

AN AMERICAN PASTOR SERIES

I REPENT
in
DUST & ASHES

An Exposition of I John

*Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth no any that
are wise of heart.
Job 37:24*

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AmericanPastor.com

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

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Commentators

Notes on the Old and New Testaments

by Albert Barnes

Albert Barnes, known as the most prolific American commentator of his generation, was born December 1, 1798, in Rome, New York. Although he wanted to study law, he instead entered the Presbyterian ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. There he was a dedicated student, rising early in the morning and studying by lamp-light at night, almost driving himself blind. Upon graduation, his first pastorate was at Morristown, New Jersey. Barnes later accepted a call to be the minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, where he served for forty years and was granted the title of pastor emeritus. He later became president of the Pennsylvania Bible Society, a position he held until he died in 1870. While in Philadelphia Barnes wrote multiple commentaries, making him a household name. His works include *Notes Explanatory and Practical on the Gospels* (1832), designed for Sunday school teachers and Bible classes, and *Notes on the New Testament* (11 vols.). He published commentaries on Job (2 vols.), Isaiah (2 vols.), Daniel, and Psalms (1870, 3 vols.). By the 1920s over a million copies of his commentaries had been sold, and they are still being printed today. Charles Spurgeon said concerning this commentary, “No minister can afford to be without it.”¹

Commentary of the Old and New Testaments

by Joseph Benson

Prominent theologian and minister Joseph Benson was born January 26, 1749, in Melmerby, England. At an early age Benson became proficient in Greek and Latin. At sixteen he joined John Wesley, a leader of the Methodist Church. Later, in 1766 at Kingswood School, Benson was appointed as a master of classics, in which he dedicated himself to studying theology and philosophy under the guidance of Wesley. Three years later he was made headmaster of Trevecca College in Wales, which he later left due to conflicting beliefs with the school becoming Calvinistic. Though Benson had many shifts in ministry and titles, such as editor of the *Methodist Magazine*, his spiritual legacy lies in his multi-volume *Commentary on the New and Old Testaments*. Joseph Benson passed onto glory February 16, 1821, at the age of seventy-two.²

1 “Albert Barnes (Theologian).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 29 Jan. 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Barnes_\(theologian\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Barnes_(theologian)).

“Albert Barnes.” Edited by Amy McKenna, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 Dec. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albert-Barnes>.

“Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bnb.html>.

2 “Joseph Benson.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 10 Apr. 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Benson.

“Books Available - Benson’s Commentary of the Old and New Testaments - Bible Commentaries.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/rbc.html>.

Gnomon of the New Testament

by Johann Bengel

Known best for his edition of the *Greek New Testament*, Johann Albrecht Bengel, a Greek scholar and Lutheran pietist clergyman, was born June 24, 1687. Bengel spent his early years devoted to the works of Spinoza and Aristotle while he only dabbled in religious studies. It was not until he obtained his degree that he devoted his life to theology. Even with an initial dedication to learning the Scriptures, he held many doubts, but in 1707 Bengel gave himself to ministry, which led him to one of his greatest works, twenty years in the making, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, or *Gnomon of the New Testament*, published in 1742. Bengel's choice of the term *gnomon* was no choice of the imagination, as it is derived from the Greek as "one who knows or examines." In the English language it refers to the pin of a sundial that casts its shadow. The Gnomon was simply to be used as an index to guide others in the Scriptures rather than inputting Bengel's own words and leading by a dogmatic approach. Ten years after publishing *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, Bengel died at the age of sixty-five on November 2, 1752.³

Bible Commentary for English Readers

by Charles Ellicott

Charles John Ellicott, best known for his Bible commentary and as an outstanding conservative scholar in the nineteenth century, was born at Whitwell, near Stamford, England, April 25, 1819. Ellicott graduated from St. John's College in Cambridge, where he became a fellow. Later he was ordained a priest in the Church of England. After marrying Constantia Beecher he became the rector of a small country parish where he used his spare time to study and write his well-regarded commentaries on the New Testament epistles. He was quite accomplished as a divinity professor at Cambridge, dean of Exeter, and bishop of Gloucester but is best remembered for his commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Ellicott's other popular works include *Modern Unbelief*, *The Being of God*, and *The History and Obligation of the Sabbath*. In 1860 he was involved in a serious train accident while traveling between Cambridge and London. Though he had fractures to both legs and other injuries, it has been said that his first concern was for the academic manuscripts he was transporting, and the second was to minister to the dying passengers around him, with little thought of himself. His injuries left him with a limp; however, the railway company gratefully awarded him a silver pass for free travel between the two cities. About ten years after the accident, Ellicott was commissioned to help revise the King James Bible, a project that is regarded as one of the great works of his life. Ellicott was known for his sympathy toward others and for living a simple life. He was remembered as good-humored, kindly, pleasant, entertaining in conversation, and "a warm, outgoing person with a genuine interest

³ "Johann Albrecht Bengel." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 May 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Albrecht_Bengel.

in people.” Ellicott resigned in March 1905 due to failing health and retired with his wife to Birchington-on-Sea, England, where he died October 15, 1905.⁴

The Pulpit Commentary

by Joseph Exell and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones

The Pulpit Commentary, created by Rev. Joseph Exell (1849–1909) and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones (January 14, 1836–November 2, 1917) is one of the largest homiletical works produced to this day with a total of twenty-three volumes compiled over thirty years. Though not much is known about the faith of the creators of this commentary, the heart and labor of love of these men can be seen in their compilation and selection of one hundred contributors filling 95,000 entries covering the Scriptures. This commentary, being one of the largest of its kind, dissects the Bible into easy-to-read yet detailed outlines, providing key points for those who study God’s Word. In addition to outlines, it provides details on biblical customs and geographical information as well as translations for key Greek and Hebrew words. This catch-all commentary is a great resource for students and ministers alike.⁵

Exposition of the Entire Bible

by John Gill

Baptist pastor and scholar John Gill was born November 23, 1697, in Kettering, England, and passed onto glory at the age of seventy-four October 14, 1771. At age twelve Gill devoted himself to the Lord and made a public profession at eighteen. He went on to become a pastor at age twenty-one. Gill held a doctor of divinity degree and is known as the first major writing Baptist theologian. Gill’s *Exposition of the New Testament* includes three volumes written between 1746 and 1748. Soon after, Gill started his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, which included six volumes written between 1748 and 1763. Preacher Charles Spurgeon esteems Dr. Gill highly for his methodical formatted sermons and ability to retain being sound and sober in his commenting—rarely being given to his imagination, thus distinguishing Gill and his excellent work on the Holy Scriptures.⁶

4 “Charles Ellicott.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 5 Jan. 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Ellicott.

Projects, Contributors to Wikimedia. “Dictionary of National Biography, 1912 Supplement/Ellicott, Charles John.” *Wikisource, the Free Online Library*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 1 Jan. 2021, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1912_supplement/Ellicott,_Charles_John.

5 “Books Available - The Pulpit Commentaries - Bible Commentaries.” *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/tpc.html>.

“The Pulpit Commentary.” *Biblesoft*, <https://store.biblesoft.com/products/172-pulpitcob00035-the-pulpit-commentary.html>.

6 “John Gill (Theologian).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Dec. 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Gill_%28theologian%29.

“Biography of John Gill - Coming in the Clouds.” *Coming In The Clouds*, 5 Jan. 2014, <https://comingintheclouds.org/about-protestant/teachers-preachers/biography-of-john-gill/>.

Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible

by Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry was born into a godly home October 18, 1662, in Wales. By the age of three, Henry had developed a passion for books, mainly the Bible. After deciding to pursue theology, he sometimes rose as early as four o'clock in the morning to study. He often studied his day away except for the allotted morning breakfast and worship. Though Henry explained he was always best when alone and that no company was as good as that of the book of God, he was rich in friends. Later, when Henry became a minister in Chester he wrote, "I think I can say with confidence that I do not design to take up the ministry as a trade to live by, or to enrich myself, out of the greediness of filthy lucre. No! I hope I aim at nothing but *souls*; and if I gain those, though I should lose all my worldly comforts by it, I shall reckon myself to have made a good bargain." Henry was not settled in making a name for himself, but rather he would "prefer the good word of my Master before the good word of my fellow-servants." He was invited frequently to speak and lecture. After a visit to Chester in 1713, his health declined, and then a year later he was thrown off his horse but continued to preach at Nantwich, where he succumbed to apoplexy the morning after, on June 22, 1714. His legacy is still remembered in his six-volume *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* and *Complete Commentary*, for which thirteen other ministers completed Romans through Revelation after his death. Then in 1811 the entire commentary was re-edited. Henry is also remembered for *A Communicant's Companion* and *Directions for Daily Communion with God*.⁷

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

by Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* was created by three theologians and scholars from across the United Kingdom: Rev. Robert Jamieson, D.D. (January 3, 1802–October 26, 1880), Rev. Andrew Robert Fausset A.M. (October 13, 1821–February 8, 1910), and Rev. David Brown, D.D. (August 17, 1803–July 3, 1897). Robert Jamieson in his early years had intended to study medicine but instead devoted himself to the work of Christ's ministry. His coauthor of the commentary, Andrew Fausset, was a man of many accolades who produced several works on biblical prophecy. Their third partner, Rev. David Brown, served as moderator of the general assembly. In 1871 these three men published a six-volume work known as *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. This expository continues holding a high reputation due to its "scholarly rigor" and "devotional value." English preacher Charles Spurgeon commended this commentary in saying, "It is to some extent a compilation and condensation of other men's thoughts, but it is sufficiently original to claim a place

7 Hamilton, James. "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Matthew Henry." *Christian Biography Resources*, <https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bhenry3.html>.

"Matthew Henry (1662–1714) | Reformed Theology at a Puritan's Mind." *A Puritan's Mind*, <https://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/matthew-henry-1662-1714/>.

"Matthew Henry." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 12 Nov. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Henry#:~:text=Matthew%20Henry%20\(18%20October%201662,the%20Old%20and%20New%20Testaments.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Henry#:~:text=Matthew%20Henry%20(18%20October%201662,the%20Old%20and%20New%20Testaments.)

in every minister's library: indeed it contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this and used it diligently."⁸

Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

by Heinrich Meyer

Heinrich Meyer, a German Protestant chiefly known for his *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, was born January 10, 1800, and passed away June 21, 1873. Meyer had a deep and early love for languages and studied them voraciously, which allowed him to consume English, French, Dutch, Latin, Greek, and even Gothic commentaries. Through his years as a pastor he was known for always being prepared to speak on the message of the cross. Meyer's work on the commentary started in 1829 in German. Later, in 1832, the second part of his work on the New Testament continued with Meyer writing and editing, alongside other ministerial duties. In 1846 Meyer developed a visceral affliction that caused him to struggle with his health for much of the rest of his life. Even from his sickbed, Meyer was diligent in the work he had begun, as long as the Lord preserved him to do so. Meyer understood, though, that he could not complete the commentary or complete full translations in his own strength. They were, however, completed after his death. In tribute to a man who was faithful to the end, his headstone reads, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8). His commentary went through a series of translations, one being an English version of twenty volumes, produced after his death throughout the years 1873–1882, and an American translation in 1884–88 in eleven volumes.⁹

English Annotations on the Holy Bible

by Matthew Poole

Matthew Poole, a renowned theologian and Bible scholar, was born in York, England, in 1624. Little is known of his early life until his admittance to Emmanuel College in Cambridge on July 2, 1645. Poole served as minister of St. Michael-le-Querne in London for a time but later worked almost solely on his biblical studies. After earning his MA at Cambridge and Oxford University, Poole wrote the *Synopsis Criticorum*

8 "Books Available - Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible - Bible Commentaries." *StudyLight.org*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/jfb.html>.

"Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 9 Aug. 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamieson-Fausset-Brown_Bible_Commentary.

"Robert Jamieson (Moderator)." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Sept. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Jamieson_\(moderator\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Jamieson_(moderator)).

"Andrew Robert Fausset." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 29 June 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Robert_Fausset.

"David Brown (Free Church of Scotland)." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 Aug. 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Brown_\(Free_Church_of_Scotland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Brown_(Free_Church_of_Scotland)).

9 Meyer, Gustav. *Meyer's NT Commentary*, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/meyer/>.

"Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Feb. 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_August_Wilhelm_Meyer.

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Biblicum, which condenses the views of 150 biblical critics into five volumes. Another of his works, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*, was greatly valued by both Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards. Spurgeon said of Poole, “He is a very prudent and judicious commentator, less a commentator, and more an expositor.” And in regard to Poole’s synopsis, Spurgeon found it “a marvelous collection of all the wisdom and folly of the critics.” Poole’s other published works include *The Nullity of the Romish Faith*, *A Blow at the Root*, and *Dialogues between a Popish Priest and an English Protestant*. Before Poole finished his commentary, he died in October 1679. His friends completed the work and published it in 1685. Today he is still considered one of the eminent Puritans of Great Britain’s biblical scholarship.¹⁰

¹⁰ “Matthew Poole.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 21 June 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Poole.

“Matthew Poole.” *SwordSearcher*, <https://www.swordsearcher.com/christian-authors/matthew-poole.html>.

An Introduction to Job and His Trial

Job Chapter 1

A STRUCTURE of the book, as detailed by Dr. E. W. Bullinger, gives us a quick overview of the book as a whole.

THE BOOK OF JOB AS A WHOLE.

A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.

B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.

C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.

D | iii. 1—xxxii. 40. Job and his friends.

E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.

D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.

C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.

B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.

A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Without getting too technical regarding the historical context of Job's background, it is enough to know that his lineage descends from Nahor,¹ a brother of Abraham.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 1:1) We have observed, that it is likely he was of the posterity of Uz, the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham; but how far removed from him can only be conjectured from the age of his friends;

the eldest of whom, Eliphaz the Temanite, could not be nearer than great-grand-son to Esau; for Esau begat Eliphaz, and the son of Eliphaz was Teman: so that supposing this Eliphaz to be the son of Teman, (and higher it will be impossible to place him,) he will then be five generations from Abraham; but as Eliphaz was very much older than Job, nay, older than his father, as appears from chap. Job 15:10;¹ and, considering that Abraham was very old before he had a son by Sarah, and that Rebecca, grand-daughter to Nahor, by Bethuel, perhaps his youngest son, was of an age proper to be wife to Isaac; we shall, probably, not be wide of the mark, if we allow Job to be at least six, if not seven generations removed from Nahor. The age therefore in which he lived must have coincided with the latter years of the life of Jacob, with those of Joseph, and the descent into, and sojourning in Egypt: his afflictions must have happened during the sojourning, about ten years before the death of Joseph, and his life must have been prolonged to within fourteen years before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, that is, the year of the world 2499.

And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. Job was not perfect in that he had no flaws; rather, his inward heart was sincere in his reverence for God and his distaste for evil. God delivers and teaches greater truth about Himself to those who fear Him and seek to live their lives as perfectly before the Lord as their weak flesh permits. God does not work with any man who does not inwardly desire to be both upright and blameless before Him.²

¹ Job 15:10 *With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*

² 1 Kgs. 3:6 *And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.*

1 Kgs. 9:4 *And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:*

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For the true Christian, not even one sin will be deemed a small and allowable thing. Though the righteous do sin, and far more than they would ever desire, no sin will be deemed either permissible, or lightly. Job was like Noah: *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God* (Gen. 6:9); and Abraham: *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect* (Gen. 17:1). There is no evil greater than sin, and if men do not flee it and understand what an affront it is to God,³ then it will prove impossible for them to have any true and lasting relationship with Him. God is righteous, so that for any to be numbered among His people, they must pursue His own righteous integrity.

Although Job feared God and eschewed evil, he was not in any way spiritually mature, nor did he fully understand how God deals with man. If Job were mature, then he would not have needed to undergo both Elihu's and God's correction, seen later in the book.⁴ The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge,⁵ but surely

it should never be considered the end of it. The fear of God puts men in a position of coming to know the Lord, but only He knows how far they have come on their journey. God's Word also teaches us that with true faith, along with the fear of God, Christians should seek to add other virtuous characteristics to their lives.⁶

Although the Scriptures praise Job for his holy character, they in no way imply that he knew all he needed to know about God and His ways with man. This applies to us as well: although we may have one good quality, this does not mean that we are not lacking in other areas in our life. Thus, for any who deceive themselves to believe that they do not need some form of spiritual reformation in their lives, they are ignorant at best. As long as we remain on this earth, we Christians also remain unfinished products until such time through Jesus' power we are transformed to be like Him.⁷

Job 1:2–3 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

³His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great house-

I Chrn. 29:17 I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

Job 33:3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

Ps. 25:21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

Prov. 14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him. Isa. 26:7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

3 II Tim. 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

I Tim. 6:9–11 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ¹¹But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. I Cor. 10:14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

4 Chapters 38–41

5 Prov. 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

6 II Pet. 1:5–8 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ⁸For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

hold; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

We first observed the man Job, and now we see what he possessed. He had a large family and a great amount of physical possessions.

(Benson Commentary, Job 1:3) The account of his piety and prosperity comes before the account of his afflictions, to show that neither of these will secure us from the common, no, nor from the uncommon calamities of human life.

What is observed here, for those who know the story of Job, is that regardless of Job's prosperity, he was still vulnerable to Satan's attacks. This teaches us that human affluence, whether it be status in community, the number of friends men have, or the wealth they have accumulated, will do nothing to protect men against Satan's attacks. Hence, regardless of whatever material things men possess, they should never be misled into believing that these earthly possessions will protect them from spiritual assault.⁸ For all true believers, who are in fact strangers

and pilgrims on this earth,⁹ the world is always a dangerous place. Job is described as the *greatest of all the men of the east*, but even this could not protect him from the heavenly calamities that were to come.

Job 1:4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

While Job's character is described as noble and worthy of respect, we learn that his children manifested a taste for worldly pleasure and entertainment. This is often the case with those raised with material abundance.¹⁰ No doubt, Job's children never learned the greatest attribute of their father, which was his holy, sincere, and religious fear of God—a fear that led him to seek to avoid all paths that led to sin and a departure from God and His will. Instead, Job's children lived their lives as many do today, fulfilling themselves with the lusts and desires of their bodies¹¹ while remaining willingly ignorant of God and the judgment to come.¹² Job's children possessed none of their father's fear of the Lord and his desire to please God in his life.

8 Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

9 John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Heb. 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

10 Deut. 31:20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

Deut. 32:15–16 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

¹⁶They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

I Chrn. 5:23–25 And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land: they increased from Bashan unto Baalhermon and Senir, and unto mount Hermon. ²⁴And these were the heads of the house of their fathers, even Ephraim, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous men, and heads of the house of their fathers. ²⁵And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them.

11 Job 1:4–5 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. ⁵And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

12 Heb. 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

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Because of this, we should not be surprised that the Lord allowed their destruction.¹³

Job 1:5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Fathers, especially God-fearing fathers, know far more of the Lord and His dealings with men than their children do. Because Job was concerned about his children's spirituality, he did his best to sanctify them by rising early in the morning and offering sacrifices to God for their sin. Ultimately Job was fully aware that for all sin there must be sacrifice presented to atone for it.¹⁴

*(Benson Commentary, Job 1:5) And rose up early in the morning—*Thereby showing his ardent zeal in God's service. *And offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all—*Well knowing himself, and hereby teaching them, that all sin, even secret unbelief, ingratitude, and vanity of mind, merited condemnation from God, and could only be expiated by the shedding of blood, and offering of sacrifice, in a spirit of true penitence, and humble, lively faith. *It may be my sons have sinned—*His zeal for God's glory, and his love to his children, made him jealous;

for which he had sufficient cause, from the corruption of human nature, the frailty and folly of youth, the many temptations which attend feasting, and men's proneness to slide from lawful to forbidden delights.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 1:5) That Job sent—*Sent for them, and called them around him. He was apprehensive that they might have erred, and he took every measure to keep them pure, and to maintain the influence of religion in his family. . . . What father is there who loves God, and who feels anxious that his children should also, who does not feel special solicitude if his sons and his daughters are in a situation where successive days are devoted to feasting and mirth?

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

We now shift from the historical record of Job to Satan's assault and Job being stripped of all.¹⁵ This account begins with the sons of God (God's created beings) coming to present themselves before the Lord, with Satan among them. God is sovereign; consequently, those of His government and in His creation must report to Him directly. This appears to be customary and part of a general policy in heaven, wherein the Lord's heavenly

13 *Job 1:13–20 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

14 *Lev. 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

Heb. 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

15 See again E. W. Bullinger's "The Book of Job as a Whole" structure at the beginning of this chapter.

ministers must give reports and accounts of their activity in the earth.

(Benson Commentary, Job 1:6) ...that the affairs of earth are much the subject of the counsels of the unseen world, to which we lie open, though that world is in a great measure concealed from us. And such representations may also be intended to discover to us, in part, at least, the causes of many of those things which happen on earth, and which appear to us unaccountable, namely, that they arise from our having some connection with, or relation to, other orders of beings through the universe, on whose account, and through whose ministry, many things may happen to us, which otherwise would not. Thus the dreadful calamities and afflictions which befell Job, in such quick succession, are utterly unaccountable according to the ordinary course of human things, and seem almost without reason, if he were considered merely as a human being, having no connection with, relation to, or influence upon, any world but this.

Job 1:7–8 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

⁸ *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

Undoubtedly God singled out Satan by directly speaking to him, to ultimately

use him for the Lord's own great design.¹⁶ Indeed, God has used, and will use, even evil spiritual agencies to accomplish His divine purposes. The crucifixion of the Son of God is an example of this,¹⁷ whereby through Jesus' death on the cross God brought many new sons to glory. Hence, whereas Satan desired to murder the Son of God, and eventually did, God's wisdom used His adversary's attack on His only begotten Son to atone for the sins of man.¹⁸

When God drew Satan's attention to Job and praised him for his holy character, He surely knew that this would arouse envy in Satan. But since the devil remained unaware of the Lord's final purpose for Job, he was unsuspectingly led to assist God in bringing about His will for Job's life.¹⁹ Little would arouse Satan's indignation more than God bringing his attention to a man, a mere frail human being, who was everything Satan was not—someone who feared God and eschewed evil.²⁰ By the Lord's asking Satan to consider Job and his righteous character, He undoubtedly knew that this would remind Satan of his own lack of righteousness. As with all evil men, Satan hated Job because his own deeds were evil while the deeds of this righteous servant of God were good. *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd* (John 3:20).

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 3:20) *For every one that doeth evil ha-*

16 1 Cor. 3:19 *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

17 1 Cor. 2:7–8 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ⁸which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

18 John 1:29 *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Matt. 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Gal. 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

19 Job 42:12 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.*

20 Job 1:1 *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

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teth the light. . . . Not only does the man that doeth evil love darkness rather than light, but he hates the light. (Comp. note on John 7:7.²¹) Its presence makes manifest and re-proves his works, which he would hide even from himself. It illumines the dark and secret chambers of the heart, and reveals thoughts and deeds which conscience, seeing in this light, trembles at, and turns away to darkness that it may hide itself from its own gaze.

Job 1:9–10 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

¹⁰ Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

It took only the mere mention of Job to ignite an indignant response in God's adversary. Satan replied that the only reason Job feared God was that he had been blessed and protected by God. This claim would ultimately be proven false—as tragedy did not change Job's heart but only revealed what lay within it, teaching us that trials do not form men's character but only reveal what it consists of. Those also who live in sin will never recognize or give respect to true religious piety—simply because they themselves have abandoned all love for God and any desire to please Him in their lives.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 1:9) *fear God for naught*—It is a mark of the children of Satan to sneer and not give credit to any for disinterested piety.

Ellicott's commentary also adds some interesting thoughts on this verse.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Job 1:9) *Doth Job fear God for nought?*—Manifesting the worst kind of scepticism, a disbelief in human goodness. Satan knows that the motive of an action is its only value, and by incrimination calumniates the motives of Job. The object of the book is thus introduced, which is to exhibit the integrity of human conduct under the worst possible trial, and to show man a victor over Satan.

Though Satan did not know it, all the harm he would inflict upon Job would one day be reversed by God. In the end, through God's wisdom and heavenly power, Job was made to overcome every wicked plan devised by Satan.²²

Job 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

The vehemence in Satan's reaction reveals the hatred that lives within him. All creatures, including fallen angels like the devil, see things primarily through their own eyes. Since cursing God is what defined Satan's character, he wrongly assumed that if Job lost all, then he would follow the same pattern as himself and rebel against the Lord.²³ Yet this was only foolish and wishful thinking; in fact, Satan's assaults on Job's life would eventually produce a completely different response in Job, which would be proven to be far different than what Satan had intended. Instead of cursing the Lord, Job worshiped Him.²⁴

21 John 7:7 *The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*

22 I John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

23 Isa. 14:12–15 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*¹³ *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*¹⁴ *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*¹⁵ *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

24 Job 1:20 *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

(Benson Commentary, Job 1:11) It was a great truth that Job did not fear God for naught; he got much by it: for godliness is great gain. But it was a false lie that he would not have feared God if he had not got this by it, as the event proved.

Job 1:12 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

What is observed here is that regarding the Lord's people, Satan is given power over them only according to divine will. It is the Lord Who is sovereign, and no great harm can be done to His chosen unless He first allows it.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 1:12) *All that he hath is in thy power . . .* —Mighty as the principle of evil is in the world, it is nevertheless held in check by One who directs it to His own ends. Such is the uniform teaching of Scripture. We are not under the uncontrolled dominion of evil, strong as the temptation may be at times to think so. (See 2Corinthians 12:7; 2Corinthians 12:9; 1Thessalonians 2:18, &c.²⁵)

Satan initially claimed that Job was loyal to the Lord because he had been blessed by Him. In response, God yielded more power to His adversary to remove and destroy the very things that Satan had surmised were the reasons for Job's re-

ligious piety. The record of Joseph being sold by his brothers into bondage²⁶ is also a wonderful example of how God will use evil intentions for the good of His people. Thus, though Joseph's brothers intended to cause him harm, the Lord used their evil act to exalt Joseph and ultimately even to save their own lives. God's thoughts are higher than man's,²⁷ and even every angelic creature God has created, including Satan, should be included in this category.

Job 1:13–20 *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*

¹⁴ *and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:*

¹⁵ *and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

¹⁶ *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

¹⁷ *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

²⁵ II Cor. 12:7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.* II Cor. 12:9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

I Thess. 2:18 *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.*

²⁶ Gen. 37:23–28 *And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;*²⁴ *And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.*²⁵ *And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.*²⁶ *And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?*²⁷ *Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.*²⁸ *Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

²⁷ Isa. 55:9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

¹⁸ *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*

¹⁹ *and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

²⁰ *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

Although Job loved his children, he did not curse his God even after their tragic deaths. While lesser men, perhaps even we ourselves, might have been tempted to lay blame upon the Lord, or at the very least to doubt God's goodness, Job did the exact opposite. He rent his mantle and shaved his head, which were signs of spiritual mourning,²⁸ and then fell upon the ground and worshiped. What a great example this man of the East is, who possessed true religious piety, who also instead of cursing the Lord after tremendous physical loss, worshiped Him! The righteous also will regularly prove that the most important aspect of their lives is not their bodies, their earthly possessions, or even their earthly families—which, no doubt, they cherish much—but their God. How men also respond while suffering trials reveals the depth of their actual trust in God.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 1:20) Moments of intense sorrow or trial, like moments of intense joy, force us into the immediate presence of God.

²⁸ *Ezra 9:3 And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.*

Isa. 15:2 He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

Jer. 7:29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

Jer. 41:5 That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the LORD.

Mic. 1:16 Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

²⁹ *Eccl. 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Foolish is the man who does not live his life seeking to save his most precious possession, his soul. Job knew that he came into the world with nothing and would leave it the same way. The soul also is the only real treasure any man possesses. For the soul will one day leave the body,²⁹ and the only question is where it will go. To depart from sin and return unto God is the only real way to save the soul from eternal death. *Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive (Ezek. 18:27).*

Job wisely knew that whatever he had gained after birth would be lost immediately at the time of his death. This reminds us that no matter what anyone possesses while alive on the earth, it must be both forfeited and relinquished at death. *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark 8:36).*

(Benson Commentary, Job 1:21) and naked shall I return—I shall be as rich when I die as I was when I was born; and therefore have reason to be contented with my condition, which also is the common lot of all men. We go naked out of the [womb] into the [world] or lap of our common mother the earth, as the weary child lays its head on

its mother's bosom. Death strips us of all our possessions and enjoyments; clothing can neither warm nor adorn a dead body: a consideration which silenced Job under all his losses. The sanctified soul, however, goes out of the world clothed, (2 Corinthians 5:3,)³⁰ and when it appears in the presence of God is not found naked.

Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

In the agonizing loss of his children and the spoiling of his goods, *Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*. So sincere was Job's faith and trust in the Lord that he did not bring blame upon Him even after the loss of all he loved. Satan was wrong, and the Lord was proven right. Mutiny had been purposed, and righteousness and holiness had won.

If men murmur and raise their voices against the Lord,³¹ it reveals that they are dissatisfied with His rule. Satan's main goal has always been to lead sinners into rebellion against God,³² and murmuring against Him is the very first outward evidence of rebellion.³³ But because God is just³⁴ and righteous in all His ways,³⁵ He will never, nor can He ever, sin against man, as man sins against Him. To foolishly claim sin on God's part only reveals the spiritual ignorance that lies in sinners. Through Job's response to his physical loss, we learn that "true piety will bear the removal of property and friends without murmuring. Religion is not based on such things, and their removal cannot shake it. It is founded deeper in the soul, and mere external changes cannot destroy it."³⁶

30 II Cor. 5:3 *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

31 Jude 1:16 *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.*

32 Isa. 14:12–15 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*¹³ *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ¹⁵Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

Ezek. 28:11–18 *Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ¹²Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. ¹³Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. ¹⁴Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ¹⁶By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. ¹⁸Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.*

33 Deut. 1:26–27 *Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: ²⁷And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.*

34 Deut. 32:4 *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

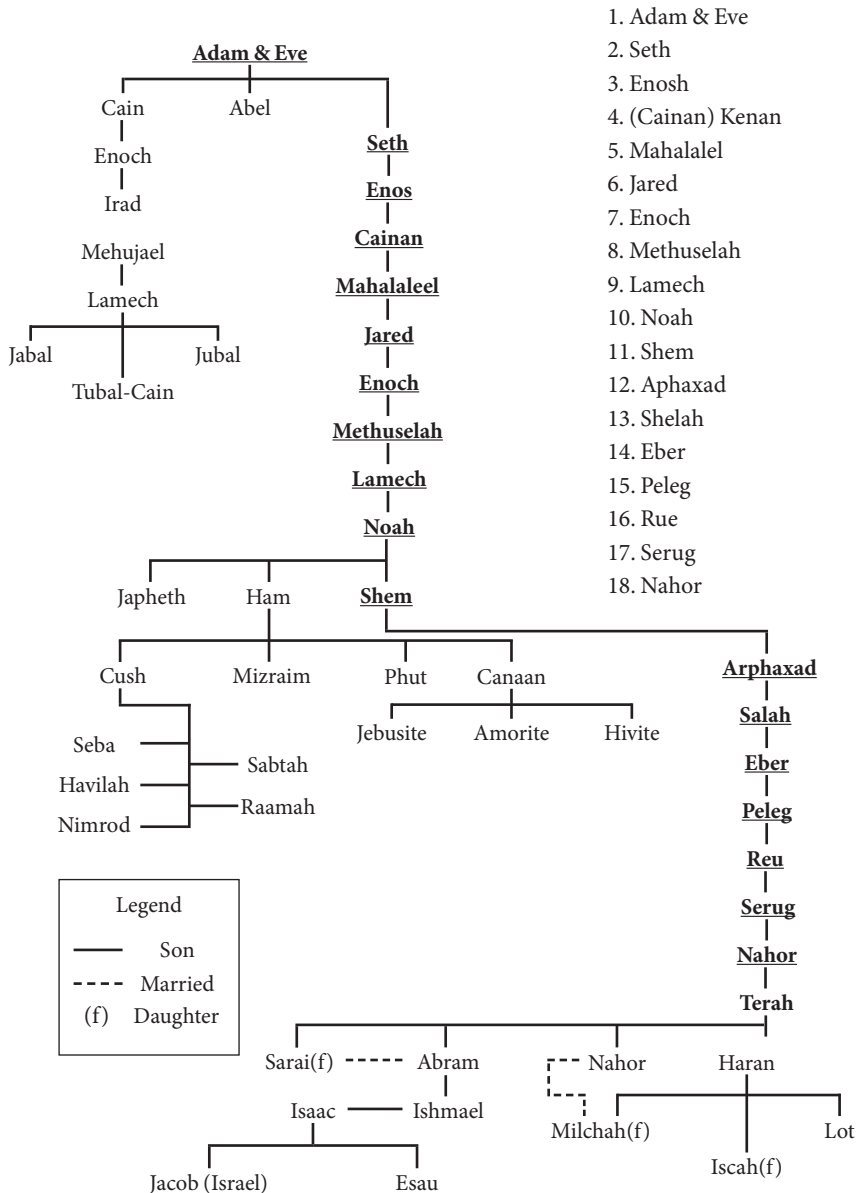
Ps. 89:14 *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

35 Ps. 145:17 *The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

36 Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 1:22

Endnote

Genealogy of Adam to Nahor



adapted from therealmelchizedek.wordpress.com

Satan's Assault Against Job's Life

Job Chapter 2

Job 2:1–3 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

² And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

³ And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

At the core of Job's integrity is his fear of God and his distaste for evil. If men do not fear God and do not avoid following paths of evil, then they cannot possess any true integrity and can be compromised fairly easily. It is when men fear the Lord that they will seek to depart from evil.¹ At its core, spiritual integrity possesses both respect for God and a loathing of evil. It is God who keeps men by His Word and by His Spirit, walking uprightly in life. If men leave Him and refuse to subject themselves to Him, their character will be forever damaged and ultimately unrepairable.

Just as God knows those who fear Him, so does He also know the temptations they are able to overcome. Because of Job's deep and reverential fear of the Lord, a trial that would have destroyed lesser men only purified his faith in the end. *There*

hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13).

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Cor. 10:13) There hath no temptation taken you.—What is meant by a "temptation common to man" (or rather, suited to man) is explained further on as a temptation which one is "able to bear." From the warning and exhortation of the previous verse the Apostle passes on to words of encouragement, "You need not be hopeless or despairing." God permits the temptation by allowing the circumstances which create temptation to arise, but He takes care that no Fate bars the path of retreat. With each temptation he makes a way to escape from it.

Though Job's trials were extreme, the Lord knew that he possessed sufficient strength of faith to endure Satan's assaults and ultimately reach God's end for his life. Because God's promise is that men will never be tempted above what they are able to endure, then if men sin while in temptation they alone are to blame.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 10:13) If people fall into sin, under the power of temptation, they only are to blame. They have strength to resist all the temptations that assail them, and God has given the assurance that no temptation shall occur which they shall not be able, by His aid, to resist. In all instances, therefore, where people fall into sin; in all the yielding to passion, to allurements, and to vice, man is to blame, and must be responsible to God. And this is especially

¹ *Prov. 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

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true of Christians, who, whatever may be said of others, cannot plead that there was not power sufficient to meet the temptation, or to turn aside its power.

When most read about the trial of Job's life, they undoubtedly will blame the Lord. Ignorant of the Lord's ways with man, sinners will judge His ways. Therefore, the Book of Job has caused many to bring accusations against the Lord simply because they lacked the spiritual insight to see God's ultimate purpose. But although most will fail God's test through their lack of trust in Him, when in trial or observing others' trials, this does not mean that divine trials are either wrong or unnecessary. What Job endured did not exceed the limitations of his faith. Because Job's fear of God was great, he possessed sufficient spiritual ability to endure what God would allow Satan to do in his life. Thus, we should never question God's purposes for this God-fearing man, simply because the Lord knew Job's inward heart, and there was nothing in his trial that could not be overcome if he remained trusting in the Lord—teaching us that though spiritual trials can be severe and very difficult for the people of God to endure, if faith in God remains then both spiritual understanding and deliverance will follow them.

Although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. Satan had implied that the only reason Job feared the Lord was the selfish explanation that God had blessed him and placed a wall of

protection around him. This claim would be proven false when Job, even after losing all that he had, still worshiped God and remained subject to Him. Satan commonly introduces false claims against the anointed, knowing that accusations, if later even proved untrue, will injure the innocent. Accusations also do not need to be true for Satan to bring them forth and lay them at the Lord's feet. The devil is described in Scripture as a liar² and one who accuses the brethren night and day in his constant attempts to impugn God's elect. In Job's case, Satan repeatedly brought forth devilish accusations in a continued effort to try turning the Lord against this faithful servant of God. Hence, it can be seen that the devil will always do his best to pit believers against the Lord, and the Lord against them. *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night* (Rev. 12:10).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rev. 12:10) The description of Satan as an accuser accords with the opinion of the ancient Hebrews in regard to his character. Thus he is represented in Job 1:9–11; Job 2:4–5; Zechariah 3:1–2; 1 Chronicles 21:1.³ The phrase “of the brethren” refers to Christians, or to the people of God; and the meaning here is, that one of the characteristics of Satan—a characteristic so well known as to make it proper to designate him by it—is that he is an accuser of the righteous; that he is employed in bringing against them charges affecting their character and

² John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

³ Job 1:9–11 *Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? ¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. ¹¹But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

Job 2:4–5 *And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. ⁵But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

Zech. 3:1–2 *And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. ²And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

1 Chrn. 21:1 *And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.*

destroying their influence. The propriety of this appellation cannot be doubted. It is, as it has always been, one of the characteristics of Satan—one of the means by which he keeps up his influence in the world—to bring accusations against the people of God. Thus, under his suggestions, and by his agents, they are charged with hypocrisy; with insincerity; with being influenced by bad motives; with pursuing sinister designs under the cloak of religion; with secret vices and crimes. Thus it was that the martyrs were accused; thus it is that unfounded accusations are often brought against ministers of the gospel, palsying their power and diminishing their influence, or that when a professed Christian falls the church is made to suffer by an effort to cast suspicion on all who bear the Christian name. Perhaps the most skillful thing that Satan does, and the thing by which he most contributes to diminish the influence of the church, is in thus causing “accusations” to be brought against the people of God.

It is worth noting that those who bring false claims against the Lord's elect have close kinship with the devil, since any who engage in his methods are, if not directly, then indirectly under his influence. Whenever, then, false accusations are brought against the people of God without reliable evidence to prove that what is spoken is true, then we can be sure that the devil is highly involved in seeking to harm God's chosen. Nothing

also reveals the true colors of sinners more than when they bring false charges against the chosen. The Jews did this with the Son of God,⁴ Sanballat with Hezekiah,⁵ and Korah with Moses.⁶ From these records and many more like them we see that Satan's primary weapon to blunt the outreach of the kingdom of God is falsely accusing those who seek to both advance and strengthen it.

Job 2:4–5 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

⁵ But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 2:4) Satan sneers bitterly at man's egotism and says that Job bears the loss of property and children because these are mere outward and exchangeable goods, but he will give up all things, even his religion, in order to save his life, if you touch his bones and flesh.

Satan did not actually know what Job would do; rather, he merely hoped that Job would curse God because of the physical suffering he purposed to afflict Job with. We observe here Satan's new spiritual attack—to inflict physical pain,

4 Matt. 9:34 *But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.*

5 Neh. 6:1–8 *Now it came to pass when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) ²that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. ³And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? ⁴Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner. ⁵Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; ⁶wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. ⁷And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. ⁸Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.*

6 Num. 16:1–8 *Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: ²and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: ³and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?*

beyond even the emotional damage already done through stripping both Job's family and wealth from him. In respect to the people of God, the devil will never be content until both life and soul are stolen from them. It is not enough for the Lord's adversary to steal from believers, as his ultimate aim is always to kill and destroy them. *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy* (John 10:10a). Indeed, the hatred of the devil is so great against the Lord's chosen that he will never be fully satisfied until death follows bodily torture. This was seen in Satan's assault on the Savior's life, where it was not enough for Jesus merely to be crucified, without prior to it the devil inflicting as much pain on Christ's body as it could bear.⁷ *As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men* (Isa. 52:14). Throughout human history Satan has repeatedly inflicted the bodies of the saved, hoping that by touching believers' bodies, their pain will cause them to abandon piety and curse God. Nothing also can break the human spirit more than bodily torture.

Surprising to most, there is a divinity in undergoing physical pain, for when men's

spirits are broken, their ears and hearts can be opened. The pride of many is also so great that it is not until all is either lost or seemingly lost (which can include loss of physical health) that they become humble enough to be taught by God. For the prodigal son it took a famine and the loss of all things to help him come to his senses and return to his father.⁸ For us, we also may need to experience both emotional and physical pain before we come to realize the paths that we are on may be wrong and against God's will for our lives. Therefore, though the devil is the one who introduces suffering, it is the Lord, Who, in the end turns it toward His people's good.⁹ It is also only when men come to observe themselves as they really are, ignorant of God and His ways with man, that they become ready for God to teach them. *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee* (Ps. 73:22).

Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

The Lord gave Satan permission to do that which he desired, with one restriction—he could not in any way endanger Job's life.

Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with

⁷ Matt. 27:26–35 *Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.* ²⁷*Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.* ²⁸*And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.* ²⁹*And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!* ³⁰*And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.* ³¹*And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.* ³²*And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.* ³³*And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,* ³⁴*They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.* ³⁵*And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*

⁸ Luke 15:14–18 *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.* ¹⁵*And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.* ¹⁶*And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.* ¹⁷*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!* ¹⁸*I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

⁹ Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

*sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*¹⁰

(Benson Commentary, Job 2:7) *And smote Job with sore biles*—*εκλέ πωρηνο*, with a foul ulcer, or evil inflammation, say the Seventy; breaking out and spreading itself over all his body. The biles, it seems, were like those inflicted upon the Egyptians, which are expressed by the same word, and threatened to the apostate Israelites, (Deuteronomy 28:27),¹¹ whereby he was made loathsome to himself and to his nearest relations, and filled with consuming pains in his body, and no less torments and anguish in his mind. *From the sole of his foot unto his crown*—In all the outward parts of his body. “His tongue,” says Poole, “he spared, that it might be capable of uttering those blasphemies against God which Satan desired and expected him to utter.” One boil, when it is gathering, is very distressing, and gives a man abundance of pain and uneasiness. What a condition was Job then in, who had biles all over his body, no part being free, and those as much inflamed, and of as raging a heat, as Satan could make them! If at any time we be exercised with sore and grievous distempers, let us not think ourselves more hardly dealt with than God has sometimes dealt with the best of his saints and servants. We know not how far Satan may have a hand, by God's permission, in the diseases with which

mankind, especially the children of God, are afflicted; or what infections that prince of the air may spread, what inflammations may come from that fiery serpent. We read of one whom he had bound for many years, Luke 13:10.¹² And should God suffer him to have his will against us, he would soon make the best and bravest of us very miserable. It is a judicious remark of Dr. Mede here, that it is not Job himself or his friends, but the author of the book, who attributes his calamities to Satan; for this writer's intention seems to have been to show, by a striking example, that the world is governed by the providence of God; and as the holy angels, whose ministry God makes use of in distributing his bountiful gifts, punctually execute all his commands; so Satan himself, with his agents, are under the power of God, and cannot inflict any evils on mankind without the divine permission.

Job 2:8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

All Job had left with which to care for himself was a potsherd, an indication of the deep loss and depravity of his situation. And although Job's condition needed the most tender and loving care, all he possessed to deal with his afflic-

10 (Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 2:7) It has been commonly supposed that the disease of Job was a species of black leprosy commonly called “elephantiasis,” which prevails much in Egypt. This disease received its name from *ελέφας* *elefas*, “an elephant,” from the swelling produced by it, causing a resemblance to that animal in the limbs; or because it rendered the skin like that of the elephant, scabtons and dark colored. It is called by the Arabs *judhām* (Dr. Good), and is said to produce in the countenance a grim, distorted, and “lion-like” set of features, and hence has been called by some “Leontiasis.” It is known as the black leprosy, to distinguish it from a more common disorder called “white leprosy”—an affection which the Greeks call “*Leuce*,” or “whiteness.” The disease of Job seems to have been a universal ulcer; producing an eruption over his entire person, and attended with violent pain, and constant restlessness. A universal bile or groups of biles over the body would accord with the account of the disease in the various parts of the book. In the elephantiasis the skin is covered with incrustations like those of an elephant. It is a chronic and contagious disease, marked by a thickening of the legs, with a loss of hair and feeling, a swelling of the face, and a hoarse nasal voice. It affects the whole body; the bones as well as the skin are covered with spots and tumors, at first red, but afterward black. “Coxe, Ency. Webster.” It should be added that the leprosy in all its forms was regarded as contagious, and of course involved the necessity of a separation from society; and all the circumstances attending this calamity were such as deeply to humble a man of the former rank and dignity of Job.

