restores him. And all Job's fears are proven ultimately unnecessary- but only because of God's grace.

Job 9:29 I shall be condemned. Why then do I labour in vain?- Job's reliance on works to bring justification with God is clearly seen here, as if to say 'If I've been condemned, all these good works I've done are vain- they won't give me the salvation I thought'. This again is part of the build up towards the final declaration of salvation by grace which we find in God's final revelation at the end.

Job 9:30 If I wash myself with snow, and cleanse my hands with lye- This was apparently the attitude of the exiles. The question "How can a man be just with God?" is the same question as 'How can a man ever be clean before a perfect God?', and is repeated in this form in Job 15:15; 25:5. They had considered themselves cleansed whiter than snow because of their obedience to some parts of the Mosaic law (Lam. 4:7), but failed to accept that such cleansing to be whiter than snow is only possible by doing what David did, and casting ourselves upon God's grace outside of justification by works (Ps. 51:7). Job was to learn this lesson at the end. It was this offer which was made to Job just as it was to Judah under judgment (Is. 1:18).

Job 9:31 yet You will plunge me in the ditch. My own clothes shall abhor me- This again is Job allowing his depression to lead him to unreasonable statements about God, and not speaking right about Him. The fact we are sinners doesn't mean that God makes us dirty; we make our own clothes dirty. The word translated "ditch" is usually used in Job about the grave or "pit" (Job 17:14; 33:18,22,24,28,30); so the idea may be that all the same, for all his efforts to be righteous and cleanse his own sin, God will plunge Job into the grave at the end.

Job 9:32 For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, that we should come together in judgment- Job in his own righteousness and amateur attempts to fix up his own sins was unable to come "together" or "at one" with God in judgment. Job is driven to realize his need for outside help (:33), but by the nature of his situation that help needed to be somehow also "a man" who still could approach to God as his advocate. He was driven to his need for the Lord Jesus, who is presented as the ultimate answer to this need- a man of human nature, but sinless Son of God.

Job 9:33 There is no umpire between us, that might lay his hand on us both- The word for "umpire" suggests 'one who is right', a reasoner, an advocate, one who pleads (s.w. Job 16:21), a reprover (Job 40:2 s.w.). Job's request is not simply for a mediator; he would have used a different word if so. He seems to want to put God in the dock, but knows this is not appropriate; he wants someone else to do this who can legitimately do it. And he is rebuked for this in Job 40:2.

Job 9:34 Let Him take his rod away from me- "Take His rod away" is the very same phrase used in Gen. 49:10, promising that the sceptre (s.w. "rod") would *not* be taken away (s.w.) from Judah. Judah would always have God's rod or sceptre with them; David likewise takes comfort from the fact that God's "rod and staff" remained with him and were not taken away from him (Ps. 23:4 s.w.). We see here God's grace in not in fact answering every prayer of a depressed or misunderstanding believer; we can likely look back in our own lives and see examples of this. The exiles experienced God's "rod" (s.w. Lam. 3:1), and only those who passed beneath it could enter the restored Kingdom (s.w. Ez. 20:37). The desire to not experience the rod was therefore precluding a necessary step towards entrance into the Kingdom.

Let His terror not make me afraid- Job repeats this fear in Job 13:21, and Elihu alludes to it when he uses the same phrase in assuring Job that *his* terror will not make Job afraid (Job 33:7). The terror is perhaps "the terror of the Lord", the fear of condemnation at the last day (so Paul uses the phrase, 2 Cor. 5:11). That terror should "persuade men" to accept grace, Paul argues. To have that terror unexperienced by men would mean they had no persuasion toward grace.

Job 9:35 then I would speak, and not fear Him; but I am not in such a position within myself- LXX "So shall I not be afraid, but I will speak: for I am not thus conscious of guilt". The ambiguity of the original is perhaps intentional; for Job teeters between accepting his sinfulness, and yet claiming he is without sin. See on :15 for another example.

Job Chapter 10

Job 10:1 My soul is weary of my life. I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul- Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4). "Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; 'I only said / did it [or didn't do it] because...'. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins.

Job 10:2 I will tell God, 'Do not condemn me. Show me why You contend with me- This somewhat contradicts Job's earlier statements in Job 9 that he is indeed a sinner and therefore fears condemnation. He knows, therefore, why he is worthy of condemnation; but his underlying sense that he is in fact innocent keeps coming out. And this is something we probably can identify with; it is one thing to admit that "I am a sinner", or "We are all sinners"; but quite another to accept the consequences and meaning of that, when compared to society we may appear very righteous.

Job 10:3 Is it good to You that You should oppress, that You should despise the work of Your hands, and smile on the counsel of the wicked?- Job felt despised or cast away by God (Job 10:14) just as the exiles did, but this wasn't the case; God will not despise or cast away His servant people (Job 36:5; Is. 41:9; Jer. 31:37; 33:26). The grace of it all was that although he wanted to cast away his life (Job 7:16; 9:21), just as God's people cast away His covenant (Is. 8:6; 30:12; Jer. 6:19), God would not cast away His people in their exile and depression (s.w. Lev. 26:44), even if they cast him away.

Here again we see that Job's depression leads him to charge God foolishly. He clearly does not smile on wicked counsel, nor does He despise people. We marvel the more at God's final statement that Job had spoken rightly about Him (Job 42:7,8). That Divine comment may indeed simply be upon Job's statement of repentance. But all the same, we would expect God to clarify that was what He intended, and to offer some note that Job has indeed falsely accused Him. But God doesn't. He doesn't need to. He has completely justified Job by faith, clothing him with imputed righteousness. And His demonstration of His ways has in any case made the required point, and Job recognized that.

Job 10:4 Do You have eyes of flesh? Or do You see as man sees?- As explained on :5,6, these desires Job had were in a sense legitimate; and they set him up to yearn for a person exactly like the Lord Jesus. The exiles' demand that God be like this was partly answered in the vision of the cherubim, which were covered with a body or "flesh" full of "eyes" (Ez. 10:12). This was to teach that God was in fact legitimately aware of the human perspective of His people in exile.

Job 10:5 Are Your days as the days of mortals, or Your years as man's years- LXX "Or is thy life human?". It was to be, in the person of His Son. See on :6.

Job 10:6 that You inquire after my iniquity, and search after my sin?- The Lord Jesus can execute judgment upon human sin exactly because He is and was "Son of man" (Jn. 5:27); He is the answer to Job's complaint in :5 LXX "Is

thy life human?". Job's questions and struggles set him up to need and appreciate the Lord Jesus, although Job died without having seen Him, although probably believing in His future appearance.

Job 10:7 Although You know that I am not wicked, there is no one who can deliver out of Your hand- This appears to contradict Job's apparent awareness of sin in Job 9. He later confesses his sin; but here he seems to expect God to accept his own view of himself. He was effectively casting God in his own human image and likeness rather than the other way around. Or we could consider the possibility that Job is trying to force a difference between his being a sinner, but not being "wicked", i.e. 'extremely sinful' by the norms of society. This false difference is tackled by Paul in Rom. 1-8 and Job at the end repents, realizing that no such gradation of sin is ultimately acceptable.

Job 10:8 Your hands have framed me and fashioned me altogether, yet You swallow me up- GNB "Your hands formed and shaped me, and now those same hands destroy me". This was indeed what happened at the destruction of Judah by God through Babylon; see on Jer. 18:8-10. It was unreasonable of both Job and the exiles to consider that because they were God's created people, therefore they were somehow immune from judgment. Job believed that it was God who was seeking to swallow him up in death (Job 10:8 Heb.) – surely alluding to how Mot, the god of death, was thought to have jaws encompassing the earth and swallowing up people at their death into the underworld. But Job rejected that myth – he saw God as the swallower, and death as a return to the dust, albeit in hope of bodily resurrection at the last day (Job 19:25–27). See on Job 26:6.

Job 10:9 Remember, I beg You, that You have fashioned me as clay. Will You bring me into dust again?- As noted on :8, it was unreasonable of both Job and the exiles to consider that because they were God's created people, therefore they were somehow immune from judgment. A connection is made between Job and Adam here. This is Gen. 3:19- the curse upon sinful Adam that he would return to the dust. Job seems to be admitting that he is like Adam in that it appeared God was going to end his life as a result of his sin- return him to the dust. But he reasons that this is unfair, seeing he has not sinned (Job 10:7,14,15). Thus he oscillates between saying he has sinned and is like Adam, and then claiming that although he is being treated like Adam this is unfair. See on Job 9:17; 13:20-22.

Job 10:10 Haven't You poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese?- The original is obscure. Hence GNB: "You gave my father strength to beget me; you made me grow in my mother's womb". Again, as noted on :8,9, Job appears to consider that his being human, having been created by God, means that it is unreasonable of God to find fault with him. This again is leading us up to the final revelation of God, where all such justifications of sin and minimalizing of Divine judgment are taken away.

Job 10:11 You have clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews- "Knit me together" is the same word as "hedge" when satan complains that God has made a hedge about Job (Job 1:10). Job appears to be aware of the conversation between the satan and the Lord. It therefore makes sense to understand that the gathering of the sons of God and 'satan' was a gathering of the people of God, including the friends and Job, and the conversation was heard by all. Job is therefore saying that actually the only hedge or fence he has is his own physical body. In Job 3:23 and Job 19:8 this hedging seems to be interpreted as a feeling of spiritual restriction- as if like Paul, Job yearned to be released from this body of sin and corruption to "the glorious (spiritual) liberty of the sons of God". Job seems to be saying 'You say I'm hedged about with blessings. But now the only hedge I've got is this sick body. The only help you give me now is to give me my spirit to keep me alive, only so you can torment me more'. Understandable, if faulty, reasoning in Job's situation.

Job 10:12 You have granted me life and grace. Your visitation has preserved my spirit- This is the kind of oscillation of feeling which is characteristic of depression. One moment Job sees God as unreasonable, the next, he appreciates the gift of life which he has been saying he doesn't want; and appreciates grace, and that it is God's special and conscious "visitation" which keeps him alive every moment. Divine "visitation" is an idea used for judgment (Jer. 11:23; 23:12; 46:21 etc.). If Job understood it that way, he is coming to see the paradox later made explicit at the end of the book- that the wrath of God is the love of God, His judgment is in fact the preservation of life for those who respond to it; it is in fact His grace. And *chesed* is the word that features in the description of the promises to Abraham as "mercy and truth" (Gen. 24:14,27 etc.).

Job 10:13 Yet You hid these things in Your heart. I know that this is with You- LXX "Having these things in thyself, I know that thou canst do all things; for nothing is impossible with thee". Job at the end was to repeat these words in Job 42:2, but really understanding and meaning them as a result of his sufferings.

Job 10:14 If I sin, then You mark me. You will not acquit me from my iniquity- Job feels here like Cain (Gen. 4:15; see on Job 11:15), marked for his sin and unable to just die as he perhaps initially wanted. Still Job is far from the total confession of sin and repentance which he finally comes to; he accepts he is a sinner, but seem to always qualify it, putting it under some question, and accuses God of unjustly punishing him for sin. But the Hebrew translated "mark" is the common word for 'keeping', e.g. "the way to the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24). Perhaps Job is lamenting that God still keeps him alive and doesn't let him die.

Job 10:15 If I am wicked, woe to me. If I am righteous, I still shall not lift up my head, being filled with disgrace, and conscious of my affliction- Perhaps Job has in mind the two possible outcomes of his final judgment; the "woe" of condemnation if indeed he is finally judged wicked, and yet the "disgrace" he would still feel if declared righteous. We see here how he has no clear faith in salvation at this point, and dislikes the way future salvation has to come through accepting "disgrace". The final revelation of God at the end elicits both his disgrace, and also his final acceptance that God has counted him as righteous. "Righteous" is the word for "just", used in the common question and theme of the book: "How can a man be just with God?" (Job 4:17; 9:2). What Job had to recognize was that righteousness was a gift from God by grace, and by attempting to establish his own righteousness according to his works, he was effectively condemning God (s.w. Job 40:8). We can also reason that Job's confusion is because even if he is personally righteous, he still will feel the "disgrace" or shame of condemnation- the very term used of the "disgrace" of Israel in their condemnation and rejection (Jer. 13:26; Hos. 4:7 etc.). And again we see the representative nature of Job as the suffering servant. He was righteous, but bore the shame / disgrace of Judah's condemnation. This confused and depressed him, but the Lord learnt from this; feeling our condemnation on account of His total identity with us, and yet being personally righteous.

Job 10:16 If my head is held high, You hunt me like a lion. Again You show Yourself wonderful to me- As noted on :15, Job struggles with what seem contradictory movements of God toward him. On one hand, he is hunted as prey being chased by a lion; but then this same God, manifest through the lion, shows tender grace to him. And again, this is how things were to be with the representative suffering servant. It was God's people who were hunted by God, acting like a lion manifest in Babylon / Assyria. And yet that same God was "wonderful to me" personally, for Job was a righteous man. It was only when he was called upon to pray for his friends and to save them that he appreciated this; and thereby became established as a wonderful prototype of the Lord Jesus.

Job 10:17 You renew Your witnesses against me, and increase Your indignation on me. Changes and warfare are within me- This continues the theme of :16, that one moment God shows Himself "wonderful to me", and the next, He has Job in the dock calling all manner of witnesses against him, and reading out the judgment of His "indignation". And this "change" or tension, this struggle or "warfare", was "within me", deeply absorbed into Job's struggling soul. The Lord Jesus generally appeared to have none of this, until the final struggling appeal "My God, why have You forsaken me?", 'Me, the righteous one' (Mt. 27:46). That struggle is shown resolved in Job.

Job 10:18 'Why, then, have You brought me forth out of the womb? I wish I had given up the spirit, and no eye had seen me- This despising of his own life was because (as explained on :15-18), Job had yet to appreciate that his sufferings were not just for himself; they were because he was representative of others, and his prayer for the friends would be for their salvation. This is Paul's message in 2 Cor. 1- that suffering is in order for us to help others, and to mediate to them the grace God gives us in our sufferings. But without that sharing further, suffering is perceived by the sufferer as solely personal. And they therefore wish to die, because suffering for our own sake seems pointless. And so the simplistic explanation of the book of Job to the effect that 'through suffering Job became a better man' is missing the point, and is a one cent answer to million dollar questions.

Job 10:19 I should have been as though I had not been. I should have been carried from the womb to the grave- Job doesn't wait to hear the answer to his question to God of :18- *Why...?* had he been born. The answer to that was that he was to become a representative sufferer who would be prepared for a point where he could pray for his friends

and save them. Without this aspect of evangelism, of pastoral effect upon others, then all human experience and suffering, even life itself, is ultimately meaningless.

Job 10:20 Aren't my days few? Cease then. Leave me alone, that I may find a little comfort- Job didn't want comfort, he wanted God to leave him alone; and this was just how the exiles felt, in effect. Hence the message of the restoration prophets was that God's people were to be comforted (Is. 40:1 etc.). By grace, God didn't answer Job's request, and pushed forward His saving plan with him, as He sought to do with the exiles. These words were later on the lips of David (Ps. 39:10-13), perhaps at the time of his illness after his sin with Bathsheba. But that period was the one when he wrote the Psalms which are most clearly prophetic of the feelings of the Lord Jesus upon the cross. And Job was being led toward the spirit of Christ.

Job 10:21 before I go where I shall not return from, to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death- At this point Job has apparently no faith in a resurrection. But already he has reasoned that the suffering of the righteous means that there must be a day of future judgment, involving personal resurrection. And by Job 19:25-27 he is clear about this. His faith, like ours, went up and down in the short term, but progressing towards the final acceptance of Divine salvation, grace and restoration at the end.

Job 10:22 the land dark as midnight, of the shadow of death, without any order, where the light is as midnight'- The lack of "order" and darkness suggests a return to the situation as described before the creation of Genesis 1. Job is failing to perceive that his 'decreation' or 'uncreation', like the destruction of Judah's kingdom and temple, was all a necessary prelude to the new creation promised in the restoration prophecies. And it was the essence of that which Job experienced in his own restoration. And this is why Job 12:22 is such a significant breakthrough in Job's thinking, when he starts to accept that "He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings out to light the shadow of death".

Job Chapter 11

Job 11:1 Then Zophar the Naamathite responded- He comes over as angry and arrogant, as if he really hates Job. He doesn't specifically answer Job's arguments nor even cite them very much. I noted on Job 1:6 that Job's "friends" appear to become associated with the actual actions of the "Satan", and Zophar's anger with Job would confirm that conclusion.

Job 11:2 Shouldn't the multitude of words be answered? Should a man full of talk be justified?- The idea may be that Job was wrong to justify his much talking by saying that it was inevitable because of the greatness of his suffering; see on Job 10:1. Job was not to assume that his wild talking was simply not culpable, just because he was suffering and depressed. And again, there is some abiding truth in that. And God finally demonstrates that Job is "justified" by grace, and not by his words.

Job 11:3 Should your boastings make men hold their peace? When you mock, shall no man make you ashamed?- LXX "Be not a speaker of many words", alluded to by James when he urges is not to be "many teachers" (James 3:1). See on Job 10:1. The friends mix elements of truth (as noted on :2) with unreasonable exaggeration of Job's weaknesses and positions. He has not so far come over as 'mocking', but that was how Job was perceived by the friends; just as our holding of alternative positions can be wrongly read as 'boasting' and 'mocking'.

Job 11:4 For you say, 'My doctrine is pure. I am clean in Your eyes'- As noted on :1, Zophar attacks Job according to Zophar's own perceptions of him, the image of "Job" he had developed in his mind, rather than reality. As noted on :1, unlike Eliphaz he doesn't actually engage with what Job says. And he is typical of many who engage in supposed 'dialogue' today. Job has only said that even if he were to cleanse himself (implying he felt unclean), then God would not accept him (Job 9:30). The friends begin with the suspicion that Job is being judged for sin; and so their wrong theological position [that sin brings immediate Divine judgment and loss of previous blessing] leads them to interpersonal problems, and an overall negative view of their brother Job, seeking to perceive fault in everything he said or had ever done.

Job 11:5 But oh that God would speak, and open His lips against you- In the end, all the participants in the dialogue get what they ask for- God's open revelation. But it was not what any of them expected. And the opening of God's lips was against the friends, and not against Job.

Job 11:6 that He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For true wisdom has two sides- This was finally true for them all. Both Job and the friends say many true things, but they fail to see there was 'another side' to those truths; just as so many do today.

Know therefore that God exacts of you less than your iniquity deserves- Connecting with how Ezra confesses that the exiles and all Judah had been punished less than their sins deserved (Ezra 9:13). Zophar likely implies that Job's huge sins (reflected in his massive judgments) really deserved death, and the fact Job was still alive meant that he was being punished less than deserved. And so it was with Judah. God had not destroyed them as a people, He had not taken their collective life; and this meant that they were being punished less than their sins deserved. And yet they, like Job, considered they were being punished and judged disproportionately. The resolution of that was in accepting their sins and the justice and grace of God's judgment of them, as Job finally did at the end.

Job 11:7 Can you fathom the mystery of God?- This again is true so far as it stands, but Zophar uses this truth wrongly. He implies that any attempt to understand God's ways was therefore wrong; and yet he dogmatically proceeds with his own attempts to fathom the mystery of God. Paul has this verse in mind in Rom. 11:33, where he declares that the "mystery of God" (Rom. 11:25) is in His saving grace which cannot be fathomed by us. And that was the declaration of the "mystery of God" which is finally made at the end of the book of Job.

Or can you probe the limits of the Almighty?- Job sought to "probe" (AV "find out") the Almighty (Job 23:3; 28:12), whereas Elihu appears to agree with Zophar that "the Almighty" cannot be 'found out' (Job 11:7; 37:23). God's own appearance at the end is perhaps an answer to this. He cannot be 'found out' by intellectual argument or personal righteousness. Instead, He 'finds out' people and saves them by grace. Paul expresses the same idea when he writes that it is not so much a case of man 'knowing God', but rather of being "known of God" by grace (Gal. 4:9).

Job 11:8 They are high as heaven. What can you do? They are deeper than Sheol. What can you know?- As discussed on :7, it is indeed true that we cannot "know" God by intellectual argument or personal righteousness. And that lesson abides. And yet on the other hand, 'knowing' God in the Hebraic sense of 'having a relationship with' is absolutely possible, and is what God seeks with men. However it is possible that Zophar uses the idea of 'heaven and sheol' as it is used in the only other two Biblical occurrences of the phrase (Ps. 139:8; Am. 9:2)- where it means that one cannot escape God by going above heaven or deeper than *sheol*. Jonah, representative of the exiles, tried to do this and failed.

Job 11:9 Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea- God's ways are further or longer than the *eretz*, a word often used specifically of the land promised to Abraham. There is the hint here that the final wisdom of God was connected with a plan of global salvation, and was not limited to any single territory. This had special relevance to the captives in Babylon and Assyria, some of them now outside the *eretz*; and it also speaks to their tendency towards racial elitism, as if Israel were the only people God was willing to have relationship with. The prophets therefore speak of the restored people of God as being multiethnic, and His kingdom as universal and not any longer only based in the *eretz* of Israel.

Job 11:10 If He passes by, or confines- "Confines" is the word used of the shutting up or confining of the exiles in captivity (Jer. 13:19; Lam. 2:7; Am. 6:8).

Or convenes a court, then who can oppose Him?- This again has abiding truth- because we cannot simply get out of our relationship with God by as it were not turning up in court.

The dramatic story of Job thrice uses the same phrase as in Is. 43:13, concluding that "who can hinder...?" God's way (Job 9:12; 11:10; 23:13). The exiles were to understand that no human opposition or discouragement can turn back or hinder God's purpose to save His people, even if they are as Job in suffering. His saving and restorative purpose will not be hindered, if we wish to identify with it.

Job 11:11 For He knows false men. He sees iniquity also, even though He doesn't consider it- AV "will He not then consider it?", as if God is aware of all sin, and will "consider" it in judgment. Zophar and the friends seem to think that this judgment is going on in Job's life, whereas Job is correctly driven to understand that judgment must be yet future.

Job 11:12 An empty-headed man becomes wise when a man is born as a wild donkey's colt- The idea seems to be that a stubborn and untamed man like Job, similar to a wild donkey's colt, can still become wise- if he repents (:13). Zophar is misreading Job, but he is correct to understand the true wisdom as being in repentance. Job's vain search for wisdom in Job 28 finally comes to an end when he repents and thereby 'finds' God. Even wrong argumentation and false accusation can be used by God to bring us closer to His truth, through the process of our working it through and rejecting it.

Job 11:13 If you set your heart aright, stretch out your hands toward Him- As noted on :4, Zophar's wrong theology [his assumption that Job must have sinned to be suffering as he now was] led him to judge the state of Job's heart, as being not "set aright". And it is exactly this wrongful judgment of human hearts which arises from an insistence in believing that we can attach meaning to event in the lives of others; and this is effectively to play God.

Job 11:14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away. Don't let unrighteousness dwell in your tents- Clearly an oblique reference to the family "tents" of Job having been smitten because of the unrighteousness there. Job's children were indeed sinners, it would appear. For they were struck down by "the fire of God". But Zophar is reasoning that one man, Job, can be responsible for the sins of his family. But God works with individuals, and all Job's regular sacrifices for the sins of his children were revealed as irrelevant. For God deals with individuals.

Job 11:15 Surely then you shall lift up your face without spot; yes, you shall be steadfast, and shall not fear- Zophar possibly recognized that Job was like Cain in that his countenance had fallen and he was so angry, although also fearful of God (Gen. 4:5); Job has already seen himself as Cain (Job 10:14). See on Job 13:27; 16:17,18; 31:39. Job

has argued that even if he were righteous, still he could not lift up his face without spot and without fear. Zophar fails to realize that it was quite possible for Job to be personally righteous, and yet to experience all the sufferings and feelings of the sinful, condemned people of God. The idea of being "without spot" before God is picked up in the New Testament. We can be like this (Eph. 5:27; 2 Pet. 3:14) but only "in His sight", because the righteousness of His spotless Son has been imputed to us by grace through faith (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19).

Job 11:16 for you shall forget your misery. You shall remember it as waters that are passed away- The exiles likewise could be restored so that their sufferings were seen as the waters of Noah which had passed away (Is. 54:9), and would forget the days of their misery. "Misery" is the word translated "travail" regarding the sufferings of the suffering servant (Is. 53:11). That figure is undoubtedly based upon Job as prototype.

Job 11:17 Life shall be clearer than the noonday. Though there is darkness, it shall be as the morning- Again, there is some level of truth in all this. This is what repentance could lead to. And the language is exactly that of the joyful dawn which could have come for the exiles, brought forth out of the darkness of captivity in Babylon. Job experienced this in his restoration, but the exiles failed to follow his path.

Job 11:18 You shall be secure, because there is hope. Yes, you shall search, and shall take your rest in safety- Again, the language of the restoration prophets concerning the lying down of the returned exiles in safety with none making them afraid (Is. 14:30; Hos. 2:18).

Job 11:19 Also you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid- Exactly the language of how Judah could be restored, if they repented and accepted the new covenant (Ez. 34:14,15; Jer. 33:12).

Yes, many shall court your favour- LXX "and many shall charge, and make supplication to thee", the language of later Isaiah of how the tables would turn and the Gentiles would make supplication to the restored exiles.

Job 11:20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail- Perhaps Job's health issues included failing eyesight. For here when Zophar speaks of the fate of the wicked, he has Job in view. The very language of the curses to come upon Israel for breaking covenant (Lev. 26:16), experienced by them at the Babylonian invasion (Lam. 2:11; 4:17). The suffering servant experienced this (Ps. 69:3 s.w.) as did Job, sharing in the judgment of the condemned although not personally sinning.

They shall have no way to flee- The judgment upon Judah (s.w. Jer. 25:35; Am. 2:14).

Their hope shall be the giving up of the spirit- This was what Job so hoped for, and Zophar has Job in view all through his description of the death of the wicked. As demonstrated earlier in this verse, the condemnation of the wicked did indeed happen to God's people, and Job experienced it, whilst being personally innocent. This is the exact situation with the Lord Jesus. He who will dispense condemnation does in fact know what condemnation feels like, because He so identified with condemned humanity.

Job Chapter 12

Job 12:1 Then Job answered- Job now seems angry in this speech, descending at times to sarcasm.

Job 12:2 No doubt, but you are the people, and wisdom shall die with you- Job is responding to the friends' insistence that Job stood condemned according to the wisdom of those who had gone before. Job is saying that he doesn't accept that, and that rather the friends are projecting their ideas onto the previous 'wise men', creating those men after their own likeness and mental image. In fact, Job is saying, the friends consider that they themselves are the source of all wisdom, they see themselves as the unequalled pinnacle of wisdom, so great that when they die, so will their wisdom. In other words, their wisdom was just they themselves.

Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Yes, who doesn't know such things as these?- Job refused to take false guilt and to be pushed down by men. Our opinion is *a priori* as valid as that of any other believer, no matter how they seek to shore it up allusion to other sages.

Job 12:4 I am like one who is a joke to his neighbour, because I called on God, and He answered. The just, the blameless man is a joke- The restoration prophet Jeremiah quoted this about himself (Jer. 20:7; Lam. 3:14 s.w.), as representative of Judah in captivity, who were mocked [s.w. 'joked at'] daily (Jer. 48:27 s.w.) by their neighbours, the Babylonians and the peoples of their confederacy.

Job 12:5 In the thought of him who is at ease there is contempt for misfortune. It is ready for them whose foot slips- Suffering is intended to produce empathy with others; as 2 Cor. 1 makes clear, this is a large reason for our experience of suffering. Job is realizing this; that there can be no empathy with the suffering from those who haven't suffered. And thus he was being led towards realizing that his sufferings were not just for himself, but were to be used to comfort others. And those "others" were the friends, whom he was to save by his forgiveness and prayers for them. LXX "For it had been ordained that he should fall under others at the appointed time, and that his houses should be spoiled by transgressors"- connecting with the destruction of the great houses of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (Jer. 52:13).

Job 12:6 The tents of robbers prosper. Those who provoke God are secure, who carry their God in their hands- Job makes several references to the arguments of the satan in his replies to the friends; as if they were in fact the satan, and as if he knew perfectly well what they had said to Yahweh. Thus he tells the friends that those who provoke God are secure, whereas the satan had suggested that Job would provoke God to His face if his security was taken away. Job says that such people who provoke God have all things given into their hand by Yahweh; and it is hard not to see in this a reference to the satan, into whose hand Job had been delivered. It was as if Job was saying to them: 'You are the ones who have provoked God, you are the ones into whose hand God has delivered me; so actually you are the wicked, not me'. For more connections between the friends and the satan, see on Job 1:6.

Job 12:7 But ask the animals now, and they shall teach you; the birds of the sky, and they shall tell you- At the end of the book, we are told that it is God who not only created Behemoth, but can effortlessly control him in accord with His purpose. That's the comfort of the message. Indeed the descriptions of the natural world which lead up to the Leviathan / Behemoth passages are there to underline this point; and it's interesting that those passages zoom in upon the cruelties and even brutalities within nature. Yet these are all of God's ultimate design and creation, and under His providential control. Job had earlier perceived this; for he responds to the friends' allusions to an evil 'Satan' figure as the source of his suffering by observing: "Ask the animals... The birds of the air... [they show that] the hand of the Lord [and not any supernatural 'Satan'] has done this" (Job 12:7-9). Job himself turned to the natural creation for lessons, and so God's final appeal to that same creation was only really leading him further from where he had already arrived.

Job 12:8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach you. The fish of the sea shall declare to you- "Declare" is literally 'to number'. Job's idea was that one had only to look at the natural creation, and they would 'number up' the extent of God's activity. But later Job has to be taught that man cannot number up these things (s.w. Job 38:37; 39:2). They could not be numbered by man, but only by God. This is the same word used in the restoration prophecy of Jer. 38:22: "As the host of the sky cannot be *numbered*, nor the sand of the sea measured", so God's grace would be

poured out in restoring His people. Job was being taught the same lesson. He finally believed it, but the exiles generally didn't, and so their restoration didn't happen after the pattern of Job's.

Job 12:9 Who doesn't know that in all these, the hand of Yahweh has done this- Satan asks God: "Put forth Your hand". The hand of God is an Angelic phrase. God agrees- "he is in your hand" (:6). Thus Satan's hand is God's hand, which in practice was articulated through an Angel. Job seems to emphasize the place of God's hand in bringing his trials- Job 2:5,6,10; 6:9; 10:7; 13:21; 19:21; 27:11 AVmg; 28:9. Job in Job 12:9 feels that in the same way as God's hand had created the natural creation- and the Angels did this- so that same Angelic hand was upon him for evil. "By His Spirit (God makes His Angels spirits) He hath garnished the Heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent" (Job 26:13). Thus Job associates God's Spirit with His hand, which is Satan's hand. It seems far more fitting that this hand and spirit should be Angelic rather than human. For no one human being could bring these sufferings upon Job. The human Satan, the fellow worshipper, was reflected in an Angel in the court of Heaven. Again, it was Angelic work that formed the Heavens. Job recognized that his trials came from the hand of God, but knew that His hand would not kill him- "with Thy strong hand Thou opposeth Thyself against me... howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to (bring me to) the grave" (Job 30:21,24 AV). This was exactly the brief given to Satan- to try Job, but "preserve his life". The hand of God creating evil (Job 2:10,11) must surely refer to God's "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- in the restoration context, the people and Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7).

Job 12:10 in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?- As noted on :9, this alludes to God's command to the Satan: "He [Job] is in your hand". But Job insists that he is in *God's* hand. He is labouring this point (:9), because he is perhaps answering the implication of the friends that he has sinned and is therefore in the hands of some cosmic evil being, out of God's control.

Job 12:11 Doesn't the ear try words, even as the palate tastes its food?- The idea is that truth should not just be accepted because the source is an old or reputedly wise man (:12). For even their wisdom is nothing compared with God's (:13). Job is looking for truth to come from direct revelation from God rather than through the wisdom of men. And that desire appears frustrated by God's apparent silence. But all this builds up towards the final wonder of God Himself appearing and speaking at the end of the book.

Job 12:12 With aged men is wisdom, in length of days understanding- See on :11. Job may be being sarcastic here, and perhaps we could put a question mark at the end of this sentence. For to predicate wisdom upon years lived becomes laughable compared, therefore, to the wisdom of the God who is from everlasting (:13). Therefore Job is looking for truth to come from direct revelation from God rather than through the wisdom of men. And that desire appears frustrated by God's apparent silence. But all this builds up towards the final wonder of God Himself appearing and speaking at the end of the book.

Job 12:13 With God is wisdom and might. He has counsel and understanding- See on :11,12. Job has complained about God's apparent silence and failure to speak or dialogue with him throughout all the suffering. But Job doesn't doubt that God does have "counsel and understanding". Again, all this builds up towards the final wonder of God Himself appearing and speaking at the end of the book. Job can be read as implying that he doesn't have "counsel and understanding", but God does. This again makes his representative of Israel under judgment, who were left "without counsel and understanding" (s.w. Dt. 32:28).

Job 12:14 Behold, He breaks down, and it can't be built again. He imprisons a man, and there can be no release- Here Job starts to go wrong. Because he feels that at this moment, he has no hope of restoration- therefore he assumes that this is how God is. But this was how the depressed exiles felt. The restoration prophecies speak of release from the prison of captivity, and the broken down Zion being "built again" (Jer. 24:6; 31:4). The fact Job was 'released' and restored, despite his momentary lack of faith that this were possible, was intended as a pattern for the exiles.

Job 12:15 Behold, He withholds the waters, and they dry up. Again, He sends them out, and they overturn the earth-
The theme of 'drying up' or 'withering' is significant. Bildad considers Job to have been 'dried up' by God's judgment (Job 8:12), and the word is used of how God withered or dried up Judah at the hands of their invaders (Jer. 12:4; 23:10; Ez. 17:9,10,24; Zech. 11:17; Lam. 4:8; Is. 40:7,8- although the prophetic word of God requiring their restoration would endure, despite their drying up). The dry bones of Judah in captivity were withered or dried up (Ez. 37:11). So Job's 'drying up' was again, a sharing in the representative suffering of God's people. Job's personal response to his 'drying up' was to reflect that God dries up waters and also sends them forth as floods (Job 12:15 s.w.); He can give and He can take, just as Job had initially realized (Job 2:10). Just as He dried up Job / Israel, so He could abundantly send forth waters; just as He did at the Red Sea. Restoration and salvation was just as easy for Him as destruction, to put it another way. The drying up of Job was also understood by him as referring to his death (Job 14:11), but God could raise him from the dead and have a desire to him again (Job 14:15). Eliphaz wrongly argues that the Divine 'drying up' of a person means permanent extinction (Job 15:30), as does Bildad (Job 18:16); but Job always sees the 'drying up' as part of a Divine action which also has a counterpart, the pouring out again of waters, or resurrection of the dried up, withered bones. Likewise Judah in captivity thought that their drying up, their dry bones, were incapable of revival (Ez. 37:11); but the message is that they could indeed be revived, and their drying up was but a presage to their eternal revival.

Job 12:16 With Him is strength and wisdom. The deceived and the deceiver are His- Job is poetry, and poetry works by using familiar words and images in new ways. Hence myths can be alluded to and used, but in order to present them in a different context and to achieve more powerfully a conclusion rather than just baldly stating it; i.e. that Yahweh is all powerful and that there are actually no abiding realities behind the myths. Thus poetry is an appropriate medium through which to articulate this message. "The deceived and the deceiver are His" is poetry which even comes through somewhat in translation (Job 12:16). The expectation is that the deceiver is Satan, and God is with or sympathetic to the deceived. But no. Such dualistic expectations are set up, but crushed at the end of the strophe: both deceived and deceiver are God's. For there is no dualistic cosmos out there. Indeed, "the deceiver" may refer to some superhuman tempter, similar to how many today understand 'Satan'. And Job is saying that God is far more powerful than any such being. Or we can note that the words for "deceived" and "deceiver" are usually used about sin and those leading into sin. Despite all that, God is still there, and His people "are His"; the words are used about spiritually "wandering" Judah in their captivity (Ez. 34:6), who were still "His" in that He would never ultimately reject His people.

Job 12:17 He leads counsellors away stripped. He makes judges fools- This was to be seen in the leading away of the leaders of Judah "stripped" in exile, despite their apparent wisdom. Again Job is being driven to the view that God alone has wisdom, as the judges and counsellors represented by the friends simply have no wisdom. As noted on :11-13, all this builds up towards the final wonder of God Himself appearing and speaking at the end of the book.

Job 12:18 He loosens the bond of kings. He binds their waist with a belt- LXX "He seats kings upon thrones, and girds their loins with a girdle", exactly the language used of Cyrus. Being a leader was a gift from God which He could give and take at will, according to the wisdom of His own plans, which as yet Job could not perceive, but which was to be revealed at the end of the book.

Job 12:19 He leads priests away stripped, and overthrows the mighty- So relevant to the leading into captivity of the priests such as Ezekiel. Job appears to have been a priest for his family, and his overthrow was therefore representative of Judah's; and his path to restoration was to be theirs, if they perceived it. He could not of himself save anyone, only show an example to be followed; as stated explicitly to the exiles in Ez. 14:14,20. And this is true of us all.

Job 12:20 He removes the speech of those who are trusted, and takes away the understanding of the elders- The "trusted" and "elders" are oblique references to the friends. All human wisdom is removed compared to God's wisdom. But that wisdom is only finally revealed at the end of the book. The lesson of Job is to wait patiently for that, suffering when we cannot assign meaning to event for the moment, in the knowledge that finally there is a Divine wisdom at work through it all.

Job 12:21 He pours contempt on princes, and loosens the belt of the strong- Job is starting to perceive that God's style is to radically invert everything. The high are brought low, the humble exalted. This explained why Job had been brought down, and led Job towards an expectation that he the humbled, the weak, would be restored. This theme of radical inversion, the first being last and the last first, is found throughout the restoration prophets, especially Isaiah. The humbled exiles were to see in their humiliation a situation pregnant with hope for restoration.

Job 12:22 He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings out to light the shadow of death- Earlier, Job has longed to go to the darkness of death never to return (Job 10:21), where "the land [is] dark as midnight, of the shadow of death, without any order, where the light is as midnight" (Job 10:22). The lack of "order" and darkness suggests a return to the situation as described before the creation of Genesis 1. Job is failing to perceive that his 'decreation' or 'uncreation', like the destruction of Judah's kingdom and temple, was all a necessary prelude to the new creation promised in the restoration prophecies. And it was the essence of that which Job experienced in his own restoration. And this is why Job 12:22 is such a significant breakthrough in Job's thinking, when he starts to accept that "He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings out to light the shadow of death".

Job 12:23 He increases the nations, and He destroys them. He enlarges the nations, and He leads them captive- As noted on :21, Job was beginning to perceive that all goes in cycles of exaltation and humiliation, but he is to finally learn that for God's people, that humiliation is required for them to be exalted and restored as God intends. We too are to humble ourselves under His hand, that we may be exalted in due time. Perhaps Peter had his eye on Job's restoration as he wrote that (1 Pet. 5:6). These things are clearly relevant to the captives who were in Babylon, at the hands of an 'enlarged' Babylon which would also be 'destroyed' in due time.

Job 12:24 He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth, and causes them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way- This is quoted in Ps. 107:40 as a summary of the history of Israel, but the Psalm goes on to say that "the poor" of Israel would be "set on high from affliction" (Ps. 107:41). Again Job's experiences were understood by the Psalmist as typical of all Israel.

Job 12:25 They grope in the dark without light. He makes them stagger like a drunken man- Yet this was in fact the experience of Job himself (see on Job 5:14). Job was experiencing darkness at noon. But in this Job looked ahead to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus on the cross. He like the Lord suffered as a sinner without having personally sinned. Job was representative of sinful Israel under judgment, for to "grope at noonday" was their punishment for breaking the covenant (s.w. Dt. 28:29).

Job Chapter 13

Job 13:1 Behold, my eye has seen all this. My ear has heard and understood it- This may be in direct reference to what Job has just said in Job 12, he is saying that he has worked these things out by his own reflections, and this has led him to an understanding which is no less valid than that of the friends. Job would later confess that he has indeed heard of God by the hearing of the ear; but only at the end did he join the dots, to the point where he could say that "now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5).

Job 13:2 What you know, I know also. I am not inferior to you- As noted on :1, Job is not saying that his knowledge or understanding is identical to that of the friends, but rather that his path to knowledge is no less valid than theirs. "Inferior" is better 'to fall down'. Job may mean that he is not falling down before them, but before God. For he uses the same word in :11 to urge the friends to fall down ['be inferior to'] God, rather than assuming they know His game plan and thereby lifting themselves up above Him.

Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty. I desire to reason with God- Job has heard their demand that he turn to God, and he says that indeed he wishes to do so. But he implies that God will not speak to him. All this builds up towards the final wonder of God Himself appearing and speaking at the end of the book.

Job 13:4 But you are forgers of lies. You are all physicians of no value- "Physicians" is the same word as "make[rs] whole" in Job 5:18: "He injures, and His hands make whole". His disillusion with the members of his religion, his brethren, led him to seek the more earnestly to God as the only one whose hands could "make whole" (s.w. "physician").

Job 13:5 Oh that you would be completely silent! Then you would be wise- This was true, but Job himself was not being silent. At the end, he puts his hand upon his mouth and is silent (Job 40:4). When Job finally lays his hand upon his mouth, he is only doing what he had earlier told the friends to do in recognition of their folly (Job 13:5; 21:5). Through the pain and irritation of their speeches, Job came to value and appreciate the need for silence before God. But it was only when personally confronted by God at the end that he realizes that he too had spoken too much and he repents of that in silence.

Job 13:6 Hear now my reasoning. Listen to the pleadings of my lips- These appeals to hear and listen may not be simply asking them to hear his words; they may be an appeal to them to hear and repent. This desire for their repentance and understanding builds up within Job as the speeches progress. And again, this is preparing him for the Lord's final request to him- to pray for the friends and bring about their salvation (Job 42:8).

Job 13:7 Will you speak unrighteously for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?- LXX "Do ye not speak before the Lord...", another hint that the friends were represented by the Satan figure of the prologue, who likewise appeared "before the Lord". Job warns them as many need warning today- that they were wrong to express their own gut feelings and assumptions in the name of God, as if they were talking on His behalf. Job differs from them in that he makes no claim to be speaking by Divine inspiration; he is simply bemoaning his lot and trying to reason through it, and that record of his words is noted down in the drama by an inspired writer.

Job 13:8 Will you show partiality to Him?- Perhaps the idea is that they were acting as if God were in the dock, and they were being generous to Him in their judgment of Him.

Will you contend for God?- God was not contending with Job through the friends as His representatives. The wonder of the final appearance of God is that He Himself appears and contends directly, not through any representatives such as the friends claimed to be.

Job 13:9 Is it good that He should search you out? Or as one deceives a man, will you deceive Him?- The idea seems to be that if God searched out the friends, they would have to try to deceive Him, lest He find the truth about them. But Job later realizes that God does indeed search out all things (s.w. Job 28:27). He begins here by saying that *if* He were to search things out, He would not find a nice scene in the hearts of the friends. But Job moves on to realize that indeed this is what God is doing, on a cosmic scale- searching out all things.

Job 13:10 He will surely reprove you if you secretly show partiality- "Reprove" is a legal term, used for legal 'pleading' in court (s.w. Job 16:21; 40:2). Job clearly considers the friends to be guilty, and we are set up to expect that therefore God is going to open a legal case against the friends. And this is exactly what happens when God finally appears at the end of the book.

Job 13:11 Shall not His majesty make you afraid, and His dread fall on you?- "Fall" is the same word translated "inferior" in :2: "I am not inferior to you". Job may mean that he is not falling down before *them*, but before God. For he uses the same word in :11 to urge the friends to fall down ['be inferior to'] God, rather than assuming they know His game plan and thereby are lifting themselves up above Him. At the end of the book, as noted on :10, God does appear in majesty, and they are indeed afraid before Him.

Job 13:12 Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, your defences are defences of clay- LXX "And your glorying shall prove in the end to you like ashes, and your body like a body of clay". They were bodies of clay; but only through their humiliation at the end of the book would they appreciate this in reality rather than merely as theory. And we see this happening in the events at the end of the book. And it is so with us today; the mortality of man can never be a mere theological proposition. It must be believed and felt, with an appropriate humility, rather than having to be reminded of it through Divine humiliation.

Job 13:13 Be silent, leave me alone, that I may speak. Let come on me what will- LXX "Be silent, that I may speak, and cease from mine anger". In this case Job is wrongly thinking that his anger is legitimate because once he has blown it all out, he will then be silent. This was wrong, because at the end of the book he lays his hand on his mouth and recognizes that he has spoken wrongly. We too can falsely justify sin or unwise talking on the basis that once we've done it, we will then somehow stop being angry and get over our problem.

Job 13:14 Why should I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand?- The simple sense is as in GNB "I am ready to risk my life". That risk of life was in order to justify himself before God (:15). This was demonstrated at the end as being indeed wrong and punishable by death. Job did indeed risk his life, and was saved from condemnation by grace alone. However, taking "my flesh in my teeth" may be a figure drawn from a wild beast taking its prey in its teeth and carrying it off to safety; meaning therefore 'Why should I seek anxiously to preserve my life?'

Job 13:15 Even if He slays me, still I will trust in Him- The language of 'slaying' takes us back to the Mosaic commands about how a 'slayer' of a man might be killed by the 'avenger of blood'. Job saw God as slaying him; yet he also sees God as the 'witness' in the case (Job 16:19), and the avenger of Job's blood (Job 19:25). Job even asks God to not let the earth cover his blood, so that God as the avenger of Job's blood may avenge Job's death (Job 16:18). Job does *not* see 'Satan' as his slayer, and God as the avenger of his blood. Instead Job – in a quite breathtaking set of associations – sees God in all these things: the slayer, the legal witness to the slayer, the avenger of blood, and the One who will enforce the doing of justice in this case, the One who will not let the earth cover Job's blood. If Job really believed in a superhuman Satan, in Satan as the bad guy and God as the avenger of the injustice, he surely would've expressed himself differently. As Job imagines God as it were taking vengeance on Himself, so he came to portray for all time the way that evil and good are indeed both ultimately from God.

"Trust" here is the usual Hebrew word translated to wait or be patient (Job 13:15; 14:14; 30:26). Even if God slew him, Job would still be patient or wait (Job 13:15), he would patiently wait for his "change" to come at some point after his death (Job 14:14), and waited for light to somehow come out of his current darkness (Job 30:26). This was the legendary "patience of Job" which we are bidden follow (James 5:11). He was impatient, but he was "patient" in the Hebrew sense of enduring in faith; faith that even if things didn't work out at all in this life, even if God was apparently unfair in this life, he would be finally restored at the resurrection. This was his 'endurance', and it is a parade example for all who struggle with the justice of God and the incomprehensible problem of suffering.

Nevertheless, I will justify my ways before Him- This was what was the matter with Job, and it was this weakness which was removed from him by Yahweh's final appearance. The connection between the two halves of the verse, and the preceding verse, is that Job was willing to be slain by God for justifying himself before God. And he would die, he says, still trusting in God, but willing to die for the sake of self justification. So many are like this today. To accept God's justification of us, His imputed righteousness by grace, is so deeply counter instinctive to men.

Job 13:16 This also shall be my salvation- LXX "And this shall turn to me for salvation". See on Phil. 1:19, where this is quoted by Paul. The referent of "this..." is unclear. It could be Job's enduring hope that he would be saved finally, despite life not working out for him in this life (see on :15). This would fit the context in which Paul quotes this in Phil. 1:19.

In that a Godless man shall not come before Him- Job concludes at this point that he will finally be saved, even though God is apparently against him in this life. And he concludes that therefore he must be Godly and not Godless, seeing no Godless man would be accepted "before Him" finally. Job may be making an oblique reference to how the friends as the "sons of God" came "before Him" in worship (Job 1:6); but Job implies they would not ultimately do this at the last day. As it happened, Job's intercession for them "before Him" was to mean that they did.

Job 13:17 Hear diligently my speech. Let my declaration be in Your ears- This may not merely be an appeal for them to pay attention to what he is saying; but rather an appeal for them to "hear" him and repent, taking his appeal deeply within themselves.

Job 13:18 See now, I have set my cause in order. I know that I am righteous- Job had judged himself, setting in order his legal case ["cause"], but declaring himself righteous (Job 13:8). By Job 23:4, Job is realizing that he needs to set his case in order before God; but he can't find God, or get God to engage in this game of judgment. He needed the final appearance of God at the end of the book to review his case, and declare that he is in fact wrong and condemned. But by grace, God will count him as right. He was prepared for this by Elihu's speech in Job 37:19: "Teach us what we shall tell Him, for we can't make our case by reason of darkness". "Make our case" is s.w. "set my cause in order".

Job 13:19 Who is he who will contend with me? For then would I hold my peace and give up the spirit- Job is challenging anyone to come forward and contend with him in court by proving him wrong. If they did, then he would be silent ["hold my peace"] and willingly die. This of course is exactly what happens at the end. God does contend with Job, and he is proven guilty. He lays his hand upon mouth in silence (Job 40:4), and we can deduce from his challenge here that he wanted to die. He saw then saved from that position by grace alone. The connection with the exiles is in Is. 50:8, where a similarly convicted Israel would be justified by Divine grace to the point they could again challenge any to convict them of sin, seeing that "He is near that justifies me".

Or we can read this quite differently: "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4). "Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; 'I only said / did it [or didn't do it] because...'. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins.

Job 13:20 Only don't do two things to me; then I will not hide myself from Your face- This is so arrogant, to think that he could himself from God. The allusion is to Adam hiding in Eden from God. Job seeks a guarantee from God that he will not be condemned, and then says he will agree to respond to God's call (:22)- another allusion to Adam,

who was 'called' to account by God after his sin. It would appear that Job was recognizing that he had sinned, that he knew that the sense of spiritual limbo he was in paralleled Adam's hiding from God in Eden, but that he would only respond to God's call and come out of hiding to confess his sin as he knew God wanted him to, if God withdrew His hand- i.e. relieved him of the immediate trials he was then experiencing. Thus Job was trying to barter with God- wanting Him to withdraw the trials in return for Job making the confession which he knew God wanted. See on Job 10:9; 9:17.

Job 13:21 withdraw Your hand far from me- From here to the end of the chapter could be addressed to God, or to the friends. If the latter, then it would appear that Job considers the friends guilty for bringing his sufferings upon him. This would confirm the connection suggested between the friends and the Satan figure. For as soon as Satan is as it were off the stage, the friends appear. See on :20.

And don't let Your terror make me afraid- Job repeats this fear in Job 9:34, and Elihu alludes to it when he uses the same phrase in assuring Job that his terror will not make Job afraid (Job 33:7). The terror is perhaps "the terror of the Lord", the fear of condemnation at the last day (so Paul uses the phrase, 2 Cor. 5:11). That terror should "persuade men" to accept grace, Paul argues. To have that terror unexperienced by men would mean they had no persuasion toward grace.

Job 13:22 Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, and You answer me- See on :20. In the end, God does call Job; and he lays his hand upon his mouth in silence. For he has no answer, nor does he desire to speak. For God has already answered him.

Job 13:23 How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my disobedience and my sin- This seems an arrogant denial of sinfulness and a false accusation of God. Job, like the friends, cannot understand suffering as having any reason apart from sin. And he indignantly insists that he has not sinned. This insistence upon never moving beyond the paradigm whereby suffering reflects sin led Job to thereby falsely accuse God. And we can so easily do the same.

Job 13:24 Why do You hide Your face, and hold me for Your enemy?- The implication of the argument is that Job had a right to see God's unhidden face, because God (so Job thinks) cannot convict Job of sin. Cain was hidden from God's face (s.w. Gen. 4:14); Job again feels he is being treated like Cain, with a mark set upon him (:27); when he is innocent. He totally failed to perceive his sinfulness, and was convicted of it only by the revelation of God at the end- whereby, by grace alone, God no longer hid His face but revealed Himself. God hid His face from the exiles (s.w. Dt. 31:17,18; 32:20; Is. 8:17; 54:8; 59:2; 64:7; Jer. 33:5; Ez. 39:23), and again, His apparent hiding of His face from Job was not because Job had sinned but because he was suffering as representative of his people.

Job 13:25 Will You harass a driven leaf? Will You pursue the dry stubble?- Job argues that he is so dead and insignificant that God should stop bothering with him. But this is exactly the point- that God is indeed to interested in the dead and insignificant. The leaf driven by the autumn wind and the stubble after harvest being blown away are all pictures of judgment, and again connect Job to the judged people of Judah in captivity.

Job 13:26 For You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth- see on Job 29:13,14. Job's denial of sin was to be totally overcome by Yahweh's final appearance. Here he reasons as many do today: 'I am not a sinner, if I did sin, well that was years ago'. We make the passage of years a kind of pseudo atonement for sin. But sin needs atoning, and "just" one sin means death. That is the lesson of Eden.

Job 13:27 You also put my feet in the stocks, and mark all my paths. You set a mark on the soles of my feet- Job complains that although he is associated with Cain (as in :24), this is not really fair. The mark on him that was a witness wherever he went echoes that which God put on Cain. God's preservation of Cain from death also finds a parallel in Job's feeling that God is preserving him unnaturally (Job 3:21-23; 10:9-15). See on Job 11:15; 16:17,18; 31:39. The exiles felt as Job- marked, unable to die, miraculously preserved, and yet imprisoned in stocks. The

restoration prophets have the message of deliverance from the stocks, and paths directed back to Zion- towards a restoration as Job experienced. But most of them refused this and remained in Babylon, and those who did return precluded the fulfilment of the restoration prophecies.

Job 13:28 though I am decaying like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten- This is parallel in reference to Is. 50:9: "Behold, all they shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up". The "they" are any possible adversaries who might bring charges against us. This had particular relevance to all the adversaries to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. With Yahweh justifying the returned exiles, the court room was effectively empty of adversaries, all charges were to be seen in the perspective of God's ultimate justification of His people (see on Is. 50:8). These words are also found in Job 13:28, where it is God who consumes them, as it were manifesting Himself in a tiny moth. We find the same ideas in Is. 51:6, where the "they" is the 'heavens and earth' of any system, be it Persia / Babylon or an unbelieving Jewish system, which is adversarial to God's people and purpose. The contrast is with how the clothing of Israel in the wilderness did not "wax old" (s.w. Dt. 8:4; 29:5; Neh. 9:21). The exodus and journey to the promised land is repeatedly alluded to in Isaiah as a pattern for the exiles to follow in returning to Judah, and for us in our exodus from this world and journey towards the Kingdom.

Job Chapter 14

Job 14:1 Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble- Job slips back into the argument that human nature or condition is such that behaviour doesn't matter, as it will all soon be over anyway; and so it is God's problem if He wastes His time so closely concerned with our lives (:3). Job has at times a clearer view of the future, even looking forward to resurrection and judgment. But his faith in that goes up and down, with his depression always clawing him back towards a

Job 14:2 He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down. He also flees like a shadow, and doesn't continue- Is. 37:27 speaks of how the nations around Judah at Hezekiah's time were like this, and were of "small power", s.w. "few" in Job 14:1. Job was reasoning as if he were just any man with human nature. What he says about the brevity and frailty of life is true as far as it stands; but he fails to see that God's way with His chosen give them hope beyond the narrow limits of human nature. Hence the connection with Hezekiah continues- in his case, the shadow *did* "continue", its fleeing was "brought back" (Is. 38:8). Is. 40:7,8 specifically says that although the flower is cut down, the word of restoration would endure for ever.

Job 14:3 Do You open your eyes on such a one, and bring me into judgment with You?- I noted on Job 1:6 that the 'Satan' figure refers to both fellow worshippers and also their Angelic representative in the heavenly throne room. The "eyes" of the Lord are His angels, and Job seems to be asking why God is using His Angel-eyes to take such a special interest in him; why God has asked His Angel to "consider My servant Job". When Job asks God to 'look away' from him, or remove His eyes from him (Job 7:8,19 RV and frequently in Job), this would then be understood as a reference to God's Angel-eyes, whom Job perceived as bringing about his problems. The restoration prophecy of Zech. 12:4 turns all this around, saying that Yahweh will "open My eyes upon the house of Judah" to restore them.

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one- This is not to say that all born of a woman must be morally unclean; for all we posit about human nature we say about the Lord Jesus, who fully had human nature, and yet was holy and undefiled. The LXX may be better, therefore: "For who shall be pure from uncleanness? not even one". And in any case, Job is wrongly assuming things about the human condition at this point. God doesn't make man a laughing stock or target practice, for example, nor is man without hope of resurrection as Job elsewhere thinks (:10). And there is a way for sinful man to be purged from uncleanness, as the law of Moses taught. It was and is a lame excuse to blame any human sin upon our nature.

Job 14:5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with You, and You have appointed his bounds that he can't pass- This may be a reference to the 'wonderful numberer' Angel of Dan. 8:13 who controls the timing of all things. LXX "if even his life should be but one day upon the earth: and his months are numbered by him: thou hast appointed him for a time, and he shall by no means exceed it". The restoration prophets interpret this more positively, in that the appointed time was set to favour Zion (Ps. 102:13)- just as a time was set for the end bounds of Job's sufferings. "Determined" is the word used for the 'determined time' of Judah's judgment and restoration (Is. 10:22,23; 28:22; Dan. 9:27; 11:36). "Bounds" is the word translated "appoint me a set time" in :13. Job longed for that point to come, in that he assumed that the bound or end of his suffering was in death. When God finally appears, that bound or set time is reached- and by pure grace, Job is restored and not slain in death. And this was what could have happened for the exiles when the appointed 70 year period ended.

Job 14:6 look away from him, that he may rest, until he shall accomplish, as a hireling, his day- Job's faith in resurrection or future restoration comes and goes; in :13 he looks for a future "set time" of change of fortune, but now he just longs for death, counting the days toward it, considering that there is more hope of a tree reviving than of human restoration (:7-10). The way restoration finally comes for Job is therefore proof enough that God doesn't require perfect faith.

Job 14:7 For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, that the tender branch of it will not cease- Job's idea that a tree will revive because it can sprout again with a "tender branch" is contrasted in his own mind with how he considers he doesn't have such hope (:10). However, these very images are reworked into a

positive take by the restoration prophets. The revived Judah were indeed to have a "tender branch", a Messiah figure. Zerubbabel, the 'sprout from Babylon', could have fulfilled the prophecies in the sort term. There was indeed "hope" for the tree of Judah, once cut down by Babylon; just as finally, we are to see that Job also was "cut down" and yet sprouted again at his restoration.

The imagery is taken over in Is. 6:13: "If there is a tenth left in it, that also will in turn be consumed: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stump remains when they are felled; so the holy seed is its stump". The idea is of new life being sown from a minority (ten per cent?) as a result of the destruction of the majority. The image is similar to that of the Messianic "Branch" shooting forth from the decaying stump of the house of David. A ten percent minority is also envisaged in Am. 5:3; Am. 6:9,10. The point is that as those trees even when cut down retain the seed in their roots, which will again spring up into a great tree, so out of the judgments to come upon Judah there would arise a remnant who would grow up into the great tree of God's restored Kingdom.