11 Deut. 28:27 *The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.*

12 Luke 13:10–13 *And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.* ¹¹ *And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.* ¹² *And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.* ¹³ *And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*

tion was a hard, sharp, broken piece of pottery. We see Job sitting in the ashes of what was once a wealthy and abundant life. And now, after Satan's assault, a potsherd was indicative of the low state of life he found himself in. Symbolically the potsherd represented what once had been a beautiful vessel, distinguished and worthy of admiration but now like Job was fit for nothing but the dunghill. Job's condition now was beyond all ability to help himself. He could not put his broken life back together without divine assistance, and he knew it. By observing this righteous man sitting among the ashes, it is revealed how despondent his soul must have been, lacking the strength to either stand or do anything more in his life. Job knew that he was defenseless to stop the vicious spiritual attacks on his family, life, and body, so he resigned himself to simply sit and wait for whatever tragedy was still to come. Job also spiritually knew, and his experience had proved it, that he was humanly powerless to protect himself in any way. What was true of Job is likewise true of ourselves; for without the Lord's protection and divine intervention, there is nothing a man can do when attacked by evil spiritual forces. Human power and human

ability therefore are never enough for men to protect themselves against spiritual wickedness in high places.¹³ If Job had feared the Lord before, now this fear was intensified. God's will indeed will be done both in heaven and in the earth,¹⁴ and no mortal man can prevent it.

Nebuchadnezzar, a man of great power and influence, learned the same lesson as Job:¹⁵ that the mighty in this world may possess position, wealth, and/or worldly influence, but these things cannot protect them from God's overreaching sovereignty and at times Satan's assaults. Ultimately no one—neither the world's greatest governments nor its highest-ranking individuals—can prevent the will of God from being done on the earth. Thus, if the Lord desires to bring men low, then there is nothing of their own natural strength and ability that can prevent it. God is sovereign,¹⁶ as well He should be.

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 2:9) Then said his wife.— Thus it is that a man's foes are they of his own household

13 Eph. 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

14 Matt. 6:10 *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Luke 11:2 *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

15 Dan. 5:18–22 *O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: ¹⁹and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. ²⁰But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: ²¹and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. ²²And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;*

16 Isa. 46:9–10 *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*

Dan. 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

Isa. 14:24 *The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:*

(Micah 7:6; Matthew 10:36, &c.).¹⁷ The worst trial of all is when those nearest to us, instead of strengthening our hand in God and confirming our faith, conspire to destroy it.

When men turn against those they should love, they turn against the laws of nature. When Cain slew his brother,¹⁸ Abel, not even brotherhood could prevent an envious and evil heart from committing murder. Job's wife should have demonstrated compassion, but instead her corrupted heart spewed nothing but contempt. This might explain the pleasure-seeking lifestyles of Job's children, simply because a wife and mother this insensitive to grief could not have influenced her children in any truly godly manner. Her words *Curse God, and die* show us her lack of respect and love for both her husband and God. It is also quite possible that Satan was the instrument in turning Job's own wife so harshly against him. No sound person would encourage death to another, let alone a family member, without wicked spiritual involvement. That Job's wife spoke of cursing God, thus bringing the Lord into the conversation, proves there to be a spiritual element in her words.¹⁹ It is worth noting that at the core of betrayal, devilish forces are always at work. This is observed with Judas, and it has been repeated since the dawn of time. Where betrayal exists, and especially so in families,²⁰ Satan is near, leading it.

Job 2:10 *But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*

Here Job defends God, as a righteous and godly man both must do and always will do.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 2:10) This is the true expression of piety. It submits to all the arrangements of God without a complaint.

True Christians know that regardless of God's judgment, the Lord's actions are never unfair. Whereas an ungodly man will quickly smear God's name in times of trouble, those with a deep fear of God will defend it. This is because sincere believers are more willing to sacrifice their own reputation than to allow others to falsely lay blame upon God. To a truly righteous man, God's name is deemed far more important than even his own.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 2:10) In addition to that, true piety feels that all claim to any blessing, if it had ever existed, has been forfeited by sin.

When the righteous suffer loss, their eyes will turn inward, seeking to see how they have sinned, to being about the consequences in their life, rightly surmising that some hidden sin is being dealt with

17 *Mic. 7:6* For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

Matt. 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

18 *1 John 3:12* Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

19 *1 Pet. 5:8* Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

20 *Gen. 4:8-9* And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. ⁹And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

Luke 21:16-18 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. ¹⁷And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. ¹⁸But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

Matt. 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Matt. 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

in themselves, and that no fault either can or should be found with God. Instead of murmuring against the Lord,²¹ Job held fast to his fear of God and continued to maintain faith and trust in his Creator.

Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

As the book's structure reveals,²² we are now ready for the next important event in Job's life: the arrival of his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. No doubt these individuals were godly associates of Job; yet the record will reveal that they ultimately lacked anything of their own wisdom to help their friend. And though they were surely sincere in the words they would speak, all they really did was add salt to Job's wounds. Good intentions, as it shall be seen, do nothing to guarantee profitable results.

Just because a man is a believer, one should not presume that all he says or in fact that anything he says comes from the Lord's Holy Spirit. Foolishness often flows from the mouth of those who, though they believe in God, have little wisdom given to them by God. Therefore, whenever believers seek to mourn and comfort people in their troubles, it is wise to engage only in what God inspires them to say—simply because good intentions do nothing to help attain divine results. The Scriptures also advise us to be quick to hear and slow to speak until by inspiration we are given something meaningful to say. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath* (Jas. 1:19).

Job 2:12–13 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

¹³ ***So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.***

21 *Exod. 16:8 And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.*

Num. 14:27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

Deut. 1:27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

Ps. 106:25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

John 6:41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

John 6:43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

John 7:12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

Phil. 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

22 *The Book of Job: A New Translation by Dr. E. W. Bullinger*

A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.

B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.

C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.

D | iii. 1—xxxi. 40. Job and his friends.

E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.

D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.

C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.

B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.

A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.

Taken aback by Job's condition, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar barely recognized that this was the same healthy and prosperous man they had once known. Job was, at least on the outside, a shell of his previous self, and his friends recognized the great grief that burdened his soul. At least for now, they remained wise and spoke not a word because of the sadness they felt for their friend. In Job's present condition of being largely naked and affected by boils and loss of weight, he was at least in appearance nothing like the man he had once been. Therefore, at the sight of him

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar cried aloud, rent their clothes, and sat on the ground next to their friend. And though these three friends would later prove to have little wisdom and needed themselves to have Job pray for them,²³ still their acts of compassion at this point in the record should not go unnoticed.

(Benson Commentary, Job 2:13) "A long silence," says Dr. Dodd, "is a very natural effect of an extraordinary grief, which overwhelms the mind, and creates a sort of stupor and astonishment."

²³ Job 42:7–10 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. ⁸Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. ¹⁰And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

Job Curses His Day

Job Chapter 3

Job 3:1 *After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.*

ALTHOUGH previously Job had not sinned with his lips,¹ by the end of the book he would not be able to claim this to be true. This is seen in chapter 38 when the Lord reproves Job for darkening His counsel by speaking words without knowledge: *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* (Job 38:2).

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 38:2) *Who is this, &c.*—What and where is he that presumes to talk at this rate? *That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*—Words proceeding from ignorance, mistake, and want of consideration. Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them?

Perhaps since he had been broken down over time and he now had friends nearby whom he felt he could trust, Job began revealing his true inner thoughts.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 3:1) *and cursed his day*, to wit, his birthday, as is evident from Job 3:3,² which is called simply a man's day, Hosea 7:5;³ which also some others, through the same infir-

mity, and in the same circumstances, have cursed, as we see, Jeremiah 20:14.⁴ In vain do some men endeavour to excuse this and the following speeches of Job, who afterwards is reproved by God and severely accuseth himself for them, Job 38:2; 40:4; 42:3, 6.⁵ And yet he doth not proceed so far as to curse or blaspheme God, but makes the devil a liar in his prognostics. But although he doth not break forth into direct and downright reproaches of God, yet he makes secret and indirect reflections upon God's providence.

Although Job does not directly curse the Lord, he does curse his day. Perhaps he did not know at this stage of his trial that once men begin cursing the circumstances of their lives, then reproaching God soon follows.⁶ Previously Job had praised God, but now he despised the day of his birth. How fickle are men also when from their mouths once came praise and worship and now proceeds bitterness and cursing.

Chapter 3 is the first of ten discourses in which Job speaks. These chapters include 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12–14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26–31, and 42. As the trial of Job's life advances, we ultimately see his contention with the Lord. It is for this spiritual contention with the Almighty that Job is later reproved. *Moreover the*

¹ Job 1:22 *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

² Job 3:3 *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.*

³ Hos. 7:5 *In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners.*

⁴ Jer. 20:14 *Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.*

⁵ Job 38:2 *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

Job 40:4 *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*

Job 42:3 *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

Job 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

⁶ Jas. 3:10 *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it (Job 40:1–2). The Lord stated that by his lack of wisdom, Job had proven himself guilty of darkening God's plans through words without knowledge. For this sin he needed to stand before the Lord and give an account of his actions. *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel*

by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me (Job 38:1–3). Whenever men sin against the Lord, they will, like Adam and Eve in the garden,⁷ need to eventually stand before Him since no sin either can or will be dismissed without the Lord addressing it with the sinner. David needed to give an account of his sin,⁸ Miriam hers,⁹ and we ours.¹⁰

7 Gen. 3:8–13 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. ⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? ¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. ¹¹And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? ¹²And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. ¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 8 II Sam. 12:1–13 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. ²The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: ³But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. ⁴And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. ⁵And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: ⁶And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. ⁷And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ⁸And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. ⁹Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. ¹¹Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. ¹²For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. ¹³And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 9 Num. 12:1–15 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. ²And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. ³(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) ⁴And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. ⁵And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. ⁶And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. ⁷My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. ⁸With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? ⁹And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. ¹⁰And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. ¹¹And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. ¹²Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. ¹³And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. ¹⁴And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. ¹⁵And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.

10 Rom. 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Job could not understand why such a righteous man as himself should have to endure such hardship. Whether aware of it or not, the sinner believes his own righteousness to be more than God's. And for this reason complaints eventually if not initially, will be directed toward God. *Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?* (Job 35:1–2). It is always self-righteousness that is at the core of men condemning the Lord so that if men think they are on God's level, they will not hesitate to condemn His ways. Thus, if sinners do not perceive their tragedy and pain to be either directly or indirectly connected to themselves, then they will undoubtedly claim the fault to be God's. Yet God's righteousness is such that He can never, nor will ever, do anything unjust toward man.¹¹ The Lord's own righteous and just character prohibit it.

Opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. The tongue is without question an unruly evil. If it is let loose and not controlled by God's Spirit, it will undoubtedly bring judgment upon its owner. *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison* (Jas. 3:8).

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Jas. 3:8) *no man*—literally, “no one of men”: neither can a man control his neighbor's, nor even his own tongue. Hence the truth of Jas 3:2¹² appears.

unruly evil—The Greek, implies that it is at once restless and incapable of restraint. Nay, though nature has hedged it in with a double barrier of the lips and teeth, it bursts from its barriers to assail and ruin men [Estius].

¹¹ Ps. 119:137 *Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.*

Ps. 145:17 *The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

¹² Jas. 3:2 *For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

¹³ Luke 6:45 *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

deadly—literally, “death-bearing.”

Jesus clearly warned that the words men speak will result in either their justification or their condemnation. *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned* (Matt. 12:37). While most give no account to their words and believe they will quickly disappear in the air after spoken, the Lord both remembers and will demand that what has been said must be given account for.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Matt. 12:37) *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*—They might say, “It was nothing: we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?” Jesus replies, “It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment.”

Very few take the words they speak as having any bearing on whether they will be justified or condemned. Nevertheless, since out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,¹³ a man's words will directly affect his salvation. By a man's words is his true inner heart known, and by a man's words his soul is brought to light. Perhaps Job possessed some of this understanding, but his spiritual ignorance reveals that he did not possess enough of it to avoid the treacherous path of indicting himself in God's eyes. Sinners often foolishly believe that they will not have to give an account for the words they speak. Yet whatever men do

in their body, whether it be by their hand, tongue, or heart, will one day be brought to light¹⁴ since sinning with even one member of the body ultimately indites the whole man.

Four important points are seen in this chapter: (1) Job cursed his birth;¹⁵ (2) he praises the benefits of the grave;¹⁶ (3) he questions why God gives light to men but then hems them in so that they cannot escape their bondage;¹⁷ and (4) he reveals the personal unrest that filled his soul.¹⁸

*Job 3:2–12 And Job spake, and said,
3 Let the day perish wherein I was born,
and the night in which it was said, There
is a man child conceived.*

*4 Let that day be darkness; let not God
regard it from above, neither let the light
shine upon it.*

*5 Let darkness and the shadow of death
stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the
blackness of the day terrify it.*

*6 As for that night, let darkness seize upon
it; let it not be joined unto the days of the
year, let it not come into the number of
the months.*

*7 Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful
voice come therein.*

*8 Let them curse it that curse the day, who
are ready to raise up their mourning.*

*9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be
dark; let it look for light, but have none;
neither let it see the dawning of the day:*

*10 Because it shut not up the doors of my
mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from
mine eyes.*

*11 Why died I not from the womb? why
did I not give up the ghost when I came
out of the belly?*

*12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why
the breasts that I should suck?*

With deep depression will often come the natural conclusion that all of life is nothing but vanity: that life is not worth living and to die would be a better alternative. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity* (Eccl. 1:2).

(Benson Commentary, Eccl. 1:2) All—All worldly things; is vanity—Not in themselves, for they are God's creatures, and therefore good in their kinds, but in reference to that happiness which men seek and expect to find in them. So they are unquestionably *vain*, because they are not what they seem to be, and perform not what they promise, but, instead of that, are the

14 II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

15 Job 3:1–12 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. ²And Job spake, and said, ³Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. ⁴Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. ⁵Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. ⁶As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. ⁷Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. ⁸Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. ⁹Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: ¹⁰Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. ¹¹Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? ¹²Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

16 Job 3:13–22 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, ¹⁴With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves; ¹⁵Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: ¹⁶Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. ¹⁷There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. ¹⁸There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. ¹⁹The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. ²⁰Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; ²¹Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures. ²²Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

17 Job 3:23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

18 Job 3:26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

occasions of innumerable cares, and fears, and sorrows, and mischiefs.

God's Word states that all creation *groaneth and travaileth in pain* even now.¹⁹ This life will often not seem worth remaining in if we forget that God has a plan for our lives. Trials therefore become the most difficult when men lose sight of God's sovereignty during them. One of the lessons also that every trial aims to teach is that men must yield themselves to God's sovereignty and His will for their lives. It is thus hard to *kick against the pricks*,²⁰ because this will only injure the one resisting divine will. God's will shall be done both in heaven and on earth, whether men agree with it or not.²¹ It is also worth noting that without this knowledge, men will spend much of their lives fighting against God's will, which in the end will only bring more pain and suffering upon themselves. Since he who is foolish enough to contend with the Almighty should never deceive himself that human will can ever be able to overcome divine will.

After lamenting being born and the deep pain his trial had brought him, Job unwisely concluded that it would have been better if he had died at birth. *Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?* (v. 11). Undoubtedly Job's weak and painful condition marred his thinking. Yet death is an enemy and should never be desired in times of trial, though it often will be,²² teaching us that when men have lost sight of God, they often look to the grave and

the false release they think it will provide. But it is not the grave that will ultimately produce peace, joy, and deliverance in the sinner's life, but only true reconciliation with the Lord. It is also more than enough to suffer personal pain without adding the great burden it is to break fellowship with the Lord.

When men go through earthly trials they seldom if ever consider what the trials are meant to accomplish, that something is amiss in either their hearts or lives and that only a trial of God can assist in setting it right. The ultimate purpose of trials also is to reveal the true heart of the one being tried. This was true with Israel, and it is likewise true with us since only divinely organized trials of God will reveal who men really are. *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God 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* (Deut. 8:2).

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Deut. 8:2) *To know what was in thine heart*, i.e. that thou mightest discover to thyself and others that infidelity, inconstancy, hypocrisy, apostacy, rebellion, and perverseness, which lay hid in thy heart; the discovery whereof was of singular use, both to them and to the church of God, in all succeeding ages.

By trials, then, the true condition of a man will be made known, revealing whether there exists genuine faith and trust in God, as seen in Abraham,²³ or repeated sin, as

19 Rom. 8:22 *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

20 Acts 9:5 *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Acts 26:14 *And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

21 Matt. 6:10 *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Luke 11:2 *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

22 I Cor. 15:26 *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

23 Gen. 22:1-12 *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. ²And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou*

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evidenced with Israel.²⁴ Trials therefore will reveal whether men will keep God's commandments or not and whether or not there is true trust in the Lord or merely a profession of His name.

Job 3:13–22 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

¹⁴ With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves;

¹⁵ Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

¹⁶ Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

¹⁷ There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

¹⁸ There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

¹⁹ The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

²⁰ Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;

²¹ Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

²² Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

After questioning why he was born and did not die at birth, Job proceeds to think of the advantages of death, how through death prisoners find rest from their op-

pressors (v. 18), servants are freed from their masters (v.19), and how death can be considered as light and therefore is a welcome sight when this life is filled with misery (v. 20). Job longed for death and the grave, and he thought that if he could be so lucky as to die, his soul would rejoice (v. 22).

Job 3:23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

For the first time Job implies that God is involved in his captivity, that *God had hedged [him] in*, that it was God Who had trapped him, allowing no escape from his broken condition. Job declares that surely it must be God's fault that he could find no avenue of escape nor discover deliverance from his bondage, teaching us that when sinners are in prisons, even if they are of their own making, they will blame God for it.

(Benson Commentary, Job 3:23) Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?... And whom God hath hedged in—Whom God hath put, as it were, in a prison, so that he can see no way or possibility of escape; but all refuge fails him.

lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. ³And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. ⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. ⁷And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? ⁸And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. ⁹And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. ¹⁰And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. ¹²And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. ²⁴ Num. 14:1–4 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. ²And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! ³And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? ⁴And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 3:23) *Whom God hath hedged in*— . . . The meaning here is, that God had surrounded him as with a high wall or hedge, so that he could not move freely. Job asks with impatience, why light, that is, life, should be given to such a man? Why should he not be permitted to die? This closes the complaint of Job, and the remaining verses of the chapter contain a statement of his sorrowful condition, and of the fact that he had now been called to suffer all that he had ever apprehended. . . . When it is asked, why man is kept in misery on earth, when he would be glad to be released by death, perhaps the following, among others, may be the reasons:

(1) Those sufferings may be the very means which are needful to develop the true state of the soul. Such was the case with Job.

(2) They may be the proper punishment of sin in the heart, of which the individual was not fully aware, but which may be distinctly seen by God. There may be pride, and the love of ease, and self-confidence, and ambition, and a desire of reputation. Such appear to have been some of the besetting sins of Job.

(3) They are needful to teach true submission, and to show whether a man is willing to resign himself to God.

(4) They may be the very things which are necessary to prepare the individual to die. At the same time that people often desire death, and feel that it would be a relief, it might be to them the greatest possible calamity. They may be wholly unprepared for it. For a sinner, the grave contains no rest; the eternal world furnishes no repose.

. . . The true place of release from suffering for a sinner, is not the grave; it is in the pardoning mercy of God, and in that pure heaven to which he is invited through the blood of the cross. In that holy heaven is the only real repose from suffering and from sin; and heaven

will be all the sweeter in proportion to the extremity of pain which is endured on earth.

Often when under trial, men are misled into thinking that they must find a way out themselves. Yet just as men have no power to prevent a trial, so also are they just as weak and feeble to end it. Ultimately both the severity of the spiritual trial and its duration lay within God's will and not man's. Thus, not until the Lord turns a man's captivity, as will be seen with Job,²⁵ can deliverance come. To foolishly believe that sinners can extract themselves when being tried by the Lord reveals that such men do not know the power of God or His complete sovereignty over their lives.

Job 3:24–26 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

²⁵ *For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.*

²⁶ *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.*

There is great insight in these verses as they reveal that even prior to Job's trial, there was an uneasiness and an unrest in Job's soul. Thus, even before Satan's assaults on his life, Job internally knew that he was not in safety, nor could he find rest. What precisely Job feared would come upon him we do not know for certain. It could have been God's judgment upon his children for their sin, or perhaps simply the uncertainty and unpredictability of a worldly existence. Hence, even though Job possessed an abundance of earthly prosperity,²⁶ he held a strong suspicion that something was not right in his life. Thus, even when a man's outward life appears prosperous and pious, if there is sin within, then the believer's conscience can-

²⁵ Job 42:10 *And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

²⁶ Job 1:3 *His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

not be at rest and therefore will trouble him until confession of that sin is made.²⁷ It is also worth noting that sin in the heart is just as worthy of judgment as sin evidenced in the life.²⁸

Though Job would continue to believe and profess himself as righteous before God, this did not quiet his heart.

(Benson Commentary, Job 3:25) For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me — Before this flood of misery was poured upon me, I was indeed under great and strong apprehensions, which I could not account for, of something or other that would happen to me; something extremely grievous and afflicting; something as bad, nay, worse than death itself. For I considered the variety of God's providences, the changeableness of this vain world, the infirmities and contingencies to which human nature is liable in the present life, God's justice, and the sinfulness of all mankind. And it is now evident that these fears of mine were not in vain, for they are justified by my present calamities. I may, therefore, say that I have never enjoyed any sound tranquillity since I was born; and, of consequence, it hath not been worth my while to live, since all my days have been evil, and full of trouble and distress, either by the fear of miseries or by the suffering of them.

Few if any of the critics of God's dealings with Job take into account the inward unrest and disturbance in Job that he reveals about himself. Few also have ever suspected that perhaps one of the main objectives

²⁷ Ps. 32:5 *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

Ps. 38:18 *For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*

Prov. 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

²⁸ Matt. 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

²⁹ Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

³⁰ Ps. 147:3 *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

Isa. 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Isa. 66:2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

of Job's trial was to finally put to rest that which had plagued him in his inner heart. There was something amiss in this righteous man that need be corrected before he could enjoy the same internal prosperity that his outward life once possessed. It is also worth noting that no man will ever be able to discover rest in his soul until he spiritually discovers the mystery, and/or secret of what it is to possess a broken and contrite spirit,²⁹ which secret is also the ultimate purpose of Job's trial. Since it is also only when men are fully humbled by the Lord and come to know themselves as sinners before Him that they will find true and lasting peace. This teaches us that all religious and human pride must be broken before any true spiritual rest and serenity can inhabit the soul. For this the heart, that is, pride, of man must be broken and man's spirit made contrite. *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit (Ps. 34:18).*

(Pulpit Commentary, Ps. 34:18) The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and sayeth such as be of a contrite spirit. On the value in God's sight of a broken and contrite heart, see Psalm [51]:17; and on his mercy towards the truly contrite, see Psalm 147:3; Isaiah 57:15; [66]:2.³⁰ He "is nigh" to such persons, he "dwells with" them, "looks to them, ... revives their heart, ... heals" them, "saves" them.

It is a state of lowliness, yea, brokenness, that severe spiritual trials ultimately

produce, which also are able to instruct sinners as to the holiness of God and the sinfulness of themselves, something also that prosperity and blessing generally fail to do. Hence, there is practically much more spiritual profit and heavenly learning when men undergo the Lord's trials than even when they are blessed by Him. Hence, a trial of God can accomplish so much more to bring a sinner closer to God than even if he were to be blessed by Him. And this is so simply because learning what it is to possess a broken and contrite spirit is proven to be one of the greatest blessings that God could ever give to man. Isaiah's vision taught him this,³¹ as did the prodigal son's famine,³² teaching us that it is in a state of brokenness and unworthiness that men enter into true and lasting fellowship with the Lord and as a result will be able to receive all the good, both inwardly and outwardly, that God has purposed for their lives.³³ The Lord is with those who are broken and possess a contrite spirit, and by the end of Job's trial this truth would be unequivocally substantiated.

For it is to this manner of man that the Lord draws himself toward one who has had all human pride broken and is fully aware of the sin and unworthiness of self. *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word* (Isa. 66:2).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 66:2) *But to this man will I look*—That is, 'I prefer a humble heart and a contrite spirit to the most magnificent earthly temple' (see the notes at Isaiah 57:15).³⁴

That is poor—Or rather 'humble.' The word rendered 'poor' (עָנִי 'ânîy), denotes not one who has no property, but one who is down-trodden, crushed, afflicted, oppressed; often, as here, with the accessory idea of pious feeling Exodus 24:12; Psalm 10:2, Psalm 10:9. The Septuagint renders it, Ταπεινὸν Tapeinon—'Humble;' not πτωχὸν ptôchon (poor). The idea is, not that God looks with favor on a poor man merely because he is poor—which is not true, for his favors are not bestowed in view of external conditions

31 Isa. 6:1–5 *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

32 Luke 15:11–19 *And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

33 Job 42:12–17 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.*

34 Isa. 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

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in life—but that he regards with favor the man that is humble and subdued in spirit.

And of a contrite spirit—A spirit that is broken, crushed, or deeply affected by sin. It stands opposed to a spirit that is proud, haughty, self-confident, and self-righteous.

When Job complained of his birth and longed for his death, he had forgotten that prayer remained at his disposal, teaching us as well that when men are too concerned about defending their own self-righteousness or even being

rigidly self-centered on their pain, then they will often forget to turn to the Lord in prayer. But it is only through prayer that men's thoughts are directed upward, away from their troubles and toward the very One, Who alone possesses sufficient spiritual power and ability to deliver them from them. The contrast also between leveling complaints against the Lord and trusting Him is when prayers of faith are lifted to Him,³⁵ reminding us that it is through faith, not complaint, that the Lord both hears and answers the prayers of His people.³⁶

³⁵ Heb. 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

³⁶ Ps. 66:18–19 *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me: ¹⁹But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*

I Pet. 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

II Chr. 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Jer. 29:12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Eliphaz

Job Chapters 4–5

WE now come to line D in the structure of Job.¹ It consists of twenty-nine chapters. Since God ultimately reproves Job's words² as well as those of his three friends,³ one might ask why such an extensive record is given to speeches and reasonings that God later declares are full of error. The answer is this: it is to show that human reason and thinking, no matter how developed it is and no matter how much time it is given to advance its case, will always come short of any true understanding of the ways of God and His will for man.

We come, therefore, at once to the next member, "D." It is a large one, consisting of twenty-nine chapters. It contains and records the conference of Job with his three friends; the design of which is to show that man, apart from Divine revelation; has not true wisdom and cannot find out or know God: and cannot understand or know himself. Until man has this knowledge, he will neither justify God nor condemn himself. He may understand Jehovah's "works," but His "ways" cannot be known. His works

are seen by all; but His ways are secret and hidden, and can be known only by revelation to His People. Hence we read (Ps. [103:7]):

He made known His WAYS unto Moses, His ACTS unto the children of Israel.

Ample time is given to Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar so that every ounce of human wisdom is given a reasonable chance to help Job in his circumstances. Thus, for twenty-nine chapters human wisdom, conjecture, and thought are allowed every possible opportunity to prove themselves capable of delivering a man afflicted by Satan and his own religious pride.

Dr. Bullinger's notes on the book of Job give us an overview of the general mode of reasoning of Job's three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Eliphaz reasons on human experience.

Bildad reasons on human tradition; while

Zophar reasons on human merit.

1 Structure from Bullinger's *The Book of Job: The Oldest Lesson in the World* A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.

B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.

C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.

D | iii. 1—xxxii. 40. Job and his friends.

E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.

D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.

C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.

B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.

A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.

2 Job 40:1–5 *Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, ²Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. ³Then Job answered the LORD, and said, ⁴Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. ⁵Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.*

3 Job 42:7 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

If we look at the three colloquies as a whole, the one great lesson for ourselves is this: that man with all his wisdom, and all his powers, cannot get to know God, and cannot meet man's needs. He can neither satisfy the righteous claims of God, nor heal the wounds of the sinner's heart.

All these reasonings were wrong in their conclusions, as they were false in their logic. They reasoned from the particular to the general: i.e., they argued that what they had seen and observed in their own respective spheres was true universally.

They may speak truly of the "works" of God, and of what they had seen in the case of individuals; but it did not follow that they could gather from these few cases what was the law which regulated the "ways" and dealings of God with mankind.

Eliphaz is the first to answer Job's complaints. His three utterances are given (1) chaps. iv., v., (2) chap. xv., and (3) chap. xxii.

His reasonings, as we have said, are based on human experience. He argued from the particular to the general, and hence arrived at a wrong conclusion. He based his argument on his own experience. "As I have seen" is the burden of his speech. As he had "seen" that it was the wicked who always suffer, and the righteous who prosper, so he concluded that as Job was suffering he must therefore have committed some dreadful sin. At first he only insinuates this. He asks Job if he had not noticed the same thing himself.

Job 4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Eliphaz spoke before the other two, either because he was the most aged or because he thought himself the most knowledgeable. Either way, he considered himself more than able to set Job right. Yet as will be shown, Eliphaz is the only one of Job's three friends whom the Lord directly calls out by name and reproves for speaking of God things that were not right. *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath* (Job 42:7). Since Eliphaz placed himself first and viewed himself as the one with the greatest wisdom, the Lord singled him out for being the greatest sinner. He had lifted himself up because of religious pride, and God would bring him low.⁴

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 4:1) Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said. When Job was done cursing his day, and had finished his doleful ditty on that subject, then Eliphaz took the opportunity of speaking, not being able to bear any longer with Job and his behaviour under his afflictions; Eliphaz was one of Job's three friends that came to visit him, Job 2:11;⁵ very probably he might be the senior man, or a man of the greatest authority and power; a most respectable person, had in great esteem and reverence among men, and by these his friends, and therefore takes upon him to speak first; or it may be it was agreed among themselves that he should begin the dispute with Job; and we find, that in the close of this controversy

⁴ *Matt. 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

Isa. 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Ps. 18:27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.

Isa. 26:5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

⁵ *Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.*

the Lord speaks to him by name, and to him only, Job 42:7;

When men take upon themselves the senior position, as Eliphaz did, and deliver what they think is accurate reproof but are ultimately wrong, then they will also need to bear the greatest judgment. Hence, if men are led by pride to think themselves the most knowledgeable, then they will also receive the greater heavenly condemnation. Eliphaz was confident in his assertions, though there was no helpful truth, nor hidden revelation, in anything he said to assist Job in his troubles. By taking the highest seat, he grabbed the Lord's attention and as such became worthy of the most public correction and chastisement. *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation* (Jas. 3:1).

(Benson Commentary, Jas. 3:1–2) *Be not many masters*—, ἰολακσαδιΔ teachers. Let none of you rashly, and without proper qualifications, undertake the office of teachers of others; an office into which many are ready to intrude themselves, without being called of God to it. “The great desire which the Jewish Christians, to whom this letter was written, had to become teachers in the church after their conversion, and to inculcate the obligation of the law of Moses, is noticed by St. Paul, 1 Timothy 1:7.⁶ *Desiring to be teachers of the law, &c.*—These teachers of the law in the Christian Church were the great corrupters of the gospel.” Knowing that—*If we err, we shall receive the greater condemnation*—On account of our taking upon us an office for which we are not qualified, and in the exercise of which more is required of us, in many respects, than of others in a more private station of life.

It is wisdom to know what God has appointed for us to do in His name, and it is wisdom to know when God has not purposed us to speak at all. Ultimately, to properly speak for the Lord, the Lord

must first prompt the message, since it is not given to any man to speak on God's behalf without God through heavenly revelation directing what is to be spoken. What this teaches us is that to properly speak for the Lord, men must first be appointed by Him and then be given what message He desires to be delivered. Hence, no man is given the freedom to speak on God's behalf without being called for such a purpose and then being given exactly what it is that the Lord wants delivered. If this principle is not adhered to, then you can be sure the message is not from God but from man. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD* (Jer. 23:16).

(Benson Commentary, Jer. 23:16) *Thus saith the Lord, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets*—People are under no religious obligation to hear what is contrary to the revealed will of God, or to obey those who enjoin things which that does not require. *They make you vain*—Or rather, *they deceive you*, as the words may be properly rendered: or they make you trust to and undertake vain things. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were fed by these false prophets with the vain hopes of being able to drive the Babylonians from their walls, and raise the siege of the city; yea, and of shaking off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar entirely, and being quite free for the future. *They speak a vision of their own heart*—A pretended vision which they have framed themselves.

Eliphaz, fully confident in his own human wisdom, begins the first of his discourses recorded in chapters 4, 5, 15, and 22.

Job 4:2–11 *If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?*

³ *Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.*

⁶ 1 Tim. 1:7 *Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

⁴ *Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.*

⁵ *But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*

⁶ *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*

⁷ *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

⁸ *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

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

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

¹¹ *The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.*

Eliphaz argues based on what he has seen. He corrects Job for being a teacher of others, who now, in his own distress, has no answers to even help himself. He presumes to know Job's guilt, but he is woefully ignorant of the wicked forces that are involved. The real truth also is that Job did not plow iniquity, nor did he sow wickedness, as Eliphaz had implied. *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same* (v. 8). It is also quickly observed that Eliphaz is not led by divine inspiration but rather by his own human reason and imagination. Perhaps this was due to his personal conceit; if not, then surely spiritual ignorance.

Job 4:12–17 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

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

¹⁴ *Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

¹⁵ *Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:*

¹⁶ *It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,*

¹⁷ *Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?*

Because we know that Eliphaz had spoken of God that which was not right, then it is hard to hold any confidence in his declared vision (v. 12). Hence, even if the Lord had given him a revelation, which is highly likely He had not, then it is certain that he was never given any true interpretation.⁷ It is also worth noting that many in the religious realm have claimed to see things that they actually never have seen, simply because of being puffed up by human conceit. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind* (Col. 2:18).

(Benson Commentary, Col. 2:18) *Intruding into things which he hath not seen*—With great presumption, and pretending to discover wonderful secrets, relating to their various ranks, subordinations, and offices. “The apostle’s meaning,” says Macknight, “is, that the false teachers, of whom he speaks, presumptuously penetrated into the secrets of the invisible world, and talked of them with an air of certainty, without having any knowledge of the things which they affirmed; particularly that the angels intercede with God for men, and that to worship them is acceptable to God.” *Vainly puffed up by his fleshly*—His corrupt and carnal; *mind*—With the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion.

⁷ Dan. 1:17 *As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.*

Gen. 40:8 *And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.*

It is true that the Lord gives men visions,⁸ but it is equally true that many who claim to have seen things brought to them by the Lord actually have seen nothing at all. Undoubtedly, a man may say that God has spoken to him, but this does not mean the man speaks the truth—since many through the centuries have proclaimed that they have spoken for the Lord when in fact the Lord has never, even remotely, spoken to them. *And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!* (Ezek. 13:1–3). So also, as we read in Jer. 23:25–26, *I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.*

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Jer. 23:26) *How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? . . . To invent such lies, and deceive the people, and turn them away from God; agreeably to the preceding and following verses: this shows that this was not through ignorance and inadvertence; it was a meditated and studied thing by them; they contrived it in their hearts, and they were resolute and bent upon it, and took much delight and pleasure in it; their hearts were in it, and it was in them to do as they did; and in this way they had been long, but should continue no longer.*

Though we cannot know for sure if Eliphaz even was given a vision, we do know for certain that he was not God's spokesman, nor had God inspired him to speak on His behalf. Sincerity is no guarantee for truth, even if men are deceived that what they are given is from God. *And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you* (Gen. 40:8). Any therefore who claim to speak by the Spirit or say they possess the Spirit should be tried to discern whether the Lord is really with them or not. There is also nothing in God's Word that implies that Christians should receive those who come in God's name without careful spiritual and biblical scrutiny, to determine if they are who they claim to be. For this reason every spirit—and/or every man who claims to be led by the spirit—should be tried in order that an impostor of faith does not gain any preeminence in true Christians' lives. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world* (I John 4:1).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 4:1) *Beloved, believe not every spirit*—Do not confide implicitly in everyone who professes to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. Compare Matthew 24:4–5.⁹ The true and the false teachers of religion alike claimed to be under the influence of the Spirit of God, and it was of importance that all such pretensions should be examined. It was not to be admitted because anyone claimed to have been sent from God that therefore he was

8 Ezek. 11:24–25 *Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.* ²⁵*Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.*

Acts 16:9 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

Acts 9:10–11 *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.* ¹¹*And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

Acts 18:9 *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:* 9 *Matt. 24:4–5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.* ⁵*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

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sent. Every such claim should be subjected to the proper proof before it was conceded. All pretensions to divine inspiration, or to being authorised teachers of religion, were to be examined by the proper tests, because there were many false and delusive teachers who set up such claims in the world.

The last point worth noting is why the Lord even allows false prophets and false testifiers of dreams and visions to remain in the world. It is to determine if true love for God is held, which form of love also will never break divine commandments *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul* (Deut. 13:1–3).

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Deut. 13:3) *Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet*; not receive his doctrine, though the sign come to pass. For although when such a sign or wonder foretold did not follow or come to pass, it was a sign of a false prophet, as is said, Deu 18:22,¹⁰ yet when it did come to pass, it was no sufficient or infallible sign of a true one, especially in such a case when he brings in new gods. The reason of the difference is, because many causes must concur to make a thing good and true, but any one failure is sufficient to make a thing bad or false. And particularly there are many signs, yea, such as men may think to be wonders, which may be wrought by evil spirits, God so permitting it for divers wise and just rea-

sons, not only for the trial of the good, as it here follows, but also for the punishment of ungodly men, who would not receive Divine truths, though attested by many evident and unquestionable miracles, and therefore are most justly exposed to these temptations to believe lies.

Proveth you, i.e. trieth your faith, and love, and obedience, examineth your sincerity by your constancy. See Matthew 24:24 2 Thesalonians 2:11 Revelation 13:14.¹¹

A truly proud man will believe that only he knows the path to righteousness and all others do not. Yet this belief is contrary to divine revelation, and this is especially so when prophecy is being reported as coming from God. *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge* (1 Cor. 14:29).

Eliphaz's incorrect correction of Job continues:

Job 4:18–21 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

¹⁹ ***How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?***

²⁰ ***They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.***

²¹ ***Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.***

It seems amazing that Eliphaz, after speaking of his own vision and thinking himself fully able to set Job right because of what he believes God has taught him, now casts doubt on God's trust of others

¹⁰ Deut. 18:22 *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

¹¹ Matt. 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

II Thess. 2:11 *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

Rev. 13:14 *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

in ministry—as if God would reveal revelation to him but then exclude others from receiving it. By this it is observed that pride prompts men to believe that they alone can be used by God while simultaneously believing others cannot.

Eliphaz continues his discourse, but all he can really do is speak of God, and there is nothing in his words or his “wisdom” to indicate that he was sent to speak for God. No doubt, he was both a religious and prideful man who liked to talk, but in the end he had very little profitable to say. Yes, there were traces of truth in Eliphaz’s words, but nothing he said was inspired by the Holy Spirit.¹² This is an important point to remember, lest an element of truth spoken by Eliphaz is confused to be the truth. For there are many who hold fragments of God’s Word but in the end hold nothing of it at all.

Job 5:1–27 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

² *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.*

³ *I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.*

⁴ *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.*

⁵ *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.*

⁶ *Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;*

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

⁸ *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:*

⁹ *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:*

¹⁰ *Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:*

¹¹ *To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.*

¹² *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*

¹³ *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*

¹⁴ *They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.*

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

¹⁶ *So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.*

¹⁷ *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*

¹⁸ *For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*

¹⁹ *He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*

²⁰ *In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.*

²¹ *Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.*

²² *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.*

²³ *For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.*

²⁴ *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.*

²⁵ *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*

²⁶ *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.*

²⁷ *Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*

¹² Job 42:7 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

Through Eliphaz's failed ministry to convict Job of sin, we have the first example of how the wisdom of man can help nothing in the affairs of God. That human wisdom and reason cannot convict men of sin, regardless of the garb of religiosity put around it. For this work it must be God's Holy Spirit, who alone is sufficiently able to produce true conviction in the sinner's soul and therefore prompt him to both recognize and repent of his sin. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* (John 16:8). In the end, Eliphaz's confidence in his own religious wisdom does absolutely nothing to help Job's suffering or to convince his friend of sin. This same result will hold true in all of Eliphaz's other speeches recorded in chapters 15 and 22—simply because Eliphaz was never led by God's Holy Spirit and therefore was totally incapable of helping Job to understand the real reason for his trial or any means to escape it. Ultimately it is God's Word—and not man's—that is

able to pierce the sinner's heart and bring him to his knees.¹³ So if a man does not truly possess this, as Eliphaz surely did not, then it will prove impossible that any lasting and real profit can come from his words. God's Word alone is the true discerner and critic of the human heart, and even sinners will recognize this. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart* (Heb. 4:12).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 4:12) Sharper than any two-edged sword—Literally, "two-mouthed" sword—*νομοσιδ distomon. . . . The comparison of the Word of God to a sword or to an arrow, is designed to show its power of penetrating the heart . . . The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; and the meaning here is, that the Word of God reaches the "heart"—the very center of action, and lays open the motives and feelings of the man.

¹³ *I Cor. 14:24–25 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all.*²⁵ *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*
Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Job's Initial Response to Eliphaz

Job Chapter 6

Job 6:1 *But Job answered and said,*

(Benson Commentary, Job 6:1) Job answered and said—Eliphaz concluded his discourse with an air of assurance, being very confident that what he had advanced was so plain and so pertinent that nothing could be objected to it. Job, however, is not at all convinced by it, but still justifies himself in his complaints, and condemns his friend for the weakness of his arguing. Though Eliphaz, in the beginning and some other parts of his speech, was very severe upon Job, he gave him no interruption, but heard him patiently till he had delivered his whole mind. But when he had done this, and had finished all he had to say, Job modestly, but feelingly, makes his reply.

Job 6:2–3 *Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!*

³For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

IN his defense of wrongful correction, Job attributes thoughtlessness on Eliphaz's part. He was an outsider to Job's pain and suffering and therefore lacked the empathy needed in Job's situation. Eliphaz had spoken casually, if even sincerely, but in truth he merely added to Job's misery. When in pain and sorrow, men also often dread that they must speak and would prefer remaining quiet, especially if it is needed to defend themselves of some perceived sin on their part.

Job 6:4 *For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.*

Not only were Job's afflictions on the outside, but even far more severe than this was the pain he felt in his inward spirit. He envisioned himself attacked by the Lord, which had taken his last ounce of spiritual strength from him, teaching us that a man can endure if the world turns against him and even makes assault on his life, but what he cannot endure, and that which will zap him of all spiritual strength, is if he believes the Lord has forsaken him.

Job 6:5 *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?*

Job here likens himself to beasts of the field, that when content and fed are quiet and unassuming but when in pain bray and low because of their distress and agony. Job's argument is that if creatures of the field have this luxury, does not man?

Job 6:6 *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*

Though commentators differ on the interpretation of this verse, it is certain that when men are under severe trial, previous things that once blessed them seem tasteless and totally unable to provide satisfaction to the soul.

Job 6:7 *The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 6:7) The sense of the verse seems to be, Those grievous afflictions, which I dreaded the very thought of, are now my daily, though sorrowful, bread.

Job 6:8–9 *Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!*

⁹Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

It is not simply that Job hoped to die; it was a request made to God to die. It is also an act of great mercy that God does not answer all prayers. An unanswered prayer therefore can be as equal an expression of divine love as one answered would be deemed to be. For the Lord not to grant our request can be just as benevolent and caring on His part as if He *did* grant it. When lacking God's Spirit and God's Word, man in all natural aspects is woefully ignorant as to what is best for his life.¹ Because of this he will regularly offer pleas to God that if answered would bring even greater pain and suffering to his life. In truth, unanswered requests are often the greatest blessings, simply because they are directed by divine will and not human will. The rashness of a man's words, as with Jonah,² reveals that men often toy with the idea of death without really knowing what a great spiritual enemy death really is.³

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:8) *Oh that I might have my request!* Here the second point is taken up. Eliphaz has threatened Job with death, representing it as the last and most terrible of punishments (Job 4:9, 20, 21; Job 5:2).⁴ Job's reply is that there is nothing he desires so much as death. His primary wish would have been never to have been born (Job 3:3–10);⁵ next to that, he would have desired an early death—the earlier the more acceptable (Job 3:11–19).⁶ As both these have been denied him, what he now desires, and earnestly asks for, is a speedy demise. It is not as yet clear what he thinks death to be, or whether he has any hope beyond the grave. Putting aside all such considerations, he here simply balances death against such a life as he now leads, and must expect to lead, since his disease is incurable, and decides in favour of death. It is not only his desire, but his "request" to God, that death may come to him quickly. And that God would grant me the thing that I long for; literally, my expectation or wish.

Job 6:10 *Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.*

1 Jer. 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

2 Jnh. 4:8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

3 I Cor. 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

4 Job 4:9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

Job 4:20–21 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it. ²¹Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

Job 5:2 For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

5 Job 3:3–10 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. ⁴Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. ⁵Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. ⁶As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. ⁷Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. ⁸Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. ⁹Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: ¹⁰Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

6 Job 3:11–19 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? ¹²Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? ¹³For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, ¹⁴With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves; ¹⁵Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: ¹⁶Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. ¹⁷There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. ¹⁸There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. ¹⁹The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 6:10) *I would harden myself in sorrow*— rather, “I would exult in the pain,” if I knew that that pain would hasten my death [Gesenius]. Umbreit translates the Hebrew of “Let Him not spare,” as “unsparing”; and joins it with “pain.” *concealed*—I have not disowned, in word or deed, the commands of the Holy One (Ps 119:46; Ac 20:20).⁷ He says this in answer to Eliphaz’ insinuation that he is a hypocrite.

Job 6:11 *What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?*

In defending his request of God to die and why it should not be thought unreasonable, Job declares, *What is my strength?* and therefore why maintain any desire to live in his weakened physical and mental condition? In his mind the hope of ever gaining strength again was far beyond his reach, so why should he hope to live any longer and prolong his agony?

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 6:11) What strength have I, so as to warrant the hope of restoration to health? a hope which Eliphaz had suggested. “And what” but a miserable “end” of life is before me, “that I should” desire to “prolong life”? [Umbreit].

Job 6:12 *Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?*

Is a man’s strength like that of a stone, Job asks, which is impervious to harsh climate and can endure without the least

of struggle, the raging of the sea, and all other inclement environments thrown against it? Is a man’s flesh also as brass, whereby it is likewise impervious to the arrows’ attack and the spear’s thrust? Since man is flesh and blood, made of the dust of the earth,⁸ and is as mortal as the grass of the field,⁹ why should it be thought that he is anything but weak and feeble and therefore vulnerable to so many things more powerful than himself? By what he has suffered, Job has become aware, now more than ever, of the weakness of his flesh. The flesh is weak, and those under trial become painfully conscious of how frail the human condition is, absent God’s Holy Spirit to strengthen it.¹⁰

Job 6:13 *Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?*

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Job 6:13) *Is not my help in me?*—This would be better rendered in an affirmative manner, or as an exclamation. The interrogative form of the previous verses need not be continued in this. The sense is, “alas! there is no help in me!” That is, “I have no strength; I must give up under these sorrows in despair.” So it is rendered by Jerome, Rosenmuller, Good, Noyes, and others.

And is wisdom quite driven from me?—This, also, should be read as an affirmation, “deliverance is driven from me.” The word rendered wisdom (תְּשִׁיבָה *tūshiyâh*) means properly a setting upright; then help, deliverance; and then purpose, enterprise; see the notes at Job 5:12.¹¹ Here it means that all hope of deliverance had fled, and that he was sinking in despair.

⁷ Ps. 119:46 *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.*

Acts 20:20 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,*

⁸ Ps. 103:14 *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*

⁹ Isa. 40:6–7 *The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: ⁷The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.*

¹⁰ Matt. 26:41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

¹¹ Job 5:12 *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*

Job 6:14 *To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.*

After documenting his own weakness, Job states that it should be pity that is due him, and not as Eliphaz had done, only opening his wounds further. If Eliphaz also was a true friend, compassion would fill his heart, not religious judgment. Job thus attributes the insensitive words of Eliphaz to his lack of a true fear of God. Should not therefore Eliphaz be more mindful of God's judgment in his own life and not be so causal in his reproof of Job? Words are important, and just as Eliphaz would soon learn, the Lord hears all things spoken, both in the heart and in the life, and will ultimately either condemn or justify men according to their speech.¹²

Job 6:15 *My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;*

Where Job had looked for aid and comfort from his friends, he had discovered that like a stream that vanishes in the summer, gaining any true help was hopeless.

Job 6:16 *Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid:*

Here again is another analogy on the vanity and uselessness of Eliphaz's foolish reproof of Job.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Job 6:16) *Which are blackish by reason of the ice.* Job seems to have seen wadys where, in the winter-time, the water was actually frozen into hard black ice.

Job 6:17 *What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.*

In respect to the waters spoken of in verse 16, Job now likens Eliphaz and his friends' help to warm and soon-vanishing water, which because it does not stem from a spring cannot remain constant and therefore cannot truly be trusted in. What Job had learned by personal experience in regard to trusting man is what God's Word has revealed for millennia that the help of man is vain.¹³ *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man* (Ps. 60:11).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Ps. 60:11) It is a delusion (cp. Psalm 33:17¹⁴) to look to human strength for victory.

Job 6:18 *The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.*

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 6:18) *turned aside*—rather, “caravans” (Hebrew, “travellers”) turn aside from their way, by circuitous routes, to obtain water. They had seen the brook in spring full of water: and now in the summer heat, on their weary journey, they turn off their road by a devious route to reach the living waters, which they remembered with such pleasure. But, when “they go,” it is “into a desert” [Noyes and Umbreit]. Not as English Version, “They go to nothing,” which would be a tame repetition of the drying up of the waters in Job 6:17; instead of waters, they find an “empty wilderness”; and, not having strength to regain their road, bitterly disappointed, they “perish.”

Job 6:19 *The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.*

¹² Matt. 12:36–37 *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* ³⁷*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

¹³ Ps. 118:8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

Ps. 146:3 *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*

Isa. 2:22 *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

¹⁴ Ps. 33:17 *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*

(Geneva Study Bible, Job 6:19) The troops of Tema {I} looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

(I) They who pass by it to go into the hot countries of Arabia, think to find water there to quench their thirst but they are deceived.

Job 6:20 They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

Job likens the help of his friends to dried-up streams and empty water holes, where it might be perceived thirst could be quenched but in reality could not. As he perhaps initially hoped that he could learn from his friends, now the truth was evident to Job—he could not. There are also none who place their hope and trust in man who are not in the end consistently and regularly discouraged because of whom they have placed their trust in.¹⁵ To trust in man is to trust in a fallen creature flawed with shortcomings and weakness. To trust in God is to trust in a Holy Being, perfect in every respect and faithful to all His words.¹⁶

Job 6:21 For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:21) As the dried-up brook is to the

caravan, so are ye to me, namely, a nothing; ye might as well not be in existence [Umbreit]. The Margin “like to them,” or “to it” (namely, the waters of the brook), is not so good a reading.

ye see, and are afraid—Ye are struck aghast at the sight of my misery, and ye lose presence of mind.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:21) *Ye see my casting down, and are afraid.* Here Job penetrates to the motive which had produced the conduct of his friends. They had come with good intentions, meaning to comfort and console him; but when they came, and saw what a wreck he was, how utterly “broken up” and ruined, they began to be afraid of showing too much friendliness. They thought him an object of the Divine vengeance, and feared lest, if they showed him sympathy, they might involve themselves in his punishment.

Though it is possible to lay fault upon Job's friends, as if it would never happen to us, the truth is that even the most spiritual and loyal friend can fail to help those he claims to love simply because of fear in his heart. This was evidenced in Peter when he followed Jesus *afar off*⁷ and then betrayed the very One he had claimed allegiance and love toward.¹⁸ Fear therefore does a great amount of harm to the soul,

15 Jer. 17:5 *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.*

16 II Thess. 3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

Ps. 36:5 *Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*

Mic. 7:18–20 *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. ¹⁹He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.*

17 Matt. 26:58 *But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.*

18 Luke 22:54–62 *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. ⁵⁵And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. ⁵⁷And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. ⁵⁸And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. ⁵⁹And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. ⁶⁰And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁶¹And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of*

but never more so than when it prevents men from providing aid and comfort, to those they love, simply because of the fear of coming too close and perhaps suffering the same fate as them.

Job 6:22–23 *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? ²³ Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?*

Job had not asked for his friends to come, neither had God directed them to help their friend. Therefore, all they did and would eventually say was of their own choosing. Hence, if their efforts could not help Job and they lacked the wisdom in themselves to remedy the situation, then the fault lay squarely on them. They had placed themselves in Job's trial by their own choosing and consequently would very soon need to give an account of their false assumptions of sin on Job's part, and especially so in what they had said of God.¹⁹

Job 6:24 *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.*

Job, revealing his humility, states that he would hold his tongue and not defend himself against Eliphaz's accusations if true understanding and enlightenment could be brought to him regarding sin on his part. This shows that Job was not rigid in his defense, only that his friends' weak and unenlightened arguments could easily be debunked. Yea, Job later proved that

he would listen to one wiser than himself when someone more knowledgeable of his sin finally spoke. It is thus evident that Job was ready to be taught, but not by those more spiritually ignorant than himself. Job's willingness to be instructed in his sin is proven when Elihu speaks to him in chapters 32–37. Here Job offers no defense nor refutes any of Elihu's reproof for his sin.²⁰ The same holds true when the Lord Himself continues Job's reproof in chapters, 38–42, enlightening him to his true condition and how Job had sinned against Him.²¹

(Benson Commentary, Job 6:24) Teach me— Instead of censuring and reproaching, instruct and convince me by solid arguments; *and I will hold my tongue—* I will patiently hear and gladly receive your counsels; *and cause me to understand wherein I have erred—* Show me my mistakes and miscarriages; for I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them. *How forcible are right words!*—The words of truth and solid argument have a marvellous power to convince and persuade a man; and, if yours were such, I should readily yield to them. *But what doth your arguing reprove?*—There is no truth in your assertions, nor weight in your arguments, and therefore they are of no account, and have no power with me.

and I will hold my tongue— I will patiently hear and gladly receive your counsels; *and cause me to understand wherein I have erred—* Show me my mistakes and miscarriages; for I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them.

Job 6:25 *How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?*

the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶² And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

¹⁹ Job 42:7–9 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. ⁸ Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. ⁹ So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.*

²⁰ Job 36:2 *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*

²¹ Job 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 6:25) *How forcible are right words!*—The words of truth and solid argument have a marvellous power to convince and persuade a man; and, if yours were such, I should readily yield to them. *But what doth your arguing reprove?*—There is no truth in your assertions, nor weight in your arguments, and therefore they are of no account, and have no power with me.

Job in his fear of God knew both the strength and power of divine words. He knew that the inspired Word of God possessed the ability to pierce the sinner's heart and convince him of sin.²² Hence, though Job's friends presented their arguments as having come from the Lord, Job rightly knew that they were bringing nothing truly of Him. What this teaches us is that where the true Word of God resides and is spoken and held forth by those filled with the Spirit,²³ there will always be power and accuracy in its message—as God's Word is more than sufficient to fully realize all that the Lord has purposed it should. Whenever, then, and to whomever, then, the Lord sends His Word, it will accomplish His own great design. It will not return void and will accomplish all that God has pleased it should. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it* (Isa. 55:11).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 55:11) 1. That God has a design in giving his Word to people. He has as distinct an intention in his Word as he has in sending down rain upon the earth.

22 Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

23 Mic. 3:8 *But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.*

Exod. 31:3 *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Luke 1:15 *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.*

Acts 4:8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.*

2. That whatever is his design in giving the gospel, it shall be accomplished. It is never spoken in vain, and never fails to produce the effect which he intends. The gospel is no more preached in vain than the rain falls in vain. And though that often falls on barren rocks, or on arid sands; on extended plains where no vegetation is produced, or in the wilderness 'where no man is,' and seems to our eyes in vain, yet it is not so. God has a design in each drop that falls on sands or rocks, as really as in the copious shower that falls on fertile fields. And so the gospel often falls on the hard and barren hearts of men. It is addressed to the proud, the sensual, the avaricious, and the unbelieving, and seems to be spoken in vain, and to return void unto God. But it is not so. He has some design in it, and that will be accomplished.

Job 6:26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Job 6:26) *Do ye imagine to reprove words?* i.e. do you think that all your arguments are solid and unanswerable, and all my answers are but idle and empty words? Or do you think it is sufficient to cavil and quarrel with some of my words and expressions, without considering the merits of the cause, and the truth of my condition, or giving an allowance for human infirmity, or for my extreme misery, which may easily force from me some indecent expressions? ...

Which are as wind, i.e. which you esteem to be like the wind, vain and light, without solid substance, making a great noise with little sense, and to little purpose. ... Do you take me for a desperate and distracted man, that knows not or cares not what he saith, but

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only speaks what comes first into his mind and mouth? The *wind* is oft used to express vain words, as Job 15:2 Jeremiah 5:13;²⁴ and vain things, Job 7:7 Proverbs 11:29.²⁵

Job 6:27 Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.

Job likened himself to a fatherless child who was alone in his misery and had no reliable means of help. Job's friends had failed him, and instead of helping their friend, they only dug a deeper pit for him to fall into. This is often the characteristic of the religious, to not truly look and try to understand what a man is saying but instead only attempt to catch him in his words—with the ultimate intent of judging him for them. This approach was evidenced in the religious leaders of Jesus' day who sought not to hear Christ's message of salvation but only spoke deceptive and misleading questions purposed to entrap Him.²⁶

Job 6:28 Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

Though Job was afflicted, he had not lost the discernment to know whether what he spoke was sincere or not. Eliphaz had attacked Job's character, and in response Job appealed to Eliphaz's conscience.

Job here appeals to Eliphaz's conscience. (*Benson Commentary*, Job 6:30) *Is there iniquity in my tongue?*—Consider, if there be any iniquity, or untruth, in what I have already said, or shall further speak? Have I hitherto uttered any thing that is faulty? *Cannot my taste discern perverse things*—That is, my understanding, which judges of words and

actions, as the palate doth of meats. I hope it is not so corrupted but that I can discern what is bad, though spoken by myself.

In seeking to reason with his friends, Job calls upon them to look upon him so they could more rightly judge if indeed he was a hypocrite or had lied to them. Job therefore knew that with a more careful examination of his life, it would be clearly evident that he had neither lied nor misrepresented himself. A truly righteous man also should not be hesitant to challenge people to more fully examine his life, to either prove or disprove his religious integrity. Hence, whereas the sinner will dread having his life examined and looked into deeply, a truly righteous man will welcome it, knowing that in the end he will be exonerated of all false claims against him.

Job 6:29 Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.

Job's spiritual integrity was at stake; thus, he implored his friend to re-examine if he was actually the sinner they claimed him to be. In essence, Job sought a reopening of his case, knowing that if all things were considered and rightly weighed, then it would not be with judgment that he would be looked upon but rather mercy and pity. Job's name, integrity, and righteousness were at stake; consequently, it remained reasonable that sufficient time should be given to rightfully appraise Job's life. Job knew himself innocent of all charges and thus hoped with greater inspection of his life that his friends would come to full agreement with him.

²⁴ Job 15:2 *Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?*

Jer. 5:13 *And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.*

²⁵ Job 7:7 *O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.*

Prov. 11:29 *He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.*

²⁶ Mark 12:13 *And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. Matt. 22:15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.*

Job 6:30 *Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 6:30) *Is there iniquity?—Or, injustice in my tongue? Is my taste so perverted that it cannot perceive what is perverse? “Ye appear to think that I am wholly incapable of judging my own cause because it is my own; but if ye will only condescend to return in due course, ye shall find that I know what is right as well as you, and that there is no more vicious reasoning in me than there is with you, and probably less.”*

We could continue documenting Eliphaz's continued arguments against Job as well as Job's defense of himself; however, this would only clutter the real purpose of the book, by getting lost in the words of those who did not themselves know God. To finish out Eliphaz's words, the reader can read chapters 15 and 22. In these chapters Eliphaz continues his second address by beseeching Job to hear, based primarily on what Eliphaz had seen. *I will shew thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare* (Job 15:17). By his third address, because he finds himself unable to convince Job of any wrongdoing, Eliphaz then begins accusing him of crimes well beyond any reasonable evidence. The harshness and injustice of Eliphaz's words are seen here: *Is not thy wickedness great? and*

thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken (Job 22:5–9). When sinners are not heard as they think they should be, and mostly because of pride, their improper claims and exaggerations about what others have done seem to have no limits. This was certainly true of Eliphaz and his sin, teaching us a truly self-righteous and religious man will stop at nothing, including bringing accusation against those supposedly dear to him, in an attempt to preserve his own human pride and self-righteousness.

Because of time constraints, only part of Job's initial response to Eliphaz is addressed here. The rest can be studied in chapter 7 and then later in chapters 16 and 17, as well as chapters 23 and 24. In each and every claim against Job, Eliphaz failed to convince Job of sin or to offer higher understanding as what was necessary for his deliverance. Though Eliphaz talked much of Job's perceived sin, in the end he only brought the Lord's condemnation upon himself.²⁷

²⁷ Job 42:7–8 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. ⁸Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.*

Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Bildad

Job Chapter 8

Job 8:1–2 *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How long wilt thou speak these things?
and how long shall the words of thy mouth
be like a strong wind?*

SIMILAR to what we saw in chapter one, in which messengers come one by one to inform Job of the loss of all that he owned or cherished,¹ now a similar pattern begins developing when one by one, those who are thought to be Job's friends bring accusation against him. Before it was Eliphaz, now Bildad, and soon it would be Zophar.²

Bildad demonstrates little patience toward Job and voices irritation after hearing Job's rebuttal to Eliphaz as to the cause of his trouble. Zophar's speech immediately declares not only ignorance on his part but also supreme arrogance. He likens Job's speech to being as a strong wind, claiming that Job is full of pride and that this is the reason he cannot be persuaded of guilt.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:2) The words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?—The

Syriac and Arabic (according to Walton) render this, "the spirit of pride fill thy mouth." The Septuagint renders it, "The spirit of thy mouth is profuse of words"—*πνομηῖ ῥύλο πολurrēmon*. But the common rendering is undoubtedly correct, and the expression is a very strong and beautiful one. His language of complaint and murmuring was like a tempest. It swept over all barriers, and disregarded all restraint.

Job 8:3 *Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*

Bildad's words, though accurate, come not from God's Spirit. True, the Lord will neither pervert judgment nor deny justice and cannot, because of His own righteous character, deal with men unjustly. There is nothing for Him to gain by doing so and nothing unrighteous in Him that could cause Him to act in such an unrighteous manner.

(Benson Commentary, Job 8:3) Doth God—Hebrew, אלהים, El, the mighty God, as this word signifies; pervert judgment?—Judge unrighteously? No: this is inconsistent with God's nature, which is essentially and necessarily

1 Job 1:13–20 *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

2 Job 11:1 *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

just, and with his office of governor of the world. *Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*— Hebrew, **יְשׁוּב**, *Shaddai*, a word that sets forth God's omnipotence and all-sufficiency. These names are emphatically used to prove that God cannot deal unjustly or falsely with men: because he hath no need so to do, nor temptation to it, being self-sufficient for his own happiness, and being able, by his own invincible power, to do whatsoever pleaseth him.

Though Bildad spoke of God as unable to pervert justice, in truth he should have looked within himself and cast the mote out of his own eye³ before thinking himself able to cast it out of Job. The truth is that what he said of Job was actually true of himself. The Lord had given him no right to chastise Job, and it was his own pride that had both prompted and encouraged him to do so.

Job 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;

Bildad's words reveal his complete and total lack of compassion toward Job when

speaking of the death of his children. The death of one child is unbearably painful, let alone the deaths of all of one's children. If men are not prompted by love or led by God's Holy Spirit, then even if what they speak contains elements of truth, they cannot speak for God. If a man also does not love, then any other thoughts he may have of God or of the Lord's reasons for divine judgment cannot be right.⁴ Truly enlightened men are fully aware that it grieves the Lord's character to bring forth judgment on sinful men, if even they have proved themselves worthy of it.⁵ *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?* (Ezek. 18:23).

Bildad's words continue but with the very shaky premise that if Job were truly pure and upright, then the Lord would respond to his pain.

Job 8:5–6 If thou wouldst seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

³ Matt. 7:5 *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

⁴ John 13:35 *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

⁵ I John 2:9 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

⁶ I John 3:17 *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

⁷ I John 4:12 *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

⁸ I John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

⁹ Gen. 6:5–7 *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

¹⁰ Exod. 32:14 *And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.*

¹¹ I Sam. 15:10–11 *Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, ¹¹It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.*

¹² II Sam. 24:16 *And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.*

¹³ I Chrn. 21:15 *And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.*

¹⁴ Jnh. 3:10 *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.*

6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

It is amazing how right a man's words can initially seem to be without careful biblical inspection. Bildad now claims, not simply by insinuation but also by actual declaration, that if Job were actually pure and upright, then God would hear him and rise to answer his pleas, that it was because of the sin of hypocrisy in Job that prohibited the Lord from responding to his prayers.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:6) If thou wert pure and upright— . . . Nothing could be more unjust and severe, however, than to take it for granted that he was a hypocrite, and then proceed to argue as if that were a settled point. He does not make it a supposition that possibly Job might have erred—which would not have been improper; but he proceeds to argue as if it were a point about which there could be no hesitation.

Bildad speaks of men being upright before the Lord as if it were a small thing—as if man in his sinful state could ever be pure in the Lord's eyes without the Lord making him such. It is also not because of a man's uprightness and purity that God saves men but only through His own divine mercy and grace.⁶ It is also only truly religious hypocrites who do not know this,

and Job surely was not one of these.⁷ It should be noted as well that true religion does not make a man pure but rather reveals to him how impure he really is. The truth also is that any prayer, without exception, heard and answered by God comes from a sinner to some degree. This is because even godly men are sinful men. Hence, if God were to hear only those without sin, then none could be actually heard at all. Thus, every petition that the Lord answers needs extended mercy from Him to grant it. For no prayer answered by the Lord could ever be based on the worthiness of man. God's throne is a throne of mercy and grace, wherein divine mercy is given to the unworthy. It is a throne of compassion where through God's good character and benevolence He grants the petitions made to Him by unworthy petitioners. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need* (Heb. 4:16).

Bildad speaks of Job as though he were not pure and upright, and to this Job replies, "Who then can be?" Only the self-righteous man, similar to the Pharisee Jesus speaks of in Luke 18,⁸ thinks himself worthy to stand in God's holy presence on his own merits and illustrates a stark contrast to the publican in the same parable, who cries for mercy.⁹ Job was also aware, at least to a degree,

⁶ Luke 18:13 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

⁷ Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

⁸ I Pet. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

⁹ Eph. 2:4–5 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

¹⁰ I Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

¹¹ Luke 18:9–12 *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

¹² The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

¹³ Luke 18:13–14 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

of man's unholy state. This is seen in the burnt offerings presented to God on behalf of his children in chapter one.¹⁰ Job's sacrifices reveal his consciousness of sin and the need for its atonement. Yes, Job was aware of his sin and far more than his friend, who assumed he himself had none.

Job 8:7 *Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.*

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Job 8:7) Bildad seems to have spoken under a spirit of prophecy, without being sensible of it, and not imagining in the least that so it would be in fact; for he only affirms it on supposition of Job's good behaviour for the future, putting it entirely upon that condition, which he had no great expectation of it ever being performed.

The Lord is more than able to speak through men—and He has—even when they do not know it. Hence, just as the Lord can make an ass speak,¹¹ so He can also bring truth out of those totally unaware of it. Bildad's words would be proven true, but not because of anything either divinely done or purposed by Bildad.

Job 8:8 *For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:*

Bildad here appeals to Job to consider the past—to search in history for answers concerning the present. Perhaps Bildad is referring to the men of the past who lived long lives, who because of their longevity had much more of an opportunity to understand God and His dealings with

man. No doubt, this reference is made in contrast to the relatively short life that Job had lived. In chapter 32 Elihu addresses a similar issue when he speaks of what length of life should accomplish but seldom does.

Job 32:7–9 *I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.*

⁸ *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

⁹ *Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.*

It is not merely what a man has seen, either with his own eyes, or the eyes of his ancestors, that imparts true wisdom. For this there must be given to the spirit of a man inspiration from the Almighty. It is thus only from the Lord and His divine revelation that true understanding can enter the sinner's heart, especially concerning the error of his ways. And though human history does afford some instruction, the truly deep things of life are discovered only through receiving both inspiration and revelation from God.

Job 8:9–10 *(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)*

¹⁰ *Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*

Again comparing the shortness of life of men in Job's age to those of the antediluvian fathers and those born soon after the flood, Bildad states that present knowledge is insufficient and that men should

¹⁰ *Job 1:5* And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

¹¹ *Num. 22:27–31* And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. ²⁸ And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? ²⁹ And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. ³⁰ And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? and he said, Nay. ³¹ Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

look to history to be truly taught. Whatever men also trust in is where they will search for life's answers. Thus, the man who trusts in himself¹² will look within himself as a means to guide his path while on the earth.¹³ Even so are those who trust in others as holding the keys to life, who will likewise look to man on how to live. Rarely, though, is found one whose trust lies not in himself nor in other men but solely in his God. A wise man is also one who does not rely on his natural wisdom¹⁴ as a true source of wisdom but instead seeks the spiritual wisdom that originates from above¹⁵ and is imparted by the Spirit of God.¹⁶ In truth, it is only the inspiration that God gives and comes from Him that can enlighten the sinner to the error of his ways and the divine path necessary to be forgiven of them.

Job 8:11–12 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? ¹² Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

Here Bildad refers to two marsh plants common in the area to illustrate the short and very limited prosperity of the hypocrite. He points out that hypocrites may flourish for a time but that this time of prosperity will be momentary.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:11–12) The word "rush" here רֹמֶשׁ *gôme'* denotes properly a bulrush, and especially the Egyptian papyrus—*papyrus Nilotica*; see the notes at Isaiah 18:2.¹⁷ It is derived from the verb רָמַם *gâmâ'*, to absorb, to drink up, and is given to this plant because it absorbs or drinks up moisture. . . .

Without mire—Without moisture. It grew in the marshy places along the Nile.

Can the flag—Another plant of a similar character. The word רֹחֵף *'âchû*, flag, says Gesenius, is an Egyptian word, signifying marsh-grass, reeds, bulrushes, sedge, everything which grows in wet grounds. . . . Jerome says of it, "When I inquired of the learned what this word meant, I heard from the Egyptians, that by this name everything was intended in their language which grew up in a pool." The word is synonymous with rush, or bulrush, and denotes a plant which absorbs a great quantity of water. What is the exact idea which this figure is designed to convey, is not very clear. I think it probable that the whole description is intended to represent a hypocrite, and that the meaning is, that he had in his growth a strong resemblance to such a rush or reed. There was nothing solid or substantial in his piety. It was like the soft, spongy texture of the water-reed, and would wilt under trial, as the papyrus would when deprived of water. . . .

12 Jer. 17:5 *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.*

Prov. 28:26 *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whose walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

13 Isa. 30:2 *That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!*

Isa. 31:1 *Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!*

Isa. 36:6 *Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.*

14 1 Cor. 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

15 Jas. 3:17 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

16 1 Cor. 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

17 Isa. 18:2 *That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!*

And is not cut down—Even when it is not cut down. If suffered to stand by itself, and if undisturbed, it will wither away. The application of this is obvious and beautiful. Such plants have no self sustaining power. They are dependent on moisture for their support. If that is withheld, they droop and die. So with the prosperous sinner and the hypocrite. His piety, compared with that which is genuine, is like the spongy texture of the paper-reed compared with the solid oak. He is sustained in his professed religion by outward prosperity, as the rush is nourished by moisture; and the moment his prosperity is withdrawn, his religion droops and dies like the flag without water.

Job 8:13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

Bildad's words reveal his belief that Job only outwardly professed religion and was in fact a hypocrite at heart. From Bildad's perspective, Job's world had crashed because of the lack of sincerity in his faith. Job's life, Bildad concludes, was like that of marshy plants, which can endure only in the wet season, when also there is prosperity and not adversity. And though it is true that the hypocrite's hope will perish, this would surely not be Job's end.¹⁸ As for hypocrisy, God's Word teaches us that its roots stretch deep into man's past, all the way back to man's beginning. Hence, even in the time of Job, religious hypocrisy was as present, prevalent, and pervasive as it is today. The truth, though, was that Job was not a hypocrite but was as God had defined him to be, one who feared God

and eschewed evil,¹⁹ especially the evil conduct of those manifesting insincere faith around him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:13) (1) That there were hypocrites even in that early age of the world. They are confined to no period, or country, or religious denomination, or profession. There are hypocrites in religion—and so there are in politics, and in business, and in friendship, and in morals. There are pretended friends, and pretended patriots, and pretended lovers of virtue, whose hearts are false and hollow, just as there are pretended friends of religion. Wherever there is genuine coin, it will be likely to be counterfeited; and the fact of a counterfeit is always a tribute to the intrinsic worth of the coin—for who would be at the pains to counterfeit that which is worthless? The fact that there are hypocrites in the church, is an involuntary tribute to the excellency of religion.

Though what Bildad believed about Job was not true, what he spoke of the hypocrite's end surely is, so that if a man desires actual hope of spending eternity with God, then he must avoid any and all hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is that behavior in man wherein God is honored with the lips but the heart remains estranged of Him.²⁰ Ultimately the hypocrite's actions are purposed to please man, for it is from man that he desires to gain true recognition and honor.²¹ The hypocrite also, blind to the true reality of the Lord, will set about to live his life seeking to gain honor for himself, often through actions speaking of God but with the real

¹⁸ Job 42:12–16 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.* ¹³He had also seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. ¹⁵And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. ¹⁶After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

¹⁹ Job 1:1 *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

²⁰ Mark 7:6 *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

²¹ Matt. 6:16 *Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

Matt. 23:13 *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

intention of bringing praise and glory to himself. Practically speaking, every hypocrite is a worshiper of himself. For it is from others that he seeks praise—and ultimately from the Lord, Whom he seeks to steal it from.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:13) (2) The hypocrite has a hope of eternal life. This hope is founded on various things. It may be on his own morality; it may be on the expectation that he will be able to practice a deception; it may be on some wholly false and unfounded view of the character and plans of God. Or taking the word “hypocrite” in a larger sense to denote anyone who pretends to religion and who has none, this hope may be founded on some change of feeling which he has had, and which he mistook for religion; on some supposed vision which he had of the cross or of the Redeemer, or on the mere subsiding of the alarm which an awakened sinner experiences, and the comparative peace consequent on that. The mere cessation of fear produces a kind of peace—as the ocean is calm and beautiful after a storm—no matter what may be the cause, whether it be true religion or any other cause. Many a sinner, who has lost his convictions for sin in any way, mistakes the temporary calm which succeeds for true religion, and embraces the hope of the hypocrite.

Job 8:14–15 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.
¹⁵ He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

Continuing with the theme of the frailty of the hypocrite and how his life cannot endure trial, Bildad references the spider vainly trying to hold its web together but cannot because of the feeble material it is made of. Such, then, is the hypocrite's life, Bildad reasons, which cannot stand up to life's trials because of the lack of true spiritual strength and integrity.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:15) *He shall lean upon his house*—This is an allusion to

the web or house of the spider. The hope of the hypocrite is called the house which he has built for himself; his home, his refuge, his support. But it shall fail him. In times of trial he will trust to it for support, and it will be found to be as frail as the web of the spider. How little the light and slender thread which a spider spins would avail a man for support in time of danger! So frail and unsubstantial will be the hope of the hypocrite! It is impossible to conceive any figure which would more strongly describe the utter vanity of the hopes of the wicked. . . . *He shall hold it fast*—Or, he shall lay hold on it to sustain him, denoting the avidity with which the hypocrite seizes upon his hope. The figure is still taken from the spider, and is an instance of a careful observation of the habits of that insect. The idea is, that the spider, when a high wind or a tempest blows, seizes upon its slender web to sustain itself. But it is insufficient. The wind sweeps all away. So the tempest of calamity sweeps away the hypocrite, though he grasps at his hope, and would seek security in that, as a spider does in the light and tenuous thread which it has spun.

All that Bildad states concerning the hypocrite is true—it is just not true of Job—teaching us that wisdom should never be viewed as true wisdom unless it is spoken at the very right time and exactly to the one to whom the Lord has purposed should hear it.

Bildad continues with another comparison. It is a strong one, revealing how even the earth will disown the hypocrite.

Job 8:16–18 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.
¹⁷ His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.
¹⁸ If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:18) *Then it shall deny him*—That is, the soil, the earth, or the place where it stood. This

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represents a wicked man under the image of a tree. The figure is beautiful. The earth will be ashamed of it; ashamed that it sustained the tree; ashamed that it ever ministered any nutriment, and will refuse to own it. So with the hypocrite. He shall pass away as if the earth refused to own him, or to retain any recollection of him. *I have not seen thee*—I never knew thee. It shall utterly deny any acquaintance with it. There is a striking resemblance here to the language which the Savior says he will use respecting the hypocrite in the day of judgment: “and then will I profess to them, I never knew you;” Matthew 7:23.²² The hypocrite has never been known as a pious man. The earth will refuse to own him as such, and so will the heavens.

Other translations of verse 18 show us that even the earth will deny the hypocrite.

(NIV) *But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, ‘I never saw you.’*

(NLT) *But when it is uprooted, it’s as though it never existed!*

(ESV) *If he is destroyed from his place, then it will deny him, saying, ‘I have never seen you.’*

Job 8:19 *Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.*

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:19) *Behold, this is the joy of his way*—This is evidently sarcastic. “Lo! such is the joy of his course! He boasts of joy, as all hypocrites do, but

his joy endures only for a little time. This is the end of it. He is cut down and removed, and the earth and the heavens disown him!”

And out of the earth shall others grow—This image is still derived from the tree or plant. The meaning is, that such a plant would be taken away, and that others would spring up in its place which the earth would not be ashamed of. So the hypocrite is removed to make way for others who will be sincere, and who will be useful. Hypocrites and useless people in the church are removed to make way for others who will be active and devoted to the cause of the Redeemer.

The Lord’s promise is that all false religion will one day be replaced by true religion,²³ that all false worshipers likewise should be supplanted by true worshipers; *out of the earth shall others grow*. Though hypocrites may have a temporary influence, in the end only those with genuine faith will inhabit the earth.²⁴ This is God’s promise to Israel,²⁵ and it will be fulfilled. Thus, there is no lasting and substantial hope for any who do not love, obey, and keep God’s commandments out of a sincere and pure heart. The hope of the hypocrite is vain, and it is unwise to pretend that with God he has any true hope of all.

Job 8:20 *Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:*

Bildad’s words now shift to a very general truth, but it’s one that hardly applies to Job. In fact, according to the Lord’s own words,

²² Matt. 7:23 *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

²³ II Pet. 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

²⁴ Ps. 37:29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

Prov. 2:21 *For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.*

Matt. 5:5 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

²⁵ Ps. 37:9 *For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.*

Ps. 37:22 *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*

Ps. 37:34 *Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*

Isa. 57:13 *When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;*

Job meets this standard.²⁶ No doubt, *perfect* does not mean with no flaws but only the abiding both in one's heart and life a genuine and faithful pursuit of God.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 8:20) Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man. . . . If Job is, as he says, true to God, upright, and (humanly speaking) "perfect," then he has only to go on trusting God; God will not leave him "till he fill his mouth with laughing, and his lips with rejoicing" (ver. 21); then "they that irate him shall be clothed with shame, and their dwelling-place shall come to nought" (ver. 22); but if, as we feel instinctively that Bildad believes, Job is not "perfect," but "an evil-doer," then he must expect no relief, no lull in his sufferings; he is obnoxious to all the threatenings which have formed the bulk of Bildad's discourse (vers. 8–20)—he may look to being cut off, like the rush and the flag (vers. 11, 12), crushed like the spider's web (ver. 14), destroyed, and forgotten, like the rapidly growing gourd (vers. 16–19); he must look for no help from God (ver. 20); but must be contented to pass away and make room for men of a better stamp (ver. 19).

Job 8:21–22 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

²² They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Bildad concludes that if Job is truly penitent and righteous, this will be his end. There is no real sense of certainty in his words, which are not nearly as harsh as the judgments he uttered previously concerning hypocrites, with the implication that Job was one. These verses also teach us that most are more acquainted with the evil of man than with the goodness of God, that most seem to speak much of sin but rarely that God will both forgive and cover it. Thus, the majority of Bildad's words concern the Lord's judgment on sin and very few words on how the Lord can deliver men from its grasp. In truth, Bildad could (at least he thought) identify sin but could not (as his words will reveal) help deliver Job from it. To inform a man that he is a sinner is therefore not enough unless also there is given him proper direction on how to escape remaining in his sin.

²⁶ *Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

Job's Initial Response to Bildad

Job Chapter 9

Job 9:1–2 *Then Job answered and said, ²I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*

ON the charges of him being a hypocrite, Job utters these memorable and instructive words: *But how should man be just with God?* No greater question has ever been asked, and every truly godly man will seek the Lord for its answer. How, then, can mortal and sinful man ever be found worthy of a holy and eternal God? The wiser a man is to his true condition before the Lord, the more he knows the great gulf that lies between his own unworthiness and the Lord's holiness. For no man can stand just before a just and holy God and approach His divine presence until he learns the secret of what it is to possess a broken and contrite spirit,¹ a spirit that has drained itself of all fleshly pride and is fully aware that to be truly saved, the Lord's mercy must be given, a spirit that is penitent and broken because of sin and humbly seeks the Lord for forgiveness for it, a spirit that knows the unworthiness of man and the critical need for divine mercy in order to be saved.

Job 9:3 *If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 9:3) The word "thousand" here is used to denote the largest number, or all. A man who could not answer

for one charge brought against him out of a thousand, must be held to be guilty; and the expression here is equivalent to saying that he could not answer him at all. It may also be implied that God has many charges against man. His sins are to be reckoned by thousands. They are numerous as his years, his months, his weeks, his days, his hours, his moments; numerous as his privileges, his deeds, and his thoughts. For not one of those sins can he answer. He can give no satisfactory account before an impartial tribunal for any of them. If so, how deeply guilty is man before God! How glorious that plan of justification by which he can be freed from this long list of offences, and treated as though he had not sinned.

If a man is sincere and does not deceive himself, he knows that regardless of whatever sin the Lord charges him with, he will not be able to mount an adequate and proper defense. Job knew, that if even one sin of a thousand were brought against him, he could not defend it before a Holy God. What is observed here is Job's true and godly humility before the Lord. He knows that man on his own can never be just before God and that if even one sin were accounted to him, then no proper defense could ever be properly mounted so that he could be successfully acquitted from it.

Job 9:4a *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength:*

¹ Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Ps. 34:18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* Isa. 66:2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

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God's glory lies in His infinite wisdom² and superior strength.³ No one is wiser than God, nor is any other power in creation able to overcome Him. Thus, if God is truly with a man, it matters not what other powers are against him. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* (Rom. 8:31). The power and wisdom of God are more than sufficient to lift His people above any and all weakness on their part. This includes even the sin that binds them from pleasing God. There is no match for the Lord, and if He chooses to join Himself to an individual⁴ or a people,⁵ then certain victory will follow. Therefore, whenever the people of God lack spiritual confidence, they should look toward the Lord's strength and not their own weaknesses and shortcomings. For

it is not by either the holiness or strength of men that true deliverance comes, but solely from Him Who is Himself mighty in strength and greater in might than all other forces in creation.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 9:4) When Job mentions the wisdom and power of God, he forgets his complaints.

Job 9:4b who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Though Job was not aware of how to be just before God, he was aware that hardening himself against the Lord was not the answer. No one, not even one person, has ever hardened himself against God and God's will for his life and won. Pharaoh is a visible example of this,⁶ but he is just one

2 Ps. 147:5 *Great is our LORD, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*

Isa. 40:28 *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

Rom. 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

3 I Chr. 29:11-12 *Thine, O LORD is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. ¹²Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*

II Chr. 20:6 *And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?*

Jer. 10:12-13 *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.¹³When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.*

Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

4 Josh. 1:5 *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

5 Isa. 43:1-6 *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. ²When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. ³For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. ⁴Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. ⁵Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; ⁶I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;*

6 Exod. 7:22 *And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exod. 8:15 *But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exod. 8:19 *Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Exod. 8:32 *And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.*

of many who have suffered the awful consequences of hardening one's heart against the Lord. The religious leaders in Christ's day also hardened themselves against the Son of God,⁷ and as a result they crucified the very One sent to save them and in the end doomed their own souls to eternal damnation.⁸ Bent on rebellion, those who manifest a hard heart will shut out all other voices, especially God's, to do what they desire. At the base also of the hardening of the heart is stubbornness to do one's own will⁹ and not submit himself to God's will. It is thus a very vain and fruitless thing to harden oneself against the will of the Lord, and none have ever done so and ultimately prospered because of it.

Job 9:5–6 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.

⁶ Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:5) *Which removeth the mountains*—In order to show how vain it was to contend with God, Job refers to some exhibitions of his power and greatness. The "removal of the mountains" here denotes the changes which occur in earthquakes and other violent convulsions of nature. This illustration of the power of God is often referred to in the Scriptures; compare Judges 5:5; 1 Kings 19:11; Psalm 65:6; Psalm 114:4; Psalm 144:5; Isaiah 40:12; Jeremiah 4:24.¹⁰ . . .

Exod. 9:7 *And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.*

Exod. 9:12 *And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.*

Exod. 9:34–35 *And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.³⁵ And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.*

Exod. 15:4 *Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.*

7 Mark 3:1–5 *And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.² And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.³ And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.⁴ And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.⁵ And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.⁶ And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.*

Mark 6:52 *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

Mark 8:17 *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?*

8 Matt. 20:18–19 *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,¹⁹ And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

Matt. 26:4 *And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.*

Matt. 27:1–2 *When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:² And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.*

Mark 15:1 *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.*

Luke 22:2 *And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.*

Luke 23:1 *And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.*

John 7:1 *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*

John 11:53 *Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

9 Jer. 18:12 *And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.*

10 Judg. 5:5 *The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.*

1 Kgs. 19:11 *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:*

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Which overturneth them in his anger—As if he were enraged. There could scarcely be any more terrific exhibition of the wrath of God than the sudden and tremendous violence of an earthquake.

As Scripture reveals, the Lord's power is so great, so fierce, and so overwhelming that on the day of the Lord the entire earth will be dissolved with a fervent heat. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (II Pet. 3:10). If men truly knew the Lord's power and His supernatural ability to affect even mountains, which are able to be dissolved at His will, then they would learn how foolish it is to reject His sovereignty. For He Who is able to remove mountains from their bases is easily able to remove the feeble men who trek upon them.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Pet. 3:10) Water, in its component parts, is inflammable in a high degree; and even the diamond has been shown to be combustible.

Job 9:7–8 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. 8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

Though natural laws presently govern creation, the Lord can easily set them aside or even change them.¹¹ The Lord has created both the heavens and earth,¹² and all is under His complete control. Thus, just as He has set the laws of nature, so can He alter them according to His own will. It is also amazing that the very One Who has called us to be His own and to cry to Him, "Abba, Father," has such awesome power over all things. We spiritually cannot say that we know God if we remain ignorant of His power, that we have fully believed in the Lord, if we remain blind to His extensive and supreme authority over all things.¹³

Ps. 65:6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:

Ps. 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.

Ps. 144:5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

Isa. 40:12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Jer. 4:24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

11 Josh. 10:12–14 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. ¹³And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. ¹⁴And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

12 Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

13 Isa. 45:7–9 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. ⁸Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. ⁹Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Isa. 46:9–10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Ps. 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Ps. 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Isa. 40:22–23 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: ²³That bringeth

Job 9:9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

Much knowledge has been lost of the study of the stars and how they foretold the coming of Christ.¹⁴ Furthermore, as artificial light increases on the earth, men become more and more removed from the Lord's celestial lights, which themselves reveal the glory of God.¹⁵

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:9) *Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south*: these he names as stars or constellations of greatest note and eminency; for so they are both in Scripture and other authors, and such as have, or are thought to have, a special influence in raising storms and tempests; but under them he seems to comprehend all the stars, which as they were created by God, so are under his government. Arcturus is a northern constellation, near that called the Bear, which riseth to us about the beginning of September, and by its rising produceth (as Pliny affirms) horrible storms and tempests. Orion is a more southerly constellation, that ariseth to us in December, and is noted by astronomers for raising fearful winds and tempests, both by sea and land. The Pleiades is a constellation not far from Orion, and near that called the Bull, which we call the Seven Stars: to us it riseth at the beginning of the spring, and by

its rising causeth rains and tempests, and therefore is unwelcome to mariners at sea. *By the chambers* (or *inmost and secret chambers*, as the word signifies) of the south, he seems to understand those stars and constellations which are towards the southern pole, which are fitly called *inward chambers*, because they are for the most part hid and shut up (as chambers commonly are) from these parts of the world, and do not rise or appear to us till the beginning of summer, when they also raise southerly winds and tempests, as astronomers observe.

Job 9:10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Other Bible translations give us a better sense of this passage.

(NIV) *He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.*

(NLT) *He does great things too marvelous to understand. He performs countless miracles.*

(NASB) *It is He who does great things,^[a] the unfathomable, And wondrous works without number. Lit until there is no searching out*

the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

Isa. 14:24 *The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:*

14 Num. 24:17 *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*
 Matt. 2:1–10 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.³ When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.⁵ And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,⁶ And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.⁷ Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.⁹ When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

15 Ps. 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

Ps. 50:6 *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

Ps. 97:6 *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

(AMP) *Who does great things, [beyond understanding,] unfathomable,*

Yes, marvelous and wondrous things without number.

What God has done in His creation is past finding out. The wonders in His creation are without number. Such, then, is the power and majesty of the Lord, which both are beyond human comprehension.

Job 9:11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

Here Job confesses how blind he is to God's presence. He knows God exists, but he cannot see God's face or perceive how

He is working for him, whether blessing him or as at this time in his life allowing things to be taken from him. Ultimately it was also Job's spiritual blindness that caused him to unrighteously make false claims against the Lord. This is because what Job did not realize or truly know was that the Lord was working quietly to bring about all the good that He had always purposed for Job's life. Indeed, the Lord is invisible to the human eye,¹⁶ but through the Spirit of God, given to us by God,¹⁷ the reality of His supernatural being is made known.¹⁸

(Benson Commentary, Job 9:11) Lo he goeth by me—Or besides, or before me, in my presence; that is, he worketh by his providence in ways of mercy or judgment. And I see him not—I see the effects, but I cannot under-

¹⁶ Heb. 11:27 *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

I Tim. 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

I Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Rom. 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

¹⁷ *I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

I John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

I Thess. 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

¹⁸ *I Cor. 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

I Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Prov. 1:23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Neh. 9:20 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withholdest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

I John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Matt. 10:19–20 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. ²⁰For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Luke 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

stand the causes or grounds of his actions, for they are incomprehensible to me, or any other man: for though Job speaks only in his own person, yet he means to affirm it of all men, that such is the weakness of their understandings that they cannot search out God's counsels and ways. The operations of second causes are commonly obvious to our senses; but, though God works by those causes, we see him not, nor can our finite minds fathom his counsels, apprehend his motions, or comprehend the measures he takes. *He passeth on also*—He goeth from place to place; from one action to another. *But I perceive him not*—He passes and acts invisibly and undiscerned.