Job 14:8 Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stock dies in the ground- "Earth" is *eretz*, the land (of Israel). If merely "soil" was intended, a different word would have been used. Again, we see the drama of Job has been tweaked, under Divine inspiration, to become the narrative for the exiles. The root had indeed largely died in the land at the time of the Babylonian invasion, but it still had some life and would "bud" again (Job 14:9). Job was the man with great roots who had been cut down but hadn't completely died (Job 8:17); his roots had been dried up (Job 18:16; 29:19). He represented Judah, whose roots were throughout the land as a tree transplanted by God (s.w. Ps. 80:9). Those roots were withered by the invasions (Is. 5:24), but out of those dry roots would grow up a "tender plant / branch" (Is. 11:1,10; 53:2), using the same word for "tender" as in Job 14:7. This Messianic suffering servant was to be based upon Job, and representative of all God's restored people. They were to again spread their roots in the land of promise in a restored Kingdom (Is. 37:31; Jer. 17:8), after the pattern of Job's restoration.

Job 14:9 yet through the scent of water it will bud, and put forth boughs like a plant- Perhaps God almost playfully responds to this by talking of how oceans of waters are under His control. Clearly Job's restoration was typical of how the restored Israel could "bud" and fill the land with fruit (s.w. Is. 27:6; 35:1,2; 66:14; Hos. 14:5,7).

Job 14:10 But man dies, and is laid low. Yes, man gives up the spirit, and where is he?- I pointed out on :4 that Job's depression leads him to a wrong understanding of the human condition; and here we have another example, in his denial of any hope of resurrection of the body (as in :12); even though by Job 19:25-27 he has come to believe in it, and even by :13 he has returned to some idea of it. Again we see how both Job and the friends have truth on many points, but framed in the wrong context. Death is indeed unconsciousness; but Job is overlooking the resurrection of the body and future restoration, just as the exiles were focused only upon their present realities and not eternal ones.

Job 14:11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the river wastes and dries up- The theme of 'drying up' or 'withering' is significant. Bildad considers Job to have been 'dried up' by God's judgment (Job 8:12), and the word is used of how God withered or dried up Judah at the hands of their invaders (Jer. 12:4; 23:10; Ez. 17:9,10,24; Zech. 11:17; Lam. 4:8; Is. 40:7,8- although the prophetic word of God requiring their restoration would endure, despite their drying up). The dry bones of Judah in captivity were withered or dried up (Ez. 37:11). So Job's 'drying up' was again, a sharing in the representative suffering of God's people. Job's personal response to his 'drying up' was to reflect that God dries up waters and also sends them forth as floods (Job 12:15 s.w.); He can give and He can take, just as Job had initially realized (Job 2:10). Just as He dried up Job / Israel, so He could abundantly send forth waters; just as He did at the Red Sea. Restoration and salvation was just as easy for Him as destruction, to put it another way. The drying up of Job was also understood by him as referring to his death (Job 14:11), but God could raise him from the dead and have a desire to him again (Job 14:15). Eliphaz wrongly argues that the Divine 'drying up' of a person means permanent extinction (Job 15:30), as does Bildad (Job 18:16); but Job always sees the 'drying up' as part of a Divine action which also has a counterpart, the pouring out again of waters, or resurrection of the dried up, withered bones. Likewise Judah in captivity thought that their drying up, their dry bones, were incapable of revival (Ez. 37:11); but the message is that they could indeed be revived, and their drying up was but a presage to their eternal revival.

Job 14:12 so man lies down and doesn't rise. Until the heavens are no more, they shall not awake, nor be roused out

of their sleep- Job was wrong to deny so dogmatically the hope of resurrection; see on :10. But he has the closeness of relationship with God to ask that in fact his case there would be a resurrection (:13), and by Job 19:25-27 he is thoroughly convinced there will be. We hereby see his growth in understanding throughout the book.

Job 14:13 Oh that You would hide me in Sheol, that You would keep me secret, until Your wrath is past- The desires of Job were met, at least potentially, in God's willingness to hide the exiles from further personal suffering when Babylon fell, and to preserve them for His restored Kingdom. For these words are surely alluded to in Is. 26:20: "Come, My people, enter into your rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for a little moment, until the indignation is past".

That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!- As noted on :5, that "set time" corresponds with Job's restoration, just as the exiles were to be restored at the end of 70 years "set time". See on Job 7:1.

Job 14:14 If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my warfare would I wait, until my release should come-

Job recognized that there would come a time when "My change come (when) Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: (I know) Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands" (Job 14:14,15 AV). It would appear from this that Job feels that there will be a call to resurrection corresponding to God's call of Adam out of hiding, after which he would confess his sins- i.e. at the judgement. God's calling to Job out of the whirlwind and Job's subsequent confession at the end of the book again encourages us to see "the end of the Lord" with Job as pointing forward to our justification at the day of judgement and the Kingdom, as well as the restoration possible for the exiles. See on Job 14:20.

Even if God slew him, Job would still be patient or wait (Job 13:15), he would 'patiently wait' for his "release" (AV "change") to come at some point after his death (Job 14:14), and waited for light to somehow come out of his current darkness (Job 30:26). This was the legendary "patience of Job" which we are bidden follow (James 5:11). He was impatient, but he was "patient" in the Hebrew sense of enduring in faith; faith that even if things didn't work out at all in this life, even if God was apparently unfair in this life, he would be finally restored at the resurrection. This was his 'endurance', and it is a parade example for all who struggle with the justice of God and the incomprehensible problem of suffering.

Job 14:15 You would call, and I would answer You. You would have a desire to the work of Your hands- Despite all his apparently bitter words against God, Job realizes that finally, "God is love". For he uses a very tender expression for how he believes when God finally calls him to judgment, God will have a "desire" to Job as His very own created handiwork. It was 'just' that God was apparently acting very differently at that time in Job's mortal life. This is one implication of understanding that we are God's created beings, made in His image and likeness, and not mere results of random evolutionary chance. If indeed we are created by Him in His image, then He has a tenderness toward us, ultimately.

Job 14:16 But now You number my steps. Don't You watch over my sin?- This was how Job felt in this life, but he has prefaced this in :15 by saying that he believes that finally God would call him to judgment and show great tenderness to him. That indeed was what happened when God appeared at the end, speaking positively of the Job who had well nigh cursed Him, and restoring him. And the exiles could have experienced the same grace. We note that Job is slowly moving towards the acceptance that he does have "my sin", a realization which will come to full term when God finally appears. Earlier he has spoken as if he has nothing to apologize for before God.

Job 14:17 My disobedience is sealed up in a bag. You fasten up my iniquity- LXX "and marked if I have been guilty of any transgression unawares". Like David, Job felt that God took note of sins of ignorance. But although he is now beginning to accept his sinfulness, he is justifying it. He has argued that his human nature is an excuse, and now he deploys the argument that any sin found in him would be a mere sin of ignorance. He has yet to come to the final confession of sin he makes at the end, when he ceases all attempts at self-justification before the marvel of God's justification of him.

Job 14:18 But the mountain falling comes to nothing. The rock is removed out of its place- We note the progression

from mountain to rocks to stones to dust (:19). Job saw man's being brought to dust as reflected in the process of erosion which can remove the greatest mountains. Again, Job is saying the truth but within the wrong framework. For although God indeed brings to dust, He revives from the dust and can work any number and nature of new creations. Again, the restoration prophets have a positive take on this; the great mountain which God would surely remove was Babylon, and He would establish the mountain of His restored people and Kingdom in Zion (Zech. 4:7; Dan. 2:45). See on Job 18:4.

Job 14:19 the waters wear away the stones. The torrents of it wash away the dust of the earth. So You destroy the hope of man- See on :18. Originally, Job believed that his "hope" was predicated upon his upright ways (Job 4:6). But Job through his sufferings comes to feel he now has no "hope" (Job 7:6; 14:19; 17:15; 19:10). The friends suggest that Job had only the "hope" of the hypocrite, and this "hope" would perish (Job 4:6; 8:13; 27:8). Job had integrity, and on that basis he thought he had "hope". He suffered, and he lost that "hope", because he assumed that his sufferings meant that he was not in fact righteous. And yet he often reflects that he is righteous and is suffering unjustly. And so he is led to the realization that the "hope" of the righteous is by God's grace and not because of the "integrity of [Job's] ways". Judah in captivity likewise lost their "hope" (Ez. 19:5; 37:11). But the message of the restoration prophets was that "there *is* hope in your end" (Jer. 31:17); they were prisoners or exiles in "hope" (Zech. 9:12).

Job 14:20 You forever prevail against him, and he departs. You change his face, and send him away- LXX "thou settest thy face against him, and sendest him away", relevant to the sending away of Judah into captivity with the face of God hidden from them and against them. See on :18. In his humbler moments Job recognized that he was a sinner and deserved Adam's punishment of being sent out of Eden; or also to Cain's countenance falling and then being sent away from God. See on Job 31:33; 9:17; 10:9. But Job makes one very wrong statement here, although 'just' one word: "forever". God does not send away forever. This was the whole message of the restoration prophets.

Job 14:21 His sons come to honour, and he doesn't know it. They are brought low, but he doesn't perceive it about them- This may simply be a reference to the numbness Job still felt about the bringing low of his own sons.

Job 14:22 But his flesh on him has pain, and his soul within him mourns- This clearly refers to Job personally; he saw himself as representative of the whole body of God's people, or all mankind. The captive exiles likewise 'mourned' (s.w. Ezra 10:6; Neh. 1:4), but were urged not to mourn (Neh. 8:9) because it was God's intention to restore them; after the pattern of Job.

Job Chapter 15

Job 15:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered- Eliphaz in this speech clearly objects to Job having made any comeback whatsoever on what the friends have so far said. This is so often the case in supposed 'dialogue'; once people are persuaded of their own narrative, they accuse any dissent therefrom to be arrogance. Which is in turn really just their own pride.

Job 15:2 Should a wise man answer with vain knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind?- This is an allusion to inspiration, seeing that "wind" in Hebrew also means 'spirit'. He implies that he and the friends are Divinely inspired, whereas Job is not. Yet the friends state often that they are merely saying what the wise sages thought. But as often happens, by reason of merely repeating their own narrative they become persuaded of its truth and beauty and imply that in fact they are speaking on God's behalf, inspired by Him, and any opposition thereto is therefore uninspired and blasphemous. We note Job never claims to be inspired by God, his speeches are a struggle with God rather than a man claiming Divine inspiration.

Job 15:3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches with which he can do no good?- This reflects a very utilitarian view of grief and language, as if even in grief a man is supposed to say things which "do good", which somehow put things right. The friends change very quickly from their initial silent grief with Job, and become very aggressive. They cannot cope with their narrative being upset, or being rejected. And then all human sympathy for the individual suffering person goes out of the window.

Job 15:4 Yes, you do away with fear, and hinder devotion before God- This would appear to be criticism of Job's confidence that he will finally be accepted by God, even if not in this life. Whatever Job said was found wrong by the friends, and this whole drama is a parade example of how dialogue breaks down to the point that every word said is taken issue with and found wrong; and then it is extrapolated to positions never intended by the speaker. In this case, Job's apparent confidence of final acceptance is extrapolated to mean that he is hindering or 'limiting' the power of prayer ["devotion"] to God.

Job 15:5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the language of the crafty- As noted on :4, the friends were extrapolating from Job's words to positions they imputed to him which were totally untrue. He was hardly "crafty", he blurts out whatever he feels at the moment, oscillating between faith in resurrection and utter denial of it. The whole thing is an object lesson in how not to dialogue.

Job 15:6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I. Yes, your own lips testify against you- Although the context of these words is that Eliphaz is twisting Job's words against him (see on :3-5), he states a truth. And this is picked up by the Lord in His words to the one-talent man in the parable: "Out of your own mouth will I judge / condemn you" (Lk. 19:22). The man was condemned for keeping his talent (his spiritual knowledge of the word) to himself rather than sharing it with others. Eliphaz proceeds to make the same rebuke of Job- although he had "heard the secret of God", which may imply the gift of prophesying the word seeing that Job was a prophet, he instead "restrained wisdom unto thyself" (:8 AV). This confirms that the one talent man of the parable is based on Job, thus making him represent the rejected at judgement. No doubt the primary application of the one talent man was to the Jewish believers of Christ's day who did not capitalize on the talent they already had. The taking away of the talent and its being given to others recalls the Kingdom (i.e. the Gospel of the Kingdom) being taken from the Jews and being given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it (cp. trading the talent).

Job 15:7 Are you the first man who was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills?- The friends ridiculed Job's evident comparison of himself with Adam: "*Are you* (the emphasis is on that phrase) the first man (Adam; 1 Cor. 15:45 alludes here) who was born?". See on Job 31:33; 9:17; 10:9. But the idea is that there was more wisdom the further back you went; the further back in history, and also the longer you had lived, the more likely you were to have wisdom. This is a very weak argument; for Adam messed up, and the wisdom of sages is often at variance with God's wisdom.

Job 15:8 Have you heard the secret counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself?- “Dost thou hearken in the council of God?” (Job 15:8 RVmg.) is the language of the Heavenly throne room- note how this is said in the context of Job, where we have the most classic statement of the operation of the court of heaven in the opening chapters. See on Job 1:6. If indeed the friends were the "sons of God" of the prologue, the fellow worshippers who were influenced by the discussion between God and the 'Satan' figure (who was also a human worshipper, it seems, although with Angelic representation in the court of heaven). If indeed all this is in view, the argument would be that Job was wrong to be out of step with the argument of the Satan. Eliphaz's argument would then be that indeed he was only faithful to God because God had blessed him, and Job was then wrong to deny it.

Or the idea may be that Job was not the *only* one who had heard God's counsel (:9); they had also heard it. And yet they did not accurately speak forth what they had heard, or were even inspired with, as Job did (Job 42:7).

Job 15:9 What do you know, that we don't know? What do you understand, which is not in us?- This is all a parade example of how dialogue and inter-personal discussion goes so wrong. The friends were persuaded that their narrative was right, and Job couldn't teach them anything. Any new perspective he might offer was therefore treated as an example of his pride and assuming knowledge. But all this arose from their idea that 'truth' was a closed circle of ideas which they possessed and anything outside of it was just presumed knowledge. And human nature hasn't changed to this day, especially with those who consider that they hold absolute truth.

Job 15:10 With us are both the gray-headed and the very aged men, much elder than your father- This implies Job's father was still alive. Again, the source of truth is seen as predicated upon how long a person has lived. Human experience and developed philosophy was seen as the authority, rather than Divine revelation. And this is why their arguments are reduced to nothing by the final appearance of God speaking His own words.

Job 15:11 Are the consolations of God too small for you, even the word that is gentle toward you?- LXX "Thou hast been scourged for but few of thy sins: thou hast spoken haughtily and extravagantly", just as Ezra says that Judah had suffered less than their sins deserved (Ezra 9:13). Again, although what Eliphaz says is true so far as it goes, he is totally wrong because he fails to perceive that the grace of being punished less than sin deserves is but a prelude to glorious restoration.

Job 15:12 Why does your heart carry you away? Why do your eyes flash?- Job was indeed angry, with flashing eyes. But the expression of emotion is misinterpreted as being angry with God (:13). God's special creation, Leviathan, also had flashing eyes (Job 41:18,19). Perhaps this is God's way of saying that eyes flashing with anger is not necessarily sinful of itself, and is all part of the natural created order, and is not worthy of rebuke in itself. This is said against the backdrop of a Bedouin culture where expressions of emotion were only to be made in appropriate ways.

Job 15:13 that you turn your spirit against God, and let such words go out of your mouth?- As the speeches of the friends continue, they engage less and less with Job's actual words. They argue against their perceptions of his position and deal in vague generalities. This again is typical of the breakdown in meaningful dialogue which we see all around us, whereby the participants become confirmed in their positions and build up an image of their opponent in their mind which gets progressively awful and also the more confirmed as true in their view.

Job 15:14 What is man, that he should be clean? What is he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?- Here and in :15, Eliphaz is just repeating what he has said in Job 4:17-19. I noted there the problems with his ideas, and how questionable it was that he really had the vision he claimed, and in any case, the contents of it contradict Bible teaching elsewhere so it was not of God. And again, this is how human relationships break down, as discussed on :13. The participants revert to their old arguments and refuse to engage with what is being said by their opponent,

whom they progressively demonize. Eliphaz's argument that man is inevitably sinful is used to desperately disprove Job's perceived claim of being sinless. But the argument also convicts Eliphaz of sin, as he too was human.

Job 15:15 Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones. Yes, the heavens are not clean in His sight- Eliphaz is just repeating what he has said in Job 4:17-19. I noted there the problems with his ideas, and how questionable it was that he really had the vision he claimed, and in any case, the contents of it contradict Bible teaching elsewhere so it was not of God.

It can be argued that the book of Job is a dialogue concerning evil and suffering, with three popular views being represented by the three friends. These views are examined and corrected by the personal history of Job, as well as by the epilogue and prologue to the book. Eliphaz seems to be representative of the idea that Job is being hit by supernaturally controlled evil- Eliphaz speaks of a force of darkness (Job 22:10,11) and sinful or faulty Angels living in an unclean Heaven (Job 4:18; 15:15). Yet the *answer* to all this is that the Satan figure is under God's control, all Job's misfortunes come from *God* and His Angels- one of whom may have been called 'the adversary' ('Satan')- are in fact perfectly obedient to Him and not disobedient. And finally, Eliphaz and the friends are rebuked for their various wrong understandings, with God declaring Himself supreme and ultimate sovereign. Likewise Bildad's view of Angels in Job 25:5 "The stars are not pure in God's eyes" is corrected by God in Job 38:7, when He says that "the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy".

The question "How can a man be just with God?" is the same question as 'How can a man ever be clean before a perfect God?', and is repeated in this form in Job 9:30; 15:15; 25:5; here, we have the claim that even heaven is unclean before God. The exiles had considered themselves cleansed whiter than snow because of their obedience to some parts of the Mosaic law (Lam. 4:7), but failed to accept that such cleansing to be whiter than snow is only possible by doing what David did, and casting ourselves upon God's grace outside of justification by works (Ps. 51:7). Job was to learn this lesson at the end. It was this offer which was made to Job just as it was to Judah under judgment (Is. 1:18).

Job 15:16 how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks iniquity like water!- Eliphaz seems to be claiming this about all humanity, in order to desperately prove Job wrong in claiming to be sinless (as Eliphaz liked to perceive Job's words). There is error all around here. For Job was not claiming to be sinless, and Eliphaz was himself human, so his argument that we are all inevitable sinners would apply to himself. But self-awareness and humility aren't present in him; he is driven to prove Job wrong, and he will use any argument to do so. The simple truth is as Job put it- God has a tender desire to man, the work of His hands (Job 14:15). And whatever we posit about human nature, we say about the Lord Jesus. He fully shared that nature and yet was holy, harmless and undefiled (Heb. 7:26). Man by nature, just standing there as flesh and blood before God, is not "abominable" to Him of himself. It is sin which is the problem; and sin is not inevitable. We must bear full responsibility for our sins and cannot just pass them off as an inevitable function of our humanity. The wrong view of human nature held by the friends affected their view of Job and people in practice. They claim man is "abominable" to God, and therefore the same word is used of how they abhorred Job, treating him as "abominable" (Job 19:19; 30:10). The lower our view of human nature, the more likely we are to despise human beings rather than value them and speak well of them because they are made in the image of God (James 3:9).

Job 15:17 I will show you, listen to me; that which I have seen I will declare- Eliphaz again is appealing to his supposed vision which he "saw", first referenced by him in Job 4:17-19. I noted there the problems with his ideas, and how questionable it was that he really had the vision he claimed, and in any case, the contents of it contradict Bible teaching elsewhere so it was not of God.

Job 15:18 which wise men have told by their fathers, and have not hidden it- Eliphaz is careful to emphasize that what he 'has seen' in his vision is perfectly in line with the wisdom of the sages of old. This is so important in legalistic societies- to always speak in line with accepted, historical wisdom. There is no humility in this, no openness to truth or to the possibility that Divine revelation may in fact contradict all we once held as 'truth'. This is the power of God's final appearance and words at the end of the book.

Job 15:19 to whom alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them- Eliphaz claims that his "fathers" were given the *eretz* alone and no other ethnic group. This could sound like an early form of the land dispute amongst the children of Abraham which we see to this day. We marvel at the relevance of this ancient book. Adding this point was irrelevant as to whether Eliphaz is speaking rightly about God, but for him it was obviously significant.

Job 15:20 the wicked man writhes in pain all his days, even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor- Clearly he has Job in view, who was oppressed by raiders, and was apparently writhing in pain constantly. Eliphaz suggests that Job must suffer this for a Divinely decreed "number of years". This is the phrase used of the number of years Judah and Israel were to suffer for their sins in exile at the hands of their oppressors (Ez. 4:5; Dan. 9:2). "Laid up" is AV "hidden". Perhaps Elihu alludes to this when he uses the same phrase to say that "the number of years" cannot be "searched out" because God is great (Job 36:26). This may refer to how Daniel tried to search out the number of years Judah ought to be in captivity, and had to conclude that the 70 years time period was flexible, depending upon Judah's repentance and other preconditions. We note Ez. 4:5 gives a different period.

Job 15:21 A sound of terrors is in his ears. In prosperity the destroyer shall come on him- In God's final revelation to the friends and Job, they all heard the terrifying sound of the approaching theophany in the thunderstorm. They were thereby convicted of Divine judgment, expressed in their own terms.

Eliphaz says that Job's sudden problems amid his prosperity were what would happen to all the wicked. This seems to be alluded to in 1 Thess. 5:3 concerning the sudden destruction of rich, spiritually self confident believers- but at the Lord's coming, not in this life. Again we see the friends stating things which are true as far as they go, but framing them in a context which makes them untrue; and this can happen today.

The friends insist that "the destroyer" [by which they surely meant an early equivalent to 'the devil' of popular belief today] had touched Job- whereas Job insists that it is *God* who had destroyed him (Job 15:21 cp. 19:10; 13:21), perhaps through the Divine Angel known as "the destroyer" (1 Cor. 10:10). I suggested on Job 1:6 that the 'Satan' may have reference to an obedient Divine Angel. In some ways the book of Job is a deconstruction of the popular Persian and Canaanite myths about a 'satan' figure. Job, both in the story of his sufferings and his specific words, seeks to demonstrate that the essential issues in life is being "just with God", and not whether or not we are touched by the hand of an evil being; for the hand of God which touched Job (Job 19:21) is the hand of 'satan' into whom God delivered Job temporarily (Job 1:12). Job says that the attitude of the friends is wrong- they should be looking into themselves, rather than fantasizing about the action of some unseen evil being they imagined: "Ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in *me*?... know that there is a [personal] judgment" (Job 19:28,29).

Job 15:22 He doesn't believe that he shall return out of darkness. He is waited for by the sword- The oblique references to Job continue. He has oscillated between faith in a return from the darkness of death, and yet disbelief in this. Uncharitably, Eliphaz focuses upon the low points of his statements. This too can be how we handle interaction with others- seizing upon their lowest points. Job was constantly writhing in pain (:20), so to focus upon his words at his lowest points shows a wilful desire to judge and not save him. We need to learn from this not to mentally record every word spoken in a dialogue- if we are truly seeking to help and restore, rather than judge. Eliphaz was sure that it was only a matter of time before the sword of Divine judgment fell upon Job; hence God's appearance and justification of Job was so fatal for Eliphaz.

Job 15:23 He wanders abroad for bread, saying, 'Where is it?'. He knows that the day of darkness is ready at his hand- LXX "and a dark day shall carry him away as with a whirlwind"; the language of Judah's destruction, and also alluding to Job's sons being slain by a whirlwind. Eliphaz implies that that is coming for Job too. It could seem from what Eliphaz says that Job was even driven to begging for bread by this point.

Job 15:24 They prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle- Eliphaz claims that God is preparing to judge Job like a king ready to ride into the battle. But God's later revelation includes Him demonstrating that man cannot participate successfully in any battle with what God has willed (Job 41:8), and the horse runs foolishly into battle with no regard for consequence (Job 39:25). The connection with the words of Eliphaz may be in that it was effectively Eliphaz who was rushing into battle to do judgment against Job; and he was acting like the foolish horse, forgetting that God alone will fight in the battle, and win (Job 38:23).

Job 15:25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God, and behaves himself proudly against the Almighty- As noted above, Eliphaz is imputing positions to Job, extrapolating from Eliphaz's general impression of Job's positions and turning them into something far removed from reality- in this case, accusing Job of actively stretching out his hand against God. To stretch out the arm is an idiom for judging (Jer. 6:12 and often). The idea is that Job has judged God. Hence the first half of the verse reflects the second half- he has behaved proudly against God.

Job 15:26 he runs at Him with a stiff neck, with the thick shields of his bucklers- As noted on :25, this again is a grotesque extrapolation from Job's positions, claiming that he is proactively against God, charging at Him as a fully armed soldier charges at an enemy.

Job 15:27 because he has covered his face with his fatness, and gathered fat on his thighs- Eliphaz refers to how Job was once full fleshed because of the good life he enjoyed, whereas now he was emaciated and begging for bread (:23).

Job 15:28 He has lived in desolate cities, in houses which no one inhabited, which were ready to become heaps- LXX "and what they have prepared, others shall carry away"- the language of the Babylonian captivity and the curses for disobedience to the covenant. Job had not broken the covenant, but is suffering as if he had, as the representative suffering servant. It could be implied that Job was now living in deserted homes in deserted settlements, as well as begging for bread (:23). This would all imply a period of time during which the historical Job suffered.

Job 15:29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall their possessions be extended on the earth- The "substance" of Israel would continue blessed if they continued obedient (Dt. 33:11 s.w.) and be removed if they were not (s.w. Is. 10:14; Jer. 15:13). Again we see Job suffering as the representative of sinful Israel whilst himself innocent, all looking forward to the nature of the Lord's work for us as the ultimate suffering servant.

Job 15:30 He shall not depart out of darkness- Job had perceived that God would and could bring light out of darkness (Job 12:22). To predict that the darkness was endless is presented here as a major sin and mistaken position. And so it was for those who thought the darkness of exile in Babylon could never end.

The flame shall dry up his branches. By the breath of God's mouth shall he go away- The theme of 'drying up' or 'withering' is significant. Bildad considers Job to have been 'dried up' by God's judgment (Job 8:12), and the word is used of how God withered or dried up Judah at the hands of their invaders (Jer. 12:4; 23:10; Ez. 17:9,10,24; Zech. 11:17; Lam. 4:8; Is. 40:7,8- although the prophetic word of God requiring their restoration would endure, despite their drying up). The dry bones of Judah in captivity were withered or dried up (Ez. 37:11). So Job's 'drying up' was again, a sharing in the representative suffering of God's people. Job's personal response to his 'drying up' was to reflect that God dries up waters and also sends them forth as floods (Job 12:15 s.w.); He can give and He can take, just as Job had initially realized (Job 2:10). Just as He dried up Job / Israel, so He could abundantly send forth waters; just as He did at the Red Sea. Restoration and salvation was just as easy for Him as destruction, to put it another way. The drying up of Job was also understood by him as referring to his death (Job 14:11), but God could raise him from the dead and have a desire to him again (Job 14:15). Eliphaz wrongly argues that the Divine 'drying up' of a person means permanent extinction (Job 15:30), as does Bildad (Job 18:16); but Job always sees the 'drying up' as part of a Divine action which also has a counterpart, the pouring out again of waters, or resurrection of the dried up, withered bones. Likewise Judah in captivity thought that their drying up, their dry bones, were incapable of revival (Ez. 37:11); but the message is that they could indeed be revived, and their drying up was but a presage to their eternal revival.

Job 15:31 Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; for emptiness shall be his reward- This idea that we become like that which we trust or worship is again true, so far as it goes. "Trust" is the usual word for "belief"; and "emptiness" is s.w. "vanities", a term often used about idols. There is here the definite suggestion Job was an idol worshipper. This was untrue. Now Eliphaz has been driven to absolutely wrong conclusions about Job, because he is so convinced that suffering means major sin has been committed. We see a progressive imputation of sin to Job by the friends, all dramatically reversed when God appears and imputes righteousness to Job.

Job 15:32 It shall be accomplished before his time. His branch shall not be green- To die before man's time, to die young, was seen as a sign of Divine judgment. The death of the Lord Jesus at 33 reveals what a misunderstanding this was.

Job 15:33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive tree- The idea is that he would begin having fruit, but it would be shaken off before it came to maturity. The reference would be to the way Job had had children, but they had been slain in relative youth. The friends are later accused of 'wronging' Job by wicked "devices" (Job 21:27). 'Wronging' is the same word as "shake off" in Job 15:33. Eliphaz was so convinced that God would do Job 'wrong' that he developed to the point of actually devising to do wrong to Job, thus confirming the sense that the friends became the 'Satan' figure and actually did the evil to Job which he initially wanted done.

Job 15:34 For the company of the Godless shall be barren, and fire shall consume the tents of bribery- It was Job's tents that had been consumed, and so clearly Eliphaz implies Job's children had practiced bribery. Perhaps they had- for they were indeed destroyed by "the fire of God". But he is wrong to imply some kind of guilt by association whereby Job had done the same and was about to be judged for it.

Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. Their heart prepares deceit- Eliphaz thought there were only a few very sinful people in the world, of whom Job was one; but his words are quoted by the Spirit in Is. 59:4 concerning the whole nation of Israel; and this in turn is quoted in Rom. 3:15-17 concerning the whole human race. This same path of progressive realization of our sinfulness must be trodden by each faithful individual, as well as on a communal level. The association between Job's supposed sins and those of Israel again confirms the idea that Job is the prototype suffering servant of Is. 53, carrying Israel's sins and the judgments for them, whilst personally innocent.

Job Chapter 16

Job 16:1 Then Job answered- Job here despairs at how Eliphaz has merely repeated his earlier speech; and his disillusion with the friends leads him in this speech to therefore turn to God more strongly and directly. And this is where disillusion with fellow believers and religious structures will lead the truly spiritual person- to the God whom we know has the answers to our unaddressed issues and questions, even if for now He is not revealing them.

Job 16:2 I have heard many such things. You are all miserable comforters!- The friends admit they are only saying what was generally accepted wisdom at the time. Job had heard this many times over. But it gave him no comfort. This leads him to seek "comfort" from God; and the restoration prophets promise such "comfort" direct from God to the exiles who had not found it in traditional answers (Is. 40:1; 66:13).

Job 16:3 Shall vain words have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer?- Job is led by the annoying, empty answers of the friends to long for "an end". And that is what he is given when Elihu and then God appears at the end. His enquiry as to what was motivating them can be read as genuine pity for them, and a desire to help them forward spiritually- even from his own desperate position. This basic desire was rewarded at the end, when he is asked to pray for the friends and thereby save them from their own stupidity.

Job 16:4 I also could speak as you do. If your soul were in my soul's place, I could join words together against you, and shake my head at you- It was against the Lord Jesus that the Jews shook their head, as He died the death of the suffering servant (Ps. 22:7). Despite his own awful situation, with all the self-centeredness which is elicited by extreme physical pain and suffering, Job thinks himself into their very soul, imagining how he would react in their situation. This basic concern for them was turned into reality when God makes Job their saviour in the end.

Job 16:5 but I would strengthen you with my mouth. The solace of my lips would relieve you- We can't be brethren in Christ who have no effect on the rest of the body. We all have an influence on others. Words of our brethren really can strengthen and relieve. Our behaviour, however passive, has a powerful effect on our brethren. We are all members of one body. See on :6. On the contrary, a whole community can be cursed for the sake of one man's sin, even if he later repents (2 Kings 24:3,4). The fact we can be guilty of causing others to stumble means that we can limit God's gracious plan for them. "Strengthen" is exactly what God wanted to do for the exiles in their suffering (s.w. Is. 35:3; 41:10).

Job 16:6 Though I speak, my grief is not subsided. Though I forbear, what am I eased?- "Relieve" in :5 is the same word translated "subside" in :6. Job is therefore pointing out that the words of another can relieve grief in a way that ones' own self-talk simply cannot (Job 16:5,6).

Job 16:7 But now, God, you have surely worn me out- Or, "wearied", the same word used of the weariness of sinful Judah (Jer. 9:5; 12:5; Ez. 24:12). Job was to be read as their representative, although not personally sinful.

You have made desolate all my company- Job had sought comfort from the friends, his "company", but he feels that the lack of comfort from them is also somehow God's testing of him. Those who despair at the lack of comfort from their fellow believers would do well to adopt this perspective; that this too is from God, and as in Job's case in this speech, it is designed to drive us the closer to Him personally.

Job 16:8 You have shrivelled me up. This is a witness against me. My leanness rises up against me. It testifies to my face- Job looked at his body, as the Lord looked upon His own body from His elevated position on the cross (Ps. 22:17). The once fat and full fleshed Job (see on Job 15:27) was now thin and emaciated.

Job 16:9 He has torn me in His wrath, and persecuted me. He has gnashed on me with His teeth- Job 41:14 speaks of how terrible are the teeth of the creature God has made; but He alone can open the mouth of it and is fearless

before its' teeth. The idea of the connection back to Job 16:9 is that God knows all about teeth. He has designed them, and even if Job thinks God is gnashing at Him like a beast, he must accept that God creates the beast and its teeth.

My adversary sharpens His eyes on me- Job sees God as his adversary / enemy; he understood God to be the Satan. God's eyes often refer to the Angels. For the connection between the Satan and an Angel, see on Job 1:6.

Job 16:10 They have gaped on me with their mouth. They have struck me on the cheek reproachfully- The exact language of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, the ultimate "suffering servant" (Ps. 22:13; Mic. 5:1). I have earlier suggested that the "friends" morph with the Satan figure, adopting his mentality, and proceed to actually bring some of the sufferings upon Job. Their aggression was to the point of pulling faces and hitting him. Yet they originally came to see him to comfort him, apparently sincerely. This is how far and how quickly a false theological understanding can transform human relationships for the worse. They also spat in his face (see on Job 17:6).

They gather themselves together against me- A reference to the friends gathering themselves together to supposedly comfort Job.

Job 16:11 God delivers me to the ungodly, and casts me into the hands of the wicked- There is reason to think that Eliphaz, the leader of the friends, may have been the specific individual referred to as 'Satan' in the prologue. God singles him out for especial condemnation at the end (Job 42:7). After one of Eliphaz's speeches, Job responds with what appears to be a comment upon him, rather than God, here in :9-11. Eliphaz was a Temanite, from where Job's afflictors came. See on Job 1:6. But Job perceives that God is working through the friends; and his thoughts about them in :9,10 now therefore merge into his thoughts about God, so clearly did He see God working through them. This is a sure example as to how we can see the difficult people in our lives- as used by God. This removes some amount of personal anger with them, even though God is not forcing them to behave as they do, and they will be ultimately accountable for it as the friends were.

Job 16:12 I was at ease, and He broke me apart- There are some very evident ways in which Job spiritually grew. In Job 3:26 he originally says that his life previous to his afflictions had not been a life of ease; but as a result of his suffering, he realized that actually it had been "at ease".

Yes, He has taken me by the neck, and dashed me to pieces- Job perceives God as a lion or beast of prey, taking him off to His lair by the neck and now ripping him apart.

He has also set me up for His target- Like the friends, Job is starting to repeat himself; for he has said this in Job 6:4; 7:20. Eliphaz blames Job's troubles upon the "sons of Resheph" (Job 5:7); but Job's response is that the source of the evil in his life is ultimately from God and not any such being. Eliphaz there speaks of how man's trouble comes "as the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Resheph was known as "the lord of the arrow" and the Ugaritic tablets associate him with archery (William J. Fulco, *The Canaanite God Resheph* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1976)). We would therefore be justified in reading in an ellipsis here: man's trouble comes "as the [arrows of] the sons of Resheph fly upwards". Job's response is that "The arrows of the Almighty are in me" (Job 6:4), and he laments that God is an archer using him as his target for practice (Job 7:20; 16:12,13). Job refuses to accept Eliphaz's explanation that Job is a victim of Resheph's arrows. For Job, if God is "the Almighty" then there is no space left for Resheph. Each blow he received, each arrow strike, was from God and not Resheph.

Job 16:13 His archers surround me. He splits my kidneys apart, and does not spare. He pours out my gall on the ground- The prophets speak of archers surrounding Zion, and the language of gall and kidneys spilled on the ground is that of Jeremiah in Lamentations reflecting on the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. God was to threaten His sinful people that He would "not spare" (Jer. 13:14; Lam. 2:2). He finally did, in His grace. Job has earlier hinted that God would have a tender desire to the work of His hands at the end (Job 14:15), but in his weakness he has for now lost that perspective. And yet at this very nadir of faith and understanding, he becomes the representative of God's people who felt He had not spared them.

Job 16:14 He breaks me with blow after blow. He runs on me like a giant- LXX "They...", as if Job saw God manifest in the abusers. This was the situation in the Babylonian overthrow of Judah. Just as Eliphaz had exaggerated Job's position to the point of accusing him of running upon God as a charging soldier (Job 15:26), so

Job now makes the same mistake and does the same, exaggerating positions and extrapolating to make God like a giant charging at him. This was not at all the case. But once one party in a dialogue starts distorting things grossly, the partner in the dialogue tends to do the same in other contexts. And this is a lesson for us today.

It was so hard for Job to accept that God and not any orthodox 'Satan' figure was his adversary. It's one thing to deduce from the Bible that both good and disaster comes from the Lord, as per Is. 45:5–7. It's of course quite another to accept it in real life, and Job is an inspiring example. Job 16:9–14 is so powerful – the poetry speaks of Job's awesome and even angry realization that *God* is in fact [in a sense] his enemy / adversary. "Here Job... identifies God as his enemy rather than his advocate. From his perspective he is led to wonder if the God in whom he trusted is not in reality his Satan" (J.E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) p. 30). See on Job 19:26.

Job 16:15 I have sewed sackcloth on my skin- The language of the Messianic Ps. 69:11 about the suffering of the Lord Jesus. Sinful Israel were called to do this in repentance (Jer. 6:26); they refused to do so, and so they were covered with sackcloth at the time of their judgment (Lam. 2:10). Job was sorry for himself, and didn't use sackcloth as a sign of repentance but of self pity. This was to be transformed at the end when he really repents unconditionally.

And have thrust my horn in the dust- His horn may refer to his reproductive organ, so desperate was he to express his grief.

Job 16:16 My face is red with weeping. Deep darkness is on my eyelids- "On my eyelids is the shadow of death" (Job 16:16 AV). Job felt he was facing death right before his eyes, and the shadow of that death was cast over his eyes. But God disagrees, challenging Job that he has not in fact seen "the doors of the shadow of death" (Job 38:17 s.w.). Job had only seen death from a personal, human perspective. God sees death for what it really is, and it is far more terrible than man perceives. For from God's perspective it carries with it the tragedy of the eternity which a man has missed, if he has rejected God. And God is saying that Job hasn't see death from that perspective.

Job 16:17 Although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure- Job oscillates between accepting he has sinned, and protesting his innocence. The final appearance of God leads him to the unqualified conclusion that he is indeed a sinner, and this was God's intended outcome for the exiles in captivity. Job's oscillation however is understandable once we perceive that he is being set up as representative of God's sinful people, represented by the friends. He is suffering the judgment for sins when he himself is innocent, pointing forward to the Lord's representative sacrifice.

Job 16:18 Earth, don't cover my blood- Here he seems to associate himself with unfairly persecuted Abel, whose blood cried out for justice (Gen. 4:10). And yet he earlier compares his seeking of death and not finding it, as a marked man, with the judgment of Cain. He feels he is being treated as Cain when he is in fact as Abel. This is exactly what happened to the Lord in hearing our sins. See on Job 11:15.

Let my cry have no place to rest- Job makes the amazing comment: "Although He slays me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). The language of 'slaying' takes us back to the Mosaic commands about how a 'slayer' of a man might be killed by the 'avenger of blood'. Job saw God as slaying him; yet he also sees God as the 'witness' in the case (Job 16:19), and the avenger of Job's blood (Job 19:25). Job even asks God to not let the earth cover his blood, so that God as the avenger of Job's blood may avenge Job's death, continuing the allusions to the avenger of blood scenario. Job feels he is innocent blood. Job does *not* see 'Satan' as his slayer, and God as the avenger of his blood. Instead Job – in a quite breathtaking set of associations – sees God in all these things: the slayer, the legal witness to the slayer, the avenger of blood, and the One who will enforce the doing of justice in this case, the One who will not let the earth cover Job's blood. If Job really believed in a superhuman Satan, in Satan as the bad guy and God as the avenger of the injustice, he surely would've expressed himself differently. As Job imagines God as it were taking vengeance on Himself, so he came to portray for all time the way that evil and good are indeed both ultimately from God.

Job 16:19 Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven. He who vouches for me is on high- See on :18. Job in his

depths came to know God as his “witness in heaven”; in his former life, “when the eye saw me, it gave witness [s.w.] to me” (Job 29:11). But Job was brought to learn that the only ultimate witness in life is God, and it is His testimony and not man’s which is meaningful.

Job 16:20 My friends scoff at me. My eyes pour out tears to God- The emphasis is upon "God"; he had poured out his tears to the friends and they had scoffed at him. So his experience of disillusion with his brethren didn't turn him away from God, as so often happens; instead it drove him to throw himself more intimately upon his God.

Job 16:21 that He would maintain the right of a man with God, of a son of man with his neighbour!- Job sees his enemy as his "neighbour", surely referring to the friends. Again we have the hint that they had effectively morphed into the satan figure bringing some of the actual distresses upon him. Job felt like having a court case with them before God. But God's final appearance is to hold a court case against them all, Job included. Clearly the lesson is that instead of judging our brother and wanting justice established with him, we should concern ourselves with God's judgment of us, and our injustice before Him.

Maintaining the right is legal language. Job appeals for ‘witnesses’ (Job 9:33–35; 16:18–22; 19:20–27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a ‘case’ with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29–31 is effectively Job’s declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job’s earlier plea: “Sleeplessly I wait for His reply” (Job 16:22). It’s as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of ‘Satan’, suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about ‘Satan’ figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the “holy ones”, had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: “To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job’s guilt] is true” (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters.

AV "O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!". "Plead" is the same word translated "umpire" in Job 9:33. The word suggests 'one who is right', a reasoner, an advocate, one who pleads, a reprover (Job 40:2 s.w.). Job's request is not simply for a mediator; he would have used a different word if so. He seems to want to put God in the dock, but knows this is not appropriate; he wants someone else to do this who can legitimately do it. And he is rebuked for this in Job 40:2.

Job 16:22 For when a few years have come, I shall go the way of no return- This may be a purposeful challenge to the statements of Eliphaz in the previous chapter, that Job is about to be smitten with death at any moment. Job instead gives himself a few years. We note that Job directly engages with the words of the friends, whereas they attack him in terms of vague generalities.

Job Chapter 17

Job 17:1 My spirit is consumed. My days are extinct, and the grave is ready for me- LXX "I seek for burial, and obtain it not". To have no burial and to have their corpse thrown on the open field was the very punishment several times threatened to Judah's leadership. Again Job oscillates; in Job 16:22 he has just given himself a few years, but now within the same speech he considers himself already as without spirit and at death's door. This is typical of a depressed sufferer, and confirms that there was a historical Job who suffered these things.

Job 17:2 Surely there are mockers with me. My eye dwells on their provocation- Even in deep illness, a man can still dwell on the unkind words of others. This is one lesson of Job- the power of words. LXX "strangers have stolen my goods", also relevant to the captivity at the hands of Babylon. This further confirms the idea that the satan figure of the prologue has morphed into the friends, and it was they personally who brought some of the sufferings upon him.

Job 17:3 Now give a pledge, be collateral for me with Yourself. Who is there who will strike hands with me?- The person in view is clearly God, as :4 continues to address Him. To strike hands is parallel with giving a pledge as in Prov. 6:1. Job is here inviting God to enter court with him, and to pay a pledge, a kind of caution money required before the court sits, in case He is indeed found guilty. And that bond money is to be God Himself. This is indeed arrogant of Job. He is asking God to stake His very own Divine self, all He stands for, and risk losing it if Job is right. When God finally appears in judgment, Job is quite rightly humbled. But for all this arrogance of a moment, it is the friends whom God condemns and justifies Job. We cannot justify arrogance or sins of depression or hot blood, they remain as sins. But we notice, we are forced to notice, that God passes over them in Job's case and sees the man's core devotion to Him. It is the arrogance and lies of the friends, their hatred of their brother, which is to Him so hard to forgive unless, as it were, He has the 'help' of Job in forgiving them himself and praying to Him for their restoration. We learn so very much from all this.

Job 17:4 For You have hidden their heart from understanding, therefore You shall not exalt them- Job considers the friends have been stopped from understanding the real facts and truths about Job's case, because God doesn't want to exalt them. God can indeed close eyes of understanding, but He does so in response to the attitudes of the people concerned; just as He hardened Pharaoh's already hardened heart. We see that God is capable of working directly upon the mind of man, to give or take understanding.

Job 17:5 He who denounces his friends for a prey, even the eyes of his children shall fail- Perhaps the idea is that in the envisioned court case of :3, Job is not going to denounce the friends before God. Job may here be quoting a proverb known at the time. Job is angry with the friends in his speeches, but has a basic desire to save them and not to see them dragged by him into court for condemnation. This basic desire to save people needs to be in us too, and if it is, as with Job at the end (Job 42:7,8), then God will use us to save people. This is what is so essential in all evangelism; technique and evangelism materials may be as perfect as man can make them, but without this basic desire to save others, it is all useless.

Job 17:6 But He has made me a byword of the people. They spit in my face- The friends have earlier been accused of striking Job (see on Job 16:10), and the "they" here refers likewise to the friends (:5). They were so furious with him that they spat in his face, thereby again connecting him with the future sufferings of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant after the pattern of Job. Their aggression was to the point of spitting at and hitting him. Yet they originally came to see him to comfort him, apparently sincerely. This is how far and how quickly a false theological understanding can transform human relationships for the worse.

Job 17:7 My eye also is dim by reason of sorrow. All my members are as a shadow- Failing eyesight appears to also have been experienced by the Lord on the cross. "Shadow" is literally a shade, and is very often used in the sense of giving shade and comfort to others. Through his sufferings, Job was to become a shade for salvation to the friends who were abusing him, just as the Lord achieved for His enemies through His crucifixion.

Job 17:8 Upright men shall be astonished at this. The innocent shall stir up himself against the godless- This matches the astonishment of the Jews at the ghastly physical appearance of Christ on the cross (Is. 52:14). Job

begins to have the sense that his sufferings are somehow for the sake of others; and this is revealed as the key to his suffering, as an innocent man suffering as if he has committed sins he hasn't, so that he might thereby become a representative saviour. Just as the Lord Jesus did, to a far greater extent. So now he muses that his sufferings will stir up other innocent people to action. He is starting to come towards the climax of the book, when he is asked to pray for and intercede to save the friends (Job 42:7,8).

Job 17:9 Yet shall the righteous hold on to his way. He who has clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger- Job has been lamenting the decline of his physical health, to the point he feels he is now facing death (:11). But he has held on to his way spiritually and insists he has clean hands. So he knows that at some future point, he must "grow stronger and stronger". This implies a resurrection. See on :17.

Job 17:10 But as for you all, come on now again; I shall not find a wise man among you- Paul alludes to these words lamenting that there was not found a wise man amongst the church at Corinth, who could correctly judge his brother (1 Cor. 6:5). This is an identical context- the friends couldn't judge their brother Job rightly because they were themselves morally compromised and lacked wisdom. We can infer that Paul understood Job to mean that there was not a wise man amongst the friends *to judge him rightly*. For that is how Paul uses this quotation.

Job 17:11 My days are past, my plans are broken off, as are the thoughts of my heart- The word for "plans" is not the Hebrew word which would be used if "plans" were simply meant. In nearly all of the other 28 occurrences of the word in the Old Testament, the word means "wickedness" or "lewdness". Job again moves closer towards the final confession of sin he will make, and away from his earlier self righteousness. He seems to be saying that death will finally end his sin, because his sin is parallel with his thoughts, and they will perish at death. Or it could be that he was so carrying the guilt of others, as their sin bearer, that he feels a wicked sinner when in fact he wasn't; just as the Lord was to carry the sin of His people in Himself on the cross. The difference of course was that although Job is presented as "perfect" before God in Job 1:1, he was not Jesus, and he had sinned, and he minimized that sin- until the final appearance of God elicits this realization from him.

Job 17:12 They change the night into day, saying 'The light is near' in the presence of darkness- The argument was that because Job was in darkness, then light had to come soon; whereas Job felt he was about to die, before the dawn broke (:11,13). The friends never deploy this argument; Job is transferring his own thoughts onto the friends, and then knocking down the argument. And they then do just the same to him (see on Job 18:3). This again is an example to us of what happens when dialogue goes wrong. The whole dialogues are a masterful example to us in this respect. The restoration prophets again seize upon Job's words here and reframe them; the darkness of the exile was indeed to soon end in the day of Zion's glad morning of restoration. And so it happened with Job.

Job 17:13 If I look for Sheol as my house, if I have spread my couch in the darkness- Job was lying on a couch (Job 7:13), and felt that he was already lying in the darkness of the grave. The deserted house he was lying in (see on Job 15:28) was effectively *sheol*, the grave, for him.

Job 17:14 if I have said to corruption, 'You are my father'; to the worm, 'My mother', and 'my sister'- Job felt he was in a living death and therefore the idea that hope was just around the corner (12,15) was meaningless, because death had already come effectively, and he felt as if already in *sheol*.

Job 17:15 where then is my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it?- Originally, Job believed that his "hope" was predicated upon his upright ways (Job 4:6). But Job through his sufferings comes to feel he now has no "hope" (Job 7:6; 14:19; 17:15; 19:10). The friends suggest that Job had only the "hope" of the hypocrite, and this "hope" would perish (Job 4:6; 8:13; 27:8). Job had integrity, and on that basis he thought he had "hope". He suffered, and he lost that "hope", because he assumed that his sufferings meant that he was not in fact righteous. And yet he often reflects that he is righteous and is suffering unjustly. And so he is led to the realization that the "hope" of the righteous is by God's grace and not because of the "integrity of [Job's] ways". Judah in captivity likewise lost their "hope" (Ez. 19:5; 37:11). But the message of the restoration prophets was that "there is hope in your end" (Jer. 31:17); they were prisoners or exiles in "hope" (Zech. 9:12).

Job 17:16 Shall it go down with me to the gates of Sheol, or descend together into the dust?- Job saw *sheol* as death, the grave, the time of turning back to dust. And he felt he could take no hope with him there. Here again we have Job at the low point of his oscillation between believing in a resurrection, as he does in :9 and often, and yet denying it. Or at best, placing it under serious question. But for all his fluctuating faith and spirituality, he is the one justified in the end; and the self confident friends are condemned. We learn at least that perfectly consistent maintenance of faith and hope is not necessary for God to impute righteousness and save us by grace. Job is rightly condemned at the end and does repent, but the up points of his faith cycle are noted by God.

Job Chapter 18

Job 18:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered- Bildad doesn't even engage with Job's words after briefly doing so in :4, but rather just vents his anger in this speech, threatening Job with all manner of condemnation; and the longer he rants on, the more convinced he becomes that Job is "wicked" and doesn't know God (:5,21). This is the problem when we don't engage with the words and arguments of another, or pay mere lip service to doing so; we can fall headlong into a feeding frenzy of angry accusation, resulting in doing what God condemns- condemning our brother, imputing sin rather than righteousness to a person we have created in our own minds, who merely bears the name of the one who began merely with a theological difference with us.

Job 18:2 How long will you hunt for words? Consider, and afterwards we will speak- This again is imputing to Job an image which the friends like to assume he has, rather than engaging with what he has actually said. Job appears to be blurting out his feelings, not hunting for words to say.

Job 18:3 Why are we counted as animals, which have become unclean in your sight?- Again as noted on :2, this is a case of attacking a straw man image of an opponent. For Job has not treated them as animals. They have themselves proclaimed all men as "unclean" by birth (Job 15:14), and yet they decide Job has called them unclean, and they object to it. But as Job transfers his feelings back onto the friends in Job 17:12, so they are doing the same to him. They may posit that all men are unclean, including themselves; but if Job is even supposed to have said this, then he is to be condemned. This again is an example to us of what happens when dialogue goes wrong. The dialogues begin and end with Job and the friends in silence. The implication is that all that was said had been better not said.

Job 18:4 You who tear yourself in your anger, shall the earth be forsaken for you? Or shall the rock be removed out of its place?- This is the only point in this speech where Bildad makes any attempt to engage with the actual words of Job; see on :1. And he quickly moves on to generalize about Job as a wicked person for the rest of his speech. In any case, he is only superficially engaging with Job's words. Job has said that he felt as if God were tearing him apart like a wild beast (Job 16:9); but Bildad twists this, or simply misremembers it, to Job saying that he was tearing himself apart. Job has argued that the process of erosion wears down the greatest mountains and removes them (Job 14:18,19), and so likewise the strongest man is eventually worn down to dust. But Bildad denies this; perhaps he was ignorant of the process of erosion, and considered it bunk science. For him, present realities are all that count. Mountains aren't removed, in his experience. And yet they are, by faith (Mt. 17:20); and the great mountain which God would surely remove was Babylon, and He would establish the mountain of His restored people and Kingdom in Zion (Zech. 4:7; Dan. 2:45). The exiles disbelieved this, and thus were like Bildad, seeing only what was immediately before their own eyes. Bildad considered that the *eretz* ("land") could never be "forsaken"; but that is just what happened. The very phrase is used of the land being forsaken, because God's people had forsaken Him (Lev. 26:43). The hope of the restoration prophets was that the land would no longer be forsaken (Is. 62:4). But just as Bildad considered such a thing impossible, so God's people had done.

Job 18:5 Yes, the light of the wicked shall be put out, the spark of his fire shall not shine- Much of Bildad's condemnation of Job in :5-21 appears to be taken from the "wisdom of the Beni Kedem", the children of the east (1 Kings 4:30). Bildad has decided Job is sinful and very wicked, because of the extent of his sufferings. And he brings in now descriptions of the wicked man taken from other sources. Through these allusions and quotations, he is lead to yet further condemn and slander Job.

Job 18:6 The light shall be dark in his tent. His lamp above him shall be put out- Light becoming dark is exactly the phrase used about the judgment coming upon Judah (Is. 5:10; 13:10; Jer. 13:16). Indeed this had happened to Job, but insofar as he was representing God's people who were to suffer this.

Job 18:7 The steps of his strength shall be shortened. His own counsel shall cast him down- An oblique reference to the way Job was apparently dying before his time, with a shortened life. Here we have another connection between Job and Hezekiah, who had the same experience, but like Job was restored out of it. Yet Hezekiah didn't make use of that restoration, just as the exiles didn't.

Job 18:8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he wanders into its mesh- I noted on :5 that Bildad has

concluded that Job is wicked because of the extent of his sufferings; and he begins quoting or alluding to standard condemnations of the wicked from the wisdom of the east. And this leads him to ever more falsely accuse Job. For it was simply not so that Job was falling into his own trap. For he had lived justly and uprightly before his trials (Job 1:1).

Job 18:9 A snare will take him by the heel. A trap will catch him- I noted on :8 that this idea that Job had fallen into his own snare was totally untrue. But it was how he was judged and considered by men. In this respect, he was completely identified with the sins of Israel, who indeed fell into their own snare (Is. 8:14; 24:17,18; Hos. 5:1). He was a representative figure.

Job 18:10 A noose is hidden for him in the ground, a trap for him in the way- Jeremiah alludes to this in complaining that the Jews had hid snares for him (Jer. 18:22). He often alludes to Job and saw himself as Job-persecuted by his own people, whom he vainly tried to reform.

Job 18:11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall chase him at his heels- This looks ahead to Jerusalem, represented by Job, surrounded on every side by her enemies. The "terrors" are imagined to be demon-like figures under the control of "the king of terrors" (s.w., :14). As noted on :14, this wrong idea is being deconstructed.

Job 18:12 His strength shall be famished. Calamity shall be ready at his side- The destruction of Jerusalem by famine may be in view, prefigured by Job being so hungry that he had to beg for bread (see on Job 15:23).

Job 18:13 The members of his body shall be devoured. The firstborn of death shall devour his members- The phrase recalls the destroying Angel who destroyed the Egyptians and would have also destroyed the Israelite firstborn were it not for the blood of the Passover lamb. The Satan figure was associated with an obedient Divine angel who brought the trials upon Job (see on Job 1:6). "Devour" is the same Hebrew word used of how Job's wealth was "consumed" by Divine fire (Job 1:16). Again, Job is representative of an apostate Israel who likewise had their members (s.w. "branches") devoured by the fire of Divine judgment (s.w. Ez. 19:14; Hos. 11:6).

Job 18:14 He shall be rooted out of his tent where he trusts. He shall be brought to the king of terrors- Significantly, it is the friends who make allusion to the 'Satan' figures and gods as if they are real, whereas Job in his responses always denies their reality and sees God as the direct source of His sufferings. Bildad speaks of how Job's troubles are to be associated with "the king of terrors"; Eliphaz blames them upon the "sons of Resheph" (Job 5:7); but Job's response is that the source of the evil in his life is ultimately from *God* and not any such being. See on Job 5:7. The Bible personifies death as a person; that is the king of terrors (Ps. 49:14; Is. 28:15), rather than the superhuman being of the friends' imagination.

Job 18:15 There shall dwell in his tent that which is none of his. Sulphur shall be scattered on his habitation- Living in early times, the friends were likely aware of the fate of Sodom. Job's children and wealth had been destroyed by Divine fire, just as Sodom was, and perhaps sulphur was also used. God's sinful people are likewise identified with Sodom (Is. 1:10; Ez. 16:46; Am. 4:11), the destruction of Jerusalem was seen as that of Sodom (Lam. 4:6), just as the friends here identify Job with Sodom.

Job 18:16 His roots shall be dried up beneath. Above shall his branch be cut off- The theme of 'drying up' or 'withering' is significant. Bildad considers Job to have been 'dried up' by God's judgment (Job 8:12), and the word is used of how God withered or dried up Judah at the hands of their invaders (Jer. 12:4; 23:10; Ez. 17:9,10,24; Zech. 11:17; Lam. 4:8; Is. 40:7,8- although the prophetic word of God requiring their restoration would endure, despite their drying up). The dry bones of Judah in captivity were withered or dried up (Ez. 37:11). So Job's 'drying up' was again, a sharing in the representative suffering of God's people. Job's personal response to his 'drying up' was to reflect that God dries up waters and also sends them forth as floods (Job 12:15 s.w.); He can give and He can take, just as Job had initially realized (Job 2:10). Just as He dried up Job / Israel, so He could abundantly send forth

waters; just as He did at the Red Sea. Restoration and salvation was just as easy for Him as destruction, to put it another way. The drying up of Job was also understood by him as referring to his death (Job 14:11), but God could raise him from the dead and have a desire to him again (Job 14:15). Eliphaz wrongly argues that the Divine 'drying up' of a person means permanent extinction (Job 15:30), as does Bildad (Job 18:16); but Job always sees the 'drying up' as part of a Divine action which also has a counterpart, the pouring out again of waters, or resurrection of the dried up, withered bones. Likewise Judah in captivity thought that their drying up, their dry bones, were incapable of revival (Ez. 37:11); but the message is that they could indeed be revived, and their drying up was but a presage to their eternal revival.