All men are innately blind to the Lord and His movements upon the earth until He chooses to reveal Himself to them.¹⁹ It is also the voice of God that awakens men to the call of God. Hence, it is generally true that the Lord will open a man's ears before his eyes.²⁰ *And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me* (Ezek. 2:2). Through then exposure to the Lord's Word and His Spirit, He enters and prompts men to obey His will.²¹ It is a beautiful reality in both Scripture and life that the Lord of creation so humbles Himself to reveal His presence to men²²

19 Eph. 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

20 Job 33:16–17 *Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, ¹⁷That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

Job 42:5 *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*

21 Num. 11:25 *And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*

I Sam. 16:13 *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.*

I Sam. 19:23 *And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.*

I Chrn. 12:18 *Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.*

II Chrn. 15:1–2 *And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: ²And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

II Chrn. 24:20 *And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.*

Ezek. 3:24 *Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.*

Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 19:6 *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

22 Gen. 7:1 *And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.*

Gen. 9:12 *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:*

Gen. 28:13–15 *And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whither thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; ¹⁴And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

Gen. 35:9–12 *And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.*

¹⁰And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. ¹¹And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; ¹²And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

so that through heavenly communication sinners can be stirred to do His will and carry out His commandments.²³

Job 9:12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Job's fear of God is seen here through his knowing that if God chooses to take something away, then it can never be recovered, and that there is no man, nor any other heavenly being, who is able to question what the Lord purposes to do,

nor stand up against Him to prevent its being done.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:12) Behold, he taketh away—property, friends, or life.

Who can hinder him?—Margin, turn him away. Or, rather, “who shall cause him to restore?” that is, who can bring back what he takes away? He is so mighty, that what he removes, it is impossible for us to recover.

Who will say unto him, What doest thou?—A similar expression occurs in Daniel 4:35.²⁴ The meaning is plain. God has a right to

Exod. 29:42 This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.

I Sam. 23:2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

I Sam. 23:4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

I Sam. 30:8 And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

II Sam. 5:19 And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

II Sam. 5:23–24 And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. ²⁴And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

I Kgs. 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

Jnh. 1:1–2 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

Ps. 99:7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them. Ezek. 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

Ezek. 43:2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

Zech. 1:16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

Luke 3:21–22 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, ²²And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased.

Acts 18:9–10 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁰For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

23 Acts 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Acts 11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

Acts 13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 16:6–7 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Acts 19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

24 Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto

remove any thing which we possess. Our friends, property, health, and lives, are his gift, and he has a right to them all. When he takes them away, he is but taking that which is his own, and which has been lent to us for a little time, and which he has a right to remove when it seems good to him. This truth Job fully admits, and in the calm contemplation of all his losses and his sorrows, he acknowledges that God had a right to do as he had done; see note, Job 1:21.²⁵

In truth, every event in Job's life, whether he or his companions knew it or not, was according to divine will. None can stop the Lord's will from being accomplished, and none can change its desired end.²⁶ If we do not accept this truth, then we will forever play the victim. In truth, Job was never a victim, overcome with tragedy beyond God's divine control; rather, he was a God-fearing man who, though under severe spiritual trial purposed by God, was ultimately brought through it to see God's good, generous, and benevolent end for his life. The spiritual lesson that Job needed taught was deep and profound, and only an arduous trial and clear heavenly instruction could help him learn it.²⁷

Job 9:13 *If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:13) So Dr. Good renders it, "the supports of the

him, What doest thou?

25 Job 1:21 *And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

26 Isa. 46:9–11 *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ¹¹Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*

Isa. 14:24 *The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:*

Isa. 14:27 *For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?*

Ps. 135:6 *Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*
Isa. 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

27 Job 42:5–6 *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. ⁶Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

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

proud." The meaning is, probably, that all those things which contribute to the support of pride, or all those persons who are allied together to maintain the dominion of pride on the earth, must sink under the wrath of God.

Job 9:14 *How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?*

Job inwardly knew of his inferiority to speak to God and carry sufficient wisdom to properly reason with Him. No man also will feel so small in God's sight than when he is asked to mount a credible defense of his sin, his life, and his actions. Ultimately, man is unworthy of addressing the Lord, and his spiritual timidity before Him proves this.

Job 9:15 *Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.*

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 9:15) Job is still righteous in his own eyes, ch. 32:1,²⁸ and this answer, though it sets forth the power and majesty of God, implies that the question between the afflicted and the Lord of providence, is a question of might, and not of right; and we begin to discover the evil fruits of pride and of a self-righteous spirit. Job begins to manifest a disposition to condemn God, that he may justify himself, for which he is afterwards reproved.

Many a man has maintained a stubborn belief in his internal righteousness with quietness, lacking the courage to bring his case to God yet still self-righteously believing himself to be innocent. Silence also can be as much a sign of a man justifying himself as any outward words spoken to the Lord. What this also teaches us is that mere silence does not prove a man humble. In fact, sometimes it proves the complete opposite. No man is as stubborn as the one who inwardly believes himself righteous before the Lord yet lacks the courage to bring his case into the open, where it may be impartially judged by Him.

Job 9:16 If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:16) If I had called, and he had answered me—It is remarked by Schultens, that the expressions in these verses are all taken from courts of justice. If so, the meaning is, that even if Job should call the Almighty to a judicial action, and he should respond to him, and consent to submit the great question about his innocence, and about the justice of the divine dealings with him, to trial, yet that such was the distance between God and him, that he could not hope successfully to contend with him in the argument. . . .

Would I not believe—I cannot believe that he would enter into my complaint. He deals with me in a manner so severe; he acts toward me so much as a sovereign, that I have no reason to suppose that he would not continue to act toward me in the same way still.

When men are faced with tragedy and believe it to be the Lord's doing, they lose confidence that their voice will be heard by Him. Feeling removed from God's presence, sinners often refuse to believe that God remains open to their prayers and is willing to come to their aid. What the sinner feels, though, is not necessarily true, as all prayers of faith

asked according to divine will will be both heard and granted by God. Hence, if a man maintains confidence in the Lord and disregards feelings of his own unworthiness, then all requests made according to divine will are promised to be granted. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us* (I John 5:14).

Job 9:17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

Job believes that the storms that overwhelmed his life and brought tragedy to it were without divine cause or reason. He considered that God acted arbitrarily in his life, without proper justification or through a rightful system of judicial law. Job thinks of God as an autocrat who has used His power unjustly and impetuously. Skeptics of the Lord hold this same improper belief, that the Lord is not ruled by strict judicial fairness but rather by some sort of temporal emotionalism, as if man is a pawn of God and the Lord delights in playing whatever games with man He desires.

Job 9:18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

According to Job, God was to blame for the torrents of assaults aimed directly at him that did not even allow him to catch his breath. They had come one by one, and with such rapid succession that the continual pain Job felt quickly transformed into internal bitterness.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 9:18) My pains and miseries are continual, and I have not so much as a breathing time free from them.

Job's true belief was that the Lord was unjust in dealing with him and that he was merely a helpless victim. The fault was the Lord's, and Job could see no jus-

tifiable reason why He was dealing so unfairly with him. He thus blames God for his inability to catch his breath and for filling his life with nothing but bitterness.

Job 9:19 *If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?*

Not only had God afflicted him, reasoned Job, but He had also been unfair in not allowing him to plead his case. According to Job, the Lord had produced his misery, and then, to compound the injustice, He had not even given Job a chance to stand trial and defend himself. The Lord had wronged him, or so he thought, and was continuing to do so by withholding from him the opportunity to present a fair defense.

Job 9:20 *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*

When a man views himself as a victim, he will see even his own sinful condition as a reason for victimization. Job believed not only that he could not defend himself against the Lord but also that he was a victim of his own conscience. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Lord demanded that Job gird up his loins like a man and stand before Him. It is not until men stand and are prepared to give an account of their lives and therefore confess their sin that God can deliver them.²⁹

Job 9:21 *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:21) Yet would I not know my soul—Or, "I could not know my soul. If I should advance such a claim, it must be from my ignorance of myself." Is not this true of all the claims to

perfection which have ever been set up by man? Do they not demonstrate that he is ignorant of his own nature and character? So clear does this seem to me, that I have no doubt that Job expressed more than three thousand years ago what will be found true to the end of time—that if a man advances the claim to absolute perfection, it is conclusive proof that he does not know his own heart. A superficial view of ourselves, mingled with pride and vanity, may lead us to think that we are wholly free from sin.

Job 9:22–23 *This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.*

²³ *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.*

The harshness of Job's complaints reveals the unsoundness of his thoughts. There is no true and sincere faith in the Lord here but only rash and harsh judgments against His providence. Such is the case with an afflicted man, as he will often harshly blame the Lord for injustice in order to maintain internal belief of his own innocence. *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?* (Job 40:8). So great is man's desire to be righteous in his own eyes that he will condemn God in order to remain so. If men do not think themselves corrupt in any other way, they should be able to detect their corruptness by how blame is consistently directed toward God, away from themselves—teaching us that those who view themselves as innocent will inevitably view God as evil, for none will lay stronger claims against the Lord than those who believe themselves pure in their own eyes.³⁰ And none will lay charges against the Lord more than those righteous in their own sight.³¹ It is thus those who think that they walk purely upon the earth who cast the greatest accusations against heaven and its dealings with them.

²⁹ Job 38:3 *Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

³⁰ Prov. 30:12 *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

³¹ Prov. 26:12 *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

Job 9:24 *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?*

Job now blames the Lord for the wicked ruling the earth, as if the rise of sin in man was the fault of God. Lost in the equation is the role men's own sin plays in the brokenness of their lives.

Job 9:25–26 *Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.*

²⁶*They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.*

Job presumptuously believed that whatever good he had hoped to receive in this life was behind him. His mortal life was quickly passing by, and he envisioned that no good would ever come in the future. Despair and unbelief had prompted such false conclusions, but they would later be proven untrue.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Job 9:26) *the swift ships*] the ships of reed. These skiffs, constructed of a wooden keel and the rest of reeds, are the “vessels of bulrushes” of Isaiah 18:2.³² They carried but one or two persons, and being light were extremely swift. The ancients were familiar with them; Plin. xiii. 11, *ex ipso quidem papyro navigia texunt*; and Lucan, Phars, iv. 36,

conseritur bibula Memphitis cymba papyro,

(quoted in Gesenius, *Com. on Is.* i. p. 577).

Job as usual heaps images together to picture out the brevity of his life, cf. ch. Job 7:6 seq.³³ Here the images are new, a runner, a skiff of reed, an eagle swooping on his prey.

Job 9:27 *If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:*

It is ultimately the Lord only, Who is the true Healer of a broken heart, so that although a man may try ceasing his complaints and forget his troubles, the truth is that none can truly forget their complaints or leave their own sorrow, nor bring any lasting comfort to themselves. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds* (Ps. 147:3). Practically, it would require the Lord to end Job's captivity³⁴ and restore joy to his soul.

Job 9:28 *I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.*

Job knew that forgiveness was the key to his deliverance, but he lacked confidence that God would provide it. Even self-righteous men know that for suffering to cease, God must grant forgiveness. In the end, Job was at least partially aware that the Lord would have to pardon him and proclaim him innocent, simply because his personal claims of innocence were doing nothing to remove his suffering.

Job 9:29 *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?*

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Job 9:29) *I shall be wicked, or guilty, to wit, before thee.* Whether I be holy or wicked, if I dispute with thee, I shall be found guilty. . . . Why should I trouble myself with clearing mine innocency, seeing God will still hold me guilty?

Sinners will often take the stance that since they are sinners, why should they labor to be anything different? This is hardly a strong argument for choosing to remain in sin, but it is commonly employed when

³² *Isa. 18:2* *That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!*

³³ *Job 7:6* *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.*

³⁴ *Job 42:10* *And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

men have chosen not to exert the spiritual effort and labor necessary to gain true and sincere faith in God.³⁵

Job 9:30–31 *If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; ³¹Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*

No doubt, the labor Job refers to in verse 29 is that of cleansing himself. Job's view of God has become so twisted that he believes that even if he washed himself, God would still plunge him into a ditch. What is missing is the divine revelation that man cannot cleanse himself, that for a man to be clean before God, the Lord must make him that way since men through their own power can do nothing to truly sanctify their souls or remove the strong stain of sin from them.

Job 9:32–33 *For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. ³³Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*

Job again makes an appeal for his day in court. He hopes for a *daysman*, or “an umpire or arbiter, a mediator.”³⁶ Little does Job know that Elihu will become exactly this. Elihu's ministry, though, will not help Job plead his case to God. Instead, Elihu will bring God's case to Job. The Lord will indeed answer Job's prayers, just

not in the way he might think it should be. In this Job demonstrates some awareness: of his need for another greater than himself, to plead on his behalf. Job's own efforts had failed and he knew enough to realize that another was needed to plead on his behalf.

Job 9:34 *Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: ³⁵Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.*

How important and how needed is this lesson today—that fear of God and fear of His judgment can be removed only if a man has a sincere and genuine belief in the One Who is able to make true mediation for his sin, that every man needs a mediator between him and God and that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is this mediator. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (I Tim. 2:5).

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I Tim. 2:5) one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. When the sin of man had provoked Divine justice, and the guilt could not be expiated without satisfaction, God appointed his Son incarnate to mediate between his offended Majesty and his rebellious subjects.

Because of time constraints, only Job's initial response is addressed here.

³⁵ Heb. 4:9–11 *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.* ¹⁰*For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* ¹¹*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

³⁶ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 9:33

Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Zophar

Job Chapter 11

Job 11:1–3 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

² Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?

³ Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

ZOPHAR esteems Job as full of words, filled with himself. Could a man so overflowing with vain speech truly be justified? Zophar, like the preceding miserable “comforters,” erringly feels it his religious duty (albeit not a duty received from God) to set Job right. Zophar thus enters into the discussion, not with what should be a true friend’s consideration but with accusation, possessing an even more caustic attitude than his other two cohorts. No doubt he is both offended and frustrated that Job could defend himself against Eliphaz’s and Bildad’s judgments concerning Job’s life. This has incensed him, and judgment flows from unrighteous anger. From the moment Zophar speaks, neither love nor compassion is seen as a motive, but only indignation—a personal animosity produced from the fact that Job could not be humbled.

(Benson Commentary, Job 11:1) *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite*—How hard is it to preserve calmness in the heat of disputation! Eliphaz began modestly: Bildad was a little rougher: but Zophar falls upon Job without mercy. “Those that have a mind to fall out with their brethren, and to fall foul upon them, find it necessary to put the worst colours they can upon them and their performances, and, right or wrong, to make them odious.” Zophar, highly provoked that Job should dare to call in question a maxim so universally assented to as that urged by his friends, immediately charges him home with secret wickedness. He tells him that he makes not the least doubt, were the real state of his heart laid open, that it would be found God had dealt very gently with him, Job 11:2–7.¹ That he was highly blameworthy to pretend to fathom the depths of divine providence, a task to which he was utterly unequal: that, however his wickedness might be concealed from me, yet it was open and bare to God’s all-seeing eye; could he therefore imagine that God would not punish the wickedness he saw? Job 11:7–11.² It would surely be far more becoming in him to submit, and give glory to God, by making an ample confession and full restitution. In that case, indeed, he might hope for a return of God’s goodness to him; but the way he was in at present was the common road of the

¹ Job 11:2–7 *Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?*

² *Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.* ³ *But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.* ⁷ *Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*

² Job 11:7–11 *Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.* ¹⁰ *If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? It* ¹¹ *For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?*

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wicked, whose only hope was annihilation, Job 11:12–20.³—Heath and Dodd.

Bitterness often enters self-righteous men when their arguments and accusations are rebutted. This was the case with Zophar, as he was incensed that Job could so easily defend himself against Eliphaz's and Bildad's words. Consequently, carnal and fleshly anger filled him because in religious arrogance he surmised that he, as well as Job's other two friends, were superior to Job. This is often the case when people view themselves as above tragedy and above those experiencing it. Because they themselves have not been afflicted, they view themselves above those who have.

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 11:1–6) Zophar attacked Job with great vehemence. He represented him as a man that loved to hear himself speak, though he could say nothing to the purpose, and as a man that maintained falsehoods. He desired God would show Job that less punishment was exacted than he deserved. We are ready, with much assurance, to call God to act in our quarrels, and to think that if he would but speak, he would take our part. We ought to leave all disputes to the judgment of God, which we are sure is according to truth; but those are not always right who are most forward to appeal to the Divine judgment.

The Scriptures reveal that men should obey the truth and not the unrighteous indignation and anger that lives within them. *But unto them that are contentious,*

and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath (Rom. 2:8). What men obey—whether it is God and His holy Word or the carnal impulses that originate from their flesh—reveals the nature they are both of and led by. When it is not God and His Holy Spirit, then self-righteous indignation and deep-seated spiritual animosity will fill the sinner. Practically speaking, those who are subject to both God and His Spirit will strongly contrast with the internal contentiousness of the unsaved. Because also those who are not born of God lack the spiritual fruit⁴ that will accompany being filled with God's Holy Spirit, they will lack the internal joy and peace that fill the saved. Coupled with this is the fact that when sinners do not possess a strong argument against the righteous, they will often use exaggeration and outlandish lies to strengthen their case. This is exactly what is seen in Zophar's hateful and caustic rhetoric. In reality, what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar accused Job of, was actually true of themselves. They claimed they had come to help and comfort Job, but ultimately their actions demonstrated a far different, bordering on sinister, motive.

Just because a man feels the urge to speak and give an answer for something, that does not mean that he should. God's Word often instructs believers to be silent, even if what is being said or spoken against them is wrong.⁵ Jesus held His peace after two false witnesses accused

³ Job 11:12–20 *For vain men would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.* ¹³*If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;* ¹⁴*If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.* ¹⁵*For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.* ¹⁶*Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:* ¹⁷*And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday: thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.* ¹⁸*And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.* ¹⁹*Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.* ²⁰*But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.* ⁴ Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,* ²³*Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

⁵ Ps. 141:3 *Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*

Prov. 10:19 *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.*

Prov. 18:13 *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*

Prov. 21:23 *Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.*

Him.⁶ Answering a fool also according to his folly only gives him more grounds for conceit.⁷ Ultimately the Lord will fight His people's battles,⁸ and this is why they should not think that they must fight every battle themselves.⁹ The more Job's three angry and self-righteous friends spoke, the more they strengthened the Lord's case against themselves. Eventually their own words would be the reason for God's anger toward them.

Scripture instructs all believers to *study to be quiet, and to do your own business*.¹⁰ Saints also should not get so caught up in others' lives that they forget to examine our own.¹¹ Job's friends had assumed the roles of judges when in fact they should have remained students. By inserting themselves and their shallow understanding into Job's life, they only brought disgrace upon themselves. And though they spoke of Job as thinking himself innocent and pure, this is actually what they conceitedly believed their own character to be. Had they been quiet and merely stayed and prayed for their friend, God's anger would have no need to eventually be directed toward them. They had displayed anger toward Job, and God would reciprocate His own anger toward them.¹² Ultimately their judgement upon Job would be measured to equal God's

judgment toward them. *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again* (Matt. 7:2).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Matt. 7:2) *For with what judgments ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete*—whatever standard of judgment ye apply to others.

it shall be measured to you again—This proverbial maxim is used by our Lord in other connections—as in Mr 4:24,¹³ and with a slightly different application in Lu 6:38¹⁴—as a great principle in the divine administration. Unkind judgment of others will be judicially returned upon ourselves, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

Job 11:4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

Zophar's words at least initially appear similar to Elihu's words in Job 33:8–9: *Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.* The difference between Elihu's and Zophar's words, though, lies in their motivation for speaking them. Hence, whereas Elihu sought Job's reformation,

6 Matt. 26:61–63 *And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*

7 Prov. 26:4 *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.*

8 Exod. 14:14 *The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

Deut. 3:22 *Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.*

9 Eph. 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

10 I Thess. 4:11 *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*

11 I Tim. 4:16 *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

12 Job 42:7 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

13 Mark 4:24 *And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.*

14 Luke 6:38 *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

Zophar inclined himself only to accuse and condemn Job. It is thus not always merely what is spoken but also the manner and the motive one speaks from that allow the sinner to hear the truth. So while Zophar sought to incriminate Job of sin, feeling himself free from it, Elihu sought to enlighten Job to realize his sin in order that God might forgive him and bring restoration to his life. While Zophar sought a verdict and condemnation and nothing more, Elihu sought to clear Job of his confusion so that he could obtain mercy from God. This is also why Job rejected Zophar's words but did not offer any repudiation to Elihu's godly correction, teaching us that the spirit a man is led by will greatly affect the effectiveness of his words. Elihu's correction also adds an element of truth that was absent in Zophar's address. *Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy* (Job 33:10). In truth, Job did to God what his friends were doing to him—he asserted blame without any true understanding of the situation. It is one thing to defend our faith when it is challenged with insincerity by men like Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but it's quite another matter to lay charges against the Lord because we think ourselves pure.

Job 11:5–6 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

It is hard to imagine that Job's pain and the loss he endured was less than his iniquity, but this is exactly what Zophar claimed. Zophar also, because of colossal arrogance, claimed to speak for the Lord when in fact the Lord was saying absolutely nothing through him. It is highly presumptuous for men to assume, and

even worse to declare, what God thinks when in truth He has revealed absolutely nothing to them. To do this is to prophesy out of one's own heart, which God greatly despises and considers an extremely egregious sin. *Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD* (Ezek. 13:2). As evidenced in Ezekiel, it is a great and notable sin to speak something out of one's own heart originating from mere human imagination and then falsely attribute its source as God.

*(Benson Commentary, Ezek. 13:2–4) Song of Solomon of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel—*So they called themselves, as if none but they had been worthy of the name of Israel's prophets, who were indeed Israel's deceivers. *Say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts—*According to their own fancy, without having received any revelation from God. ... *Wo unto the foolish prophets—*Ignorant and wicked, and who, while they wilfully deceived the people, unthinkingly brought destruction upon themselves. Observe, reader, foolish prophets are not of God's sending: those whom he sends, he either finds or makes fit for his work. Where he gives warrant, he gives wisdom. *That follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing—*Who utter their own imaginations for true prophecies, and pretend to have visions when they never had any.

There are many matters that God's Word declares should not be judged until the Lord comes and provides sufficient light to judge them correctly. The tragedies in Job's life are a great example of this. *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God* (I Cor. 4:5).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 4:5) Judge nothing—*Pass no decided opinion; see the

note at Matthew 7:1.¹⁵ The apostle here takes occasion to inculcate on them an important lesson—one of the leading lessons of Christianity—not to pass a harsh opinion on the conduct of any man, since there are so many things that go to make up his character which we cannot know; and so many secret failings and motives which are all concealed from us.

Until the Lord come—The Lord Jesus at the Day of Judgment, when all secrets shall be revealed, and a true judgment shall be passed on all men. . . .

(1) That we should not be guilty of harsh judgment of others.

(2) the reason is, that we cannot know their feelings and motives.

(3) that all secret things will be brought forth in the great Day, and nothing be concealed beyond that time.

(4) that every man shall receive justice there. He shall be treated as he ought to be. The destiny of no one will be decided by the opinions of people; but the doom of all will be fixed by God. How important is it, therefore, that we be prepared for that Day; and how important to cherish such feelings, and form such plans, that they may be developed without involving us in shame and contempt!

Job 11:7–10 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

⁸ It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

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

¹⁰ If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

Zophar asks Job to do something he neither knows how to nor can do himself—to search and find out God. In truth, Zophar had not spoken anything of the Lord that Job did not already know. Because of this,

¹⁵ *Matt. 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

Job's response to the shallow and superficial wisdom spoken to him is fitting: *No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you* (Job 12:2). It is also a sign of true wisdom to inwardly both know and confess that whatever we might think we know of the Lord, and perhaps even of ourselves, is far below what we ought to know. *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know* (I Cor. 8:2). Whatever then any man thinks he knows of the Lord, and especially His dealings with man, is vastly inferior to what he should know. There is no exception to this truth, and no man should think himself above this very clear and divine revelation.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, I Cor. 8:2) There is no proof of ignorance more common than conceit of knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to good purpose. And those who think they know any thing, and grow vain thereon, are the least likely to make good use of their knowledge. Satan hurts some as much by tempting them to be proud of mental powers, as others, by alluring to sensuality. Knowledge which puffs up the possessor, and renders him confident, is as dangerous as self-righteous pride, though what he knows may be right.

Job 11:11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

Zophar foolishly, because also of his own pride, believed Job to be both wicked and vain, which was in fact the complete opposite of Job's true character.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 11:11) *For he knoweth vain men*—Though men know but little of God, and therefore are very unfit judges of his counsels and actions, yet God knows man exactly. He knoweth that every man in the world is guilty of much vanity and folly, and therefore seeth sufficient reason for his severity against the best men. *He seeth*

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wickedness also—He perceiveth the wickedness of evil men, though it be covered with the veil of religion.

The vanity and emptiness that Zophar referred to did not lie in Job's religion but in his own. Zophar assumed his own faith holy and Job's vain, yet in the end the opposite would be proven true. It is also interesting that later in the book the Lord never speaks directly to Zophar and never speaks to him by name. What this teaches us is that when the Lord resists the proud¹⁶ it will often entail not even speaking directly to them.

Job 11:12 *For vain men would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.*

Other translations give us a clearer understanding of Zophar's words.

(NIV) *But the witless can no more become wise than a wild donkey's colt can be born human.*

(Berean Study Bible) *But a witless man can no more become wise than the colt of a wild donkey can be born a man!*

(NAS) *An idiot will become intelligent When a wild donkey is born a human.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 11:12) *For, or, yet, vain man would be wise*—Man, who since the fall is void of all true wisdom, pretends to be wise, and able to pass a censure upon all God's ways and works. *Born like a wild ass's colt*—Ignorant, and dull, and stupid, as to divine things, and yet heady and untractable. Such is man by his birth; this evil is now natural and hereditary, and therefore common to all men: of consequence it is not strange, if Job partake of the common distemper.

Job 11:13–16 *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; ¹⁴ If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.*

¹⁵ *For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:*

¹⁶ *Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:*

Zophar proclaimed that if Job would repent of his vanity, his countenance would be changed and he would soon forget all his previous misery. Spiritually ignorant and prideful men often casually conclude that complex problems may be handled with simple solutions. Perhaps Zophar was the last to speak simply because he never could distinguish himself among his other friends. Perhaps also because he was very likely the lowest on the totem pole, he thought this a great opportunity to display what he thought was his own sterling insight. In truth, Zophar was neither a true prophet of the Lord nor a seer and thus should have never thought himself able to speak of anything of what would be Job's future. He did not truly know it, and it was pride that initiated him to assume he did. He had taken on the role of a prophet, but in doing so he only revealed himself a fool.

Job 11:17–20 *And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday: thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.*

¹⁸ *And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.*

¹⁹ *Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.*

²⁰ *But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*

¹⁶ Jas. 4:6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

¹ Pet. 5:5 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

These are hopeful thoughts, but the Lord had inspired none of them. The proud of heart often promise that God's blessings will come, when in fact the Lord has said nothing at all. Even today many so-called prophets and preachers come in God's name promising both revival and blessings that never come to pass. It was nothing but pride that prompted Zophar to presume to know Job's sin, and now supposedly Job's future. Undoubtedly, Zophar knows no bounds. He presumes to know everything. The actual truth, though, was that he had received absolutely nothing from the Lord regarding Job's future. It is also a sign of those who deem themselves as God's spokesmen, but are not, who will imply that if their false revelations are both believed and obeyed, then spiritual blessings will come. Yet the truth is that one of the very first and credible signs that a man is a false prophet, and does not speak for the Lord is that what he says does not come to

pass.¹⁷ It is thus by applying this one simple principle that we can discern the great difference between false prophets, and those who are actually sent by the Lord, Who alone can impart true revelations from Him. It is also only those who are truly commissioned by the Lord to speak on His behalf, whose words the Lord will not allow to fall to the ground. *And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground* (1 Sam. 3:19).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, 1 Sam. 3:19) *The Lord was with him*] This was the one source of strength for all the "heroes of Hebrew history;" for Abraham, Genesis 21:22; Jacob, Genesis 28:15; Joseph, Genesis 39:2; Moses, Exodus 3:12; Joshua, Joshua 1:5; Gideon, Jdg 6:16; David, 1 Samuel 16:18; 1 Samuel 18:14.¹⁸

did let none of his words fall to the ground] The fulfilment of his prophetic utterances was the attestation of his divine mission.

17 Jer. 28:1-4 *And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, ²Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: ⁴And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.*

1 Kgs. 22:11-12 *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. ¹²And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand.*

18 Abraham: Gen. 21:22 *And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:*

Jacob: Gen. 28:15 *And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

Joseph: Gen. 39:2 *And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

Moses: Exod. 3:12 *And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.*

Joshua: Josh. 1:5 *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

Gideon: Jdg. 6:16 *And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

David: 1 Sam. 16:18 *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.*

1 Sam. 18:14 *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.*

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Cp. Deuteronomy 18:21–22.¹⁹ ‘*Falling*’ is a natural metaphor in all languages for ‘*failing*.’

By Samuel’s example and many others, we learn that those God is truly with and are led by His Spirit will have what they have

spoken on God’s behalf proven true.²⁰ This is also why true prophets will have veritable evidence confirming their spiritual ministries, whereas false ones will be left with proof of nothing.

¹⁹ Deut. 18:21–22 *And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? ²²When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

²⁰ Jer. 25:11–12 *And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹²And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.*

Jer. 32:36–37 *And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; ³⁷Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: Isa. 13:19 *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.**

Nah. 1:10 *For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.*

Nah. 3:15 *There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts.*

Job's Initial Response to Zophar

Job Chapter 12

Job 12:1–2 And Job answered and said, ²No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.

JOB said in sarcasm what his three friends believed to be true—that their wisdom was rare and that wisdom would die with them. Job thus rebukes his friends, who had far higher opinions of themselves than was merited by the superficial wisdom they brought forth. They all spoke at length, but they did not help Job at all. It is also common with both the heathen and the hypocrite, that they foolishly think that the more they speak the greater chance they will have of being heard. *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking* (Matt. 6:7). An abundance of words, though, does not cause God to answer prayers, nor does it help to convince the guilty of sin.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 6:7) Their much speaking.—This thought was the root-evil of the worship of the heathen or the Pharisee. It gave to prayer a quantitative mechanical force, increased in proportion to the number of prayers offered. If fifty failed, a hundred might succeed.

If the Holy Spirit does not prompt reproof, then the emptiness of human correction will prohibit any true change in the sinner's heart. The Lord has also declared that the wisdom of this world, characterized by human thought, reason, and conjecture, will be brought to nothing. *Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the*

wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid (Isa. 29:14).

Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

Job's friends thought themselves superior in knowledge because their own lives had not been touched by adversity. Many a man may live his life unafflicted by Satan, unaware that the primary reason he has not been singled out for devilish attack is simply because he poses no real threat to the devil's kingdom. It was Job's fear and faith in God that prompted Satan's jealousy, and for this he sought Job's demise. Because Job sought genuine and sincere fellowship with the Lord and revered His holy name, Satan sought his destruction. Ultimately Job's righteous desire to stand uprightly before the Lord is what contributed to the devil's hate for him. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (II Tim. 3:12). Consider as well that when a man truly joins himself to God, he is no longer an innocent bystander in the war between God and Satan.

Job 12:4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.

Just as Job was mocked by those around him, God's Word reveals that there will be an increase of mockers in the last days. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts* (II Pet. 3:3). Sanballat, Tobiah,

and Geshem mocked Nehemiah and his construction and building of the walls in Jerusalem.¹ Jeremiah was mocked when he preached for the Lord.² The apostles were mocked for supposedly drinking new wine when they were supernaturally filled with God's Holy Spirit³ and spake in diverse tongues. Jesus' journey to the cross also began with mockery before His crucifixion.⁴ Often the response of unbelievers is to mock those who do believe, even as they make mock of their own sins against God. *Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour* (Prov. 14:9).

(Benson Commentary, Prov. 14:9) . . . *Sin deludes, or makes a mock of, fools, or sinners; that is, exposes them to shame and contempt . . .*

Job 12:5 *He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.*

This verse on the surface can be viewed as difficult to understand. The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* aids in its interpretation.

As the torch is to the wanderer, so Job to his friends. Once they gladly used his aid in their need; now they in prosperity mock him in his need.

Because Job's friends were safe and at ease, they could mock his words. Again, He who is not afflicted by adversity can easily think himself superior to those who are.

Job 12:6–8 *The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.*

⁷*But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:*

⁸*Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.*

Job speaks of robbers prospering and strong beasts prevailing on earth. He uses realities visible in nature to defend the fact that just because men are afflicted does not mean they are always sinners. Undergoing persecution is not sufficient evidence to prove the presence of sin.⁵

¹ Neh. 2:19 *But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

² Jer. 20:7 *O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.*

³ Acts 2:13 *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

⁴ Matt. 27:29–31 *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!³⁰ And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.³¹ And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

Mark 15:19–20 *And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.*

Luke 22:63–64 *And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?*

Luke 23:11–12 *And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.¹² And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.*

Luke 23:36 *And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,*

Ps. 25:16–18 *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.¹⁸ Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*

Ps. 34:19–20 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.²⁰ He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

Job 12:9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

By referencing creation and the creatures in it, Job rightly declares that all is under God's providence and as such, part of His divine will. Job's views his own life as no different than this.

(Benson Commentary, Job 12:9) Who knoweth not in all these—Or, by all these brute creatures; that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this—That God, by his power and wisdom, hath created and ordered all that is in them, or that is done by and among them. Job meant in these verses to express his firm opinion that all animate and inanimate nature clearly bore testimony to the creating power and overruling providence of God: see Nehemiah 9:6.⁶ This is the only time that we meet with the name Jehovah in all the discourses between Job and his friends. For God in that age was more known by the name of Shaddai, the Almighty.

Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

The soul and breath of every living creature are in God's hands. All the earth is under the Lord's divine sovereignty. Ultimately the Lord can allow life to be taken as easy as it was given. No doubt, Job knew of Jehovah what men are woefully

ignorant of today, that *the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind* are in the hands and will of God, that all life is subject to divine will—reminding us as well that the soul who lives in eternity will do so only because God has willed it. If men were truly aware and actually believed this divine truth, that all life is in God's hands, then they would hold a much greater and reverential fear of Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:10) In whose hand is the soul of every living thing—Margin, "Life." The margin is the more correct rendering. The idea is, that all are under the control of God. He gives life, and health, and happiness when he pleases, and when he chooses he takes them away. His sovereignty is manifested, says Job, in the inferior creation, or among the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven.

And the breath of all mankind—Margin, "Flesh of man." The margin is in accordance with the Hebrew. The meaning is, that man is subjected to the same laws as the rest of the creation. God is a sovereign, and the same great principles of administration may be seen in all his works.

Few records reveal God's sovereignty over the earth more than the revelation given to Isaiah concerning Cyrus, the Persian king who returned the Babylonian Jews to their homeland. The record reveals that God anointed a non-Jew to carry out His will.⁷

Matt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

II Cor. 4:8–9 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

II Cor. 6:4–6 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, ⁵In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

⁶By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

6 Neh. 9:6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

7 Ezra 1:1–4 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, ²Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. ⁴And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place

Isaiah 45:1 *Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;*

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Isa. 45:1–4) Cyrus is called God's anointed; he was designed and qualified for his great service by the counsel of God. The gates of Babylon which led to the river, were left open the night that Cyrus marched his army into the empty channel. The Lord went before him, giving entrance to the cities he besieged. He gave him also treasures, which had been hidden in secret places. The true God was to Cyrus an unknown God; yet God foreknew him; he called him by his name. The exact fulfilment of this must have shown Cyrus that Jehovah was the only true God, and that it was for the sake of Israel that he was prospered. In all the changes of states and kingdoms, God works out the good of his church.

Isaiah 45:2 *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:*

Cyrus was God's anointed, and his task was according to God's will. Therefore, the Lord said He would go before him and level all obstacles that could hinder his success. It was God's power that ensured Cyrus' victory. The Lord is sovereign, and what He has willed shall be done.

Isaiah 45:3 *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

8 Deut. 11:26–28 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Deut. 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

By the Lord's blessing his people with hidden treasures, they would be brought to know that He was both with and for them. What a wonderful truth is hidden in this revelation, that by blessings, riches, and spiritual treasures the people of God are brought to know both the reality and generosity of Him, Who has called them! In truth, both blessings or curses are purposed to awaken men to the reality of God and His sovereignty and spiritual presence in the earth.⁸

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 45:3) *That thou mayest know*—That from these signal successes, and these favors of heaven, you may learn that Yahweh is the true God. This he would learn because he would see that he owed it to heaven (see the note at Isaiah 45:2); and because the prediction which God had made of his success would convince him that he was the true and only God.

Job 12:11–13 *Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?*

¹² *With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.*

¹³ *With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 12:13) *With him is wisdom*—Margin, correctly, "God." However much wisdom there may seem to be with aged men, yes the true wisdom—that which was supreme and worthy of the name—was to be found in God alone. The object of Job was to lead the thoughts up to God . . . He made all things; he sustains all things; he reverses the condition of people at his pleasure; he sets up whom he pleases, and when he chooses he casts them down. His works are contrary in many respects to what we should anticipate; and the sense of all is, that God was a holy and a righteous

sovereign, and that such were the reverses under his administration that we could not argue that he treated all according to their character on earth.

Job 12:14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

What God tears down, man cannot through mere human strength build up again. What is true in life is equally true in death.

Job 12:15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

God's power over the earth is vividly demonstrated by His power over the water above it, which can either make a land prosper or, if withheld, ruin it.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 12:15) Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up. God, at his pleasure, causes great droughts, which are among the worst calamities that can happen. He withholdeth the blessed rain from heaven (Deuteronomy 11:17; 1 Kings 8:35; 1 Kings 17:1),⁹ and the springs shrink, and the rivers dry up, and a fruitful land is turned into a desert, and famine stalks through the land, and men perish by thousands. Also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth; i.e. he causes floods and inundations. Once upon a time he overwhelmed the whole earth, and destroyed almost the entire race of mankind, by a deluge of an extraordinary character, which so fixed itself in the human consciousness, that traces of it are to be found in the traditions of almost all the various races of men. But, beside this great occasion, he also in ten

thousand other cases, causes, by means of floods, tremendous ruin and devastation, sweeping away crops and cattle, and even villages and cities, sometimes even "overturning the earth," causing lakes to burst, rivers to change their course, vast tracts of land to be permanently submerged, and the contour of coasts to be altered.

Job 12:16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

Though God did not create sin, He does maintain control over the extent that it can influence the earth. Thus, though the Lord did not make the deceiver, still there are bounds to which He will allow people to be deceived. In a similar manner, the Lord had set boundaries on the degree that Satan could through affliction harm and bring pain to Job.¹⁰

*(Benson Commentary, Job 12:16) The deceived and the deceiver are his—*Wholly subject to his disposal. He governs the deceiver, and sets bounds to his deceits, how far they shall extend: he also overrules all this to his own glory, and the accomplishment of his righteous designs of trying the good and punishing wicked men, by giving them up to believe lies. Yet God is not the author of any error or sin, but only the wise and holy governor of it.

Job 12:17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

Human wisdom is no match for divine providence. The counselors and supposed wise men in the earth can be led to their own destruction as easily as can those who sit in judgement of others be revealed

⁹ Deut. 11:17 *And then the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.*

¹ Kgs. 8:35 *When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:*

¹ Kgs. 17:1 *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*
¹⁰ Job 1:12 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

Job 2:6 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

as fools, the lesson being that neither the wisdom, position, or authority of man can prevent God's will from being accomplished on the earth.

Job 12:18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

Though kings may bind themselves together to form confederacies and seek to increase their own power in the earth through unity, God can bind them and put them in bonds, just as they have others. This teaches us that the Lord rules all the earth, even those who think themselves its rulers.

Job 12:19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 12:19) princes—rather, “priests,” as the Hebrew is rendered (Ps 99:6).¹¹ Even the sacred ministers of religion are not exempt from reverses and captivity.

Just as God has power over nations and its political leaders, so does He hold the same power over those in religion. Hence, religion is not any more a safe haven from God's will being done than how divine will maintains sovereignty over governments and their leaders. The priest can be as easily led away, if it is God's will, as the ruler.

Job 12:20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:20) He removeth away the speech of the trusty—Margin, “lip of the faithful.” “He takes away the lip,” that is, he takes away the power of giving safe counsel or good advice. The “trusty” or “faithful” here refer to those of age and experience, and on whose counsel men are

accustomed to rely. The meaning here is, that their most sagacious anticipations are disappointed, their wisest schemes are foiled. They fail—in their calculations of the [course] of events, and the arrangements of Providence are such that they could not anticipate what was to occur.

The understanding of the aged—To whom the young were accustomed to look up with deference and respect. The meaning here is, that they who were accustomed to give wise and sound advice, if left by God, give vain and foolish counsels.

Job 12:21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

No worldly prince or ruler can prevent the Lord from taking away his strength and ultimately making him completely powerless. If the Lord desires to bring shame to a man's life by removing him from all his previously held power, then nothing can prevent his fall from grace. Ultimately, every man is entirely vulnerable to having God's will carried out in his life. If God desires to lift a man up, He will. Or if God wishes to bring shame upon a man's plans, He will do this as well. The point of all these examples is to show that it is not men who rule the world, and the events that transpire in it, but God.

Job 12:22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 12:22) The meaning of Job 12:22 in this connection can only be, that there is nothing so finely spun out that God cannot make it visible. All secret plans of the wicked, all secret sins, and the deeds of the evil-doer though veiled in deep darkness, He bringeth before the tribunal of the world.

¹¹ Ps. 99:6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

In the Book of Esther, Haman is a wonderful example of how God can see what is done in darkness and then bring it into the light. Haman's plot to destroy the Jews,¹² which he had planned in darkness, led to his own public hanging.¹³ *For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform* (Ps. 21:11).

Job 12:23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.

God increases and enlarges nations as equally as He destroys them. He multiplies and spreads their influence in the earth, but if necessary, He will shrink them and take away their strength so that they must return and inhabit only their own lands.

Job 12:24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.

Just as God can touch the outside of a man, so He can also touch his understanding and reason. Nebuchadnezzar learned this when he was restored to reason after madness caused him to realize through his own personal experience that God reigns over all.¹⁴ *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me* (Dan. 4:34–36).

12 Esth. 3:6 *And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.*

13 Esth. 7:10 *So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.*

14 Dan. 4:25–35 *That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*²⁶ *And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.*²⁷ *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.*²⁸ *All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.*²⁹ *At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.*³⁰ *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*³¹ *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.*³² *And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*³³ *The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.*³⁴ *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:*³⁵ *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

Job 12:25 *They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.*

During his conversion the apostle Paul was made blind for a season in order that he might be humbled and come to know the Lord's power over his life.¹⁵ Both blindness and sight are manifestations of the Lord's divine power over men.¹⁶ Thus as easily as the Lord can bring sight to the blind, so can he blind those with sight. The result, then, of removing vision from those who previously thought themselves untouchable is that they will be made to stagger like a drunken man.¹⁷ One of the Lord's judgments for sin is to smite those who commit it with greater blindness and unsoundness of mind. *The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart* (Deut. 28:28).

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Deut. 28:28) Wherever the sinner goes, the curse of God follows; wherever he is, it rests upon him.

Job 13:1–2 *Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. ² What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.*

Job reminds his friends that whatever they presumed to know of the Lord and His sovereignty in the earth, he knew equally, if not better. His friends had spoken of their understanding of divine providence; to this Job proclaims, *I am not inferior unto you.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 12:3) *But I have an understanding ... I am not inferior to you—* In these things; which he speaks, not in a way of boasting, but for the just vindication both of himself and of that cause of God, which, for the substance of it, he maintained rightly, as God himself attests, Job 42:6.¹⁸ *Who knoweth not such things—* The truth is, neither you nor I have any reason to be puffed up with our knowledge of these things; for the most barbarous nations know that God is infinite in wisdom, and power, and justice.

For the second time Job utters these memorable words¹⁹ as his friends had thought that their time and experience in the world had made them superior to him in wisdom. To this Job replies that there was nothing they spoke of God and his sovereignty over creation that he himself also was not acutely and keenly aware of. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had assumed Job ignorant, when in fact he was even more knowledgeable than they. In reality they had introduced no

¹⁵ Acts 9:8–9 *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

Acts 22:11 *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.*

¹⁶ Acts 9:17–18 *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

¹⁷ Rom. 11:8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

II Kgs. 6:18 *And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.*

Ps. 69:23 *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*

Zeph. 1:17 *And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.*

Zech. 12:4 *In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.*

¹⁸ Job 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

¹⁹ Job 12:3 *But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?*

new wisdom of God to Job that was not already commonly known, nor had they convinced Job of sin or revealed the true reason for his bondage. They had spoken much and had assumed themselves wiser than their friend, when in fact they were even more ignorant than him.

Because of time constraints, only Job's initial response is addressed here.

The Introduction of Elihu

Job Chapter 32:1–14

Job 32:1–2 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

²Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

THE structure of the Book of Job reveals the great importance of Elihu's ministry in preparing Job to hear from the Lord directly.

THE BOOK OF JOB AS A WHOLE.

A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.

B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.

C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.

D | iii. 1—xxx. 40. Job and his friends.

E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.

D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.

C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.

B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.

A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.¹

Elihu is the only one whose message Job does not refute, the only one who could silence Job's critics,² and also the only human character in the book whom God Himself does not reprove and correct.³ This fact alone should draw our attention to this relatively obscure biblical figure. Ultimately, Elihu was exactly who he claimed to be—one sent to speak on God's behalf. *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf* (Job 36:2).