This connects with the thought of Job's words in Job 14:8: "Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stock dies in the ground". "Earth" is *eretz*, the land (of Israel). If merely "soil" was intended, a different word would have been used. Again, we see the drama of Job has been tweaked, under Divine inspiration, to become the narrative for the exiles. The root had indeed largely died in the land at the time of the Babylonian invasion, but it still had some life and would "bud" again (Job 14:9). Job was the man with great roots who had been cut down but hadn't completely died (Job 8:17); his roots had been dried up (Job 18:16; 29:19). He represented Judah, whose roots were throughout the land as a tree transplanted by God (s.w. Ps. 80:9). Those roots were withered by the invasions (Is. 5:24), but out of those dry roots would grow up a "tender plant / branch" (Is. 11:1,10; 53:2), using the same word for "tender" as in Job 14:7. This Messianic suffering servant was to be based upon Job, and representative of all God's restored people. They were to again spread their roots in the land of promise in a restored Kingdom (Is. 37:31; Jer. 17:8), after the pattern of Job's restoration.

Job 18:17 His memory shall perish from the earth. He shall have no name in the street- This was the most awful fate for an oriental sheikh or leader. Is. 26:14 uses this language about Babylon, who initially refused to let the Jews return.

Job 18:18 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world- The idea of being driven away into darkness is that of condemnation, as is used of the driving of God's condemned people into exile (Is. 8:22; Jer. 23:12). Again, Job suffered the condemnation of the wicked without being wicked as charged. And just as the Lord's death made Him be perceived as an accursed criminal, although He was innocent, so the friends' judgments of Job made him appear "wicked" when he wasn't.

Job 18:19 He shall have neither son nor grandson among his people, nor any remaining where he lived- Clearly an oblique reference to the fate of Job's children. Perhaps the desolation and emptying of homes and areas in Israel and Judah is in view, after the people were carried into exile.

Job 18:20 Those who come after shall be astonished at his day, as those who went before were frightened- "Astonished" is s.w. "desolation" in the descriptions of the fate of the land when its people would go into exile (Lev. 26:34,35; Lam. 1:4). The promise of restoration was that the new covenant would change this and restore the desolate (Jer. 33:10). Bildad failed to see this, assuming that all judgment was to be eternal. The idea of ultimate restoration was out of his mind, as it was with the faithless exiles.

Job 18:21 Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous. This is the place of him who doesn't know God- Clearly Job did "know God". We see here for all time the danger of dashing headlong along a path of reasoning about a person which leads us to a totally wrong and slanderous position about them. Job 36:26 uses the same phrase in what appears to be Elihu's take on this- which is that in fact God is too great to be known by any man. His final appearance makes it clear that to know God is to repent and accept His grace.

Job Chapter 19

Job 19:1 Then Job answered- This speech sees Job bitterly lament his treatment by God and the friends. Indeed everything was so unfair. But out of all this deep self pity, he comes to the classic expression of his faith in resurrection and judgment in :25-27. Taking any of his statements alone would lead to the impression that he was almost narcissistic in his self-pity, but it is out of this down cycle that is born the expression of faith and yet deeper understanding of :25-27.

Job 19:2 How long will you torment me, and crush me with words?- If nothing else we see here the power of words. The friends had come to comfort, but ended up crushing him. Eliphaz had earlier concluded that Job was "crushed" (s.w.) because of his sins (Job 5:4) and so he thought he could crush Job with words as well. Even if Job had indeed been condemned, his friends ought still to have sought to save him. Through this experience he came to bear the "torment" which the exiles would during the Babylonian invasion and captivity (s.w. Is. 51:23; Lam. 1:4).

Job 19:3 You have reproached me ten times. You aren't ashamed that you attack me- There have not yet been ten speeches by the friends. So "ten times" is being used to mean 'totally' or 'many times', as in Gen. 31:41; Num. 14:22; Neh. 4:12; Dan. 1:20. We must understand that Semitic languages don't use numbers always in the strictly literal sense which European languages tend to. The friends were so sure that Job was condemned that they lost all sense of shame and personal guilt in how they treated him.

Job 19:4 If it is true that I have erred, my error remains with myself- The aggression of the friends was because they thought they had the right to join in the apparent Divine condemnation of him; rather than leaving the matter between God and Job. This mentality is seen all around us today. We note however that Job is still qualifying his sinfulness ["if it is true..."]; and his final repentance reflects a total shedding of this kind of careful self qualification.

Job 19:5 If indeed you will magnify yourselves against me- The Messianic Psalms record David and the Lord Jesus feeling that their enemies had magnified themselves against them (Ps. 35:26; 38:16; 41:9; 55:12). Ps. 41:9 applies the term to Judas, who was typified by the friends as the Lord Jesus was by Job.

And plead against me my reproach- Pleading is legal language. Job had done nothing wrong to the friends, but he feels they had come into court to quote his "reproach" as evidence he had sinned, and therefore were demanding his judgment. When they should have left any possible sin as a matter between Job and God (:4).

Job 19:6 know now that God has subverted me, and has surrounded me with His net- "Subverted" translates a Hebrew word which clearly means to be perverse or wicked with another person. Elihu sternly rebukes Job for this statement, saying that God will *not* "pervert judgment" (Job 34:12). Again we marvel at the grace of how God later says that Job has spoken what was right about Him (Job 42:7). Whilst that statement may refer simply to Job's expression of total repentance, we would still expect it to be qualified by some clause to the effect that "although earlier Job accused me of many awful things". There is no such clause in Job 42:7. The absence of it, bearing in mind Job's wrong statements about God which Elihu has reminded us of, is surely noticeable and intended to be noticed. We are left marvelling at the extent of grace and imputed righteousness, through faith by grace.

Job 19:7 Behold, I cry out because of injustice, but I am not heard. I cry for help, but there is no justice- Job now turns to lament how he feels God has treated him, having complained of how the friends have unjustly treated him. Job feels he has 'cried out' to God for justice and not been heard (Job 19:7; 30:20); and that there is nothing wrong with crying out to God in distress, it is a perfectly natural reaction (Job 24:12). One comment upon this is that the young ravens cry out to God for food and yet are not always heard (Job 38:41 s.w.). But God in the wider picture sustains all of creation by grace. Job did well to cry out to God even if there was no answer, because the hypocrites do not 'cry out' to God when they are facing judgment (Job 36:13 s.w.). Job feels hurt that God has not responded to his 'crying out' because he says that when the needy cried out to him, he had heard (Job 29:12 s.w.). But here we see his works based approach; he thought that his response to those who cried out to him meant that therefore God must respond to *his* crying out. And God is not so primitive. His apparent silence is because His response is not predicated upon human works and charity. It is by grace alone, as is taught in His final appearance to Job. The exiles likewise were to finally see the response to their crying out to God in the restoration (Is. 58:9), just as their representative Jonah cried out to God from the belly of *sheol* amidst the sea of nations, and was heard (s.w. Jonah

2:2).

Job 19:8 He has walled up my way so that I can't pass, and has set darkness in my paths- Job is feeling confined, imprisoned, blocked in. But this was what happened to Judah in their judgment (Hos. 2:6); Job although righteous was the representative of Judah. See on Job 10:11,12.

Num. 22:22 describes how an Angel of God stood in a narrow, walled path before Balaam, so that his donkey fell down beneath him. That Angel is described as a "satan", an adversary, to Balaam. Job comments how the sufferings which the 'Satan' brought upon him were God 'walling up my way that I cannot pass' (Job 19:8). The connection is clear- and surely indicates that Job's satan was a satan-Angel, acting as an adversary to Job just as such an Angel did to Balaam. See on Job 1:6. Job and Balaam have certain similarities- both were prophets (in Job's case see Job 4:4; 23:12; 29:4 cp. 15:8; Amos 3:7; James 5:10,11); both had genuine difficulty in understanding God's ways, but they to varying degrees consciously rebelled against what they did understand; both thus became angry with God (in the Angel), and were reproved by God through being brought to consider the Angel-controlled natural creation.

Job 19:9 He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head- "Stripped me" is s.w. "fell upon" in describing how the troops of Job's enemies fell upon his children and wealth (Job 1:17). It was God who did this, Job perceives; they were "His troops" (:12). The same word is used of the stripping of God's people of their glory (Ez. 16:39; 23:26; Mic. 3:3), which only happened because they themselves did not strip themselves of their clothing in repentance (s.w. Is. 32:11; Ez. 26:16). The stripping of Job, which also recalls the stripping of the priest Aaron of his clothes and "crown" [mitre] when his priesthood ended (Num. 20:26,28), was therefore to elicit repentance in him. And this is what was finally achieved at the end of the book. See on Job 40:10.

Job 19:10 He has broken me down on every side, and I am gone. My hope He has plucked up like a tree- Originally, Job believed that his "hope" was predicated upon his upright ways (Job 4:6). But Job through his sufferings comes to feel he now has no "hope" (Job 7:6; 14:19; 17:15; 19:10). The friends suggest that Job had only the "hope" of the hypocrite, and this "hope" would perish (Job 4:6; 8:13; 27:8). Job had integrity, and on that basis he thought he had "hope". He suffered, and he lost that "hope", because he assumed that his sufferings meant that he was not in fact righteous. And yet he often reflects that he is righteous and is suffering unjustly. And so he is led to the realization that the "hope" of the righteous is by God's grace and not because of the "integrity of [Job's] ways". Judah in captivity likewise lost their "hope" (Ez. 19:5; 37:11). But the message of the restoration prophets was that "there is hope in your end" (Jer. 31:17); they were prisoners or exiles in "hope" (Zech. 9:12). And we may get the possible whiff of restoration of hope in Job; for now he compares himself to a tree plucked up, whereas in Job 14:7-10 he has said that a tree has hope of sprouting again, but he has no hope at all. Now, he at least sees himself as the tree. These were baby steps towards faith in restoration.

Job 19:11 He has also kindled His wrath against me. He counts me among His adversaries- Job feels God's wrath kindled against him (Job 19:11). The innocent Job experienced the judgments of God's people, against whom God's wrath was kindled (Dt. 11:17; 2 Kings 23:26). Significantly, we find Elihu's wrath kindled against both Job and the friends (Job 32:2,3), but the wrath of God was kindled only against the friends (Job 42:7). Elihu is therefore not fully reflecting God's position about Job. I have repeatedly demonstrated that the innocent Job was suffering the judgment for the sins of God's people. In the end, this came to full term in the salvation of the friends on account of Job's intercession. God's wrath was not personally against Job, it was against the friends. But Job suffered God's wrath against him, because he was to be the saviour of the friends by offering sacrifice for them and praying for them. This looks forward to the work of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant based upon Job; experiencing the judgment for our sins, and through the representative nature of His sacrifice, being able to save us.

Job 19:12 His troops come on together, build a siege ramp against me, and encamp around my tent- See on :9. Job represents both the Lord Jesus Christ and Israel. He was representative of both. This is nicely shown by how the language of 19:12-14 is reminiscent of the descriptions of the Roman armies (Christ's armies- Mt. 22:7) surrounding

Jerusalem in AD70. There then follows a description of Job's sufferings which has clear links with that of Christ's crucifixion in Ps. 69. "He hath put my brethren far from me (cp. Ps. 69:8), and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me". Note how the last phrase links with Christ's description of Judas as "my own familiar friend", implying there may be a connection between the one-time friends of Job, and Judas. Both epitomized the Jewish system, and both were at one stage trusted by Job/Jesus. Other descriptions of Job's sufferings in the language of Ps. 69 include Job 30:9 "Now am I their song, yea, I am their byword" (cp. Ps. 69:12); Job 22:11 "abundance of waters cover thee" (cp. Ps. 69:1,2); Job 2:11 the friends came "to mourn with him and to comfort him", although Job said he turned to them for comfort in vain (16:2). The Hebrew in Job 2:11 is identical to that in Ps. 69:20, describing Christ looking in vain for comforters.

Job 19:13 He has put my brothers far from me. My acquaintances are wholly estranged from me- The brothers of Job turned against him (:17) because they all considered him "smitten of God" just as the suffering servant was considered (Is. 53:4); the Lord Jesus likewise had this experience, being initially rejected by his brothers (Jn. 7:5).

Job 19:14 My relatives have gone away. My familiar friends have forgotten me- This total rejection by everyone was indeed lamentable, but it led to Job turning the more intensely toward God, despite the apparent distance of God from him. And this apparently hopeless situation of being rejected by all his family in Job 19:13-16 was reversed at the end when all his relatives again came to him (Job 42:11). The way they give him a piece of money and an earring appears to be some kind of gratitude for his salvation of them. They thus recognized their guilt and expressed deep gratitude that although they had rejected him, his sufferings and their rejection of him had led to their salvation. For we can deduce from the gift of a piece of money that they feel they have sinned, and he has saved them. So again, his restoration was the restoration of others, the friends and his family who had rejected him. He had born the sufferings for their sins, and thus becomes a type of the Lord Jesus, who suffered the judgments for sin in order to save those who had rejected and abused him.

Job 19:15 Those who dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger. I am an alien in their sight- This is quoted in the Messianic Ps. 69:18 concerning the Lord's sufferings on the cross.

Job 19:16 I call to my servant, and he gives me no answer. I beg him with my mouth- The begging was for bread; see on Job 15:23. This is how desperately low Job became. "Beg" is the word for 'grace'; see on :21.

Job 19:17 My breath is offensive to my wife. I am loathsome to the children of my own mother- "Loathsome" is not the best translation, the Hebrew word is usually translated to be gracious to. Perhaps the idea is that he asked his brothers for grace, but wasn't afforded it. The usage of the word suggests Job for the first time is thinking about grace, undeserved favour; and this is what he is led to realize at the end when God appears. But this was one of the baby steps towards that. See on :21.

Job 19:18 Even young children despise me. If I arise, they speak against me- Job was finally to be the saving hero of his society. Likewise the exiles who had been despised were to be praised by all in the restored Kingdom (Is. 41:9 s.w.). All because Job was the suffering servant, despised and rejected of all and yet finally saviour of those who despised him, just as the Lord Jesus to a far greater extent (Is. 53:3).

Job 19:19 All my familiar friends abhor me. They whom I loved have turned against me- This abhorrence of Job by the friends is related to the way they considered mankind to be "abominable and corrupt" (Job 15:16). "Abhor" is the same word as "abominable". The simple truth is as Job put it- God has a tender desire to man, the work of His hands (Job 14:15). And whatever we posit about human nature, we say about the Lord Jesus. He fully shared that nature and yet was holy, harmless and undefiled (Heb. 7:26). Man by nature, just standing there as flesh and blood before God, is not "abominable" to Him of himself. It is sin which is the problem; and sin is not inevitable. We must bear full responsibility for our sins and cannot just pass them off as an inevitable function of our humanity. The wrong view of human nature held by the friends affected their view of Job and people in practice. The lower our view of human nature, the more likely we are to despise human beings rather than value them and speak well of them because they are made in the image of God (James 3:9).

It must be noted that the satan never occurs again, under that name. The real adversary of Job was his "friends"; and in God's final judgment, it is they who are condemned, not 'satan'. It is therefore reasonable to see a connection between the satan and the 'friends' of Job; they too walked to and fro in the earth in order to come to him, as it seems satan did at the beginning. And we pause here for another lesson. The great satan / adversary of Job turned out to be those he thought were his friends in the ecclesia. And so it has been, time and again, in our experience: our sorest trials often come from the words of our brethren. Without underestimating the physical affliction of Job, his real adversary was his brethren. Rather than bemoaning his physical affliction, he commented how his friends had become his satans (Job 19:19) And so with the Lord Jesus, whom Job so accurately typified. Again, without minimizing the material agony of His flesh, the essential piercing was from His rejection at the hands of those He died for. For other reasons to connect the satan with the friends, see on Job 1:6.

Job 19:20 My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh. I have escaped by the skin of my teeth- Job was just about hanging on to life, and so he had the hope of restoration. This was the position of the exiles. From their living death they would be given new skin and flesh in revival (Ez. 37:6,8) after the pattern of Job- if they wished to follow his example of repentance.

Job 19:21 Have pity on me, have pity on me, you my friends- The word for "grace" is used four times in quick succession (:16,17 and twice in :21). Job is now appealing for grace, even if he is deemed guilty. Job for the first time is thinking about grace, undeserved favour; and this is what he is led to realize at the end when God appears.

For the hand of God has touched me- "Touch" is the word used by the satan in Job 1:11, showing again that the hand of the Satan was the hand of God, and Job understood this. The friends insist that "the destroyer" [by which they surely meant an early equivalent to 'the devil' of popular belief today] had touched Job- whereas Job insists that it is *God* who had destroyed him (Job 15:21 cp. 19:10; 13:21). In some ways the book of Job is a deconstruction of the popular Persian and Canaanite myths about a 'satan' figure. Job, both in the story of his sufferings and his specific words, seeks to demonstrate that the essential issues in life is being "just with God", and not whether or not we are touched by the hand of an evil being; for the hand of God which touched Job (Job 19:21) is the hand of 'satan' into whom God delivered Job temporarily (Job 1:12). Job says that the attitude of the friends is wrong- they should be looking into themselves, rather than fantasizing about the action of some unseen evil being they imagined: "Ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in *me*?... know that there is a [personal] judgment"(Job 19:28,29).

Job understood God to be in control in Heaven; he rejects the idea of a cosmic conflict going on 'up there' which the friends seem to allude to. More specifically, Job speaks of how God's hand forms and can pierce the "crooked serpent" and smite any monster (Job 26:11-14). It's as if Job is mocking the idea that God has let him go into the hands of the cosmic monsters which the friends believed in. For Job so often stresses that it is the "hand of God" which has brought His affliction (Job 19:21; 23:2). That Divine hand was far greater than any mythical 'Satan' figure. The theme of his speech in Job 28 is that Yahweh alone is to be feared throughout the entire cosmos. Nobody else – such as the 'Satan' figures alluded to by the friends – needed to be feared.

Job 19:22 Why do you persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?- The friends ended up playing God. They presumed to judge Job according to their own limited and inaccurate theology, by assuming that he must have sinned in order to receive such terrible trials from God. Zophar claims to have revealed Job's guilt, and then says that "the heavens"- an ellipsis for "God"- have revealed Job's guilt (Job 20:27). Job figured out what was happening when he complained to them: "Why do you hound me as though you were divine?" (Job 19:22 NAB). But something good came out of all this for Job. The way the friends played God set up a kind of dialectic, from which Job came to perceive more powerfully who God really was- and, moreover, how in fact this God would ultimately save him rather than destroy and condemn him, as the friends falsely thought. By 'dialectic' I mean that the way the friends presented a false picture and manifestation of God's judgment led Job to react against it, and thereby come to a true understanding of God's judgment. Having stated his perception that the friends are indeed playing God (Job 19:22), Job goes straight on to make a solemn and important statement. The solemnity of it is witnessed by his request that what he was now going to say would be inscribed in rock with the point of a diamond as a permanent record (Job 19:24). And that solemn statement was that he knew that God would be his vindicator at the last day, that he would "see God", that he would have a bodily resurrection, and that at that time it would be the

friends who would be condemned (Job 19:25-29). This supreme statement of faith, hope and understanding was elicited from Job because of the rejection he suffered from his friends, and the way they so inaccurately and wrongly played God in wrongly condemning him on God's behalf. Job thus came to long for the judgment seat. There are few believers who have reached that level of intimacy with God- but Job did, thanks to the way his friends so cruelly turned against him. And this is a major lesson we can take from being the victim of slander, misunderstanding and misjudgment by our own brethren.

Job 19:23 Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!- The existence of the book of Job is proof enough that his wish was granted. His request, however, shows baby steps towards realizing that his sufferings can be used for a greater and wider purpose. He was not just suffering for himself. And finally his salvation of his friends and family [possibly leading to the resurrection of his slain children] was realized by him to be the outcome of this sufferings. He, the innocent, had born their sins in his own body, just as the Lord did. Earlier he had offered sacrifice for his children, but this was not enough; a representative sufferer was needed. For now, he is only just beginning to move towards this realization.

Job 19:24 That with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!- An "iron pen" is only found again in Jer. 17:1, where Judah's sin is written with an iron pen. The desire for suffering to be remembered was strong amongst the exiles as it was with Job.

Job 19:25 But as for me- Given the context, the idea may be that whether or not his suffering achieves anything for others, he is confident of his own salvation at the end.

I know that my Redeemer lives- God was the redeemer of His people from slavery and captivity (Ex. 6:6; 15:13). Job felt his sufferings had placed him in some kind of slavery or captivity, from which he needed redemption or 'buying out'. And he believed that God was that redeemer. In these feelings, he becomes the exact representative of the suffering exiles in slavery and captivity. A redeemer from slavery was typically a close relative (Lev. 25:48; s.w. "kinsman" in Ruth 4:8), and this is how Job came to perceive the God whom he felt was so apparently silent and distant. He is a parade example of not being ultimately fazed by the apparent silence of God. The exiles were intended to rejoice that they had a redeemer, again, after the pattern of Job (Is. 41:14; 43:1,14; 44:6,22,23 etc.); and their redemption from Babylon was ultimately to be from death itself (Hos. 13:14).

In the end- AV "latter day" is wrong. There is no Hebrew equivalent here for the idea of a "day". The idea is simply, in the future.

He will stand upon the earth- "Earth" here is the word for dust. If the land or physical planet earth was in view, then *eretz* would probably have been used as it is elsewhere in Job. "Stand" doesn't have to imply resurrection; the idea is of being 'raised up', as the Messiah was to be raised up from amongst His brothers (Dt. 18:15; Jer. 23:5). Putting the ideas of the verse together, Job looked for a Messiah-Saviour figure similar to himself to be raised up in the future, who would be the living God manifested in human dust and ashes like Job's (Job 7:21; 17:16). The Lord Jesus was not God Himself nor did He personally pre-exist, but Job's idea is that this person was to be his representative, of his own dust, but raised up by the living God. His sufferings led him to long for someone exactly like the Lord Jesus- and that longing ultimately came true.

Job 19:26 After my skin is destroyed- In Job 2:4-6 we have the 'Satan' commenting that Job's flesh and skin need to be harmed; but in Job 19:6,26 we have Job stating his faith that even though *God* destroys his flesh and skin, yet God shall ultimately save him. See on Job 16:14. Job

Then in my flesh shall I see God- Job understood God to be a personal being, and that in a bodily form he would 'see' Him. Seeing his body was to be destroyed in death, this can only mean he believed in a resurrection of the body. And yet he was to be brought to realize the 'now but not yet' nature of the Kingdom experience; for he came to realize that man can even now "see God" through repentance and acceptance of His great salvation: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee" (Job 42:5 AV). See on Job 42:5.

Job 19:27 whom I, even I, shall see for myself. My eyes shall see it, and not a stranger's. My heart is consumed

within me- Whatever value Job's sufferings may have had for others, Job was rejoicing in the intensely personal nature of salvation. He whose eyes and body were fading into death would in a corporeal form see God for himself. "And not a stranger's" connects with what we noted on :23; Job had begun to realize that his sufferings were for others' benefit, even though he didn't know who, they were still strangers to him. His point is that notwithstanding that, he was now beginning to grasp the utter wonder of his personal salvation.

As Job's emphasis on the coming of Messiah and judgment increased, so his concentration on his present sufferings decreased. His heart was consumed within him with desire for that day. 2 Tim. 4 can be regarded as Paul's most mature spiritual statement, written as it was just prior to his death. In 2 Tim. 4:1,8, Paul's mind was clearly on the second coming and the certainty of judgment. He realized, in that time of undoubted maturity, that the common characteristic of all the faithful would be that they all *loved* the appearing of Christ. But do we *love* the appearing of Christ as Job did? Is it *really* all we have in life? Is our conscience, our faith in the grace of God, our real belief in the blood of the cross, so deep that we *love* the idea of the coming of judgment, that we would fain *hasten* the day of His coming? Job's *love* of the Lord's coming grew very rapidly. Before, he was too caught up with bitterness about his unspiritual fellow 'believers', effectively justifying himself in the eyes of his ecclesia and his world, full of passive complaints about his own sufferings... and so he didn't *love* that day as he later came to. You and I personally will be in God's Kingdom, with our arms around each other in the rubble of Jerusalem. We will personally be there. We will see Abraham there (Lk. 13:28); as Job says, with our own eyes we will behold our Lord, and not through anyone else's eyes (Job 19:27). Our eyes shall behold the King in the beauty which we personally perceive in Him (Is. 33:17).

Job 19:28 If you say, 'How we will persecute him!'; because the root of the matter is found in me- Having begun by complaining about the friends and then moved to rejoicing in God's future salvation of him, Job now returns to address the friends. Here and in :29 he appeals for them not to judge him but to repent and prepare for judgment day. This is not at all out of context with the passionate rejoicing in personal salvation he has just expressed in :25-27. The connection is in that he desperately wanted the friends to be there too, to share his wonderful hope. But whilst they continued condemning him, they would unlikely be there; for God has always operated the principle that those who judge / condemn will themselves be condemned (Mt. 7:1), and that is just what they were doing. And Job wants them to stop that and be saved. The situation arose because they considered that Job was totally at fault, and they were intended to persecute him on God's behalf. If they had realized that we are not to judge in the sense of condemning, and left the possible sins between God and Job (see on :4), then they would not have worked themselves into the situation they were now in- thinking it was their duty to persecute Job. This is one of several passages where Job speaks as if the friends were responsible for his physical persecution (cp.:22); as if they had brought the calamity which the opening chapters make satan responsible for. See on Job 1:6, and note how the satan figure morphs into the friends as the book continues.

Job 19:29 be afraid of the sword, for wrath brings the punishments of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment- I suggest that this expresses a deep concern in Job for the final salvation of the friends; see on :28. He urges them to be aware that the wrath they have could lead to their own punishment by the Divine sword of judgment. And he wants them to realize "there is a judgment". His basic desire to save them is rewarded. God does appear in judgment and condemn the friends, and asks Job to save them by his prayers and sacrifices for them.

Job Chapter 20

Job 20:1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered- Job has just uttered a wonderful statement of ecstatic joy at the prospect of his personal, future salvation, and then has gone on to appeal for the friends to repent and stop judging him, so that they might share it (Job 19:25-29). Zophar is so proud and angry that all he can do is lash out at Job, totally ignoring Job's faith, hope and appeal. This is characteristic of how the friends generally refuse to engage with Job's actual words and arguments, because they are so obsessed with their own narrative they have spun about Job. And this refusal leads Zophar to crudeness (:7,15) and basically predicting the violent destruction of Job, with heaven and earth united in witness against his evil (:24-28).

Job 20:2 Therefore do my thoughts make me answer, even by reason of my haste that is in me- Elihu opens his response with something similar, leading us to see Elihu as summarizing the arguments of the friends and Job.

Job 20:3 I have heard the reproof which seeks to shame me. The spirit of my understanding makes me answer- The "reproof" was Job's genuine appeal to the friends to stop condemning him because they might thereby miss out on the wonderful personal salvation which Job rejoiced in (Job 19:25-29). To be told 'You are too judgmental' made Zophar even more judgmental and angry.

Job 20:4 Don't you know this from old time, since man was placed on earth- We the audience become almost bored by the way the friends keep on claiming that ancient sage wisdom is the source of truth, and any new revelation must be wrong just because it is new. But this sense of weariness at their repetition is intentional. We are led to realize that indeed, dialogue cannot progress if the participants simply return to the same old arguments all the time and refuse to engage with the responses.

Job 20:5 that the triumphing of the wicked is short, the joy of the godless but for a moment?- Job's relatively brief period of prosperity is interpreted as meaning that Job was "wicked... Godless". Again we see how the wrong theology (in this case, that suffering implied personal sin) led to a headlong dive into ever more false assumptions, and condemning an upright man.

Job 20:6 Though his height mount up to the heavens, and his head reach to the clouds- This was of special relevance to the captives in Babylon. These words are used of Babylon's king who was to fall (Dan. 4:22), an event the restoration prophets associate with Israel's restoration. Again, the friends state certain truths which are even quoted in later scripture, but they hold those truths within the wrong frames of reference when it comes to Job. And this is the problem with 'truth' about a matter being held isolated from a wider framework, and without connection to the things of the spirit. For God seeks worshippers in "*spirit and truth*". See on :9.

Job 20:7 yet he shall perish forever like his own dung. Those who have seen him shall say, 'Where is he?' - Bildad's anger is such that he becomes crude in his vicious desire to curse Job. We recall that just shortly before, he had been sitting in silence with Job seeking to comfort him as a friend and fellow worshipper. This is how quickly relationships can go wrong, and false suppositions and lack of engagement with a person as an individual can lead to them going down a totally different track.

Job 20:8 He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found. Yes, he shall be chased away like a vision of the night- Bildad is dogmatic that after Job's death, there can be no restoration, and he bitterly stresses this in the following verses. Later events were to show him how wrong he was. And he then is thereby presented as a warning to the exiles who tended to believe that restoration to the land of promise was impossible for them.

Job 20:9 The eye which saw him shall see him no more, neither shall his place any more see him- Again, this is a true enough picture of death, and shows the error of all primitive fears of ghosts of the dead haunting their previous living places, reincarnation etc. But that truth is misused by Bildad and is seen without the wider context of God's power to restore and resurrect. See on :6.

Job 20:10 His children shall seek the favour of the poor. His hands shall give back his wealth- Job's wealth had been

taken from him by Temanite invaders, from the same area as Eliphaz the Temanite. His hands didn't give it back. This is another hint that the Satan figure morphs with the friends, and they were actually the ones behind the stealing of Job's wealth, on the basis that they believed that as a sinner, it ought to be taken from him. See on :15.

Job 20:11 His bones are full of his youth, but youth shall lie down with him in the dust- AV "full of the sins of his youth". Job has earlier admitted the possibility that he had sinned in youth, so perhaps he had indeed sinned as a young man. Seeing they could see nothing apparently sinful in Job at that time, they concluded he must have sinned earlier, or was sinning in a way hidden from them. They were desperate to impute sin, finding possible fault in everything; whereas the way of love and of the spirit is to seek to impute righteousness as God does to us, and as He does to Job at the end. This of itself was a huge rebuke to how the friends had done just the opposite.

Job 20:12 Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue- As noted on :11, the implication is that although they had to admit there was no sin in Job's current lifestyle, they concluded that his sufferings meant he had either sinned in youth, or was hiding his current sins from them.

Job 20:13 though he spare it, and will not let it go, but keep it still within his mouth- The idea is that Job has sinned secretly and will not let that sin go but savours it.

Job 20:14 yet his food in his bowels is churned. It is cobra venom within him- As noted on :6, there is truth in these statements, in this case, that sin becomes its own punishment; the sin secretly kept in the mouth and enjoyed as a tasty morsel, turns into the venom of judgment when swallowed. But it is truth without context, just as a Bible text without context is a pretext... for various wrong thinking and behaviour.

Job 20:15 He has swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again. God will cast them out of his belly- It was in fact Israel who had taken riches but not by right, and would vomit them up again (Jer. 17:11). Job had not done this, but was treated and judged as if he had. Again we see how he was suffering as an innocent representative of his peoples' sins. If indeed it was the friends who had seized Job's wealth wrongfully (see on :10), then Job becomes so powerfully their saviour at the end. He suffered the judgments for what they had done, although he had not done those things; and so he bore their sins. Through his prayer and offering for them at the end, he thereby saved them. He was suffering for the salvation of his friends, although at the time it seems he didn't realize it. The Lord Jesus did the same to a far greater extent, but He learned the lesson of Job and was aware that His sufferings were for our salvation. See on :16,18; Job 42:7.

Job 20:16 He shall suck cobra venom. The viper's tongue shall kill him- As noted on :15, this was the judgment of Israel in their apostasy (Dt. 32:32,33; Is. 59:16; Jer. 8:14; 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:5). Like the Lord Jesus, who also drank gall on the cross (s.w. "venom"; Ps. 69:21), Job was suffering the judgment for others' sins, so that he might finally save them.

Job 20:17 He shall not look at the rivers, the flowing streams of honey and butter- Honey and butter were the blessings for obedience to the covenant; Job was suffering as if he had been disobedient to the covenant, just as the Lord did.

Job 20:18 That for which he laboured he shall restore, and shall not swallow it down. According to the substance that he has gotten, he shall not rejoice- Bildad was clearly jealous of Job's wealth, adopting the thinking of the Satan who suggested these things originally. But he justifies this by saying that Job has taken his wealth from others, and the Bedouin bands who had stolen it were in fact just taking back what Job had taken wrongfully from them. If indeed it was the friends who had seized Job's wealth wrongfully (see on :10), then all Bildad is saying becomes true for him. And he is therefore only to be saved by Job, the innocent, bearing the judgments for his sins.

Job 20:19 For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor. He has violently taken away a house, and he shall not build it up- Bildad assumes Job must have done something like this, to deserve his sufferings. Job engages with what Bildad says and denies it (Job 29:12; 31:17). Again we note that Job engages with the actual words of the friends,

whereas they tend to attack him in terms of the straw man image of him they had built up in their minds, ignoring him as a person and the actual words he says. This is typical of how dialogue goes wrong.

Job 20:20 Because he knew no quietness within him, he shall not save anything of that in which he delights- AV "quietness in his belly". Bildad is back to his crude comparison of Job's sin and wealth with tasty things he had secretly eaten (:15) which now swallowed, were working within his stomach to produce death by his bowels excreting them all.

Job 20:21 There was nothing left that he didn't devour, therefore his prosperity shall not endure- The satan had begun by saying that God had given Job wealth, but if that wealth was taken away, he would curse God. The satan then morphs into the friends, the "sons of God" present in the prologue, and they continue the role of the satan as the story progresses. But Zophar has now moved beyond the original suspicion. He now paints Job as a man who had not so much been given wealth by God, but had greedily devoured the wealth of others and was now paying the price, and justice was making him relinquish all his ill gotten wealth. Again we see a parade example of how dialogue breaks down. An initial suspicion (however legitimate the suspicion) becomes exaggerated into a totally different accusation, which has no basis in reality and is outright slander, however confidently presented.

Job 20:22 In the fullness of his sufficiency, distress shall overtake him. The hand of each one who is in misery shall come on him- Zophar is reasoning that those who had been reduced to misery by Job could now legitimately put their hand upon him. In the prologue, Job is placed in the hand of the satan, with the reminder that this hand is ultimately God's hand. Zophar now defines that "hand" as the hand of those whom Job has supposedly grabbed wealth from and reduced to misery. Again we have the suspicion that some of the trials were brought upon Job by the friends, who reasoned themselves into the assumption that they were the ones from whom Job had taken wealth. This is the classical outworking of envy and jealousy; 'you are wealthy... you have more than me... I am poorer than you... because... you took my wealth from me and added it to your own!'

Job 20:23 When he is about to fill his belly, God will cast the fierceness of His wrath upon him. It will rain on him while he is eating- A clear reference to how "the fire of God" had consumed Job's wealth and children, at the very apex of his prosperity. God casting wrath through His Divinely controlled "angels of evil" is the very phrase used of His judgment of His sinful people (Ps. 78:49; Ez. 7:3). We noted the connection between the Satan and such "angels of evil" on Job 1:6. Again, Job is presented as experiencing the judgments of God' sinful people, whilst personally innocent.

Job 20:24 He shall flee from the iron weapon. The bronze arrow shall strike him through- Zophar claims that Job was going to flee from the arrow of Divine judgment, but would all the same be struck through by it (Job 20:24,25). God's response was that His creatures didn't flee from His arrows (s.w. Job 41:28). Neither did Job flee from God; he uses the same term to describe how the wicked vainly tried to flee from God (Job 27:22). He was in harmony with the natural creation. Zophar was wrong. Job didn't flee from God but quite the opposite- he keeps begging God to reveal Himself, and He does so at the end of the book.

Job 20:25 He draws it forth, and it comes out of his body. Yes, the glittering point comes out of his liver- Zophar is gloating in the judgment that he was sure would come upon Job. We marvel at how quickly he has transformed his position from the man who came and sat down with Job seven days in silence, perhaps sincerely seeking to comfort Job in his affliction. But now by this point, the friends have reasoned themselves into a position where they not only think Job's sufferings are legitimate and deserved, but gloat at the prospect of his further and final sufferings, with his liver pierced by God's arrows, and the arrow coming out of the other side of his body. This is how far the relationship broke down, all because of a refusal to understand Job as a person and engage with what he was actually saying and who he really was.

Terrors are upon him- "Terrors" are again the judgment of God upon an apostate Israel, whom Job was suffering for whilst innocent, after the pattern of the later Lord Jesus (Dt. 32:25 s.w.). Those "terrors" were likely understood by the friends as some kind of demonic beings. God deconstructs this by explaining that the great beasts He has created likewise were 'terrible' (s.w. "terrors"). But the simple point was that He had created them and was totally in control (s.w. Job 39:20; 41:14).

Job 20:26 All darkness is laid up for his treasures. An unfanned fire shall devour him. It shall consume that which is left in his tent- This implies Job still had some wealth concealed in his tent. But that seems unlikely, seeing he was literally begging for bread (see on Job 15:23) and squatting in deserted houses (see on Job 15:28). Again the friends are dogmatically asserting what they had previously begun by surmising. This again is how relationships go wrong when there is no actual engagement with what the person really is saying and their actual location in reality.

Job 20:27 The heavens shall reveal his iniquity. The earth shall rise up against him- The friends became assured that God, "the heavens", knew Job was a sinner, and "earth" would rise up against Job in harmony with "heaven". Again, the dialogue broke down because of their assumptions, which they came to assume were supported by God, and therefore their reasoning went full circle- they, as the "earth", were rising up against Job in harmony with "heaven".

Job 20:28 The increase of his house shall depart. They shall rush away in the day of His wrath- Alluding to the destruction of Job's house / family. The friends have moved on from the original concern of the satan, who morphs into them. The initial question was whether Job only believed in God because God had materially blessed him. And so God gave all Job had into the hand of the 'satan'. The removal of Job's wealth was never intended to be an outcome of God's wrath. Rather was it part of an experiment, if you like, to teach the satan and the friends something. But they had moved far further from that position, and were talking in terms of Divine wrath and judgment against Job. This moving on from original questions and concerns about an individual is exactly what we see in relationship breakdown today. The original issues are unrecognizable compared to the accusations which the original issues morph into.

Job 20:29 This is the portion of a wicked man from God, the heritage appointed to him by God- As explained on :28, the removal of Job's wealth was in order to test Job and reveal him to God and man. It was not a judgment of a wicked man; the prologue is at pains to point out that Job was "perfect" (Job 1:1) and not a "wicked man".

Job Chapter 21

Job 21:1 Then Job answered- I have consistently noted how Job actually engages with the words of the friends, whereas they pay little attention to his words and attack him in terms of the straw man they have created. See on :2.

Job 21:2 Listen diligently to my speech. Let this be your consolation- As noted on :1, Job engages with what the friends have said, whereas they attack him in terms of vague generalities without such specific engagement with his words. In this chapter he specifically answers what Zophar has said in Job 20. He argues that (contrary to what Zophar has just claimed in the previous speech) in fact the wicked are rarely cut down in this life, instead they prosper (:17,18). And their children often don't suffer for the sins of the parents but instead profit from them (:19-21).

Job 21:3 Allow me, and I also will speak; after I have spoken, mock on- This may be an invitation to them to hear what he has actually said and only then "mock on", rather than continually attacking the straw man image of him they had created in their minds (see on :1,2). "Mock" is the word for "scorn" used of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant based upon Job (Ps. 22:7). The application to Hezekiah's time is that the people of Judah were likewise scorned by their enemies (Is. 37:22); and to the exiles in that they too were mocked by the opponents to the rebuilding by men who came from the same ethnic background as the three friends (s.w. Neh. 2:19; 4:1).

Job 21:4 As for me, is my complaint to man? Why shouldn't I be impatient?- Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4). "Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; 'I only said / did it [or didn't do it] because...'. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins.

Job 21:5 Look at me, and be astonished. Lay your hand on your mouth- When Job finally lays his hand upon his own mouth (Job 40:4), he is only doing what he had earlier told the friends to do in recognition of their folly (Job 13:5; 21:5). Through the pain and irritation of their speeches, Job came to value and appreciate the need for silence before God. But it was only when personally confronted by God at the end that he realizes that he too had spoken too much and he repents of that in silence.

Job 21:6 When I remember, I am troubled. Horror takes hold of my flesh- This horror was at the thought that although the wicked were not judged in this life, they would face a terrible future condemnation, and despite his own desperate illness and situation, he looked out of himself as did the Lord on the way to the cross, to deeply mourn the future judgment of the wicked at the last day. Here we have a wonderful window onto Job's basic loving, saving concern for others. No wonder he was the one chosen to be their representative saviour, suffering the judgment of their sins, and then invited to pray and sacrifice to bring about the salvation of the friends and his own family who had rejected him. If we too have a heart that bleeds for the condemnation of others, we will be used to save them. This is the prime qualification for all evangelism. It is this which God will use, rather than having apparently persuasive technique and evangelism materials.

Job 21:7 Why do the wicked live, become old, yes, and grow mighty in power?- The answer to this question is what

had made Job shudder in :6. The answer is that they will come to their judgment at the last day, as they clearly don't face it in this life.

Job 21:8 Their child is established with them in their sight, their offspring before their eyes- In contrast to Job's children who were dead. The point is that Job is answering Zophar's claims that the wicked are punished through the suffering of their children, but Job is saying that this simply doesn't correspond to observable reality. Note that he engages with the words of the friends, whereas they largely ignore his words. See on See on :1,2,17.

Job 21:9 Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them- Their houses compare with Job's, which fell down as a result of the Angel-satan whirlwind. Earlier in Job 9:34 Job pleaded: "Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me". He felt he was suffering the punishment of the wicked in this life, and therefore he was drawn towards the conclusion that he would not therefore suffer it at the last day- but rather then be saved.

Job 21:10 Their bulls breed without fail. Their cows calve, and don't miscarry- Miscarriage was understood as a Divine curse (s.w. Gen. 31:38; Jer. 15:7; Hos. 9:14; Mal. 3:11). It had come upon Job, but apparently not upon "the wicked". But the references just quoted in the prophets show that it was to come upon the apostate people of God. And this is Job's point. Judgment doesn't immediately come, but it will. And he was suffering those judgments because he was representative of sinners whilst himself innocent, in the spirit of the future Lord Jesus.

Job 21:11 They send forth their little ones like a flock. Their children dance- Again Job is answering Zophar's claim that the children of the wicked are punished, just as Job's children had been. But as noted on :1,2,8,17, Job is saying that this is just not true according to observed reality. There is a longer term Divine game plan here and Job is ever more clearly seeing it.

Job 21:12 They sing to the tambourine and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the pipe- This is the language of partying. Job's children had partied regularly like this, and the fire of God had consumed them in judgment. This could be a tacit recognition from Job that his children had indeed sinned, his sin offerings for them had not of themselves been efficacious, his children had been slain "in an instant" (:13); but there still remained the mystery, that the same sin leads to immediate judgment for some, but not for others. He could even be implying that because his children had suffered it in this life, there would be future hope for their salvation. And this connects with the possibility that his slain children were resurrected, thanks to his being their sin bearer in his own body, when all things in his life are restored at the end. See on Job 42:13.

Job 21:13 They spend their days in prosperity. In an instant they go down to Sheol- The idea is that they die an easy, quick and painless death. Job was dying a hard and slow death, inching ever closer to *sheol* rather than going there "in an instant".

Job 21:14 They tell God, 'Depart from us, for we don't want to know about Your ways- Again as noted on :12, Job may be admitting that his children had indeed cursed God in their hearts, renouncing Him (Job 1:5). For he seems to be saying that his children had been judged in this life for their sins, but those who did the same as they had but who avoided such judgment would be judged and condemned at the last day. There may be in 1 Tim. 5:24 the idea that if we are judged for our sins in this life, we shall not be in the last day; and the reverse is true. This again could support the possibility discussed on Job 42:3 that Job's slain children were resurrected when he was restored. See on :23. His sin offerings for them couldn't achieve this of themselves; but his representative suffering for them could. And this of course looks ahead to the work of the Lord Jesus, saving those whom Mosaic sacrifices of themselves couldn't save.

Job 21:15 What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? What profit should we have, if we pray to Him?' - Note the parallel between praying to God and serving Him. Those who feel incapacitate to physically serve God can take comfort from the fact that the Bible presents prayer as serving God. Again as noted on :14, Job may be admitting

that his children had indeed cursed God in their hearts, renouncing Him (Job 1:5). These words are misquoted by Elihu in Job 35:3 as if Job has said this about himself and about there being no profit in serving or praying to God. Yet Elihu claims to speak on God's behalf. We can however understand Elihu as merely reiterating the position of the friends, as a kind of summary at the end of their dialogues; and at the same time giving a foretaste of the speeches of God which are to come. He therefore serves as a literary device in the story, particularly required for an illiterate audience hearing or viewing the drama presented, and having inevitably forgotten the details of all the positions previously presented.

The idols and the Gentile nations amongst whom the exiles lived would not "profit" them (Is. 30:5,6; 44:9,10); but as the book of Esther makes clear, they were profiting well, apparently, from remaining amongst them. But the only real "profit" would be if they quit all that and returned to Zion (Is. 48:17 s.w.). But they saw no "profit" in being forgiven and restored as God's people (s.w. Job 35:3). Rather they considered the temporal "profit" of life in Babylon as far greater profit.

Job 21:16 Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand. The counsel of the wicked is far from me- The idea may be as GNB "They claim they succeed by their own strength, but their way of thinking I can't accept". Job is saying that citing the various calamities of the wicked, as Zophar has just done, is not relevant to him personally as he doesn't act and think as the wicked to.

Job 21:17 How often is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out, that their calamity comes on them, that God distributes sorrows to them in His anger?- The answer of course is intended to be 'Not often!'. He argues (contrary to what Zophar has just claimed in the previous speech) that in fact the wicked are rarely cut down in this life, instead they prosper (:17,18). And their children often don't suffer for the sins of the parents but instead profit from them (:19-21). We again must note how Job actually engages with the words of the friends, whereas they increasingly ignore his words and attack the image of "Job" which they have falsely created in their own minds. See on :1,2,8.

Job 21:18 How often is it that they are as stubble before the wind, as chaff that the storm carries away?- This is the language of the latter day destruction of the wicked at judgment day (Is. 17:13; Dan. 2:35). Job is saying that they do not have their judgment in this life, unlike his sinful children who did have it in this life; but they will be judged at the last day. He is driven towards his understanding of the last day by his own experience of injustice and the very differing judgment which sinners experience. All our struggles with the injustice of life today are designed to bring us to a similar focus- upon the return of the Lord Jesus as the just judge, and the establishment of eternal justice.

Job 21:19 You say, 'God lays up his iniquity for his children'. Let him recompense it to himself, that he may know it- GNB "You claim God punishes a child for the sins of his father. No! Let God punish the sinners themselves; let him show that he does it because of their sins". This was particularly relevant to the exiles, who considered they were unjustly suffering for their fathers' sins, and whose arguments are likewise challenged in Ez. 18. And in Job's immediate context, he is tacitly admitting that his children had indeed sinned and been punished- but not for his sins, but for their own sins, which he clearly was not involved in.

Job 21:20 Let his own eyes see his destruction. Let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty- GNB "Let sinners bear their own punishment; let them feel the wrath of Almighty God". See on :19.

Job 21:21 For what does he care for his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off?- The idea is that in fact the wickedness of the sinner is often not visited upon their children. Job argues (contrary to what Zophar has just claimed in the previous speech) that in fact the wicked are rarely cut down in this life, instead they prosper (:17,18). And their children often don't suffer for the sins of the parents but instead profit from them (:19-21). We again must note how Job actually engages with the words of the friends, whereas they increasingly ignore his words and attack the image of "Job" which they have falsely created in their own minds. See on :1,2.

Job 21:22 Shall any teach God knowledge, since He judges those who are high?- "Even those in high places" (GNB). The three friends have similarities with the Jewish system. When Job speaks of "the wicked" he is digging at

the friends, as they do at him when they speak of the wicked. Thus he implies here that they were trying to "teach God knowledge" - alluded to in Rom. 11:34 and 1 Cor. 2:16, where the Jews are mocked for thinking they can instruct God and be "His counsellor", thus linking the friends with the Jews. As Job suffered the judgments for their sins and finally redeemed them, so the Lord Jesus did for Israel.

Job 21:23 One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet- The idea is that "one sinner" has an easy death, whereas others have Divine judgment in this life (:25). Job has earlier accused the friends of those being "at ease" (s.w. Job 12:5). He sees them as therefore being liable to future judgment, seeing they were not receiving judgment in this life. Job had earlier lived a "quiet" life (s.w. Job 16:12). But now that had been interrupted; he was experiencing judgment now, so that he would not face it in the last day. And earlier in this chapter it seems that he considered that this is what his sinful children had experienced when God slew them, paving the way for the idea that in fact they were resurrected thanks to his restoration- see on Job 42:3.

Job 21:24 His pails are full of milk. The marrow of his bones is moistened- Job's bones are often mentioned as suffering; he was receiving judgment in this life so he didn't have to face it at the last day (as in 1 Tim. 5:24). The Satan had been given specific authority to see Job's bones suffer (Job 2:5). His suffering of the condemnation of the wicked, whose bones were to suffer, was allowed on the specific understanding that God considered him righteous and not a sinner. This had been completely and willfully forgotten by the friends, who were the "sons of God" party to those initial discussions with God in the prologue.

Job 21:25 Another dies in bitterness of soul, and never tastes of good- "Bitterness of soul" is the very phrase Job uses about himself (Job 3:20; 7:11; 10:1). He clearly has himself in view. His idea is that some get their judgment in this life, as he was; and he contrasts himself with those like the friends who don't have their judgment now, but shall have it in the last day.

Job 21:26 They lie down alike in the dust. The worm covers them- The implication of Job's argument, as noted on :6, is that indeed all experience death, but the difference will be at the future judgment. Job's belief in the mortality of man and death as an unconscious state is hereby revealed, and it likely stood in contrast to the majority views of the time.

Job 21:27 Behold, I know your thoughts, the devices with which you would wrong me- The friends are accused of 'wronging' Job by wicked "devices"; of actually planning wrong against him. 'Wronging' is the same word as "shake off" in Job 15:33. Eliphaz was so convinced that God would do Job 'wrong' that he developed to the point of actually devising to do wrong to Job, thus confirming the sense that the friends became the 'Satan' figure and actually did the evil to Job which he initially wanted done.

Job 21:28 For you say, 'Where is the house of the prince? Where is the tent in which the wicked lived?' - "The [wicked] prince" clearly refers to Job. The friends have not exactly said these words, but Job as it were places the implication of their positions in inverted commas, as if they had really said this in so many words- when actually they had only implied it. So again we see how dialogue goes so wrong, when parties become sure that the implication of others' positions is what they have actually said- when they haven't. The friends do the same to Job, but we can say that Job does so more accurately and fairly than they do to him.

Job 21:29 Haven't you asked wayfaring men? Don't you know their evidences- The friends constantly appeal to the wisdom of the sages and of previous generations. Job now appeals to the general knowledge and observations of the ordinary people, the "wayfaring men". He is saying that observed reality simply differs to what the sages are saying.

Job 21:30 that the evil man is reserved to the day of calamity, that they are led forth to the day of wrath?- Job is arguing that the way the wicked prosper means that they must face a future "day of wrath", and that this has been figured out by ordinary "wayfaring" people (:29) because it is so obvious. God confirms this view, by saying that He has "reserved" final judgment, although He has created the things He will use in that judgment and "reserved" them

until then (Job 38:23 s.w.).

Job 21:31 Who shall declare his way to his face? Who shall repay him what he has done?- GNB "There is no one to accuse the wicked or pay them back for all they have done". The answer of course is that there is no such ultimate judgment or moral ombudsman in this life. Yet justice and judgment must be done- and there must therefore be a future day of judgment when God shall do this. Job is driven relentlessly towards a focus upon the last day, just as we are by our experiences of injustice. And the appearance of God in judgment at the end is a vindication of Job's desire.

Job 21:32 Yet he will be carried to the grave. Men shall keep watch over the tomb- The wicked are carried to peaceful graves without having faced judgment (:31). But therefore, the very peacefulness of their graves is a strong argument for belief in a future day of judgment, and their resurrection to face it.

Job 21:33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him. All men shall draw after him, as there were innumerable before him- As noted on :32, the apparent sweetness of the death and burial of the wicked, going on generation after generation, is a powerful argument that in fact there must be a day of resurrection to judgment yet to come. Or we can read with GNB "Thousands join the funeral procession, and even the earth lies gently on their bodies".

Job 21:34 So how can you comfort me with nonsense, because in your answers there remains only falsehood?- LXX "I have no rest from your molestation". If this reading is correct, we have more evidence that the friends were in fact the Satan, bringing the judgments upon Job. The friends initially came to "comfort" Job. But their refusal to engage with him as a person and his actual situation and words (see on :1,2) leads them to do the very opposite. And so we see how initially well meaning dialogue turns to be destructive and the reverse of "comfort". The restoration prophets announced "Comfort" to God's people who were feeling and suffering as Job (Is. 40:1; 66:13); Job's lack of comforters thereby makes him representative of the exiles.

Job Chapter 22

Job 22:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered- Much of this speech is utterly irrelevant to what Job has just said. Eliphaz assumes Job is protesting his righteousness, as noted on Job 21:1,2, the friends attack a straw man image they have built up of Job rather than engaging with that he has actually said. And they repeatedly forget the context of Job as explained by God in the prologue- that Job is a righteous man, and his sufferings are not judgment for sin, but rather to persuade the satan of his doubts. And the satan morphs into the friends after the end of Job 2. Eliphaz here does later mention some of Job's words (:15-20), but he misrepresents them to fit his own agenda. This again is a parade example of how dialogue breaks down and becomes more than unhelpful.

Job 22:2 Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself- These words are applied by Elihu to Job in Job 35:3. It seems an obvious and unkindly wilful misquotation- until we accept the viewpoint that Elihu is not so much speaking for himself, as summarizing for the audience the arguments presented so far, with Elihu playing the role of the friends in summarizing the argument so far. See on :21.

Job 22:3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that you are righteous? Or does it benefit Him, that you make your ways perfect?- Eliphaz is now propelled by his obsession against Job to say things about God which are wildly untrue, and is specifically rebuked above the other friends for doing this at the end (Job 42:7). I would surmise that his words of Job 22:3 are specifically in view. For this is a complete denial of all that God reveals Himself to be. Job rightly understood that God as human creator has a tender desire to the work of His hands (see on Job 14:15). But Eliphaz speaks as if God has no interest nor feeling towards those who are righteous, so far above caring is He. And this could not be a more serious misrepresentation of the God who is thrilled by every move a man makes towards Him. See on :12.

Job 22:4 Is it for your piety that He reproves you- This is sarcasm. And this is the point where we know that dialogue is now no longer dialogue. Eliphaz reached this low point because he is simply ignoring all Job has said in the previous speech, and has developed his own idea that Job's sufferings are Divine reproof- when the prologue makes clear that they were for the benefit of the satan and the "sons of God", the friends party to the original discussion about Job.

That He enters with you into judgment?- The prologue had made it clear to the "sons of God", the friends, that Job was seen by God as a righteous man. His sufferings were not Divine judgment, but a means through which to teach the friends.

Job 22:5 Isn't your wickedness great? Neither is there any end to your iniquities- This is in total defiance of the opening explanation in the prologue that Job was not seen as wicked before God. But just as people today lose their basis in Biblical principle and statement and run headlong into assumptions which lead to breakdown of interpersonal relationships, so Eliphaz has become convinced that Job is a sinner because he is suffering. The greatness of his sufferings was in order to persuade the friends / satan about Job's righteousness; but instead they are so fixated on the idea that sin and judgment are proportional that they assume that the great sufferings imply great wickedness.

Job 22:6 For you have taken pledges from your brother for nothing, and stripped the naked of their clothing- Eliphaz is so convinced that Job is suffering because he sinned that he now dogmatically states Job's sins in details. What began as internal speculation within him, he now comes out with as fact. And we see this happening all the time in broken relationships. He assumes that the stripping of Job of his clothing in Job 19:9 must have been because Job had stripped others of their clothing. The same word is used of the stripping of God's people of their glory (Ez. 16:39; 23:26; Mic. 3:3), which only happened because they themselves did not strip themselves of their clothing in repentance (s.w. Is. 32:11; Ez. 26:16). The stripping of Job, which also recalls the stripping of the priest Aaron of his clothes and "crown" [mitre] when his priesthood ended (Num. 20:26,28), was therefore to elicit repentance in him. And this is what was finally achieved at the end of the book.

Job 22:7 You haven't given water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry- See on :6.

The focus of the Lord Jesus upon the positive is shown by the way the Lord quotes Job 22:7 in the parable of the sheep and goats. These words are part of Eliphaz's erroneous allegations against Job- for Job was a perfect man, and not guilty on these counts. Yet the Lord extracts elements of truth from those wrong words, rather than just contemptuously ignoring them. Likewise Job 22:25 speaks of God being our "treasure... our precious silver" (RV). Surely the Lord had this in mind when saying that our treasure must be laid up "in heaven", i.e. with God (for He often uses 'Heaven' for 'God'). And James follows suite by approvingly quoting Job 22:29 about the lifting up of the humble (James 4:6).

Job 22:8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth from you. The honourable man, he lived in it- The accusation is that Job had given land to the mighty and famous in return for favours from them, whereas he had despised the poor (:7,9). We must recall that Job was "perfect" before God and was being tested for the sake of the education of the friends. They as the "sons of God" of Job 1:6 were party to those discussions. But now Eliphaz is so persuaded of his pet theory that Job's sufferings are for his sins, that he feels he can speculate about what those things were. And that allowance of himself to speculate now leads him to dogmatically make false accusation; dialogue is now no longer dialogue but a feeding frenzy of hatred and self-justification. We too can so easily descend this path.

Job 22:9 You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless you have broken- As explained on :8, Eliphaz began by nursing a pet theory: Job was suffering because he had sinned, and God's word of explanation about why Job was now to suffer was ignored. This led to internal speculation about Job's possible sins; and now to utterly dogmatic assertion of that which was untrue. The path to every slander is similar.

Job 22:10 Therefore snares are around you. Sudden fear troubles you- Now Eliphaz quotes some of Job's words describing his lamentable state. But still, as noted on :1, Eliphaz isn't engaging with Job's words and arguments. He is merely quoting Job's laments and descriptions of his illness, and gloating that "therefore", because of Job's sins, these things have happened. This is not engagement with the words and arguments of another.

Job 22:11 or darkness, so that you can not see, and floods of waters cover you- This may refer to fits of blindness which Job complains of, and a sensation of drowning. Or the darkness can refer to the cosmic 'power of darkness' many then believed in. It can be argued that the book of Job is a dialogue concerning evil and suffering, with three popular views being represented by the three friends. These views are examined and corrected by the personal history of Job, as well as by the epilogue and prologue to the book. Eliphaz seems to be representative of the idea that Job is being hit by supernaturally controlled evil- Eliphaz speaks of a force of darkness (Job 22:10,11) and sinful or faulty Angels living in an unclean Heaven (Job 4:18; 15:15). Yet the *answer* to all this is that the Satan figure is under God's control, all Job's misfortunes come from *God* and His Angels- one of whom may have been called 'the adversary' ('Satan')- are in fact perfectly obedient to Him and not disobedient. And finally, Eliphaz and the friends are rebuked for their various wrong understandings, with God declaring Himself supreme and ultimate sovereign. Likewise Bildad's view of Angels in Job 25:5 "The stars are not pure in God's eyes" is corrected by God in Job 38:7, when He says that "the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy".

Job 22:12 Isn't God in the heights of heaven? See the height of the stars, how high they are!- This is similar to Eliphaz's terribly wrong claim in :3 that God is so far away that He is not so serious about human behaviour. Job however is then accused of misusing this to think that God is unable to see his sinful behaviour (:13). The final appearance of God is surely to demonstrate how close God is, and the height of His exaltation is no barrier to His relationship with and feelings toward man.