Job could not be persuaded of his guilt, nor did his conscience convict him of sin, because he was righteous in his own eyes. When men are righteous in their own sight and claim innocence before God, He will often send a minister. Throughout human history the ignorance of men has required physical messengers led by the Holy Spirit to open their ears. Only then can they hear the great lessons critical for their deliverance, such as that personal righteousness is never greater than God's⁴ and that it is always a sin against heaven to justify self over God (v. 2). God chose Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite,⁵ to introduce these lessons to Job, thus preparing his heart

¹ Structure from Bullinger's *The Book of Job: The Oldest Lesson in the World*

² *Job 32:15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*

³ *Job 42:7–9 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. ⁸Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.*

⁴ *Job 35:1–2 Elihu spake moreover, and said, ²Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?*

⁵ *Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

for the entrance of the Lord's own words.⁶ Practically, Elihu's ministry prepared Job for a much greater ministry to follow: the ministry of the Lord Himself. As John the Baptist was a forerunner to Christ,⁷ so does Elihu assume a similar role for Jehovah. It is customary that before sinners are ready for direct exposure to the Lord, repentance of sin must take place. And just as John the Baptist's ministry preached repentance,⁸ so does Elihu's ministry do the same.

In studying the book we observe that Elihu speaks to Job for five uninterrupted chapters. Strikingly, Job offers

no retort or disagreement with any of his words, as he had previously done with his other accusers.⁹ While Job resisted his friends' unjust accusations of committing sin, once Elihu began his address, he remains silent. Perhaps the reason for this is that true wisdom will often silence those who know it is lacking in their own lives. Jesus' words to those who brought to Him the woman taken in adultery is a great example of this,¹⁰ revealing that the words of the Holy Spirit spoken by messengers sent by the Lord often produce speechlessness in the hearers.¹¹ Ultimately, the sword of the Spirit pierces the sinner's heart so ef-

6 *Job 38:1-2 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ²Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

7 *Mark 1:1-8 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; ²As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. ³The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁴John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; ⁷And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. ⁸I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

8 *Matt. 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*

9 *Job 16:2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.*

10 *John 8:1-9 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

11 *Luke 14:1-6 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. ²And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. ³And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? ⁴And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; ⁵And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? ⁶And they could not answer him again to these things.*

John 8:1-11 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

fectively that even the tongue is stopped from defending itself.¹² Only by Elihu's spiritual ministry could the self-righteousness in Job be broken, as his other friends' attempts had failed, teaching us that it takes inspired prophecy provided by the Lord for a self-righteous man's heart to be touched. Only then may God teach him about the presence of sin and his need to repent for it. The Lord's Word is essential for God's purposes, and no amount of human wisdom can replace it. *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convicted of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth* (I Cor. 14:24–25). Prophecy brought forth from the Lord therefore will do for the unbelieving sinner what human assumption and reason cannot: it will cause him to recognize the presence and reality of God. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this great feat by revealing to men that God knows the thoughts and intentions of their hearts—so that when a man's inner soul is made known to him through both the Word and Spirit of God, the door then opens for the sinner to realize that it is not man who is addressing him, but God.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 14:24) The word here rendered “convicted” (ἐλέγχεται) is rendered “reprove” in John 16:8, “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin,” etc. Its proper meaning is to “convict,” to show one to be wrong; and then to rebuke, reprove, admonish, etc. Here it means, evidently, that the man would be convicted, or convinced of his error and of his sin; he would see that his former opinions and practice had been wrong; he would see and acknowledge the force and truth of the Christian sentiments which should be uttered, and would acknowledge the error of his former opinions and life. The following verse shows that the apostle means something more than a mere convincing of the understanding, or a mere conviction that his opinions had been erroneous. He evidently refers to what is now known also as “conviction” for sin; that is, a deep sense of the depravity of the heart, of the errors and follies of the past life, accompanied with mental anxiety, distress, and alarm. The force of truth, and the appeals which should be made, and the observation of the happy effects of religion, would convince him that he was a sinner, and show him also his need of a Saviour.

When a man filled with God's Holy Spirit brings forth prophecy from the Lord, its power will produce conviction of sin for those who believe it. Examples include David, Nineveh, and Saul.¹³ Thus,

12 Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

13 **David:** II Sam. 11:1–26 *And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. ²And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. ³And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? ⁴And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. ⁵And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. ⁶And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. ⁸And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. ⁹But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. ¹⁰And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house? ¹¹And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my*

by God's own holy Word, produced by the inspiration of His Spirit, sinners are

wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. ¹²And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. ¹³And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house. ¹⁴And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. ¹⁶And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. ¹⁷And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. ¹⁸Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; ¹⁹And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, ²⁰And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? ²¹Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. ²²So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. ²³And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. ²⁴And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. ²⁵Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. ²⁶And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

Nineveh: *Jnh. 3:1-10* And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, ²Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. ³So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. ⁴And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. ⁵So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. ⁶For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: ⁸But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. ⁹Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? ¹⁰And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Saul: *Acts 9:1-21* And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, ²And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. ³And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: ⁴And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁵And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. ⁶And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. ⁷And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. ⁸And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. ¹⁰And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ¹²And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. ¹³Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: ¹⁴And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. ¹⁵But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: ¹⁶For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. ¹⁷And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. ¹⁹And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. ²⁰And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. ²¹But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this

brought to their knees to recognize their sins against Him.

Once Elihu had finished addressing Job's sin in chapters 32–37, the Lord commenced His own correction in chapters 38–42. God's reproof and correction of Job included that he had spoken without knowledge¹⁴ and had dismissed God's judgments so that he could maintain his own self-righteousness.¹⁵ Sinners are often willing to condemn God and His dealings with them in order to maintain innocence in their own eyes. By falsely claiming fault with God, this allows for justification of self. And most men, because they love themselves more than the Lord, are much more ready to find fault with Him than with themselves.¹⁶ Though this would not prove true with Job, it will with many. The last eleven chapters of the book reveal the great amount of heavenly correction needed for Job to fully come to know the extent of his sin and the critical need to repent for it. Without the confession of sin there will not be, nor should we expect there to be, forgiveness. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9). Although Job feared the Lord,¹⁷ he still lacked much understanding concerning the Lord's dealings with man. Thus, it would take not only God's messenger, Elihu, but also Jehovah Himself to fully instruct this sincere though self-righteous man in the things still deficient in his faith. Job's

confession at the end of the book helps us to understand the great spiritual lessons he learned and that which God's spiritual correction ultimately instructed him in.

Job 42:1–6 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

² *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

³ *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

⁴ *Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

⁵ *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*

⁶ *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Job's confession of sin ultimately led him to repent in dust and ashes.¹⁸ When the Lord shows a God-fearing man his spiritual ignorance, he will repent. Little will bring a truly godly man to his knees more quickly than realizing that so much of what he has spoken about the Lord has been false. To harm our own name because of sin is a tragedy; to harm God's name is transgression.

Job 32:2–3 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was

he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

14 *Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

15 *Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*

16 *11 Tim. 3:1–2 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly,*

17 *Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

18 *Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

³ Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Elihu's wrath was twofold. (1) He was angry with Job's three friends for having no answer for Job yet they had still condemned him. (2) His wrath was directed toward Job because he justified himself rather than God. Wherever two parties have the same flaw of self-righteousness (as proved by Job and his three friends), the revelation needed for deliverance will remain elusive. Often when men cannot help the broken, they will judge them instead. Job's friends had condemned him when in fact they should have spent more time analyzing why they could not persuade him of his guilt. It takes little wisdom to condemn others; it takes much greater wisdom to help them find their way back to God.¹⁹ What these verses also teach us is that spiritual anger prompted by the Lord in His servants should not be considered wrong, and especially so in dealing with those who remain righteous in their own sight.²⁰

Job 32:4–5 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

⁵ When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Elihu, maintaining proper respect for those older than himself, waited until Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had finished speaking. Only then, when it became fully evident that they possessed no real spiritual ability to help their friend, did Elihu feel that he had the permission from God to bring forth his own opinion.²¹ A word fitly spoken is one uttered at exactly the most opportune time,²² and no word can be fitly spoken unless a man is led by the Spirit concerning when he should speak. Examples of this include Peter calling Israel to repent after they had seen the Holy Spirit descend upon the apostles,²³ as well as Nathan's words to David informing him that he was guilty of sinning against Uriah and Bathsheba after Nathan's story of the poor man's lamb.²⁴ Wisdom should teach us that it is not enough to speak revelation from the Lord until it is first revealed when it should be spoken. Pa-

19 Gal. 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

20 Prov. 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

II Cor. 10:18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

21 Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

22 Prov. 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

23 Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

24 II Sam. 12:1–13 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. ²The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

³But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. ⁴And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. ⁵And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. ⁶And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

⁷And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ⁸And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. ⁹Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife

tience is essential in doing the will of God, and the timing of speaking forth the truth is no different. There is always a proper moment to hold forth God's Word, even as there are times that God's Spirit will instruct His ministers to remain silent.²⁵ Elihu possessed the spiritual wisdom to know when to do both. *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak* (Eccl. 3:7).

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Eccl. 3:7) *a time to keep silence, and a time to speak* (k); when it is an evil time, a time of calamity in a nation, it is not a time to be loquacious and talkative, especially in a vain and ludicrous way, Amos 5:13 [*Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.*]; or when a particular friend or relation is in distress, as in the case of Job and his friends, Job 2:13 [*So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*]; or when in the presence of wicked men, who make a jest of everything serious and religious, Psalm 39:1 [*I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*]; and so when under afflictive dispensations of Providence, it is a time to be still and dumb, and not open the mouth in a murmuring and complaining way, Leviticus 10:3 [*Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.*].

Job 32:6 *And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young,*

and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 32:6) Elihu professes to speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and corrects both parties. He allowed that those who had the longest experience should speak first. But God gives wisdom as he pleases; this encouraged him to state his opinion. By attention to the word of God, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, young men may become wiser than the aged; but this wisdom will render them swift to hear, slow to speak, and disposed to give others a patient hearing.

Youth alone does not disqualify a man from either spiritual service or divine responsibility. Timothy was a young Christian leader when Paul gave him the charge to preach the Word and assume the role of leading the church. *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine* (II Tim. 4:1–2). No doubt Elihu was a man like Timothy; though young in years, still the Lord had chosen him for ministry. David too was the youngest of Jesse's sons when God anointed him.²⁶ As far as the Lord is concerned, a humble young man is much more valuable than an aged old man who lacks the spiritual humility to be taught. Jesus also stated that it was necessary for all to maintain the heart of a child in order to enter His kingdom.²⁷ *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be*

*to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.*¹⁰ *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.*¹¹ *Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.*¹² *For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.*¹³ *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

²⁵ *Isa. 53:7* He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

²⁶ *I Sam. 16:13* Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

²⁷ *Mark 10:15* Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

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converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3–4).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Mark 10:15) Whosoever shall not receive—Whosoever shall not manifest the spirit of a little child. . . .

As a little child—With the temper and spirit of a child—teachable, mild, humble, and free from prejudice and obstinacy.

No matter a man's longevity in ministry or position in the church, if he does not have a tender and humble spirit to be taught by God, heaven cannot be entered.

Job 32:7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

One might assume that the older men get, the wiser they become; however, this is hardly the case, for true wisdom is not imparted through earthly years but is given solely as a gift from God.²⁸ It is the Lord who imparts spiritual wisdom into men's hearts since it cannot be merely acquired by the length of years they live.²⁹ *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding (Prov. 2:6).* Wisdom is the first gift and manifestation of God's Spirit listed in I Corinthians 12. *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit*

28 I Kgs. 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

Eccl. 2:26 For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Luke 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Jas. 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

29 Exod. 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Exod. 35:31 And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;

Exod. 35:35 Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Exod. 36:1–2 Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. ²And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:

I Kgs. 10:24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

II Chrn. 9:23 And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.

Ps. 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Dan. 2:20–23 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: ²¹And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: ²²He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. ²³I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Acts 7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

I Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

(I Cor. 12:8). For a man to possess the wisdom of God, the Spirit of God must first dwell in him, even as none can truly manifest spiritual power and insight if they lack the Holy Spirit Himself.³⁰ Just as God gives the Holy Spirit,³¹ so too does He provide the special gift of heavenly wisdom through the Spirit.³² *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore* (I Kgs. 4:29). Men generally have very small and narrow minds constrained by the rigidity of human thought. Yet God gave Solomon *largeness of heart*, increasing and enlarging his thinking capacities so that he might possess the wisdom and ability to accomplish what God had purposed for his life. To then serve the Lord and fulfill His will for our lives, it is essential that God's own wisdom is given us, as no man can properly serve the Lord, and be effective in spiritual ministry without God's Spirit and wisdom leading him.

(Benson Commentary, I Kgs. 4:29) And largeness of heart — Vastness of understanding, or a very comprehensive mind, capable of receiving the knowledge of all things, both divine and human.

It is ultimately the Lord Who opens the mind of man so that He can then teach him the spiritual mysteries of God. *He answered and said unto them, Because*

it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given (Matt. 13:11). By God's own spiritual power are men enlightened to the mysteries of heaven. Yet if the Lord desires to withhold this wisdom from any, then there remains nothing that they can do on their own to help them to gain it. *Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it* (Eccl. 8:17).

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Eccl. 8:17) that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: he can find out that it is done, but not the reason why it is done: the ways of God are in the deep, and not to be traced; they are unsearchable and past finding out; there is a depth of wisdom and knowledge, in them, inscrutable by the wisest of men . . .

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

These are Elihu's words, and they reveal what every fruitful and faithful minister of God knows: that it is the Spirit of God and the inspiration of the Almighty that produces true spiritual understanding,

30 Rom. 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

31 Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 8:20 *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

Acts 10:45 *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 11:17 *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?*

32 Exod. 31:3 *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Exod. 31:6 *And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; Jas. 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.**

that true wisdom is from above,³³ and God is the only real impartor of it.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:8) But there is a spirit in man— . . . He now finds that wisdom is not the attribute of rank or station, but that it is the gift of God, and therefore it may be found in a youth. All true wisdom, is the sentiment, is from above; and where the inspiration of the Almighty is, no matter whether with the aged or the young, there is understanding. Elihu undoubtedly means to say, that though he was much younger than they were, and though, according to the common estimate in which the aged and the young were held, he might be supposed to have much less acquaintance with the subjects under consideration, yet, as all true wisdom came from above, he might be qualified to speak. The word "spirit" here, therefore, refers to the spirit which God gives; and the passage is a proof that it was an early opinion that certain men were under the teachings of divine inspiration.

Spiritual understanding is something God must give to man and nothing man can gain by himself. Hence, if true spiritual enlightenment is to be possessed, then it will take the inspiration of the Almighty. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, as is all heavenly wisdom given to God's people today.³⁴

Job 32:9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

Elihu reinforced his point that though Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar eclipsed him in years, neither their age nor previous

religious experience had brought them to understand not only what Job's sin was, but more importantly, their own. It is impossible through mere human ability to guess where sin lies in men and where it does not. And only a fool will attempt to address sin without first receiving revelation from the Lord as to what specifically the sin is and the extent that it has grown and manifested itself in the human heart.

Job 32:10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

Elihu, now ready to instruct, summons those present to listen to what he is about to declare.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 32:10) Therefore I said, Hearken to me. Elihu evidently claims, not exactly what is ordinarily understood by inspiration, but that his spirit, is divinely enlightened, and that therefore he is more competent to take part in the controversy that has been raised than many of the aged. I also will show mine opinion. "I also," or "even I"—i.e. I, young as I am, "will show my opinion," or "utter what I know on the subject." Elihu does not speak of his convictions as mere "opinions," but claims to be in possession of actual "knowledge."

It is not prideful to speak boldly for the Lord, especially when God is inspiring the message.³⁵ Often those filled with the Lord's Holy Spirit must demand men's attention if God's deliverance is to be given to them. Just as Peter and John did at the gate called Beautiful when they instructed the lame man to *look on us*,³⁶

33 Prov. 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Dan. 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

Jas. 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

34 II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

35 Acts 5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

36 Acts 3:4-7 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. ⁶Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ⁷And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

so does Elihu demand the same spiritual attention and concentration here. When spiritual men inwardly know they have something useful and profitable to say on God's behalf, they will not lack the courage to harken for men to hear them. Jonah heralded the prophecy of Nineveh's destruction if its inhabitants did not repent of their sin,³⁷ Jeremiah cried in the ears of Jerusalem for its sin against God,³⁸ John the Baptist with great boldness publicly proclaimed Christ's coming and had no trepidation concerning those he knew would be the Lord's enemies.³⁹ Where the Spirit of God truly abides, boldness to speak the Lord's words will also abide.⁴⁰ *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness* (Acts 4:31).

Job 32:11–12 *Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.*

¹² *Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:*

It is worth considering that Elihu could actually be the author of the Book of Job. Elihu's words *Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons* indicate that it was likely he who penned this marvelous historical account of a man afflicted by Satan but then delivered by God. This would explain a great deal, as only two people are good candidates as to who would be most qualified to record the events in Job's life: either Elihu or Job himself. The Lord very likely used one of the most obscure men in the Bible to bring forth some of its most important and precious lessons—that a *broken* and *contrite spirit*⁴¹ is always a pearl of great price, and that when men are led to possess this, God's blessings will await them. Job had previously offered sacrifice and offering for the sin of his children⁴²—now he was ready to be taught that spiritual sacrifice and offering the Lord really seeks

37 Jnh. 3:4 *And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.*

38 Jer. 2:1–2 *Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.*

Jer. 7:1–3 *The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. ³Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.*

Jer. 11:6 *Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.*

Jer. 18:11 *Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.*

39 Matt. 3:1–5 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ³For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁴And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

40 John 20:19 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

41 Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
42 Job 1:5 *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

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from men. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise* (Ps. 51:17).

Job 32:13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

Here we have the spiritual reason why Job's three friends were never given the wisdom to help their friend—simply because in human arrogance they would have claimed that they had found out wisdom. But just as a fool does not know God,⁴³ neither will God grant heavenly wisdom to any who wish to use divine wisdom to glory in themselves.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:13) You were not permitted to refute or convince him, for if you had been you would have been lifted up with pride, and would have attributed to yourselves what belongs to God.

What was true of Job's friends is equally true of many today, that even if God did provide wisdom for them, men would still claim it as their own. No doubt the old saying, "God created man last so that he could never claim that creation was his own work," has some truth to it.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:13) *God thrusteth him down, not man*—These are the words of Elihu. The meaning is, "God only can drive Job from his position, and show him the truth, and humble him. The wisdom of man fails. The aged, the experienced, and the wise have been unable to meet his arguments and bring him down from the positions which he has taken. That work can be done only by God himself, or by the wisdom which he only can give." Accordingly

Elihu, who proposes to meet the arguments of Job, makes no appeal to experience or observation; he does not ground what he says on the maxims of sages or the results of reflection, but proposes to adduce the precepts of wisdom which God had imparted to him; Job 33:4, Job 33:6.⁴⁴

Elihu knew that God alone could convict Job of sin and that the Lord singly could humble him sufficiently enough that he would repent of it, teaching us that it is not men's words that lead people to true heavenly repentance, but only God's.

Job 32:14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

Elihu made it very clear that he had absolutely no role whatsoever in the failed attempts to help Job and that the spiritual wisdom that he would bring forth did not come from anything previously heard. This wisdom came from afar and appropriately had God as its true Source. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker* (Job 36:3). Elihu's words would bring forth fresh and new spiritual understanding, which also eventually contributed to Job being made ready to hear from the Lord Himself.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 32:14) *Now he hath not directed his words against me.* Elihu thinks that he can interfere in the controversy with the better prospect of a good result, since he is untouched by any of Job's words, and can therefore speak without passion or resentment. *Neither will I answer him with your speeches.* He is also going to bring forward fresh arguments, which, as they avoid the line taken by the three friends, may soothe, instead of exasperating, the patriarch.

⁴³ Ps. 53:1 *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.*

⁴⁴ Job 33:4 *The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*
Job 33:6 *Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.*

Elihu Silences Job's Critics: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar

Job Chapter 32:15–33:3

Job 32:15–16 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.¹⁶ When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)

THE great impact of Elihu's spiritual ministry begins to be seen here, being that once he begins to speak, those previously who pridefully felt their wisdom sufficient now *were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:15) They were amazed—There also are the words of Elihu, and are designed to express his astonishment that the three friends of Job did not answer him. He says that they were completely silenced, and he repeats this to call attention to the remarkable fact that men who began so confidently, and who still held on to their opinion, had not one word more to say. . . . They could say absolutely nothing. This fact, that they were wholly silent, furnished an ample apology for Elihu to take up the subject.

The effectiveness of Elihu's words to Job's friends is threefold, as they are (1) amazed, (2) ceased to speak, and (3) left off speaking. Hardly anything is more effective in shutting men's mouths than revelation given through those whom God has sent. Even the most imperceptive men then can realize that God has entered the room.

(Benson Commentary, Job 32:15) They were amazed—Job's three friends stood mute, like persons amazed, not knowing what to reply to his arguments, and wondering at his bold and confident assertions concerning his integrity, and his interest in the favour of God, under such terrible and manifest tokens, as they thought them, of God's just displeasure against him. They answered no more . . .

God's voice alone has the power to silence the sinner and stop him from defending his own self-righteousness. It is one thing to use God's name, but it is quite another thing to speak for Him. Elihu's ministry was purposed to clearly reveal the difference between the two. It is not uncommon for those who lack the Spirit and His related gifts¹ to be amazed when they are exposed to those who possess them. And this is exactly the response of not only Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but also would prove to be the response of Job as well. When God's Holy Spirit truly enters a conversation, men will recognize His arrival. Ultimately it takes spiritual power to turn sinners from the evil of their ways. None also can bring those deceived by sin to repentance without first receiving the spiritual power from the Lord to do so. Jesus equipped His apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit,² and all who are chosen by Him will share to some degree in possessing similar, though

¹ I Cor. 12:7–10 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* ⁸*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;* ⁹*To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;* ¹⁰*To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

² Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

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perhaps not equal,³ spiritual power. *But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin* (Mic. 3:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Micah 3:8) "I am full of (or filled with) power by the Spirit of the Lord and of judgment and might." The false prophets, walked after their own spirit, Ezekiel 13:3.⁴ Their only power or influence was from without, from favoring circumstances, from adapting themselves to the great or to the people, going along with the tide, and impelling persons whither they wished to go. The power of the true prophet was inherent, and that by gift of "the Spirit of the Lord"...

I am filled with power—So our Lord bade His Apostles, "Tarry ye, until ye be endued with power from on high" Luke 24:49: "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" Acts 1:8; and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" Acts 2:4. The three gifts, "power, judgment, might," are the fruits of the One Spirit of God, through whom the prophet was filled with them. Of these, "power" is always strength residing in the person, whether it be the "power" (Exodus 15:6; Exodus 32:11; Numbers 14:17, etc.)⁵ or "might of wisdom" Job 36:5⁶ of

Almighty God Himself, or "power" which He imparts Deuteronomy 8:18; Judges 16:5, Judges 16:9, Judges 16:19⁷ or implants. But it is always power lodged in the person, to be put forth by him. Here, as in John the Immerser Luke 1:17⁸ or the Apostles Luke 24:49,⁹ it is divine power, given through God the Holy Spirit, to accomplish that for which he was sent, as Paul was endued with might 2 Corinthians 10:5, "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It is just that, which is so wanting to human words, which is so characteristic of the word of God, "power." . . .

Lap.: "These gifts the prophets know are not their own, but are from the Spirit of God, and are by Him inspired into them. Such was the spirit of Elijah, unconquered, energetic, fiery, of whom it is said, 'Then stood up Elias as fire, and his word burned like a lamp' (Eccles. 48:1). Such was Isaiah, 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins' Isaiah 58:1. Such was Jeremiah; 'Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary of holding in. I have set thee for a trier among My people, a strong fort; and thou shalt know and try their ways' Jeremiah 6:11, Jeremiah 6:27. Such was John Baptist, who said, 'O generation of vipers,

3 1 Cor. 12:11 *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

4 Ezek. 13:3 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!*

5 Exod. 15:6 *Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.*

Exod. 32:11 *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Num. 14:17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,*

6 Job 36:5 *Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.*

7 Deut. 8:18 *But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.*

Jdgs. 16:5 *And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.*

Jdgs. 16:9 *Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.*

Jdgs. 16:19 *And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.*

8 Luke 1:17 *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

9 Luke 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Matthew 3:7. Such was Paul, who, when he Acts 24:25¹⁰ reasoned of temperance, righteousness and judgment to come, made Felix tremble, though unbelieving and ungodly. Such were the Apostles, who, when they had received the Holy Spirit Psalm 48:8,¹¹ broke, with a mighty breath, ships and kings of Tarshish. Such will be Elias and Enoch at the end of the world, striving against anti-christ, of whom it is said Revelation 11:5, if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies."

The power to silence critics was evident not only in Jesus' earthly ministry¹² but also in those He ordained to continue its advancement.¹³ Though men have no power, ability, and strength in their own words, God has great power in His.¹⁴ Ultimately, where Christ's true ministers are, His own spiritual power will be manifest. *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (I*

Cor. 2:4–5). What the apostle leaned on was the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God associated with it. It is thus the demonstration and manifestation of God's spiritual power that leads people to greater faith in God. What words alone cannot accomplish, actual demonstration of the Holy Spirit often can.

Job 32:17–19 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion. ¹⁸For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.

¹⁹Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

Elihu now reveals how God's Spirit is ready to break forth from within him, as wine [bottled] which hath no vent. Where the Spirit of God is, there will exist great internal spiritual compulsion to carry out God's will. His influence is so dramatic and strong that even if God's ministers do not want to obey the command given to them, the Spirit's presence will com-

10 Acts 24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

11 Ps. 48:8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

12 John 8:1–9 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

13 Acts 6:8–10 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. ⁹Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

14 Gen. 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Ps. 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

Ps. 107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

Isa. 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Heb. 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

pel them to do as commanded. Jeremiah briefly attempted not to speak in God's name, but the Spirit of God would not allow him to remain quiet. *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay* (Jer. 20:9). God's Spirit is so strong in His messengers' hearts that if the Lord wants His Word spoken, human will has no ability whatsoever to suppress it.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Jer. 20:9) *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name*: this daily scorn and reproach which the prophet saw himself exposed unto, for preaching against the sin and wickedness of the people, was a sore temptation upon him to lay down his employment as a prophet. He did not speak this openly, but he spoke it in his heart, he had (as he confesseth) many such thoughts in his breast. But he saith he was not able to do what he thought to do, he found in his heart a constraint to go on, that when a revelation came at any time from God unto him, it was like a fire in his bones, which he must quench by uttering what God had revealed to him.

Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

Elihu properly understood that the only way he could be relieved from his spiritual burden and find refreshment in his soul was to speak what the Spirit of God had been revealing to him. God's Word was like a burning fire that could be quenched only through the carrying out of God's divine will.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Job 32:20) It is great refreshment to a good man, to speak for the glory of the Lord, and to edify others . . .

Job 32:21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

Those who are true ministers of the gospel of Christ neither can nor will be respecters of persons. *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it* (Deut. 1:17). Impartiality in judgment is the very foundation for proper justice, simply because at the core of human partiality and favoritism is sin. This was evident in Isaac's affection for Esau, because of the meat Esau provided for him.¹⁵ This also teaches us that those who show favoritism for those who give them something actually only favor themselves. *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ* (Gal. 1:10).

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Gal. 1:10–14) In preaching the gospel, the apostle sought to bring persons to the obedience, not of men, but of God. But Paul would not attempt to alter the doctrine of Christ, either to gain their favour, or to avoid their fury. In so important a matter we must not fear the frowns of men, nor seek their favour, by using words of men's wisdom. Concerning the manner wherein he received the gospel, he had it by revelation from Heaven. He was not led to Christianity, as many are, merely by education.

Job 32:22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.

The fatal result of flattery will ultimately be blindness to the sin in self. *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin* (Ps. 36:2 NIV).

15 Gen. 25:28 *And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 36:2) The word rendered "flattereth"—חָלַף *châlaq*—means to be smooth; then, to be smooth in the sense of being bland or flattering; Hosea 10:2; Psalm 5:9; Proverbs 28:23; Proverbs 2:16; Proverbs 7:5.¹⁶

Elihu knew the sin of flattery and its dangerous consequences.¹⁷ He knew that if he committed it, God would remove him from office. *The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things* (Ps. 12:3). Flatterers smooth over not only their own sins but also the sins of others; the Holy Spirit does quite the opposite of this.¹⁸ Whereas flattery minimizes sin, the Holy Spirit and God's holy Word expose it.¹⁹ Flattery also requires a very dexterous tongue so that what is said can be found pleasing to those it is purposed for.²⁰ Many a false prophet has gained his religious reputation through flattery and telling people what they want to hear and not what is actually needed to hear. Through also

false revelations, flatterers seduce people to believe untruths.²¹ The flatterer's main spiritual aim is to enlarge the egos of others so that he may enhance and greater improve his own personal standing. The devil also influences, deceives, and leads men to destruction as much with flattery as he does with persecution. This was true in Genesis with Adam and Eve,²² and the devil employs this same tactic today.²³ *And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err* (Jer. 23:13). Through flattery many have been led to trust in lies, which in the end ultimately destroyed them.

Job 33:1 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

It is not wrong to implore, pray, or even demand that men listen to our words if what we are about to speak will lead them closer to God. Peter said to the lame

16 Hos. 10:2 *Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.*

Ps. 5:9 *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

Prov. 28:23 *He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.*

Prov. 2:16 *To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;*

Prov. 7:5 *That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.*

17 Prov. 26:28 *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.*

18 John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

19 Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

20 Ps. 55:21 *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*

Prov. 7:21 *With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.*

21 Luke 6:26 *Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*

22 Gen. 3:5 *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

23 II Sam. 15:2–6 *And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. ³And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. ⁴Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! ⁵And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. ⁶And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.*

Prov. 16:25 *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

Rom. 16:18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

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man, *Look on us*,²⁴ so his faith might be focused and the man could be cured of his infirmity.²⁵ Jonah cried to Nineveh so the people might hear the Lord's warnings and be spared His judgment for their sin.²⁶ Jeremiah, another minister, was instructed by the Lord to cry in the ears of Jerusalem so that they could find restoration with God.²⁷ Finally, the apostle Peter stood up with the eleven

and demanded Israel's attention to the great sin they had committed against Jesus. Peter's result was that about three thousand were saved.²⁸ Hence, when the Spirit of God is working in men to speak His Word, it is quite appropriate, and even essential, that people are alerted to the importance of what will be said since it will, in fact, lead to the saving of their souls.

24 Acts 3:3-5 *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. ⁴And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.*

25 Acts 3:6 *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

26 *Jnh. 3:1-5 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, ²rise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. ³So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. ⁴And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. ⁵So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.*

27 *Jer. 2:1-2 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.*

28 Acts 2:14-41 *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: ¹⁵For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. ¹⁶But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: ¹⁹And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: ²⁰The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: ²¹And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. ²²Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: ²³Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: ²⁴Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. ²⁵For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: ²⁶Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: ²⁷Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. ²⁸Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. ²⁹Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. ³⁰Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; ³¹He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. ³²This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. ³³Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. ³⁴For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, ³⁵Until I make thy foes thy footstool. ³⁶Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. ³⁷Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. ⁴⁰And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. ⁴¹Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Job 33:2–3 *Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.*

³ *My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.*

Seeking to distinguish himself from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, Elihu declares he will speak with an upright heart and a clear message. True wisdom possesses not only purity but also clarity. Those who might have previously rejected the weak and confusing arguments of sinners can be persuaded by the clarity and purity of divine revelation. *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy* (Jas. 3:17). While carnal and human reason will only further agitate those who are confused, the Lord's wisdom will promote peace.²⁹ The words of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had done nothing but provoke Job and cause him internal unrest. Yet Elihu's message would accomplish just the opposite. Since it originated from above, it would prove *easy to be [received]* and beneficial to help remove Job's confusion. Ultimately, Elihu would provide a breath of fresh air, whereas previously debate and strife had prevailed. Job's friends had spoken through their own will, but now Elihu, one sent *on God's behalf*,³⁰ would speak through the direction of God's Holy Spirit.

If God has not commissioned men to speak for Him, they should claim they come in His name. *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied* (Jer. 23:21). It is easy to see why the words of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar collectively failed: God had not spoken to them, nor had He sent them to speak on His behalf.

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Jer. 23:21) *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran . . .* They might be sent of men, and be encouraged by them; but they were not sent of God: it is not only necessary that men employed in religious affairs should have an external call, in an orderly way, from the church of God; but also an internal call from the Lord himself; he qualifying them with gifts, putting his word into their mouths, and inclining their hearts to publish it; see Hebrews 5:4;³¹ but these false prophets had no mission nor commission from the Lord, nor were they sent on any errand, or with any message from him; and yet they ran; showed great diligence and zeal, and made haste to tell the people what the Lord had never said to them, but what were the warm imaginations of their own heads and hearts; they ran a race or course of ministry, but it was not good . . .

I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied; wherefore what they prophesied was not the word of the Lord, but what they themselves devised; and so was what was false, as the Targum adds: it is a sad character of men when they speak in public neither by the will of God, nor according to the word of God.

True prophecy originates not from human imagination, but from divine revelation. *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* (II Pet. 1:21). To speak for God, one must first be called by Him for such a task. Hence, before we call others to God's name, first we must be called ourselves. The prophet Jeremiah is an example of this. *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations* (Jer. 1:5). Many have failed in ministry simply because they sought and attempted to operate a divine calling which God did not give them. Ultimately, no man can possess any legitimate spiritual ministry

29 Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

30 Job 36:2 *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*

31 Heb. 5:4 *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

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without Jesus calling him to it.³² The Lord has set the members in His church as it has pleased Him,³³ and surely not how it pleases its members. Whenever also men speak for God through their own human will, they can do nothing but bring forth false prophecy, which is exactly what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had done. (Matt. 24:11) *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Jer. 23:21) A call is required, not only external, on the part of men, but also internal from God, that one should undertake a pastor's office [Calvin].

All offices and ministries in the church require a call of God. If men presume to speak for the Lord, without first being directed to do so, then the punishment can be severe. *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name*

of other gods, even that prophet shall die (Deut. 18:20).

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Deut. 18:20) *But the prophet which shall presume to speak in my name . . . Pretending a mission and commission from God, and yet was never sent by him, like the prophets in Jeremiah 23:21,³⁴*

which I have not commanded him to speak; which though true was not to be spoken in a public manner, by assuming a public office, without a divine authority or a commission from God, and much less what was false, and never commanded to be spoken at all by any:

or, that shall speak in the name of other gods; the idols of the people, as the Targum; as if any should affirm they were sent by Jove, or inspired by Apollo, as some are said to prophesy by Baal, as if they had received their orders and instructions from him, and were inspired by him, Jeremiah 2:8.³⁵

...even that prophet shall die...

32 Matt. 4:18–19 *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.* ¹⁹*And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

Luke 6:13 *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*

Rom. 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, I Cor. 1:1 Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

33 I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

34 Jer. 23:21 *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.*

35 Jer. 2:8 *The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.*

Elihu's Reproof of Job

Job Chapter 33:4–33:14

Job 33:4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

By acknowledging his Creator, Elihu revealed he knew the Lord was the Source of his life. And though Elihu was purposed to carry forth truth to Job, he knew that he was but a man and a creature of God's creation, like Job. "As a man; so every man is made by God, and not by himself."¹ If men know themselves to be merely creatures of God's creation and not gods themselves, they will pity other sinners and not harshly judge them. Elihu therefore places himself on the same human level as Job in an attempt to help him realize that it was not human pride that would be the source of His words.² He would speak through being inspired by the Spirit, and his spiritual humility here proves that he would be worthy of the task. What Elihu speaks as true of himself is true of all mankind. *Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are*

his people, and the sheep of his pasture (Ps. 100:3).

Job 33:5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

It is necessary in all criminal proceedings that the defendant be given ample opportunity to mount a proper defense. Thus, Elihu assures Job that if there was a fault in his own reasoning and spiritual conclusions, then he was more than willing to listen if they could be proven false. Yet time would reveal that unlike the words of Job's other three friends, the truth of Elihu's message could not be refuted. Its Source was the Lord, and it would begin to accomplish the Lord's purposes in Job's life. Again, Elihu is the only human character in the book of Job whom God does not single out for divine reproof. He is also the only human reprover of Job whom Job listens to without refuting the charges labeled against him. Whereas previously Job had defended both his person and his motives, now he does neither. By

¹ Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 33:4

² Prov. 22:2 *The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.*

Isa. 42:5 *Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:*

Isa. 43:7 *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

Isa. 45:5–8 *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: ⁶That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. ⁷I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. ⁸Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.*

Jer. 27:5 *I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.*

Matt. 19:4 *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,*

Heb. 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

this fact alone we can reasonably assume that Elihu was indeed sent by the Lord to speak on His behalf.³

Job 33:6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

Job had prayed for a mediator and counselor, and Elihu reveals himself to be just this. *How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin* (Job 13:23).

(Benson Commentary, Job 33:6–7) *Behold, I am, &c., in God's stead*—I will plead with thee in God's name and stead, and on his behalf, which thou hast often wished that some one would do.

Job had wished for one capable of convincing him of sin, and if someone could be found, then his prayers would be answered. Whereas a righteous man will reject those who are unrighteous in convicting them of sin, they will not oppose those truly led by the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, it is only God through the Holy Spirit Who can convict men of sin,⁴ and only those actually led by It, who can assist in bringing sinners to repentance.⁵

Though God gives the Spirit, He divides and maintains strict control, not only to whom the Spirit is given but also the degree and power that may be manifested through It. Because of this, the only ones who will prove profitable in bringing sinners to their knees are those divinely equipped with the spiritual wisdom and divine insight necessary to prove that the Lord indeed is the Source of their ministry. This is also why Job's other three friends had failed to convince Job of sin, simply because the Lord was not inspiring either their words or their ministries. They had spoken without being led by God to do so, and their failure and spiritual inability to help Job confirmed this. *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God* (Ps. 62:11).

The power and degree of spiritual gifts that a man possesses in his life are left solely to God's will and not man's. *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will* (I Cor. 12:11). The Lord knows the hearts of all men,⁶ and surely He will never give either spiritual power or spiritual authority to those not purposed to speak on His behalf. The Lord also imparts no heavenly gift merely for a man's personal glory or

3 Job 36:2 *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*

4 John 16:7–8 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

5 II Sam. 12:7, 13 *And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man... ¹³And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. ...*

Jnh. 3:4–5, 10 *And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. ⁵So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. ¹⁰And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.*

6 I Chrn. 28:9 *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.* I Sam. 16:7 *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

Ps. 44:21 *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

Prov. 21:2 *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.*

Jer. 17:10 *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Rev. 2:23 *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

for his religious and worldly advancement since all wisdom and power given to men through the Spirit is purposed to assist in helping the needs of God's people and not merely exalting the individual who is imparted with spiritual gifts.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 12:11) But all these—All these various endowments.

Worketh—Produces. All these are to be traced to him.

That one and the self-same Spirit—The Holy Spirit, Acts 2. They were all, though so different in themselves, to be traced to the Holy Spirit, just as all the natural endowments of people—their strength, memory, judgment, etc.—though so various in themselves are to be traced to the same God.

Dividing to every man severally—Conferring on each one as he pleases. He confers on each one that which he sees to be best, and most wise, and proper.

As he will—As he chooses or as in his view seems best. Dr. Doddridge remarks, that this word does “not so much express arbitrary pleasure, as a determination founded on ‘wise’ counsel.” It implies, however, that he does it as a sovereign; as he sees to be right and best. He distributes these favors as to him seems best adapted to promote the welfare of the whole church and to advance his cause.

Job 33:7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

Elihu well knew the terror that could overcome sinners when required to stand before the Lord; thus, he assures Job that his own words would not compound this fear. Truth also, when spoken to those seeking to depart from sin, will never be deemed burdensome or fearful.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:7) Behold my terror shall not make thee afraid—Job had earnestly desired to carry his cause directly before God, but he had expressed the apprehension that he would overawe him by his majesty, so that he would not be able to manage his plea with the calmness and self-possession which were desirable. He had, therefore, expressed it as his earnest wish, that if he were so permitted, God would not take advantage of his majesty and power to confound him; see the notes at Job 13:21. Elihu now says, that the wish of Job in this could be amply gratified. Though he spake in the name of God, and it might be considered that the case was fairly carried before him, yet he was also a man. He was the fellow, the equal with Job. He was made of the same clay, and he could not overawe him as the Almighty himself might do. There would be, therefore, in his case all the advantage of carrying the cause directly up to God, and yet none of the disadvantage which Job apprehended, and which must ensue when a mere man undertook to manage his own cause with the Almighty.

Until sinners come to realize God's true character and are cleansed of their sin, they will naturally fear being in His presence. The Israelites begged and pleaded with Moses to intercede on their behalf lest they should have direct communication with the Lord. *And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die* (Exod. 20:19). God's glory is so great and the light of His person is so radiant that Scripture reveals that the Lord surrounds Himself with darkness. *Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness* (II Chrn. 6:1). So also, *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne* (Ps. 97:2). The Lord surrounds Himself with darkness so that His presence will not destroy or overly discourage those who lack the holiness to be in the direct presence of God. Thus, God appeared on Mt. Sinai

in a thick cloud,⁷ shielding His true glory from Israel, and He also led the Israelites on their journey to Canaan, through His glory being hidden in a cloud.⁸ Practically speaking, it is impossible for any mortal creature to observe God's true celestial glory and live. The Lord's divine and holy presence is just too much for natural men to behold and survive. *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live* (Exod. 33:20).

(Benson Commentary, Exod. 33:20) *Thou canst not see my face*—The full display of my glory, that *light inaccessible*, before which the angels stand, but which would be insufferable to mortal eyes; this *no man can see and live*.

Given the nature and power of God, it is not surprising that sinners often hesitate in desiring direct communication with Him. The sin in man no doubt cautions him to keep a great distance between himself and the Lord. And though men are surely not wise, they do possess enough practical sense to spiritually realize that if they are in sin, they remain unworthy to stand in the divine, holy, and fearful majesty of God.

Job 33:8–9 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

Though Job did not use these exact words, Elihu summarizes Job's inward confession that he would hold fast to his own integrity and would never let go of it nor would he recant of believing himself righteous. *God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live* (Job 27:5–6). What men proclaim of themselves regarding their character is seldom either right or the truth. This is seen when Peter proclaimed that he would never deny the Lord Jesus but then actually did.⁹ Job also improperly presumed that he would be so well vindicated of being confirmed righteous that after his trial he would come forth as pure gold. *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold* (Job 23:10). Yet what Job previously viewed as his own righteousness and personal integrity greatly changed once he came to realize the extent of his sin committed against the Lord. For then, after true spiritual enlightenment, he would no longer view himself as a righteous man but rather as a man stained and made vile by sin. *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth* (Job 40:4).

⁷ Exod. 19:9 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.*

⁸ Exod. 13:21 *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

⁹ Matt. 26:35 *Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*

Luke 22:54–62 *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.* ⁵⁵*And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.* ⁵⁶*But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.* ⁵⁷*And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.* ⁵⁸*And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.* ⁵⁹*And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.* ⁶⁰*And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.* ⁶¹*And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice.* ⁶²*And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

One of the first purposes of the Holy Spirit is to convict men of sin.¹⁰ Just as light makes known darkness,¹¹ the Lord's Holy Spirit convinces men that darkness lives in them. He also who has not sincerely come to know himself to be a sinner proves that he knows neither the Lord nor his own unholy nature. Ultimately, it is only those whose eyes are spiritually blind who cannot see their own sinful condition.¹² Only those who do not have God's light in them will view themselves as without sin. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness* (Prov. 30:12).

In the end, and in the Lord's eyes, all mankind without exception have gone astray, and there is not even one righteous, no, not one.¹³ In the Lord's spiritual estimation, all have abandoned the true path of piety, and none can rightfully claim that he is different from his fellows.

Job 33:10–11 *Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy, ¹¹He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.*

Through Elihu's correction we begin to learn that Job's first notable sin was labeling God his enemy because of the calamities he had faced.¹⁴ *Wherefore hidest thou*

thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? (Job 13:24). Job repeats this claim when he stated, *Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks; and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet* (Job 13:27). In truth, it was not God who counted Job as His enemy or who had produced Job's captivity. This was Satan, though Job remained totally unaware of the real truth.

Job 33:12 *Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*

Practically, belief in human purity very soon results in rebelling against divine authority. Consequently, he who thinks himself pure will also be the first to believe that God is impure. Because then sinners view themselves as without sin, they will attribute sin to Him Who has none. The man also who is prone to find fault with God first foolishly believes that there is no true fault within himself. *The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD* (Prov. 19:3).

Time would prove that the thoughts, opinions, and false beliefs that Job had of God were greatly in error.¹⁵ No one also would dare to call God into question, let alone speak against His government,

10 John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 11 Eph. 5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*

12 II Cor. 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Eph. 4:17–19 *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

13 Rom. 3:10–12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

14 Job 19:11 *He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. 15 Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

Job 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

unless he internally believed, at least to a degree, himself equal with God.¹⁶

Job 33:13 *Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.*

It is because of vanity that men strive against the Lord and because of pride that they assume the Lord must give account to them. So twisted also is the sinner's heart that he thinks himself the Lord's judge—and not the other way around. No man also has ever striven against the Lord and won, and none have ever called Him into question and was powerful enough to force God to give an account as to why He has allowed something done or has not. In actuality, it is not God who will be forced to give account to man, but man, God. *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God* (Rom. 14:12).