Job 22:13 You say, 'What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness?- This was not Job's personal view, but he was falsely accused of holding it. In fact, this was the very view of the exiles, and it was this subconscious belief that God could not see them which led to their sins in the first place (Is. 29:15; 40:27; Jer. 23:24; Lam. 3:44; Ez. 8:12). So even the experience of false accusation was used by God, so that Job felt the feelings of God's sinful people. Eliphaz was proven wrong enough when the God enveloped by the "thick darkness" of the Sinai theophany saw Israel's sin with the golden calf (s.w. Dt. 4:11; 5:22). The "thick darkness" is created by God (Job 38:9), it is He who can shroud Himself from human understanding; but this doesn't mean that He cannot "judge through the thick darkness" (Job 22:13). The thick darkness was only from man's viewpoint; not from God's. The

fact man feels God to be distant and shrouded doesn't mean He actually is. And this is a fundamental truth for all time, that our perceptions of God don't mean that this is what He actually is. For God was not created by man in his image and likeness, but the other way around. "The thick darkness" is the term used to describe the exile in Babylon (Is. 60:2; Jer. 13:16; Ez. 34:12). But God judged through this, and the exiles weren't hidden from God because of it.

Job 22:14 Thick clouds are a covering to Him, so that He doesn't see- See on :13. Again, these were false representations of Job, attacking a straw man image of Job which had no real existence and was only in the mind of Eliphaz. God created these thick clouds and could dissolve them at will, and maintains them within a perfect balance (s.w. Job 37:11,16).

He walks on the vault of the sky'- The idea is alluded to in Is. 40:22, where the context is of assuring the exiles that in fact they are not forgotten, and the God who is enthroned over Heaven and earth has the absolute power to change their situation in a moment.

Job 22:15 Will you keep the old way, which wicked men have trodden- The friends continually appeal to past history. Their wisdom is supposedly in line with that of the ancient sages; and they consider Job's behaviour to be in line with that of previous sinners, those who lived before the flood (see on :16).

Job 22:16 who were snatched away before their time- "Snatched away" is only s.w. Job 16:8, where Job complains his body is "shrivelled" or "snatched away". Eliphaz is claiming that Job is suffering just as those previously condemned by God had done.

Whose foundation was poured out as a stream- Literally, "whose foundation was poured out (so as to become) a stream or flood", possibly referring to how the foundations of the earth appeared to turn into gushing waters at the flood (Gen. 7:11).

Job 22:17 who said to God, 'Depart from us'; and, 'What can the Almighty do for us?' - A misrepresentation of Job's words (Job 21:14,15). The friends reasoned that Job was a sinner because he was suffering, therefore he was to be seen as associated with other sinners such as those destroyed by the flood, and therefore the reported words and attitudes of those sinners must be those of Job. Like many today in pseudo dialogue, the false steps of logic all arose because they refused to engage with Job as a unique person and hear his actual words; instead they pigeon holed him within a certain category they had in their minds. And treated him as if he were like all the others they had placed him with.

Job 22:18 Yet He filled their houses with good things, but the counsel of the wicked is far from me- A sarcastic quotation of Job's words, where he had denied association with the "counsel of the wicked" (Job 21:16). The descent into sarcasm is a sure sign that genuine dialogue is over. Perhaps Eliphaz is claiming that Job had justified the sinners destroyed by the flood by noting that God had "filled their houses with good things". Whilst there may be evidence of prosperity just before the flood (Mt. 24:38,39), Eliphaz is attributing words to Job which he simply never said.

Job 22:19 The righteous see it, and are glad. The innocent ridicule them- Eliphaz equates the friends with "the righteous... the innocent". But they have earlier condemned Job for claiming he is "innocent", arguing that in fact all men are impure before God. Their obsession with condemning Job led them to contradict themselves, to even condemn themselves so that they might be seen as righteous and Job as sinful. And surely "ridicule" is never appropriate for the righteous in their relationship with the wicked. Job was indeed "the innocent", but he doesn't in this sense rejoice, gloat over nor ridicule the friends. Whereas the friends do "ridicule" Job (s.w. Job 21:3). This ridiculing of the innocent by those who wrongly thought they were innocent was exactly what happened to the Lord on the cross (Ps. 22:7 s.w.), and what was done to the exile (Is. 33:19).

Job 22:20 saying, 'Surely those who rose up against us are cut off- LXX "Has not their substance been taken away"; Heb. "Truly our adversary is cut down". Eliphaz is saying that the righteous, himself and the friends, would rejoice in Job's death because their satan / adversary would then have been cut down. This is how completely transformed was their reasoning. They were acting as the satan to Job; for the satan figure morphs with the friends after he

disappears from the story. Job was treated now as the satan, the adversary. But thereby he came to save those who were adversarial to him. He thus bore their sins whilst innocent, which is one of the great themes of the story. And it is in this aspect that he points forward to the suffering, saving work of Lord Jesus.

The fire has consumed their remnant'- Alluding to how the fire of God consumed the wealth and family of Job.

Job 22:21 Acquaint yourself with Him, now, and be at peace. Thereby good shall come to you- Eliphaz orders Job to repent, and thereby receive "good" from God. He has overlooked Job's opening position, that the righteous receive both "good" and "evil" from God's hand (Job 2:10). Again we see the defining parameters of the prologue disregarded by the friends as they rush to judge Job according to their own assumptions about him. "Acquaint yourself with Him" is the very same Hebrew phrase just used by Eliphaz in :2: "Can a man be profitable to God?". Eliphaz has been arguing that being profitable to God is not something God is interested in and Job is wasting his time. But here he contradicts himself. There are many such bald and blatant contradictions within the words of the friends. This is what happens when a preexisting agenda becomes the basis for so called dialogue, and the other party must be condemned at all costs.

Job 22:22 Please receive instruction from His mouth, and lay up His words in your heart- "Instruction" is "the law", the word usually used of the law of Moses. Job was to receive it, as Israel received it (Dt. 31:26 s.w.). Again he is set up as the representative of Israel, who received the law but refused to put it in their heart. This was not the case with Job personally, but he was treated as if he had done what Israel did. ,

Job 22:23 If you return to the Almighty, you shall be built up- This is language clearly relevant to the building up of the restored Zion which would happen if the exiles returned both to their God and their land. Job had not departed from the Almighty, but he was treated as if he had committed their sins.

If you put away unrighteousness far from your tents- Eliphaz quotes verbatim from the words of Zophar in Job 11:14. This again is a parade example of dialogue gone wrong. Those on the accusing side start quoting each other as authorities, whilst continuing to ignore the actual person and words of the accused.

Job 22:24 Lay your treasure in the dust, the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks- The idea is that Job should stop valuing wealth. Gold was washed down from the upper reaches and was found "among the stones of the brook"; and Job is bidden leave it there. Yet again, the divinely given defining parameters of the prologue are ignored; Job's wealth was from God and not because he sought it, and it was removed from him in order to teach the "sons of God", the friends. But they had done what so many do in their interpersonal relationships and supposed dialogues with others; they had ignored the parameters defining the specific relationship in view, e.g. that we are to esteem our brother better than ourselves, we are to have the love which seeks to believe good rather than evil.

Job 22:25 The Almighty will be your treasure, and precious silver to you- "Treasure" is only s.w. "treasure" in :24, the word also meaning 'gold'. God was to be Job's gold and not literal gold. LXX "and he shall bring thee forth pure as silver that has been tried by fire". This is the image used of the intended effect of Judah's sufferings in Babylon (Is. 48:18; Ez. 22:18-22). If the LXX is correct, then Job quotes this back to Eliphaz in Job 23:10. Job is arguing back that he does not love gold over God, and that he will himself come forth as gold after the trials have finished. Unlike the friends, who generally refuse to engage with Job's words in their speeches, Job specifically engages with their words. See on :7.

Job 22:26 For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty- The exiles like Job were to finally delight themselves in God at the restoration, if they followed Job's path (s.w. Is. 58:14).

And shall lift up your face to God- Perhaps the Lord had this in view when He commended the man who like Job would not lift up his face to God (Lk. 18:13). The friends were only saved because Job was allowed to lift up his face to God for them (s.w. Job 42:8,9). This was all a powerful way of teaching the friends that they were being saved by absolute grace. The man Job, whose face they were sure God would not accept, saved them by lifting up his face to God. It was the exiles whose faces God would not accept (s.w. Mal. 1:8,9). Job was treated like them

although he was not like them; he was bearing the punishment of their sins in order to save them, just as he did for the friends, whose faces were likewise unacceptable to God.

Job 22:27 You shall make your prayer to Him, and He will hear you. You shall pay your vows-

Job 22:28 You shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established to you. Light shall shine on your ways- LXX "And he shall establish to thee again a habitation of righteousness and there shall be light upon thy paths". Again this is the language of later Isaiah about Zion's light and the restored Zion.

The decree which is established is parallel to the prayer which is heard (:27,28). This was in fact true of Job, for it was thanks to his prayers that the friends were finally saved; when they had here insisted that God didn't hear Job's prayers. In fact it was their prayers which were not heard. But there is a wider principle here. Absolute faith in prayer which is according to God's broad desires results in our requests effectively being decrees of what is now going to happen! It is not difficult for us to know what the will of God in the sense of His desires is. We have been born again by the word of God. We were not born again by the will of man, but by the will of God. The will of God is therefore found in the word of God (James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Jn. 1:12-14). Thus if we pray according to our knowledge of God's desires as explained in the word, we are praying according to His will- and therefore if we have faith "He hears us". The Lord Jesus said as much: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (Jn. 15:7). Notice He didn't say 'you will ask whatever is according to God's will, and it will be heard'. We ask whatever we desire, and we will receive. This is because our will should be the will of God if the word of God is in us. And as we mature, our experience of answered prayer gets better, because we more intuitively sense what is God's will.

Job 22:29 When they cast down, you shall say, 'Be lifted up'. He will save the humble person- See on :7. This is quoted in James 4:6. As noted earlier, the friends come out with some truths, but they are framed in the wrong context. What they say is so true it is even worthy of later quotation, but the context in which they use their 'truth' is so wrong. And this is an example for all time. The friends may be saying that Job now cannot lift up the cast down by his prayers nor save anyone (:27,28) because he is a sinner. All this was turned right around at the end, where it is the friends whose prayers cannot be heard, and who are saved from their "cast down" position by Job's prayers.

Job 22:30 He will even deliver him who is not innocent. Yes, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of your hands- There are times and places where God is willing to save people for the sake of the spirituality of a third party, but if he or she fails in this, deliverance doesn't necessarily arise from another place, as it would have done in Esther's time. Eliphaz perceived all this when he told Job that a truly righteous man can "save the humble person. He shall deliver even him that is not innocent: yeah, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of thine hands" (Job 22:30 RV). And this was proved true later on- for Eliphaz was saved due to Job's mediation for him.

Job Chapter 23

Job 23:1 Then Job answered- Job's reply over Job 23 and Job 24 slips into self justification and fails to engage specifically with what Eliphaz has said in his last speech. Job 24 is largely a repeat of the general observation that the wicked prosper, and the suffering of anyone is therefore no sign they are sinning. This all indicates the overall decline of the dialogue. And it is a path followed by so many failed personal interactions.

Job 23:2 Even today- As if to say that yes, I am still going to keep complaining about my situation.

My complaint is grievous. His hand is heavy in spite of my groaning- AV "My stroke is heavier than my groaning". Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4). "Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; 'I only said / did it [or didn't do it] because...'. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins.

Job understood God to be in control in Heaven; he rejects the idea of a cosmic conflict going on 'up there' which the friends seem to allude to. More specifically, Job speaks of how God's hand forms and can pierce the "crooked serpent" and smite any monster (Job 26:11-14). It's as if Job is mocking the idea that God has let him go into the hands of the cosmic monsters which the friends believed in. For Job so often stresses that it is the "hand of God" which has brought His affliction (Job 19:21; 23:2). That Divine hand was far greater than any mythical 'Satan' figure. The theme of his speech in Job 28 is that Yahweh alone is to be feared throughout the entire cosmos. Nobody else – such as the 'Satan' figures alluded to by the friends – needed to be feared.

Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat!- Job sought to "probe" (AV "find out") the Almighty (Job 23:3; 28:12), whereas Elihu appears to agree with Zophar that "the Almighty" cannot be 'found out' (Job 11:7; 37:23). God's own appearance at the end is perhaps an answer to this. He cannot be 'found out' by intellectual argument or personal righteousness, but He still responds to the spirit of Job's request by appearing. Instead, He 'finds out' people and saves them by grace. Paul expresses the same idea when he writes that it is not so much a case of man 'knowing God', but rather of being "known of God" by grace (Gal. 4:9).

Job 23:3 perhaps epitomizes this desire of Job for judgment day: "Oh, that today I might find him, that I might come to his judgment seat!" (NAB). He wanted the judgment seat to come that very day! The invisible hand of God is working in every life that suffers from ones' brethren 'playing God' in false judgment of us... to lead us to this wonderful and blessed attitude.

The use of the word "order" in Job's words in 23:3-6 repays examination: " Oh that I knew where I might find (God)! that I might come even to His seat!. I would *order* my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments... Will He plead against me with his great power? No". See on :10.

Job 23:4 I would set my cause in order before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments- Earlier, Job had judged

himself, setting in order his legal case, but declaring himself righteous (Job 13:8). By Job 23:4, Job is realizing that he needs to set his case in order before God; but he can't find God, or get God to engage in this game of judgment. He needed the final appearance of God at the end of the book to review his case, and declare that he is in fact wrong and condemned. But by grace, God will count him as right. He was prepared for this by Elihu's speech in Job 37:19: "Teach us what we shall tell Him, for we can't make our case by reason of darkness". "Make our case" is s.w. "set my cause in order".

Job appeals for 'witnesses' (Job 9:33–35; 16:18–22; 19:20–27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a 'case' with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29–31 is effectively Job's declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job's earlier plea: "Sleeplessly I wait for His reply" (Job 16:22). It's as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of 'Satan', suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about 'Satan' figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the "holy ones", had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: "To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job's guilt] is true" (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters.

Job 23:5 I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would tell me- Job promises to be obedient and acceptant of whatever outcome there was from his meeting with God. And when God does finally appear and in a way condemn him, he does accept this. Or perhaps the sense is simply as in GNB "I want to know what he would say and how he would answer me".

Job 23:6 Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power? No, but He would listen to me- AV "Would he plead against me...?". God, and Elihu on His behalf, *did* plead against Job by recounting God's power. Judgment before God was not quite as Job had imagined. When Elihu was established in Job's mind as God's true representative, he found that he had nothing to say, as he thought he would have. Elihu seems to refer back to this speech when he challenges the dumfounded Job: "If thou hast anything to say, answer me... if thou canst answer me, set thy words in *order* before me" (Job 33:32,5 AV). Elihu has in mind Job 23:4 "I would set my cause in order before Him". Job several times spoke of how he would fully explain himself to God, if he found Him. Yet in the presence of God and Elihu, he finds that all the words dry up. Words became irrelevant. All he can do is behold the majesty of God's righteousness, and declare his own unrighteousness. That spiritual pinnacle of Job still lies ahead for the majority of us. The desire to speak is a desire to express our *own* thoughts. Words are a construct which can trap us. Only *God's* words can liberate. There is a *wordless* element in being truly humbled before the Almighty.

Job 23:7 There the upright might reason with Him, so I should be delivered forever from my judge- Job's imagination of judgment day was that there would be some upright person present who would be as his advocate, and deliver him from God as his judge. Elihu appears according to Job's wish (Job 33:6); but he condemns Job. And God then appears in person to judge Job. Elihu couldn't save Job from that.

Job 23:8 If I go east, He is not there; if west, I can't find Him- We note there was no God to be found to the east, whereas He is apparently present at the other compass points, although invisible to Job. Perhaps this would be a reference to the spiritual bankruptcy of the children of the east, from where the friends had come from. It would also be a statement from Job, as one of the greatest of the children of the east, that there was no God in his surrounding society.

Job 23:9 He works to the north, but I can't see Him. He turns south, but I can't catch a glimpse of Him- "The north" in Hebrew is 'the hidden place'. There appears to be the idea that God is indeed at work to the north and south, but Job can't glimpse God there.

Job 23:10 But He knows the way that I take- Job cannot discern the way God takes, not even the compass point He

is working on; but the point is that God knows the way Job takes. Paul expresses the same idea when he writes that it is not so much a case of man 'knowing God', but rather of being "known of God" by grace (Gal. 4:9). See on :3.

When He has tried me, I shall come forth like gold- This appears to be an allusion to Job 22:25 LXX "and he shall bring thee forth pure as silver that has been tried by fire". This is the image used of the intended effect of Judah's sufferings in Babylon (Is. 48:18; Ez. 22:18-22). If the LXX is correct, then Job quotes this back to Eliphaz here in Job 23:10. Job is arguing back that he does not love gold over God, and that he will himself come forth as gold after the trials have finished. Unlike the friends, who generally refuse to engage with Job's words in their speeches, Job specifically engages with their words.

Job 23:11 My foot has held fast to His steps. I have kept His way, and not turned aside- Job says this in the context of having lamented that he senses God's activity in various places, but cannot see God there (:9,10). But he has planted his feet in the footsteps left by the invisible God and not turned aside from that path. Job "held fast" to God's footprints, even though He didn't see Him, and yet he later realized that the afflictions God sent had taken hold [s.w. "held fast"] to him (Job 30:16). We see here the mutuality between God and man, achieved through the experience of suffering brought by Him.

Job 23:12 I haven't gone back from the commandment of His lips. I have treasured up the words of His mouth more than my necessary food- Job had had no fresh revelation from God since God gave the satan power over him. Perhaps he had been party to the discussion between God, satan and the other "sons of God" (the friends) recorded in the prologue. He would have hung on to God's statement that He considered Job to be His righteous servant. And that the afflictions were somehow for the benefit of the friends / satan / "sons of God". See on :14. But there is a wider principle here. The Word of God should be our daily food - indeed, our dependence upon it, and natural desire for it, should be even greater than our instinctive appetite for physical food: "... I have treasured the words of his mouth *more* than my necessary food" was Job's feeling (Job 23:12). Jeremiah likewise: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15:16). Making time during each day for regular Bible reading is therefore a vital thing to build into our pattern of daily life. An uninterrupted 30 minutes of Bible study first thing in the morning is bound to start us off each day in the right spiritual gear. Such faith-forming habits are vital.

Job 23:13 But He stands alone- The idea may be that God remained "alone" from Job's perspective, refusing to allow Job to come to Him and enter into dialogue.

And who can oppose Him? What His soul desires, even that He does- The dramatic story of Job thrice uses the same phrase as in Is. 43:13, concluding that "who can hinder...?" God's way (Job 9:12; 11:10; 23:13). The exiles were to understand that no human opposition or discouragement can turn back or hinder God's purpose to save His people, even if they are as Job in suffering. His saving and restorative purpose will not be hindered, if we wish to identify with it.

Job 23:14 For He performs that which is appointed for me. Many such things are with Him- Again Job demonstrates his understanding that all his afflictions were from God, not any cosmic satan being. And those afflictions were those "appointed"- perhaps referring to God's words in the prologue, which Job had continually meditated upon (see on :12; Job 24:1).

Job 23:15 Therefore I am terrified at His presence. When I consider, I am afraid of Him- Job has lamented that he senses God but cannot see Him (:8,9). But clearly he felt His presence in a very real manner. So we conclude that the presence of God can be felt in His very absence. We like Job can sense His hand working through His very silence and apparent lack of direct engagement with us.

Job 23:16 For God has made my heart faint. The Almighty has terrified me- See on :17. We can read this 'terror' as a reference to the panic attacks which were apparently part of Job's sickness (s.w. Job 22:10).

Job 23:17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither did He cover my face with the thick darkness- The

Hebrew in :16,17 is difficult, and GNB offers "Almighty God has destroyed my courage. It is God, not the dark, that makes me afraid—even though the darkness has made me blind". The darkness was typically associated with cosmic forces of evil. Job sees through that and perceives it is God behind the darkness. The exiles had to learn the same (Is. 45:5-7).

Job Chapter 24

Job 24:1 Why aren't times laid up by the Almighty? Why don't those who know Him perceive His days?- This could be read as a complaint that God's people don't realize the time periods of His operations in advance. Job sensed that his afflictions were for a period (see on Job 23:12,14), but he didn't know the end point. There is a purpose to that. All attempts to understand Bible prophecy as history and time periods predicted in advance are missing the whole point; these prophecies are so that we will understand once the fulfilment comes, rather than presenting history in advance.

Job 24:2 There are people who remove the landmarks. They violently take away flocks, and feed them- Alluding to the taking away of Job's flocks. Probably his landmarks were removed at the same time. I have suggested that the satan figure morphs into the friends, and they may actually have been responsible for the theft of Job's flocks. The Bedouin tribes were certainly from the same areas as the friends came from. Job may be hinting that the theory that sin brought judgment was wrong, because the sins of the friends against him weren't being immediately judged.

Job 24:3 They drive away the donkey of the fatherless, and they take the widow's ox for a pledge- "Drive away" is the word used of the driving of God's people into captivity (Dt. 4:27; 28:37). The exiles were wondering why judgment had come upon them, and not upon their captors and abusers. The answer of the book of Job is that they were as Job, and the wicked whose day of judgment was surely to come ultimately refer to their captors.

Job 24:4 They turn the needy out of the way. The poor of the earth all hide themselves- Turning aside the poor out of the way is the very phrase used in Am. 2:7 of how the Jewish leadership had done this to the righteous remnant. Again, the idea is that sufferings of the righteous remnant were going to be finally judged, even though it appeared as if the wicked had got away with it. This had powerful relevance to the exiles.

Job 24:5 Behold, as wild donkeys in the desert, they go forth to their work, seeking diligently for food. The wilderness yields them bread for their children- It's unclear whether those referred to are the Bedouin tribes of the preceding verses, or the desperately poor who are not helped by them (as in the subsequent verses). Possibly the ambiguity is purposeful, as if to make the point that those Bedouin tribes didn't help their own people even, and they themselves became poor and desperate. See on :6.

Job 24:6 They cut their provender in the field. They glean the vineyard of the wicked- LXX "They have reaped a field that was not their own before the time: the poor have laboured in the vineyards of the ungodly without pay and without food". The impression is that they were themselves thieves and yet were also oppressed by others; see on :5.

Job 24:7 They lie all night naked without clothing, and have no covering in the cold- Particularly relevant to the cold desert nights in the region.

Job 24:8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for lack of a shelter- This could perhaps hint that through the experience of affliction, men "embrace the rock", a symbol of God and His Son, the Messiah Jesus. Job likewise was in essence led to the spirit of Christ through his experience of the abuse of others and lack of comfort from his own brethren.

Job 24:9 There are those who pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor- Baby stealing was exactly the sort of thing practiced by the Bedouin Arab groups who had stolen Job's property, perhaps under the direction of the friends (see on :2). Job has accused the friends of abusing the fatherless (Job 6:27). The friends accused Job of doing so (Job 22:7). Job now insists that it is the wicked who do this (Job 24:3,9), and is dogmatic that he has in fact blessed the fatherless (Job 29:12; 31:17,21). As explained on Job 42:7, Job in various aspects suffers as if guilty for the very sins committed by the friends. He was their representative, and suffered the results of their sins, although he hadn't committed them. Therefore at the end, his prayer and further sacrifice for them was accepted, and they were thereby saved- by grace indeed.

Job 24:10 so that they go around naked without clothing. Being hungry, they carry the sheaves- Keeping the pledge of the poor so he is left naked (:9) was recognized from earliest times as wicked behaviour. It is condemned in the law of Moses. But Job is observing that those who do even such things are apparently not immediately judged.

Job 24:11 They make oil within the walls of these men. They tread wine presses, and suffer thirst- The wicked didn't even let their workers drink from the grape juice they were treading out. The law of Moses allowed even animals to eat bits of what they were treading out. This legislation clearly had a basis in very early standards of what was right and wrong, for the book of Job appears to be about a situation before the time of Moses.

Job 24:12 From out of the populous city, men groan. The soul of the wounded cries out, yet God doesn't regard the folly- Because God doesn't judge the abuses listed in the previous verses, it is therefore wrong to suggest that He immediately judges sin with suffering, and rewards obedience with material blessing. That's Job's point. But Job also feels he has 'cried out' to God for justice and not been heard (Job 19:7; 30:20); and that there is nothing wrong with crying out to God in distress, it is a perfectly natural reaction (Job 24:12). One comment upon this is that the young ravens cry out to God for food and yet are not always heard (Job 38:41 s.w.). But God in the wider picture sustains all of creation by grace. Job did well to cry out to God even if there was no answer, because the hypocrites do not 'cry out' to God when they are facing judgment (Job 36:13 s.w.). Job feels hurt that God has not responded to his 'crying out' because he says that when the needy cried out to him, he had heard (Job 29:12 s.w.). But here we see his works based approach; he thought that his response to those who cried out to him meant that therefore God must respond to *his* crying out. And God is not so primitive. His apparent silence is because His response is not predicated upon human works and charity. It is by grace alone, as is taught in His final appearance to Job. The exiles likewise were to finally see the response to their crying out to God in the restoration (Is. 58:9), just as their representative Jonah cried out to God from the belly of *sheol* amidst the sea of nations, and was heard (s.w. Jonah 2:2).

Job 24:13 These are of those who rebel against the light. They don't know its ways, nor stay in its paths- The implication could be that these people knew the light but refused to walk in the way of light nor its paths; whereas Job insists he has held to the true path (Job 23:11). He perhaps is making oblique reference to the friends; who may be the wicked who had stolen his flocks (see on :2). But this attacking of the partner in dialogue is an indication that the dialogue is failing: 'I held on to the true path, you didn't' is not engagement with what has been said.

Job 24:14 The murderer rises with the light. He kills the poor and needy. In the night he is like a thief- Job is appearing to overly labour his point; that the wicked are not immediately judged, nor are the righteous immediately rewarded. He almost revels in his description of wicked deeds which go unpunished, making the point that light or darkness make no difference to the wicked. Darkness is not a deterrent to them; they sin equally using both the light and the darkness. Therefore the accusation that Job has sinned in darkness is therefore untrue. But Job appears to be labouring his point. This too is a feature of how dialogue goes wrong once the actual words of our partner are ignored; lengthy digressions are made to prove a relatively minor point, and the essential thrust of the arguments is thereby lost.

Job 24:15 The eye also of the adulterer waits for the twilight, saying, 'No eye shall see me'. He disguises his face- As noted on :14, the idea is that the wicked sin as much in the light as in the darkness. Murderers take the light as a signal to murder (:14), whilst adulterers wait for darkness to commit adultery.

Job 24:16 In the dark they dig through houses. They shut themselves up in the daytime. They don't know the light- As commented upon on :14, Job is far over labouring his point- that sinners sin in both the light and the darkness.

Job 24:17 For the morning is to all of them like thick darkness, for they know the terrors of the thick darkness- Perhaps the idea is that they are disappointed when the morning comes, because they have to stop their wicked works. But AV "the shadow of death" for NEV "thick darkness" suggests that the morning is the time of their death. Job envisaged a morning coming which would mean judgment and death for the wicked. In the end this was to be the hope of the exiles too, that a day of judgment would come with the arising of Messiah as the dawn (Mal. 4:2).

Job 24:18 They are foam on the surface of the waters. Their portion is cursed in the earth. They don't turn into the way of the vineyards- GNB "The wicked are swept away by floods, and the land they own is under God's curse; they no longer go to work in their vineyards". This is relevant to the Jews exiled from their inheritance in the land and their vineyards. AV "He is swift as the waters" may refer to the swift coming of Divine judgment, like a flash flood of waters. The same word is used of the judgment of God's people (Lam. 4:19).

Job 24:19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters, so does Sheol those who have sinned- In Job 6:17, Job sees the melting of the snow waters as representing the failing comfort of his three friends; now he uses the figure about the destruction of the wicked; he comes towards the conclusions that his friends, his fellow "sons of God" of Job 1:6, were in fact sinners, they are the wicked Bedouin people who have brought his trials (see on :2). And this is all preparing the way for him to finally pray for their forgiveness and salvation at the end of the book. Job, the righteous remnant amongst the captives, were to pray for and save the unspiritual majority; but they had to be convinced of how far astray their brethren really were. We note too that *sheol*, the grave, is understood by Job as the destruction of sinners; although he himself speaks of how *sheol* is waiting for him, although he believed he would be resurrected to justification in a bodily form. He therefore believed that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23) in the grave [*sheol*, where both righteous and wicked alike go], and not eternal torment in some other place.

Job 24:20 The womb shall forget him. The worm shall feed sweetly on him. He shall be no more remembered. Unrighteousness shall be broken as a tree- GNB "Not even their mothers remember them now; they are eaten by worms and destroyed like fallen trees". As noted on :19, Job understood the judgment of the wicked as being eternal death, rather than conscious eternal torment. In Job 17:14, Job uses the same language about his own impending death. He believed that both he and the wicked were going to the same place in death; the difference was therefore in that Job would be resurrected, whereas the wicked would remain dead.

The language of judgment as a tree being broken down was relevant to the exiles, who were bidden see their hope in the revival of the cut down stump, shooting forth as the shoot who would be known as Messiah.

Job 24:21 He devours the barren who don't bear. He shows no kindness to the widow- Job appears unable to resist the temptation to dwell yet further upon the wickedness of the wicked; for this further comment upon them appears slightly out of context between verses 20 and 22. He begins to bring God into the equation, but then in this verse flips back to relishing how wicked are the wicked, and how they avoid judgment in this life. Such an attitude would be appropriate if indeed the wicked he had in view were the friends who were seated before him (see on :2).

Job 24:22 Yet God preserves the mighty by His power. He rises up who has no assurance of life- The 'rising up' could mean that the wicked mighty people are not only preserved alive by God, but at times rise up from their temporal sufferings.

Job 24:23 God gives them security, and they rest in it. His eyes are on their ways- The apparent security of the wicked is from God, somehow; but God's eyes [a reference to the Angels?] are on their ways, and therefore [by implication] they will come to judgment.

Job 24:24 They are exalted; yet a little while, and they are gone. Yes, they are brought low, they are taken out of the way as all others, and are cut off as the tops of the ears of grain- This was how the Egyptians harvested corn, cutting off the entire ear of corn at the top of the stalk, and lends support to the impression that these things really happened "in the land of Uz" to a historical Job (see on Job 1:1). The death of the wicked "as all others" implies to Job that there must be a future point of justification for the righteous; for the wicked and the righteous die the same death, as other scripture also makes clear.

Job 24:25 If it isn't so now, who will prove me a liar, and make my speech worth nothing?- Job has argued himself into an invincible position, in his own eyes. Indeed, all he says is true; but like the friends, truths are expressed but within a wrong context. Finally Job is to lay his hand upon his mouth in repentance (Prov. 30:32; Mic. 7:16) and recognize he has not spoken rightly (Job 40:4), although he earlier demanded the friends lay their hands upon their

mouths before the power of his arguments (Job 21:5). God confirms this by remarking that whoever has hope of overcoming Leviathan, His great beast (perhaps representing death and human mortality) is a liar to think he has such hope (Job 41:9 s.w. "liar"). Job has forgotten his humanity, despite being 'right' in his arguments. This is the problem with possessing truth; it can lead us to wrongly forget our humanity and consider ourselves invincible.

Job Chapter 25

Job 25:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered- Here Bildad is merely using the previous arguments of Eliphaz in Job 11:17; 15:15. This is another sign that dialogue has failed- when one side starts quoting the words and arguments of their own side, rather than engaging with the actual words of the other side. These dialogues are recorded to teach us how not to dialogue, and to see the extreme consequence of refusing to even want to understand each other.

Job 25:2 Dominion and fear are with Him. He makes peace in His high places- Again, this is true, but it is a truth used in a wrong context. For Bildad's argument here is a repeat of what Eliphaz has said, that God is so great and high, considering even the Angels unclean, that He is really not that concerned with man, and Job's idea that God ought to be passionately concerned about him is therefore blasphemous.

Job 25:3 Can His armies be counted? On whom does His light not arise?- The armies presumably refer to His Angels (as GNB). Job didn't disagree with this; he has just argued in Job 24:14-17 that indeed God's light is everywhere, but sinners refuse to walk in it, and the presence of darkness or His light is no deterrent to sinners. But that argument is totally bypassed by Bildad here because he is set on repeating earlier arguments of his friend Eliphaz. Again, this is all a parade example of dialogue gone wrong.

Job 25:4 How then can man be just with God? Or how can he who is born of a woman be clean?- Bildad isn't engaging with Job's arguments now, he is simply repeating the false statements of Eliphaz that the human condition is such that we can never be just with God. Bildad has forgotten the parameters imposed by God in the prologue- that in His eyes, Job was perfect. The final justification of Job with God, by grace, was an answer enough to this wrong view of human nature. See on :6.

The question "How can a man be just with God?" is the same question as 'How can a man ever be clean before a perfect God?', and is repeated in this form in Job 9:30; 15:15; 25:4. The exiles had considered themselves cleansed whiter than snow because of their obedience to some parts of the Mosaic law (Lam. 4:7), but failed to accept that such cleansing to be whiter than snow is only possible by doing what David did, and casting ourselves upon God's grace outside of justification by works (Ps. 51:7). Job was to learn this lesson at the end. It was this offer which was made to Job just as it was to Judah under judgment (Is. 1:18).

Job 25:5 Behold, even the moon has no brightness, and the stars are not pure in His sight- It can be argued that the book of Job is a dialogue concerning evil and suffering, with three popular views being represented by the three friends. These views are examined and corrected by the personal history of Job, as well as by the epilogue and prologue to the book. Eliphaz seems to be representative of the idea that Job is being hit by supernaturally controlled evil- Eliphaz speaks of a force of darkness (Job 22:10,11) and sinful or faulty Angels living in an unclean Heaven (Job 4:18; 15:15). Yet the *answer* to all this is that the Satan figure is under God's control, all Job's misfortunes come from *God* and His Angels- one of whom may have been called 'the adversary' ('Satan')- are in fact perfectly obedient to Him and not disobedient. And finally, Eliphaz and the friends are rebuked for their various wrong understandings, with God declaring Himself supreme and ultimate sovereign. Likewise Bildad's view of Angels in Job 25:5 "The stars are not pure in God's eyes" is corrected by God in Job 38:7, when He says that "the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy".

Job 25:6 how much less man, who is a worm, the son of man, who is a worm!- Bildad is simply wrong to argue that because man is a worm, therefore he is of no particular value to God, seeing that his nature means that he can never be clean nor just before God (see on :4). This is not the case. The Lord Jesus had human nature but was clean and just before God, showing for all time the possibilities intrinsic within human nature. The same word is used of how He on the cross felt as a worm (Ps. 22:6). It is the very message to the exiles: "Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel: I will help you" (Is. 41:14). Though their sins were red as the crimson worm (s.w.), they would be made white as wool (Is. 1:18). The lowness of man is no barrier to being clean before God, nor to being revived and used by Him.

Job Chapter 26

Job 26:1 Then Job answered- The speech of Job recorded in Job 26-31 is the longest in the book. The pattern of each of the three friends giving a speech and Job replying, spread over three speeches, appears to slightly break down in that Zophar doesn't give his third speech. We note that Bildad's final speech was very brief, and was really only quoting previous words from Eliphaz (Job 25). This could all create the intentional impression in the drama that the friends were running out of steam in their arguments. Job now makes a very long speech... but that is not his victory nor justification. That is only provided by God's appearance at the end, when Job repents of his words. It is usual for the genre of drama to play with audience expectation and dash it to make a point. That is what is happening here, with Bildad's final speech really a flop, and Zophar not giving the speech which the structure of the drama requires him to make. And we are also led to expect Job's final long speech to be his justification, seeing most of what he says is true in itself. But this too is a dashed expectation; for God appears and condemns them all, and then justifies Job by grace. But see on Job 27:11.

Job 26:2 How have you helped him who is without power! How have you saved the arm that has no strength!- The reference may again be to Cain, who was cursed with the ground being "without power" to him (Gen. 4:12 s.w.), as an apostate Israel were (s.w. Lev. 26:20). In this case Job would be saying that even the condemned in this life could be helped to revival. That was what he had learnt of God, and he expected men to act with a similar saving grace. Elihu confirms the argument by saying that although God has all power, He doesn't despise those who have none (Job 36:5). The exiles were also without "power" (Lam. 1:6 s.w.), represented by Daniel in just that position (s.w. Dan. 10:8,16,17), with "no strength" (Ez. 19:14), but would "renew their strength / power" (Is. 40:31 s.w.). That revival would not be by human power but by God's spirit (Zech. 4:6), after the pattern of Job's revival. The Zion who had "no strength" would put on strength (s.w. Is. 51:9; 52:1).

Job 26:3 How have you counselled him who has no wisdom, and plentifully declared sound knowledge!- Job felt he had been deprived of everything, including wisdom and knowledge. But this was not because he was unwise; he is presented as a perfect man (Job 1:1). God is able to give and take wisdom, as is seen in the natural creation (Job 39:17 s.w.).

Job 26:4 To whom have you uttered words? Whose spirit came forth from you?- To ask this question is to imply that they were false prophets (1 Kings 22:24). And God confirms this at the end, in saying that the friends had not spoken rightly about Him (Job 42:7).

Job 26:5 Those who are deceased tremble, those beneath the waters and all that live in them- AV "Dead things are formed from under the waters". "Waters" are a clear figure for judgment. Job's great theme is that out of death, there can be revival and restoration. Death itself is no barrier to this revival. This was the lesson taught to the exiles by the vision of the dry, dead bones of Israel reviving. The LXX therefore speaks of "giants be born from under the water".

Job 26:6 Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering- This is a deconstruction of Mot, the god of death; see on Job 10:8. He sees God is the real attacker, not, therefore, Mot or any other such being. Note too how Num. 16:31-35 describes *God* as swallowing up Korah, Dathan and Abiram into death in the earth – as if to deconstruct the idea that Mot did things like this. But in the context noted on :5, death is no barrier to God's work of revival and restoration.

Job 26:7 He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth upon nothing- This continues the ideas of :5,6; God can revive and restore from death, He can create matter, and can hang great weights upon nothing. Emptiness and deserted space can be used by Him. And this was the challenge of faith to the exiles. To believe that the empty space of the Jerusalem temple and the ruined land could again be stretched out by God as a tabernacle is stretched out, and revived (s.w. Is. 54:2); just as Job's ravaged body and life could be restored in a moment. Creation itself had been brought about from that which was "without form" (Gen. 1:2, s.w. "empty space"), and so the new creation of Job and Israel would be likewise.

Job 26:8 He binds up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not burst under them- Job likes to reason from the hints found within the natural creation, and Elihu and God Himself will speak to him in these very terms which he clearly so appreciated. Here, Job's point is that great weight can be carried by that which is nothing, and will not be broken by the great weight. This is in harmony with the preceding verses; Job believed that God would and could revive from nothing, from death itself.

Job 26:9 He encloses the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud upon it- As so often in the drama of Job, truths are presented but without context. This is indeed true; but Job and the exiles had to learn that the cloud that came between God and themselves was that of human sin (Is. 44:22), even though God responded by bringing that cloud (Job 36:32). The years of exile were the day of cloud (Ez. 34:12; Lam. 3:44). But through that cloud, the light of God's saving glory was still visible (Job 37:15).

Job 26:10 He has defined a boundary on the surface of the waters, and to the confines of light and darkness- GNB "He divided light from darkness by a circle drawn on the face of the sea". Job understands that it is *God* who sends the good and evil, the light and the darkness, into his life (Job 30:26). Significantly, he states his faith that *God even marks out the boundary between light and darkness* (Job 26:10) – a similar idea in essence to the reassurance of Is. 45:5 that God creates both light and darkness. The 'darkness', however we experience and understand it, is framed and limited by God; it is not a power or being with independent existence outside the realm of God's power. God confirms Job's understanding later, when He says that it is He who can swaddle the sea [another figure for uncontrollable evil] in bands of darkness (Job 38:9) – as if to say that it is God who gives things like darkness and the sea their sinister appearance and perception by men; but He is in control of them, using them in His hand. See on Job 38:10.

Job 26:11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His rebuke- Job understood God to be in control in Heaven; he rejects the idea of a cosmic conflict going on 'up there' which the friends seem to allude to. More specifically, Job speaks of how God's hand forms and can pierce the "crooked serpent" and smite any monster (Job 26:11–14). It's as if Job is mocking the idea that God has let him go into the hands of the cosmic monsters which the friends believed in. For Job so often stresses that it is the "hand of God" which has brought His affliction (Job 19:21; 23:2). That Divine hand was far greater than any mythical 'Satan' figure. The theme of his speech in Job 28 is that Yahweh alone is to be feared throughout the entire cosmos. Nobody else – such as the 'Satan' figures alluded to by the friends – needed to be feared.

Job 26:12 He stirs up the sea with His power, and by His understanding He strikes through Rahab- Rahab is a term used for Babylon and so this becomes all the more relevant to the restoration context. "The sea" was understood by the contemporary people to be awfully mysterious, and a radical power in its own right. Just as Babylon and the forces arraigned against Job seemed invincible and a law to themselves. Just as we may consider we are in the hands of forces which are mysterious and too great for us to grapple with. But Job's simple faith was that God was in total control of all those things. "He stirs up the sea..." is quoted in Is. 51:15 of God's power available for the exiles against Babylon.

Job 26:13 By His Spirit the heavens are garnished. His hand has pierced the swift serpent- See on :11. Here the hand and Spirit of God are equated- both are Angelic phrases, and thus provides further evidence that the Angels actually performed the creation. Many passages clearly identify God's spirit with His power. In order to create the earth, "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:2,3). God's spirit was the power by which all things, e.g. light, were made. "By His spirit He has created the heavens; His hand has formed the crooked serpent" (Job 26:13). A comparison of Mt. 12:28 and Lk. 11:20 shows that "the finger of God" and "the spirit of God" are parallel - God in action is His spirit. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

Thus Job associates God's Spirit with His hand, which is Satan's hand. It seems far more fitting that this hand and spirit should be Angelic rather than human. Again, it was Angelic work that formed the Heavens. Job recognized

that his trials came from the hand of God, but knew that His hand would not kill him- " with Thy strong hand Thou opposest Thyself against me... howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to (bring me to) the grave" (Job 30:21,24). This was exactly the brief given to satan- to try Job, but "preserve his life". The hand of God creating evil (Job 2:10,11) must surely refer to God's " Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7).

Job 26:14 Behold, these are but the outskirts of His ways. How small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?- There are only some things which God makes known to us about Himself; we do not have the total truth about God, we see but parts of His ways and hear only a little portion of Him (Job 26:14). Our perception and definition of "the truth" needs to bear this in mind. Absolute truth claims aren't simply ignorant, they lead to all manner of relationship breakdown, arrogance and deformation of spirituality both in ourselves and others. See on Rom. 1:19.

Job Chapter 27

Job 27:1 Job again took up his parable and said- In what sense is Job's pouring out of his very personal reflections about his situation "a parable"? I suggest the answer is that we are intended to understand his situation as parabolic or representative of other situations; particularly that with the exiles in Babylon, who would also be led to restoration if they followed Job's path.

Job 27:2 As God lives, who has taken away my right- Job is specifically criticized by Elihu for saying this (Job 34:5 s.w.). I have suggested that Elihu was not always specifically reflecting God's viewpoints, but instead is a literary device within the drama who serves to summarize the arguments so far delivered. "Right" is literally "judgment". Job has lamented that he sought in vain for God to meet him in judgment. But the very same phrase is used of how by grace God would 'take away Israel's judgments' in no longer condemning them (Zeph. 3:15). It was therefore a good thing that God did not meet Job in judgment; and by grace He was to justify Job and take away his judgment of condemnation.

The Almighty, who has made my soul bitter- The phrase used by Hezekiah, another possible fulfilment of the suffering servant based upon Job (Is. 38:17).

Job 27:3 For the length of my life is still in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils- This is obviously referring to the record of God's creation of Adam in Gen. 2:7. See on Job 10:9; 9:17. Job may be wrongly suggesting he is merely suffering because he is a son of Adam, whilst personally innocent. Although in Job's case he did need to repent, his situation pointed forward to that of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant based upon Job who was the second Adam.

Job 27:4 surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness, neither shall my tongue utter deceit- Job was bending all his self will to avoid not sinning with his lips, as he is initially commended for doing (Job 2:10). But finally he is taught that for all that steel willed self control, he must lay his hand upon his mouth and realize he has not spoken rightly (Job 40:4). He may have controlled his specific words, but the general thrust of his understanding had been so badly wrong.

Job 27:5 Far be it from me that I should justify you. Until I die I will not put away my integrity from me- The friends had specifically accused Job of things he had never done (e.g. Job 22:5-9). He would not justify them by saying they had been right after all; he is a great example of not taking false guilt. For in such situations, people often break down and accept guilt for what they never actually did. He held on to God's view of him which had been made clear in the prologue- that he was "perfect", of integrity, and he would not be made to feel as if that was not the case. What he had to learn was that he was after all a sinful human and that high estimation of him had been the result of imputed righteousness by grace. And he had to be taught that in God's final appearance to him.

Job 27:6 I hold fast to my righteousness, and will not let it go- God had stated in Job 2:3 that Job held fast (s.w.) to his integrity. And here Job uses this word about himself. He will not "curse God, and die". Again we have the impression that he had been present at these discussions between the Satan and God; and the view of the Satan was in fact the view now of the friends, who effectively acted as the Satan figure who had influenced their thinking. His argument against the friends, that he did maintain his integrity still, was effectively arguing back against this position of the Satan.

"Hold fast" is the same word as in Is. 56:2: "And the son of man who holds it fast". To "hold fast" means to keep covenant (2 Chron. 7:22). The "it" the exiles were to hold fast to was God's righteousness and not their own (Is. 56:1). But they refused to do so because like Job, they held fast (s.w.) to their own righteousness (s.w. Job 27:6).

My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live- Paul was like Job, determined to "have always a conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward man" (Acts 24:16); but later he learnt the lesson of Job, and realized that although his conscience doesn't condemn him, this is not to say he is ultimately right before God (1 Cor. 4:4). For the final appearance of God convicted Job of sin, of the fact that his status as "perfect" before God was by imputed

righteousness through grace; and that his spotless personal conscience was not therefore the ultimate decider of his acceptability before God. Just as we must learn that at the last day, we will be judged by God's word and our conscience will not as it were jump out of us and judge us.

Job realized his sinfulness, and yet at the same time he was in a quandary over whether he really had sinned. In Job 27:6 he even feels that his heart does not reproach him over any of the days he has ever lived (RV). This is such an accurate caricature of so many Christian consciences, of so much of our self-examination, both individually and collectively. We of course have to admit that we are sinners, riddled with weakness in so many ways; and of course we *do* admit this. And yet there is a quandary over whether we really are big time sinners. We feel ourselves to be little sinners, whatever we may theoretically admit. And as such, we fail to appreciate the grace of God's salvation, and therefore we fail to dynamically respond to this as we should do, and thereby our community and our own lives are characterized by the all too evident apathy with which they are; there is so little of the real flame, the fire of true spirituality, which there might be. And dear Job, like us, for all his good works, for all his being such a truly and really nice guy and brother, through and through... he had to be brought down to his knees: "I am vile... I know (*now*, by implication) that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee... therefore have I uttered that I understood thee; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" .

Job 27:7 Let my enemy be as the wicked. Let him who rises up against me be as the unrighteous- I wonder whether this specific enemy was Eliphaz. He is singled out by God at the end (Job 42:7), and the other two friends largely repeat his arguments in their speeches. He was from Teman, the very place from where the bands of marauders had come upon Job's encampment. He was one of the sons of God of Job 1:6 who had heard the Satan's opening arguments, and it seems he and the friends replaced the satan in the narrative; and therefore the distress brought by the satan may partly have been brought by Eliphaz and his team. He had risen up against Job, and therefore the descriptions of "the wicked" given by Job were all relevant to him and the friends.

Job 27:8 For what is the hope of the godless, when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?- GNB "What hope is there for the godless in the hour when God demands their life?". This appears to have been a source for the Lord's parable of the rich fool. "The godless" is AV "the hypocrite". This would be so true of the friends if indeed they were the ones behind Job's loss of cattle at the hand of the Bedouin tribesmen.

Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry when trouble comes on him?- Job 27:9,10 seems to be saying [although the Hebrew text is rather obscure] that every man on his deathbed cries to God in some kind of prayer; but a belief in the mortality of man will result in the righteous man having lived *a life* of prayerful crying to the Father, which will be in context with his final cry to God in his time of dying. The final truth was that God did not hear the cry of the friends- but He asks Job to pray for them, and He heard Job's cry for them.

Job 27:10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty, and call on God at all times?- As noted on :9, "at all times" means that the wicked only cry to God on their deathbeds and not "at all times" in their lifetimes. The exiles like Job were to finally 'delight themselves' in God at the restoration, if they followed Job's path (s.w. Is. 58:14). But Job is saying that whilst sinners refuse to repent, then they can never do this; and that was the fate of the exiles.

Job 27:11 I will teach you about the hand of God. That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal- See on Job 6:10. Some consider that there is textual corruption in Job, and Job 27:11-23 are Zophar's apparently missing third speech. But I would argue otherwise, apart from a dislike of positing textual corruption in order to explain away what may otherwise be hard of explanation. The speech of Job recorded in Job 26-31 is the longest in the book. The pattern of each of the three friends giving a speech and Job replying, spread over three speeches, appears to slightly break down in that Zophar doesn't give his third speech. We note that Bildad's final speech was very brief, and was really only quoting previous words from Eliphaz (Job 25). This could all create the intentional impression in the drama that the friends were running out of steam in their arguments. Job now makes a very long speech... but that is not his victory nor justification. That is only provided by God's appearance at the end, when Job repents of his words. It is usual for the genre of drama to play with audience expectation and dash it to make a point. That is what is happening here, with Bildad's final speech really a flop, and Zophar not giving the speech which the structure of the drama requires him to make. And we are also led to expect Job's final long speech to be his justification, seeing most of what he says is true in itself. But this too is a dashed expectation; for God appears and condemns them all, and then justifies Job by grace.

Job 27:12 Behold, all of you have seen it yourselves; why then have you become altogether vain?- They had been present at the opening dialogue with the Satan; and so they had 'seen' that Satan's hand was God's hand (:11). But they had not retained that in their knowledge, and had become vain in that they had come to argue and reason from a purely secular, Godless perspective.

Job 27:13 This is the portion of a wicked man with God, the heritage of oppressors, which they receive from the Almighty- The "this" refers to the description of the fate of the wicked which we now have in :13-23. Nearly all the descriptions have reference to Job's own experience. But his point is that he the righteous is suffering exactly the judgment of the wicked; he is now starting to realize that his sufferings were on behalf of others, even perhaps of the friends. And this comes to final term when at the end, he becomes their saviour, by grace.

Job 27:14 If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword. His offspring shall not be satisfied with bread- Seeing his own children had been destroyed by the sword, Job presumably was accepting that he was among the "wicked", as he does elsewhere (e.g. Job 9:2). Hos. 9:13,16 repeats such language regarding the punishment of sinful Israel: "Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer". Dt. 28:41 has the same idea.

Job 27:15 Those who remain of him shall be buried in death. His widows shall make no lamentation- Alluding to how Job's wife turned against him and was making no lamentation over his grief.

Job 27:16 Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare clothing as the clay- The sense is "Even if he..." had done these things. Job clearly has himself in view (see on :13), hence his conditional language (also in :17).

Job 27:17 he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver- The friends insisted Job was not innocent (s.w. Job 4:7). Job said he was. So he recognizes that whilst it appears that his wealth is being taken away by others because he has sinned, there will yet come a day when he is justified, and 'divides the silver'; and he as the innocent (Job 9:23) will condemn his hypocritical friends (Job 17:8). It was perhaps in recognition of this that those who had once rejected him come and give him silver (Job 42:11).

Job 27:18 He builds his house as the moth, as a booth which the watchman makes- Again Job refers to himself (Job 4:19; 13:28), recognizing that indeed he is suffering the judgment of the sinner, whilst personally righteous. Being consumed by a moth was to be the fate of apostate Israel (s.w. Is. 50:9; 51:8). But they could follow the path of Job to restoration, despite feeling and being condemned to death.

Job 27:19 He lies down rich, but he shall not do so again. He opens his eyes, and he is not- Perhaps as GNB "One last time they will lie down rich, and when they wake up, they will find their wealth gone".

Job 27:20 Terrors overtake him like waters. A storm steals him away in the night- A reference to the terrors or panic attacks which Job complained of (Job 6:4; 31:23), and the whirlwind storm which had suddenly taken away Job's family and wealth.

Job 27:21 The east wind carries him away, and he departs. It sweeps him out of his place- Job felt he too had been swept out of his place (Job 7:10). The wind from the east was the wind which swept in out of the wilderness to destroy Job (Job 1:19).

Job 27:22 For it hurls at him, and does not spare, as he flees away from his hand- AV "For God shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand". Zophar claims that Job was going to flee from the arrow of Divine judgment, but would all the same be struck through by it (Job 20:24,25). God's response was that His creatures didn't flee from His arrows (s.w. Job 41:28). Neither did Job flee from God, although he wanted to (see AV); he was in harmony with the natural creation. Zophar was wrong. Job didn't flee from God but quite the opposite- he keeps begging God to reveal Himself, and He does so at the end of the book.

Job 27:23 Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place- It was the friends who did this to Job, just as Zion's abusers did to her (Lam. 2:15 s.w.), hissing her into captivity (Jer. 19:8). Again, Job is presented as bearing the judgments of God's apostate people, who were also moved out of their place into exile.

Job Chapter 28

Job 28:1 Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold which they refine- Job in chapter 28 prides himself on his appreciation, as he thought, of God's hand in creation, and how creation reveals the greatness of God. But at the end he was taught that what he thought he so appreciated, he really didn't; and he learnt the true knowledge of God. Unclean animals are brought to his attention in Job 39; he then repents in Job 40:2-4, as if he finally saw in them symbols of himself. And then chapters 40 and 41 go on to speak of the joy of clean animals in their relationship with God, and the inability of man to come between them and their maker.

The theme of his speech in Job 28 is that Yahweh alone is to be feared throughout the entire cosmos. Nobody else – such as the 'Satan' figures alluded to by the friends – needed to be feared. Job understood God to be in control in Heaven; he rejects the idea of a cosmic conflict going on 'up there' which the friends seem to allude to. More specifically, Job speaks of how God's hand forms and can pierce the "crooked serpent" and smite any monster (Job 26:11–14). It's as if Job is mocking the idea that God has let him go into the hands of the cosmic monsters which the friends believed in. For Job so often stresses that it is the "hand of God" which has brought His affliction (Job 19:21; 23:2). That Divine hand was far greater than any mythical 'Satan' figure.

Job 28:2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted out of the ore- This is leading up to Job's contrast with the way that wisdom cannot be found by as it were mining the earth, and then processing what has been taken out. These reflections lead him to be ready for God's final appearance, announcing that grace is indeed a gift, and it is not so much knowing God as God knowing us which is so critical (Gal. 4:9). And theoretical knowledge and human wisdom play little part in that. All the extraction and processing of such knowledge will not lead us to personal relationship with Him.

Job 28:3 Man sets an end to darkness, and searches out, to the furthest bound of thick darkness, in order to find the stones of obscurity- "Darkness" is a term often used in the dialogues about what Job was enduring. Man, and the reference is to the friends, thinks he can understand it right to the ends of that darkness. But he can't. Only God can (:27). The darkness of Job's trials and their limit was to be defined by God alone, as made clear in the prologue. The finding of some obscure nugget of truth is therefore irrelevant compared to realizing that God has set far wider horizons that man has set himself.

Job 28:4 He breaks open a shaft away from where people live. They are forgotten by the foot walking above. They hang far from men, they swing back and forth- This is a picture of ancient mining, with men descending shafts on ropes in desperate search for precious nuggets (:3). Again, Job's point is that wisdom cannot be found by as it were mining the earth, and then processing what has been taken out. All the extraction and processing of such knowledge will not lead us to personal relationship with God.

Job 28:5 As for the earth, out of it comes bread; underneath it is turned up as it were by fire- This could be saying (in line with :2-4) that mining can be dangerous; under the earth is fire, and man is best to use the surface of the earth to grow bread. The whole enterprise of mining is being contrasted to man's search for meaning and knowledge. Job is not as it were anti intellectual, but is coming to appreciate that relationship with God is beyond mere nuggets of knowledge, "stones of obscurity" (:3) strung together. And this is confirmed when God finally appears and condemns the wisdom of the friends. See on :11.

Job 28:6 Sapphires come from its rocks. It has dust of gold- Job doesn't doubt that great beauty and value can indeed be mined. See on :2-5. But his point is that there is another set of values, invisible to the naked eye (:7), which is experience with God when we have a clear conscience (:28). Or the idea may be that there is gold that can be found on the surface without mining, and sapphires are found in alluvial soil embedded in gneiss on the surface, and not by mining. Perhaps the idea is that mining isn't needed to find nuggets of 'truth' but rather gathering what is on the surface of life.

Job 28:7 That path no bird of prey knows, neither has the falcon's eye seen it- The pagan peoples thought that birds had the gift of divination and wisdom. Again, as so often in Job, there is a deconstruction of popular beliefs in order

to demonstrate the utter supremacy of God.

Job 28:8 The proud animals have not trodden it, nor has the fierce lion passed by there- "The proud animals" are literally a pride of lions. Physical strength and reputation will not bring one to the wisdom of relationship with God which the argument climaxes with in :28.

Job 28:9 He puts forth his hand on the flinty rock, and he overturns the mountains by the roots- The "he" could be wisdom personified, or the reference could be to God. For He alone can overturn mountain roots. This section of the argument concludes in :12 "But where shall wisdom be found?". God can upturn mountains for us to look underneath, but still we will not find wisdom. Because wisdom is not knowledge which can be dug out and processed as if by the mining enterprise; rather is it live relationship with God which is of the essence (:28).

Job 28:10 He cuts out channels among the rocks. His eye sees every precious thing- As noted on :9, God can reveal everything physical, if He wishes. But man will still not find "wisdom" if he is searching for it as a 'physical' thing, obtained by a process of mining and subsequent refining. That reveals merely "stones of obscurity" (:3), nuggets of isolated truth. This message needs to be heeded by those who consider the Christian duty is to search out academic truth, mining it from the pages of the Bible and further processing it. This of itself is not to be despised, but this can be done as the Pharisees did it, and as the friends did- without coming to the awesome personal encounter with God and His grace with which the book of Job concludes.

Job 28:11 He binds the streams that they don't trickle. The thing that is hidden he brings forth to light- This is the same argument as explained on :10. God can dry up the streams so that those panning in them thig deep for precious stones- find them. He can bring them to light, but this is not the same thing as the "wisdom" of personal relationship with Him and departing from evil in our hearts (:28). This is what was happening on Job's life; God was 'bringing forth' light from death, deep things from darkness (s.w. Job 12:22). And this was realized by *God* bringing it forth, and not man's search for 'truth'. Job as a person was to be 'brought forth' *by God* as gold from that fire of affliction (Job 23:10 s.w.). Just as plants are 'brought forth' from the earth without the need for mining under the earth (Job 28:5 s.w.). This is why God's reply to Job keeps on using this word for 'bring forth', labouring the point that *God* 'brings forth' by His processes and initiatives, and not man. And that is as a code stamped upon all of creation (Job 38:8,29,32; 39:4,21; 41:20,21).

Job 28:12 But where shall wisdom be found?- "Found" is the word used of how Job sought to "probe" (AV "find out") the Almighty (Job 23:3; 28:12), whereas Elihu appears to agree with Zophar that "the Almighty" cannot be 'found' (Job 11:7; 37:23). God's own appearance at the end is perhaps an answer to this. He cannot be 'found out' by intellectual argument or personal righteousness. Instead, He 'finds out' people and saves them by grace. Paul expresses the same idea when he writes that it is not so much a case of man 'knowing God', but rather of being "known of God" by grace (Gal. 4:9). See on :9-12.

Where is the place of understanding?- The origin of "wisdom" is simply from God; it has no location on planet earth, no holy place somewhere which can be visited and wisdom obtained there; it is from Him rather than being mined and processed by man. This would have been relevant to the "sons of God" of Job 1:6, Job and his friends, who apparently regularly came to a defined place for worship and instruction.

Job 28:13 Man doesn't know its price; neither is it found in the land of the living- The wisdom of true relationship with God (:28) cannot be bought with money (see on :15). It can only be found beyond "the land of the living", which implies 'in death'. Job believed that his final justification and restored relationship with God could only come through his death and subsequent resurrection. And he, along with Hezekiah and later the captives in Babylon, had to pass through a living death to get to that point. See on :22.

Job 28:14 The deep says, 'It isn't in me'. The sea says, 'It isn't with me' - *Hum* ["the deep / abyss"] and *yam* ["the sea"] are references to the monsters supposed to live there, much feared by the folk of Job's day. Believing in them and trying to appease them by sacrifice (think of the casting of Jonah into the sea) wouldn't reveal wisdom. That was in repentance and relationship with God (:28), as the story of Jonah also demonstrates.

Job 28:15 It can't be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for its price- The same phrase translated as "without money and without price" is found in Is. 55:1 as to how the greatest wisdom was to leave Babylon / Persia and return to Judah, with all the inversion of values this required. The book of Job is full of connections to Isaiah, as it was rewritten to encourage the exiles in captivity.

Job 28:16 It can't be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire- Earlier in this chapter, Job has contrasted man's mining for precious stones on his initiative with God's working upon man to give him, by grace, something more precious- relationship with Him. Gold, onyx and sapphire were all stones in the Mosaic breastplate, and this is perhaps also be understood as an oblique reference to how the Mosaic system couldn't of itself bring about that relationship with God which is the true wisdom.

Job 28:17 Gold and glass can't equal it, neither shall it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold- Once a man comes to the true wisdom of relationship with God with a pure conscience by His grace (:28), he will never want to exchange it. This is the sense likewise of Prov. 23:23 "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding". "The truth", true understanding, is not a series of isolated academic truths mined and processed by man (see on :3-6). It refers to relationship with God. Many Christians obsessed with 'finding the truth' have yet to realize this.

Job 28:18 No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal. Yes, the price of wisdom is above rubies- The words of Job 28:18 are repeatedly quoted in Proverbs (Prov. 3:15; 8:11; 20:15). "Wisdom" in Proverbs refers not so much to nuggets of truth, but to a way of life in relationship with God; for that is the context in the source passage in Job 28:18 cp. 28.

Job 28:19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold- "Equal" is the word used to the exiles in Is. 40:18, where they are told that "God" has no equal. But I suggest in that context we must read in an ellipsis; 'relationship with God' cannot be equalled. It is totally inappropriate to compare it to human strength of any category.

Job 28:20 Where then does wisdom come from? Where is the place of understanding?- The origin of "wisdom" is simply from God; it has no location on planet earth, no holy place somewhere which can be visited and wisdom obtained there; it is from Him rather than being mined and processed by man. This would have been relevant to the "sons of God" of Job 1:6, Job and his friends, who apparently regularly came to a defined place for worship and instruction.

Job 28:21 Seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the birds of the sky- The wisdom of true relationship with God and restoration by grace (:28) cannot be discerned by the human senses. The naked eye cannot perceive it. Thus Job is coming closer to the New Testament teaching about the Spirit, which the exiles were also taught in Is. 64:4: "... neither has the eye seen... what He has prepared for him who waits for Him", to the end of the 70 year period of exile. These words are applied to all in our age who receive the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9).

Job 28:22 Destruction and Death say, 'We have heard a rumour of it with our ears'- As noted on :13, Job believed that through death he would thence ultimately pass to a bodily resurrection and restored relationship with God. In this sense, therefore, death has a rumour of this wisdom which nothing in the world of the living can have. A true sense of our mortality will lead to our prayerful, urgent contact with the Father all our days. Thus destruction and death give insight into the true wisdom.

Job 28:23 God understands its way, and He knows its place- Just as there is a sense in the natural creation that things such as the dawn have a specific "place" known by God alone (Job 38:12 s.w.), so the way of true relationship with Him, "wisdom", is known by Him alone. We do not find that "place" by intellectual effort, searching hither and thither, but by being open to God's leading of us as Job was.

Job 28:24 For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole sky- The implication may be that man sees only what is before his face, whereas God has an infinitely wider perspective. Job in his intense suffering is to be commended for realizing this; for physical pain tends to make the sufferer focus only upon the immediate.

Job 28:25 He establishes the force of the wind. Yes, He measures out the waters by measure- This is quoted in Is. 40:12 as encouragement to the exiles; the power of wind and waters, both representative of God's judgments for sin, are totally under His control. They are measured, the exile period would come to a defined end, just as Job's sufferings did.

Job 28:26 When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder- This "decree" for the rain is the word used of how the waters are "bounded" (Job 26:10), just as Job's sufferings were "appointed" or 'bounded' (Job 23:14), as the sufferings of the exiles were also time limited. The idea may be that when that 'bound' of the rain and darkness is reached, the end of the appointed suffering, then we find the wisdom of true relationship with God. He has set it there (:27), at that point. And that is the true wisdom, which we are led to and arrive at, rather than seeking to mine it out in human strength and enterprise.

Job 28:27 then He saw it, and declared it. He established it, yes, and searched it out- See on :3. In Job 13:9 Job asks the friends: "Is it good that He should search you out? Or as one deceives a man, will you deceive Him?". The idea seems to be that if God searched out the friends, they would have to try to deceive Him, lest He find the truth about them. But Job later realizes that God does indeed search out all things (s.w. Job 28:27). He begins here by saying that *if* He were to search things out, He would not find a nice scene in the hearts of the friends. But Job moves on to realize that indeed this is what God is doing, on a cosmic scale- searching out all things.

Job 28:28 To man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. To depart from evil is understanding'- Wisdom is thereby presented as essentially being experience of God and relationship with Him. Wisdom is not found by going to a certain location, to a guru here or a holy book there, digging like miners dig, in search of it. It is experience with God, and all the things summarized in "the fear of the Lord". Job was aware it seems of God's estimation that he had indeed "turned away from evil" and feared God (Job 1:1 s.w.); it was those things, rather than the traditional wisdom of the friends, which he came to see was the true "understanding".

Job Chapter 29

Job 29:1 Job again took up his parable and said- In what sense is Job's pouring out of his very personal reflections about his situation "a parable"? I suggest the answer is that we are intended to understand his situation as parabolic or representative of other situations; particularly that with the exiles in Babylon, who would also be led to restoration if they followed Job's path.

Job 29:2 Oh that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me- That Job was indeed depressed can be seen by the vast number of times Job speaks of "I" or "myself". There are some 40 occurrences of these words in Chapter 29 alone. "Watched over" is the same word used for how God had set the parameters for Job's trials in the prologue; his life was to be preserved (s.w., Job 2:6). But Job like the friends became obsessed with immediate suffering and issues to the point that he overlooked these basic parameters set by God. We can do the same. He complains that God watches over him too closely (Job 13:6; 33:11 s.w.), and yet complains that God isn't watching over him (Job 29:2). God's response is to direct him again to the natural creation, where God's constant 'watching over' His creation is evident. He even watches over the exact gestation time of mountain goats, who were invisible to human eyes (Job 39:1 s.w.). And likewise Job was to understand that the time of his sufferings, like the period of exile for the captives, was likewise intensely noted by God and had not been forgotten.

Job 29:3 when His lamp shone on my head, and by His light I walked through darkness- Job had experienced the darkness of trial before (see on Job 3:26), but felt he had been led by God's light through the darkness. This walking in darkness was exactly the experience of an apostate Israel (s.w. Is. 9:2; 59:9; Lam. 3:2). Job understandably struggles with being treated as wicked, and under judgment for serious sin; when he knew he was "perfect" in God's eyes, according to the prologue. And at this point he appears to be on the pole of focusing upon his being judged for sin which he hadn't committed. But this was all because he was suffering as representative of sinners, as the Lord Jesus did to a far greater extent, seeing He unlike Job was actually sinless.

Job 29:4 as I was in the ripeness of my days, when the friendship of God was in my tent- "Friendship" is 'secret'. Job was a prophet (Job 29:4 cp. 15:8; 23:12; Prov. 3:32; Amos 3:7; the secret of God being with him made Job a prophet) and it is in his role as such that he is commended in James 5:10,11 - i.e. for the words concerning God which he spoke. The words for which God and Elihu rebuked him were perhaps therefore about other things. We can conclude from this that the gift of prophecy had been withdrawn from Job whilst he was passing through his affliction, and something similar happened with the exiles; the sun went down on their prophets (Mic. 3:6), but that didn't mean that the previous prophetic words of restoration would not come true for them.

Job 29:5 when the Almighty was yet with me, and my children were around me- The same phrase is found in Job 6:4, "the arrows of the Almighty are with me". Job is struggling to accept that the presence of God "with" him was manifest through his afflictions, just as much as it had been in God's more visible, tangible presence with him he had experienced in the past.

Job 29:6 when my steps were washed with butter, and the rock poured out streams of oil for me- Loss of the blessings of oil and butter makes Job representative of an Israel who lost those blessings through their rebellion (Dt. 28:40,51; Dt. 32:13,14). Again and again we see Job set up as representative of God's people, and achieving the salvation of his friends through suffering for their sins whilst innocent (see on Job 42:6). The whole story of Job is designed to encourage Israel's faith in a representative saviour, the Lord Jesus, who bore the judgment for their sins whilst personally sinless.

Job 29:7 when I went forth to the city gate, when I prepared my seat in the street- Job recalls in great detail his former greatness, and laments his loss of power. This is all absolutely credible and appropriate to a real historical male figure who was cast down from a position of power and respect.

Job 29:8 The young men saw me and hid themselves. The aged rose up and stood- The fact those older than Job respected him is perhaps an oblique self justification against the idea of the friends that the wisdom of the aged

condemned Job.

Job 29:9 The princes refrained from talking, and laid their hand on their mouth- Job was later to be the one who laid his hand upon his mouth (Job 40:4). In this part of the dialogues, Job seems to come very low. He is consumed with self pity and regret concerning the power and prestige he has lost.

Job 29:10 The voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth- By implication, Job's voice was now hushed and his tongue stuck to the roof of his dried mouth, just as was to happen to the Lord Jesus, the ultimate suffering servant after the pattern of Job (Ps. 22:15), and to a condemned Israel (Lam. 4:4). Ezekiel passed through the same experience (Ez. 3:26), again as a representative sufferer for the sake of Israel's sins- likewise in an attempt to save them by bearing the judgment of their sins.

Job 29:11 For when the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it commended me- Job in his depths came to know God as his "witness in heaven" (Job 16:19); in his former life, "when the eye saw me, it gave witness [s.w.] to me" (Job 29:11). But Job was brought to learn that the only ultimate witness in life is God, and it is His testimony and not man's which is meaningful. He confesses that he had only heard of God by the ear, and only upon recognizing his humanity did he 'see' God (Job 42:5). The fact others' eyes and ears had seen and heard him with respect was to become of no value to him at all.

Job 29:12 because I delivered the poor who cried, and the fatherless also, who had none to help him- Bildad assumes Job must have done the very opposite, to deserve his sufferings (Job 20:19). Job engages with what Bildad says and denies it (Job 29:12; 31:17). Again we note that Job engages with the actual words of the friends, whereas they tend to attack him in terms of the straw man image of him they had built up in their minds, ignoring him as a person and the actual words he says. This is typical of how dialogue goes wrong.

Job feels he has 'cried out' to God for justice and not been heard (Job 19:7; 30:20); and that there is nothing wrong with crying out to God in distress, it is a perfectly natural reaction (Job 24:12). One comment upon this is that the young ravens cry out to God for food and yet are not always heard (Job 38:41 s.w.). But God in the wider picture sustains all of creation by grace. Job did well to cry out to God even if there was no answer, because the hypocrites do not 'cry out' to God when they are facing judgment (Job 36:13 s.w.). Job feels hurt that God has not responded to his 'crying out' because he says that when the needy cried out to him, he had heard (Job 29:12 s.w.). But here we see his works based approach; he thought that his response to those who cried out to him meant that therefore God must respond to *his* crying out. And God is not so primitive. His apparent silence is because His response is not predicated upon human works and charity. It is by grace alone, as is taught in His final appearance to Job. The exiles likewise were to finally see the response to their crying out to God in the restoration (Is. 58:9), just as their representative Jonah cried out to God from the belly of *sheol* amidst the sea of nations, and was heard (s.w. Jonah 2:2).

Job 29:13 the blessing of him who was ready to perish came on me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy- "I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy (by his charity). I (thereby) put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem" (29:13,14). This has clear reference to the clothing of the Mosaic High Priest with his outward show of righteousness. Job was probably the family priest, seeing that the head of the household appears to have been the priest in patriarchal times; thus Job could offer a sacrifice for the sins of his children (Job 1:5). Job's likening of himself to a moth-eaten garment due to God's changing of his circumstances (Job 13:26-28) must connect with the disciples of the Law as an old, decaying garment in Heb. 8:13. The priestly clothing "for glory and for beauty" (Ex. 28:2) is certainly alluded to by God when He challenges Job "Deck thyself *now* (i.e. like you used to) with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty... then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee" (Job 40:10,14)- as if God is saying that Job's previous life represented the Mosaic priestly system with its external pomp and implication that one's own righteousness can bring salvation ("that thine own right hand can save thee"). Job's humiliation meant that, by implication, he no longer felt able to clothe himself with the priestly garments of glory and beauty; he had learnt the spirit of the Christian dispensation, to trust on the grace of God rather than a system of salvation depending on personal righteousness. The descriptions of Job rending his "mantle" (priestly robes) recalls that of Caiaphas; his falling on his face

perhaps indicates his recognition that reliance on the outward show of the Law needed to be replaced by humble faith. Job thus described his experiences as God leading "priests away stripped" of their robes (Job 12:19 N.I.V.).

Job 29:14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me. My justice was as a robe and a diadem- This would mean that his merciful acts to the poor were done in a 'charitable' spirit, thinking that such public acts declared him outwardly righteous: "I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy (by his charity). I (thereby) put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem" (Job 29:13,14 AV). And yet Job's words of Job 30:1 certainly smack of arrogance: "Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock". His charity was done to some whilst despising others and judging them. This works based, judgmental righteousness can so easily be our weakness. See on :13.

Job 29:15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame- This is quoted in Rom. 2. It is in the context of Paul's rebuke of the Jews in Rom. 2:17-23 for their reliance on a mixture of worldly wisdom and the Mosaic law. The passage has many similarities with Job: ""Thou art called a Jew... and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and triest the things that differ (AVmg.) ["Doth not the ear try words?" (Job 12:11)], being instructed out of the law [A fair description of Job before his trials]... and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness ["I was eyes to the blind" (Job 29:15)], an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law... Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? ["Thou hast instructed many... thy words have upholden him that was falling... but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest" (Job 4:3-5)]. Thou that preachest a man should not steal... commit adultery... (worship) idols... dost thou? [These were the three main things of which the friends accused Job]. Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God?" [Elihu, on God's behalf, says that Job's boasting of his righteousness implied God was doing wickedly in punishing Job (Job 34:10).

Their belief that they possessed such great wisdom led the Jews to be self-righteous, in that they reasoned that if they were wicked, then their wisdom would reveal this to them. Job and the Jews were in this sense similar. But as ever, Job is being set up as representative of sinful Israel, bearing their judgments (see on :3,6); and yet personally innocent.

Job 29:16 I was a father to the needy. The cause of him who I didn't know, I searched out- It is one thing to meet needs which come right before our face on life's path; but Job went beyond that, in searching out the needs of others. "The cause" could be legal language; Job expected his legal case against God and man to be upheld, because he has taken the side of others in legal matters and upheld the downtrodden. But again, we have here a legalistic attitude. He expects better from life right now, because of his previous good deeds. He has at this point forgotten his conclusions about a future recompense at a point of future resurrection and judgment.

Job 29:17 I broke the jaws of the unrighteous, and plucked the prey out of his teeth- This suggests Job was proactive in even orchestrating physical punishment and violence against the wicked. But now he feels as if he is the prey within the teeth of his abusers and of God Himself. Again, he expects better from life right now, because of his previous good deeds. He has at this point forgotten his conclusions about a future recompense at a point of future resurrection and judgment.

Job 29:18 Then I said, 'I shall die in my own house, I shall number my days as the sand- Job lived in patriarchal times, and so we can legitimately detect here an allusion to the promises to Abraham of a seed as numerous as the sand. Job had thought that the promises spoke of a long life in this world. He was to come to realize that they rather spoke of eternal inheritance of the earth at a future point, thanks to the work of Abraham's great seed, the Lord Jesus.

Job 29:19 My root is spread out to the waters. The dew lies all night on my branch- This connects with the thought of Job's words in Job 14:8: "Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stock dies in the ground". "Earth" is *eretz*, the land (of Israel). If merely "soil" was intended, a different word would have been used. Again, we see the drama of Job has been tweaked, under Divine inspiration, to become the narrative for the exiles. The root had indeed

largely died in the land at the time of the Babylonian invasion, but it still had some life and would "bud" again (Job 14:9). Job was the man with great roots who had been cut down but hadn't completely died (Job 8:17); his roots had been dried up (Job 18:16; 29:19). He represented Judah, whose roots were throughout the land as a tree transplanted by God (s.w. Ps. 80:9). Those roots were withered by the invasions (Is. 5:24), but out of those dry roots would grow up a "tender plant / branch" (Is. 11:1,10; 53:2), using the same word for "tender" as in Job 14:7. This Messianic suffering servant was to be based upon Job, and representative of all God's restored people. They were to again spread their roots in the land of promise in a restored Kingdom (Is. 37:31; Jer. 17:8), after the pattern of Job's restoration.

Job 29:20 My glory is fresh in me. My bow is renewed in my hand' - Perhaps as GNB "Everyone was always praising me, and my strength never failed me". Job's bow or strength was however broken, just as Israel's was (Hos. 1:5); he was their representative.

Job 29:21 Men listened to me, waited, and kept silence for my counsel- We note the parallel with how Elihu on God's behalf listened, waited, and only then spoke (Job 32:4). Job was to be taught that the fact men listened, waited and kept silence before him needed to be reversed; so that *he* would wait, listen and keep silence before God, laying his hand upon his mouth (Job 40:4).

Job 29:22 After my words they didn't speak again. My speech fell on them- This is what happened at the end of the book; God's speech through Elihu fell upon Job, and after God's words Job didn't want to speak again (Job 40:4). Job was to be taught that it was God's word and greatness and not his which was of the essence.

Job 29:23 They waited for me as for the rain. Their mouths drank as with the spring rain- Job was to realize that men should wait for God's word as the rain, and the latter rain of His blessings. Job had previously functioned as those blessings for men, and he was to realize the utter insignificance of this. For he needed Divine blessing and grace, rather than being an apparent provider of that blessing to others. All his good works were therefore given a quite different context when he was made to realize *his* need for blessing. GNB "they had nothing to add when I had finished. My words sank in like drops of rain; everyone welcomed them just as farmers welcome rain in spring" (:22,23).

Job 29:24 I smiled on them when they had no confidence. They didn't reject the light of my face- GNB "I smiled on them when they had lost confidence; my cheerful face encouraged them". But Job was to realize that it was God's face smiling upon man which was the only important thing; the smiling of man's face upon man was therefore of no account compared to that.

Job 29:25 I chose out their way, and sat as chief. I lived as a king in the army, as one who comforts the mourners- Job was to realize that it was God and not him who chooses out the way of men (Ps. 25:12); like Job, the exiles failed through choosing out their own way (s.w. Is. 66:3) rather than seeking God's way.

Job Chapter 30

Job 30:1 But now those who are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs- Job has just boasted of how his charitable giving earned him his righteousness: "I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy (by his charity). I (thereby) put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem" (Job 29:13,14 AV). And yet Job's words of Job 30:1 certainly smack of arrogance. His charity was done to some whilst despising others and judging them. This works based, judgmental righteousness can so easily be our weakness.

Job 30:2 Of what use is the strength of their hands to me, men in whom ripe age has perished?- Here in :2-9 we have a rather unpleasant streak in Job revealed. He clearly despised some men deeply, and it was deeply irksome to him that the children of those he had despised should now mock him. The way he speaks of these men indicates a deep disdain which is inappropriate in any man for other men, who are all made in the image of God. GNB "They were a bunch of worn-out men, too weak to do any work for me". Here we see the importance Job placed upon "work"; for it was also by works that he felt justified before God, and deserving of a better deal in life than what he was having. His finer insights into his sufferings are now absent, as he walls in the self pity of the moment.

Job 30:3 They are gaunt from lack and famine. They gnaw the dry ground, in the gloom of waste and desolation- "Waste and desolation" is the language of condemnation (s.w. Zeph. 1:15). But God makes the point that He sends rain "to satisfy the desolate and waste ground" (Job 38:27 AV)- the very place where the condemned lived whom Job despised in his prosperity (Job 30:3 s.w.). But God doesn't despise even the most desperate of society. He sends rain to cheer them whom the righteous despise. And this was to help Job be convicted of his own desperation, of how wrong he had been to despise others and trust that he was righteous; and to further convict him that God still sought to revive him, as He did those deserted lands.

Job 30:4 They pluck salt herbs by the bushes. The roots of the broom are their food- This plant grows in the wilderness regions where the book of Job is set; the roots are famed as being bitter but nutritious for the desperately hungry and perishing Bedouin. Again we have evidence that Job was a historical person who lived where the prologue says he did.

Job 30:5 They are driven out from the midst of men. They cry after them as after a thief- These desperate people whom Job so despised had been driven from their societies so that they wandered the deserts, surviving by eating wild roots, and robbing travellers and encampments like Job's. But now they were despising Job, so desperate and rejected was he. He was surely being taught how wrong he had been to despise even the spiritually desperate.

Job 30:6 so that they dwell in frightful valleys, and in holes of the earth and of the rocks- AV "in the cliffs of the valleys", where Moses cowered and saw the glory of Yahweh. And it was the faithful who lived in holes, caves and amongst the rocks (Heb. 11:38). The connections may mean that God is a God of the desperate- and Job had despised those on the bottom rung of society. But now he had been placed there, and would be saved if he repented of his former despising of the desperate.

Job 30:7 Among the bushes they bray; and under the nettles they are gathered together- The impression is given that Job considered them as animals, braying under bushes and huddling together under nettles. This treating of human beings as less than human was deeply wrong, and was something which Job had to be convicted of when he finally realized the depth of his own desperation.

Job 30:8 They are children of fools, yes, children of base men- This was how Job had seen them, but now he was beneath even them (:9). He was being made to see that God has a saving purpose even for the desperate, those "without name" (Heb., NEV "base men"), treated by Job as if they were of no name, without personhood in his eyes. And he was now lower than them. We recall how the Lord taught that such was the Divine value of the human person, that whoever called his brother a fool was in danger of Gehenna's condemnation (Mt. 5:22).

They were flogged out of the land- AV "viler than the earth". This was how Job had so utterly despised people; and we marvel at God's grace in still calling him "perfect" and without guile. This therefore had been by imputed righteousness and grace alone.

Job 30:9 Now I have become their song. Yes, I am a byword to them- Job is presented as representative of the exiles, who were a song and byword to the Gentiles whom they had once despised. The Hebrew for "byword" is literally 'a word or speech'; and Job was the subject of the friends' speeches / words (s.w. about the speeches / words of the friends, Job 16:4; 19:2; 32:11). We must consider the possibility that Job considered these desperate Bedouin people to be somehow connected with the friends who were mocking him; see on :10. These people spat in Job's face (:10), just as it seems the friends did (see on Job 17:6).

Job 30:10 They abhor me, they stand aloof from me, and don't hesitate to spit in my face- This abhorrence of Job by the friends is related to the way they considered mankind to be "abominable and corrupt" (Job 15:16). "Abhor" is the same word as "abominable". The simple truth is as Job put it- God has a tender desire to man, the work of His hands (Job 14:15). And whatever we posit about human nature, we say about the Lord Jesus. He fully shared that nature and yet was holy, harmless and undefiled (Heb. 7:26). Man by nature, just standing there as flesh and blood before God, is not "abominable" to Him of himself. It is sin which is the problem; and sin is not inevitable. We must bear full responsibility for our sins and cannot just pass them off as an inevitable function of our humanity. The wrong view of human nature held by the friends affected their view of Job and people in practice. The lower our view of human nature, the more likely we are to despise human beings rather than value them and speak well of them because they are made in the image of God (James 3:9). In this experience of being spat at, Job again was experiencing the abuse of the suffering servant (s.w. Is. 50:6).

We must consider the possibility that Job considered these desperate Bedouin people to be somehow connected with the friends who were mocking him; see on :9. These people spat in Job's face (:10), just as it seems the friends did (see on Job 17:6).

Job 30:11 For He has untied his cord, and afflicted me; and they have thrown off restraint before me- The desperate Bedouin were seen by Job as having been unleashed upon him by God when he brought affliction upon Job. He is therefore describing the marauding bands who came and stole his cattle in the prologue. And they have an undoubted connection with the friends. Job sees God as capable of binding and loosing him, untying the cords that restrain affliction and then binding them up again (Job 30:11). God's response is that indeed this is the case, and such binding and loosing is seen throughout the natural creation (s.w. Job 38:31; 39:5; 41:14). And therefore, Job and the exiles are to live in hope of being bound up in safety from affliction, just as God "untied His cord and afflicted me" in Job 30:11.

Job 30:12 On my right hand rise the rabble. They thrust aside my feet, they cast up against me their ways of destruction- This sounds like these desperate Bedouins were in physical proximity to Job and were actually involved in his persecution (also :13). I have argued throughout the book that the Satan figure morphs into the friends, and they actually perform part of the physical trials upon Job, with the Bedouin attackers of Job partly under the control leading to Job to charge them with insincerity and hypocrisy. They are in fact guilty of all he is apparently suffering for, and so he becomes their representative saviour by the end of the book.

Job 30:13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity- These words would be so appropriate if the Bedouin Arab marauders whom Job is cursing were in fact under the control of the friends, into whom the Satan figure has morphed. Eliphaz was from the same area as the Sabeans of Job 1:15. Job's experiences were of "calamity" (s.w. Job 6:2) and affliction set in his "path" (s.w. Job 19:8). And the Bedouins he curses in Job 30:1-12 were those who had abused him in that "path" (Job 30:13). So it seems he has in view the Sabeans who had abused him in the prologue, and yet this section also has clear reference to the friends. Yet that "path" of affliction which God had given Job was the path of wisdom and relationship with Him which was indiscernible to the human eye (Job 28:7 cp. 28); the fact that the ultimate path is invisible to the secular, naked eye is a truth stamped upon the natural creation (Job 38:20), and yet after the affliction or trouble, this path shines clearly (Job 41:32). And this was to be Job's experience at his restoration, as it could have been likewise for the exiles.

Without anyone's help- The idea may be that they were unprovoked to do what they did to Job. But he has just used the term of how he helped those "without anyone's help" (s.w. Job 29:12); as if to say that in return for the grace he had shown them, they now persecuted him.

Job 30:14 As through a wide breach they come, in the midst of the ruin they roll themselves in- "The ruin" is s.w.

'the desolate place', the wilderness from where these Bedouins came (Job 30:3). This is the same picture as in Job 1:15 of the Sabeans rolling in from the wilderness, associated with the whirlwind (:15), coming upon Job like waters (symbolic of enemy forces) gushing through a breach. The accusation of the friends / "sons of God" and the Satan was that God had made a fence around Job protecting him from misfortune (Job 1:10). God had agreed for this to be as it were 'widely breached'. And in came flooding the desert tribes to despoil Job. My point is that the desperate Bedouin whom Job here curses are associated with the friends, it is they who sent their own forces against Job, making him understandably accuse them of being hypocrites and false brethren.

Job 30:15 Terrors have turned on me. They chase my honour as the wind. My welfare has passed away as a cloud- These Bedouin are associated with the whirlwind which struck Job (Job 1:15-18). "Chase" is the word translated "persecute" and is specifically applied by Job to the friends' persecution of him (Job 19:22,28), albeit under God's control (Job 13:25); for Satan's hand is God's hand, as the prologue makes clear. Again we have a fairly solid path of identification of the friends with the Satan and with the Bedouin marauders under their control, whom they sent against Job.

Job 30:16 Now my soul is poured out within me. Days of affliction have taken hold on me- Job "held fast" to God's footprints, even though he didn't see Him (Job 23:11), and yet he later realized that the afflictions God sent had taken hold [s.w. "held fast"] to him. We see here the mutuality between God and man, achieved through the experience of suffering brought by Him.

Job 30:17 In the night season my bones are pierced in me, and the pains that gnaw me take no rest- This pain in the bones at night clearly looked ahead to that experienced by the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant based on Job, during the darkness of the crucifixion. Hezekiah, another possible fulfilment of the suffering servant, suffered likewise with bone pain at night (Is. 38:13).

Job 30:18 By great force is my garment disfigured. It binds me about as the collar of my coat- LXX "With great force my disease has taken hold of my garment: it has compassed me as the collar of my coat", AV "By the great force of my disease is my garment changed". Job offered sacrifice for his children as if he were the family priest, and he likely had a priestly garment which accompanied this. But this garment had become defiled by Job's skin disease, covered with blood and secretions; and in fact Job felt it was choking him. This is another hint that legal apparatus was unable to save Job, nor those who would follow his path to restoration and revival.

Job 30:19 He has cast me into the mire. I have become like dust and ashes- Abraham, who would have been recent history for Job, had described the human condition as "dust and ashes". Job was dust and ashes anyway, but he feels he has "become" dust and ashes. Clearly, he is being made to realize his humanity, and God's final appearance will do this in ultimate terms. It is a denial of our humanity which leads people to a path in which they refuse to repent, reject any idea that they desperately need God, and leads to the pride of effectively playing God rather than accepting we are but dust and ashes.

Job 30:20 I cry to You, and You do not answer me. I stand up, and You gaze at me- Job feels he has 'cried out' to God for justice and not been heard (Job 19:7; 30:20); and that there is nothing wrong with crying out to God in distress, it is a perfectly natural reaction (Job 24:12). One comment upon this is that the young ravens cry out to God for food and yet are not always heard (Job 38:41 s.w.). But God in the wider picture sustains all of creation by grace. Job did well to cry out to God even if there was no answer, because the hypocrites do not 'cry out' to God when they are facing judgment (Job 36:13 s.w.). Job feels hurt that God has not responded to his 'crying out' because he says that when the needy cried out to him, he had heard (Job 29:12 s.w.). But here we see his works based approach; he thought that his response to those who cried out to him meant that therefore God must respond to his crying out. And God is not so primitive. His apparent silence is because His response is not predicated upon human works and charity. It is by grace alone, as is taught in His final appearance to Job. The exiles likewise were to finally see the response to their crying out to God in the restoration (Is. 58:9), just as their representative Jonah cried out to God from the belly of sheol amidst the sea of nations, and was heard (s.w. Jonah 2:2).

Job 30:21 You have turned to be cruel to me- As God (in the Angel of the presence) "was turned to be (Israel's) enemy" because of their sin (Is. 63:10).

With the might of Your hand You persecute me- Satan asks God: "Put forth Your hand". The hand of God is an Angelic phrase. God agrees- "he is in your hand" (Job 2:6). Thus Satan's hand is God's hand, which in practice was articulated through an Angel, working through the friends and their Bedouin tribesmen who are the subject of this chapter. Job seems to emphasize the place of God's hand in bringing his trials- Job 2:5,6,10; 6:9; 10:7; 13:21; 19:21; 27:11 AVmg; 28:9. Job in Job 12:9 feels that in the same way as God's hand had created the natural creation- and the Angels did this- so that same Angelic hand was upon him for evil. "By His Spirit (God makes His Angels spirits) He hath garnished the Heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent" (Job 26:13). Thus Job associates God's Spirit with His hand, which is Satan's hand. It seems far more fitting that this hand and spirit should be Angelic rather than human. For no one human being could bring these sufferings upon Job. The human Satan, the fellow worshippers, the sons of God, was reflected in an Angel in the court of Heaven. Again, it was Angelic work that formed the Heavens. Job recognized that his trials came from the hand of God, but knew that His hand would not kill him- "with Thy strong hand Thou opposest Thyself against me... howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to (bring me to) the grave" (Job 30:21,24 AV). This was exactly the brief given to Satan- to try Job, but "preserve his life". The hand of God creating evil (Job 2:10,11) must surely refer to God's "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- in the restoration context, the people and Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7). See on Job 26:13.

Job 30:22 You lift me up to the wind, and drive me with it. You dissolve me in the storm- Job recalls the whirlwind which had destroyed his family and encampment, in tandem with the attacks of the Bedouins (Job 1:19). But he insists that for all he has suffered, God was behind it. Job was representative of the exiles, who were likewise 'dissolved' in judgment (s.w. Is. 64:7).

Job 30:23 For I know that You will bring me to death, to the house appointed for all living- In line with Job's emphasis that God is behind all his sufferings, perhaps the focus is upon "You". God would bring him to death, although the friends and their Bedouin friends wanted to- but God in the prologue had not permitted them to do this. See on :24.

Job 30:24 However, doesn't one stretch out a hand to stop a fall? Or in his calamity therefore cry for help?- LXX presents Job as suicidal: "Oh then that I might lay hands upon myself, or at least ask another, and he should do this for me". AV "Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction" would connect with the same phrase being used of Satan asking God to stretch out His hand against Job (Job 1:11); but telling Satan that Job must not be brought to the grave. Although the Satan sought to move God to do so (Job 2:3). Again we have the impression that the Satan was manifest through the Bedouin tribesmen described here, under the control of the friends; who did every conceivable evil to Job apart from taking his life.

Job 30:25 Didn't I weep for him who was in trouble? Wasn't my soul grieved for the needy?- "Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor? When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness" (Job 30:25,26). Note the past tenses; even in the past, it seemed that evil came when he deserved blessing; but despite this, he hadn't become inward looking; he had wept and grieved for the misfortune of others. "Weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15) seems to be quoting from here; as if to say: Job is really our pattern in all this. But again we note that Job is very works-based in his thinking; he thinks that his kindness to the needy ought to mean that his sufferings are cut short (:26). And thereby he is failing to discern the Divine path which no eye can see.

Job 30:26 When I looked for good, then evil came; when I waited for light, there came darkness- Job understands that it is God who sends the good and evil, the light and the darkness, into his life (Job 30:26). Significantly, he states his faith that God even marks out the boundary between light and darkness (Job 26:10) – a similar idea in essence to the reassurance of Is. 45:5 that God creates both light and darkness. The 'darkness', however we experience and understand it, is framed and limited by God; it is not a power or being with independent existence outside the realm of God's power. God confirms Job's understanding later, when He says that it is He who can swaddle the sea [another figure for uncontrollable evil] in bands of darkness (Job 38:9) – as if to say that it is God who gives things like darkness and the sea their sinister appearance and perception by men; but He is in control of them, using them in His hand. See on Job 38:10.

Even if God slew him, Job would still be patient or wait (Job 13:15), he would 'patiently wait' for his "release" (AV "change") to come at some point after his death (Job 14:14), and waited for light to somehow come out of his current darkness (Job 30:26). This was the legendary "patience of Job" which we are bidden follow (James 5:11). He was impatient, but he was "patient" in the Hebrew sense of enduring in faith; faith that even if things didn't work out at all in this life, even if God was apparently unfair in this life, he would be finally restored at the resurrection. This was his 'endurance', and it is a parade example for all who struggle with the justice of God and the incomprehensible problem of suffering.

Job 30:27 My heart is troubled, and doesn't rest. Days of affliction have come on me- AV "My bowels boiled". This is the word used for the boiling of the exiles under Divine judgment (Ez. 24:5). God is able to make things boil in the natural creation and then make them perfectly still (Job 41:31 s.w.); and the message was that the days of affliction, the intense boiling of Job and later the exiles, could be made still in a moment.

Job 30:28 I go mourning without the sun. I stand up in the assembly, and cry for help- The prologue described the sons of God in assembly. This would have included Job and the friends, the "sons of God". He appealed to them for comfort when they came to the next assembly, but instead he got the bitter condemnation and false accusation which is recorded in their speeches.

Job 30:29 I am a brother to jackals, and a companion to ostriches- The concept of clean and unclean animals was known even before the flood, so Job is accepting that he has become ritually unclean. All this was necessary for him to come to realize that his restoration was not going to be upon the basis of obedience to the law, such as it was at the time. According to that, he was unclean. Likewise the exiles had broken the old covenant, and could only be saved by the grace of the new covenant offered to them through Jeremiah and Ezekiel. See on Job 31:7.

Job 30:30 My skin grows black and peels from me. My bones are burned with heat- Again Job is presented as suffering as the exiles had (Lam. 5:10), possibly with allusion to leprosy (Lev. 13:31). The exiles could share Job's path to restoration if they too repented and were humbled.

Job 30:31 Therefore my harp has turned to mourning, and my pipe into the voice of those who weep- No longer is Job able to rejoice as he once had, in his own strength and exaltation. The pictures painted of the mourning exiles in Lamentations is so clearly based upon Job. See on :30.

Job Chapter 31

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with my eyes, how then should I look lustfully at a young woman?- This chapter is Job's clearing of himself, and has similarities to Babylonian legal documents. An accused person could begin his court case by such a statement of detailed denial. The accusers could respond with silence, in which case they dropped their case; or continue. The friends are reduced to silence after this great clearing of himself. Job's righteousness in a legal sense was unassailable. We may consider that their silence after this speech means that Job has 'won'. After his great clearing speech, the audience is expecting his justification. But then we have the interlude with Elihu, and then God appears Himself- and condemns yet saves Job, justifying him by condemning him, in the spirit of Paul's legal arguments in Rom. 1-8. See on :2.

Job 31:2 For what is the portion from God above, and the heritage from the Almighty on high?- Job considers it unthinkable that he would have looked lustfully on a woman, because there was such an obvious judgment for adultery. He was well ahead of his time in considering that looking lustfully is the same as adultery- especially considering he was living at a time when "sin" was not a concept dwelt upon in religious circles, and the idea that we can sin in our minds was a new idea.

Job 31:3 Is it not calamity to the unrighteous, and disaster to the workers of iniquity?- As noted on :2, Job sees thoughts as 'working' iniquity, a conception well ahead of his time, and reflective of his deep spirituality; see on Mt. 5:27-30. Here Job uses the same Hebrew phrase used regarding the punishment of Cain's iniquity in Gen. 4:13, thus saying that it was the wicked of the world, not him, who were the real counterparts of Cain; and he was only suffering as Cain, when he was as righteous Abel. See on 31:39.

Job 31:4 Doesn't He see my ways, and number all my steps?- Job knew that it was impossible that, e.g., he would lust after a woman, if he really believed (as he claimed he did) that God was omniscient. "Why then should I think upon a maid [as the friends implied he had done]?... doth not he [God] see my ways, and count all my steps?" (Job 31:4 AV). Likewise God had to remind Israel: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23:24). The context is appealing to the people to quit their sins. We should labour to enter the Kingdom, *because* God knows absolutely every thought and action of ours and will ultimately judge them (Heb. 4:11-13). The Sermon on the Mount is really based around translating the knowledge that God sees and knows all things into practice.

Job 31:5 If I have walked with falsehood, and my foot has hurried to deceit- "Falsehood" is likely a reference to idol worship.

Job 31:6 (let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity)- The same word is used in the prologue of how God already considers Job to be of "integrity" (Job 2:3,9). Job has forgotten, as we can forget, that He counts us as if we are righteous- by grace. Instead Job seeks to establish that 'righteous' status, his own integrity, by his own good deeds and avoidance of sin, seeking now to legally establish it- rather than accepting that God simply loved him and would count him of integrity by grace.

Job 31:7 if my step has turned out of the way, if my heart walked after my eyes- Again, as noted on :3, Job perceives ahead of his time that the essence of sin is in the heart.

If any defilement has stuck to my hands- Job has been made ritually defiled by his illness, and being forced to live with unclean animals (Job 30:29). All this was to try to make him realize that all his protestations of legal purity, of not being defiled because he had avoided sin and done good deeds, could not make him undefiled. And this was to come to full term in God's appearance at the end.

Job 31:8 then let me sow, and let another eat. Yes, let the produce of my field be rooted out- This was the judgment to come upon Israel for disobedience. The reality was that Job was living in deserted houses and had lost his property. So he is saying 'This should only have happened to me if I were a sinner'. He had lost his realization that his sufferings were not related to himself; they were his bearing of the judgments of others, the just for the unjust.

The Lord likened His preachers to men reaping a harvest. He speaks of how they fulfilled the proverb that one sows and another reaps (Jn. 4:37,38). Yet this 'proverb' has no direct Biblical source. What we *do* find in the Old Testament is the repeated idea that if someone sows but another reaps, this is a sign that they are suffering God's judgment for their sins (Dt. 20:6; 28:30; Job 31:8; Mic. 6:15). But the Lord turns around the 'proverb' concerning Israel's condemnation; He makes it apply to the way that the preacher / reaper who doesn't sow is the one who harvests others in converting them to Him. Surely His implication was that His preacher-reapers were those who had known condemnation for their sins, but on that basis were His humbled harvesters in the mission field.

Job 31:9 If my heart has been enticed by a woman, and I have laid wait at my neighbour's door- Again Job reflects some spiritual insight in recognizing the process of temptation as beginning in the human heart (James 1:13-15). We noted this on :3 also.

Job 31:10 then let my wife grind for another, and let others sleep with her- This could imply that despite Job's wife not spiritually supporting him in the prologue, they remained married.

Job 31:11 For that would be a heinous crime. Yes, it would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges- "Heinous crime" is "lewdness", the word used of the moral apostasy of God's people and their unfaithfulness to Him (s.w. Jer. 13:27; Ez. 16:27,43,58; 23:27 etc.). Job was refusing to hold to his sense that his sufferings were a bearing of the condemnation of others; he is now crying out against this, and requires the rebukes he is soon to be given by God. This too is where we go wrong; in focusing upon the injustice of situations to the point that we forget that we are called to use our experiences to minister to others.

Job 31:12 for it is a fire that consumes to destruction, and would root out all my increase- All Job's increase had been rooted out; his argument is that this ought to only have happened if he had committed adultery, which he says he had not done so, not even in his heart. He had lost his realization that his sufferings were not related to himself; they were his bearing of the judgments of others, the just for the unjust.

Job 31:13 If I have despised the cause of my male servant or of my female servant, when they contended with me- Job is coming out with the reasoning of Bildad, that God will not despise a perfect man (Job 8:20 s.w.). And now he is getting angry that he is being despised when he has not despised others. He is logically building up a strong case for his self-justification. But he is omitting to factor in God's wider plan of wisdom. In spiritual terms, this final speech of Job appears to be Job at his lowest. And he lacks the humility to accept that although he had apparently not despised his servants, he had despised others (Job 30:1).

Job 31:14 what then shall I do when God rises up? When He visits, what shall I answer Him?- Job's point was that as he had not despised the cause of his servants (:13), therefore he did not have anything to fear before God's judgment. God's final appearance was proof enough that he of himself had no right to answer back to God. "What shall I answer You?" (Job 40:4) was his final word. But here, Job insists he could only be speechless before God if he had committed sins like adultery- which he was insistent he hadn't. Job is led to realize that he has sinned and fallen short of God's glory, although he had avoided the sins like adultery which counted as major sins in the view of his society.

Job 31:15 Didn't He who made me in the womb make him? Didn't One fashion us in the womb?- Job had just argued that some men he despised as almost less than human (Job 30:1); now he argues that all human beings are formed by God in the womb and therefore no human should ever be despised. This could be just put down to the oscillations of a depressed person; or it appears Job is not being completely honest, using spiritual truths to justify himself as needed rather than accepting their true implication.

Job 31:16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail- This is Job's direct answer to the false accusation of Job 22:7 (s.w.). Again we note how Job actually engages with the words of the friends, whereas they respond to him in terms of vague generalities and knocking down a straw man image of him they had created in their own minds. The whole drama is an example of how dialogue breaks down.

Job 31:17 or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it- Bildad assumes Job must have done the very opposite, to deserve his sufferings (Job 20:19). Job engages with what Bildad says and denies it (Job 29:12; 31:17). Again we note that Job engages with the actual words of the friends, whereas they tend to attack him in terms of the straw man image of him they had built up in their minds, ignoring him as a person and the actual words he says. This is typical of how dialogue goes wrong.

Job 31:18 (no, from my youth he grew up with me as with a father, her have I guided from my mother's womb)- In summary, as GNB "All my life I have taken care of them". Job is at pains to now claim that he had not sinned even in his youth, even from a baby he claims to have cared for the poor. This is a protestation of innocence too far. He has moved away from his earlier acceptance of sin to now claim he had not sinned even from the womb. No wonder he needed the rebuke which is soon to come from him. The audience is intended to wince at this point, and to expect a rebuke and conviction of sin- which indeed comes.

Job 31:19 if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or that the needy had no covering- Job has a strong awareness of his past good works; the blessing of people ready to perish came upon him, for he recalled how he had saved them (s.w. Job 29:13). Job now was ready to perish (s.w. Job 4:7; 14:19; 18:17; 20:7). He feels that he ought to be saved from perishing because he had saved others from perishing. In this final speech, Job becomes very works based. He becomes the epitome of justification by works; and God's display of *His* works in creation and salvation was going to convict him that his works were irrelevant, and salvation was by grace alone.

Job 31:20 if his heart hasn't blessed me, if he hasn't been warmed with my sheep's fleece- Job in a legalistic way (see on :19) seems to consider that the blessings given him by those whom he had helped (Job 29:13) ought to have actual meaning; instead of his perishing in shame and lack of clothing. Again, he is arguing for justification by works and human blessing. He was to be taught that Divine blessing is the only blessing which can save.

Job 31:21 if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate- The idea is as LXX "if I lifted my hand against an orphan, trusting that my strength was far superior to his" and GNB "If I have ever cheated an orphan, knowing I could win in court". Job was confident that he had not misused legal process, and so he longs for some kind of court case with God whereby he can be justified. He was to learn that his apparent justice was as nothing compared to Divine justice.

Job 31:22 then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade, and my arm be broken from the bone- The arm may represent his power. But his power, his arm, had been broken. So he is arguing that what has happened to him should only have happened if he had done the things he was accused of. And seeing he hadn't, this breaking of his life shouldn't have happened. He totally forgot the parameters set in the prologue; that his suffering was not punishment for sin. And he has moved away from his earlier perception that he was in some sense suffering for the sake of others' salvation, even if he only dimly perceived that.

Job 31:23 For calamity from God is a terror to me. Because of His majesty, I can do nothing- The idea is as GNB "Because I fear God's punishment, I could never do such a thing". And here we have a window into Job's motivation; he feared condemnation and therefore he was careful to be strictly legally obedient. It was this mindset which was to be dismantled by God's final appearance. See on :28.

Job 31:24 If I have made gold my hope, and have said to the fine gold, 'You are my confidence'- Job 31:24,25,28 speak in dire and chilling terms of trusting in wealth- and note that these words come from a rich believer who lost it all: "had I put my trust in gold, or called fine gold my security [cp. assurance and insurance policies, bank balances, portfolios of investments... banknotes stored under the carpet, jewelry hidden in a corner of some peasant home]... this would be a crime for condemnation; for I should have denied God above". It's noteworthy that Job claims that despite having been one of the wealthiest men in the Middle East, he never put his trust in it. But that shouldn't lead us to think that we can so easily handle the possession of wealth. For to possess wealth leads most people to trust in

it. And if we do this... this is a crime calling for our condemnation, it's a denial of God, an effective atheism. Attitudes to wealth are that important.

Job 31:25 if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much- Again we see Job moving outside of the parameters provided in the prologue. There it was made clear that his wealth was given by God's hand; but now he claims it was from his own hand. This is the problem with suffering and false accusation; it can make us terribly self congratulatory, listing our own good deeds, rather than serving to humble us and recognize our humanity. Job previously has had points where he does indeed appear to be responding rightly; but finally now he reveals his essential self justification. No longer does he groan about his physical sufferings; instead he is pouring out self justification.

Job 31:26 if I have seen the sun when it shined, or the moon moving in splendour- The reference is to worshipping the sun and moon. This was common enough at the time, and was called Sabaism (from *tsaba*, "the heavenly hosts"). It could be argued that the term "Lord of Sabaoth" ["Yahweh of hosts"] was a deconstruction of this common view, presenting Yahweh as the God of the heavenly hosts.

Job 31:27 and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my hand threw a kiss from my mouth- Again as noted on :1,7, Job perceives that the essence of idolatry is in the human heart. He realized what James was to later make explicit (James 1:13-15)- that the process of temptation begins within the heart. Idolatry is essentially an affair of the heart.

Job 31:28 this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges; for I should have denied the God who is above- And here we have a window into Job's motivation; he feared condemnation and therefore he was careful to be strictly legally obedient. He was careful not to follow his wife's advice to deny or curse God and die; and he as it were parades his faithfulness to God by recalling how he had refused to yield to her. It was this mindset which was to be dismantled by God's final appearance. See on :23.

Job 31:29 If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him- Job had not had an altogether easy life even before the sufferings came. He had experience of being hated, and had seen the destruction of those people. But he insists he had not rejoiced; instead he had been sad. And this sorrow for the lost is revealed several times in his genuine concern for the friends' salvation. This basic desire is to be used by God when Job is made the one whose prayer and representational suffering saves the friends.

Job 31:30 (yes, I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking his life with a curse)- Again we get the impression of Job parading his steel willed self control, not allowing his mouth to sin. Acceptability with God is not a function of how strong is our will. For some have more steel in their will than others. It's about believing in grace and accepting it. Perhaps the Lord alludes to Job favourably at this point (despite his surrounding words being so full of self justification); for He taught that instead of doing evil to our enemies, "I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you" (Mt. 5:44). And this is what Job did- his prayer for the friends, who apparently were his actual persecutors, bringing many of the trials upon him, was finally answered.

Job 31:31 if the men of my tent have not said, 'Who can find one who has not been filled with his meat? '- Job's own family were bound to recognize that Job had been generous to the hungry and stranger (:32). But his wife turned away from him, and his wider family only appear on the scene at the end. They knew he was of integrity, but Job's wife had urged him to curse God and resign his integrity.

Job 31:32 (the foreigner has not lodged in the street, but I have opened my doors to the traveller)- Job may be alluding to the well known hospitality of Abraham and Lot in fairly recent history. Again he is presenting himself as a seed of Abraham by works rather than by faith.

Job 31:33 if like Adam I have covered my transgressions, by hiding my iniquity in my heart- Here Job denies that he

is like Adam in that unlike him, he has no sin to hide. The same word for "hiding" is used in Gen. 3:8,10, of Adam *hiding* himself from God. But Job was like Adam, and part of the lesson is that he was denying his humanity. And so like Adam he was humiliated by God's questioning at the end of the book. Job is associated with Adam several times in the book- see on Job 9:17; 10:9; 13:20-22. But he was denial of his humanity, unable to accept that he was a son of Adam who was also a sinner, even if seen as righteous.

LXX "or if too having sinned unintentionally, I hid my sin; (for I did not stand in awe of a great multitude, so as not to declare boldly before them:)". Job recognizes that sins of ignorance are still sins and apparently confessed such sins before others, perhaps at the regular meetings of the "sons of God" (Job 1:6). But even this he cites as a reason for his justification; rather than recognizing that therefore he is not in fact perfect and sinless.

Job 31:34 because I feared the great multitude, and the contempt of families terrified me, so that I kept silence, and didn't go out of the door- I noted on :32 that Job compares his hospitality to that of Abraham and Lot. He alludes to how Lot went out of the door to the great crowd in order to defend his guests' honour. Again he presents himself as a seed of the faithful family by works rather than by faith. He has little to say about the great promises to Abraham and the patriarchs; he felt his own works eclipsed their importance.

"Terrify" is the word elsewhere translated 'dismay', and is used of how the exiles were urged not to be dismayed but to believe that God would indeed bring them from exile to restoration in His restored Kingdom (Is. 51:7; Jer. 30:10; 46:27). Job begins by being dismayed / scared (Job 7:14), but develops to not be dismayed (Job 31:34 s.w.), following the example of the Lord's battle horse (Job 39:22).

Job 31:35 oh that I had one to hear me!- Job appeals for 'witnesses' (Job 9:33-35; 16:18-22; 19:20-27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a 'case' with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29-31 is effectively Job's declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job's earlier plea: "Sleeplessly I wait for His reply" (Job 16:22). It's as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of 'Satan', suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about 'Satan' figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the "holy ones", had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: "To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job's guilt] is true" (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters.

Behold, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me; let the accuser write my indictment!- Or, "Behold my *sign*". The legal mark made on statements of defence in those days was originally a *cross*; and hence the letter Tau or T. We are invited to see him swearing as it were by the cross. His challenge to God to write an indictment was arrogant, and is answered by God's personal appearance, convicting him of sin. Again we note that Job perceives his "adversary" (AV) or accuser as effectively God. Although it was the satan, who morphs into the friends, who in practice accused him- of only believing in God because he had received Divine blessing.

Job 31:36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; and I would bind it to me as a crown- His desire that the accusations be written down was ultimately answered by the production of the book of Job. But the whole story is hardly a crown of glory to Job, because at the end he is humiliated and condemned.

Job 31:37 I would declare to Him the number of my steps. As a prince would I go near to Him- Job definitely had to be humbled from this arrogant position. He was no prince before God. And in this we see him as representative of Israel, 'prince with God'. Through repentance and recognizing his humanity, he would eventually become 'prince with God', as Israel could have done, and as the exiles were bidden do by following Job's path.

Job 31:38 If my land cries out against me, and its furrows weep together- The land is put by metonymy for the workers of it, who would have cried out against him for being deceived of their wages (:39). But they didn't. Job had

acted with integrity. Just as he had not caused people to lose their lives in tending his land (:39), so perhaps he farmed his land sensitive to the land itself, not greedily seeking the maximum gain from it, so that its furrows didn't as it were weep.

Job 31:39 if I have eaten its fruits without money, or have caused its owners to lose their life- See on :38. James 5:4 alludes here, condemning the early Christians for abusing their workers, and thereby holding up Job and his repentance as their pattern. Perhaps here we have another example of Job saying that he was being unfairly treated like Cain: "If I have eaten the strength (of my land) without money... let thistles grow instead of wheat" (31:39,40 AVmg.). This is referring back to the curse on Cain, that "when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength" (Gen.4:12). Job is saying that his land has yielded its strength to him, and that only if he sinned should the Adamic curse of thistles come upon him. We too can resent the limitations of our own nature, not least in the proneness to sin which it gives us, and become bitter against God because of it as Job did. See on 11:15; 13:27; 16:17,18; 31:3.

Job 31:40 let briars grow instead of wheat, and stinkweed instead of barley. The words of Job are ended- Thistles were part of the curse. Again we see Job failing to recognize his humanity, acting as if he were not under the curse of Eden, and arguing that it was unfair that it applied to him, concluding that it should only apply to him if he had sinned. He was counted righteous by God at the beginning and at the end of the book, but he was a sinner. He was not the Lord Jesus. Had he been in Adam's place, he would have done the same thing; and in that sense, we all sinned "in Adam" (Rom. 5:12). Job has now to be convicted of his humanity.

Job Chapter 32

Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job- The preceding chapter has been Job's clearing of himself, and has similarities to Babylonian legal documents. An accused person could begin their court case by such a statement of detailed denial. The accusers could respond with silence, in which case they dropped their case; or continue. The friends are reduced to silence after this great clearing of himself. Job's righteousness in a legal sense was unassailable. We may consider that their silence after this speech means that Job has 'won'. After his great clearing speech, the audience is expecting his justification. But then we have the interlude with Elihu, and then God appears Himself- and condemns yet saves Job, justifying him by condemning him, in the spirit of Paul's legal arguments in Rom. 1-8.

Because he was righteous in his own eyes- The contrast is with the fact that God doesn't remove His eyes from the righteous (s.w. Job 36:7).

Job 32:2 Then the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel, the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was kindled against Job. His wrath was kindled because he justified himself rather than God- The role of Elihu is difficult to perceive. He repeats the arguments of the friends in some detail, summing them up, as it were, in his own words. We must remember that Job is poetry, it is a drama, although that doesn't take away from the existence of a historical Job (see on Job 1:1). In terms of the drama, we have here a series of speeches, full of accusations, followed by Job's rebuttals. For an illiterate audience, or any audience hearing / watching rather than reading the drama, by this point we have all rather forgotten the arguments. So simply in terms of the drama, Elihu could function as an appropriate way of summarizing what has been said so far. And many of his arguments against Job are repeated afterwards by God- so his function is also to introduce us to the revelation of God's own perspective which is coming. Job did indeed justify himself, but he did not completely *not* justify God; although perhaps the sense is that he focused more upon his own rightness ['justification'] rather than God's. The suffering servant of Isaiah is indeed based upon Job, but at times by way of contrast. By His sufferings, He justified "many" (s.w. Is. 53:11), whereas Job at best only justified himself.

Job 32:3 Also his wrath was kindled against his three friends, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job- Job feels God's wrath kindled against him (Job 19:11). The innocent Job experienced the judgments of God's people, against whom God's wrath was kindled (Dt. 11:17; 2 Kings 23:26). Significantly, we find Elihu's wrath kindled against both Job and the friends (Job 32:2,3), but the wrath of God was kindled only against the friends (Job 42:7). Elihu is therefore not fully reflecting God's position about Job. I have repeatedly demonstrated that the innocent Job was suffering the judgment for the sins of God's people. In the end, this came to full term in the salvation of the friends on account of Job's intercession. God's wrath was not personally against Job, it was against the friends. But Job suffered God's wrath against him, because he was to be the saviour of the friends by offering sacrifice for them and praying for them. This looks forward to the work of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant based upon Job; experiencing the judgment for our sins, and through the representative nature of His sacrifice, being able to save us.

Job 32:4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job, because they were elder than he- We are invited to imagine Elihu as being one of the "sons of God" of Job 1:6 who had been party to the discussions of the prologue between God and the Satan. His comments, however, repeatedly ignore the parameters set in the prologue. Again as noted on :2, Elihu appears to be a literary device summarizing the arguments so far, although taking the side of the friends against Job; and giving a foretaste of the arguments of God which are about to be revealed.