Job 33:14 *For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.*

Job had complained about the Lord not responding to his pleas, but Elihu reveals that God does speak to men, though they perceive it not. Was it perhaps that God had spoken to Job, not once but twice, and yet Job's dullness of hearing had not perceived it? It is also not the Lord's fault that men cannot perceive His spiritual voice and are so dull in perception that

they fail to recognize the movements of His Holy Spirit in their lives.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 33:14) *For God speaketh once*—The object of what is here said is, to show the reason why God brings affliction upon people, or to explain the principles of his government which Elihu supposed had been sadly misunderstood by Job and his friends. The reason why he brings affliction, Elihu says, is because all other means of reclaiming and restraining people fail. He communicates his will to them; he speaks to them again and again in dreams and visions; he warns them of the error of their course Job 33:14–17,¹⁷ and when this is all ineffectual he brings upon them affliction. He lays them upon their bed where they must reflect, and where there is hope that they may be reclaimed and reformed, Job 33:18–28.¹⁸

Yea, twice—He does not merely admonish him once. He repeats the admonition when man refuses to hear him the first time, and takes all the methods which he can by admonition and warning to withdraw him from his wicked purpose, and to keep him from ruin.

Yet man perceiveth it not—Or, rather, “Although he does not perceive it or attend to it.” Though the sinner is regardless of the admonition, yet still God repeats it, and endeavors to save him from the commission of the crimes which would lead him to ruin. This is designed to show the patience and forbearance of God, and how many means he takes to save the sinner from ruin. Of the truth of what Elihu here says, there can be no difference of opinion. It is one of the great

¹⁶ Rev. 11:18 *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.*

¹⁷ Job 33:14–17 *For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.* ¹⁵*In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;* ¹⁶*Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,* ¹⁷*That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

¹⁸ Job 33:18–28 *He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.* ¹⁹*He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:* ²⁰*So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.* ²¹*His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.* ²²*Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.* ²³*If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:* ²⁴*Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.* ²⁵*His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:* ²⁶*He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.* ²⁷*He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;* ²⁸*He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.*

principles of the divine administration that the sinner is often warned, though he heeds it not; and that God sends repeated admonitions even when people will not regard them, but are bent on their own ruin.

Elihu Readies Job to Hear God's Correction

Job Chapter 33:15–26

Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

WHEN men are at rest, reviewing the events of their day, God will often use this time to reveal His will through instructing them through dreams and visions in the night—that silent time when daily clutter is at its least and men are the most open to be taught spiritual revelation. When believers, or even sinners, lack the spiritual perception to recognize the Lord's voice in the day, then the Lord will often approach them at night.

Dreams and visions, especially in the Old Testament, were a common means of imparting heavenly instruction. These divine methods of imparting revelation were often able to make an even more indelible imprint on the soul than even the prophet's words. In fact, prophets themselves were often instructed by the Lord through dreams and visions in the night. *And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream* (Num. 12:6). One of the reasons for this is that dreams and visions are very intimate ways that God speaks to men. They originate

inside a man's soul, and as such, they seem to spring from the man himself.

Unbelievers also, like Abimelech, were warned by God in dreams.¹ Pharaoh likewise experienced a vision from God in Joseph's day (though Pharaoh was unable to interpret it²) that warned him of seven plentiful years of crops followed by seven years of famine.³ Thus, Elihu instructs Job in the first of three ways that God speaks to men through dreams and visions in the night.

(*Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Job 33:15) Elihu now describes the first mode in which God speaks to man: He Himself comes forward as a witness in man's sleep, He makes use of dreams or dream-like visions, which come upon one suddenly within the realm of nocturnal thought (vid., Psychol. S. 282f.), as a medium of revelation—a usual form of divine revelation, especially in the heathen world, to which positive revelation is wanting. . . . In this condition of deep or half sleep, *revelat aurem hominum*, a phrase used of the preparation of the ear for the purpose of hearing by the removal of hindrances, and, in general, of confidential communication, therefore: He opens the ear of men, and seals their admonition, i.e., the admonition that is wholesome and necessary for them.

¹ Gen. 20:3 *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.*

² Gen. 41:32 *And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.*

³ Gen. 41:1–7 *And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. ²And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. ³And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. ⁴And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. ⁵And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. ⁶And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. ⁷And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

Through dreams, visions, and revelations that are given from the Lord, the most restless and sometimes troubling nights can prove to be the most life-changing ones.⁴

Job 33:16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

Dreams and vision can be as impactful and instructional to the soul as any revelation given to a man through traditional means. This is seen when the wise men who came to worship the newborn Christ refused to return to Herod and chose another route home, because a dream

had warned them of impending danger.⁵ Joseph also was given revelation through a dream, divinely instructed not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife.⁶ Later also Joseph was warned in a similar manner to flee into Egypt in order to save Jesus.⁷ By dreams and visions believers are both warned and instructed just as clearly as if the Lord spoke to them while they were awake. By this process divine will is sealed, and there remains no doubt that it is the Lord, Who has opened men's ears. It is also worth noting that sinners, and sometimes even believers, can be as deaf and dumb spiritually as some men's senses are impaired naturally.⁸

4 Abimelech was warned in a dream not to touch Sarah, Abraham's wife: *Gen. 20:3, 14*
Joseph dreamed he would one day rule over his family, commencing events that would lead him to save them: *Gen. 37:5*

Jacob went to Egypt after a vision: *Gen. 46:1-5*

Gideon led Israel into a winning battle after a dream: *Jdgs. 7:13-15*

Ezekiel had visions of the Almighty on His throne: *Ezek. 1:1-28*; God's displeasure with Israel: *Ezek. 8:1-16*; Israel as a harlot: *Ezek. 15-19*; the valley of dry bones come to life: *Ezek. 37:1-14*; the destruction of Gog and Magog, and peace in their own land for Israel: *Ezek. 38-39*; and a vision of the new temple: *Ezek. 40-48*

Joseph was told in a dream to take Mary as his wife: *Matt. 1:19-24*

After being warned, the Wise Men went another way home to avoid Herod: *Matt. 2:11-12*

Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt: *Matt. 2:13-14*

Joseph was also told in a dream it was safe to return to the land of Israel: *Matt. 2:19-20*

Pilate's wife had a dream and warned her husband not to have anything to do with the death of Jesus: *Matt. 27:19*

Ananias' vision told him to go to Saul (later renamed Paul), who had been blinded, and to share the Gospel with him, while Saul had a vision of Ananias coming to him: *Acts 9:10-12*

Cornelius (a Gentile) was told in a vision to find and listen to Simon Peter, which caused Cornelius' household to be saved: *Acts 10:1-7*; *Acts 10:44-45*

Peter had a vision to show him that heaven was opened to anyone who would believe in Jesus Christ, not just Jews: *Acts 10:9-15*

5 *Matt. 2:11-12 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.*

6 *Matt. 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

7 *Matt. 2:13-21 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. ¹⁴When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: ¹⁵And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ¹⁸In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. ¹⁹But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. ²¹And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

8 *Ps. 38:13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*

Job 33:17 *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

By interceding in men's lives and revealing His will to them, the Lord seeks to prevent the great and dangerous consequences of sinners pursuing their own will. This will is always driven through fleshly pride. It is because of pride that men and even angels pursue their own designs but in the process depart from God's will for their lives.⁹ Ultimately man is his own worst enemy¹⁰ as the pride, lust, and self-will within him can easily lead him to depart from God and God's will for his life. To do so will always be spiritually disastrous.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:17) That he may withdraw man from his purpose—*Margin, "work." The sense is plain. God designs to warn him of the consequences of executing a plan of iniquity. He alarms him by showing him that his course will lead to punishment, and by representing to him in the night visions, the dreadful woes of the future world into which he is about to plunge. The object is to deter him from committing the deed of guilt which he had contemplated, and to turn him to the paths of righteousness. Is it unreasonable to suppose that the same thing may occur now, and that God may have a purpose in the dreams which often visit the man who has formed a plan of iniquity, or who is living a life of sin? It cannot be doubted that such people often have alarming dreams; that these dreams are such as are fitted to deter them from the commission of their contemplated wickedness; and that in fact they not unfrequently do it.

Job 33:18 *He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.*

This is the result of God's warnings through dreams and visions; it is to keep men's souls from the pit and their lives from perishing. It is impossible to place too great an emphasis on this great verse, that men are saved from the pit and future destruction only because God has drawn them away from the pride in their hearts, which always will lead to death if left unaddressed.¹¹ Hence, without the Lord's divine intercession and intervention in men's lives, all sinners, including us, would perish.

Job 33:19 *He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:*

Those who insist on disregarding divine will often will be chastened with internal pain, consuming both their bodies and souls. If the Lord's commandments are insufficient to draw men's hearts closer to His will, then bodily pain is purposed to weaken their flesh through warning them spiritually of the dangers of sin and departing from the Lord. Hence, if truth cannot properly grab a man's attention when he is healthy and cause him to repent of his sin, then the Lord hopes that either physical or mental unhealthiness might. Undoubtedly pain will weaken the pride of self-will, which is at the core of men abandoning divine will. Bodily affliction is thus the next divine means

9 Isa. 14:12–15 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!* ¹³*For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ¹⁵Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

Dan. 4:30–32 *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* ³¹*While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. ³²And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

10 Prov. 14:12 *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

11 Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Elihu reveals that the Lord uses to open men's ears, just as dreams and visions are purposed to do. And though most view sickness, sorrow, and even suffering as punishment, it is often meant to be a spiritual deterrent, with the divine hope that if men experience a little of the fruit of sin, they will abandon continuing living in it.

(*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Job 33:19–28) Job complained much of his diseases and judged by them that God was angry with him; his friends did so too: but Elihu shows that they were all mistaken, for God often afflicts the body in love, and with gracious designs of good to the soul, as appears in the issue. This part of Elihu's discourse will be of great use to us for the due improvement of sickness, in and by which God speaks to men.

Practically, the Lord allowed Satan to inflict Job's body so that he might learn an even more important lesson, which is the discovery of a broken and contrite spirit,¹² a spirit also that through personal affliction or even spiritual enlightenment has had all fleshly pride broken. Every true child of God also must and will be chastised, and Job's life is a very clear biblical demonstration of this.¹³ *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons* (Heb. 12:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 33:19) Elihu now says, that affliction is a part of a dis-

ciplinary government; that it is one of the means which God adopts, when warnings are ineffectual, to restrain people and to bring them to reflection and repentance. This appears to have been a view which was almost entirely new to them.

And the multitude of his bones with strong pain—The bones, as has before been remarked, it was supposed might be the seat of the acutest pain; see the notes at Job 30:17;¹⁴ compare Job 20:11; Job 7:15; Job 30:30.¹⁵ The meaning here is, that the frame was racked with intense suffering in order to admonish men of sin, to save them from plunging into deeper transgression, and to bring them to repentance.

Job 33:20–21 *So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.*
²¹ *His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.*

The degree to which the body needs to be afflicted before the spirit is broken, and consequently open to repentance, will be determined by the level of stubbornness in the soul. Therefore some will often need to endure much bodily pain and suffering before they will even remotely consider repenting for their sins.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 33:19–28) Pain is the fruit of sin; yet, by the grace of God, the pain of the body is often made a means of good to the soul. When afflictions have done their work, they shall be removed.

12 Ps. 34:18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Isa. 66:1–2 *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*² *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

13 Job 2:4–7 *And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*⁵ *But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*⁶ *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*⁷ *So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

14 Job 30:17 *My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.*

15 Job 20:11 *His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.*

Job 7:15 *So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.*

Job 30:30 *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.*

So stubborn also are the pride and self-righteousness of sinners that sometimes they will even be willing to sacrifice their own physical lives in order not to have to abandon the pride and self-will within their hearts. This was practically evidenced in Pharaoh, who allowed the destruction of an entire nation,¹⁶ and eventually the loss of even his own life,¹⁷ instead of submitting to God's will. It is also worth noting that he who will not repent for his pride and remains resistant to God's will is only storing up for himself even greater divine wrath and judgment. *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God* (Rom. 2:5).

Job 33:22 *Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 33:22) *To the destroyers; to the instruments of death or destruction, whether it be angels, whom God sometimes useth in those cases; or devils, who have the power of death. Hebrews 2:14;¹⁸ or diseases, which by God's appointment are ready to give the fatal blow.*

As revealed earlier, the Lord often uses angels and heavenly ministers to warn men¹⁹ just as He uses these same celestial beings to carry out His judgments on the earth.²⁰

Job 33:23 *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:*

16 Exod. 7:17–18 *Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.*

Exod. 9:23–24 *And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.*

Exod. 10:14–15 *And the locust went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. ¹⁵For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.*

Exod. 12:29–30 *And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. ³⁰And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.*

17 Exod. 14:27–28 *And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.*

Exod. 15:19 *For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.*

Ps. 136:13–15 *To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever: ¹⁴And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever: ¹⁵But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

18 Heb. 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

19 Gen. 19:15 *And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

20 II Sam. 24:16 *And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.*

Ps. 78:49 *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*

There is no guarantee that God will send a messenger or an interpreter of His will to the afflicted, but if it is done, it is always a reflection of divine grace. True messengers sent by the Lord are also extremely rare, as Elihu reveals that they remain only *one among a thousand*. This is evidenced throughout biblical history, when similar to Elijah's day, for every one Elijah there were four hundred fifty prophets of Baal.²¹ Elihu also reveals that there are but few messengers and interpreters of God's will who will uphold God's uprightness in order that men can come to know that it is not God Who commits sin against man but rather man against God, that the Lord is both righteous and upright and that it is always foolish to accuse Him of committing sin or iniquity in any manner.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 33:23–24) If there be a messenger with him—*If there be a prophet or teacher with the afflicted man; *an interpreter—*One whose office and work it is to declare to him the mind and will of God, and his design in this dispensation of his providence, and what is the sick man's duty under it. *One of a thousand—*A person rightly qualified for this great and difficult work, such as there are but very few; *to show unto man his uprightness—*Not man's, but God's uprightness; namely, his justice in inflicting these sufferings, and the sufferer's desert of condemnation and wrath; God's way of pardoning and justifying the penitent;

his sincerity and faithfulness to his promises, and the necessity of acquiescing in his will without murmuring or repining, and of walking in the way of faith and holiness. *Then he is gracious unto him—*In that case, or upon the sick man's turning to God in true repentance and faith, God graciously pardons his sins, and saves him, probably from his dangerous disease and from death, but, if not, at least from going down to the pit of hell, and from everlasting destruction.

Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

If sinners heed the words of God's messengers, as Nineveh did with Jonah,²² their lives can be spared. Because also Job repented for his sin and did as God commanded and prayed for his friends,²³ the Lord found both a ransom and a reason for ending his captivity²⁴—as is the case that after all true and sincere acknowledgment of sin, heavenly grace and mercy are shown to the penitent.²⁵

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:24) I have found—*That is, there is a ransom; or, I have seen a reason why he should not die. The idea is, that God was looking for some reason on account of which it would be proper to release the sufferer, and restore him to the accustomed tokens of his favor and that such a ransom had now appeared. There was now

II Kgs. 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

21 I Kgs. 18:22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

22 Jnh. 1:1–2 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

Jnh. 3:1–3 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, ²Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. ³So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

Jnh. 3:5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Jnh. 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

23 Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

24 Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

25 Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

no necessity why those sufferings should be prolonged, and he could consistently restore him to health.

A *ransom*—Margin, or, “an atonement.” Hebrew, כֹּפֶר *kôpher*. On the meaning of this word, see the notes at Isaiah 43:3.²⁶ The expression here means that there was something which could be regarded as a valuable consideration, or a reason why the sufferer should not be further afflicted, and why he should be preserved from going down to the grave. What that price, or valuable consideration was, is not specified; and what was the actual idea which Elihu attached to it, it is now impossible with certainty to determine. The connection would rather lead us to suppose that it was something seen in the sufferer himself; some change done in his mind by his trials; some evidence of acquiescence in the government of God, and some manifestation of true repentance, which was the reason why the stroke of punishment should be removed, and why the sufferer should be saved from death. This might be called by Elihu “a ransom”—using the word in a very large sense.

There can be no doubt that such “a fact” often occurs. God lays his hand on his erring and wandering children. He brings upon them afflictions which would consign them to the grave, if they were not checked. Those afflictions are effectual in the case. They are the means of true repentance; they call back the wanderer; they lead him to put his trust in God, and to seek his happiness again in him; and this result of his trials is a reason why they should extend no further. The object of the affliction has been accomplished, and the penitence of the sufferer is a sufficient reason for lightening the hand of affliction, and restoring him again to health and prosperity.

When men come to know their sin, confess it,²⁷ and no longer deny its existence

within themselves, then the door is opened for God's forgiveness and mercy to be given to them. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy* (Prov. 28:13). What this teaches us is that for divine mercy to be given, there must be both a confession and a forsaking of sin. Hence, no sinner should mislead himself to think that without confession of sin God's mercy will ever, nor should ever, be given him.

Job 33:25–26 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

²⁶ He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

In speaking these words to Job, Elihu hoped to impart unto him seeds of hope—assuring Job that through repentance his body could regain its vigor and his soul rediscover reason to hope. So great then is the mercy and grace of God that when sin is repented of and no longer denied nor covered, the Lord will then allow a man to regain his previous right standing with Him. The final result of forgiveness being granted is that the penitent will be filled with divine joy and ultimately behold even more clearly the Lord in his life. Through confession of sin a clearer view of God will be gained and God's spiritual joy, which is His possession alone, will fill the heart. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full* (John 15:11). Therefore, a penitent man, it will be proved, will always be a much more blessed and happy man.

²⁶ Isa. 43:3 *For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.*

²⁷ I John 1:10 *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

I John 1:6 *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

Elihu Addresses Job Speaking Without True Knowledge of God

Job Chapter 33:27–34:35

Job 33:27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

WHAT is observed here, and then is more fully revealed in the next verse, is that the Lord both searches and seeks men out in the earth who are willing to confess their personal sin against God in order to be cleansed from it. Before forgiveness and mercy can be granted, sinners must without hesitation and without denial confess, *I have sinned, and perverted that which was right*. Confessing one's sin reveals both an admission and an acknowledgment that God's Word and God's laws are righteous. Hence, wherever there is a true and sincere repentance for sin, the Lord is justified, His ways are esteemed as right, and men agree with Him that they have broken His will for their lives. It is also an admission of sin that encapsulates the great spiritual lessons taught in the book of Job, as Job was exactly the kind of repentant man whom Elihu reveals that the Lord searches for in

the earth, one who would confess his sin, admit his guilt, and in the same breath justify his God.

Job 33:28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

When there is confession of sin, the Lord's promise is that the soul will be saved from death and the confessor will see the light of God in his life. There is also no true path to heaven that does not first begin with confession of sin. This is testified to throughout Scripture and evidenced in all whom the Lord has saved.¹ It is also the soul of man, and not merely his body, that the Lord is most concerned with rescuing—since Jesus instructed His followers to not be fearful of those able to kill the body but rather He who is able to destroy both the soul and the body. *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (Matt. 10:28).

¹ Matt. 3:2 *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Mark 1:4 *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Mark 6:12 *And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*

Luke 5:32 *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Luke 13:3–5 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. ⁴Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

Acts 8:22 *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

Acts 11:18 *When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

Acts 17:30 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 10:28) *Them which kill the body*—That is, people, who have no power to injure the soul, the immortal part. The body is a small matter in comparison with the soul. Temporal death is a slight thing compared with eternal death. He directs them, therefore, not to be alarmed at the prospect of temporal death, but to fear God, who can destroy both soul and body forever.

Understandably, it is only a genuine and sincere fear of God and confession of sin that are able² to save the soul, the part of man's creation that the Lord has likened to His own image.³

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 33:30) *To bring back his soul.*—Here, again, is the very key-note of Elihu's doctrine.

Job 33:29 *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,*

This process of saving the soul from death, through many divine agencies, is something that the Lord often works with man. Other translations of this verse add more insight into Elihu's instruction.

(ESV) *“Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man,*

(NKL) *“Behold, God works all these things, Twice, in fact, three times with a man,*

(AMP) [Elihu comments,] *“Behold, God does all these things twice, yes, three times, with a man,*

(Holman Christian Standard Bible) *God certainly does all these things two or three times to a man*

The manner in which God warns man and seeks to turn him from the pit is previously mentioned by Elihu: (1) by dreams and visions in the night,⁴ (2) by bodily chastisement and affliction,⁵ (3) by the Lord sending a messenger to instruct the sinner as to the why of his affliction and how through repentance and confession of sin, forgiveness can be granted.⁶ “So the Septuagint understands it, which rendered it, ὀδοῦς τρεῖς *hodous treis* — three ways, referring to the three methods which Elihu had specified.”⁷

Job 33:30 *To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*

Reiterating verse 28, Elihu reveals the Lord's ultimate purpose for bringing chastisement and allowing affliction in the sinner's life—to recover his soul

2 Prov. 14:27 *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

Prov. 22:4 *By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.*

Ps. 145:19 *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*

3 Gen. 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

Gen 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

4 Job 33:14–17 *For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. 15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; 16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, 17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

5 Job 33:19–22 *He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:*

²⁰*So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. 21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. 22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.*

6 Job 33:23–26 *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: 24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. 25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: 26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.*

7 Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:29

from death. Hence, Elihu reveals the great and central truth, that for those called to God, the primary and ultimate purpose of affliction is to steer God-fearing men toward that path whereby their souls can be saved.

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 33:31) Elihu shows that God's great and gracious design toward the children of men, is, to save them from being for ever miserable, and to bring them to be for ever happy. By whatever means we are kept back from the [pit,] we shall bless the Lord for them at least, and should bless him for them though they be painful and distressing. Those that perish for ever are without excuse, for they would not be healed.

Job 33:31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

Elihu is about to begin addressing Job's confusion, which will assist in laying the foundation upon which the Lord will build even more spiritual understanding (ch. 38–41). Practically speaking, there must be in the sinner a consideration of the messengers' words,⁸ to prompt sufficient internal awareness, so that then they can hear directly from God. Because of this, Elihu instructs Job to hold his peace and listen carefully to the truth he is about to bring forth. Through careful consideration of what is said, spiritual light and understanding can begin to illuminate Job's soul.

Job 33:32 If thou hast anything to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

If after Job had heard Elihu's words he observed error in them, he would be given ample opportunity to defend himself. Elihu also reveals that at the core of his own heart he seeks to justify Job. Because Elihu is interested in Job and his ultimate justification of his three friends' unjust accusations, he will lay no sin upon Job

above that which has been committed. Hence, whereas Job's other three friends seemed intent on establishing nothing more than religious dominance over this grief-stricken man, Elihu seeks his justification, teaching us that the motive from which a man speaks is as critical to true spirituality as the words spoken.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 33:32) I desire to justify thee.—He wishes to justify Job before his friends, that is, to maintain that his afflictions are not on account of past sin, but as a preservative against possible future defection. This being so, he considers that Job's case may justly be defended, and Job himself vindicated against his friends.

Job 33:33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

If Job has nothing to say in response to Elihu's words, then he is asked to hold his peace in order that true wisdom may be imparted to him. No doubt there are some who infer that it is arrogance that prompts Elihu's address, but if we are honest and consider that neither Job nor the Lord corrects Elihu at any time in the book, then we must conclude that Elihu was exactly who he claimed to be, a messenger sent by God to aid in Job's deliverance. Thus, if neither the Lord nor Job expresses fault and error in Elihu's correction, then it is foolish that those greatly removed from a personal exposure to Job's situation should—establishing the reality that if the Lord never corrects Elihu and if Job never refutes his words of reproof, why should any who merely read the book do so hundreds, if not thousands, of years later?

Job 34:1–4 Furthermore Elihu answered and said,
² Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

⁸ II Tim. 2:7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

³ *For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.*

⁴ *Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.*

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 34:4) Elihu calls upon those present to decide with him upon Job's words. The plainest Christian, whose mind is enlightened, whose heart is sanctified by the Spirit of God, and who is versed in the Scriptures, can say how far matters, words, or actions, agree with true religion, better than any that lean to their own understandings.

Whenever a man is led by the Spirit of God, he can appeal to those who are also of God and filled with the Spirit, knowing that they also will be able to discern and confirm the truth that has been spoken. Thus, it is common for those who speak after being inspired through the Spirit to call upon those who also possess the Spirit, to confirm that what has been revealed has its source in God and the higher spiritual realm.

Job 34:5–6 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

⁶ *Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.*

Job's words contain two improper assumptions: first, the certainty of his own righteousness, and second, the belief that his wounds were incurable. Yet the Lord would eventually prove both of these assumptions false, since Job was not nearly as righteous and innocent as he thought,⁹

and God did in fact heal his body and restore his life to an even greater level of abundance and prosperity.¹⁰

Job 34:7–8 What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?

⁸ *Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 34:7–9) *Who drinketh up scorning like water*—That is, abundantly and greedily: who doth so break forth into scornful expressions, not only against his friends, but, in some sort, even against God himself. The Hebrew may be interpreted, *What man, being like Job, would drink up scorning?* &c. That a wicked or foolish man should act thus, is not strange; but that a man of such piety, gravity, wisdom, and authority, as Job, should be guilty of such a sin, this is wonderful. *Which walketh with wicked men*—Although I dare not say he is a wicked man, yet in this matter he speaks and acts like one of the wicked.

Though Job was not wicked, in uttering false charges against God, he did to a degree walk in the company of the wicked. Job's exact words were *This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked* (Job 9:22). What this teaches us is that if even we are not evil, if we carry and espouse the same thoughts as those who are and claim injustice on God's part, then we manifest some agreement with God's detractors. To therefore speak and espouse the same sentiments as the ungodly undoubtedly reveals a level of walk and agreement with them.

⁹ *Job 10:7 Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.*

Job 13:18 Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.

Job 27:5–6 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. ⁶My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

Job 31:6 Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity.

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

¹⁰ *Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

Job 42:12–13 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. ¹³He had also seven sons and three daughters.

Job 34:9 *For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Job 34:9) Job had nowhere used this precise language, though the idea is not an unnatural inference from much that he had said; comp. ch. Job 9:12, Job 21:7, Job 24:1,¹¹ and ch. 21 throughout. This charge that a man is nothing bettered by being religious Elihu refutes in ch. 35, directing his attention in the meantime to the general charge of in justice so far as it bore on God Himself.

At the base of Elihu's correction of Job is the idea that Job inferred that none of his previous religious piety had prevented the affliction he was now suffering, thus foolishly asserting that it makes little to no difference if a man seeks to walk uprightly, since he would still need to undergo the same affliction as the wicked. In short, Job had concluded, *What profit is there in serving God?* if he was punished in the very same way as those who had rejected God.

Job 34:10 *Therefore hearken unto me ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.*

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 34:10–15) Elihu had showed Job, that God meant him no hurt by afflicting him, but intended his spiritual benefit. Here he shows, that God did him no wrong by afflicting him. If the former did not satisfy him, this ought

to silence him. God cannot do wickedness, nor the Almighty commit wrong.

Elihu draws a spiritual line in the sand regarding the impossibility of God committing sin through allowing unjust trials, rejecting the foolish notion that God could ever behave improperly and commit iniquity. The sinner will often lay claims of others' wrongdoing, including the Lord's, in order that he may continue viewing himself as righteous.¹² Consequently, because of personal conceit sinners will regularly charge the Lord with crimes of which it is spiritually impossible for Him to have committed.¹³ It is man also who is accustomed to sin and has blatantly and regularly proved himself a sinner—it is not God.

Job 34:11 *For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.*

Divine and heavenly justice demands that all men, without exception, will reap as they have sown, that the Lord will not be mocked, so that what sinners have sown they will just as surely reap. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap* (Gal. 6:7). The Lord's rendering to men exactly as they have sown proves that God is neither biased nor partial in His spiritual judgments toward man. Ultimately men determine their own fate, and the Lord only renders to them how they have chosen to live.

¹¹ Job 9:12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Job 21:7 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

Job 24:1 Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

¹² Gen. 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Num. 20:5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

¹³ Num. 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

Deut. 1:26–27 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: ²⁷And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 34:11) *For the work of a man shall he render unto him—He shall treat each man as he deserves—and this is the essence of justice. Of the truth of this, also, there could have been no question. Elihu does not, indeed, apply it to the case of Job, but there can be little doubt that he intended that it should have such a reference. He regarded Job as having accused God of injustice, for having inflicted woes on him which he by no means deserved. He takes care, therefore, to state this general principle, that with God there must be impartial justice—leaving the application of this principle to the facts in the world, to be arranged as well as possible. No one can doubt that Elihu in this took the true ground, and that the great principle is to be held that God can do no wrong, and that all the facts in the universe must be consistent with this great principle, whether we can now see it to be so or not.*

Job 34:12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

Job maintained that God had dealt with him unjustly, either by not hearing his case or by improperly ruling before he could present his defense. To maintain himself as righteous, Job had condemned both the Lord and His justice.¹⁴ When sinners reap as they have sown and do not like the fruit they bear, they generally will transfer and lay blame upon God. Until they come to possess true humility, sinners also will assume the role of victims of divine justice, when in fact they are nothing more than criminals in God's sight.

It is worth noting that by the Lord exercising spiritual judgment in the earth and

rendering to men as they have sown, the inhabitants of the earth are instructed in, and can come to learn, God's righteousness. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness* (Isa. 26:9).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 26:9) *For when thy judgments are in the earth— ...* The reason is, that the punishments which he [God] inflicted were intended to lead people to learn righteousness. The sentiment is expressed in a general form, though there is no doubt that the immediate reference is to the calamities which the Jews had suffered in their removal to Babylon as a punishment for their sins.

Learn righteousness—The design is to warn, to restrain, and to reform them. The immediate reference here was undoubtedly to the Jews, in whom this effect was seen in a remarkable manner in their captivity in Babylon. But it is also true of other nations; and though the effect of calamity is not always to turn a people to God, or to make them permanently righteous, yet it restrains them, and leads them at least to an external reformation. It is also true in regard to nations as well as individuals, that they make a more decided advance in virtue and piety in days of affliction than in the time of great external prosperity (compare Deuteronomy 6:11–12¹⁵).

Job 34:13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

All power that the Lord exerts and exercises on earth comes from the fact of His ownership of it.¹⁶ Because both the earth,

¹⁴ *Job 40:8* (NIV) "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?"

¹⁵ *Deut. 6:11–12* *And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;*
¹² *Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

¹⁶ *Deut. 10:14* *Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.*

and man are God's creation,¹⁷ it is His right and spiritual prerogative to do with both as He wills. If the earth and those upon it were not the result of the Lord's creative power, then men could rightly claim sin on God's part concerning His dealings with them. But since the Lord possesses and maintains ownership of all creation, then He can do with it all as He wills, and there is no injustice at all in His doing so.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 34:14) If the world were not God's property, as having been made by Him, but committed to His charge by some superior, it might be possible for Him to act unjustly, as He would not thereby be injuring Himself; but as it is, for God to act unjustly would undermine the whole order of the world, and so would injure God's own property (Job 36:23¹⁸).

Job 34:14–15 If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

¹⁵ All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

It is a spiritual reality that if God so willed it, He could choose to gather and return to Himself all the spiritual and breath life, that He has imparted to man. Because it is God Who has provided both natural and spiritual life, it is well within His authority and privilege to remove both from man if He so deems it necessary.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 34:14) The argument seems to be this. "If God wished such a thing, and should set his heart upon it, he could easily cut off the whole race. He has power to do it, and no one can deny him the right. Man has no claim to life, but he who gave it has a right to withdraw it, and the race is absolutely dependent on this infinite Sovereign. Being such a Sovereign, therefore, and having such a right, man cannot complain of his Maker as unjust, if he is called to pass through trials."

Elihu's position is this: do not question the Lord in His smaller judgments, lest He administer a far greater judgment. For if God set His heart on fully executing judgment for sin, then He could easily and without difficulty gather all life and return it to Himself. Indeed, all life has its source in God, whether it is manifested in men's bodies or imparted through the Lord's Spirit.¹⁹ Thus, all life, either flesh or spirit, will be either extended or shortened according to divine will. This is the Lord's right and something that should never be thought to be the right of sinners. *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die* (Ezek. 18:4).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ezek. 18:4) All souls are mine—Man is not simply to ascribe his existence to earthly parents, but to acknowledge as his Father Him who created man in His own image, and who gave and gives him the spirit of life.

Ps. 89:11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

Ps. 95:4–5 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. ⁵The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

17 Ps. 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

1 Cor. 10:26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

1 Cor. 10:28 But if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

18 Job 36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

19 Neh. 9:6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Acts 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

Job 34:16–20 *If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.*

¹⁷ *Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?*

¹⁸ *Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?*

¹⁹ *How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.*

²⁰ *In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.*

Elihu argues the fact that God has a legal and just right to govern His own creation. If worldly kings have this prerogative, does not He Who rules all the universe? This is also not only a very accurate observation but a very profound one as well, that God, Who is both the world's and man's Creator, has full right to judge and administer justice as He sees fit. The world and the creation surrounding it are God's; they are the work of His hands,²⁰ and man has absolutely no true ownership of anything, including even his own soul.

Job 34:21–23 *For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.*

²² *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.*

²³ *For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.*

Because God has universal sight of all worldly creatures²¹ and is able to see their goings, decisions, and motives throughout the earth, He is in a unique and knowledgeable position to judge the earth's inhabitants righteously.²² Because the Lord is able to observe all of man's goings, then it is impossible for Him to either incorrectly or improperly exercise unjust judgment upon man. Hence, because the Lord both knows and sees all, then every piece of vital evidence is directly before Him, allowing Him to properly and without bias judge justly all men and the lives they live.

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 34:21) For his eyes are upon the ways of man, . . . This may denote all their inward thoughts, the workings of their mind, the imaginations of their heart; all their secret purposes, designs, and schemes; and all the desires and affections of their soul; and all these, whether good or bad:

and he seeth all his goings; the whole of his walk and conversation, conduct and behaviour; all his external ways, works, and actions; and these whether of good or bad men, see Psalm 139:1 [O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.]

Job 34:24–30 *He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.*

²⁵ *Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.*

²⁶ *He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;*

20 Ps. 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

21 I Chr. 28:9 *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.* Ps. 139:2–4 *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. ³Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. ⁴For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

Ezek. 11:5 *And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.*

22 Jer. 16:17 *For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.*

²⁷ Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

²⁸ So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

²⁹ When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:

³⁰ That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

It is not within man's power to overthrow the will of God, not within his power to find the Lord if the Lord so chooses to hide Himself from man. It is also the Lord Who retains the power to overturn not only the leaders of nations but also entire nations themselves. Because He knows the works of the mighty, and those in the highest positions in the earth, and is fully aware if they turn back from Him, then all heavenly judgment descending from heaven is based on firm legal grounds.

Job 34:31–32 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:

³² That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

A variety of translations provide even clearer insight on these two verses.

Job 34:31–32 (NIV) “Suppose someone says to God, ‘I am guilty but will offend no more.’³² Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again.”

Job 34:31–32 (ESV) “For has anyone said to God, ‘I have borne punishment; I will not offend any more;’³² teach me what I

²³ Job 40:3–5 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. ⁵Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. Mic. 7:9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

Lev. 26:41 And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

²⁴ Job 34:6 Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.

do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more’?

Job 34:31–32 (NKJV) “For has anyone said to God, ‘I have borne chastening; I will offend no more;’³² Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will do no more’?

Job 34:31–32 (AMP) “For has anyone said to God, ‘I have endured my chastisement; I will not offend anymore;’³² Teach me what I do not see [in regard to how I have sinned]; If I have done wrong (injustice, unrighteousness), I will not do it again’?

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 34:31) Job accordingly says so (Job 40:3–5; Mic 7:9; Le 26:41).²³ It was to lead him to this that Elihu was sent. Though no hypocrite, Job, like all, had sin; therefore through affliction he was to be brought to humble himself under God. All sorrow is a proof of the common heritage of sin, in which the godly shares; and therefore he ought to regard it as a merciful correction. Umbreit and Maurer lose this by translating, as the Hebrew will bear, “Has any a right to say to God, I have borne chastisement and yet have not sinned?” (so Job 34:6).²⁴

What this teaches us is that many times, if not at all times, for men to clearly understand their sin against God, they must seek divine enlightenment so that their transgression may become known and therefore enable them to repent. So also is the degree of darkness in the sinner's soul, so much so that if divine light were never to enter into it, then he would remain completely oblivious to the harmful nature of sin, and God will eternally judge unrepentant sinners for it.

Job 34:33 *Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.*

Other translations of this verse are as follows:

(NIV) *Should God then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know.*

(NKJV) *Should He repay it according to your terms, Just because you disavow it? You must choose, and not I; Therefore speak what you know.*

(Holman Christian Standard Bible) *Should God repay you on your terms when you have rejected His? You must choose, not I! So declare what you know.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 34:33) *Should it be according to thy mind?*—Having advised and directed Job how to conduct himself, and what to say to God in his afflicted state, he now proceeds to enforce his advice with solid arguments; *should it*—Namely, God's chastening of thee, about which the great controversy was; *be according to thy mind?*—Or, as thou wouldst have it? Shall thy opinion or affection give laws and measures to God, that he shall afflict only such persons, and in such a manner and measure, and so long, as thou chooseth? Does God need, or should he seek for, thy advice how to govern the world, and whom and when to reward or punish? Dost thou quarrel with him because he chastises thee more severely and longer than thou expectedst?

Only when men spiritually realize and agree with the fact that God sets the terms for all things, including the spiritual trials in their lives, will they then yield to divine sovereignty. It is also pride and ignorant worldly narcissism that assume that the Lord must meet man's terms, and not man, God's.

25 Job 42:3 *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

Job 34:34–35 *Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.*

³⁵ *Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.*

Elihu's claims were not that Job was truly wicked, as his three friends had implied, but only that he was a man without true understanding of the Lord, who had also spoken many things concerning the Lord that he was actually totally ignorant of. This is also the precise sin that the Lord charges Job with, that he had both spoken and uttered *words without knowledge*, that Job, though he had at great length spoken of God, had uttered words without any true understanding of Him. Yes, Job was sincere in his faith and feared the Lord, and this should be reckoned to his credit, but there was still much lacking in his understanding of God's ways and his dealings with man. *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* (Job 38:1–2).

(Benson Commentary, Job 38:2) Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them? This language becomes not a creature, much less a professor of the true religion. The person here intended is not Elihu, who spoke last, but Job, who had spoken most, as is manifest from the former verse, in which it is said, The Lord answered Job; and from Job 42:3,²⁵ where Job takes the following reproof to himself, as also from the following discourse, wherein God convinces Job by divers of the same kind of arguments which Elihu had used against him. With a single question God shows the absolute emptiness of human abilities, strikes Job to the heart, and puts an end to the dispute.

Just because a man is sincere and authentic in his love and affection for God, it does not mean that he truly knows God.

Hence whatever a man may think he knows of the Lord is surely not equal to what the Scriptures reveal he should know. This is true of all men, including ourselves. *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know* (I Cor. 8:2).

Elihu Corrects Job for Speaking Without Wisdom

Job Chapter 34:35–35:16

Job 34:35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.

JOB had spoken of himself as righteous and had said of God that He denied him justice. Both of these statements would be proven false, revealing in Job the absence of both divine knowledge and true heavenly wisdom. All thoughts, like all spirits, must be tried,¹ and it is only God's Holy Spirit who can do this. If men also are quick to speak, and especially against the Lord, then they will very quickly find themselves ashamed. A fool utters all his mind,² and if a man does not carefully control his tongue, specifically in the area of faith, then his entire religion the Lord will esteem as vain. *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain* (Jas. 1:26).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 1:26) If any man among you seem to be religious—*Pious, or devout. That is, if he does not restrain his tongue, his other evidences of religion are worthless. A man may undoubtedly have many things in his character which seem to be evidences of the existence of religion in his heart, and yet there may be some one thing that shall show that all those evidences are false. Religion is designed to produce an effect on our whole conduct; and if there is any one thing in reference to which it does not bring us under its control, that one thing may show that all other appearances of piety are worthless.

*And bridleth not his tongue—*Restrains or curbs it not, as a horse is restrained with a bridle. There may have been some reason why the apostle referred to this particular sin which is now unknown to us; or he may perhaps have intended to select this as a specimen to illustrate this idea, that if there is any one evil propensity which religion does not control, or if there is any one thing in respect to which its influence is not felt, whatever other evidences of piety there may be, this will demonstrate that all those appearances of religion are vain. For religion is designed to bring the whole man under control, and to subdue every faculty of the body and mind to its demands. If the tongue is not restrained, or if there is any unsubdued propensity to sin whatever, it proves that there is no true religion.

Nowhere is self-righteousness more evident than in the happiness men take in listening to the sound of their own voices. In Christ's parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the Pharisee did not worship and praise God in his prayer; instead, he only self-righteously exalted himself.³ This is what Job's three friends had done, and Job's sin was not much different. Yet as far as God is concerned, an unbridled tongue, which speaks without true heavenly knowledge and wisdom, is clear evidence that a man's faith is false. Loose lips, it has been said, sink ships, and the same is true of any who allow their tongue unrestrained movement without careful spiritual restraint.

¹ *1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

² *Prov. 29:11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.*

³ *Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,⁴ and just as a man's heart and actions determine his destiny, so also, God's Word reveals, shall his words. *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned* (Matt. 12:36–37).

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Matt. 12:37) But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment—*They might say, "It was nothing: we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?" Jesus replies, "It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment."

Idle, careless, and uninspired spiritual words will often cause injury both to the one spoken of and the one who speaks them. In Job's case, because of his shallow knowledge of God, Elihu proclaimed his injury to be against God. In trying to protect himself, Job had carelessly brought reproach upon the Lord. Nothing also

is more important to keep in its original and unadulterated form than the Word of God, which reveals the Lord to the world. By it He saves men⁵ and makes Himself known.⁶ None also should foolishly believe that any words, especially if not inspired by God, will not directly affect his life. *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile* (I Pet. 3:10).

*(Benson Commentary, I Pet. 3:10–13) He that will love life—*That would make life amiable and desirable; *and see good days—*Namely, such as are prosperous and happy; *let him refrain his tongue from evil—*From railing, back-biting, tale-bearing, from all rash and provoking expressions; *and his lips that they speak no guile—*No deceit; nothing contrary to sincerity and simplicity. See on Psalm 32:2.⁷

If a man hopes to see good days, as Job undoubtedly desired, then he must keep his tongue from speaking evil, especially if there is any insinuation that the Lord has committed it. None also shall live a quiet and blessed life if the tongue is improperly used for anything other than sincere worship and praise of God⁸ while also pursuing the edification of men. All speech therefore should be directed toward the godly intention of either praising the Lord or the edification, instruction, and/or ad-

⁴ Prov. 18:21 *Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*

⁵ Jas. 1:18 *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

⁶ John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

⁷ Ps. 32:2 *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

⁸ Ps. 71:8 *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.*

Ps. 71:15 *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.*

Ps. 96:2 *Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.*

Ps. 109:30 *I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*

Ps. 145:21 *My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

Rom. 15:6 *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Heb. 13:15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

monishment of our fellow man⁹ if indeed a blessed and happy life is desired.

Job 34:36 My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.

Elihu's desire was for Job to be tried because he had, if not intentionally, inadvertently provided ammunition for the wicked. This sin needed to be addressed, and Elihu desired that sufficient time be given for Job's words to be fully brought to light. Job had sought an audience with the Lord in order to defend himself, and he would indeed be given one, but its purpose would be to bring his ignorance to light and reveal no fault on God's part. Yes, Job's prayer would be answered, just not the way he originally envisioned. All men, without exception, including us, will have to give account for their words and will also have to undergo a similar heavenly inspection as Job. *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned* (Matt. 12:37).

Job 34:37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

Though Job had successfully defended himself against the false accusations of his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, he should not have had any thoughts of gaining spiritual victory. It was true that he had refuted his critics' weak and unsubstantiated arguments regarding his spiritual integrity, but in doing so he had also unintentionally indicted himself.

(Benson Commentary, Job 34:37) *He addeth rebellion unto his sin*—He sinned before by

impatience under his afflictions, but now he is grown obstinate, and, instead of humbling himself for his sins, he justifies himself, and accuses the blessed God. *He clappeth his hands among us*—In token of victory, insulting and triumphing; *and multiplieth his words against God*—In effect, though not directly.

Whatever knowledge we may have of the Lord, we should not boast of it, especially when this knowledge remains insufficient to release us from personal captivity. Job rejoiced that his arguments countered those of his friends, but in truth he had done nothing to help his broken condition. Winning any debate, especially with fools, surely does not guarantee release from our own bondage. And though a self-righteous man may praise himself, thinking he possesses superior wisdom, what good is winning any spiritual argument or debate without gaining spiritual freedom as a result?

Job 35:1–2 Elihu spake moreover, and said,

²Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?

Here is Job's, great sin, though unintentional: *Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?* Though Job did not directly say this, and it is a summarization of both his words and his inner thoughts, it is still accurate. Whenever anyone accuses the Lord of injustice, there is an implication that human righteousness is greater than and superior to divine righteousness. If men also believe they are already on the same level as the Lord, it is but a very small

⁹ Eph. 4:15 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Eph. 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

Eph. 5:19–20 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; ²⁰Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

Col. 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

step to think and believe that their own righteousness is equal or superior to His. By questioning God's ways and doubting His sovereignty, Job had implied that God was unjust and that he, Job, alone remained righteous.