Job 32:5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was kindled- This phrase "his wrath was kindled" is that used of how God's wrath was kindled against the friends (Job 42:7); but significantly not against Job. Elihu is therefore presented as not completely in step with God and is not totally His representative when he talks about Job. This all adds to the intentional enigma of Elihu; he functions also to elicit *our* response as the audience to the speeches. We are all beginning to form our opinions of the characters, and then Elihu appears and gives his take, and we raise our eyebrows and wonder whether... he is right or wrong, just as we too struggle to come to a correct and just opinion about what we've just heard.

Job 32:6 Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered, I am young, and you are very old; therefore I held back, and didn't dare show you my opinion- "Very old" may be sarcasm, seeing Job lived 140 years after this (Job 42:16) and his father was still alive (Job 15:10), and the friends appeal to the wisdom of men older than them, in which case we immediately begin to doubt whether Elihu is indeed totally God's representative; this enigma of Elihu is intentional, as explained on Job 32:5. As a Buzite, Elihu was from the same geographical area and the same broad ethnic background as the friends (Gen. 22:1; Jer. 25:23).

Job 32:7 I said, 'Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom' - On this point Elihu agrees with Job, that traditional wisdom and religion has failed and was not being taught by the friends (Job 26:3). The old men were not teaching wisdom.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding- I suggest the idea is not that every man is inspired, but that just as God breathes the physical breath of life into man, so He can choose to inspire some men; and this is the source of teaching, as we have it today in the inspired writings known as the Bible; rather than through appealing to sages and tradition, as the friends were doing. But see on Job 33:4.

Job 32:9 It is not the great who are wise, nor the aged who understand justice- This idea that age and position were effectively the basis for inspired wisdom was well entrenched. Even the disciples marvelled that the great men of Jewish society would not be saved (Mt. 19:23-25).

Job 32:10 Therefore I said, 'Listen to me; I also will show my opinion' - By implication, Elihu considers himself to be inspired by God (see on :8). "Opinion" really means "knowledge", and the Hebrew word is used only by Elihu (Job 32:6,10,17). He claims his knowledge comes from "afar", from God (Job 36:3), but he also recognizes that God alone has totality of "knowledge" (Job 37:16). So we are again left with Elihu as an enigma, not totally reflecting God's knowledge, although considering that his view is in line with God's. This enigma of Elihu is purposeful; as explained on Job 32:5, his function is to elicit *our* opinions; we too who like to think our view is in line with God's, and yet admitting we lack His total knowledge.

Job 32:11 Behold, I waited for your words, and I listened for your reasoning, while you searched out what to say- The friends claimed they had "searched out" their response (s.w. Job 5:27). One theme of the book is that God alone searches man and searches out final truth in judgment (Job 28:3,27). The exiles were comforted that no matter how they were judged by human judgment, God alone searches out man (Ps. 139:1,23; Jer. 17:10). The exiles were to search themselves not others (Lam. 3:40 s.w.). God's final appearance is evidence enough that He alone can search out His own creation, including humans. Elihu yet again is presented as not completely in line with God's position, for by implication he considers he can search out this matter where the friends have failed to.

Job 32:12 Yes, I gave you my full attention, but there was no one who convinced Job, or who answered his words, among you- As often noted on expounding the speeches, the friends tend not to engage with Job's actual words but rather attack their straw man image of him which they have created. They tend to respond to Job in terms of vague generalities, whereas Job more specifically engages with their actual words. The whole dialogue, on one level, is an example of human dialogue and personal relationship gone wrong. We are left with the impression that Job needs to be convicted, but he hasn't been convicted by the friends. Their legal case has failed. And this sets the scene for God's final conviction of Job.

Job 32:13 Beware lest you say, 'We have found wisdom, God may refute him, not man' - GNB "How can you claim you have discovered wisdom? God must answer Job, for you have failed". Their failure was in that they had not convicted Job is sin. Only God can do that, and indeed that is what happens at the end. This is one of those points at which the audience has to nod in agreement with Elihu. Or we can read with LXX "lest ye should say, We have found that we have added wisdom to the Lord". They were acting as greater than God, assuming their wisdom was above His.

Job 32:14 for he has not directed his words against me; neither will I answer him with your speeches- The idea may be that even if Job had been answering Elihu, he wouldn't have spoken as they had.

Job 32:15 They were amazed. They answered no more. They didn't have a word to say- It could be that this is the narrator's description of how the friends were unable to answer Elihu. Or it could be that this is Elihu commenting upon how they had been closed down by Job's reasoning, looking forward to how at the end, men feared to ask the Lord any more questions or seek to answer Him back. Mt. 22:46 appears to allude here, confirming Job as a type of the Lord Jesus: "No man was able to answer Him a word, neither dared any man from that day onwards ask Him any more questions". Some see in :15,16 the implication that Elihu actually wrote the book of Job. *He* was therefore the fulfilment of Job's desire that someone would sympathetically write his grief and record his mental agonies (Job 19:23).

Job 32:16 Shall I wait, because they don't speak, because they stand still, and answer no more?- The drama in performance likely included a significant silence after Job finishes his last speech, and the silence of the friends leads us to wonder whether for all Job's self righteousness in his final speech, they have been trounced. But then Elihu speaks.

Job 32:17 I also will answer my part, and I also will show my opinion- Whether Elihu is directly from God or not is an open question. It is purposefully ambiguous. The audience 'hear' the lengthy silence after Job finishes, and the friends are unable to continue arguing with him. His righteousness appears genuine, if arrogantly presented and recounted. And we are left to ponder how much of what he says is just the views of an angry young man, and how much is really of God. The enigma of Elihu is therefore to give us the audience a chance to ponder whether we accept or reject Job's argument and legal case. We wonder whether Elihu speaks for us, in places, or completely, or not at all.

Job 32:18 For I am full of words. The spirit within me constrains me- Elihu sounds exactly like Zophar, who says the same (Job 20:2,3) as well as Job, who likewise feels he just has to speak (Job 13:13,19). The book ends with Job, Elihu and the friends all in humbled silence. We feel that our earlier impression has been confirmed- that it would've been better had they remained in silence as they were at the start of the drama. The book opens and closes with Job and the friends sitting in silence. The implication is that all the words were inappropriate. And this impression applies to Elihu too. Again we are purposefully presented with Elihu as an enigmatic figure.

Job 32:19 Behold, my breast is as wine which has no vent; like new wineskins it is ready to burst- The implication is that he has old wine in new wineskins, and this is an image used negatively by the Lord (Mt. 9:17). This would place Elihu in a somewhat negative light. As argued earlier, he appears to be a literary device to summarize the friends' arguments, reminding us of Job's weaker moments in his self-righteousness, and giving a foretaste of God's argument which is yet to come.

Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed. I will open my lips and answer- Job opened his mouth at the beginning (Job 3:1), just as Elihu now does, and we have the impression that he would have been better to be as the Lord Jesus, and remain silent through His trials. Elihu spoke for his own benefit- "that I may be refreshed". And this was what they all did.

Job 32:21 Please don't let me respect any man's person, neither will I give flattering titles to any man- As noted on :9, Elihu is correct in realizing that titles and human respect are no basis for truth. 'To give flattering titles' is s.w. "surname himself" in Is. 44:5, where the exiles are to surname themselves by Yahweh and not by man.

Job 32:22 For I don't know how to give flattering titles; or else my Maker would soon take me away- This is confirming Job's similar condemnation of flattery in Job 17:5. If we accept God is our maker, then other human beings are likewise made by Him. This means we should respect them, but not make them more than human by giving them flattering titles.

Job Chapter 33

Job 33:1 However, Job, please hear my speech, and listen to all my words- This recalls the plea of Job (Job 13:17; 21:2). We are given the impression that just as Job was so desperate to speak and would've been better not to, so Elihu likewise. See on :2,31.

Job 33:2 See now, I have opened my mouth. My tongue has spoken in my mouth- Again we see a similarity with Job, who is silent for a period and then opens his mouth and speaks (Job 3:1). But our natural reflection is that Job would've been better to remain silent. And we are encouraged through this connection to think the same of Elihu. This all contributes towards an intended impression that Elihu is an enigmatic figure. We are not intended to be sure as to whether he is really in line with God or not. He functions also to elicit *our* response as the audience to the speeches. We are all beginning to form our opinions of the characters, and then Elihu appears and gives his take, and we raise our eyebrows and wonder whether... he is right or wrong, just as we too struggle to come to a correct and just opinion about what we've just heard.

Job 33:3 My words shall utter the uprightness of my heart. That which my lips know they shall speak sincerely- The very phrase "words of uprightness" is only found when Job complains about the words of the friends in Job 6:25: "How forcible are words of uprightness! But your reproof, what does it reprove?". This experience led Job to long for "words of uprightness", and thereby he came to be ready for the final revelation of God's words at the end of the book. Likewise our disillusion with human words and relationships leads us to be the more eager and ready for God's revelation.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life- LXX "The Divine Spirit is that which formed me, and the breath of the Almighty that which teaches me". Elihu has used the same argument in Job 32:8. He seems however to assume that because he like all men has been made by God's Spirit and given life by that Spirit, his opinion is therefore inspired by God's Spirit. That is obviously a false position. Again, we are intentionally left wondering whether Elihu is totally in line with God, and we get the impression from this kind of thing that he isn't. See on Job 32:5.

Job 33:5 If you can, answer me. Set your words in order before me, and stand forth- Elihu seems to be responding to Job's words in Job 23:6 "Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power? No, but He would listen to me"- AV "Would he plead against me...?". God, and Elihu on His behalf, *did* plead against Job by recounting God's power. When Elihu was established in Job's mind as God's true representative, he found that he had nothing to say, as he thought he would have. Elihu seems to refer back to this speech when he challenges the dumfounded Job: "If thou hast anything to say, answer me... if thou canst answer me, set thy words in *order* before me" (Job 33:32,5 AV). Elihu has in mind Job 23:4 "I would set my cause in order before Him". Job several times spoke of how he would fully explain himself to God, if he found Him. Yet in the presence of God and Elihu, he finds that all the words dry up. Words became irrelevant. All he can do is behold the majesty of God's righteousness, and declare his own unrighteousness. That spiritual pinnacle of Job still lies ahead for the majority of us. The desire to speak is a desire to express our *own* thoughts. Words are a construct which can trap us. Only *God's* words can liberate. There is a wordless element in being truly humbled before the Almighty.

Job 33:6 Behold, I am toward God even as you are. I am also formed out of the clay- The degree to which Elihu was Job's exact representative helps us appreciate the precision of our Lord's representation of us. Indeed this appears to be one of the roles of Elihu in Job. The LXX brings this out well: "Stand against me, and I will stand against thee. Thou art formed out of the clay as also I: we have been formed out of the same substance". It seems that Elihu had been through Job's very experiences, of 'death' and rising again: "He has delivered *my* soul from death, that my life may praise him in the light. Hearken, Job, and hear *me*" (33:30,31 LXX). And this is exactly what Job did. But again we are left wondering whether Elihu really is the answer to Job's desire for a sympathetic mediator with God. Here at the beginning of his speech, we have hopes he might be. But as we see how tough he is on Job, we wonder. We look for someone else. And that person doesn't arise, at the time. God Himself then appears, without any mediator. But our sympathy with Job's desire for a mediator leads us in essence to an understanding of the Lord Jesus.

Understanding the real import of the speeches rests largely on a correct understanding of Elihu. Job longed for one like Elihu, who could reconcile God with Job's righteous life, his sufferings, and all his intellectual doubts. Elihu points out that he is the fulfilment of Job's need (Job 33:6 cp. 9:33). With this, Job has no disagreement. Elihu can be seen as a type of Christ. The speeches of Job therefore make us see the desperation of man's need for Elihu/Jesus; especially the need of those who lived under the Old Covenant. Job's weakness, morally, physically and intellectually, becomes representative of the weakness of each of us. We breathe a sigh of relief when Elihu appears on the scene. But we are not completely relieved as Elihu's speeches continue. For he isn't very sympathetic to Job. So whilst we see him as the requested mediator, his failure and our dissatisfaction with him becomes our longing for a better mediator, the Lord Jesus.

Job 33:7 Behold, my terror shall not make you afraid, neither shall my pressure be heavy on you- Clearly God's "hand" (s.w. "pressure") had been upon Job, and God had made Job feel His "terrors" (s.w. Job 7:14; 9:34). Elihu is saying that he is not going to be like this; he had no power to hurt Job, he is just making observations.

Job had stated this fear of God's terror making him afraid in Job 9:34; 13:21, and Elihu alludes to it when he uses the same phrase in assuring Job that *his* terror will not make Job afraid (Job 33:7). The terror is perhaps "the terror of the Lord", the fear of condemnation at the last day (so Paul uses the phrase, 2 Cor. 5:11). That terror should "persuade men" to accept grace, Paul argues. To have that terror unexperienced by men would mean they had no persuasion toward grace. Elihu however argues that he is not going to as it were pressurize Job with such fears.

It might be possible to speculate as to the tone of voice in which Elihu spoke. By contrast to the friends' "hard speeches", Elihu assures Job at the start of their dialogue: "My fear shall not terrify thee, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee" (33:7 LXX). A similar contrast is pointed by Elihu's claim to be speaking as a result of God's spirit within him (Job 32:8), whereas Zophar and the friends spoke from their *own* spirit (20:3). Apart from God's specific confirmation of Elihu's words, Job evidently perceived Elihu to be the answer to his pleas to find God. Job's desire for "a daysman" was answered by Elihu: "I am according to thy wish". Job did not dispute this. If one of the friends had claimed to be such a "daysman", we can imagine Job's indignant denial of it!

Job 33:8 Surely you have spoken in my hearing, I have heard the voice of your words, saying- Elihu has been present all along. Although the reader hasn't seen him, the audience watching the drama would have seen him there.

Job 33:9 'I am clean, without disobedience. I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me- Discerning and feeling one's own sinfulness is an undoubted part of conversion. Elihu on God's behalf rebukes Job for thinking that "I am clean without transgression" (33:9,12); and Elihu's exhortation to Job to say "I have sinned" (33:27) is obeyed by Job, as if he accepted the truth of what Elihu was saying. How we see the role of Elihu determines how we understand Job's claims of innocence. But we are left with a nagging doubt about Elihu. I have earlier suggested that he is inserted as a literary device to summarize the arguments so far and to give us a foretaste of God's argument which is yet to come.

Job 33:10 Behold, He finds occasions against me. He counts me for His enemy- This is a rather uncharitable twist of Job's words in Job 7:17-19; 10:3-6. And even when Job feels God is his enemy (Job 16:9), this surely must be balanced against what Job elsewhere says about maintaining his faith in God, even if God slays him. We are expecting Elihu to be sympathetic, and instead we find him twisting Job's words and seizing upon the words of a man clearly in great pain and anguish whilst ignoring the other things he says about God. God's statement that Job has spoken what is right about Him (Job 42:7) appears to be a rebuke of Elihu's position. But for now, we immediately begin to have our doubts about Elihu.

Job 33:11 He puts my feet in the stocks. He marks all my paths'- This is indeed a quote of Job's words in Job 13:27, but Elihu rather overlooks the context in which Job spoke of God marking all his paths (Job 7:17-19). We get the impression that Elihu is making Job an offender for a word, and is not giving credit for all the faith he shows in God in his other speeches.

Job 33:12 Behold, I will answer you. In this you are not just, for God is greater than man- Job has often said that God is greater than man. And yet indeed Job is "not just" for no man can be just with God of himself, as Job has

recognized (Job 9:2). We sense Elihu is definitely framing Job in as negative a light as possible, and is not free from the false accusations against Job which have been seen throughout the speeches of the friends. I suggested on Job 32:5 that Elihu serves in the narrative to summarize the arguments of the friends.

Job 33:13 Why do you strive against Him, because He doesn't give account of any of His matters?- Again this seems a twist of Job's words; he has complained that God is striving against *him* (s.w. Job 9:3; 10:2; 13:8,19), and in his maturer moments Job recognized God was not in fact striving against him (Job 23:6).

Job 33:14 For God speaks once, yes twice, though man pays no attention- Job has wanted God to speak to him (Job 13:22; 23:5), and Elihu is saying that God has spoken to Job through his sufferings, which Elihu now proceeds to allude to in the next verses. But God will finally speak, plainly and directly. We are left to wonder whether in fact Elihu is right or not; for it was not that Job was paying no attention.

Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, in slumbering on the bed- This and the following verses allude to Job's situation. God had given him nightmare visions and bad dreams (Job 7:14). Whether these were the Divine revelations which Elihu imagines or merely part of the overall illness of Job... again remains unclear to us. Exactly because Elihu is purposefully enigmatic as to whether he is really in line with God; see on Job 32:5.

Job 33:16 then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction- This rather sounds like the claim of Eliphaz to have had revelation from God in a night vision, which claim I suggested was false (see on Job 4:15). See on :15.

Job 33:17 that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man- This suggests Job had an evil purpose which God had sought to deflect him from by giving him night visions. But this argument of Elihu's is at variance with the explanations provided in the prologue- that Job is not a sinner who needs correction, but a man being tested for the sake of revealing truths to the friends / satan / "sons of God".

Job 33:18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword- The impression is that Job was headed for death "by the sword" of his attackers, but God was trying to save him from this by giving him visions at night. But that is at variance with the parameters set in the prologue. God was not going to allow Job's abusers to slay him. His life was to be preserved. So recalling that, we further wonder about Elihu. He states some truths, which God later confirms, but there is much which leaves us doubting whether his approach is totally in line with God's. This is intentional. See on Job 32:5.

Job 33:19 He is chastened also with pain on his bed, with continual strife in his bones- This clearly alludes to Job's writhing with pain on his couch with continual pain on his bones. But was this for his 'chastening'? As discussed on :18, the parameters defined in the prologue suggest that the sufferings were for the education of others, and not for Job's personal chastening.

Job 33:20 so that his life hates bread, and his soul dainty food- Clearly Elihu has Job in view. But there is no evidence he lost appetite; instead he complains that he has to beg for bread and has to eat whatever he can get (Job 3:24; 6:7; 15:23). Again we fail to find in Elihu a totally truthful and sympathetic mediator; and we look for another, finally fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

Job 33:21 His flesh is so consumed away, that it can't be seen. His bones that were not seen stick out- The reference to consumed flesh seems somewhat exaggerated. The same phrase is used in Prov. 5:11 for judgment for sin. But the prologue has made it clear that Job's sufferings were *not* a punishment for his sin. The righteous was to suffer in order to demonstrate something to others. And Elihu again appears out of full step with the Divine basis of things concerning Job.

Job 33:22 Yes, his soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the destroyers- Elihu appears to hold some pagan ideas

that there were "those who bring death" (ESV) who meet and greet those who die. This isn't the Biblical picture of death and the grave, and yet again, we get the feeling that Elihu is not completely in line with God, although some of his views are repeated by God later.

Job 33:23 If there is beside him an angel, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show to man what is right for him- Elihu seems to be suggesting that unless Job makes use of Elihu's offer of being a mediator / "interpreter" (Job 33:6), then he is going to die the death of the condemned (:24). But this again misses the point of the parameters set in the prologue. Job is not going to die as a result of his sufferings. Elihu is not going to prove Job's saviour.

Job 33:24 then God is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom'- Again, this isn't what happened. God's grace was not mediated to Job through Elihu being a mediator who made a ransom payment for Job; although Elihu clearly liked to image himself like that (Job 33:6). This primitive idea of ransom payment through a mediator is completely debunked by God's final appearance to justify and save Job. His grace to Job was not predicated upon Elihu, nor in fact any mediator nor ransom payment.

Job 33:25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's. He returns to the days of his youth- Indeed Job's fortunes were revived, but not thanks to Elihu's mediation (see on :23,24). Job indeed longed to return "to the days of my youth" (Job 29:4); and Elihu is offering Job the power to return, thanks to his mediation (see on :23).

Job 33:26 He prays to God, and He is gracious to him, so that he sees His face with joy. He restores to man his righteousness- This is indeed what happened to Job. He was 'restored', he prayed to God for the friends (Job 42:10), and felt as if he had seen God's face (Job 42:5). The point is that this revival of Job happened exactly as Elihu said- but not thanks to his mediation (see on :23,24). It was predicated purely upon God's direct grace.

Job 33:27 He sings before men, and says, 'I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it didn't profit me- The return of the prodigal son foreshadowed the final repentance of the Jews (note how that parable is based on Gen. 43:16;45:14,15). But Job's decision to say "I have sinned... and it didn't profit me" also connects with the prodigal son (Lk. 15:21), thus again associating him with the Jews in their suffering and repentance. LXX "Even then a man shall blame himself, saying, What kind of things have I done? and he has not punished me according to the full amount of my sins". This has special reference to the exiles, who admitted that they had not been punished according to their sins (Ezra 9:13).

Job 33:28 He has redeemed my soul from going into the pit. My life shall see the light'- The 'redemption' of the exiles was to be predicated likewise upon their repentance (Jer. 31:11 s.w.). But this was to be possible without any mediator figure; Elihu failed to be that figure, just as the various possible Messiah figures didn't come to anything. But salvation was still possible through repentance eliciting God's direct restorative grace.

Job 33:29 Behold, God works all these things, twice, yes three times, with a man- Perhaps the idea is that God has offered Job a way out two or three times, and he has rejected it. However this would reflect Elihu again missing the point of the prologue's explanation of why the sufferings were coming upon Job. They were not condemnation for his personal sins, from which he could only be saved by repentance and response to visions given by God. This is Elihu's position, and it is simply at variance with the parameters given in the prologue.

Job 33:30 to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of the living- It seems that Elihu had been through Job's very experiences, of 'death' and rising again: "He has delivered *my* soul from death, that my life may praise him in the light. Hearken, Job, and hear *me*" (33:30,31 LXX). And this is exactly what Job did. As Job was to be the representative saviour of the friends, so perhaps Elihu was to be for Job.

Job 33:31 Mark well, Job, and listen to me. Hold your peace, and I will speak- See on :30. These are Job's words of Job 13:13. I noted on :1,2 that Elihu often repeats Job's words and style. Perhaps the collective impression is that Elihu's many words are no better than Job's; he is as desirous that his words be taken as 'truth' just as much as Job and the friends.

Job 33:32 If you have anything to say, answer me. Speak, for I desire to justify you- Elihu's speech so far has been so self-justifying and critical of Job that we as the audience struggle to believe that he really desires to justify Job. And we are to learn that Job can be justified only by God and not man. And his justification is certainly not going to be on account of his speaking any more words. The fact Job doesn't say anything (:33) is because he clearly doesn't believe Elihu can justify him. God's final appearance and justification of Job, with no reference of Elihu nor usage of his offer of being the mediator desired (:6), is proof enough that Elihu is simply not completely God's representative.

Job 33:33 If not, listen to me. Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom- The impression is that in the drama, there is now a period of silence. Job says nothing (see on :32). Although he could have taken issue with much of what Elihu says, he doesn't. He is learning that verbal response is of no value and will not help toward resolution of matters with God.

Job Chapter 34

Job 34:1 Moreover Elihu answered- This part of the speech is largely addressed to "you wise men" (:2) and "men of understanding" (:10). The friends are in view, but this serves to confirm Job's claim that sages and those reputed for wisdom are often wrong.

Job 34:2 Hear my words, you wise men. Give ear to me, you who have knowledge- As in :34, Elihu considers that any who is wise will agree with him, that he is wise and is speaking wisdom. But this is a circular, self-justifying argument. Or he could be referring to the friends sarcastically as "wise men" when he proceeds to bitterly criticize them. Seeing at times he repeats their arguments, we again wonder what to make of Elihu; and that unclarity is intentional; see on Job 32:5.

Job 34:3 For the ear tries words, as the palate tastes food- He is quoting Job (Job 12:11). Elihu thereby is attempting to repeat what is good in Job's arguments whilst condemning him where he is wrong. But as I have argued on Job 32:5 and often, Elihu may simply be a literary device to summarize the arguments so far.

Job 34:4 Let us choose for us that which is right. Let us know among ourselves what is good- "Right" is *mishpat*, 'judgment'; he is urging the friends to come to a just judgment on the case. This slightly misses the point which God is to make- that He alone is the judge. The only judgment the friends are entitled to come to is that Job has maintained his faith despite adversity, contrary to their original suspicion. But this seems to be behind Paul's words in 1 Thess. 5:21 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good", which is in the context of using "prophesyings" (1 Thess. 5:20)- i.e. the true word of God- to analyze and reject false Judaist teaching that was claimed to be inspired. We are left wondering whether Paul is merely using the outline principle, or is interpreting Elihu as the true prophet of God and Job as a false reasoner, doing so under the guise of speaking the Truth, seeing he was a prophet.

Job 34:5 For Job has said, 'I am righteous- Job never actually says this. He doesn't claim to be sinless and accepts he isn't. Job's argument has been that in the legal case he feels he is in with God, he is right. Elihu appears to twist this.

God has taken away my right- Job has said this (Job 27:2), but in the sense that he feels frustrated that God is not participating in the legal case and is in that sense denying him justice. So many of Elihu's quotations of Job leave us internally debating as to whether he is citing him fairly and in context, and whether he is in fact adding to Job's words. He is certainly not the sympathetic mediator we have been led by the story line to expect.

Job 34:6 notwithstanding my right I am considered a liar. My wound is incurable, though I am without disobedience'- Again Elihu is putting words in Job's mouth. He just didn't say this. He has insisted he will not lie (Job 27:4) but that doesn't make him "a liar"- unless like the friends, Elihu is arguing that Job is in fact a sinner. Job has complained about suffering a wound or arrow (Job 6:4) when he has not been disobedient. But Elihu is out of line with the prologue in criticizing Job about this; for there it was made clear that indeed he would suffer but not because he had been disobedient.

Job 34:7 What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water- This seems at best an unnecessary comment, intended to mock Job, rather than to justify him- as Elihu had claimed he wanted to. He appears to be alluding to the words of Eliphaz in Job 15:16.

Job 34:8 who goes in company with the workers of iniquity, and walks with wicked men?- As it stands, this is an untruth. But Elihu isn't rebuked by God for this. Rather is he perhaps just summarizing the arguments of the friends. LXX "saying, I have not sinned, nor committed ungodliness, nor had fellowship with workers of iniquity, to go with the ungodly".

Job 34:9 For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing that he should delight himself with God'- Again, this purports to be a citation of Job's words when it isn't. Job has indeed lamented that he who delighted himself with God was suffering all the same. But that was indeed the situation, as the prologue makes clear. LXX, perhaps seeking to justify Elihu, has: "For thou shouldest not say, There shall be no visitation of a man, whereas there is a visitation on him from the Lord".

Job 34:10 Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding- As noted on :2, this is circular reasoning. Elihu is saying that any wise man will listen to him and agree with him. The argument feels somewhat manipulative.

Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness, from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity- This is a typical debating technique; implying an awful conclusion arises from the argument of the opponent, even if they haven't stated that. And even though their supposed argument has been misquoted and unfairly summarized (see on :9 etc.). In theological squabbles, this kind of thing is often done. "If you believe what he says [which is being misquoted anyway], then effectively you are saying [something awful] about God".

Job 34:11 For the work of a man He will render to him, and cause every man to find according to his ways- This was the argument of Eliphaz (Job 4:8); Job's sufferings were to be understood as judgment for sin, which therefore Job has committed. The idea of future and ultimate judgment at a last day of judgment has been overlooked.

Job 34:12 Yes surely, God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert justice- As explained on :10, this is a very manipulative argument. Elihu is saying that Job's position (which as noted on :9 he misquotes) implies God is wicked and unjust. But Job has never said nor implied this. Far from being keen to justify Job, Elihu acts more like a vicious minded prosecutor- although I have argued elsewhere that he is merely a literary device to summarize the arguments of the friends, adding no new material to their arguments (see on Job 32:5).

Job 34:13 Who put Him in charge of the earth? Or who has appointed Him over the whole world?- The following statement of God's greatness is true as far as it goes, but Job would have agreed with it. Elihu is implying that Job disagrees with it. And this again is a parade example of where dialogue goes wrong. One party goes on at length about a position which their opponent agrees with, because they are failing to understand 'the other', but are arguing against a straw man position.

Job 34:14 If He set His heart on Himself, if He gathered to Himself His spirit and His breath- The whole of creation keeps on going as a result of God having a heart that bleeds for people. "If he causes his heart to return unto himself", the whole of creation would simply cease (Job 34:14 RVmg.). His spirit is His heart and mind, as well as physical power. Creation is kept going not by clockwork, but by the conscious outpouring of His Spirit, by the fact that our creator has a constantly and passionately outgoing spirit toward us. In times of depression we need to remember this; that the very fact the world is still going, the planet still moves, atoms stay in their place and all matter still exists... is proof that the God who has a heart that bleeds for us is still there, with His heart going out to us His creation. And the spirit of the Father must be in us His children.

Job 34:15 all flesh would perish together, and man would turn again to dust- This is indeed the case (Ps. 104:29), but Elihu seems to be deploying the argument that Job effectively thinks God's Spirit is not active in the world any more (:14); and Job is wrong, because in this case, he would not be alive. But Job wasn't doubting this, indeed he wonders as to why God keeps him alive "every moment". We can reflect that man's returning to dust is indeed his lot, the result of his sin (Gen. 3:19); but until that point, God's Spirit keeps us from returning to dust (:14). His Spirit is therefore keeping us alive by grace every moment.

Job 34:16 If now you have understanding, hear this. Listen to the voice of my words- As noted on :2,10, Elihu is implying that every man of understanding will listen to him with approval. Elihu certainly comes over as manipulative in his argument; and that is not required of anyone who is simply speaking God's word.

Job 34:17 Shall even one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty?- Elihu has misquoted Job (see on :9), and then claimed that Job's words were implying God was wicked and injustice. Elihu

now solemnly proceeds to argue that such false accusation was inappropriate even against human rulers; and was unspeakably awful against God. All this is a false path of logic and typical of dialogue gone wrong, exaggerating the implications of the other's argument. However we can read the argument as Elihu saying that Job can not be a ruler himself, because he mocks others who are in authority (:18,19).

Job 34:18 Who says to a king, 'Vile!' or to nobles, 'Wicked!'?- "Is it fit to say to a King (God), Thou art wicked? and to princes (Angels), ye are ungodly?". Here Elihu is rebuking Job for wrongly accusing the Angels, who had brought the trials. But as noted on :17, this is an exaggeration of Job's position.

Job 34:19 Who doesn't respect the persons of princes, nor respects the rich more than the poor; for they all are the work of His hands- The argument seems to be that the God who has created all men therefore doesn't show favour to the rich ones more than the poor ones. The fact we are all created beings makes us equal before our creator. He doesn't therefore respect persons; but Job, according to Elihu, mocks God as vile and wicked (:18). As often happens in dysfunctional dialogue, Elihu is jumping from one false implication about Job to another. His argument that God doesn't accept the faces [NEV "persons"] of men is finally proven totally false when God accepts the face of Job in intercession for the friends (s.w. Job 42:9).

Job 34:20 In a moment they die, even at midnight. The people are shaken and pass away. The mighty are taken away without a hand- The later application of Job to Hezekiah and the exiles would be in the midnight destruction of the Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35) and in the promise that the kingdoms of the world which dominated the exiles would be destroyed without human hand (Dan. 2:34).

Job 34:21 For His eyes are on the ways of a man. He sees all his goings- Elihu is implying that Job considers that God's eyes don't see him. But Job so often states the opposite. Elihu, representing the arguments of the friends, has reasoned from one false implication to another, until he ends up accusing Job of believing the very opposite of what Job has stated.

Job 34:22 There is no darkness, nor thick gloom, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves- Job hardly appears to be hiding himself from God. He indeed complains that God appears to be hidden from him, and he earnestly seeks God's face and a meeting with Him in judgment.

Job 34:23 For He doesn't need to consider a man further, that he should go before God in judgment- The idea seems to be that man is automatically in God's judgment presence. This is what God is going to later imply by His appearance and demonstration of His presence in creation. I suggested on Job 32:5 that the function of Elihu in the narrative is to summarize the position of the friends, and to give a foretaste of God's position.

Job 34:24 He breaks in pieces mighty men in ways past finding out, and sets others in their place- The present tenses imply Elihu thinks that God's judgments are revealed in this life (:23), involving breaking the mighty in pieces and replacing them with others. He clearly has Job in view. But Job's perspective is better and truer; God judges not so much now, as at the last day. Likewise the exiles had looked in vain for the breaking in pieces of their oppressors, and Dan. 2:34 explains that this is to only happen at the last day.

Job 34:25 Therefore He takes knowledge of their works. He overturns them in the night, so that they are destroyed- As argued on :24, Elihu is assuming that Divine judgment happens right now, with God destroying men at night because He has noticed their sins. This is not only untrue, it is totally out of step with the prologue's explanation of why Job is suffering.

Job 34:26 He strikes them as wicked men in the open sight of others- This appears to be justifying the friends; they had openly seen Job's being stricken.

Job 34:27 because they turned aside from following Him, and wouldn't pay attention to any of His ways- This was

totally untrue of Job, as the prologue makes clear. Job had not cursed God and died, he had retained his integrity.

Job 34:28 so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him. He heard the cry of the afflicted- This is simply repeating the assumption of the friends; Job is suffering, therefore he sinned, and they have speculated that he abused the poor, and God had heard their cry and was punishing Job. For Elihu to repeat this, when Job has denied it and given evidence to that effect, and the prologue has stated he is righteous and not suffering because of any sin... surely demonstrates that Elihu is phony, if we consider him as an individual. But he is, I suggest, introduced into the narrative to summarize the arguments of the friends; see on Job 32:5.

Job 34:29 When He gives quietness, who then can condemn?- But Job is not condemning God, and to imply this is wrong.

When He hides His face, who then can see Him? Alike whether to a nation, or to a man- God hid His face from the exiles (s.w. Dt. 31:17,18; 32:20; Is. 8:17; 54:8; 59:2; 64:7; Jer. 33:5; Ez. 39:23), and again, His apparent hiding of His face from Job was not because Job had sinned but because he was suffering as representative of his people. Hence "whether to a nation, or to a man".

Job 34:30 that the Godless man may not reign, that there be no one to ensnare the people- LXX "causing a hypocrite to be king, because of the waywardness of the people". Elihu clearly expresses the friends' perspective, that although Job has been a ruler, he has been deposed by God because he is a hypocrite and is ensnaring people.

Job 34:31 For has any said to God, 'I am guilty, but I will not offend any more- This kind of oblique reference to Job comes over as disingenuous. Elihu is telling Job how he ought to repent, for things which clearly Job has not been guilty of, as explained on the previous verses. He is repeating the language of all three friends (Job 5:8; 8:5; 11:13-15). That Job does finally repent in similar words is a sign of his humility. Although falsely accused and urged to repent in a certain form of words, he uses those words to repent- even though he is innocent of the charges. He realizes he has not responded perfectly to the trials brought upon him, and recognizes that although counted perfect by God, that was by grace, and he himself had sinned. The RVmg. here offers "though I have not offended"; in which case, Elihu is urging Job to confess sin even if he hasn't done it. This kind of burdening others with false guilt happens frequently amongst religious people. There is true guilt, which we should take before God; and false guilt, which we need not take and indeed must not take.

Job 34:32 Teach me that which I don't see. If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more'- Finally Job does repent, but he doesn't need to ask God to reveal his sin to him. This realization of sin is elicited by the revelation of God Himself. It didn't need Elihu and the friends to elicit it; they are therefore revealed as failures.

Job 34:33 Shall His recompense be as you desire, that you refuse it? For you must choose, and not I- The idea of the Hebrew appears to be that Job cannot decide God's judgment as he desires; and Job was refusing to accept God's judgment because it was not as he wished. But God's judgment has not yet been revealed, and his sufferings were not a part of any judgment upon him for personal sins. The prologue has made this clear.

Therefore speak what you know- Job remains silent before Elihu, as the Lord before His false accusers. He is learning the lesson that human words uttered before humans are inappropriate in these situations. He has learned that the dialogue is broken and it is not only pointless but counter productive to continue it. We can imagine a pause for silence in the drama at this point.

Job 34:34 Men of understanding will tell me, yes, every wise man who hears me- LXX "Because the wise in heart shall say this, and a wise man listens to my word". As in :2,10, Elihu considers that any who is wise will agree with him, that he is wise and is speaking wisdom. But this is a circular, self-justifying argument.

Job 34:35 'Job speaks without knowledge. His words are without wisdom'- Job does finally repent in similar words. This is a sign of his humility. Although falsely accused and urged to repent in a certain form of words, he uses those words to repent- even though he is innocent of the charges. He realizes he has not responded perfectly to the trials

brought upon him, and recognizes that although counted perfect by God, that was by grace, and he himself had sinned. Elihu's appeal here is that of God in Job 38:2; 42:3. But this is not to say that Elihu is God's representative in all that he says, for our commentary so far has demonstrated that this is just not the case. I have argued that Elihu functions as a way of summarizing the arguments so far presented, and giving a foretaste of God's final argument.

Job 34:36 I wish that Job were tried to the end, because of his answering like wicked men- Job's attitude had been that when God had finished trying him, he would come forth as gold (s.w. Job 23:10). But Elihu, far from wanting sincerely to justify Job, clearly wants to see Job condemned "to the end". He labels him a "wicked" man, when the prologue has laboured the point that this is not the case.

Job 34:37 For he adds rebellion to his sin. He claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words against God- But God says that Job spoke what was right about Him. "Among us" reflects Elihu's identity with the friends. LXX "for iniquity will be reckoned against us, if we speak many words before the Lord".

Job Chapter 35

Job 35:1 Moreover Elihu answered- Here Elihu claims he is adding something new to the dialogue so far. For he condemns both Job and the friends. We have been set up to expect and hope that he will contribute something new, to an argument that has started to go around in circles. But we are disappointed; for Elihu only repeats the arguments of the friends.

Job 35:2 Do you think this to be your right, or do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's' - The words of Job are misquoted in :3, and so this accusation is wrong too. Elihu repeatedly jumps from one false premise to another. Job was not claiming to be more righteous than God, in fact he has said quite the opposite. This is what happens when the words and situation and personality of the other is not really engaged with, and their words are made to fit our preconceived assumptions of what we think they are really saying.

Job 35:3 that you ask, 'What advantage will it be to you? What profit shall I have, if I had not sinned?' - Job's words of Job 21:15 about the sinful children of sinners are misquoted by Elihu here as if Job has said this about himself, and about there being generally no profit in serving or praying to God. Yet Elihu claims to speak on God's behalf. We can however understand Elihu as merely reiterating the position of the friends, as a kind of summary at the end of their dialogues; and at the same time giving a foretaste of the speeches of God which are to come. He therefore serves as a literary device in the story, particularly required for an illiterate audience hearing or viewing the drama presented, and having inevitably forgotten the details of all the positions previously presented.

Further, the reference seems to be also to Elihu's words in Job 22:2 "Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself". These words are applied here by Elihu to *Job*. It seems an obvious and unkindly wilful misquotation- until we accept the viewpoint that Elihu is not so much speaking for himself, as summarizing for the audience the arguments presented so far, with Elihu playing the role of the friends in summarizing the argument so far.

The idols and the Gentile nations amongst whom the exiles lived would not "profit" them (s.w. Is. 30:5,6; 44:9,10); but as the book of Esther makes clear, they were profiting well, apparently, from remaining amongst them. But the only real "profit" would be if they quit all that and returned to Zion (Is. 48:17 s.w.). But they saw no "profit" in being forgiven and restored as God's people (s.w. Job 35:3). Rather they considered the temporal "profit" of life in Babylon as far greater profit.

Job 35:4 I will answer you, and your companions with you- Elihu claims he is adding something new to the dialogue so far. For he condemns both Job and the friends. We have been set up to expect and hope that he will contribute something new, to an argument that has started to go around in circles. But we are disappointed; for Elihu only repeats the arguments of the friends.

Job 35:5 Look to the heavens, and see. See the skies, which are higher than you- The huge height of God above man doesn't mean, contrary to how Elihu argues, that God is insensitive to human sin and righteousness (:6,7). God's response is to display His power and demonstrate the omnipresence of His Spirit- not just in the cosmos, but in very intimate and concealed processes upon the earth. He Himself as it were 'comes down' to demonstrate that this argument and feeling is so untrue; and He was to yet more powerfully rend the heavens and come down to earth in His manifestation in His Son.

Job 35:6 If you have sinned, what effect do you have against Him? If your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?- This is repeating the arguments of the friends, that God is so far from man that He is insensitive to human sin. Nothing could be more untrue. Elihu's promise to contribute something radically new and helpful to the discussion (see on :4) is felt by us to be very hollow.

Job 35:7 If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand?- The prologue has stressed God's positive view of Job's righteousness. Clearly enough, He is sensitive to human morality. Elihu is contradicting himself by arguing that God is too distant to be much affected by human behaviour, and yet then calling down God's wrath upon Job for his behaviour.

Job 35:8 Your wickedness may hurt a man as you are, and your righteousness may profit a son of man- Elihu is so wrong. God is hurt, terribly, by human sin. The prophets of the exile made this point in multiple ways. He was "broken" by their unfaithfulness to Him, feeling it as Hosea did, as if His wife had been unfaithful to Him.

Job 35:9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they cry out. They cry for help by reason of the arm of the mighty- This sounds like Israel in captivity in Egypt and Babylon crying out. Elihu's accusation is that Job has cried out because of his affliction, but not to God his maker (:10). Elihu was wrong. Job had indeed cried out to God. And the exiles in Babylon could have followed his path to restoration.

Job 35:10 But none says, 'Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night- We wonder if Paul and Silas had meditated about this as they sung songs in the night. The Passover festival was the time when songs were sung at night. The exiles were bidden believe that they too would be released from captivity. But none was found amongst them who truly sought for God.

Job 35:11 who teaches us more than the animals of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky?' - God's answer is that the animals do teach us of God's ways. This would appear to imply His disagreement with Elihu on this point.

Job 35:12 There they cry, but none gives answer, because of the pride of evil men- Elihu's argument is that Job has cried out because of his affliction, just as all sufferers do (:9). But he is not heard because his cry is "empty" (:13) and he is a proud, evil man. Yet the prologue has stressed Job is not evil.

Job 35:13 Surely God will not hear an empty cry, neither will the Almighty regard it- "Empty" is the word for 'vanities', often used of idols. Elihu is sliding headlong down a path of false logic which leads him to ever more seriously slander Job. He is implying that Job's crying out in his sufferings is in fact a crying out to idols; for Job is an idolater. The parameters of the prologue have been overlooked; just as the foundational principles of God's word which are to guide and frame our relationships are so often likewise ignored.

Job feels he has 'cried out' to God for justice and not been heard (Job 19:7; 30:20); and that there is nothing wrong with crying out to God in distress, it is a perfectly natural reaction (Job 24:12). One comment upon this is that the young ravens cry out to God for food and yet are not always heard (Job 38:41 s.w.). But God in the wider picture sustains all of creation by grace. Job feels hurt that God has not responded to his 'crying out' because he says that when the needy cried out to him, he had heard (Job 29:12 s.w.). But here we see his works based approach; he thought that his response to those who cried out to him meant that therefore God must respond to *his* crying out. And God is not so primitive. His apparent silence is because His response is not predicated upon human works and charity. It is by grace alone, as is taught in His final appearance to Job. The exiles likewise were to finally see the response to their crying out to God in the restoration (Is. 58:9), just as their representative Jonah cried out to God from the belly of *sheol* amidst the sea of nations, and was heard (s.w. Jonah 2:2).

Job 35:14 How much less when you say you don't see Him. The cause is before Him, and you wait for Him!- This seems a cruel twist of Job's great statement of faith in Job 19:25-27; he believed that although he didn't now see God, yet he would do so in a bodily form in the resurrection and judgment of the last day.

Job 35:15 But now, because He has not visited in His anger, neither does He greatly regard arrogance- Elihu is again wrong. God does greatly regard the sin of arrogance, and the restoration prophets repeatedly cite pride as the essential reason for the judgment of Israel. Elihu here argues that because God has not judged Job "in His anger", "therefore" Job speaks as he does (:16). But this is obviously contradictory to Elihu's position that Job's sufferings are exactly because God is angry with Job.

Job 35:16 therefore Job opens his mouth with empty talk, and he multiplies words without knowledge- See on :15. "Words without knowledge" is exactly what God accuses Job of (Job 38:2 s.w.). Elihu functions in the story as a means of summarizing the arguments so far, and giving us a foretaste of the Divine judgment which is to come.

Job Chapter 36

Job 36:1 Elihu also continued and said- Elihu as it were speaks up for God in this chapter; although by this stage, we the audience are deeply sceptical of him.

Job 36:2 Bear with me a little, and I will show you; for I still have something to say on God's behalf- Elihu seems to utter four speeches, more than the friends. We are set up to expect some new contribution; but we are already sceptical as to whether Elihu is going to add anything to the argument, as he is repeating the essential argument of the friends. Elihu appears to be a literary device to summarize the friends' arguments, reminding us of Job's weaker moments in his self-righteousness, and giving a foretaste of God's argument which is yet to come. He now moves on to focus upon God's argument, although as we listen to him, we are wondering what God *really* has to say, seeing Elihu lacks integrity. This all leads up to our thankful marvel when God Himself does appear and speak.

Job 36:3 I will get my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker- Elihu often speaks of his "opinion". "Opinion" really means "knowledge", and the Hebrew word is used only by Elihu (Job 32:6,10,17). He claims his knowledge comes from "afar", from God (Job 36:3), but he also recognizes that God alone has totality of "knowledge" (Job 37:16). So we are again left with Elihu as an enigma, not totally reflecting God's knowledge, although considering that his view is in line with God's. This enigma of Elihu is purposeful; as explained on Job 32:5, his function is to elicit *our* opinions; we too who like to think our view is in line with God's, and yet admitting we lack His total knowledge.

Job 36:4 For truly my words are not false. One who is perfect in knowledge is with you- We have seen Elihu repeatedly misquoting Job and fabricating things which Job never said. This skepticism we have about Elihu's promise to speak only truly lead us to likewise immediately question whether he was indeed "perfect in knowledge". That is after all a huge claim for any mortal man to make. Elihu uses the same phrase about God in Job 37:16. Elihu seems here to at best be claiming to speak directly on God's behalf, if not to be somehow Divine. But the friends effectively do the same, and it is all these failed attempts to speak on God's behalf which lead up to the necessity and power of God's final appearance. See on :6.

Job 36:5 Behold, God is mighty, and doesn't despise anyone. He is mighty in strength of understanding- Job felt despised or cast away by God (Job 10:14) just as the exiles did, but this wasn't the case; God will not despise or cast away His servant people (Job 36:5; Is. 41:9; Jer. 31:37; 33:26). The grace of it all was that although he wanted to cast away his life (Job 7:16; 9:21), just as God's people cast away His covenant (Is. 8:6; 30:12; Jer. 6:19), God would not cast away His people in their exile and depression (s.w. Lev. 26:44), even if they cast him away. See on Job 26:2.

Job 36:6 He doesn't preserve the life of the wicked, but gives to the afflicted their right- Yet Job has repeatedly complained that God preserves his life when Job instead wishes to die. Job is living evidence that God preserves life; for it seems Job was indeed preserved by God's grace alone at the point of death, to the point that he was experiencing a living death. Again, Elihu is shown to be obviously wrong, straight after his claim to be somehow Divinely "perfect in knowledge" (:4).

Job 36:7 He doesn't withdraw His eyes from the righteous, but with kings on the throne, He sets them forever, and they are exalted- This was exemplified in the Divine influence upon Persian kings like Cyrus in allowing the restoration. Hence the mention of kings on the throne is particularly relevant to the exiles. We recall how Ezra and Nehemiah experienced God's eyes and "good hand" upon them, so that kings sitting on thrones made decrees of restoration. The contrast is with how Job was righteous in his *own* eyes (s.w. Job 32:1). What matters is that *God's* eyes are upon us, imputing righteousness to us in *His* view.

Job 36:8 If they are bound in fetters, and are taken in the cords of afflictions- The force of "then" in :9 is that if people suffer, then God uses it to help them toward knowing themselves and repentance. This may be true on one level; and the reference to the fetters and cords of imprisonment continue the similarity with the captives in Babylon,

who were intended to be reformed by their experiences so that God could bring about their restoration. But this isn't really the case with Job. His sufferings weren't in order to reform him nor to elicit his repentance, as the prologue states clearly. Elihu is wrong to say that 'Suffering is intended to elicit repentance, you're suffering, therefore, fess up and repent'. That was the view of the friends, and it is not appropriate to Job. It would be a very surface level reading of the book which concluded that this is the intention of the sufferings. The question of the book is not that of suffering, but rather "how can a man be just with God?".

Job 36:9 then He shows them their work, and their transgressions, that they have behaved themselves proudly- See on :8. The intention of Job's sufferings was not so that he himself would learn and repent. Again we must give full weight to the teaching of the prologue about this. The same words for "to show... transgression" are used of how the prophets sought to show Israel their sin (Is. 58:1; Mic. 3:8). But that was not by the prophets making their audience suffer. It was by direct appeal, and this is what God does at the end of the book.

Job 36:10 He also opens their ears to instruction, and commands that they return from iniquity- Job had been 'chastened' (s.w. "instruction"; Job 5:17). The positive effect of "chastening" is only experienced upon repentance, returning from iniquity. Judah in exile didn't repent, and so they were left with the problem of having been 'chastened' apparently in vain, and not experiencing a 'return' to the land because they didn't 'return' to God. The friends fail to realize that "chastening" may not necessarily be for our own personal sins; the suffering servant was 'chastened' not for his own sins, but to achieve our peace with God (Is. 53:5 s.w.).

Job 36:11 If they listen and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures- Job had listened and served God, and is described by God as His "servant". But his days weren't spent in pleasure and prosperity. Again and again, Elihu's position is simply repeating that of the friends, and he fails in his promise to add something radically new to the dialogue. Job has earlier argued that this simplistic view was wrong because the wicked did indeed "spend their days in prosperity" (s.w. Job 21:13). Elihu is quoting Job's words but absolutely failing to engage with his argument.

Job 36:12 But if they don't listen, they shall perish by the sword; they shall die without knowledge- Elihu's argument is like that of the friends- that unless Job repents, he will "perish by the sword". But the prologue has made it clear that Job's life is to be preserved. He will not perish by the sword. And yet the idea that Job is "without knowledge" is repeated by God (Job 38:2) and accepted by Job (Job 42:3). Again, we see Elihu functioning as an introduction to God's ideas. We at this point wonder whether Job is indeed "without knowledge". Elihu's language provokes that question; and then we have it answered in God's usage of the phrase. Elihu's function is to provoke the question.

Job 36:13 But those who are Godless in heart lay up anger. They don't cry for help when He binds them- Job did indeed cry to God for help (see on Job 35:13). To state he had a "Godless heart" is simply untrue and inappropriate for Elihu to judge. There are several allusions to Job in Romans, all of which confirm that Job is set up as symbolic of apostate Israel; although he was so as their representative, without being himself astray from God. For he was the righteous suffering the punishment of the wicked. An example is Elihu's description here of Job as a hypocrite heaping up wrath, which connects with Paul's description of the Jews as treasuring up unto themselves "wrath against the day of wrath" (Rom. 2:5).

Job 36:14 They die in youth. Their life perishes among the unclean- Elihu is reasoning from the position that Job is about to die in relative youth; and he is lying there amongst the unclean, apparently terminally ill. All such reasoning is ignoring the prologue; for Job was not to die. His life would not perish but was to be preserved.

Job 36:15 He delivers the afflicted by their affliction, and opens their ear in oppression- As discussed on :9,10, Elihu's reasoning is not rooted in the Divine words stated in the prologue. The purpose of suffering was not for the reformation of Job. Job's deliverance was to be by grace, and not because he had learnt lessons from affliction.

Job 36:16 Yes, He would have allured you out of distress, into a broad place, where there is no restriction. That which is set on your table would be full of fatness- Elihu implies that if Job repents, then he will be brought out from a narrow place into a broad place (Job 36:16). God perhaps comments on this by saying that the "broad place" is in fact the whole earth (Job 38:18). Man is already in freedom; it is a case of accepting it. Whilst I have argued that the idea that suffering leads to spiritual development and repentance was irrelevant in Job's case, it was relevant to Israel in outline terms, especially to the exiles in Babylon for whom the book was rewritten (see on Job 1:1). Elihu's speeches especially have many Chaldee influences in them, suggesting that an ancient Hebrew story was rewritten in Babylon, under inspiration. God's intention was likewise to allure His sinful people to the freedom of repentance (Hos. 2:14), far from the restriction of captivity and judgment (s.w. Is. 9:1), to a feast of fat things in the restored kingdom (Is. 25:6).

Job 36:17 But you are full of the judgment of the wicked. Judgment and justice take hold of you- Elihu implies that Job has refused God's offers of repentance (:16) because Job continues to suffer; and now Elihu in the next verses appears to relish describing the inevitable destruction of Job. This relishing in Job's judgment is far removed from the ways of the God who takes no pleasure in the death nor judgment of the wicked. Clearly Elihu is presented as out of step with God.

Job 36:18 Don't let riches entice you to wrath, neither let the great size of a bribe turn you aside- The prologue began with the satan / sons of God / friends wondering whether Job's Divinely given wealth was the basis for his faith. But their initial doubts developed into various other theories- not least that Job's wealth was because he had accepted bribes. Now Elihu warns Job not to let his wealth allure him to Divine condemnation ["wrath"]; but rather to be allured by God's encouragement to repentance (:16). But we see how far Elihu has strayed from the initial issues. Perhaps the lesson is that once we start to question the integrity of heart in another believer, we will end up imagining all manner of slander against them. What began as passing conspiracy theory becomes solidified as actual slander in our hearts and then in our words. Quite apart from anything else, the dialogues are a worked example of how personal relationships break down once the Divine parameters bounding them are ignored. AV "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee". The idea then would be that Job is foolish to think that his wealth can buy off Divine condemnation.

Job 36:19 Would your wealth sustain you in distress, or all the might of your strength?- The idea is as in :18, that Job is foolish to think that his wealth can buy off Divine condemnation. But he has not implied that. His wealth came from God's blessing, and was really his misfortune rather than his crime.

Job 36:20 Don't desire the night, when people are cut off in their place- Job's clear desire was to meet God in the light, and he himself has noted that it is the wicked who desire the night as they think they can sin in secret, hidden from God and man. Elihu's lack of basic moral framework for his dialogues leads him to do as the friends had done- speculate ever more wildly about Job's sins, and ever more dogmatically state that he has really done these things. This is the downward spiral of dialogue that is not started nor finished in love for the human person, but rather in jealousy.

Job 36:21 Take heed, don't regard iniquity; for you have chosen this rather than affliction- Elihu several times states that Job has made a choice; and he has chosen to continue in sin, which means the sufferings will continue, and shall lead him to death. Again, Elihu is far adrift from the guiding light of the prologue. For there it is clear that Job has absolutely no choice in the experience.

Job 36:22 Behold, God is exalted in His power. Who is a teacher like Him?- As discussed on :8-10, this continues Elihu's misplaced idea that God is trying to teach Job through his sufferings, and that Job isn't responding. Rather is it the friends, represented by Elihu, who are intended to learn from Job's sufferings.

Job 36:23 Who has prescribed His way for Him? Or who can say, 'You have committed unrighteousness?' - Job says that He is following in God's footsteps and vows to hold on to following God's way to the end. He is certainly not prescribing God's way, in the sense of telling Him which way He should take. Neither is Job accusing God of committing unrighteousness.

Job 36:24 Remember that you magnify His work, whereof men have sung- The idea may be as in GNB "He has always been praised for what he does; you also must praise him". Again, Elihu is setting up a straw man. Job has not refused to praise God. He is not out of line with the truly faithful, who have always sung God's praises.

Job 36:25 All men have looked thereon. Man sees it afar off- Elihu continues the theme of the friends; faithful men of old have seen things their way, and Job is out of step with them. He needs to repent and come to praise God along with them. This terrible need to be seen as in step with other believers and their positions and experiences is on one hand natural. But it can militate against a personal journey with God, and a leading by Him to the final "truth" of personal relationship with Him.

Job 36:26 Behold, God is great, and we don't know Him. The number of His years is unsearchable- Literally "the number of years". This is the same phrase as in Job 15:20: "The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor". Clearly he has Job in view, who was oppressed by raiders, and was apparently writhing in pain constantly. Eliphaz suggests that Job must suffer this for a Divinely decreed "number of years". This is the phrase used of the number of years Judah and Israel were to suffer for their sins in exile at the hands of their oppressors (Ez. 4:5; Dan. 9:2). "Laid up" is AV "hidden". Perhaps Elihu alludes to this when he uses the same phrase to say that "the number of years" cannot be "searched out" because God is great (Job 36:26 AV). This may refer to how Daniel tried to search out the number of years Judah ought to be in captivity, and had to conclude that the 70 years time period was flexible, depending upon Judah's repentance and other preconditions. We note Ez. 4:5 gives a different period.

Job 36:27 For He draws up the drops of water, which distil in rain from His vapour- It is possible that from about this point in the narrative, we are intended to imagine a thunderstorm developing. This begins with rain at this point. It comes to full term in the theophany where God Himself as it were comes down and speaks to men. See on Job 36:33; 37:1,2; 38:34.

Job 36:28 which the skies pour down and which drop on man abundantly- All this is true, but Elihu is describing God's power and greatness in order to prove his point in :26; that Job's deep pain about his relationship with God is all rather irrelevant because God is so distant that He doesn't pay as much attention to us as we do to Him. This is so wrong. The reverse is true. God's goodness to man is not merely like God sending rain abundantly on all men, as part of the water cycle which runs on clockwork. God Himself will appear in the gathering clouds, to demonstrate that He is not absent in His greatness, but very present.

Job 36:29 Yes, can any understand the spreading of the clouds, and the thunderings of His pavilion?- As noted on :28, Elihu points that God cannot be understood, and so all Job's angst is in vain. And yet of course he and the friends have just as much engaged in that seeking to understand God. God's own discussion of the clouds and thunderings is simply to speak His word of grace to Job out of them. They simply show that His greatness is in His grace.

Job 36:30 Behold, He spreads His light around Him. He covers the bottom of the sea- This again has relevance to the exiles. They felt they were at the bottom of the sea of nations, just as Jonah felt he had gone down to the depths of the sea. And yet from there he was restored, just as the exiles could have been if they followed the path of Job.

Job 36:31 For by these He judges the people. He gives food in abundance- The "these" appear to refer to the clouds, a symbol of judgment and yet also providing rain which "gives food". Out of judgment comes blessing. But Elihu wrongly predicated this upon the personal repentance of Job. However the principle was true for the exiles; the judgment of Babylon could have led to their release and return to the land, enjoying the blessings of a restored Kingdom, "food in abundance". Hence LXX "For by them he will judge the nations". But this potential scenario didn't work out; Babylon and her confederate nations didn't fall in the dramatic, supernatural way envisaged, the Jews didn't repent, and most refused to participate in the possible restoration.

Job 36:32 He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark- AV "With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt". This is Elihu's commentary upon Job's words in Job 26:9: "He encloses the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud upon it". As so often in the drama of Job, truths are presented but without context. This is indeed true; but Job and the exiles had to learn that the cloud that came between God and themselves was that of human sin (Is. 44:22), even though God responded by bringing that cloud (Job 36:32). The years of exile were the day of cloud (Ez. 34:12; Lam. 3:44). But through that cloud, the light of God's saving glory was still visible (Job 37:15).

God's amazing control of events in the natural world is surely through Angelic influence. God gives the lightning-often associated with Angels- a specific charge [as He does to His Angels] that it "strike the mark". Job has earlier complained that God is using him as target practice. Elihu goes along with this, and sees it reflected in the natural creation.

Job 36:33 Its noise tells about Him, and the livestock also concerning the storm that comes up- The idea is that the animals sensed the thunderstorm that was about to burst, and so should man. This again lends weight to the suggestion that a literal thunderstorm was gathering, which came to final term in God's theophany.

Job Chapter 37

Job 37:1 Yes, at this my heart trembles, and is moved out of its place- Elihu has in view the approaching thunderstorm (see on Job 36:27,33). He says that just as the animals are trembling and moved because of it, so is he (Job 36:33).

Job 37:2 Hear, oh, hear the noise of His voice, the sound that goes out of His mouth- Elihu asks Job to hear the voice of the thunderstorm (see on :1). Of course Job could hear it physically, but Elihu has the idea that there is a Divine voice within it. And this is indeed true, Elihu functions to introduce the appearance and speaking of God which begins in the next chapter.

Job 37:3 He sends it forth under the whole sky, and His lightning to the ends of the earth- God was appealing not just to Job but to the ends of the *eretz*, the land promised to Abraham. This was the potential scenario possible at the restoration. The restoration prophets envisage the supernatural destruction of Babylon coinciding with the repentance of the exiles and leading to the repentance of a minority of the Gentiles at "the ends of the earth"; the borders of the *eretz* promised to Abraham where they were located, in Babylon and Assyria. The idea was that they would together form a new multi-ethnic people of God in the land, under a new covenant. But this potential didn't happen. For they didn't hear the voice of God.

Job 37:4 After it a voice roars. He thunders with the voice of His majesty. He doesn't hold back anything when His voice is heard- Elihu perceives there is a voice, a Divine voice, far beyond the literal roar of noise associated with the thunderstorm (see on :2). If that voice was "heard", as Elihu exhorts Job to hear it (:2), then nothing will be 'held back'. God is willing to do marvellous things (:5). This was of great relevance to the exiles. Had they heard / obeyed that prophetic voice, then the great potentials prophesied as possible in the restored Kingdom would have come true. God would have held nothing back. The Kingdom of God would again have been established in Israel.

Job 37:5 God thunders marvellously with His voice. He does great things, which we can't comprehend- The great things God does are all conditional; when or if His voice is heard / obeyed (:4). What we read in the following verses is therefore pregnant with wider meaning than simply describing God's control of the natural creation, thoughts elicited by the bursting of the thunderstorm. This is why the language is used in the restoration prophets concerning what could have happened if the exiles had been obedient to the prophetic word. That God indeed "does great things" was recognized by Job as well as the friends (Job 5:9; 9:10 s.w.). But they were to be taught now by the thunderstorm leading up to the actual revelation of God Himself that indeed God can do all things. "I know You can do all things" was Job's final response. The restoration likewise would have been a case of the Lord doing great things (Joel 2:21).

Job 37:6 For He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth'; likewise to the shower of rain, and to the showers of His mighty rain- God's command to the water is understood as meaning that God's prophetic word of restoration could bring about the restoration of the Kingdom for the exiles (Is. 55:10,11). See on :5.

Job 37:7 He seals up the hand of every man, that all men whom He has made may know it- For the potentials planned by God to be realized, man must first realize he has no power of himself. His hand or power must be sealed up, so that God's prophetic word for His exiled, suffering people could be sealed up (s.w. Dan. 9:24). This is what Job was taught, and it was what God wished the exiles to understand (see on :5).

Job 37:8 Then the animals take cover, and remain in their dens- As those responsive to the wind go into their "dens" (AV), so in turn out of its den or room comes the storm of Divine theophany (:9). As the animals were running in response to the storm (Job 36:33), so should all men. God's people were likewise bidden obediently enter their chambers in order to be saved from the wrath to come (Is. 26:20).

Job 37:9 Out of its room comes the storm, and cold out of the north- See on :8. Just as destruction had been called forth upon Judah from the north, so God calls forth His prepared natural phenomena from the north.

Job 37:10 By the breath of God, ice is given- The breath of God is His Spirit. And this was the point so relevant to the exiles. God's Spirit was potentially able to transform their entire existence, just as it operates throughout the cosmos and upon the earth.

And the breadth of the waters is frozen- LXX "He guides the water in whatever way he pleases". This is similar to the idea of the heart of kings being as water in His hands (Prov. 21:1); Cyrus and the rulers at the time of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther were all under God's control, but His activity was dependent upon His people hearing His voice (see on :5).

Job 37:11 Yes, He loads the thick cloud with moisture. He spreads abroad the cloud of His lightning- AV "By watering He wearie the thick cloud". God created these thick clouds and could dissolve them at will, and maintains them within a perfect balance; whereas the exiles in their depression were under the impression that the thickness of the clouds meant that God could not therefore see nor judge (s.w. Job 22:13,14, see notes there). See on :15,16. But LXX "And if a cloud obscures what is precious to him, his light will disperse the cloud". This connects with the exiles being precious to Him (Is. 43:4). Even the cloud of His own anger with them could be dispersed by Him, such is His saving love and grace.

Job 37:12 It is turned around by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them on the surface of the habitable world- "Turned" is literally 'returned', and is pregnant with allusion to how God's prophetic word could make the exiles return. But that turning around was by "His guidance", AV "counsels". It was by response to God's word that this turn about could happen; see on :5.

Job 37:13 whether it is for correction, or for His land, or for grace, that He causes it to come- The reference to God's land again begs for reference to the situation with the exiles. The whole suffering of Job / Israel was for multiple possible reasons. It was to correct, it was so that His Kingdom or land would be restored, and through it all the whole exercise was to parade His grace.

Job 37:14 Listen to this, Job. Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God- We perhaps imagine Job agitated and distracted. He is asked to calm himself and consider the thunderstorm and its implications. This is clearly preparing him for the final appearance of God's word to him through that storm which will begin in the next chapter. Clearly the function of Elihu is to prepare us for God's words and revelation which is to come.

Job 37:15 Do you know how God controls them, and causes the lightning of His cloud to shine?- See on :11,16. Note the emphasis upon God's control of the clouds, and that clouds aren't random occurrences but all intricately balanced with His light shining within them. This is in response to the impression held by the exiles, and wrongly imputed to Job in Job 22:13, that the thickness of the Divine clouds meant He could not see nor judge them (Is. 29:15; 40:27; Jer. 23:24; Lam. 3:44; Ez. 8:12).

This is perhaps commentary upon Job's words of Job 26:9: "He encloses the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud upon it". As so often in the drama of Job, truths are presented but without context. This is indeed true; but Job and the exiles had to learn that the cloud that came between God and themselves was that of human sin (Is. 44:22), even though God responded by bringing that cloud (Job 36:32). The years of exile were the day of cloud (Ez. 34:12; Lam. 3:44). But through that cloud, the light of God's saving glory was still visible (Job 37:15).

Job 37:16 Do you know the workings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?- See on :11,15. Elihu often speaks of his "opinion". "Opinion" really means "knowledge", and the Hebrew word is used only by Elihu (Job 32:6,10,17). He claims his knowledge comes from "afar", from God (Job 36:3), but he also recognizes that God alone has totality of "knowledge" (Job 37:16), although he also makes this claim about himself (see on Job 36:4). So we are again left with Elihu as an enigma, not totally reflecting God's knowledge, although considering that his view is in line with God's. This enigma of Elihu is purposeful; as explained on Job 32:5, his function is to elicit *our* opinions; we too who like to think our view is in line with God's, and yet admitting we lack His total knowledge.

Job 37:17 You whose clothing is warm, when the earth is still by reason of the south wind?- GNB "No, you can only suffer in the heat when the south wind oppresses the land". The land of Israel had indeed been oppressed and the people had suffered. But this was all because of their abusers who had as it were been blown in by God's wind / Spirit.

Job 37:18 Can you, with Him, spread out the sky, which is strong as a cast metal mirror?- Elihu seems to hold the ancient view that the sky was in fact made of spread out material. This view, rather like the language of demons in the New Testament, is used without correction. Because the science is not the essential point; rather the idea is that the heavens are as a mirror, and by looking at the natural creation, one sees a reflection of God's work with us. And this is preparing us for God's words which are to soon come, which bid man do just this.

Job 37:19 Teach us what we shall tell Him, for we can't make our case by reason of darkness- Earlier, Job had judged himself, setting in order his legal case, but declaring himself righteous (Job 13:8). By Job 23:4, Job is realizing that he needs to set his case in order before God; but he can't find God, or get God to engage in this game of judgment. He needed the final appearance of God at the end of the book to review his case, and declare that he is in fact wrong and condemned. But by grace, God will count him as right. He was prepared for this by Elihu's speech in Job 37:19: "Teach us what we shall tell Him, for we can't make our case by reason of darkness". "Make our case" is s.w. "set my cause in order".

Job 37:20 Shall it be told Him that I would speak? Or should a man wish that he were swallowed up?- Elihu's speech becomes more helpful and appropriate the closer he gets to his conclusion, which is followed by God's words, which Elihu is preparing us for. For that is his function. He is here making the legitimate point that the God who can do such wonders doesn't need to be informed that Job wants to talk to Him. And in the light of all the great potentials which He has prepared, Job's earnest wish for death was inappropriate.

Job 37:21 Now men don't see the light which is bright in the skies, but the wind passes, and clears them- The essential light of God was obscured by clouds. But the wind of God's Spirit, which had blown in the great heat of suffering (:17), would likewise clear the clouds and reveal His light.

Job 37:22 Out of the north comes golden splendour. With God is awesome majesty- LXX "From the north come the clouds shining like gold: in these great are the glory and honour of the Almighty". Job several times mentions "the north", connecting with the invaders of Israel "from the north" who would all the same finally be used to glorify God.

Job 37:23 We can't reach the Almighty. He is exalted in power- "Reach" is the word used of how Job sought to "probe" (AV "find out") the Almighty (Job 23:3; 28:12), whereas Elihu appears to agree with Zophar that "the Almighty" cannot be 'found out' or 'reached' (Job 11:7; 37:23). God's own appearance at the end is perhaps an answer to this. He cannot be 'found out' by intellectual argument or personal righteousness. Instead, He 'finds out' people and saves them by grace. Paul expresses the same idea when he writes that it is not so much a case of man 'knowing God', but rather of being "known of God" by grace (Gal. 4:9).

In justice and great righteousness, He will not oppress- Elihu's speech becomes more helpful and appropriate the closer he gets to his conclusion, which is followed by God's words, which Elihu is preparing us for. For that is his function. Elihu's conclusion is that God doesn't willingly afflict or oppress, and the same conclusion was reached in the context of the exiles by Jeremiah (Lam. 3:33 s.w.).

Job 37:24 Therefore men revere Him. He doesn't regard any who are wise of heart- This is almost Elihu's repentance, for he has earlier boasted that the "wise in heart" will listen to him and approve his condemnation of Job. But he concludes that men are to revere God because He does not "oppress" and somehow articulates His great justice so as not to afflict His people (:23). And this is quite at variance with all the traditional wisdom of Elihu, the friends and even Job.

Job Chapter 38

Job 38:1 Then Yahweh answered Job- The answer is to Job, not Elihu who has just spoken, nor the friends. The whole focus of the book is upon Job's restoration, and out of that comes the restoration of the friends.

Out of the whirlwind- The restoration prophets speak of the whirlwind coming to judge both Israel and her abusers (Is. 40:24; 41:16; Jer. 23:19; 30:32), and it is through the whirlwind that God's cherubic glory is revealed in exile in Ezekiel. But out of that whirlwind, Yahweh speaks. We read here of Yahweh for the first time; His Name was to be declared through those judgments.

Job 38:2 Who is this who makes counsel dark by words without knowledge?- The LXX suggests Job had another agenda which he was trying to hide from God, despite Job's protestations of absolute openness and saying precisely what he thought: "Who is this that hides counsel from me, and confines words in his heart, and thinks to conceal them from me?". This would seem to be the sense, because Job pleads guilty to this charge in Job 42:3. There, he has "hidden counsel without knowledge". And he has done that by 'darkening' that counsel by all his words, which would have been better left unsaid.

Or we can read it as in the Masoretic Text, as an accusation that Job was darkening God's word ["counsel"] by his own words. He was not simply accepting the truth of God's word because he was so full of his own words. And this is what we see in ourselves and humanity generally so often; the Bible's words are crowded out by the words of our own presuppositions.

The Lord and His word is the light of the world. But we can darken that light, if we do not properly reflect it. God complained that Job had darkened His word (Job 38:2 NIV); the truths which Job should have taught to his friends he relayed very imperfectly, through the prism and distortion of clinging on to his own traditions and preconceptions of God, and his deep desire for self justification.

Job 38:3 Brace yourself like a man, for I will question you, then you answer Me!- "Like a man" is not said as it might be said today, as an appeal to masculinity. Rather it is asking Job to realize he is human, and to answer these questions as a human. The implication is that by exalting his own words above God's (see on :2), Job was forgetting his humanity and effectively attempting to rise above God. His questions of God had been inappropriate, just as the friends had been wrong to seek wisdom by asking the sages, mere men (Job 8:8; 21:29 s.w.); it is for God to question us. For we and not God are in the dock.

Job 38:4 Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding- In the drama, we imagine a significant silence after each question. The laying of foundations is the word used for what the exiles were to do for the temple in Zion (Ezra 3:6,10 etc.). Just as God had laid those foundations without any human observation or strength, so He would lay the foundations of the restored Zion (Is. 44:28; 48:13). But the exiles like Job had forgotten that (Is. 51:13). Zechariah teaches this same parallel between God's laying the foundations of the earth, and His empowering the laying of the temple foundations (Zech. 4:9; 8:9; 12:1). But how that was to be done was beyond human understanding. Job was silent when asked as to how it was done. The 'how' of God's purpose is a challenge to our faith, and this is reflected in our theological efforts to explain the 'how' of God's Kingdom. There is an element of mystery to it; for it is by grace alone, beyond our effort and understanding.

Job 38:5 Who determined its measures, if you know? Or who stretched the line on it?- God had both stretched the line of destruction upon Zion (2 Kings 21:13; Lam. 2:8), and that of restoration (Zech. 1:16). He gave the "measures" for the reconstruction of Zion and the temple system (s.w. often in Ez. 40:5,6 etc.); and yet He had likewise measured out the earth (s.w. Is. 40:12). The restoration of Job and all God's people was to be predicated upon the fact that His work could not be measured and was known finally only to Him (s.w. Jer. 31:37; 33:22). Just as in Gen. 1:9 "Let the waters be marked out with a line", so in the new creations God works, He has the power to determine the dimensions of His work in a way we do not.

Job 38:6 Whereupon were its foundations fastened?- The answer is 'Apparently upon nothing'. And this is the way of faith; to believe that out of apparently nothing, restoration can come. This was the challenge to Job, the exiles and to all of God's people.

Or who laid its cornerstone- This again was of special significance to the exiles who were bidden follow Job's path

to restoration. The laying of the cornerstone of the new temple was no less an act of pure grace than that of creation in the first place. Hence Zech. 4:7 "Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you are a plain; and he will bring out the capstone [cornerstone] with shouts of 'Grace, grace, to it!'" The exiles didn't make use of that grace, and so these plans were reworked, to the even greater provision of the cornerstone in the person of the Lord Jesus (Ps. 118:22).

Job 38:7 when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?- There is an obvious connection with the "sons of God" of the prologue in Job 1:6. I explained there that they refer to Job's fellow worshippers, although they had their Angelic representatives in the court of heaven. But the friends are the fellow worshippers, and the Satan figure morphs into the friends. The contrast is therefore with how the sons of God should be rejoicing at God's work in testing and restoring Job, just as their Angelic counterparts did at creation. But instead they were caught up in their petty jealousies and conspiracy theories, and failed to see the wonder of God's new creation.

Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth from the womb- There are several allusions in Job to Babylonian legends concerning Marduk – indicating that the book must have been re-written in Babylon with allusion to these legends. Thus the *Enuma Elish* 4.139,140 speaks of how Marduk limited the waters of Tiamat, and set up a bar and watchmen so that the waters wouldn't go further than he permitted. But this very language is applied to God in Job 7:12 and Job 38:8–11. One of the purposes of Job was to urge Judah that Yahweh was greater than Marduk, He and not Marduk was to be Israel's God.

The sea was understood to be the abode of evil monsters. Yet Job stresses how God is in control of the raging sea. Just look out for all the references to the sea in Job (J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1985)). The book of Daniel perhaps makes the same point – the beasts that arise out of the raging sea are all under God's control and part of His purpose with Israel (Dan. 7:2). God artlessly claims to have created the sea (Job 38:8–11). In the Canaanite pantheon, Baal was seen as well matched in conflict by Yam, the sea god. But it's emphasized by God that He created the sea, shuts it up within bounds, brought it out from the womb (Job 38:8). See on Job 39:2.

As God 'shut up' Job (Job 1:10), so He could 'shut up' the sea, with all the evil associated with it (Job 38:8). For at creation, He had commanded the waters where to go and they obeyed just one word from Him. The point is, God is using poetry to reframe these pagan myths in the context of His omnipotence, to show that His awesome power means that there's no room left for these supposed beings to exist. It's noteworthy that many times the Bible speaks of the power of God over raging seas – for the sea was so deeply associated with evil in the minds of Semitic peoples (e.g. Ps. 77:19; 93:4 and the fact that three of the Gospels emphasize how Jesus walked over raging sea – Mt. 8:23–27; Mk. 4:36–41; Lk. 8:22–25; "Who is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!").

Job 38:9 when I made clouds its garment, and wrapped it in thick darkness- The "thick darkness" is created by God, it is He who can shroud Himself from human understanding; but this doesn't mean that He cannot "judge through the thick darkness" (Job 22:13 s.w.). The thick darkness was only from man's viewpoint; not from God's. The fact man feels God to be distant and shrouded doesn't mean He actually is. And this is a fundamental truth for all time, that our perceptions of God don't mean that this is what He actually is. For God was not created by man in his image and likeness, but the other way around.

The thick darkness was a "swaddling-band" for the sea (AV). The newborn sea, fresh as it were from the womb (:8), is completely subject to God as its Creator, and is absolutely not a form of radical evil outside of His control, as was imagined by the surrounding peoples.

Job understands that it is *God* who sends the good and evil, the light and the darkness, into his life (Job 30:26). Significantly, he states his faith that *God even marks out the boundary between light and darkness* (Job 26:10) – a similar idea in essence to the reassurance of Is. 45:5 that God creates both light and darkness. The 'darkness', however we experience and understand it, is framed and limited by God; it is not a power or being with independent existence outside the realm of God's power. God confirms Job's understanding later, when He says that it is He who can swaddle the sea [another figure for uncontrollable evil] in bands of darkness (Job 38:9) – as if to say that it is God who gives things like darkness and the sea their sinister appearance and perception by men; but He is in control of them, using them in His hand. See on Job 38:10.

Job 38:10 marked out for it My bound, set bars and doors- Job's idea that God fixes limits for the darkness is repeated by God saying that He sets limits for the raging sea. God controls evil, or our perception of it (e.g. of the sea as being evil), and He sets limits for it – which was exactly what He did to the power of 'Satan' in the prologue to Job. All these statements by God about His use of and power over things like darkness and sea, with the perceptions of them as being independent forces of evil, are quite different to Canaanite and Babylonian views of creation. In them, gods like Baal had to fight Yam, the evil sea god, with clubs provided by other deities; in the Babylonian version, Marduk has to arm himself with various weapons in order to try to get supremacy over Tiamat (S. Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia: Vol. 4, The Epic of Creation* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1989) pp. 251–255). But Yahweh as revealed in the book of Job has utter and absolute power over the sea [monster] and the [supposed god of] darkness – for He created the sea and the darkness and uses them creatively for His purpose. That's the whole purpose of the many 'nature passages' in the book of Job. And the language of Genesis 1:9 is evidence enough of His power. He speaks a word – and light, darkness and seas are created, the waters gathering obediently where He commands them. Likewise God isn't in any battle with Leviathan – rather is the monster actually His "plaything" (Ps. 104:26 says likewise).

The way the doors and bars of even the sea are under God's control connects with how God was to open the great doors of Babylon, to cause the city to fall and release the exiles back to His land (Is. 45:1).

Job 38:11 and said, 'Here you may come, but no further. Here your proud waves shall be stayed?' - The waters were representative of the invading nations. There was a limit to Judah's sufferings, because the waters of the nations had their limits. Job likewise was to be tested so far but no further.

Job 38:12 Have you commanded the morning in your days- God consciously makes the sun rise each day (Mt. 6:26)- it isn't part of a kind of perpetual motion machine. Hence the force of His promises in the prophets that in the same way as He consciously maintains the solar system, so He will maintain Israel. But this is by grace, totally without human involvement nor understanding of the processes, the whys and wherefores with which the dialogues have been so pointlessly taken up.

And caused the dawn to know its place- This is God's comment on Job's words of Job 28:23 about wisdom / relationship with God: "God understands its way, and He knows its place". Just as there is a sense in the natural creation that things such as the dawn have a specific "place" known by God alone (Job 38:12 s.w.), so the way of true relationship with Him, "wisdom", is known by Him alone. We do not find that "place" by intellectual effort, searching hither and thither, but by being open to God's leading of us as Job was.

Job 38:13 that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and shake the wicked out of it?- If the "earth" as in the sense of *eretz* Israel is in view, then the ends of the earth were where the exiles were located, in Persia / Babylon. The idea of a dawning which chases away evil is used in Mal. 4:2,3 of what could have happened at the restoration of the exiles- had they followed Job's path.

Job 38:14 It is changed as clay under the seal- Although Job is written in ancient Hebrew, there are many signs of how it was rewritten in Babylon. The Babylonians used seals which were impressed upon clay rather than wax. Perhaps the idea is that as the seal changes clay (what man is made from) from a formless lump into something highly significant, so God can work with man. But the original is very unclear. LXX: "Or didst thou take clay of the ground, and form a living creature, and set it with the power of speech upon the earth?"

And stands forth as a garment- The idea is of an embroidered dress, where valuable stones make the pattern stand out in relief. Again the sense is that God can transform the very ordinary into something of beauty and significance.

Job 38:15 From the wicked, their light is withheld. The high arm is broken- LXX "And hast thou removed light from the ungodly, and crushed the arm of the proud?". Job has complained that light has been removed from him, and so he is being reminded that he has indeed sinned, and is "ungodly", although relatively very righteous, and counted as righteous by the God who so loved him. This is a lesson needed for all 'Godly' people, especially middle class Western Christians, and it was what the exiles had to learn in order that they might repent. Perhaps God is quoting with approval Job's lament that the light of the wicked is darkness (Job 24:13-17).

Job 38:16 Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?- GNB "Have you been to the springs in the depths of the sea? Have you walked on the floor of the ocean?". Job is reminded that he is ignorant of many things in creation, which remain inaccessible and remote. And so it is with insisting to know everything about Divine process with us. These things are purposefully hidden, and it is part of recognizing our humanity to realize that.

Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the gates of the shadow of death?- Job earlier complained that "On my eyelids is the shadow of death" (Job 16:16 AV). Job felt he was facing death right before his eyes, and the shadow of that death was cast over his eyes. Job thought he had been there, standing at the gates of death (Job 10:21,22; 17:16). But God disagrees, challenging Job that he has not in fact seen "the gates of the shadow of death" (s.w.). Job had only seen death from a personal, human perspective. God sees death for what it really is, and it is far more terrible than man perceives. For from God's perspective it carries with it the tragedy of the eternity which a man has missed, if he has rejected God. And God is saying that Job hasn't see death from that perspective.

Job 38:18 Have you comprehended the earth in its breadth? Declare, if you know it all- Elihu implies that if Job repents, then he will be brought out from a narrow place into a broad place (Job 36:16). God perhaps comments on this by saying that the "broad place" is in fact the whole earth (s.w. Job 38:18). Man (including Job) is already in freedom; it is a case of accepting it.

Job 38:19 What is the way to the dwelling of light? As for darkness, where is its place- The dialogues have much to say about light and darkness; but the question of their ultimate origin is with God. This was what the exiles had to be reminded of (Is. 45:5-7). Job had rather simplistically concluded that the place of darkness was death (Job 10:21,22). But there was more to it than that. All the various theories of the origin of evil in a cosmic being have been deconstructed in Job. And now God reveals the ultimate truth- that the origin is with Him. Light is distinct from the sun, moon and planets, as Genesis itself teaches (Gen. 1:3,16). The question of ultimate origins is with God.

Job 38:20 that you should take it to its bound, that you should discern the paths to its house?- Job's experiences were of affliction set in his "path" (s.w. Job 19:8). And the Bedouins he curses in Job 30:1-12 were those who had abused him in that "path" (Job 30:13). So it seems he has in view the Sabeans who had abused him in the prologue, and yet this section also has clear reference to the friends. Yet that "path" of affliction which God had given Job was the path of wisdom and relationship with Him which was indiscernible to the human eye (Job 28:7 cp. 28); the fact that the ultimate path is invisible to the secular, naked eye is a truth stamped upon the natural creation (Job 38:20), and yet after the affliction or trouble, this path shines clearly (Job 41:32). And this was to be Job's experience at his restoration, as it could have been likewise for the exiles.

Job 38:21 Surely you know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!- This is also an answer to the way the friends considered that there was wisdom accrued through the number of days lived. Within the context of eternity and God's creative power, such knowledge is as nothing. It is therefore only the truth revealed from God which is a source of truth, and not length of human days. God is engaging with the idea of the friends, that number of days is related to wisdom. But compared to the specter of infinity, that is a very weak argument.

Job 38:22 Have you entered the treasuries of the snow, or have you seen the treasures of the hail- This implies that God has gone exploring through His own creation-making Him even more marvellous than being just the creator. Hail is a common symbol of God's judgment (Ex. 9:18-29; Ps. 18:12, 13; 78:47,48; 105:32; Is. 30:30; 32:19 etc.). These things are stored up by God for use at the appropriate time. Both Job and the exiles needed to realize that they were not merely at the whim of God, but He had prepared their experiences in order to achieve specific ends.

Job 38:23 which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?- Earlier Job has argued that judgment is "reserved" until the last day (Job 21:30 s.w.), and therefore the wicked appear to prosper.

God is here confirming that view. Eliphaz claimed that God is preparing to judge Job like a king ready to ride into the battle (Job 15:24). But God's later revelation includes Him demonstrating that man cannot participate successfully in any battle with what God has willed (Job 41:8), and the horse runs foolishly into battle with no regard for consequence (Job 39:25). The connection with the words of Eliphaz may be in that it was effectively Eliphaz who was rushing into battle to do judgment against Job; and he was acting like the foolish horse, forgetting that God alone will fight in the battle, and win (Job 38:23).

Job 38:24 By what way is the lightning distributed, or the east wind scattered on the earth?- AV "By what way is the light parted?", referring to refraction. God has not simply made the good, but He has refracted it in various ways. Peter gets a glance at this when he writes of the refracted beauty of God's grace (AV "the manifold grace of God", 1 Pet. 4:10). Job is being taught that life is not as simple as light and darkness, good and evil; but these things are refracted by God in different ways, such is the beauty and complexity of His workings.

Job 38:25 Who has cut a channel for the flood water, or the path for the thunderstorm- The flood waters were a symbol for evil such as the invaders who had taken Judah into exile. But God cuts channels so that His flood waters dissipate, just as His wind / Spirit drives away the clouds that come between God and man. And He had directed the path of that particular thunderstorm to come directly upon Job.

Job 38:26 to cause it to rain on a land where no man is; on the wilderness, in which there is no man- God's actions cannot be simply understood by men. To the ancients, it would have appeared pointless to send rain on the remote deserts. But His goodness, represented by the rain, operates on a level far beyond our comprehension. It is not utilitarian, intended to just produce some easily discernible good. His grace is far greater than that.

Job 38:27 to satisfy the waste and desolate ground- Although the gift of His grace in rain falls sometimes where it apparently has no purpose (:26), it also falls on other areas where the tender grass is nourished by it. And His purpose is to revive even the apparently useless and waste land; both in the life of Job, and of His deserted land and people.

To cause the tender grass to spring forth?- "Waste and desolation" is the language of condemnation (s.w. Zeph. 1:15). But God makes the point that He sends rain "to satisfy the desolate and waste ground"- the very place where the condemned lived whom Job despised in his prosperity (Job 30:3 s.w.). But God doesn't despise even the most desperate of society. He sends rain to cheer them whom the righteous despise. And this was to help Job be convicted of his own desperation, of how wrong he had been to despise others and trust that he was righteous; and to further convict him that God still sought to revive him, as He did those deserted lands.

Job 38:28 Does the rain have a father? Or who fathers the drops of dew?- The question of origins remains to this day. No matter how persuasive are theories of evolutionary development, the question of ultimate origins has to always come back to God. And this question of origins, God is arguing, is really a signpost to the simple idea of grace. For creation is in a sense grace itself.

Job 38:29 Out of whose womb came the ice? The gray frost of the sky, who has given birth to it?- "Came" is the word for 'bring forth' in Job 28:11: "The thing that is hidden He brings forth to light". God can reveal everything physical, if He wishes. But man will still not find "wisdom" if he is searching for it as a 'physical' thing, obtained by a process of mining and subsequent refining. That reveals merely "stones of obscurity" (Job 28:3), nuggets of isolated truth. This message needs to be heeded by those who consider the Christian duty is to search out academic truth, mining it from the pages of the Bible and further processing it. This of itself is not to be despised, but this can be done as the Pharisees did it, and as the friends did- without coming to the awesome personal encounter with God and His grace with which the book of Job concludes. God can dry up the streams so that those panning in them thigh deep for precious stones- find them. He can bring them to light, but this is not the same thing as the "wisdom" of personal relationship with Him and departing from evil in our hearts (Job 28:9,10,28). This is what was happening on Job's life; God was 'bringing forth' light from death, deep things from darkness (s.w. Job 12:22). And this was

realized by *God* bringing it forth, and not man's search for 'truth'. Job as a person was to be 'brought forth' by *God* as gold from that fire of affliction (Job 23:10 s.w.). Just as plants are 'brought forth' from the earth without the need for mining under the earth (Job 28:5 s.w.). This is why *God's* reply to Job keeps on using this word for 'bring forth', labouing the point that *God* 'brings forth' by His processes and initiatives, and not man. And that is as a code stamped upon all of creation (Job 38:8,29,32; 39:4,21; 41:20,21).

Job 38:30 The waters become hard like stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen- Not only the creation of water and things is wonderful, but equally the transformations of created things. This is what *God* was to do to Job, and He was offering to do the same to the exiles.

Job 38:31 Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loosen the cords of Orion?- Job sees *God* as capable of binding and loosing him, untying the cords that restrain affliction and then binding them up again (Job 30:11 s.w.). *God's* response is that indeed this is the case, and such binding and loosing is seen throughout the natural creation (s.w. Job 38:31; 39:5; 41:14). The constellations are bound together in pattern by *God*. And therefore, Job and the exiles are to live in hope of being bound up in safety from affliction, just as *God* "untied His cord and afflicted me" in Job 30:11.

Job 38:32 Can you lead forth the constellations in their season? Or can you guide the Bear with her cubs?- AV "Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?". The context would suggest that "Mazzaroth" [a plural word] is a constellation like Orion just mentioned in :31. This would mean that the signs of the Zodiac are not in view here, as has been falsely claimed. It could be that "Mazzaroth" was a group of stars the people of the times thought they had observed which we now know as something else. It could be a variant of Mazzaloth, the gods made to these stars (2 Kings 23:5). In this case *God* is saying that even if they believed the stars influenced life on earth and made idols to them, *God* was the ultimate controller and mover. It's rather like the usage of the language of demons in the New Testament. The scale of miracles implies *God* was far greater than any supposed demons, but the wrong understanding is not specifically targetted; rather by appealing to the greater principle of *God's* majestic power, it is shown to be bankrupt and void of real power.

Job 38:33 Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you establish its dominion over the earth?- GNB "Do you know the laws that govern the skies, and can you make them apply to the earth?". This is perhaps the clearest Biblical condemnation of any attempt to practice astrology. The movement of the stars was under *God's* control, but is *not* related to the outcomes of life upon earth. For *God* can work in parallel ways with the stars as well as with human life and situations upon earth.

Job 38:34 Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover you?- This is said in the context of the thunderstorm which began as noted on Job 36:27. That thunderstorm was brought about by *God's* sovereign action, and was not called up by men commanding *God* to bring it. The movement of *God* through His grace is likewise sovereign, otherwise grace would not be grace.

Job 38:35 Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go? Do they report to you, 'Here we are?' - The same challenge was made to Ezekiel and the exiles, in the visions of the lightnings of the cherubim. The simple point of all this is that this lightning quick and powerful activity is for our sakes, to the end of achieving saving restoration. Job and the exiles complained that *God* was apparently slow to act. But He is working with lightning speed.

Job 38:36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who has given understanding to the mind?- GNB "Who tells the ibis when the Nile will flood, or who tells the rooster that rain will fall?"; LXX "And who has given to women skill in weaving, or knowledge of embroidery?". But the preceding and following context is of *God's* control of the planets and atmosphere. So the idea may be that the lightnings also have their own wisdom, given to them by *God*, as it were. Hence one suggested translation is "Who has put wisdom in the thunderbolts? or who has given understanding to the tempest?".

Job 38:37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of the sky- The answer of course was that they could not be numbered by man, but only by God. This is the same word used in the restoration prophecy of Jer. 38:22: "As the host of the sky cannot be *numbered*, nor the sand of the sea measured", so God's grace would be poured out in restoring His people. And that challenge was at the very heart of the covenant with Abraham, whose seed couldn't be numbered. Job was being taught the same lesson. He believed it, but the exiles generally didn't, and so their restoration didn't happen after the pattern of Job's.

Job 38:38 when the dust runs into a mass, and the clods of earth stick together?- The idea is that God sends rain from the clouds at the time when it is most desperately needed. The dry bones of both Job and Israel were to be rained upon with the Spirit. And this kind of thing is seen in the natural creation.

Job 38:39 Can you hunt the prey for the lioness, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions- The theme now changes to the animals, and perhaps Job 39 would better begin at this verse. The point is that although the lioness hunts, this is in league with God: "The lions, roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God" (Ps. 104:21). The lions who hunted Job and Judah were likewise from God, and were not acting without Him.

Job 38:40 when they crouch in their dens, and lie in wait in the thicket?- "Crouch" is the word for to humble, to crouch down. The theme of the book of Job is that man must be humbled before he can be used by God (s.w. Job 9:13; 22:29). And this is coded into the natural creation. The lioness must crouch down before she pounces.

Job 38:41 Who provides for the raven his prey- The raven was considered a bad omen. But still God cares for them; and how much more for His people. This is the force of the Lord's argument in Lk. 12:24, "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them". Hence Ps. 147:9 emphasizes that "He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry". Clearly God doesn't simplistically punish the evil and bless the righteous immediately in this life. His grace reaches out to all.

When his young ones cry to God, and wander for lack of food?- Job feels he has 'cried out' to God for justice and not been heard (Job 19:7; 30:20); and that there is nothing wrong with crying out to God in distress, it is a perfectly natural reaction (Job 24:12). One comment upon this is that the young ravens cry out to God for food and yet are not always heard (Job 38:41 s.w.). But God in the wider picture sustains all of creation by grace. Job did well to cry out to God even if there was no answer, because the hypocrites do not 'cry out' to God when they are facing judgment (Job 36:13 s.w.). Job feels hurt that God has not responded to his 'crying out' because he says that when the needy cried out to him, he had heard (Job 29:12 s.w.). But here we see his works based approach; he thought that his response to those who cried out to him meant that therefore God must respond to *his* crying out. And God is not so primitive. His apparent silence is because His response is not predicated upon human works and charity. It is by grace alone, as is taught in His final appearance to Job. The exiles likewise were to finally see the response to their crying out to God in the restoration (Is. 58:9), just as their representative Jonah cried out to God from the belly of *sheol* amidst the sea of nations, and was heard (s.w. Jonah 2:2).

Job Chapter 39

Job 39:1 Do you know the time when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears fawns?- The idea is that man may not know the exact time, but God does, and it is built into His plan; see on :2. "Watch [over]" is the same word used for how God had set the parameters for Job's trials in the prologue; his life was to be preserved (s.w., Job 2:6). But Job like the friends became obsessed with immediate suffering and issues to the point that he overlooked these basic parameters set by God. We can do the same. He complains that God watches over him too closely (Job 13:6; 33:11 s.w.), and yet complains that God isn't watching over him (Job 29:2). God's response is to direct him again to the natural creation, where God's constant 'watching over' His creation is evident. He even watches over the exact gestation time of mountain goats, who were invisible to human eyes (Job 39:1 s.w.). And likewise Job was to understand that the time of his sufferings, like the period of exile for the captives, was likewise intensely noted by God and had not been forgotten.

Job 39:2 Can you number the months that they fulfil? Or do you know the time when they give birth?- This continues the theme of Job 38, that everything has its bounds and limits, and timings set by God. This was so relevant to the exiles who considered their suffering endless; it was a reminder that restoration had been promised after a period, even if they didn't know that exact time (see on :1) and that script is written into all God's work in creation.

The answer of course was that they could not be numbered by man, but only by God. This is the same word used in the restoration prophecy of Jer. 38:22: "As the host of the sky cannot be *numbered*, nor the sand of the sea measured", so God's grace would be poured out in restoring His people. Job was being taught the same lesson. He believed it, but the exiles generally didn't, and so their restoration didn't happen after the pattern of Job's.

In Canaanite myth, Aquhat [another 'Satan' figure in their theology] could alone "count the months" (Robert S. Fyall, *op cit* p. 75) – but the same phrase is used here in Job 39:2 about how God alone has this power. See on Job 38:8.

Job 39:3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young, they end their labour pains- This is the language of later Isaiah; the travail of Zion would come to an end, in the rebirth of a restored Kingdom of God in Judah. That at least was the Divine intention, although the Jews largely precluded its realization by their own refusal to really want it.

Job 39:4 Their young ones become strong. They grow up in the open field. They go forth, and don't return again- LXX emphasizes this idea of 'going forth', which as noted on :1,2 looks ahead to the going forth of the Jews from captivity: "Their young will break forth; they will be multiplied with offspring: their young will go forth, and will not return to them".

"Grow up" is the word for 'bring forth' in Job 28:11: "The thing that is hidden He brings forth to light". God can reveal everything physical, if He wishes. But man will still not find "wisdom" if he is searching for it as a 'physical' thing, obtained by a process of mining and subsequent refining. That reveals merely "stones of obscurity" (Job 28:3), nuggets of isolated truth. This message needs to be heeded by those who consider the Christian duty is to search out academic truth, mining it from the pages of the Bible and further processing it. This of itself is not to be despised, but this can be done as the Pharisees did it, and as the friends did- without coming to the awesome personal encounter with God and His grace with which the book of Job concludes. God can dry up the streams so that those panning in them thigh deep for precious stones- find them. He can bring them to light, but this is not the same thing as the "wisdom" of personal relationship with Him and departing from evil in our hearts (Job 28:9,10,28). This is what was happening on Job's life; God was 'bringing forth' light from death, deep things from darkness (s.w. Job 12:22). And this was realized by *God* bringing it forth, and not man's search for 'truth'. Job as a person was to be 'brought forth' *by God* as gold from that fire of affliction (Job 23:10 s.w.). Just as plants are 'brought forth' from the earth without the need for mining under the earth (Job 28:5 s.w.). This is why God's reply to Job keeps on using this word for 'bring forth', labouring the point that *God* 'brings forth' by His processes and initiatives, and not man. And that is as a code stamped upon all of creation (Job 38:8,29,32; 39:4,21; 41:20,21).

Job 39:5 Who has set the wild donkey free? Or who has loosened the bonds of the swift donkey?- This loosing of

bands is the language of Judah's bands being freed and their freedom to return to Zion. Job sees God as capable of binding and loosing him, untying the cords that restrain affliction and then binding them up again (Job 30:11 s.w.). God's response is that indeed this is the case, and such binding and loosing is seen throughout the natural creation (s.w. Job 38:31; 39:5; 41:14). And therefore, Job and the exiles are to live in hope of being bound up in safety from affliction, just as God "untied His cord and afflicted me" in Job 30:11.

Job 39:6 whose home I have made the wilderness, and the salt land his dwelling place?- It was from the wilderness that Job's troubles came. The Bedouins attacked from there, and the destructive wind came from there. But God was somehow in all that.

Job 39:7 He scorns the tumult of the city, neither does he hear the shouting of the driver- Job in his depression feels as Israel suffering in Egypt (Ex. 3:7; 5:6,13), considering that death was the only way out of the misery of hearing the "voice of the taskmaster", "the shouting of the driver" (Job 3:18). But he fails to see that out of that misery they were redeemed and restored to their land. This is alluded to when attention is drawn to how God's creations "hear not the voice, the shouts and curses of the driver". God's people didn't have to "hear" the voice of the taskmaster; there was a way of redemption offered.

The LXX here has a strange appropriacy to the release of the exiles from captivity, and the edicts of the Persian kings allowing them to reestablish their kingdom without paying any taxes: "He laughs to scorn the multitude of the city, and hears not the chiding of the tax-gatherer".

Job 39:8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, he searches after every green thing- LXX "He will survey the mountains as his pasture, and he seeks after every green thing". The returned exiles would have free pasture in all their land, as Ez. 34 and other restoration prophecies had intimated.

Job 39:9 Will the wild ox be content to serve you? Or will he stay by your feeding trough?- LXX "And will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or to lie down at thy manger?". The reference may be to Cyrus being the servant of Yahweh in allowing the exiles to return.

Job 39:10 Can you hold the wild ox in the furrow with his harness? Or will he till the valleys after you?- The wild animals may appear to the human eye to be aimlessly wandering hither and thither. But they are actually ploughing furrows for God. The apparently aimless wandering of Job and the exiles was likewise under God's control, and was actually intended to bring forth a great harvest from the apparently barren land.

Job 39:11 Will you trust him, because his strength is great? Or will you leave to him your labour?- No man could "trust" the randomly wandering oxen. But God has such a close relationship with those things which seem random and aimless that He doesn't actually need to hold those wild animals in harness (:10), He can trust them to do His work without Him harnessing them. And the same progression is to be seen in His work with apparently wild men; they begin needing a harness (:10), but then progress to working independently and yet within the overall furrow of God's direction.

Job 39:12 Will you confide in him, that he will bring home your seed, and gather the grain of your threshing floor?- Man struggles to have faith / trust (:11) or confidence in things and processes which appear random and out of his control. But God has such confidence, and He invites Job and all His people to do likewise. Job's sufferings, like Judah's, were not random and aimless. They can be trusted to achieve the work intended, and bring about a great harvest; incredible as that might seem to secular, onlooking man.

Job 39:13 The wings of the ostrich wave proudly; but are they the feathers and plumage of love?- I suggest that the following verses are arguing that the ostrich may appear to behave strangely, but is not in fact without love or care for its young. No animal totally lacks parental instinct. The people of Job's time thought that the ostrich did lack it;

just as Job and the exiles were questioning whether God really loved and cared for them. Her wings wave as she dashes around the desert in the day time; but the question is, does she really have love for her own? God likewise was and is active through the wings of the cherubim. But does He care for His little ones? That is the sense in which the ostrich becomes a significant animal. Job had felt a companion of ostriches (Job 30:29), and God is engaging with that feeling- and talks to Job about ostriches.

Job 39:14 For she leaves her eggs on the earth, warms them in the dust- "Ostriches, having scratched a hole in the sand, and deposited their eggs in it, cover the eggs over with a layer of sand, sometimes as much as a foot in thickness, and, leaving them during the daytime to be kept warm by the heat of the sun, only incubate at night". As noted on :13, the question is as to whether the ostrich really loves her young. She does; for no animal is without parental instinct. And likewise with God; He covers His little ones in the dust, and uses the darkness of night, the trials of life, to incubate them personally.

Job 39:15 and forgets that the foot may crush them, or that the wild animal may trample them- The idea may be that the ostrich can forget about her eggs, with no fear that they may be crushed, as she has buried them well (see on :14). The eggs of both God and the ostrich are preserved; neither man nor wild beasts of nations can destroy them. Job was not going to be crushed as he feared (Job 4:19; 5:4). God likewise hides and covers His people (Is. 26:20), although to the eye of secular, imperceptive man, He may appear not to care. But in the analogy, His people had to be prepared to accept that covering; for indeed many of them were trodden down / trampled by the wild beasts of the nations.

Job 39:16 She deals harshly with her young ones, as if they were not hers. Though her labour is in vain, she is without fear- "Young ones" is Heb. "sons". The ostrich is introduced as hard to understand- "loving, or unloving?" is the opening question about the ostrich (:13). And indeed she apparently deals harshly with her young ones. The Bedouin peoples amongst whom Job lived thought that the ostrich was unloving, that it didn't care for its young; and they had proverbs to this effect, alluded to in Lam. 4:3. But the ostrich is not without maternal instinct. Why does she incubate at night and hide her eggs in the day time? Not so that she can flit around the desert at her own pleasure, but because she is out looking for food for her young, and at night she incubates her eggs- working around the clock for her little ones. God's labour for His exiled people was likewise, and was also at times in vain (Ps. 127:1; Is. 49:4). But He did not fear, He didn't give up because some were indeed crushed and trodden down by the wild beasts of the nations, but continued working for them. And God did at times appear to treat His people as if they were not His; for "you are not My people", because they had chosen not to be (Hos. 1:9; Jer. 23:39).

Job 39:17 because God has deprived her of wisdom, neither has He imparted to her understanding- The ostrich is presented as being an apparent contradiction; lacking understanding and yet able to run swiftly and be stronger than a horse and its rider (:18). As explained above, the ostrich is not without wisdom nor without parental instinct. But it can appear she is; and indeed some of her young are lost and crushed. See on :18.

Job felt he had been deprived of everything, including wisdom and understanding (Job 26:5). But this was not because he was unwise; he is presented as a perfect man (Job 1:1). God is able to give and take wisdom, as is seen in the natural creation (Job 39:17 s.w.).

Job 39:18 When she lifts up herself on high, she scorns the horse and his rider- This lifting herself up refers to how the ostrich does this in order to run at great speed. She has been given good qualities such as speed and power, and also apparent foolishness which leads to some of her young being lost (:17). It is this union of apparently differing qualities which is the impression men have as they look at the work of God towards His little ones.

Job 39:19 Have you given the horse might? Have you clothed his neck with a quivering mane?- The apparently foolish ostrich is a match for the might of the horse (:18). But all these abilities are given by God, contradictory as they may seem to the secular man observing them. This is addressing the complaint of Job, that God appears to act toward man in contradictory ways (Job 10:16).

Job 39:20 Have you made him to leap as a locust? The glory of his snorting is awesome- "Awesome" is literally 'terrible' or 'as terrors', which the friends believed would come upon Job (Job 20:25 s.w.). "Terrors" are again the judgment of God upon an apostate Israel, whom Job was suffering for whilst innocent, after the pattern of the later Lord Jesus (Dt. 32:25 s.w.). Those "terrors" were likely understood by the friends as some kind of demonic beings. God deconstructs this by explaining that the great beasts He has created likewise were 'terrible' (s.w. "terrors"). But the simple point was that He had created them and was totally in control (s.w. Job 39:20; 41:14).

Job 39:21 He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength. He goes out to meet the armed men- Just as the ostrich is on one hand apparently foolish and yet has qualities of speed and bravery (:18), so the horse has great strength and is eager to fight, not fearing the sword which can slay it (:22). It is this union of apparently differing qualities which is the impression men have as they look at the work of God towards His people.

Job 39:22 He mocks at fear, and is not dismayed, neither does he turn back from the sword- See on :21. "Dismay" is the word used of how the exiles were urged not to be dismayed but to believe that God would indeed bring them from exile to restoration in His restored Kingdom (Is. 51:7; Jer. 30:10; 46:27). Job begins by being dismayed / scared (Job 7:14), but develops to not be dismayed (Job 31:34 s.w.), following the example of the Lord's battle horse (Job 39:22).

Job 39:23 The quiver rattles against him, the flashing spear and the javelin- This is all the language of Divine judgment (Nah. 3:3; Lam. 3:13). The horse doesn't fear that, just as Leviathan doesn't (Job 41:29). He is as he is, not always wise, but free from the fear of judgment, not fearing the battle as men fear it. And this was perhaps how God wants His people to be, and this was in fact how Job was.

Job 39:24 He eats up the ground with fierceness and rage, neither does he stand still at the sound of the trumpet- "Stand still" is the word for 'belief'. The idea may be that 'he hardly trusts his ears for joy' that the battle is beginning. The sound of the trumpet can be understood as the call to judgment. The horse doesn't fear the battle nor the call to judgment, but is eager for it- just as Job was, and as David and Paul also were. And yet the horse fails to understand the real implications of it all. In this sense God may be justifying Job's attitude to judgment.

Job 39:25 As often as the trumpet sounds he snorts, 'Aha!'. He smells the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting- Eliphaz claims that God is preparing to judge Job like a king ready to ride into the battle (Job 15:24). But God's later revelation includes Him demonstrating that man cannot participate successfully in any battle with what God has willed (Job 41:8), and the horse runs foolishly into battle with no regard for consequence (Job 39:25). The connection with the words of Eliphaz may be in that it was effectively Eliphaz who was rushing into battle to do judgment against Job; and he was acting like the foolish horse, forgetting that God alone will fight in the battle, and win (Job 38:23).

Job 39:26 Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and stretches her wings toward the south?- The invasions of Judah from the north were as birds of prey flying south as they migrate- all under God's control.

Job 39:27 Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up, and makes his nest on high?- The eagle was a symbol of the enemies of God's people (Dt. 28:49). But their movements were completely under God's control.

Job 39:28 On the cliff he dwells, and makes his home, on the point of the cliff, and the stronghold- The eagle dwells on a point which is inaccessible to man. That seems to be the point. But the eagle is completely under Divine control (:27), although man is unable to engage with it. It was this which Job needed to learn.

Job 39:29 From there he spies out the prey. His eyes see it afar off- The extraordinary eyesight of the eagle was legendary. The context is of God teaching Job that all his concerns with process and 'why' this or that are inappropriate; for even the animal creation has better eyesight than he does. Job earlier compared the passing of his life to the swiftness of an eagle (Job 9:26); perhaps now he is being taught that such comparison is inappropriate. The relevance to the exiles may be that they were "afar off" from the promised land, but in a moment could be

brought there, just as the eagle can in an apparent moment close that distance which was "afar off" (Is. 43:6; 49:12; 60:4,9).

Job 39:30 His young ones also suck up blood. Where the slain are, there he is- The Lord appears to allude to this in Mt. 24:28. He is answering the disciples' concerns as to where and how the judgment will take place. Perhaps He sees their undue concerns with process to be similar to those of Job. He directs them back to this passage, which teaches that we are not to overly concern ourselves with these questions, contrary as that attitude is to the 'scientific' mindset of the age of reason. It is the reality of it which is to be focused upon.

Job Chapter 40

Job 40:1 Moreover Yahweh answered Job- We perhaps are to imagine a pause of silence in the drama at the end of Job 39.

Job 40:2 Shall he who argues contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it- "Argues" is the word used for "umpire" in Job 9:30. The word for "umpire" suggests 'one who is right', a reasoner, an advocate, one who pleads (s.w. Job 16:21), a reprover (Job 40:2 AV, s.w.). Job's request was not simply for a mediator; he would have used a different word if so. He seems to have wanted to put God in the dock, but knew this was not appropriate; he wants someone else to do this who can legitimately do it. And he is rebuked for this here in Job 40:2. This is all legal language. Job appeals for 'witnesses' (Job 9:33–35; 16:18–22; 19:20–27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a 'case' with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29–31 is effectively Job's declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job's earlier plea: "Sleeplessly I wait for His reply" (Job 16:22). It's as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of 'Satan', suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about 'Satan' figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the "holy ones", had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: "To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job's guilt] is true" (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters.

Job 40:3 Then Job answered Yahweh- The paradox is that he answered Yahweh by saying that he cannot answer Him (:3). And that indeed is man's only possible answer to God.

Job 40:4 Behold, I am of small account- The word for "cursed" (Job 3:1; 24:18). The one who felt cursed was to be blessed, just as the Israel whom he unknowingly represented.

What shall I answer you?- Earlier, Job in Job 31:14 had confidently boasted that only if he had committed adultery would he feel before God that he was unable to speak; "What shall I answer Him?". Job's point was that as he had not despised the cause of his servants (:13), therefore he did not have anything to fear before God's judgment. God's final appearance was proof enough that he of himself had no right to answer back to God. "What shall I answer You?" (Job 40:4) was his final word. But here, Job insists he could only be speechless before God if he had committed sins like adultery- which he was insistent he hadn't. Job is led to realize that he has sinned and fallen short of God's glory, although he had avoided the sins like adultery which counted as major sins in the view of his society.

The epilogue and prologue to Job are evidently related. Job begins sitting in dust and ashes and ends repenting in dust and ashes (Job 2:8; 42:6). The silence of the friends at the opening of the book is matched by the silence after God has finally spoken (Job 40:4). Job intercedes for his children (Job 1:5) and ends up interceding for his friends. Job begins with the description of being the Lord's servant; and the book concludes on the same note (Job 42:7,8). The question of course is: 'So what's the equivalent of the 'Satan' figure in the epilogue?'. The omission is intended and obvious. Ultimately the answer is the essence of the whole book: the 'Satan', the adversary, is none other than God Himself, in His love, however and through whomsoever He was manifested.

I lay my hand on my mouth- When Job finally lays his hand upon his mouth, he is only doing what he had earlier told the friends to do in recognition of their folly (Job 13:5; 21:5). Through the pain and irritation of their speeches, Job came to value and appreciate the need for silence before God. But it was only when personally confronted by God at the end that he realizes that he too had spoken too much and he repents of that in silence. In Job 24:25 he has boasted of the strength of his own speeches: "If it isn't so now, who will prove me a liar, and make my speech worth

nothing?". Job has argued himself into an invincible position, in his own eyes. Indeed, all he says is true; but like the friends, truths are expressed but within a wrong context. Finally Job is to lay his hand upon his mouth in repentance (Prov. 30:32; Mic. 7:16) and recognize he has not spoken rightly, although he earlier demanded the friends lay their hands upon their mouths before the power of his arguments (Job 21:5). God confirms this by remarking that whoever has hope of overcoming Leviathan, His great beast (perhaps representing death and human mortality) is a liar to think he has such hope (Job 41:9 s.w. "liar"). Job has forgotten his humanity, despite being 'right' in his arguments. This is the problem with possessing truth; it can lead us to wrongly forget our humanity and consider ourselves invincible.

Earlier, Job had confidently challenged: "Who is he who will contend with me? For then would I hold my peace and give up the spirit" (Job 13:19). Job is challenging anyone to come forward and contend with him in court by proving him wrong. If they did, then he would be silent ["hold my peace"] and willingly die. This of course is exactly what happens at the end. God does contend with Job, and he is proven guilty. He lays his hand upon mouth, and we can deduce from his challenge here that he wanted to die. He was then saved from that position by grace alone. The connection with the exiles is in Is. 50:8, where a similarly convicted Israel would be justified by Divine grace to the point they could again challenge any to convict them of sin, seeing that "He is near that justifies me".

Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he was entitled to "bray" and "low" over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that "Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (Job 7:11). "I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being "full of talk" and speaking "the multitude of words", "for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure" (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. "Why should I not be impatient?" (Job 21:4 RV). "Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning" (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. "If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit" (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God's behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: "I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" in regret of his words (Job 40:4). "Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; 'I only said / did it [or didn't do it] because...'. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins.

Job 40:5 I have spoken once, and I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further- Perhaps he means 'I have spoken once in that I have just said that I have no answer. And now, I am speaking twice, I am saying this. But now I promise absolute silence'. He really appreciates that his many words have been inappropriate.

Because God sees and knows absolutely all, we must recognize that He realizes the unspoken implications of our words. Its possible that Job's words about silence here are seen by God as Job effectively condemning God, because presumably they were said merely as a mask over Job's inner feelings that God had been unjust with him (Job 40:8). But when Job uses effectively the same words in Job 42:6, God accepts them. God's ability to see to the core should therefore not only affect our words but elicit in us an honesty of heart behind the words which we use.

Job 40:6 Then Yahweh answered Job out of the whirlwind- This is God's answer to Job's silence (:5). Perhaps the implication is that Job has not yet come to recognize his humanity and repent in the way he needs to. Hence God speaks again.

Job 40:7 Now brace yourself like a man- The idea is that Job is to answer as a human, to recognize his humanity and answer the questions as a man. Job is perhaps not so much asked to repent as to realize his humanity.

I will question you, and you will answer Me- His questions of God had been inappropriate, just as the friends had been wrong to seek wisdom by asking the sages, mere men (Job 8:8; 21:29 s.w.); it is for God to question us. For we and not God are in the dock. And Job's vow of silence in :5 was not in fact answering God's previous questions.

Job 40:8 Will you even annul My judgment?- As noted on :5,6, this could be seen as a criticism that Job hadn't said more. He had simply accepted he was condemned and vowed silence. The phrase is used of how Israel had broken covenant with God through breaking His judgments in the sense of His commands (Lev. 26:15). Job at this point absolutely represents the exiles, who had broken covenant and needed to repent and accept the new covenant offered to them (s.w. Jer. 11:10; 31:32).

Will you condemn Me, that you may be justified?- The final speeches of God and Elihu brought home the point that the righteousness achieved by man was not comparable with God's righteousness (e.g. 40:7-10). Any attempt at self justification is to condemn God as a false accuser. We are left to draw the conclusion: that the only way for man to be just with God is through the imputation of God's righteousness to man, by absolute grace. We must give due weight to the words of the prologue, that God saw Job anyway as "perfect", as justified. The sense may be that God is saying 'You are justified, by My grace; you don't have to condemn Me by self-justification in order to be justified. You are justified by My grace without your effort'. God's justification of Job and Job's innocence are thereby reconciled.

Job 40:9 Or do you have an arm like God? Can you thunder with a voice like Him?- The reference is to the thunderstorm which was perhaps still ongoing. God's arm is often associated with His salvation. Man cannot save himself, as he has no saving arm like God's; and to attempt to do so is to justify ourselves, thereby condemning God (:8).

Job 40:10 Now deck yourself with excellency and dignity. Array yourself with honour and majesty- This alludes to the garments of the priests, for glory and beauty. Job had already been stripped of his glorious priestly robes, as we learn from Job 19:9: "He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head". The stripping of Job recalls the stripping of the priest Aaron of his clothes and "crown" [mitre] when his priesthood ended (Num. 20:26,28). The same word is used of the stripping of God's people of their glory (Ez. 16:39; 23:26; Mic. 3:3), which only happened because they themselves did not strip themselves of their clothing in repentance (s.w. Is. 32:11; Ez. 26:16). Job's stripping and inability to reclothe himself was therefore to elicit repentance in him. And this is what is now finally achieved at the end of the book. God is of Himself "clothed with majesty and strength" (Ps. 93:1), "with glory and beauty" (Ps. 104:1). Job need not seek to play God by using legal rituals and religious clothing. This was not going to help Job.

Job 40:11 Pour out the fury of your anger- Heb. "the floods of wrath", preparing the way for Job to be taught that he need not fear such floods himself (:23).

Look at each one who is proud, and bring him low- This judgment of pride is God's work, and not Job's. If God alone is the judge and the One who can condemn, all Job's struggles over issues of justice ['judging'] were thereby inappropriate. And that is true today, in a world where judging issues of justice appears to be the passion of every man.