Job 35:3 *For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

As evidence that Job thought his righteousness greater than God's, Elihu addressed his previous statement that there appeared to be no profit in living a godly life.¹⁰ By challenging God's government, Job challenged the righteousness of Him who instituted this government.¹¹ In short, Job was disgruntled by the way he thought God had governed his affairs and had unjustly either caused or allowed the tragic events in his life.

What Job also did not know was that no sin can be properly confessed or atoned for until it is first known. Thus, if there is any ignorance of sin, there practically cannot be full and complete repentance, which alone is the path to forgiveness. It is also very foolish to judge anything as being right or wrong solely according to whether or not it is profitable to us—simply because the Lord has called many to suffer for His name, and surely this is not sin on their part. Moses also was called to suffer affliction with the people of God, but solely because of the necessity to lead God's people to deliverance. *Choosing*

rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). The apostle Paul also was called to suffer both affliction and persecution for the Lord's name. *But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake"* (Acts 9:15–16 NLT). This teaches us that we should never judge any call from God according to whether or not it produces personal advantage, since most heavenly calls will actually entail a large degree of internal pain and suffering.

Job 35:4–8 *I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.*

⁵ *Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.*

⁶ *If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?*

⁷ *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?*

⁸ *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 35:7) If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? By parity of reasoning, as our sins do not injure God, so our righteousness cannot benefit him. As David says, "My goodness extendeth not to thee" (Psalm 16:2). *Or what receiveth he of thine hand?* All things being already God's, we can but give him of his own. We cannot

¹⁰ Job 34:9 *For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*

Job 35:3 *For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

¹¹ Ps. 22:28 *For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.*

Ps. 29:10 *The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.*

Ps. 47:7–8 *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. ⁸God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*

Ps. 103:19 *The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

Dan. 2:21 *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

Dan. 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

really add to his possessions, or to his glory, or to his felicity.

Men will often overestimate what they think should be their reward for pursuing righteousness. Hence, Job vastly overestimated what his fear of God should yield him, thinking that the pursuit of a righteous life is somehow a special gift to God and that by such a pursuit any pain and tragedy in his life must be deemed as unjust. Yet it is always improper to assume that our desire to walk righteously before the Lord means that we are immune to either tragedy in our lives or to receiving divine chastisement.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 35:8) Thy wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art—That is, it may injure him, but not God. He is too far exalted above man, and too independent of man in his sources of happiness, to be affected by what he can do. The object of the whole passage Job 35:6–8 is, to show that God is independent of people, and is not governed in his dealings with them on the principles which regulate their conduct with each other. One man may be greatly benefited by the conduct of another, and may feel under obligation to reward him for it; or he may be greatly injured in his person, property, or reputation, by another, and will endeavor to avenge himself. But nothing of this kind can happen to God. If he rewards, therefore, it must be of his grace and mercy, not because he is laid under obligation; if he inflicts chastisement, it must be because people deserve it, and not because God has been injured. In this reasoning Elihu undoubtedly refers to Job, whom he regards as having urged a "claim" to a different kind of treatment, because he supposed that he "deserved" it. The general principle of Elihu is clearly correct, that God is entirely independent of human beings; that neither our good nor evil conduct can affect his happiness, and that consequently his dealings with us are those of impartial justice.

Job 35:9–10 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed

to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

¹⁰But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;

At first glance, this is a difficult verse to understand. The Cambridge Bible helps with its interpretation:

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Job 35:9) Having laid down his principle Elihu now proceeds to clear away some anomalies which seem to support Job's contention. There are instances where godliness does not seem to advantage men, where oppressed innocence cries in vain for redress. The reason is that the cry is merely the natural voice of suffering; it is no true devout appeal to heaven—none saith, Where is God my maker?

It is not enough to merely cry by reason of oppression if the cry is not directly lifted to the Lord, as many men lament their personal suffering without calling upon God while in it. When men also experience the difficulties of religion, as Job did, they often (incorrectly) bring into question its validity, teaching us that when things are difficult and it appears that prayers have gone unanswered, it is not uncommon that sinners will question the profitability of faith. The apostle Paul also stated that we must undergo much tribulation to enter the kingdom of God, confirming that the road to heaven will not always be an easy one. *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 14:22) And that we must ἰεὶς τὸ ἕκ—kai hoti dei. That it is fit or proper that we should. Not that it is fixed by any fatal necessity, but that we are not to expect that it will be otherwise. We are to calculate on it when we become Christians. Why it is proper, or fit, the apostle did not state. But we may remark that it is proper:

(1) Because such is the opposition of the world to pure religion that it cannot be avoided. Of this they had had striking demonstration in Lystra and Iconium.

(2) it is necessary to reclaim us from wandering, and to keep us in the path of duty, Psalm 119:67, Psalm 119:71.¹²

(3) it is necessary to wean us from the world; to keep before our minds the great truth that we have here “no continuing city and no abiding place.”¹³ Trial here makes us pant for a world of rest. The opposition of sinners makes us desire that world where “the wicked shall cease from troubling,”¹⁴ and where there shall be eternal friendship and peace.

(4) when we are persecuted and afflicted, we may remember that it has been the lot of Christians from the beginning. We tread a path that has been watered by the tears of the saints, and rendered sacred by the shedding of the best blood on the earth. The Saviour trod that path; and it is enough that the “disciple be as his master, and the servant as his lord,” Matthew 10:24–25.¹⁵

Job 35:11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

Beasts do not know the reason for their afflictions or why they are led to slaughter, but this should not be so with man. Having access to his Creator gives man a distinct advantage over all other worldly creatures. Yet if he rejects the pursuit of higher wisdom and chooses to abandon

divine instruction and correction, then he will regress to being exactly like the beasts of the field, who are themselves ignorant of the Lord and their own carnal condition. When sinners also refuse to seek the Lord in their trials and spiritually inquire why they are afflicted, they then reveal themselves to be as deficient in wisdom as the beasts of the field.¹⁶

Job 35:12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

(Benson Commentary, Job 35:12) *There they cry*—Or then, as the Hebrew particle here used often means; that is, in that time or condition of trouble; *but none giveth answer*—The reason that God doth not deliver them is, because, though they lie crying under their afflictions, they continue to be evil, wicked, and impenitent; proud and unhumbled for those sins, on account of which God brought these miseries upon them.

Here we see why sinners receive no heavenly answer when they cry. It is simply because pride still maintains control of their hearts, which teaches us that the pride in the sinner’s heart ultimately determines whether God hears his prayers or not. Elihu thus reveals to Job that the Lord will not hear those who hold high opinions of themselves, higher also than God has deemed man should think of himself.¹⁷ Thus, if a man is lifted up with pride, then he will see no good thing given to him from heaven. This teaches us that until sinners remove fleshly pride and

12 Ps. 119:67 *Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.*

Ps. 119:71 *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

13 Heb. 13:14 *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

14 Job 3:17 *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.*

15 Matt. 10:24–25 *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* ²⁵*It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

16 Dan. 4:25 *That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

17 Ps. 138:6 *Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.* Gen. 18:27 *And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes:*

human arrogance from their hearts, they should not assume that God will hear their prayers, whether they are lifted in desperation or not.

Job 35:13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 35:13) vanity—that is, cries uttered in an unhumbled spirit, Job 35:12, which applies in some degree to Job's cries; still more to those of the wicked (Job 27:9; Pr 15:29).¹⁸

Though Job feared God, there was still a degree of vanity within him, and this kept his petitions from fully being heard.¹⁹ *God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 35:13)

1. Vain and light persons, that have no true wisdom or solid piety in them, but are wholly addicted to vain and worldly things, rejoicing immoderately when they have them, and crying out for want of them, as here they do. Or,

2. Vain cries, which proceed not from faith or piety, but only from self-love and a natural sense of their misery; which is common to them with brute beasts. The abstract is here put for the concrete, as wickedness is oft put for wicked men, and pride for proud persons, and the like.

Neither will the Almighty regard it: though God be able to help them, as this title of God implies, and though he be the Judge of the world, as the former name of God signifies, to whom therefore it belongs to right the

oppressed against the oppressor, yet in this case he justly refuseth to help them.

If a man's heart is not right and is controlled by either vanity or vain things, God will neither hear his prayer nor come to his aid when he is in need of heavenly assistance. The condition of a man's heart, therefore, both must and will greatly affect whether or not God responds to his prayers,²⁰ teaching us that where true vanity exists, so shall unanswered prayers also exist.

Job 35:14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.

(Benson Commentary, Job 35:14) Here Elihu answers another objection of Job's; and tells him that though God may, for a season, delay to answer, yet he will certainly do him right. *Yet judgment is before him*—Justice is at his tribunal, and in all his ways and administrations. *Therefore trust thou in him*—Instead of murmuring, repent of what is past, humble thyself under God's hand, wait patiently in his way till deliverance come, for it will certainly come, if thou dost not hinder it.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 35:14) Elihu here says that though it is true in fact that God is invisible, yet this ought not to be regarded as a reason why he should not confide in him. The argument of Elihu here—which is undoubtedly sound—is, that the fact that God is invisible should not be regarded as any evidence that he does not attend to the affairs of people, or that he is not worthy of our love.

¹⁸ Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

Prov. 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

¹⁹ Ps. 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Ps. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

²⁰ II Chron. 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Ps. 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Prov. 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

To trust God, especially in times of trial, is one of the most neglected and often forgotten elements of true faith.²¹ It is this counsel that Elihu wisely imparts to Job, that he should remain trusting in the Lord despite his affliction simply because his trust will eventually be rewarded.

Job 35:15 *But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:*

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 35:15–16) *But now, because it is not so*—That is, because Job doth not acknowledge God's justice and his own sins, and wait upon God in a proper way for mercy; *he hath visited in his anger*—God hath laid grievous afflictions upon him, all which appear to be too little to bring Job to a compliance with God's will. *Yet he knoweth it not*—Job is not sufficiently sensible of it, so as to be humbled under God's mighty hand.

Men often commit sin that they are completely unaware of, similar to David's sin against both Uriah and Bathsheba.²² However, though sin may be committed in ignorance, this ignorance did not mitigate God's angry feelings toward it. It has been said, and is true, that ignorance of the law is no excuse. The same holds

true if men are ignorant of divine law. Hence, though sin may be both unknown and even unintentional, still there will be spiritual consequences for committing it.

Job 35:16 *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 35:16) *Therefore*—In view of all that Elihu had now said, he came to the conclusion that the views of Job were erroneous, and that he had no just cause of complaint. He had suffered no more than he had deserved; he might have obtained a release or mitigation if he had applied to God; and the government of God was just, and was every way worthy of confidence. The remarks of Job, therefore, complaining of the severity of his sufferings and of the government of God, were not based on knowledge, and had in fact no solid foundation.

Job spoke much,²³ and it could be blamed upon his affliction, but in the end he proved that he knew very little of the Lord.²⁴ Ultimately it would be neither Job's complaining nor the multitude of his words that delivered him—but only God's merciful intervention in his life.

21 Ps. 34:8 *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

Ps. 40:4 *Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

Ps. 73:28 *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.*

Ps. 84:12 *O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

Prov. 16:20 *He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.*

Jer. 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.*

22 II Sam. 11:2–4 *And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. II Sam. 11:14–17 *And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.**

23 twenty chapters: 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

24 Job 42:3 *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

Elihu Speaks to Job of God's Righteousness

Job Chapter 36:1–22

Job 36:1–3 Elihu also proceeded, and said, ²Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. ³I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

HERE we see the distinct difference between Elihu and Job's other three friends. They had spoken from personal reason, experience, and tradition. Elihu had fetched his *knowledge from afar*. Elihu thus assured Job that the wisdom he was about to bring to him did not originate from himself. It did not originate from man or a group of men but rather from man's Creator, the Maker of all living things. It is also only as messengers of the Lord seeking their understanding from the Lord Himself, from afar—thus not from personal reason, experience, or the past—that they can properly speak on *God's behalf*.

Because he brings inspiration from above, Elihu reveals that he will *ascribe righteousness to [his] Maker*. How rare are such messengers as Elihu, who instead of seeking to justify himself or man has instead chosen that heavenly path, which pursues divine wisdom, ultimately justifying God and ascribing righteousness to Him.

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 36:4)
For truly my words shall not be false, . . . But strictly true; he would take the utmost care to say nothing but the truth, with the greatest

impartiality and sincerity, so that what was said might be depended upon; truth spoken briefly, clearly, and on so important a subject as the righteousness of God, deserved attention;

Job 36:4 For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

Elihu remained confident that he would not err or speak false words about God or Job, as Job's other three companions had done. This was because his source was the Spirit of God and not himself. The Spirit is truth,¹ and only He can reveal where sin actually abides and the real cause of it. In his previous words to Job, Elihu revealed where he knew the true source of all wisdom resided, and it was from the very same God Who imparts His Spirit to man.² It is from this Spirit, this Holy Spirit who descends from above and comes from the spiritual realm, that divine knowledge is imparted to those who woefully lack it. *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding* (Job 32:8).

Job 36:5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.

In his defense of God and His righteousness, Elihu states that the might and strength of the Lord allow Him to be un-

¹ John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

² I John 5:6 *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

³ Ezek. 36:26–27 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

rivalled by any and consequently *despiset* *not any*. Elihu assures Job that the Lord does not despise men and cannot do anything unbecoming toward them beyond what they deserve. Ultimately, the Lord is neither capricious, nor are His judgments concerning man erratic or haphazard. Because of the Lord's great might and His great distance from man, He is above all human vendetta and emotion.

Job 36:6 *He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.*

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Job 36:6) *He preserveth not the life of the wicked*. There is no special providence over the life of the wicked, as Job had supposed, or pretended to suppose (Job 21:7; comp. Job 12:6).³ On the contrary, God "overturneth" wicked men "in the night, so that they are destroyed; he striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others" (Job 34:25, 26).⁴ *But giveth right to the poor*. The poor and afflicted, the meek and humble, God vindicates.

Assuring Job of God's justice, Elihu refutes Job's claim that the wicked become old and live long lives while also increasing in both influence and power. *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?* (Job 21:7). One needs only to observe the actual lives of sinners to know that no wicked man has a good end. Hence, even if their lives appear momentarily blessed, it is only for a time before divine justice and their own wicked deeds discover them. Elihu also rightfully proclaims that the real blessed are those who are poor, especially those poor in spirit, who have humbled themselves before God and yielded to

His sovereignty over their lives. Because the Lord's deep affection has always been toward the humble and those contrite in spirit, it is foolishness to think that the same God Who adores and cherishes the lowly would ever promote the proud. It is also not the wicked who actually live long lives but rather the humble, who by divine grace are given eternal life as a gift from God. Hence, the wicked should never esteem themselves as blessed, even if they retain some world prosperity, simply because God's eternal life has been withheld from them. It is the meek to whom God looks, not the proud. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. 5:3).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 5:3) To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favor from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition.

Ultimately, it is only those who are truly poor in heart, possess a contrite spirit, and also tremble at God's Word whom the Lord looks upon with both kindness and favor.⁵ *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word* (Isa. 66:2).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 66:2) *But to this man will I look*—That is, 'I prefer a humble heart and a contrite spirit to the most

³ Job 21:7 *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?*

Job 12:6 *The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.*

⁴ Job 34:25 *Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. Job 34:26 He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;*

⁵ Ps. 25:9 *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*

Ps. 138:6 *Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

Jas. 4:6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

magnificent earthly temple' (see the notes at Isaiah 57:15).⁶

That is poor—Or rather 'humble.' The word rendered 'poor' (עָנִי 'ânîy), denotes not one who has no property, but one who is down-trodden, crushed, afflicted, oppressed; often, as here, with the accessory idea of pious feeling Exodus 24:12; Psalm 10:2, Psalm 10:9.⁷ The Septuagint renders it, Ταπεινὸν *Tapeinon*—'Humble;' not πτωχὸν *ptōchon* (poor). The idea is, not that God looks with favor on a poor man merely because he is poor—which is not true, for his favors are not bestowed in view of external conditions in life—but that he regards with favor the man that is humble and subdued in spirit.

And of a contrite spirit—A spirit that is broken, crushed, or deeply affected by sin. It stands opposed to a spirit that is proud, haughty, self-confident, and self-righteous.

Job 36:7 *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 36:7) God does not forsake the godly, as Job implied, but "establishes," or makes them sit on the throne as kings (1Sa 2:8; Ps 113:7, 8).⁸

Job 36:8–10 *And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;⁹ Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.*

6 Isa. 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

7 Exod. 24:12 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.*

Ps. 10:2 *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*
Ps. 10:9 *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*

8 I Sam. 2:8 *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them.*

Ps. 113:7–8 *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;⁹ That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.*

¹⁰ *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

Elihu reveals to Job that if the righteous find themselves bound in affliction, it is because of their own spiritual transgressions. By the Lord's allowing sinners to enter into bondage, it is hoped that they see the error of their ways and humbly realize that their affliction is the result of divine discipline—and therefore recognize their great need to repent of sin in order that God's blessings and favor can return to their lives.

(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 36:9) The fundamental thought of Elihu here once again comes unmistakably to view: the sufferings of the righteous are well-meant chastisements, which are to wean them from the sins into which through carnal security they have fallen—a warning from God to penitence, designed to work their good.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 36:9) This is Elihu's special doctrine, that God's chastisements are by way of discipline, to reform the future rather than to chastise the past.

Though most will almost universally disagree with this truth, the Lord does use captivity, suffering, and affliction to open men's ears to the guilt of their sin and come to know their need to repent for it. But if sinners do not repent when

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they are being chastised by the Lord, then there is no hope that He will redeem their souls from the grave.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Job 36:10) God's chastisements are to be viewed as commands to men to "go and sin no more."⁹

Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

True repentance for sin must include leaving the service of sin to pursue spiritual obedience and service to the Lord. Elihu instructs Job that it is obedience and service to the Lord that produce long life and a life filled also with both prosperity and pleasure. Thus it is through subjection and service to the Lord that men's lives are blessed and happiness can fill their souls.

Job 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 36:12) *But if they obey not*—If those who are afflicted do not turn to God, and yield him obedience, they must expect that he will continue their calamities until they are cut off.

He who stubbornly resists heavenly chastisement, manifested through divine affliction and captivity, will die without any true knowledge of God. To *die without knowledge* is to die without any true understanding of Him, Who alone gives life and breath to all things.¹⁰ It is thus the Lord's heavenly judgment that unrepentant sinners will die without any true exposure to the Lord or the goodness that is alone God's. Hence, those who do not obey the will of God will experience a future of never being allowed to come to truly know God and the beauty of His

divine being as their ultimate and final judgment for rebellion

Job 36:13–14 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.

¹⁴ ***They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.***

Advancing his argument of the godless and how the Lord deals with them, Elihu now draws Job's attention to the hypocrite who refuses to cry to God, even in his affliction, and as a result dies before his time. This no doubt includes the religious hypocrite, who though speaking of God, lives a life totally contrary to Him. Trials also ultimately determine men's true character, which will also determine when they die and where their final resting place will be—in heaven or among the unclean.

Job 36:15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

For the second time Elihu stresses¹¹ that through affliction and oppression men's ears are opened in order that they may hear God's voice and come to know His will for their lives.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Job 36:15) *He delivereth the poor in his affliction.*—The point of Elihu's discourse is rather that He delivereth the afflicted by his affliction; He makes use of the very affliction to deliver him by it as a means, "and openeth their ears by oppression."

The Lord's divine hope is always that sinners through adversity will be humbled and come to know their great need for subjection to divine will. For this reason affliction is just one of many means

⁹ John 8:11 *She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

¹⁰ Acts 17:25 *Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;*

¹¹ Job 36:10 *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

whereby the Lord attempts to save the sinner.

Job 36:16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 36:16) Elihu shows that Job caused the continuance of his own trouble.

How sinners deal with affliction in its beginning will often determine the length of its duration. If sinners also are not brought to know themselves and the sin that lives within them and consequently the role it has played in their bondage, then they will never come to know the real reason for their bondage.

Job 36:17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 36:17) According to this the meaning is, that if Job held the opinions of wicked people, he must expect that these opinions would be rapidly followed by judgment, or that they would go together, and support each other. This seems to me to be in accordance with the connection, and to express the thought which Elihu meant to convey. It is a sentiment which is undoubtedly true—that if a man holds the sentiments, and manifests the spirit of the wicked, he must expect to be treated as they are.

When any man, even one who thinks himself righteous, aligns himself with the wicked, even in merely speech, he opens the door for divine judgment. Job indeed feared God, but by both sharing and agreeing with the opinions of the wicked, he had unknowingly opened the door to be treated exactly as them.

12 *Job 1:3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

Job 36:18 Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

If the Lord is extensively provoked because of men's sin and if affliction does not humble them, then His wrath can very easily take away all their life through a stroke of His hand.

Job 36:19 Will he esteem thy riches? no, nor gold, nor all the forces of strength.

Job had possessed both riches and wealth,¹² yet none of his worldly possessions could prevent the Lord from allowing Satan to touch his life. Hence, just as worldly riches and honor could not prevent Job's affliction, neither would they be able to prevent Job's death if the Lord so willed it. Whatever therefore a man possesses, be it wealth, honor, or privilege, it will not prevent divine justice if sin is committed. Thus, no worldly power or earthly influence can prevent the Lord's spiritual judgment to render to men the bitter fruit of their sin.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 36:19) *Will he esteem thy riches?*—That is God will not regard thy riches as a reason why he should not cut you off, or as a ransom for your forfeited life. The reference here must be to the fact that Job "had been" a rich man, and the meaning is, either that God would not spare him because he "had been" a rich man, or that if he had now all the wealth which he once possessed, it would not be sufficient to be a ransom for his life.

Nor all the forces of his strength—Not all that gives power and influence to a man—wealth, age, wisdom, reputation, authority, and rank. The meaning is, that God would not regard any of these when a man was rebellious in affliction, and refused in a proper manner to acknowledge his Maker.

Job 36:20 *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.*

Job had desired death,¹³ which Elihu warns is never something to wish for. The reason for this is that there is a finality in death, which if entered into cannot be reversed. Hence, in death men can no longer repent, nor is there any true hope of being reconciled to God. Yet it was sadly his own death that Job naively wished for. *Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!* (Job 6:8–9).

(Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, Job 6:9) The sense is, that Job wished that God would wholly finish his work, and that as he had begun to destroy him he would complete it.

Job 36:21 *Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.*

It is common among the afflicted that death is preferred above living under divine chastisement. Sinners would rather die quickly than have to endure the fruit and consequences of sin.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Job 36:21) *Regard not iniquity.*—Or, perhaps, the special sin of longing for death, for thou hast desired to die rather than bear thine affliction.

Job 36:22 *Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?*

Elihu now instructs Job that if there is to be deliverance from his captivity, it will require the Lord instructing him as He must all the ungodly as to the nature of their sin and how to be delivered from it. *Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way* (Ps. 25:8–9). In regards to pointing out and revealing any sin against God, there is none who can teach like God, Who alone can instruct the sinner as to how he has sinned and the means to be forgiven for it. This eternal truth would very soon be apparent in Job's life, for after Elihu's correction the Lord begins His own spiritual chastisement of both Job's words and his thoughts. *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee* (Job 42:2).

¹³ Job 16:22 *When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*

Job 17:13 *If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.*

Job 19:27 *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

Elihu Speaks to Job of God's Greatness

Job Chapter 36:23–37:24

Job 36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

AT the core of all rebellion is the treasonous belief that men know how to rule the earth better than God. Sinners also will not hesitate to bring charges against the Lord simply because they believe they know more than Him. Yet no mortal man, let alone a sinful man, has ever ascended so high in creation that he could counsel the Lord or ascribe any sin to Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 36:23) The idea is, that God is supreme and independent; no one has advised him, and no one has a right to counsel him.

Men are sinners; God is not. Men transgress against the Lord; the Lord does not sin against them. Elihu thus declares that

none have the right to say that the Lord has wrought iniquity, when in fact it is spiritually impossible for Him to do so. *The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD* (Prov. 19:3).

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 19:3) A man's own self-will (Proverbs 1:7)¹ overturns his way, stops his progress, whether in temporal or spiritual matters, and then, instead of blaming himself, "his heart fretteth against the Lord." (Comp. Isaiah 8:21; Revelation 16:10–11.²)

Martha blamed Lazarus' death on the fact that Jesus was not there during his sickness.³ Israel blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt.⁴ Ahab blamed and hated Micaiah because he prophesied only evil concerning him.⁵ The point is that the righteous will often be blamed and accused of wrongdoing when in fact

1 Prov. 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

2 Isa. 8:21 *And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.*

Rev. 16:10–11 *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

3 John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

4 Num. 20:5 *And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.*

Num. 21:5 *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

5 1 Kgs. 22:1–8 *And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.*

6 *And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by*

they are actually purposing to help others. It is also impossible to blame the Lord for anything unjust without directly sinning against Him—simply because it has been revealed, and is it certain, that he who unjustly blames or casts aspersions upon God sins against Him.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 36:23) Let not Job continue his unjust quarrel with God and his providence. And let us never dare to think favourably of sin, never indulge it, nor allow ourselves in it. Elihu thinks Job needed this caution, he having chosen rather to gratify his pride and humour by contending with God, than to mortify them by submitting, and accepting the punishment. It is absurd for us to think to teach Him who is himself the Fountain of light, truth, knowledge, and instruction.

Job 36:24–25 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

²⁵*Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.*

By directing Job's thoughts to the Lord, Elihu sought to move them away from his own misery. What men think upon greatly determines the opinion they have of their situations. He also who is overly occupied with self will believe himself to be a much higher creature than he really is. Elihu's antidote to this is to direct Job's thoughts off himself and onto God. By doing this, human conceit

can be lowered and men can be brought to know the true position they hold in God's creation. It is also by beholding the Lord and His works, and not ourselves or our situations, that we have the key to true spiritual transformation: *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (II Cor. 3:18). What men dwell upon produces the greatest degree of influence on their character. Moses' face shone after he came down from Mount Sinai because of both being in and beholding the Lord's presence. Through Moses' communion with the Lord, his own countenance and visage were actually changed. Beholding the Lord's celestial glory created a reflection on Moses' face, practically revealing his communion with the Lord. *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him* (Exod. 34:29).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Exod. 34:29) *The skin of his face shone.*—That an actual physical phenomenon is intended appears from the entire narrative, as well as from St. Paul's comment upon it in 2 Corinthians 3:7–18.⁶ According to some commentators, a radiance like that here described was a part of man's original heritage, a feature of that "image of God" wherein he

whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

6 II Cor. 3:7–18 *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: ⁸How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ⁹For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. ¹⁰For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. ¹¹For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. ¹²Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: ¹³And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: ¹⁴But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. ¹⁵But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

was created (Genesis 1:27).⁷ The gift was forfeited by the fall, and will not be restored generally until the time of the restitution of all things. But meanwhile, from time to time, it pleases God to restore to certain of His saints the physical glory, which is the symbol of internal purity and holiness, as to Moses on this occasion and afterwards to Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9:31),⁸ and to St. Stephen when he pleaded before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:15).⁹ A glory of the kind, but of surpassing brilliancy, belonged to the human nature of our blessed Lord, who concealed it ordinarily, but allowed it to appear temporarily at the transfiguration, and permanently after His ascension (Revelation 1:16; Revelation 10:1; Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5).¹⁰ The grant of the privilege to Moses was perhaps necessary to support his authority among a people of such materialistic leanings as the Israelites.

The glory of the Lord, which made Moses' face visibly shine, came after he had direct communion with God. What is also observable in this record is that though the Lord's glory radiated from Moses' face and countenance, he was at least initially unaware of it—teaching us as well that a Christian's spirituality may be observed and recognized by others, though he may himself not be conscious of it.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Exod. 34:29) *Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him*—It was an intimation of the exalted presence into which he had been admitted and of the glory he had witnessed (2Co 3:18);¹¹ and in that view, it was a badge of his high office as the ambassador of God. No testimonial needed to be produced. He bore his credentials on his very face; and whether this extraordinary effulgence was a permanent or merely temporary distinction, it cannot be doubted that this reflected glory was given him as an honor before all the people.

What a great spiritual lesson this teaches us, that those who do not know the Lord may be able, at least to a degree, see Him in the countenance and visage of those who do!¹²

Job 36:26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

An important indicator of true religion is the humble admission that there is much to know about God that we do not and cannot know during this mere earthly existence.¹³ Nowhere also is human pride more evident than when sinful men both presume and assume to know

7 Gen. 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

8 Luke 9:31 *Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

9 Acts 6:15 *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

10 Rev. 1:16 *And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

Rev. 10:1 *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:*

Rev. 21:23 *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Rev. 22:5 *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

11 II Cor. 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

12 Matt. 5:14–16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

13 I Cor. 13:2 *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

a God, Whom in fact they are completely estranged from.

Job 36:27–28 *For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:*

²⁸ *Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.*

In truth, men do not have the power to grow or sustain anything without God providing the means through nature to have their needs met. One of the first places this is true is when rain descends from the heavens, giving life to both the plants and creatures upon the earth. Elihu thus directs Job's attention to the mystery of water in its three forms—vapor, liquid, and solid—to prompt him to consider that if even rain, the work of God, is so mysterious and wonderful, how much greater is the Lord Himself?

Job 36:29 *Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?*

Another mysterious and powerful work of God is how clouds begin small and then spread and expand, potentially becoming great and gigantic thunderstorms. Clouds are also often associated in Scripture revealing the presence of the Lord: *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne* (Ps. 97:2). It seemed to be well known, even in Job's time, that clouds covered God: *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven* (Job 22:14). It was also a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night that revealed God's presence with Israel in their long journey to the promised land: *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people (Exod. 13:21–22). A cloud also revealed the Lord's presence when He descended upon Mount Sinai: *And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness* (Deut. 4:11). Scriptures also describe Jesus as sitting upon His throne supported by a white cloud: *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle* (Rev. 14:14). By directing Job to observe the work of God concerning rain and clouds, Elihu begins the spiritual process of bringing Job to a greater awareness of the mystery that is God. If Job looked up into the heavens and observed the great wonder and mysterious nature of God's creation, then he could begin to realize that there was a mystery of God far beyond mere human and natural comprehension.

Job 36:30 *Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.*

Proceeding to enlighten Job to God's majesty and power, Elihu directs his thoughts to lightning and how it descends from the heavens and even on the darkest night illuminates the vast expanse of the sea. Like clouds, lightning is often associated with the presence and power of the Lord: *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled* (Ps. 97:4). Scripture also reveals that lightning originates, and can come from the Lord, as judgment: *Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them* (Ps. 144:6). Through the startling and fearful bolts of lightning, God conveys Himself as possessing sufficient power and authority to judge all sinners:¹⁴ *And Elijah answered*

¹⁴ Rev. 16:18 *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*

and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty (II Kgs. 1:10–12). When the temple of God is opened in the book of Revelation, flashes of lightning will be among the strong natural forces that will exhibit the Lord's presence within it: *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail* (Rev. 11:19). If men would actually consider that lightning, thunder, clouds, and rain are revelations meant to display God's glory and majesty, then they would realize that He is far closer and much more powerful than they ever imagined.

Job 36:31–33 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

³² *With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.*

Luke 9:54 *And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*

15 Job 1:8 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

16 Gen. 3:10 *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

Exod. 3:6 *Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*

Exod. 14:31 *And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.*

Exod. 19:16 *And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.*

Exod. 20:18–21 *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. ²¹And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

³³ *The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 36:31–33) *For by them he judgeth the people—*By thunder and lightning, and rain from the clouds, he executes his judgments against ungodly people. *He giveth meat—*By the same clouds by which he punisheth wicked men, he provideth plentiful showers to drop fatness upon the earth.

Other translations help to enlighten the meaning of verses 32 and 33.

(NLT) *He fills his hands with lightning bolts and hurls each at its target.*

³³ *The thunder announces his presence; the storm announces his indignant anger.*

(ESV) *He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark.*

³³ *Its crashing declares his presence; the cattle also declare that he rises.*

Job 37:1 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

Elihu possessed a similar fear of the Lord as Job,¹⁵ if not actually greater. It is also true sight of God that produces fear of Him.¹⁶ Creation also testifies to God's

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eternal power and Godhead. *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse* (Rom. 1:20).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:20) Being understood—His perfections may be investigated, and comprehended by means of his works. They are the evidences submitted to our intellects, by which we may arrive at the true knowledge of God.

The Lord has left such a mark on the universe that it still bears ample testimony to His existence, glory, and majesty. God has determined that there is enough evidence of Himself in creation, and this prohibits any excuse for men not to yield to His sovereignty and rule over their lives.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:20) So that they are without excuse—God has given them so clear evidence of his existence and claims, that they have no excuse for their idolatry, and for hindering the truth by their iniquity. It is implied here that in order that people should be responsible, they should have the means of knowledge; and that he does not judge them when their ignorance is involuntary, and the means of knowing the truth have not been communicated. But

I Sam. 4:7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

I Sam. 12:18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

II Sam. 6:9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

Jonah 1:16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. Dan. 10:15–17 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. ¹⁶And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Mark 9:4–6 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. ⁶For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Luke 9:34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Heb. 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

17 Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

where people have these means within their reach, and will not avail themselves of them, all excuse is taken away.

Job 37:2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

It is extremely probable and virtually certain that while Elihu was speaking to Job about the glory of God in creation, thunder reverberated and shook the environment, both awakening and startling Job to the Lord's approaching presence. The tempest that was brewing was firm evidence that God was near and visibly not happy with what He had been observing.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 37:2) Hear attentively— ... It has been supposed by many, and not without probability, that the tempest was already seen rising, out of which God was to address Job [Job 38:1¹⁷], and that Elihu here calls the special attention of his hearers to the gathering storm, and to the low muttering thunder in the distance.

The noise of his voice—Thunder is often represented as the voice of God, and this was one of the most natural of all suppositions when its nature was little understood, and is at all times a beautiful poetic conception;

see the whole of Psalm 29:1–11.¹⁸ The word rendered “noise” (רָגַז *rôgez*), means properly “commotion,” that which is fitted to produce perturbation, or disquiet (see Job 3:17, Job 3:26; Isaiah 14:3¹⁹), and is used here to denote the commotion, or “raging” of thunder.

That Job could hear the thunder and then see the great storm containing God's presence approaching reveals two things. First, it documented God's arrival in the situation. Second, it revealed God's displeasure with both Job's person and his words. Because of this, the Lord was ready to enter into direct conversation with Job and then ultimately with Job's other three friends as well. *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said . . .* (Job 38:1). Ultimately everything that Elihu spoke to Job—including his mention of the rain, clouds, thunder, and lightning—was becoming manifest, and they would all collectively testify to the presence of God. The Lord has often confirmed His presence through powerful acts of nature, purposed to testify to the legitimacy of those sent to speak for Him. Elijah had his spiritual ministry confirmed by lightning descending from heaven,²⁰ Joshua as well had his ministry confirmed by the sun standing still, enabling him to win the battle in which he was engaged.²¹ At Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent death upon

the cross, the earth did quake and the rocks were rent,²² revealing God's displeasure with the murder of His Son. Hence, through the tempest that was approaching, Elihu's message was being confirmed as having its source in God. Elihu had spoken of the power and mystery of God manifested through creation, and now Job would be able to experience it personally.

Job 37:3–6 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

⁴ *After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.*

⁵ *God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

⁶ *For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.*

As the Lord's voice rumbled in the approaching storm, it would soon be followed by His actual spiritual presence. Indeed *he* [the Lord] *will not stay them when his voice is heard* (v. 4). Once the Lord speaks and once His voice is heard, nothing can hold back His presence from intervening in men's lives. Jesus proved this when He verbally called Lazarus out

18 Ps. 29:1–11 Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. ²Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. ³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. ⁴The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. ⁵The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. ⁷The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. ⁸The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. ⁹The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. ¹⁰The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever. ¹¹The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace. 19 Job 3:17 There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

Job 3:26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

Isa. 14:3 And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

20 1 Kgs. 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

21 Josh. 10:13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

22 Matt. 27:50–51 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. ⁵¹And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

of his tomb.²³ It was also Jesus' spoken Word that preceded His healing of the man with the withered hand.²⁴ Hence, once God speaks, His power, presence, and glory are ready to be revealed and will be made known.²⁵ The sound of His voice is only a precursor to the arrival of His presence.

Job 37:7 He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.

Elihu now mentions God's supernatural ability over creation, to then stop men's hands from both their labor and work and/or to shut them up because of the harsh and unbearable climate around them. Thus, while men will often glory in the work of their own hands,²⁶ it takes but a small act of God's intervention in nature to reveal that His work and His hands are so much more powerful than any natural ability of man. By this demonstration of heavenly power, sinners should be able to perceive that all true power, glory, and authority belong to God and that

there is no other true governor upon the earth than Him.

Job 37:8–13 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

⁹Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.

¹⁰By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

¹¹Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud:

¹²And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

¹³He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

In reality, all acts in creation have their roots either in God's correction of men or in His mercy toward them. *He brings the clouds to punish people, or to water his earth and show his love* (Job 37:13 NIV). How shallow also are most men's thoughts when men insist on spending countless hours discussing the weather but are often

²³ John 11:43–44 *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* ⁴⁴*And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

²⁴ Matt. 12:9–13 *And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: ¹⁰And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. ¹¹And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? ¹²How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. ¹³Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

²⁵ Gen. 1:3 *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*
Gen. 1:6 *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*

Gen. 1:9 *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.*

Gen. 1:11 *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*

Gen. 1:14 *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

Gen. 1:20 *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*

Gen. 1:24 *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

Gen. 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

²⁶ Isa. 2:8 *Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:*

Acts 7:41 *And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

not, even the least bit, interested in Him who rules it.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 37:13) Nature directs all creatures to shelter themselves from a storm; and shall man only be unprovided with a refuge? Oh that men would listen to the voice of God, who in many ways warns them to flee from the wrath to come; and invites them to accept his salvation, and to be happy.

Job 37:14 Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

Elihu now instructs Job to *stand still* so that he could gain quietness in his heart and begin contemplating the wondrous works of God. By his standing and ceasing from his own erring thoughts, room could be provided for Job to hear directly from the Lord. Mary also sat at Jesus' feet and remained still, subsequently receiving spiritual truth about God that anxious Martha, because of her preoccupation with other things, positioned herself to be deaf to.²⁷

Job 37:15–17 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?

¹⁶ ***Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?***

¹⁷ ***How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?***

Like cold and unforgiving weather, smothering heat likewise is able to keep men indoors and force them to cease from their activity and labor. Hence, through God's influence on nature, He can easily control even the routine movements of man.

²⁷ Luke 10:38–42 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ⁴⁰But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: ⁴²But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Now Elihu proposes to Job a series of questions. First, he asks if Job knows how God controls the clouds and causes the lightning to flash out of them (v. 15). Second, he inquires of Job as to whether he really knows how God balances the clouds and keeps them suspended above the earth (v. 16). Third, he asks Job if he is aware of the hot and warm wind that quiets all living creatures and demands that they take shelter until it passes (v. 17). By asking Job questions concerning creation, which Elihu knows Job has no answers for, it is hoped that he would realize that if he does not know these answers concerning creation, then how could he presume to so easily know its Creator?

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Job 37:17) *how thy garments are warm*] Rather perhaps, thou *Whose garments are warm, when the earth is still because of the south wind*. Job 37:15 referred to the storm cloud; Job 37:16–17 refer rather to the sultry summer cloud. . . . “This sensation of dry, hot clothes is only experienced during the siroccos” (Thomson, *Land and the Book*). In reference to the *stillness* of the earth under such a wind, this writer says, “There is no living thing abroad to make a noise. The birds hide in thickest shades, the fowls pant under the walls with open mouth and drooping wings, the flocks and herds take shelter in caves and under great rocks, and the labourers retire from the fields and close the windows and doors of their houses.

Job 37:18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?

Elihu now directs Job to look at the sky and all that comprises the earth's atmosphere. Hence, just as there is wonder in those things that fill up the sky, so is

there even greater wonder in beholding and marveling in the sky itself.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 37:18) Wast thou his assistant in spreading out the sky, like a canopy, over the earth? *Which is strong*—Which, though it be very thin and transparent, yet is also firm, and compact, and steadfast. *As a molten looking-glass*—Made of brass and steel, as the manner then was. Smooth and polished, without the least flaw. In this, as in a glass, we may behold *the glory of God*, and the wisdom of *his handiwork*.

Job 37:19 Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

There are many who have murmured against the Lord on earth who would be at a complete loss for words, and exceedingly fearful, if they were brought into God's presence in heaven. It is one thing for sinners to speak of God while it is thought they are outside of His presence and beyond His sight, but quite another thing to attempt to defend themselves when being personally confronted by the Lord. Could Job then do such a thing as this and properly order his words before God? Elihu knew that he could not and hoped that if given the chance, Job would wisely view himself exactly as himself.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 37:19) *Teach us what we shall say unto him*—This seems to be addressed to Job. It is the language of Elihu, implying that he was overawed with a sense of the majesty and glory of such a God. He knew not in what manner, or with what words to approach such a Being, and he asks Job to inform him, if he knew.

We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness—Job had repeatedly professed a desire to bring his cause directly before God, and to argue it in his presence. He felt assured that if

he could do that, he should be able so to present it as to obtain a decision in his favor; see Job 13:3,²⁸ note; Job 13:18–22,²⁹ notes. Elihu now designs, indirectly, to censure that confidence. He says that he and his friends were so overawed by the majesty of God, and felt themselves so ignorant and so ill qualified to judge of him and his works, that they would not know what to say. They were in darkness. They could not understand even the works of his hands which were directly before them, and the most common operations of nature were inscrutable to them. How then could they presume to arraign God? How could they manage a cause before him with any hope of success? It is scarcely necessary to say, that the state of mind referred to here by Elihu is that which should be cultivated, and that the feelings which he expresses are those with which we should approach the Creator. We need someone to teach us. We are surrounded by mysteries which we cannot comprehend, and we should, therefore, approach our Maker with profound reverence and submission.

Job 37:20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 37:20) Elihu had designed to reprove Job for the bold and presumptuous manner in which he had spoken of God, and for his wish to enter into a debate with him in order to vindicate his cause. He now says, that if anyone should attempt this, God had power at once to destroy him; and that such an attempt would be perilous to his life. But other interpretations have been proposed, which may be seen in Rosenmuller, Umbreit, and Lee.

Surely he shall be swallowed up—Destroyed for his presumption and rashness in thus contending with the Almighty. Elihu says that on this account he would not dare to speak with God. He would fear that he would come forth in his anger, and destroy him.

²⁸ Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

²⁹ Job 13:18–22 Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. ¹⁹Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost. ²⁰Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee. ²¹Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

²²Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

Job 37:21 *And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.*

If men cannot even look at the brightness of the sun, then how could they possibly think they could see God, Who is Himself solely light?³⁰

(NIV) *Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 37:21) Men are not able to look upon the brightness of the sun when it shines in the heavens, after the winds have swept away the clouds which before obscured the clear sky. And therefore it is not strange if we cannot see God, or discern his counsels and ways.

If the sun, which is but one element of God's creation, prohibits men from gazing upon it for any length of time, how can men presume that they could see the Lord and live? *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live* (Exod. 33:20).

(Benson Commentary, Exod. 33:20) *Thou canst not see my face*—The full display of my glory, that light inaccessible, before which the angels stand, but which would be insufferable to mortal eyes; this no man can see and live.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Exod. 33:20) The impossibility of the thing from man's weakness, which is such, that if God should display all the beams of his glory to him, it would certainly astonish, overwhelm, and destroy him.

30 I John 1:5 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Hab. 3:4 *And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.*

Ps. 18:2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

31 Exod. 20:18–19 *And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*

Job 37:22 *Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 37:22) *Fair weather cometh out of the north*—From the northern winds, which scatter the clouds and clear the sky. Elihu concludes with some short, but great sayings, concerning the glory of God. He speaks abruptly and in haste, because, it should seem, he perceived God was approaching, and presumed he was about to take the work into his own hands.

Just as the northern wind clears the air and removes the clouds so the sun can be seen, Elihu now reveals that his time with Job is about to end. For soon the Lord will begin His own work to fully humble Job and therefore bring him into a spiritual awareness of his crimes against God. What this teaches us is that there is a time for messengers of God to speak on the Lord's behalf and another more fearful and frightening time when the Lord will speak directly for Himself. Concerning this time, Israel also cried unto Moses that they could be given a mediator, which would allow them not to have direct communion with the Almighty.³¹

Job 37:23 *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.*

Though sinners through their own efforts cannot find out God, He can find out them. In the context of the approaching storm, again Elihu asserts to Job that if nature itself is not fully understood, how could God and His ways with man be so simple to comprehend?

Job 37:24 Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

Concluding his spiritual correction, Elihu finishes and ends his discourse with Job with this strikingly simple but yet profound spiritual truth, that God *respecteth not any that are wise of heart*. It is this lesson that is the ultimate lesson the book of Job, seeks to impart—that he [God] *respecteth not any that are wise of heart*. This was Job's sin, and he could not hide it from the Lord. God had heard his words and was equally aware of his thoughts,³² and Job would have to give an account for both. Like John the Baptist,³³ Elihu has now prepared the way for One greater than himself to speak and begin revealing even more heavenly revelation to Job. Elihu, God's messenger, has done his part, and now Jehovah will do His. It is thus time—as in the time of Jesus

when John prepared His way—that God will directly reveal Himself to Job, as also when the time of the prophet was past and the Son of God was ready to be revealed to the world. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight* (Mark 1:3).