Job 40:12 Look at each one who is proud, and humble him. Crush the wicked in their place- Job has observed that the wicked prosper, whilst he the righteous is suffering. God reminds Job that He has the power to condemn, and He will do so- looking at literally each one who is proud, throughout time and space. Job cannot do this. His unspoken desires that the wicked be judged by himself are addressed here. He obviously felt the injustice so deeply- that he suffered, whilst the wicked prospered. God's answer is that Job is incapable of judging them. But He will. Recognizing our inability to condemn and judge will help us in coping with the painful issues of injustice which surround us.

Job 40:13 Hide them in the dust together. Bind their faces in the hidden place- The faces of the condemned were covered, as Haman's was. The judgment of the wicked was to be death in the dust (and not eternal conscious torment). The question is, can Job condemn men and turn them to dust? No he can't. So his struggles over issues of justice were misplaced, and were actually an implication that he thought that his arm could bring salvation.

Job 40:14 Then I will also admit to you that your own right hand can save you- The question is, can Job condemn men and turn them to dust (:13)? No he can't. So his struggles over issues of justice were misplaced, and were

actually an implication that he thought that his arm could bring salvation.

Job 40:15 See now, Behemoth, which I made as well as you. He eats grass like an ox- "Behemoth" can be read as the intensive plural of *behema*, a beast. Whatever actual beast is in view, perhaps the hippopotamus, it is simply presented as a beast. The argument will develop, that Job is part of the same creation as Behemoth, the most awesome and terrifying things created by God. And if he is at peace with his place within that creation, he need not fear. See on :20,23.

Perhaps we are to see in this a reference to Nebuchadnezzar being made to eat grass like an ox. The wild beasts of Judah's aggressors were all under God's control, even the most apparently mighty of them. Leviathan and Behemoth are monster figures appearing at the end of the book of Job, to form a kind of *inclusio* with the opening reference to Satan; and they are clearly part of God's final answer to Job's "case". Behe-mot can be understood as a reference to Mot, the Canaanite god of death.

Job 40:16 Look now, his strength is in his thighs. His force is in the muscles of his belly- These descriptions would be appropriate to a hippopotamus. "Look now" could suggest they were standing by a river, and the animal arose out of it at God's command. The theophany in a whirlwind by a river, with lightnings, is what Ezekiel experienced. The hope was that the exiles would likewise be moved to follow Job's path through repentance to restoration.

Job 40:17 He moves his tail like a cedar. The sinews of his thighs are knit together- Again these descriptions would be appropriate to a hippopotamus. Job would have feared the beast as it moved its tail, for they arise out of rivers to feed on crops. But he need not fear, for the hippopotamus eats plants not men (:15). Again Job was being taught that in the face of apparently overwhelming opposition, his life would be preserved. And this was the lesson for the exiles too. See on :20.

Job 40:18 His bones are like tubes of brass. His limbs are like bars of iron- Babylon's defences of brass and iron would likewise be no barrier to the restoration of God's people, for all was under His control (Is. 45:2), and Israel could be made as strong (Mic. 4:13) seeing they were part of the same creation that had made this animal (:15).

Job 40:19 He is the chief of the ways of God. He who made him gives him His sword- The primary reference may be to the very sharp teeth of the hippopotamus. This would be a connection to how the sword of Babylon had been Yahweh's sword. Even the most awful wild beast in Israel's experience, Babylon, was under God's control and manipulated by Him. Hence LXX "This is the chief of the creation of the Lord; made to be played with by his angels". It is God who not only created Behemoth, but can effortlessly control him in accord with His purpose. That's the comfort of the message. Indeed the descriptions of the natural world which lead up to the Leviathan / Behemoth passages are there to underline this point; and it's interesting that those passages zoom in upon the cruelties and even brutalities within nature. Yet these are all of God's ultimate design and creation, and under His providential control. Job had earlier perceived this; for he responds to the friends' allusions to an evil 'Satan' figure as the source of his suffering by observing: "Ask the animals... The birds of the air... [they show that] the hand of the Lord [and not any supernatural 'Satan'] has done this" (Job 12:7-9).

Job 40:20 Surely the mountains produce food for him, where all the animals of the field play- The animals of the field don't fear the hippopotamus, although Job did (:17). But he need not fear, for the hippopotamus eats plants not men (:15). Again Job was being taught that in the face of apparently overwhelming opposition, his life would be preserved. And this was the lesson for the exiles too. Job was to recognize that he too was part of the same creation that had brought forth the hippopotamus (:15), and if he did so, then he too could live at peace in the presence of such an awesome beast.

Job 40:21 He lies under the lotus trees, in the cover of the reed, and the marsh- LXX "by the papyrus", perhaps a reference to Babylon's mastery over Egypt. But the connection is to some words of Bildad in Job 8:11 "Can the papyrus grow up without mire? Can the rushes grow without water?". Bildad's idea is that Job's prosperity was like a quick growing papyrus which would soon wither (Job 8:12) because it had not enough water or mud. Bildad's reasoning is wrong, but clearly the Lord quarried His parable of the sower from parts of these ideas. For He speaks of the man who has no "depth of earth" as the one who responds eagerly to the word sown, but falls away "when affliction of persecution arises for the word's sake" because he has 'no root in himself' (Mk. 4:5,17). Bildad was therefore not simply saying that Job's persecution was because he had sinned; but rather he implies that Job had lost his faith after the persecution arose, because he had no real root in faith. In this Bildad was also wrong, for Job continually seeks to God in his tribulations. Behemoth was quite at home in the "mire" or "marsh" (s.w. Job 40:21); and the connection is in order to demonstrate that even the "mire" was created by God and just as He saved Jeremiah out of the mire of the dungeon, so He could save Job and the exiles. And the only other usage of the word is in the description of the healing of the "miry places" (Ez. 47:11) if the exiles were responsive to the prophetic call to restore the temple and city made in Ez. 40-48.

Job 40:22 The lotuses cover him with their shade. The willows of the brook surround him- Trees often represent nations, and here we have a picture of the nations being subservient to Babylon. LXX "And the great trees make a shadow over him with their branches, and so do the bushes of the field".

Job 40:23 Behold, if a river overflows, he doesn't tremble. He is confident, though the Jordan swells even to his mouth- As noted on :20, Job was to recognize that he too was part of the same creation that had brought forth the hippopotamus (:15), and if he did so, then he too could live at peace in the presence of overflowing, flooded rivers; which represent the invaders of God's people and His judgment of men (see on :11). Even if those rivers came up to his mouth, they would go no further. Just as Job had been promised in the prologue that his life would be preserved. And the swelling of the rivers of Israel's enemies would likewise not destroy Israel. They need not tremble as the faithless did in the times of Isaiah.

Job 40:24 Shall any take him when he is on the watch, or pierce through his nose with a snare?- The idea is as GNB "The most amazing of all my creatures! Only his Creator can defeat him". And indeed God would overthrow Babylon and allow the exiles to return.

Job Chapter 41

Job 41:1 Can you draw out Leviathan- Leviathan and Behemoth are monster figures appearing at the end of the book of Job, to form a kind of *inclusio* with the opening reference to Satan; and they are clearly part of God's final answer to Job's "case". Leviathan appears to be the Canaanite version of the orthodox 'Satan' figure, perhaps a reference to the 'Lotan' of the Ugaritic myths. In great detail, these figures are deconstructed. They are shown to be *created* beings – created by the one almighty God of the Old Testament, to be completely under His control to the point that He can even tease them, so enormously greater is His power than theirs. These Canaanite 'Satan' figures are thereby shown to have no significant existence; and they certainly don't exist as opposed to God. They are totally under His control. And yet these monster figures clearly have characteristics shared by known animals, such as the hippopotamus, crocodile etc. Those similarities are intended. It's been well observed: "To say that Leviathan has characteristics of the crocodile and the whale is not to say that it *is* such a creature, but rather to suggest that evil is rooted in the natural world" (Robert S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job* (Leicester: I.V.P. / Apollos, 2002) p. 27) – and the point is so laboured in Job that the natural world is of God's complete creation. 'Evil' in a form independent of Him, in radical opposition to Him, simply isn't there.

It's significant that dragons in the form of serpents were common in Babylonian theology. Figures on vases show serpent griffins, there was one on Marduk's temple in Nippur, and also on the Ishtar Gate in Babylon. These would have been familiar to Judah in Babylonian captivity; and we have suggested that the book of Job was edited there, under inspiration, for their benefit. They may well have seen a similarity between the Babylonian monsters and the Leviathan / Behemoth beasts. That God is greater than Leviathan and can do what He wills with him would therefore have had a special meaning to the faithful Jew in exile. In a restoration context, Isaiah comforted Judah that God would destroy "Leviathan the gliding serpent; He will slay the monster of the sea" (Is. 27:1). The real 'monster' faced by Judah in exile wasn't a supernatural being; it was a concrete kingdom of men on earth, namely Babylon. God taught Job, and through him showcased to the watching world, that all such imaginations of Leviathan, monsters in the raging sea, crooked serpents etc. were vain – in any case, God had created them and used them to do His will with His people, symbolized as they were by Job. His sitting in dust and ashes is very much the picture of Judah sitting by the rivers of Babylon, bemoaning their losses. The language of Job's captivity being 'turned' (Job 42:10) is the very term used about the restoration of Judah from Babylon (Jer. 29:14; Ps. 126:4).

With a fishhook, or press down his tongue with a cord?- God almost jokes with Job, that he had been trying to draw out Leviathan with a fish hook (Job 41:1), and I see that as a commentary upon so many human attempts to get a handle on the way God is the adversary / Satan figure in our lives. Shrugging it off as chance and bad luck, believing in a personal Satan in the sea or in Heaven, thinking God is punishing us... all this is trying to capture Leviathan with a mere fishing rod. The book of Job isn't an explanation for specific human suffering – and many who turn to the book looking for that come away disappointed. Rather is it an account of God's sovereign power, putting meaning into the word "All-mighty" when applied to God. On a 'doctrinal' level it is indeed a deconstruction of the ideas of supernatural 'Satan' figures. But on a more personal level, it challenges us to follow in Job's faithful footsteps, as it challenged Judah in captivity. See on Job 42:2.

I suggested on Job 40:16 that Behemoth was a hippopotamus which arose from a river. "Look now" could suggest they were standing by a river, and the animal arose out of it at God's command. The theophany in a whirlwind by a river, with lightnings, is what Ezekiel experienced. The hope was that the exiles would likewise be moved to follow Job's path through repentance to restoration. Here now God seems to bring a crocodile out of the same river, "Leviathan". Unlike the hippopotamus which is a herbivore, the crocodile was likely to attack and eat Job. He was thrown back to the promise of the prologue that God would preserve his life, just as He would the national life of Judah from every wild beast. Job's experience with Behemoth was to prepare him for the encounter now with Leviathan the crocodile.

Job 41:2 Can you put a rope into his nose, or pierce his jaw through with a hook?- This and the following verses use the language of captivity. Prisoners were treated in this way in victory processions. The language is so relevant to the exiles who had been led away into captivity; and God could lead their captors captive, in a way only He could, just as He as it were led Job's captivity captive.

Job 41:3 Will he make many petitions to you, or will he speak soft words to you?- This is exactly how captives spoke to their captors; see on :2 (cp. 1 Kings 20:32).

Job 41:4 Will he make a covenant with you- Captive kings were forced to make covenants with their captors; see on :2.

That you should take him for a servant forever?- Just as Job is described as God's "servant" (Job 1:8), so is Leviathan (Job 40:28; 41:4). No evil power uncontrolled by God is at work in Job's life. We also need to give due weight to the fact that God speaks the Leviathan / Behemoth passages "out of the storm", which had been gathering since Job 37:2. This is significant because storms were seen as manifestations of evil powers. Yet here (and elsewhere in Scripture), the one true God speaks out of such storms, to demonstrate how far greater He is than any storm god; and showing by implication that such storm gods don't exist, and the 'evil' which supposedly came from them was in fact under His control.

In pagan myth, Baal was temporarily conquered by Mot, and the Ugaritic poem about their conflict which was found in the Ras Shamra texts speaks of how Baal was made a "slave forever" (Umberto Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975) Vol. 2 p. 6). This very language is picked up in Job 41:4, where God mocks that in no way would He become a "slave forever". The allusion shows that the one true God is in no way Baal. He is greater than Baal. Unlike Baal, He is in no conflict with Mot nor anyone. Baal's sister, Anath, muzzled a dragon with great difficulty – but Yahweh muzzled Leviathan and then sported with him (Job 41:1–5). The poem challenges Baal to "Pierce through Lotan the serpent, destroy the serpent the seven headed tyrant" (Cassuto, *ibid* p. 7). Yet this is exactly the language picked up in Is. 27:1: "Yahweh will punish with His powerful, great and mighty sword Leviathan the serpent, Leviathan the serpent, and He will slay the dragon". Yahweh's utter supremacy over any other god is so great that it makes all ideas of cosmic conflict simply laughable. Ps. 92:10 likewise: "Lo, thine enemies, O YHWH, lo, thine enemies shall perish, all evil doers shall be scattered" alludes to Part 3 lines 8 and 9 of the poem about the Mot–Baal conflict: "Lo, thine enemies, O Baal, lo thine enemies wilt thou pierce through, lo, thou wilt destroy thine adversaries" (Cassuto, *ibid* p. 8). Note too that Baal's enemies, i.e. Mot and the demons of the underworld, are paralleled with "evildoers". Human sinners rather than demons are the real issue.

Job 41:5 Will you play with him as with a bird? Or will you bind him for your girls?- God is not only the victorious captor of Leviathan, but He can play with him as a pet, and even give him as a pet to His children. And God's children are His people. The same idea is in Job 40:19 LXX "This is the chief of the creation of the Lord; made to be played with by his angels".

Job 41:6 Will traders barter for him? Will they part him among the merchants?- This alludes to how captives were sold into slavery; see on :2.

Job 41:7 Can you fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish spears?- These weapons would have no effect on the head of a crocodile, which is covered by extremely hard skin. No human device or weapon could destroy the crocodile, only God could take him captive.

Job 41:8 Lay your hand on him. Remember the battle, and do so no more- The idea may be that if Job tries to lay hands on the crocodile, he will do it only once and will not live to do it again. Eliphaz claims that God is preparing to judge Job like a king ready to ride into the battle (Job 15:24). But God's later revelation includes Him demonstrating that man cannot participate successfully in any battle with what God has willed (Job 41:8), and the horse runs foolishly into battle with no regard for consequence (Job 39:25). The connection with the words of Eliphaz may be in that it was effectively Eliphaz who was rushing into battle to do judgment against Job; and he was acting like the foolish horse, forgetting that God alone will fight in the battle, and win (Job 38:23).

Job 41:9 Behold, the hope of binding him is vain. Won't one be cast down even at the sight of him?- "Vain" is literally "a liar". In Job 24:25 he has boasted of the strength of his own speeches: "If it isn't so now, who will prove me a liar [s.w. "vain"], and make my speech worth nothing?". Job has argued himself into an invincible position, in his own eyes. Indeed, all he says is true; but like the friends, truths are expressed but within a wrong context. Finally Job is to lay his hand upon his mouth in repentance (Prov. 30:32; Mic. 7:16) and recognize he has not spoken rightly

(Job 40:4), although he earlier demanded the friends lay their hands upon their mouths before the power of his arguments (Job 21:5). God confirms this here by remarking that whoever has hope of overcoming Leviathan, His great beast (perhaps representing death and human mortality) is a liar to think he has such hope. Job has forgotten his humanity, despite being 'right' in his arguments. This is the problem with possessing truth; it can lead us to wrongly forget our humanity and consider ourselves invincible.

Job 41:10 None is so fierce that he dare stir him up. Who then is he who can stand before Me?- The reference is to how crocodiles are seen sleeping by the banks of rivers, but no man dare "stir him up" or even creep near him. But despite God's awesomeness, Job at that point was standing before God. The "sons of God" of the prologue likewise stood before the Lord. The idea is that this can only be possible through God's grace, and Job and the friends had been unaware of how awesome it was to be able to stand before God.

Job 41:11 Who has first given to Me, that I should repay him?- This is quoted in Rom. 11:35 AV: "who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?". The context is Paul marvelling at God's utter grace. This was clearly how he was led to interpret this verse in Job. There is again legal language here; as if to say 'Who has put me under any legal obligation, forcing Me to do what you say and repay you what I owe you?'. All Job's persistent demands to meet God in judgment were therefore inappropriate (Job 9:34,35; 10:3; 13:3,22; 23:3-7).

Everything under the heavens is Mine- Much of the language used about Leviathan and Behemoth is also used about God's manifestation of Himself. Smoke from nostrils, flame from mouth (Job 41:11,12)= Ps. 18:8; Strength before and dismay behind (Job 41:14 Heb.) = Pestilence before and plague behind (Hab. 3:5); Strong ones and leaders cringe in fear (Job 41:17 Heb.) = Earth reels (Ps. 18:7) and mountains tremble (Hab. 3:6); Deep sea stirred up (Job 41:23,24 Heb.) = Deep sea laid bare (Ps. 18:5) ; Terrible teeth = Job felt that God was gnashing His teeth at him (Job 16:9); Breath carries men away = The breath of God's mouth will carry away the wicked (Job 15:30); On earth there is not his equal (Job 41:33) = Only ultimately true of God. Leviathan is called the 'cruel one' (Job 41:10) – and the very same word is used by Job about God in His afflicting Job in Job 30:21. Leviathan, the seemingly overbearing power of evil in the world, be it in the early satan myths or Baylon, is in fact a manifestation of God to such an intense degree that effectively it 'is' God; God, ultimately, is the adversary / Satan to Job. The epilogue and prologue to Job are evidently related; see on Job 42:6.

Job 41:12 I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, nor his mighty strength, nor his goodly frame- LXX "I will not be silent because of him: though because of his power one shall pity his antagonist". God pities Job because he had thought that in his own strength he could be right with God. This is perhaps what is in view in James 5:11, where we learn that at "the end of the Lord" in His relationship with Job, He showed Himself "very pitiful". This means that God is not shooting out these challenges to Job in anger or in offence at a mortal man, but rather in pity.

Job 41:13 Who can strip off his outer garment? Who shall come within his jaws?- The reference is to the scaly "coat" of the crocodile. If that cannot be taken off, there is no chance to open his mouth and enter between his jaws, where crocodiles have ""two rows of sharply pointed teeth, thirty or more on each side".

Job 41:14 Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth is terror- This may be an answer to Job's complaint in Job 16:9 that God "has gnashed on me with His teeth". Job 41:14 speaks of how terrible are the teeth of the creature God has made; but He alone can open the mouth of it and is fearless before its teeth. The idea of the connection back to Job 16:9 is that God knows all about teeth. He has designed them, and even if Job thinks God is gnashing at Him like a beast, he must accept that God creates the beast and its teeth.

It is God alone who can "open" or "shut up" Leviathan (:15). Ginzberg demonstrates that the Jews saw the monster 'Rahab' and Leviathan as the same entity; and twice Job stresses how infinitely greater than Rahab is Yahweh. When God starts speaking about Leviathan, He is therefore confirming the truth of what Job has earlier said about His power over Rahab / Leviathan. The context of Job's comments was to answer the theories of the friends – and God is as it were confirming that Job's deconstruction of their 'Satan' theories was correct. The same Hebrew words are used about God's binding and loosing of the stars [which were thought to control evil on earth] and His binding, loosing and opening of Leviathan's mouth (Job 38:31 cp. Job 40:29). Whether or not Leviathan / a 'Satan' figure, or

the bad stars, are for real... God is in utter control of them, and there is thus no conflict, no war in Heaven, no ultimate dualism at all in the cosmos. Which is just the message we would expect from a monotheistic Old Testament book. Israel's God is truly the Almighty.

"Open" is the word for 'loosing'. Job sees God as capable of binding and loosing him, untying the cords that restrain affliction and then binding them up again (Job 30:11 s.w.). God's response is that indeed this is the case, and such binding and loosing is seen throughout the natural creation (s.w. Job 38:31; 39:5; 41:14). And therefore, Job and the exiles are to live in hope of being bound up in safety from affliction, just as God "untied His cord and afflicted me" in Job 30:11.

"Terror" is what the friends believed would come upon Job (Job 20:25 s.w.). "Terrors" are again the judgment of God upon an apostate Israel, whom Job was suffering for whilst innocent, after the pattern of the later Lord Jesus (Dt. 32:25 s.w.). Those "terrors" were likely understood by the friends as some kind of demonic beings. God deconstructs this by explaining that the great beasts He has created likewise were 'terrible' (s.w. "terrors"). But the simple point was that He had created them and was totally in control (s.w. Job 39:20; 41:14).

Job 41:15 Strong scales are his pride, shut up together with a close seal- The scales of the crocodile resemble shields. The idea is that this beast represents the enemies of God's people, with none of their soldiers breaking rank, just as the prophets envisage Israel's enemies. But these are also all designed and created by God and can be manipulated by Him at will.

Job 41:16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them- "Air" here is *ruach*, the usual word for wind or spirit. If "air" was all that was meant, a different Hebrew word would be used. The idea is that there is a designed unity here between the shields / scales which God's Spirit will not break apart. This is a unity created by God. Unity comes from Him alone. And this is what we see in functional relationships within marriages and true churches.

Job 41:17 They are joined one to another. They stick together, so that they can't be pulled apart- The idea is that they are soldered to each other by God; see on :16.

Job 41:18 His sneezing flashes out light. His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning- In Job 15:12 Eliphaz condemned Job: "Why do your eyes flash?". Job was indeed angry, with flashing eyes. But the expression of emotion is misinterpreted as being angry with God (:13). God's special creation, Leviathan, also had flashing eyes (Job 41:18,19). Perhaps this is God's way of saying that eyes flashing with anger is not necessarily sinful of itself, and is all part of the natural created order, and is not worthy of rebuke in itself. This is said against the backdrop of a Bedouin culture where expressions of emotion were only to be made in appropriate ways.

Job 41:19 Out of his mouth go burning torches. Sparks of fire leap forth- The crocodile which had crawled up to Job is now transformed by God into more than an animal (:20 too). He starts to appear like part of the cherubim vision. The "burning torches" is s.w. "burning lamp" in the theophany of Gen. 15:17; Ez. 1:13; Dan. 10:6 and Ex. 20:18. This apparently frightful beast is actually a manifestation of Yahweh's glory. And that burning torch is how Yahweh's salvation shone forth for the exiles (s.w. Is. 62:1), and how the revived Judah could become (s.w. Zech. 12:6).

Job 41:20 Out of his nostrils a smoke goes, as of a boiling pot over a fire of reeds- This continues the language of God manifestation / theophany; see on :19. The "smoke" is s.w. Gen. 15:17; Ex. 19:18 and other visions of God manifestation. "Goes" is the word for 'bring forth' in Job 28:11: "The thing that is hidden He brings forth to light". God can reveal everything physical, if He wishes. But man will still not find "wisdom" if he is searching for it as a 'physical' thing, obtained by a process of mining and subsequent refining. That reveals merely "stones of obscurity" (Job 28:3), nuggets of isolated truth. This message needs to be heeded by those who consider the Christian duty is to search out academic truth, mining it from the pages of the Bible and further processing it. This of itself is not to be despised, but this can be done as the Pharisees did it, and as the friends did- without coming to the awesome personal encounter with God and His grace with which the book of Job concludes. God can dry up the streams so that those panning in them thigh deep for precious stones- find them. He can bring them to light, but this is not the

same thing as the "wisdom" of personal relationship with Him and departing from evil in our hearts (Job 28:9,10,28). This is what was happening on Job's life; God was 'bringing forth' light from death, deep things from darkness (s.w. Job 12:22). And this was realized by *God* bringing it forth, and not man's search for 'truth'. Job as a person was to be 'brought forth' by *God* as gold from that fire of affliction (Job 23:10 s.w.). Just as plants are 'brought forth' from the earth without the need for mining under the earth (Job 28:5 s.w.). This is why God's reply to Job keeps on using this word for 'bring forth', labouring the point that *God* 'brings forth' by His processes and initiatives, and not man. And that is as a code stamped upon all of creation (Job 38:8,29,32; 39:4,21; 41:20,21).

Job 41:21 His breath kindles coals. A flame goes forth from his mouth- LXX "His breath is as live coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth". All this is the language of the cherubim. Leviathan, the great wild beast, was under God's control and Judah's whole experience with Babylon would result finally in the glory of Yahweh being revealed through this beast. The tragedy is that Babylon didn't fall as prophesied, at the time (it will in the last days, as Rev. 18 makes clear). The Jews preferred to remain in Babylon, and those who returned didn't act as they ought to have done. But it was the Divine intention that His glory be revealed through the fall of Babylon leading to Judah's exit from exile.

Job 41:22 There is strength in his neck. Terror dances before him- This would be true of the crocodile, whose neck is about the same diameter as its head. AV "Sorrow is turned into joy before him". "Sorrow" or "terror" is also translated "fear". This creature which would strike fear into any man actually turns fear into joy. Through this awful, terrifying beast under God's control, fear of judgment is turned into joy in God's presence.

Job 41:23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together. They are firm on him. They can't be moved- The body of the crocodile is so compacted together that all its parts must move together, and the crocodile therefore has difficulty in turning. This theme is continued in the reference to him having a stone firm heart (:24). This is all similar language to that of the cherubim, who turned not as they went (Ez. 10:11). See on :19,20. God's movement is likewise multi factorial, all touched by it are part of the wider plan to manifest His saving glory, and it moves one way- towards human salvation.

Job 41:24 His heart is as firm as a stone, yes, firm as the lower millstone- See on :23, which uses the same word for "firm".

Job 41:25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid. They retreat before his thrashing- Likewise Job and all men must retreat before God's raising up of Himself in manifestation, as was happening in the ongoing theophany. Job has already perceived this in theory, saying that he can do nothing when God raises Himself up (s.w. Job 31:23). But now what he had heard by the ear, known in theory, his eye was seeing (Job 42:5). "Retreat" is AV "they purify themselves"; and the friends would soon have to do this, through Job's agency in offering for them as he had once offered for the purifying of his children. "Thrashing" is the word for 'destruction', commonly used of the exiles' destruction (Is. 51:19 etc.). The exiles needed to see in that the raising up of God as Leviathan, and to purify themselves in repentance.

Job 41:26 If one attacks him with the sword, it can't prevail; nor the spear, the dart, nor the pointed shaft- No weapon formed could prosper against Leviathan, just as no weapon formed against Israel would (Is. 54:17)- if they were on the side of God's manifestation, if this theophany was for and not against them.

Job 41:27 He counts iron as straw; and brass as rotten wood- All human strength was as nothing before Leviathan; and Job grasps this lesson with both hands in the next chapter. See on :26.

Job 41:28 The arrow can't make him flee. Sling stones are like chaff to him- Or "slingers". All the military strength and device of Gentile nations against Babylon would come to nothing. And yet Judah trusted desperately in Egypt and other Gentile nations to save them from Babylon. But God as the creator of this beast would remove it in due time. See on :26.

Zophar claims that Job was going to flee from the arrow of Divine judgment, but would all the same be struck through by it (Job 20:24,25). God's response was that His creatures didn't flee from His arrows (s.w. Job 41:28). Neither did Job flee from God; he uses the same term to describe how the wicked vainly tried to flee from God (Job 27:22). He was in harmony with the natural creation. Zophar was wrong. Job didn't flee from God but quite the opposite- he keeps begging God to reveal Himself, and He does so at the end of the book.

Job 41:29 Clubs are counted as stubble. He laughs at the rushing of the javelin- This is all the language of Divine judgment (Nah. 3:3; Lam. 3:13). The horse doesn't fear that (Job 39:23), just as Leviathan doesn't (Job 41:29). He is as he is, not always wise, but free from the fear of judgment, not fearing the battle as men fear it. And this was perhaps how God wants His people to be, and this was in fact how Job was. See on :26.

Job 41:30 His undersides are like sharp potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge- "His belly is covered with jagged scales"—a thing which is true of the crocodile, but scarcely of any other beast. LXX appears to more pointedly refer to Babylon, the 'golden city': "His lair is formed of sharp points; and all the gold of the sea under him is an immense quantity of clay".

Job 41:31 He makes the deep to boil like a pot. He makes the sea like a pot of ointment- Referring to how the path of the crocodile through water causes an impression of boiling water. The sea / water was seen as the habitation of evil, radical evil out of God's control. But Leviathan / the manifestation of God could make it boil, and yet also make it as placidly calm as a pot of ointment when he is finished. And that was what was about to happen to Job.

"Boil" is the word used of Job's afflictions in Job 30:27 AV "My bowels boiled". This is the word used for the boiling of the exiles under Divine judgment (Ez. 24:5). God is able to make things boil in the natural creation and then make them perfectly still (Job 41:31 s.w.); and the message was that the days of affliction, the intense boiling of Job and later the exiles, could be made still in a moment.

Job 41:32 He makes a path shine after him. One would think the deep had white hair- Referring to the white path of spray left by the crocodile as it passes through water. Job's experiences were of affliction set in his "path" (s.w. Job 19:8). And the Bedouins he curses in Job 30:1-12 were those who had abused him in that "path" (Job 30:13). So it seems he has in view the Sabeans who had abused him in the prologue, and yet this section also has clear reference to the friends. Yet that "path" of affliction which God had given Job was the path of wisdom and relationship with Him which was indiscernible to the human eye (Job 28:7 cp. 28); the fact that the ultimate path is invisible to the secular, naked eye is a truth stamped upon the natural creation (Job 38:20), and yet after the affliction or trouble caused by the passing of Leviathan, perhaps symbolic of the huge grief in Job's life, the pattern for Israel's future suffering at the hands of the beast... this path shines clearly (Job 41:32). And this was to be Job's experience at his restoration, as it could have been likewise for the exiles.

Job 41:33 On earth there is not his equal, that is made without fear- LXX "There is nothing upon the earth like to him, formed to be sported with by my angels". Again, we see taught the utter supremacy of God over the greatest of the wild beasts, Babylon.

Job 41:34 He sees everything that is high. He is king over all the sons of pride- The idea may be that the crocodile is king over all the animals, even the proud lions- representative of Babylon, in the context of the exiles. LXX "He is king of all that are in the waters", speaking of Babylon's supremacy over the nations.

Job Chapter 42

Job 42:1 Then Job answered Yahweh- Job finally answers, and we are all ears. For God has said earlier that He doesn't accept Job's silence. He wants an answer of sorts, although there is no legitimate one. It has been observed that the Covenant name of Yahweh is not used in the speeches of Job and the friends. Instead they speak of God as *El* (power) or *Shaddai* (the fruitful one). This shows how they perceived God as the awesome power of the universe, the one who granted their physical blessings in response to their obedience to Him. 'God' was like a profitable insurance policy. But *Yahweh* is fundamentally a saviour-God, one who manifests Himself in men for their salvation, and is supremely manifested in the Son. Significantly, we are told in chapter 42 that Job finally spoke to *Yahweh*; it was to Him that he said: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee" (:5). He came to understand God's Name, His personality, in far greater fullness. He came to appreciate far more the extent of God's manifestation in the true friend which he looked forward to. Our sufferings and traumas have a like effect, if we respond as Job did. Note that both Jacob and Samson, in their time of spiritual maturity, also reached a higher appreciation of the names of God. Reflect likewise how Abraham told Isaac that "Elohim yir'eh", the elohim would provide the sacrifice; but after the wonder of the ram being provided, he named the place "Yahweh yir'eh" (Gen. 22:14). The experience of this foreshadowing of the cross led him to know the Yahweh Name more fully; and for this reason it can be shown that the cross was the supreme means of that Name being declared to men.

Job 42:2 I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be restrained- Job has said this already in Job 10:13 LXX: "Having these things in thyself, I know that thou canst do all things; for nothing is impossible with thee". Job at the end repeats these words, but really understanding and meaning them as a result of his sufferings, turning theoretical knowledge into experience (:5). In Mt. 19:26 the Lord explains the irrelevance of riches and human power to salvation and entering the Kingdom, saying that "with God all things are possible"- without money. This is almost quoting Job 42:2, where Job comes to the conclusion that all human strength is meaningless: "I know that You can do everything". It may be that Jesus is even implying that through the tribulation of his life he had come to the same conclusion as Job.

I have pointed out that Job all through rejects the ideas promoted by the friends, the view of traditional wisdom (especially emphasized by Bildad, Job 8:8–10), that various supernatural 'Satan' monsters and figures were responsible for his experiences. Job began by saying that we receive both good and evil from God's hand (Job 2:10 cp. Is. 45:5–7). And he ends saying the same – that the Lord brought the trouble upon him (Job 42:11). He repeatedly sees God as the source of all his affliction. Hence God can say that Job has spoken about Him that which is right (Job 42:8). But Job came to realize the massive practical extent of what he had previously known in theory, what he had "by the hearing of the ear". Now his eye saw / perceived that truly no plan of God can be thwarted, by any of the various 'Satan' monsters imagined by men (Job 42:2). We too may say that we believe in the omnipotence of God; but such a belief requires us to throw out all beliefs in supernatural Satan figures. And that's not a merely intellectual exercise; to see the tragedies and cruelties of our lives as being ultimately from God and under His control is something which shakes us to the core. See on Job 41:1.

Job 42:3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' - Job is here quoting from God's accusation against him in Job 38:2 LXX (see note there), and accepting it as true. His many words had darkened or hid the word / counsel of God.

Therefore I have uttered that which I did not understand- Job here directly engages with God's words in Job 38:18, using the same words as when God asked him if he could 'utter' his 'understanding' of the breadth of the earth. Those amongst the exiles who repented would be able to 'utter the understanding' once they perceived God's grace (s.w. Is. 40:21; Jer. 9:12). Job had initially been sure that he could "understand" what God was doing (Job 6:30), but progressively came to realize that he could not "understand" God's ways (Job 9:11; 23:8). Now he realizes that even that confession that he didn't "understand" was inadequate, for if he really meant it, he would have not spoken as he had. It was through the work of the suffering servant that God's people would come to understand that which they had not understood (Is. 52:15 s.w.). For in the death and work of the Lord Jesus there was a like theophany going on to that which Job was experiencing, and our response to it should be as his.

Things too wonderful for me, which I didn't know- Job had earlier admitted that God's ways were too wonderful for him (s.w. Job 9:10), but now that theoretical knowledge of his own humanity was felt in reality (:5).

Job 42:4 You said, 'Listen, now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you will answer Me'- In his brief speech, Job engages directly with God's words, here in Job 38:3; 40:7. His repentance and restoration were a direct result of his careful response to God's word, and this too was to be the path of Israel, if they would share in his restoration. God twice told Job that He was going to demand of him, and receive an answer (Job 38:3; 40:7). I suggest that God puts the words of repentance to Job, and Job then meekly repeats them. The same was intended to be true of the exiles' repentance (Hos. 14:2).

There appears to be a purposeful ambiguity in the text. GNB: "You told me to listen while you spoke and to try to answer your questions"; whereas LXX "But hear me, O Lord, that I also may speak: and I will ask thee, and do thou teach me". The LXX seems more likely, as the other readings then have little logical flow of connection with the next verse.

Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You- This must be connected with Job 19:27, where Job reveals that his perception of the Kingdom is that *then* he would see God with his own eye. But by now he has come to the realization that what the depth of Divine understanding which he thought would only be possible in the Kingdom, was in fact possible *here and now*. This same progressive, awesome realization that *so much* is possible here and now is something which both individually and collectively we must go through. He had thought this would only be at the resurrection (19:26), seeing a full relationship with God was, he felt, impossible in this life (28:12,20); but he came to see that even in this life, with the joy of a good conscience, the principle is even now realizable. He exalted that now, his eye saw God. It wasn't all abstractly reserved for the Kingdom.

Job finally recognized that he had only heard of God "by the hearing of the ear". There had been no real spiritual vision of God, no real *personal understanding*- just hearing in the ear. Note how the Queen of Sheba alludes to Job's words- she had heard in the ear, but her spirit failed when she saw with her eyes. In the theological context in which Job was, the idea of seeing God for oneself was a huge paradigm jump. Centuries later, righteous Isaiah was sure he would die because he thought he had seen Yahweh (Is. 6:5). Job reached the same spiritual peak of ambition and closeness to the Almighty which Moses did when he asked to be shown God's glory, with the apparent implication that he wanted to see Yahweh's face (Ex. 33:18,20). This peak of ambition which characterized Job's maturity was partly due to the way in which God recounted His greatness before Job (e.g. ch. 38). And yet (as the above chart makes clear) an appreciation of the physical greatness of God was something which had consistently featured in Job's words. Yet he had to be taught that what he thought he knew and appreciated so well, in fact he didn't.

Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes- "Abhor" is the word commonly used for spiritual rejection or condemnation. Job condemned himself; he recognized he as a sinful man of himself should be condemned. Perhaps God's imputed righteousness, whereby He counted Job as "perfect", had led Job over time to forget his own humanity and sin. And we who are justified in Christ can take a warning from this. Job had recognized that his flesh was 'abhorrent' (s.w. Job 7:5); but he had to stop making that an excuse for not perceiving that he himself was personally sinful. Whatever we view we take of our own nature, we must ever remember this.

The epilogue and prologue to Job are evidently related. Job begins sitting in dust and ashes and ends repenting in dust and ashes (Job 2:8; 42:6). The silence of the friends at the opening of the book is matched by the silence after God has finally spoken (Job 40:4). Job intercedes for his children (Job 1:5) and ends up interceding for his friends. Job begins with the description of being the Lord's servant; and the book concludes on the same note (Job 42:7,8). The question of course is: 'So what's the equivalent of the 'Satan' figure in the epilogue?'. The omission is intended and obvious. Ultimately the answer is the essence of the whole book: the 'Satan', the adversary, is none other than God Himself, in His love.

LXX "I have counted myself vile, and have fainted: and I esteem myself dust and ashes". This sounds as if Job now accepts in reality the truth of the mortality and frailty of man, whereas previously (and he has had much to say about it in his speeches) he was only mouthing the theory of it.

"Wherefore I loathe my words and repent" (Job 42:6 RVmg.). Job fell into the trap of thinking that his terrible situation somehow allowed him to speak whatever words came into his head. Job felt he hadn't been 'fed' and so he

was entitled to “bray” and “low” over his misfortune (Job 6:5). Because of the weight of his sufferings, he thereby justified the fact that “Therefore have my words been rash (Job 6:3). Likewise “Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit” (Job 7:11). “I will give free course to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul” (Job 10:1 RV). Zophar criticizes Job being “full of talk” and speaking “the multitude of words”, “for thou sayest, my doctrine is pure” (Job 11:1-4)- as if Job felt that because he held true doctrine he was justified in pouring out words as he did. “Why should I not be impatient?” (Job 21:4 RV). “Today is my complaint bitter. My stroke is heavier than my groaning” (Job 23:2)- i.e. his complaining was due to his sufferings. “If I hold my peace, I shall give up the spirit” (Job 13:19 RVmg.). Job felt that the situation he was in *forced* him to use the words he did, and certainly justified it [we may well have used this reasoning ourselves when justifying the use of bad language]. But in the end, Elihu on God’s behalf rebuked him for his wrong words. And Job himself recognized: “I am vile. I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” in regret of his words (Job 40:4). “Wherefore I loathe my words and repent” (Job 42:6 RVmg.). He realized his mistake: he had thought that the situation justified his words. Now he hung his head and admitted that there was no justification for speaking in the way he had. Especially in the matter of the tongue, we can so easily justify ourselves; ‘I only said / did it [or didn’t do it] because...’. And it is all so child-like. Once we leave off *all* attempts at self-justification, we will face up to our sins.

Job 42:7 It was so, that after Yahweh had spoken these words to Job, Yahweh said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against you, and against your two friends- Job feels God's wrath kindled against him (Job 19:11). The innocent Job experienced the judgments of God's people, against whom God's wrath was kindled (Dt. 11:17; 2 Kings 23:26). Significantly, we find Elihu's wrath kindled against both Job and the friends (Job 32:2,3), but the wrath of God was kindled only against the friends (Job 42:7). Elihu is therefore not fully reflecting God's position about Job. I have repeatedly demonstrated that the innocent Job was suffering the judgment for the sins of God's people. In the end, this came to full term in the salvation of the friends on account of Job's intercession. God's wrath was not personally against Job, it was against the friends. But Job suffered God's wrath against him, because he was to be the saviour of the friends by offering sacrifice for them and praying for them. This looks forward to the work of the Lord Jesus, the suffering servant based upon Job; experiencing the judgment for our sins, and through the representative nature of His sacrifice, being able to save us. For other examples, see on Job 20:15,16; 24:9.

For you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job has- LXX "You have sinned". There is reason to think that Eliphaz, the leader of the friends, may have been the specific individual referred to as 'satan' in the prologue. God singles him out for especial condemnation at the end. After one of Eliphaz's speeches, Job responds with what appears to be a comment upon him, rather than God: "He hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles... he teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me (surely Job speaks here about Eliphaz, not God): he gnasheth upon me... mine enemy (satan) sharpeneth his eyes upon me. They (the astonished friends?) have gaped upon me with their mouth, they have smitten me... they have gathered themselves together (as the friends did to Job) against me" (Job 16:9-11). Eliphaz was a Temanite, from where Job's afflictors came (Job 6:19). See on Job 1:6.

Eliphaz in Job 22:3 was propelled by his obsession against Job to say things about God which are wildly untrue, and is specifically rebuked above the other friends for doing this at the end (Job 42:7). I would surmise that his words of Job 22:3 are specifically in view: "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that you are righteous? Or does it benefit Him, that you make your ways perfect?". For this is a complete denial of all that God reveals Himself to be. Job rightly understood that God as human creator has a tender desire to the work of His hands (see on Job 14:15). But Eliphaz speaks as if God has no interest nor feeling towards those who are righteous, so far above caring is He. And this could not be a more serious misrepresentation of the God who is thrilled by every move a man makes towards Him.

Job appeals for ‘witnesses’ (Job 9:33–35; 16:18–22; 19:20–27), an advocate in Heaven (Job 9:33), denies his guilt and demands a legal list of his sins (Job 13:19), he wishes for God to come to trial (Job 9:3), and thus Job is described as a man who has taken out a ‘case’ with God (Job 23:4; 40:2). Job 29–31 is effectively Job’s declaration of legal innocence and an appeal to God to hear his case more sympathetically (Job 31:35). And of course God pronounces a final legal verdict at the very end (Job 42:7), in response to Job’s earlier plea: “Sleeplessly I wait for His reply” (Job 16:22). It’s as if the whole experience of Job was [at least partly] in order to test out the Canaanite theories of ‘Satan’, suffering and evil in the court of Heaven; and also the various theories which arose to explain Judah's captivity in Babylon. The friends represent the traditional views of evil, and often make reference to the myths of their day about ‘Satan’ figures. They speak as if *they* are the final court – Eliphaz speaks of how the judges and elders of their day, the “holy ones”, had concluded Job was guilty, and that they, the friends, were right: “To which of the holy ones will you appeal [legal language]?... we have [legally] examined this, and it [Job’s guilt] is

true" (Job 5:1,27). This is of great comfort to those who feel misjudged by man – above them in Heaven the ultimate Heavenly court is considering our case, and that is all that matters.

Although Job did not speak wrongly about God (42:7;2:10) and kept patiently speaking the word of God despite the mockery it brought from the friends (James 5:10,11), this does not mean that Job or all that he said was blameless. The friends are not reprimanded for speaking wrongly about Job, but about God. Thus there was probably a fair degree of truth in their accusations concerning Job. Elihu also severely rebukes him, and unlike the three friends he is not rebuked for anything in the final analysis by God in Job 42; not to mention the accusation of 'darkening counsel without knowledge' (38:2) by the Lord Himself, backed up by four chapters of heavy reprimand of Job's reliance on human strength and wisdom. This led to Job retracting much of what he had said: "I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth... I will not answer... I will proceed no further... I uttered that I understood not... wherefore I abhor myself and repent" (Job 40:4,5; 42:3-6). This clearly establishes that much of Job's reasoning was faulty, although what he spoke before God was correct. Job was a prophet (Job 29:4 cp. Job 15:8;23:12; Prov.3:32; Amos 3:7; the secret of God being with him made Job a prophet) and it is in his role as such that he is commended in James 5:10,11- i.e. for the words concerning God which he spoke. The words for which God and Elihu rebuked him were therefore about other things. Elihu accused him of speaking "without knowledge" (Job 34:35), which Job admitted to doing (42:3).

The problem of reconciling the rebuke of Job's words with the statement that he has spoken what is right about God as opposed to the friends is the same as the frequent pronouncement that some kings of Judah walked blamelessly before God exactly as David did, when there is clear evidence in the record that this was not so. This may be because God imputes righteousness to a believer's whole life if his final acts are acceptable (cp. Ez.18:27,28). "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath" may refer to the response of the friends and Job to the rebukes of Elihu and the manifestation of God's power in the thunderstorm which must have been witnessed by the friends as well as by Job. Maybe they made some unrecorded response about God which was not right, whereas Job's supreme recognition of God's righteousness and humbling of himself was speaking that which was right about God. It has to be admitted that it is hard to understand all that Job says in the book about God as being "right", and he is specifically rebuked by God for his words.

Consider how Job shook his fist at God through many of his speeches- so much so that Elihu, on God's behalf, had to rebuke him at the end. Finally, Yahweh asks Job to "declare thou unto me" (Job 40:7; 42:4): to make a declaration. And Job does, in a matchless humility: "...therefore have I uttered that I understood not...I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes". And Yahweh immediately comments to the unrepentant friends: "Ye have not spoken of ['unto'] me the thing that is right [Heb. 'prepared'], as my servant Job hath" (42:7). Evidently Job hadn't spoken "right" earlier; but it's as if God seizes upon this one recognition of failure and is so pleased with it. He was looking for repentance in Job, and triumphantly seizes upon it once it is stuttered out by him. And so with our preaching of the Gospel and in our seeking to win back brethren who go astray [and I do hope we all make some personal effort to do this...]: *seek* for response.

As an example of how Job had indeed spoken wrongly about God, consider Job 19:6: "know now that God has subverted me". "Subverted" translates a Hebrew word which clearly means to be perverse or wicked with another person. Elihu sternly rebukes Job for this statement, saying that God will *not* "pervert judgment" (Job 34:12). Again we marvel at the grace of how God now says that Job has spoken what was right about Him (Job 42:7). Whilst that statement may refer simply to Job's expression of total repentance, we would still expect it to be qualified by some clause to the effect that "although earlier Job accused me of many awful things". There is no such clause in Job 42:7. The absence of it, bearing in mind Job's wrong statements about God which Elihu has reminded us of, is surely noticeable and intended to be noticed. We are left marvelling at the extent of grace and imputed righteousness, through faith by grace.

The words of God and Elihu brought Job to a shuddering spiritual climax. From his heart he cried: "I am vile... I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes... I am melted" (42:6 LXX). It was concerning this matchless confession that God could say that Job had "spoken of me the thing which is right(eousness)". God swept over the times when Job shook his fist at God, imputing righteousness to him on behalf of this confession. Thus the Spirit later speaks of the long-enduring patience of Job (James 5:11); God was able to look on his good side rather than the bad side, due to Job's confession of that bad side. To confess our sinfulness properly is to declare, by implication, righteous things about God.

Job 42:8 Now therefore, take to yourselves seven bulls and seven rams- Numbers and offerings understood to be necessary when approaching God (Num. 23:1,29).

And go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept him, that I not deal with you according to your folly- LXX "And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will only accept him: for but his sake, I would have destroyed you, for ye have not spoken the truth against my servant Job". Job's earlier appeals to the friends to hear and listen may not be simply asking them to hear his words; they may be an appeal to them to hear and repent (Job 13:6). This desire for their repentance and understanding builds up within Job as the speeches progress. And again, this is preparing him for the Lord's final request to him- to pray for the friends and bring about their salvation. We note that the intercession of a third party alone cannot save; the friends had to offer "for yourselves" an offering. And yet in the final equation, Job 42:8 implies that the forgiveness of Job's friends was only because he prayed for them. What stronger motivation could we have to pray earnestly for each other? I have pointed out several times that Job suffered the judgment for sins which he had not committed, but the friends (and later Israel) had done. The endurance of suffering is always helped by appreciating that there is an element to it which is for the benefit and salvation of others. Hence Paul reasons in 2 Cor. 1 that whatever we suffer is so that we may minister salvation and comfort to others; perhaps he had Job in mind, as a pattern for us all.

For you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as My servant Job has- Job had not always spoken right of God; for He does not mock at the "sudden" suffering of His people, such as Job experienced in the sudden loss of all he had, as Job had wrongly claimed in Job 9:23. So we marvel the more at God's final statement that Job had spoken rightly about Him. This Divine comment may indeed simply be upon Job's statement of repentance. But all the same, we would expect God to clarify that was what He intended, and to offer some note that Job had indeed falsely accused Him. But God doesn't. He doesn't need to. He has completely justified Job by faith, clothing him with imputed righteousness. And His demonstration of His ways has in any case made the required point, and Job recognized that. See on :7.

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did what Yahweh commanded them, and Yahweh accepted Job- LXX "And he pardoned their sin for the sake of Job". We have another example of sin being forgiven for the sake of third parties in Mk. 2:5; and there is huge implication in this for our own prayers and concern for others. Literally, "Yahweh accepted the face of Job", as in :8. In Job 22:26 the friends had insisted that Job could not lift up his face to God. Perhaps the Lord had this in view when He commended the man who like Job would not lift up his face to God (Lk. 18:13). But now the friends are only saved because Job was allowed to lift up his face to God for them. This was all a powerful way of teaching the friends that they were being saved by absolute grace. The man Job, whose face they were sure God would not accept, saved them by lifting up his face to God. It was the exiles whose faces God would not accept (s.w. Mal. 1:8,9). Job was treated like them although he was not like them; he was bearing the punishment of their sins in order to save them, just as he did for the friends, whose faces were likewise unacceptable to God.

The conversion of Job is a poignant lesson in interceding for others motivated by our own forgiveness; he prays for his friends, he mediates for them, after gratefully realizing that his own search for mediation with God in order to obtain forgiveness had somehow been answered, by grace (Job 42:6,8).

"Accepted" is literally 'accepted the face' of Job. The friends had mocked that if he confessed his sins, God would accept his face (Job 11:15; 22:26). There was complete appropriacy that finally this came true, to their salvation. We also see here God's disagreement with Elihu, who had argued that God didn't accept the faces of any man (Job 34:19). God was likewise prepared to accept the faces of the exiles, but their behaviour precluded this (s.w. Mal. 1:8,9).

Job 42:10 Yahweh turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends- The language of Job's captivity being 'turned' is the very term used about the restoration of Judah from Babylon (Jer. 29:14; Ps. 126:4). The idiom of turning the captivity is clearly used to connect with the exiles returning from captivity when they repented. That was the intention, anyway. And they were to pray for those who had abused and misunderstood them, and they too could be forgiven.

Perhaps the Lord alludes to Job favourably at this point; for He taught that instead of doing evil to our enemies, "I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you" (Mt. 5:44 = Job 31:30). And this is what Job did- his prayer for the friends, who apparently were his actual persecutors, bringing many of the trials upon him, was

finally answered.

James 5:11 comments: "Behold, we call them blessed that endured. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the result that the Lord intended, how the Lord is full of pity and is merciful". Job was a prophet (Job 29:4), one of those referred to in the preceding James 5:10: "Brothers, take for an example the suffering and patience of the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord". "Full of pity" is very intense in Greek- elsewhere it is translated "bowels", "inward affection". Thus the position of Job touched the Lord's heart in a way few other human experiences are said to in the word. The tremendous pity which God showed for Job would also be shown to the friends if they fully fellowshipped his example by their patient endurance. *Perhaps the "pity" in view is God's pity to the friends rather than Job.* James 5:13 "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray" uses the same word translated "affliction" in James 5:10 concerning Job's hardships. *The idea is that we should channel all our feelings and words through prayer, rather than indulge in the circular talking of Job and the friends which was the exact opposite of "Yes, yes... no, no".* James 5:16 continues the Job allusions: "Therefore, confess your sins to each other, and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working". Job confessed his sins and prayed for his friends, and they were forgiven.

Yahweh gave Job twice as much as he had before- This is the historical basis for the restoration prophecy of Is. 61:7 "Instead of your shame you shall have double". The idea may simply be that they inherit double what they ought to, such is God's grace to them and desire to load them with double blessing (Is. 40:2; Zech. 9:12), just as He gave double to Job as representative of restored Israel (Job 42:10). The revival of Job's fortunes is surely behind the Lord's promise to each of us in LK. 18:10, that whoever loses house, brothers, wife or children shall receive them many times over in this life, and salvation in the age to come. This means that the Lord understood Job's path as that of every man.

Job 42:11 Then came there to him all his brothers, and all his sisters, and all those who had been of his acquaintance before, and ate bread with him in his house. They comforted him, and consoled him concerning all the evil that Yahweh had brought on him. Each one also gave him a piece of money, and each one a ring of gold- The apparently hopeless situation of being rejected by all his family in Job 19:13-16 was reversed at the end when all his relatives again came to him (Job 42:11). The way they give him a piece of money and an earring appears to be some kind of gratitude for his salvation of them. They thus recognized their guilt and expressed deep gratitude that although they had rejected him, his sufferings and their rejection of him had led to their salvation. For we can deduce from the gift of a piece of money that they feel they have sinned, and he has saved them. So again, his restoration was the restoration of others, the friends and his family who had rejected him. He had born the sufferings for their sins, and thus becomes a type of the Lord Jesus, who suffered the judgments for sin in order to save those who had rejected and abused him.

LXX "and each one gave him a lamb, and four drachms' weight of gold, even of unstamped gold". The gift of a lamb would perhaps hint at their need for forgiveness; and they gave him the lamb to offer it for them as the family priest. Again, the sufferings of Job, like those of the suffering servant, were finally towards the salvation of others.

Job 42:12 So Yahweh blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning- The friends had all spoken of the restoration of Job's prosperity at this "latter end", if he accepted their false accusations of him (Job 5:18,26; 8:20,21; 11:13-19). That restoration now came about, but not on their terms. But rather, according to God's pure grace. It is this "latter end" which may be in view when James speaks of God's tender pity at "the end of the Lord" (James 5:11). The end of the Lord was the "end of Job". God and His child were intimately bound up in their destinies. That became evident in the end of Job, and it was a parade example to God's child Israel.

The friends had insisted that Job had lost his blessings because of disobedience, but his "latter end" (s.w.) would "increase" if he repented. Hence Job 8:7 "Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would greatly increase". Job's "latter end" did increase (s.w. Job 42:12) and Bildad lived to see it, and thereby realized how wrong his judgment had been. Bildad's words may be a recognition of how Job arose to wealth from small beginnings, implying that his "latter end" would only really increase if he were repentant and Godly (:5,6). The fact Job's latter end did increase was therefore evidence that God accepted him as Godly. The same word is used of the "latter end" of Israel, which will likewise be "increased" and blessed; and could have been so for the exiles had they followed the path of Job (Is. 41:22; 46:10; Jer. 29:11; 31:17).

He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand female donkeys-

This may be intended to demonstrate that his wealth was exactly double what he had before. For someone living on the edge of the wilderness, from where whirlwinds could blow in and Bedouins invade, these were huge numbers. It would have to follow that he had a huge retinue of servants able to care for them all.

Job 42:13 He had also seven sons and three daughters- The connection is with Is. 49:20 "The children of your bereavement shall yet say in your ears", or LXX "For thy sons whom thou hast lost shall say in thine ears". The idea of receiving back children who had been once slain is clearly alluded to in Job's experience, who is set up as representative of the Jews in exile. The language of the LXX suggests their resurrection of lost children. The idea is obviously that Job's situation was restored. But the loss of children is not capable of restoration in any meaningful sense. One wonders therefore if his slain children were resurrected. All his sufferings were the innocent suffering the judgment for others' sins. And those others were his friends and family He was not just suffering for himself. He, the innocent, had born their sins in his own body, just as the Lord did. Earlier he had offered sacrifice for his children, but this was not enough; a representative sufferer was needed. If indeed his experience of representative suffering led to the resurrection and salvation of his sinful children, we would have an even more powerful and detailed prefigurement of the work of the Lord Jesus, the ultimate suffering servant. See on Job 21:12.

Job 42:14 He called the name of the first, Jemimah- "Day of Yah", looking forward to how Job's restoration was a foretaste of the coming day of Yahweh at the restoration of Israel.

And the name of the second, Keziah- Possibly 'scraped or peeled by Yah', perhaps referring to the scraping off of leprosy (s.w. Lev. 14:41), as Job had scraped his skin.

And the name of the third, Keren Happuch- "Keren" is 'horn' or 'hill', recalling how Job's horn had been in the dust (s.w. Job 16:15), perhaps referring to his own reproductive organ, and thereby recalling his ultimate degradation (representing Israel's, Lam. 2:3) now so gloriously restored. "Happuch" is 'colours', looking ahead to the final restoration of Israel decked with "fair colours" (s.w. Is. 54:11).

Job 42:15 In all the land were no women found so beautiful as the daughters of Job- Perhaps they looked ahead to the revival of the daughters of Zion, which was to become the most beautiful place in the land (Ps. 48:2 s.w.).

Their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers- Job gave his daughters an equal inheritance with his sons- something which would have been unusual in those times. Through all his sufferings, Job came to see the value and meaning of persons before God, be they male or female; he overcame the background culture, the thinking of his surrounding society, and openly showed to all the immense value he had come to place upon each and every human being, regardless of their gender.

Job 42:16 After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, to four generations- Seeing his sons may be another hint they were resurrected. Seeing Job lived after the time of Abraham, this was a great lifespan for the times.

Job 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days- The very language used of the death of the patriarchs, as if to show that although Job was not directly their seed, he was in spirit.

I have suggested that the sufferings of Job are framed in language which connects with the sufferings of Hezekiah and also Israel, whom he epitomized, at the time of the Assyrian invasion. Hezekiah and Israel are both types of Christ (note how so many of the curses on Israel for their disobedience came upon Christ on the cross). The suffering servant of Isaiah often concerns all three of them. Thus Job's sufferings point forward, via Hezekiah and Israel, to Christ. His final vindication when he prays for his friends, lives many years, and sees his sons (Job 42:8,16) thus connects with the prophecy of Christ making "intercession for the transgressors" who persecuted him- i.e. the Jews- and seeing his seed, prolonging his days, after his crucifixion and resurrection (Is.53:10,12- note how Is.53 is a chronological account of the events of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension). The description of Job as the son of man and a worm uses identical language as that used about Christ on the cross in Ps. 22:6. Thus the friends for whom Job prayed are equated with the Jews who persecuted Christ, for whom Christ made intercession both on the cross and after his ascension.

LXX adds: "And then he died at a very great age. And Job died, an old man and full of days: and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up. This man is described in the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausis, on the borders of Idumea and Arabia: and his name before was Jobab; and having taken an Arabian wife, he begot a son whose name was Ennon. And he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth from Abraam. And these were the kings who reigned in Edom, which country he also ruled over: first, Balac, the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dennaba: but after Balac, Jobab, who is called Job, and after him Asom, who was governor out of the country of Thaeman: and after him Adad, the son of Barad, who destroyed Madiam in the plain of Moab; and the name of his city was Gethaim. And his friends who came to him were Eliphaz, of the children of Esau, king of the Thaemanites, Baldad sovereign the Sauchaeans, Sophar king of the Minaeans".