(*Benson Commentary, Isa. 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*) The idea is taken from the practice of the eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, or took a journey, especially through desert and unpractised countries, sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments.

³² Job 42:2 *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

³³ John 1:27 *He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

God Demands Job Answer Him Concerning Creation

Job Chapter 38:1–36

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

(NIV) Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:

THIS magnificent display of God's power was intimidating, and His manifestation would be worthy of nothing less. *The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters* (Ps. 29:3). The Lord's creation both revealed and hid His presence, and Job could not doubt the seriousness that the change in climate was impressing upon him. The atmosphere reflected the severity of Job's crime, for God spoke not in a still, small voice¹ but out of a strong, forceful, and threatening whirlwind. Nature showed its agreement with the Lord, and He directed it to ready Job's heart for His upcoming spiritual reproof.

(Benson Commentary, Job 38:1) *Then the Lord answered Job*—No sooner had Elihu uttered the words last mentioned, but there was a sensible token of the presence of that dreadful majesty of God among them, spoken of Job 38:22;² and Jehovah began to debate the matter with Job, as he had desired; *out of the whirlwind*—Out of a dark and thick cloud, from which he sent a terrible and tempestuous wind, as the harbinger of his presence.

Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

(Benson Commentary, Job 38:2) *Who is this, &c.*—What and where is he that presumes to talk at this rate? *That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*—Words proceeding from ignorance, mistake, and want of consideration. Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them? This language becomes not a creature, much less a professor of the true religion. The person here intended is not Elihu, who spoke last, but Job, who had spoken most, as is manifest from the former verse, in which it is said, *The Lord answered Job*; and from Job 42:3,³ where Job takes the following reproof to himself, as also from the following discourse, wherein God convinces Job by divers of the same kind of arguments which Elihu had used against him. With a single question God shows the absolute emptiness of human abilities, strikes Job to the heart, and puts an end to the dispute.

When men speak, they either reveal the Lord's true nature and character to others or they distort His image. If not led by the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to speak of the Lord without darkening Whom God really is. Hence, whenever human reason, tradition, or experience replaces divine revelation, confusion will increase and

1 I Kgs. 19:11–13 *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:*¹² *And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*¹³ *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?*

2 Job 38:22 *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,*

3 Job 42:3 *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

the understanding of God's true character will be tarnished. Instead of bringing light to the situation, Job's lack of true spirituality only darkened it more. Because Job spoke of things beyond his spiritual ability to understand, all he really did was darken the counsel of the very one he sought to please.

Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Whenever men sin against God, they will be required to gird up their loins and ultimately stand before Him, needing to give a full account for their actions.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:3) Gird up now thy loins like a man— . . . The idea here is, "Make thyself as strong and vigorous as possible; be prepared to put forth the highest effort." God was about to put him to a task which would require all his ability—that of explaining the facts which were constantly occurring in the universe.

Job was now required to stand before the Lord and give a full account of his previous words and thoughts. The Lord had required this of him, and it would prove impossible for him to avoid it.

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 38:1–3) Our darkening the counsels of God's wisdom with our folly, is a great provocation to God.

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Whenever men speak of God, there is some inference that they have been with God. To this the Lord asks Job if he had been with Him in the beginning. Since Job had presumed to know so much of the Lord, could he recall the celestial and awe-inspiring events of creation?

Job 38:5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

It is one thing for a man to lay out the plans for a small earthly abode; it is quite another thing to be the Architect and Creator of heaven and earth.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:5) The earth is represented as a building, the plan of which was laid out beforehand, and which was then made according to the sketch of the architect. It is not, therefore, the work of chance or fate. It is laid out and constructed according to a wise plan, and in a method evincing infinite skill.

Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

Since all buildings and structures must have a foundation to sit upon, what, then, is the earth's? If Job could not answer this question concerning what the earth sat upon and where it had gained its beginnings, then how could he be so confident in speaking of its Creator?

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Whenever a great work is completed, it is reason for joy and celebration. The earth's creation was no different. The expression *shouted for joy* describes the angels' response to a moment of unequalled beauty in the distant past. The time referred to is the end of creation, for the account relates to the formation of the earth and not that of the stars.

Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

We know that large aquifers in the earth contain huge volumes of water and that

during the flood⁴ these aquifers burst open and filled the earth. God asks Job, “Who set the bounds of these watery eruptions so that they did not completely immerse the land above?” The image used to describe this early creation event is that of a child coming out of his mother’s womb. The earth is God’s creation, and He looks upon it with both affection and admiration. It is His work, it has sprung forth from Him, and therefore it is proper for Him to glory in it.

Job 38:9 *When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,*

Continuing to liken the earth to a child, the Lord describes the clouds as its swaddling blanket.

(Geneva Study Bible, Job 38:9) When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a {g} swaddlingband for it,

(g) As though the great sea was but as a little baby in the hands of God to turn to and fro.

Job 38:10 *And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,*

When we imagine the vast power of the seas in the early days of creation, when darkness lay upon the waters of the deep, we see why God asked Job if he knew Who put bounds upon them. Who is this God who can set even boundaries on the vast oceans of water that encompass the earth? What heavenly and spiritual creature is so great that He could create a door strong enough to hold back the mighty seas? Nations spend large amounts of financial resources on creating levees, but if a storm is sufficiently strong, it will easily and with little effort overcome anything that man has built. Yet God in his intrinsic spiritual

ability is able to separate the dry land from the sea so that each might fulfill its distinct purpose for man.

Job 38:11 *And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?*

Like a general, the Lord commanded that the mighty and often ferocious waves halt and proceed no farther than the shoreline. Regardless of how robust and proud the oceans may be, they cannot proceed beyond the boundaries the Lord has set for them. Not even the mighty waters of the earth can progress or extend themselves beyond the limits that divine will has set.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Job 38:11) *And here shall they proud waves be stayed*—Margin, as in Hebrew, “the pride of thy waves.” A beautiful image. The waves seem to advance in pride and self-confidence, as if nothing could stay them. They come as if exulting in the assurance that they will sweep everything away. In a moment they are arrested and broken, and they spread out humbly and harmlessly on the beach. God fixes the limit or boundary which they are not to pass, and they lie prostrate at his feet.

Job 38:12 *Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;*

Each and every morning that has ever transpired upon the earth mimics the early days of creation, when the Lord commanded the light to shine out of the darkness. None are more removed from God than those who no longer acknowledge or believe in His role in creation, who foolishly believe that something could come out of nothing yet cannot even explain what this nothing consisted of in the first place.

⁴ Gen. 7:11 *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.*

Job 38:13 *That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?*

Here God reveals how His light exposes wickedness on the earth and causes it to scatter. Where true light exists and whenever the Lord chooses to send it, darkness is neutralized and cannot carry out its evil intentions.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:13) *That the wicked might be shaken out of it*—Out of the earth; that is, by the light which suddenly shines upon them. The sense is, that the wicked perform their deeds in the darkness of the night, and that in the morning light they flee away. The effect of the light coming upon them is to disturb their plans, to fill them with alarm, and to cause them to flee. The idea is highly poetic. The wicked are engaged in various acts of iniquity under cover of the night. Robbers, thieves, and adulterers, go forth to their deeds of darkness as though no one saw them. The light of the morning steals suddenly upon them, and they flee before it under the apprehension of being detected. "The dawn," says Herder, "is represented as a watchman, a messenger of the Prince of heaven, sent to chase away the bands of robbers." It may illustrate this to observe that it is still the custom of the Arabs to go on plundering excursions before the dawn. When on their way this faithful watchman, the aurora, goes out to spread light about them, to intimidate them, and to disperse them; compare the notes at Job 24:13–17.⁵

Job 38:14 *It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.*

When we observe pictures of the earth from space, we realize the great distinc-

tion between where the sun shines and where it does not. When light hits the earth, it is then seemingly transformed as clay would be when pressed upon by a seal. Hence, whereas previously the earth in darkness seems flat and without any shape or form, upon exposure to light the beauty, shape, and contour of it are both vividly and wonderfully exposed.

Job 38:15 *And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:15) *their light*—by which they work; namely, darkness, which is their day (Job 24:17⁶), is extinguished by daylight.

high—Rather, "The arm uplifted" for murder or other crime is broken; it falls down suddenly, powerless, through their fear of light.

The Lord again draws a picture of how His light affects wicked men. Light is as dangerous to the sinner's plans, schemes, and deeds as darkness is to the innocent.

Job 38:16–17 *Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?*

¹⁷ *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?*

Just as men are ignorant of the mysteries of the deep and the great vents and springs that lie under the oceans and seas of the world, so are they equally ignorant as to what transpires at death. This door is locked, and none aside from God really knows what lies on the other side.

⁵ Job 24:13–17 *They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.* ¹⁴*The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.* ¹⁵*The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.* ¹⁶*In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.* ¹⁷*For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.*

⁶ Job 24:17 *For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:17) Man during life does not even “see” the gates of the realm of the dead (“death,” Job 10:21);⁷ much less are they “opened” to him. But those are “naked before God” (Job 26:6).⁸

The Lord asks Job these questions so that he might become more fully aware of his spiritual ignorance. In his previous responses, Job had manifested an air of religious arrogance, and the Lord now sought to remove this ungodly and ultimately unhealthy pride from him.

Job 38:18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

Focusing on the size and breadth of the earth, the Lord asks Job if he can truly comprehend the world he was born into.

(Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, Job 38:18) It is presumptuous for us, who perceive not the breadth of the earth, to dive into the depth of God’s counsels.

We can never truly know the reasons for what God does, or for what He divinely allows to be done. This wisdom is far beyond man, and his lack of understanding should actually lead him to become more subject to divine rule—simply because if man cannot properly understand the Lord’s works, he should be wise enough to refrain from questioning His ways and methods with ruling man, as this hidden wisdom is far more mysterious, deep, and intricate than any of God’s observable creative works.

Job 38:19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

In Job’s day and according to Job’s understanding—or lack of it, rather—the true

origin of light and darkness and where they originated from was virtually unknown, though each day upon the earth seemingly rotated, when also darkness and light took turns replacing the other.

Job 38:20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Job 38:20) The sense seems to be this: God asks Job whether he was so well acquainted with the sources of light, and the place where it dwelt, that he could take it under his guidance and reconduct it to its place of abode.

And that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?—The same idea is repeated here. Light has a home; a place of abode. It was far distant—in some region unknown to man. Did Job know the way in which it came, and the place where it dwelt so well, that he could conduct it back again to its own dwelling?

Job 38:21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

The Lord knew Job could never answer His questions, so now He addressed how much pride must exist in him to assume he had learned so much during his extremely brief life on the earth. Using irony and a bit of mockery, God intended to reveal to Job his unrivaled foolishness. Hence, though Job was only a creature of God and had walked the earth but for just a short time, still he felt fully qualified enough to question the Lord’s judgment in his life. In truth Job knew absolutely nothing concerning creation and the events that surrounded it, and yet because of conceit, he felt himself more than fully qualified to question God’s dealings in his life.

⁷ Job 10:21 Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;

⁸ Job 26:6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

Job 38:22–23 *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,*

23 *Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?*

God likens the formation of both snow and hail as a treasure.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 38:23) *Which I have reserved*—As if they were carefully treasured up to be brought forth as they shall be needed. The idea is, that they were entirely under the direction of God.

The time of trouble—Herder “the time of need.” The meaning probably is, that he had kept them in reserve for the time when he wished to bring calamity on his enemies, or

that he made use of them to punish his foes; compare the notes at Job 36:31–33.⁹

Against the day of battle and war—Hailstones were employed by God sometimes to overwhelm his foes, and were sent against them in time of battle; see Joshua 10:11; Exodus 9:22–26; Psalm 18:12–13;¹⁰ compare the notes at Isaiah 29:6.¹¹

Great battles have often been determined by freezing cold, great storms, or extreme heat, all of which the Lord states He frequently employs to stop the plans of evil men.¹²

Job 38:24 *By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?*

⁹ Job 36:31–33 *For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.* ³²*With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.* ³³*The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.*

¹⁰ Josh. 10:11 *And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.*

Exod. 9:22–26 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.* ²³*And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.* ²⁴*So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.* ²⁵*And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.* ²⁶*Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.*

Ps. 18:12–13 *At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.* ¹³*The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.*

¹¹ Isa. 29:6 *Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.*

¹² **The destruction of the Spanish Armada:** Destroyed by Atlantic storms while battling to take over England (1588).

Washington's retreat at the Battle of Long Island: Successful evacuation of nine thousand men with their supplies and cannons under the cover of torrential rains and dense fog that kept the British from detecting their movements (1776).

Napoleon's invasion of Russia: Decimation of Napoleon's troops from 700,000 to 27,000 due to the cold winter and lack of food and supplies caused by the weather (1812).

Hitler's invasion of Russia: German troops battled the cold and found it difficult even to retreat from Moscow because of the weather, with many survivors losing fingers, toes, noses, and eyelids (1941) (*History Collection*, “6 Times the Weather Has Changed War History,” by Michelle Powell-Smith).

Kublai Khan's attempted conquest of Japan: Kahn's fleets were destroyed by massive typhoons, twice, saving Japan from being conquered (1274, 1281) (*The Guardian*: “How a Typhoon Sank Kublai Khan,” by David Hambling).

Waterloo: Torrential rains, mist, and fog contributed to Napoleon's final defeat after twelve years of war (1815) (*The Causes for the Loss of the Battle of Waterloo*, by Solomon Guedalia Rosenbaum).

D-Day: Storms made confident German generals leave their coastal posts, believing the terrible weather likely to continue for many more days and keep the Allies from any conceivable attack (*History-Extra*: “D-Day: How did a weather forecast change the fate of the war?”).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 38:23) is . . . parted—parts, so as to diffuse itself over the whole earth, though seeming to come from one point. Light travels from the sun to the earth, ninety millions of miles, in eight minutes.

which scattereth—rather, “And by what way the east wind (personified) spreads (scattereth) itself.” The light and east wind are associated together, as both come from one quarter, and often arise together (Jon 4:8).¹³

Job 38:25–28 Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

²⁶ **To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;**

²⁷ **To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?**

²⁸ **Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?**

Progressing to rain and how it brings water to dry places upon the earth, even where men do not live, the Lord asks Job if rain has a father, again revealing that the Lord likens creation to His own child. Ultimately, the Lord holds an endearing affection for creation and most notably the earth and the wonderful processes that He has established to maintain her fruitfulness and abundance.

Job 38:29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 38:29) *Out of whose womb came the ice?*—That is, who has caused or produced it? The idea is, that it was not by any human agency, or in any known way by which living beings were propagated.

¹³ *Jnh. 4:8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.*

¹⁴ *Job 37:10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.*

¹⁵ *Job 9:9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.*

And the hoary frost of heaven—Which seems to fall from heaven. The sense is, that it is caused wholly by God; see the notes at Job 37:10.¹⁴

Job 38:30 The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Not only did God create water, but He also designed it so that in low temperatures it would change its form to become as hard as stone. This transformation of water from liquid to a solid is directly attributed to the wisdom of God.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 38:30) The formation of ice is thus appealed to as a proof of the wisdom of God, and as a thing which Job could not explain. No man could produce this effect; nor could Job explain how it was done.

Job 38:31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

Referring to the Pleiades (also spoken about in Job 9:9),¹⁵ which usher in the spring, and Orion, which foretells of winter, the Lord asks Job if he can bind either of them. Men have no power either to contain or restrain the courses of the stars above. If men do not have the power to prevent the stars of heaven from appearing at their respective times, how could they ever stop God's will from being accomplished on the earth?

Job 38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

The Lord now asks Job if he can make the stars and constellations appear in their respective seasons. By providing specific names to the stars, the Lord reveals how

acutely connected He is to the landscape of heaven.¹⁶

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:32) He calleth them all by names—*This idea is also taken from a military leader, who would know the names of the individuals that composed his army. In smaller divisions of an army, this could of course be done; but the idea is, that God is intimately acquainted with all the hosts of stars; that though their numbers appear to us so great, yet he is acquainted with each one individually, and has that knowledge of it which we have of a person or object which we recognize by a name. It is said of Cyrus, that he was acquainted by name with every individual that composed his vast army.

Job 38:33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

The heavens exhibit a dominion over the earth; they affect things like the ocean's tides and a great many seasonal weather patterns. By this truth Elihu hopes to impress upon Job that heaven rules the earth, and not the earth heaven.

Job 38:34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 38:34) Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Thy gardens, fields, and farms; canst thou, in a magisterial way, call to and demand of the clouds to let down rain in large quantities, sufficient to water them and make them fruitful? no, thou canst not: thou mayest cry and call as long as thou wilt, not a cloud will

stir, nor a drop of water be let down; rain is to be had in a suppliant way, through the prayer of faith, as by Elijah, but not in a dictatorial authoritative way: the clouds and rain are only at the disposal of the Lord; ask of him, and he will give them; but they are not to be commanded, Zechariah 10:1 [*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*]; see Amos 5:8.¹⁷

Job 38:35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are?

If Job cannot control the clouds and the manner in which they bring forth rain, is he in any better position to send lightning upon the earth?

Job 38:36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

The Lord now asks Job, Who gives wisdom and understanding to man? Who has put wisdom into him, and given understanding to his heart? What also is as beautiful and mysterious as the Spirit of God imparting wisdom into the heart of the soul of one blind to God, and the vast though invisible spiritual world around him? *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding* (Job 32:8). It is the Lord, Who illuminates the heart, causes understanding to flow into it, and divinely separates man from all the other creatures in the earth. It is He, and none other, Who has put wisdom into the inward parts of man and *hath given understanding to the heart.*

¹⁶ See *The Witness of the Stars* by E. W. Bullinger

¹⁷ Amos 5:8 *Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:*

The Lord Speaks of the Complexities of Nature to Humble Job

Job Chapter 38:37–39:30

Job 38:37 *Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,*

RAIN is the largest source of fresh water where rivers, lakes, small streams, and aquifers are not accessible. All abundance, therefore, especially physical nourishment, comes from the processes that God has established to supply water to the earth. Men are content, full, and blessed because the Lord has furnished consistent natural laws of nature for them to be so.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 38:37) *Who can number the clouds?*—The word here rendered *clouds* (שַׁחַקִּיִּם *shachaqiyim*) is applied to the clouds as made up of “small particles”—as if they were composed of fine dust, and hence, the word *number* is applied to them, not as meaning that the clouds themselves were innumerable, but that no one could estimate the number of particles which enter into their formation.

In wisdom—By his wisdom. Who has sufficient intelligence to do it?

Or who can stay the bottles of heaven?—Margin, as in Hebrew “cause to lie down.” The clouds are here compared with bottles, as if they held the water in the same manner; compare the notes at Job 26:8.¹

Job 38:38 *When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?*

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Job 38:38) *When the dust groweth into hardness.* ‘*Aphar* (אֶפְרָר) here, as often, means “earth,” or “soil,” rather than “dust.” When by the heat of the sun’s rays the ground grows into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together, baked into a compact mass, then is the time when rain is most needed, and when the Almighty in his mercy commonly sends it. The consideration of inanimate nature here ends, with the result that its mysteries altogether transcend the human intellect, and render speculation on the still deeper mysteries of the moral world wholly vain and futile.

Job 38:39–40 *Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,*

⁴⁰ *When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?*

Shifting from the heavens, the Lord now directs Job’s attention to the creatures of the earth, which God cares for through His providence. The text mentions lions, which man considers to be the most regal of nature’s creatures, to show that even their needs are provided for by the Lord. Just as man cannot care for himself without an environment supplied by God, likewise he cannot care for or sustain the well-being of any other of the earth’s creatures without God’s divine intervention.

(*Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, Job 38:39) *Is it by thy care and providence that the lions, who live in desert places, are furnished with necessary provisions? This is justly mentioned as another wonderful work of God.*

¹ Job 26:8 *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.*

Job 38:41 *Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.*

It is not man but rather God Who provides food for wild creatures such as the raven. *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry* (Ps. 147:9). It is thus the Lord Who sustains not only man but also all other wild creatures far removed from him.

Job 39:1–2 *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? ²Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?*

The Lord now asks Job what he knows about the wild goats that live in the high mountains. If Job could speak very little about these majestic creatures who inhabit the highest regions of the earth, how could he know a God whose habitation is heaven? Hence, if man cannot without great effort discern the ways of the mountain goat, which makes its home on some of the highest peaks of the earth, how could he so easily presume to understand the God of heaven, Whom no man can approach² and is so much more a mystery than the goat?

Job 39:3 *They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.*

Continuing with the subject of wild goats, the Lord reveals to Job how man has no role whatsoever in helping them bring forth their young since by divine providence they are born and survive in the harshest of wintry and barren environments without any assistance or help from man. The Lord uses this to impress upon Job that unlike domesticated ani-

mals, many creatures of the earth do not depend on man whatsoever. They are God's creatures, they are under His care, and He abundantly supplies for them all that is needed for their survival.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:3) They bow themselves—literally, they curve or bend themselves; that is, they draw their limbs together.

*They cast out their sorrows—*That is, they cast forth the offspring of their pains, or the young which cause their pains. The idea seems to be, that they do this without any of the care and attention which shepherds are obliged to show to their flocks at such seasons. They do it when God only guards them; when they are in the wilderness or on the rocks far away from the abodes of man. The leading thought in all this seems to be, that the tender care of God was over his creatures, in the most perilous and delicate state, and that all this was exercised where man could have no access to them, and could not even observe them.

Job 39:4 *Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.*

Though born in harsh and dangerous conditions, the young kids of the goats seemingly grow and develop like domesticated animals that are fed with corn. All this speaks to the Lord's wisdom as He has adapted so many of His creatures to survive and even thrive in precarious and dangerous environments, which even men would find it extremely difficult and challenging to live in.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:4) They go forth, and return not unto them—*God guards and preserves them, even when they wander away from their dam, and are left helpless. Many of the young of animals require long attention from man, many are kept for a considerable period by the side of the

² *1 Tim. 6:16* *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

mother, but the idea here seems to be, that the young of the wild goat and of the fawn are thrown early on the providence of God, and are protected by him alone. The particular care of Providence over these animals seems to be specified because there are no others that are exposed to so many dangers in their early life.

If God provides for the survival and healthy development of young mountain goats, could He not also provide the necessary assistance and strength for Job to successfully overcome and gain victory in his trial?³ And since He gives young mountain goats the ability to survive and flourish in the severest of habitats, could He not also provide for tempted people the means to escape and gain victory over their temptations? Hence, just as the harsh weather of rocky mountains cannot impede the birth or development of the mountain goat, so also is the Lord more than able of caring for the needs of man, regardless of the challenging trials and temptations in his life.

Job 39:5–8 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

⁶Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

⁷He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

⁸The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

The wild ass spoken of here has no respect or desire for the bustling cities of man and even despises them. Instead, he prefers the mountains and the green and wide-open pastures the Lord has provided not only for his survival but also for his solitude. For some creatures the Lord has intended domestication, and others, like the wild ass, He has established to

be free from human servitude. The Lord also delights in giving certain creatures freedom from domestication as much as He enjoys it when other animals provide companionship and usefulness to man.

Job 39:9–12 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

¹⁰Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

¹¹Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

¹²Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

If God has decreed that it is necessary that some animals need not be under either human dependence or governance, then there is nothing any man can do that will enable him to reverse their natural and genetic independence. Hence, if any creatures have been set free by God, men will never be able to reverse their natural and free instincts He has imparted to them, which also are critical to their survival.

(Benson Commentary, Job 39:9) Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee—Canst thou tame him, and bring him into subjection to thy command? Or, abide by thy crib?—Will he suffer himself to be tied, or confined there all night, and kept for the work of the next day as the oxen are? Surely not. It is much disputed among the learned, whether this reem, which is the Hebrew name of the animal here spoken of, be the rhinoceros, or a certain kind of wild goat, called orix, or a kind of wild bull, which seems most probable, both from the description of it here and elsewhere in Scripture. Schultens inclines to this opinion, thinking it to be the Arabian buffalo of the bull species, but absolutely untameable, and which the Arabians frequently hunt.

³ *I Cor. 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

Job 39:13–18 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

¹⁴ *Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust,*

¹⁵ *And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.*

¹⁶ *She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not her's: her labour is in vain without fear;*

¹⁷ *Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.*

¹⁸ *What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.*

Though God has deprived some creatures, such as the ostrich, of great wisdom, nevertheless He has provided for them all the necessary wisdom for their survival. And though many creatures are endowed with less intelligence, still the Lord has ensured that they possess other strengths and abilities to maintain their independence and freedom to live on earth as God has purposed that they should.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:17) Because God hath deprived her of wisdom . . .

—That is, he has not imparted to her the wisdom which has been conferred on other animals. The meaning is, that all this remarkable arrangement, which distinguished the ostrich so much from other animals was to be traced to God. It was not the result of chance; it could not be pretended that it was by a human arrangement, but it was the result of divine appointment. Even in this apparent destitution of wisdom, there were reasons which had led to this appointment, and the care and good providence of God could be seen in the preservation of the animal. Particularly, though apparently so weak, and timid, and unwise, the ostrich had a noble hearing Job 39:18, and when aroused, would scorn the fleetest horse in the pursuit, and show that she was distinguished for properties that were expressive of the goodness of God toward her, and of his care over her.

Job 39:19–25 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

²⁰ *Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.*

²¹ *He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.*

²² *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.*

²³ *The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.*

²⁴ *He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.*

²⁵ *He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.*

The Lord now brings Job's attention to the war horse, with an emphasis on its fearlessness and readiness for battle. Few creatures on earth are as powerful, athletic, and majestic as the horse. The horse, and especially the war horse, is noble and worthy of great spiritual attention, for the Scriptures reveal that the Lord Jesus will return on a white war horse, signifying His readiness for battle to conquer the devil and all others who have rejected His divine rule. *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war* (Rev. 19:11).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 39:19) Hast thou given the horse strength?—

The incidental allusion to the horse in comparison with the ostrich in the previous verse, seems to have suggested this magnificent description of this noble animal—a description which has never been surpassed or equalled. The horse is an animal so well known, that a particular description of it is here unnecessary. The only thing which is required is an explanation of the phrases used here, and a confirmation of the particular qualities here attributed to the war-horse, for the description here is evidently that of the horse as he

The Lord Speaks of the Complexities of Nature to Humble Job

appears in war, or as about to plunge into the midst of a battle.

The Lord reminds Job that He is the One Who has given the horse its strength and ferociousness to disregard its own well-being and plunge into battle, unafraid and without hesitation. So confident is the horse also in its ultimate victory that it seemingly laughs before the upcoming conflict. Hence, neither the shouts of its rider nor the commotion of anxious soldiers, nor the sound of the trumpet impact anything to prevent the war horse's anticipation to reveal its strength and innate, uncommon fearlessness.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 39:25) *And he smelleth the battle afar off*—That is, he snuffs, as it were, for the slaughter. The reference is to the effect of an approaching army upon a spirited war-horse, as if he perceived the approach by the sense of smelling, and longed to be in the midst of the battle.

What a stark contrast there is between Jesus Christ first entering Jerusalem on a donkey and how He will return in resurrected glory, riding on a white horse, which symbolizes His assurance of complete and total victory over the devil,⁴ the kings of the earth, and all others who have collectively risen up in defiance against Him!⁵ *And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer* (Rev. 6:2).

(*Benson Commentary*, Rev. 19:11) Many paid little regard to Christ when he came meek and lowly, riding upon an ass: but what will they say or think, when he comes forth upon his white horse, with the sharp sword of his mouth? The white horse, on

which Christ is represented as riding, was intended to denote his justice and holiness, and also that victory and triumph should mark his progress.

Job 39:26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

The Lord now inquires of Job whether the hawk has gained its extraordinary power of flight because of his, Job's, natural wisdom.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 39:26) *Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom*—The appeal here is to the hawk, because it is among the most rapid of the birds in its flight. The particular thing specified is its flying, and it is supposed that there was something special in that which distinguished it from other birds. Whether it was in regard to its speed, to its manner of flying, or to its habits of flying at periodical seasons, may indeed be made a matter of inquiry, but it is clear that the particular thing in this bird which was adapted to draw the attention, and which evinced especially the wisdom of God, was connected with its flight. . . . The falcon, or hawk, is often distinguished for fleetness. One, belonging to a Duke of Cleves, flew out of Westphalia into Prussia in one day; and in the county of Norfolk (England) one was known to make a flight of nearly thirty miles in an hour. A falcon which belonged to Henry IV of France, having escaped from Fontainebleau, was found twenty-four hours after in Malta, the space traversed being not less than one thousand three hundred and fifty miles; being a velocity of about fifty-seven miles an hour, on the supposition that the bird was on the wing the whole time. It is this remarkable velocity which is here appealed to as a proof of the divine wisdom. God asks Job whether he could have formed these birds for their rapid flight. The wisdom

4 Rev. 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

5 Ps. 2:2–3 *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, ³Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

Rev. 17:12–14 *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. ¹³These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. ¹⁴These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

and skill which has done this is evidently far above any that is possessed by man.

Job 39:27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

The Lord next brings to Job's attention another glorious creature, the eagle, highlighting the spectacular wisdom necessary to create such regal birds as eagles that seemingly make their nests in the heavens. Like the goat, the eagle lives in the highest regions of the earth. The Lord no doubt chooses to speak of majestic creatures like the goat and the eagle because His own home is high and lofty, far above the earth, residing also in the clouds.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 39:27) The eagle has always been celebrated for the height to which it ascends. When Ramond had reached the summit of Mount Perdu, the highest of the Pyrenees, he perceived no living creature but an eagle which passed above him, flying with inconceivable rapidity in direct opposition to a furious wind. *Edin. Ency.* "Of all animals, the eagle flies highest; and from thence the ancients have given him the epithet of *the bird of heaven.*"

Job 39:28–29 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

²⁹ From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

Keeping Job's attention and focus on the eagle, the Lord now mentions its astonishing natural sight. So great is this creature's eye that scientists claim it can see four to eight times farther than the human eye. It is also said that with the eagle's

acute vision, it can perceive an ant from a vantage point as far up as a ten-story building.⁶ Hence, not only does the eagle have the glorious power of flight and is the greatest and most glorious of all the earth's birds, but God has also blessed it with an extraordinary gift of sight.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Job 39:29)

Her sight is exceeding sharp and strong, so that she is able to look upon the sun with open eyes, and to behold the smallest prey upon the earth or sea, when she is mounted out of our sight; which when she spies, she flies to it with incredible swiftness, even like an arrow out of a bow.

Job 39:30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

Because young eagles, like many other nestlings and fledgling birds, live in nests high above the earth and have no access to water, the Lord has ensured that the blood of their mothers' prey will aptly care for both their thirst and their nourishment.

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Job 39:30) *Her young ones also suck up blood, . . .*

As well as herself, being brought up to it by her. The eagle cares not for water, but drinks the blood of her prey; and so her young ones after her, as naturalists report (w). And Aelianus says (x) the same of the hawk, that it eats no seeds, but devours flesh and drinks blood, and nourishes her young ones with the same. . . . Job was ignorant of the nature of these creatures and incapable of governing and directing them; any excellency they have is of God and not of him or of any man. So then, how unfit must he be to dispute with God, and contend with Him about His works of providence?

⁶ Wolchover, N. (2012, February 24). What if humans had eagle vision? *Live Science*. Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/18658-humans-eagle-vision.html>

Job Is Speechless after God Addresses His Pride

Job Chapters 40:1–41:34

*Job 40:1–2 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,
2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

HERE we observe even further the extent of Job's sin against God. First it was that Job had darkened God's counsel by speaking words without knowledge. *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* (Job 38:2). Now Job is accused of contending with the Lord and thinking himself able to both reprove and instruct Him in respect to His dealings in Job's life. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.* Job had wanted an audience with the Lord, and now he has it. It would not transpire as he had previously either hoped or suspected, however. And though Job had not previously believed his actions to be sinful, in the Lord's eyes they are now revealed, without question, as criminal. Job had blurred the Lord's character, and now he thought himself able to question God's justice. For this God would demand that he give a full account and answer for his actions.

(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 40:2) With Job 40:1; Job 38:1¹ is again taken up, because the speech of Jehovah has now in some measure attained the end which was assigned to it as an answer to Job's outburst of censure. . . . The question means, will Job persist in this contending with God? He who sets God right, as though he knew everything better than He, shall answer the questions put before him.

Job had questioned God, and now God required Job to stand before Him and give answers to the Lord's own questions. Understandably the roles have been reversed, because now it was not the Lord who was demanded to give account of what He had allowed in Job's life, but rather it was Job and what he had falsely said of the Lord that must be addressed. To contend with the Lord and think oneself able to reprove and instruct Him constitute a great sin. Even if this attitude originates because of ignorance, it is still esteemed as rebellion. To question God is viewed to be the very same thing as condemning Him. Ultimately the Lord sees no difference between the two, and soon Job would completely agree with Him as he came to realize the reckless words and thoughts that he had foolishly directed against his Creator. He had questioned God's justice, and now the Lord demanded why he thought himself able to reprove One so much greater than himself.

It is not uncommon for sinners to contend with the Almighty and think themselves able to both instruct and reprove Him for how they erringly believe He has wronged them. Thus Job's account is perhaps one of the great reasons that the book of Job has gained such religious notoriety and criticism from the critics of God. For when most read of His dealings with Job, they are quick and ready to reprove the Lord and enter into contention with Him over what they believe are His unjust dealings with men. Not afraid of God's judgment, sinners will readily condemn God's ways and foolishly think themselves able to reprove God.

¹ *Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,*

Job 40:3–4 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

⁴ Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

Job's demeanor now experiences a dramatic change: thus, instead of continuing to maintain that he is personally righteous and without fault, he now confesses his own vileness. Whereas before, Job falsely presumed God was at fault and himself righteous, now he views God as righteous and himself as vile. The Lord's correction and display of heavenly wisdom had accomplished their purpose and had done exactly what God had designed they should, which was to put Job in his place, bring him to his knees, and cause him to see the human arrogance and insubordination in his heart. The Lord's reproof of Job accomplished exactly this. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it* (Isa. 55:11).

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 40:1–5) After God had shown Job, by his manifest ignorance of the works of nature, how unable he was to judge of the methods and designs of Providence, he puts a convincing question to him; Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? Now Job began to melt into godly sorrow: when his friends reasoned with him, he did not yield; but the voice of the Lord is powerful. When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall convince. Job yields himself to the grace of God. He owns himself an offender, and has nothing to say to justify himself. He is now sensible that he has sinned; and therefore he calls himself vile. Repentance changes men's opinion of themselves. Job is now convinced of his error. Those who are truly sensible of their own sinfulness and vileness, dare not justify themselves before God.

Job 40:5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Job had spoken once—indeed, more than once—in an insulting manner, but now he sees his egregious spiritual error. Afraid that he might sin again, he refuses to speak anymore without first confessing his personal unworthiness. Job's words as well as his thoughts had gotten him into trouble, and now he desires not to compound his situation any further by speaking out of turn and revealing even more fleshly conceit. He had done it once, *yea, twice*, but he is both resolved and determined not to do it again. If Job had not realized how important it was to restrain his tongue from speaking evil before, he surely did now.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 40:5) *Once have I spoken*—That is, in vindicating myself. He had once spoken of God in an irreverent and improper manner, and he now saw it.

but I will not answer—I will not now answer, as I had expressed the wish to do. Job now saw that he had spoken in an improper manner, and he says that he would not repeat what he had said.

Yea, twice—He had not only offended once, as if in a thoughtless and hasty manner, but he had repeated it, showing deliberation, and thus aggravating his guilt. When a man is brought to a willingness to confess that he has done wrong once, he will be very likely to see that he has been guilty of more than one offence. One sin will draw on the remembrance of another; and the gate once open, a flood of sins will rush to the recollection.

Job 40:6 Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

The intensity of the situation has not lessened in the slightest. For still the Lord is speaking out of a whirlwind to impress upon Job the great spiritual and dynamic power that he has offended. Hence, after Job's initial confession of uncleanness and his desire to say no more lest he incrimi-

nate himself further, the Lord continues His lengthy correction of this sincere yet spiritually unenlightened man.

Job 40:7 *Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

(NIV) *“Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*

(NLT) *“Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.*

Every man will ultimately, like Job, have to stand and give an account of the life he has lived, the words he has uttered, and the thoughts he has entertained. Thus, for every man there will come a day of reckoning when he will be required to give a full and detailed account of all the things done in his body, including all he has both said and thought of God.² *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad* (II Cor. 5:10).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Cor. 5:10) *That every one may receive the things done in his body.*—It would have seemed almost impossible, but for the perverse ingenuity of the system-builders of theology, to evade the force of this unqualified assertion of the working of the universal law of retribution. No formula of justification by faith, or imputed righteousness, or pardon sealed in the blood of Christ, or priestly absolution, is permitted by St. Paul to mingle with his expectations of that great day, as revealing the secrets of men's hearts, awarding to each man according to his works. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7) was to him an eternal, unchanging law.

Job 40:8 *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*

In this simple verse of Scripture we discover the primary source for condemnation and questioning of God: it is so that men may perceive and believe themselves as inwardly pure and righteous. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness* (Prov. 30:12).

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Prov. 30:12) *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,....* Not in the eyes of God, who sees the heart, and all the impurities of it, as well as of life and conversation; nor in the eyes of others, though such may appear outwardly righteous before men; but in their own eyes, in their own conceit and imagination, trusting in themselves that they are righteous: but such have not their eyes opened or enlightened to see the plague of their own hearts, the spirituality of the law of God, the perfection of righteousness that requires; nor the righteousness and holiness of God himself; nor the imperfection and insufficiency of their own; did they, they would not seem pure and righteous to themselves.

Ultimately there are no bounds that a sinner will not cross, which include even condemning his Creator, to maintain belief in his own personal righteousness.

(NIV) *“Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?”*

(NLT) *“Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?”*

Practically, the primary cause of all human condemnation of God is the desire of men to justify themselves and think of themselves as gods. But by questioning the Lord's judgments, sinners reveal they have reckoned themselves as equal to the Lord. Hence, it is easy to see why

² Matt. 12:37 *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

God deals so harshly with the pride and hubris of man,³ since both are the genesis of spiritual rebellion. For he who is willing to speak against the Lord and question His ways has already assumed a position of rebelling against Him. To speak against anyone is to think ourselves above the person. To speak against God reveals that we think ourselves as gods. *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil* (Gen. 3:5). Wherever and whenever men imagine themselves able to judge good and evil, apart from God revealing it to them, they reveal that they have already believed Satan's lie of being little gods themselves. This blasphemous and dangerous assumption is similar to Satan's own desire when he sought to lift himself to the level of the most high. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isa. 14:12–14).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 14:14) *I will be like the Most High*—There is a remarkable resemblance between this language and that used in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, in regard to antichrist: 'He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.' And this similarity is the more remarkable, because antichrist is represented, in Revelation 17:4–5, as seated in babylon—the spiritual seat of arrogance, oppression, and pride. Probably Paul had the passage in Isaiah in his eye when he penned the description of antichrist.

Job 40:9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

³ Deut. 1:26 *Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God:*

Deut. 1:43 *So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill.*

Deut. 9:23 *Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.*

I Sam. 15:23 *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

Neh. 9:26 *Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.* Ps. 107:10–11 *Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; ¹¹ Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:*

Ps. 5:10 *Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.*

Isa. 1:19–20 *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: ²⁰ But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

Jer. 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.*

Jer. 29:32 *Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.*

Ezek. 20:8 *But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.*

Ezek. 20:13 *But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.*

Ezek. 20:21 *Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.*

The discussion of God's *arm*, and his voice of being like *thunder*, are symbolic of divine strength and power⁴ and are meant to demonstrate that Job should not condemn a Being so much mightier in power than himself. It is a simple question put forth to Job: If you think yourself equal with God, can you do as He does? It is often necessary and generally essential that for men to be properly humbled, God must reveal His power to them.⁵ For not until the Lord reveals Who He truly is, in both wisdom and might, will pretentious men come to know both what and whom they are not.

Job 40:10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

There is no natural ability or any moral quality in men that would allow them to clothe themselves with the majesty that is God's or to array themselves in the same glory and beauty as God.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 40:10) God is at all times "clothed with majesty and strength" (Psalm 93:1), "with glory and beauty" (Psalm 104:1). He "decks himself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104:2). Job is challenged to array himself similarly.

Jesus' parable of the marriage of the king's son reveals the importance of wearing a heavenly garment worthy of God's presence.⁶ This holy garment is revealed in the parable as necessary for entrance into heaven and is not anything that men can make for themselves. And as with the

4 *Exod. 6:6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:*

Exod. 15:16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

Deut. 7:19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

Deut. 26:8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:

II Kings 17:36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

Ps. 98:1 O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Isa. 30:30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

Isa. 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Jer. 32:17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

Ezek. 20:33 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

5 *Rom. 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

Exod. 14:31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Ps. 106:8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

6 *Matt. 22:1-13 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, ²The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. ⁷But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which*

priests who served the Lord in the temple, no natural nakedness or fleshly indecency⁷ was allowed to enter God's presence. What this teaches us is that unless the Lord provides a holy and heavenly garment, which is reflective and worthy of heaven, then true communion and fellowship with the Lord are impossible. The majesty, glory, and beauty of this garment must mirror the majesty, glory, beauty, and excellency of the Lord Himself. To then partake of heaven, sinners must be so transformed in order to take on the same glory and majesty of heaven. For the Christian this entails being transformed by God's power into the image of God's Son.⁸ And this is not a feat or ability that men can accomplish through their own power. The Lord therefore wants Job to fully realize and understand that it is impossible for any mortal creature to deck and array himself in the glory, beauty, and majesty of God. By this it is hoped that he would be humbled to realize how inferior man is to such a heavenly and holy Being. Man is also foolishly prone to criticize and condemn.

Job 40:11–14 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

¹² Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

¹³ Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

¹⁴ Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

The Lord brings up Job's lack of spiritual ability to abase the proud as grounds that

he could never save himself. Undoubtedly Job must have at least partially still believed in his individual strength to deliver himself. For God would never address Job's inability to save himself unless it remained an unresolved issue in Job's heart. Hence, the pride of men is often such that only as a last resort will the sinner yield to the divine reality that all true deliverance must come from the Lord and cannot come from himself.⁹ Consequently, not until all human hope and confidence in self are lost will most realize that only God's power, and not their own, can save them. Not until also the sinner's pride and fleshly independence are fully broken and not purposed to be rebuilt will he be ready to actually trust in the Lord and in the process forfeit all previous fleshly confidence. The Lord also reminds Job of his inability to bring the proud low, which is exactly what He has accomplished in Job's life. He has sufficiently humbled the proud, and this includes the very one He is now speaking to.

Job 40:15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Attention is brought to the *behemoth*. Exactly what this animal actually was is open to conjecture. Some have supposed it to be the hippopotamus, others the elephant. If we had to choose between the two, the hippo would be the most reasonable choice. However, if we are to adhere to the strict interpretation of the scripture, probably neither of these creatures is the true identity of the *behemoth* spoken of. Very likely this great beast is now extinct.

were bidden were not worthy. ⁹Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. ¹¹And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹²And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁷ Exod. 20:26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

⁸ I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

⁹ Ps. 3:8 Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

Like the hippo, its power lay in its loins. According to verse 19, the behemoth was considered the *chief of the ways of God*. No other creature could match it in size or strength, indicative also of the Lord's own power and ability. For He Who creates both large and intimidating creatures like behemoth must be, and certainly is, far greater in strength and inherent might than them.

Job 40:16–24 *Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.*

¹⁷ *He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.*

¹⁸ *His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.*

¹⁹ *He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.*

²⁰ *Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.*

²¹ *He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.*

²² *The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.*

²³ *Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.*

²⁴ *He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.*

If sinners would never even consider wrestling with a creature such as the one spoken of, why should they so foolishly imagine that they could actually strive against the Lord and hope to be successful? If a beast of the field is greater in power and might than mere man, which many undoubtedly are, then how unwise is it for men to foolishly believe themselves able to strive against their Creator?

Job 41:1–7 *Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?*

² *Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?*

³ *Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?*

⁴ *Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?*

⁵ *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?*

⁶ *Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?*

⁷ *Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 41:1) *Leviathan*.—There can be little doubt that by this is meant the crocodile or alligator, whatever may be the true meaning of behemoth.

The Lord now queries Job as to whether he could tame such a ferocious creature as the leviathan, or crocodile. *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?* Since Job could not subdue and domesticate this large and ferocious reptile, then how could he so foolishly believe himself equal to quarrel and contend with the Lord? Hence, if Job could not domesticate the crocodile and make creatures such as this become subject to him, then how could he ever be so foolish as to believe that the Lord would bow to his own human will?

Job 41:8–9 *Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.*

⁹ *Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?*

The Lord reminds Job that if he were ever to contend with the crocodile, a creature found to be over twenty feet in length, weighs almost 2,500 pounds, and is the largest reptile on earth, then he would experience very quickly that he could never be physically able to do it again—as any attempt to wrestle such a dangerous, fierce, and

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savage creature as this would result in certain and excruciating death.

Job 41:8 (NIV) If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!

Job 41:8 (NLT) If you lay a hand on it, you will certainly remember the battle that follows. You won't try that again!

Job 41:9 (NIV) Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering.

Job 41:10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

The fierceness and ferocity of the crocodile are so great that only a foolish, ignorant, and reckless man would arouse and awaken him to anger. Since this is undoubtedly true concerning the croc, should it not likewise be even more true and paramount in respect to God? Hence, there are many creatures upon the earth, like the hippo, the elephant, the crocodile, the lion, the tiger, and even the North American grizzly, that men have the natural sense not to stir to anger lest their own bodily lives be endangered in the process. Yet it is astounding how few sinners and ungodly men hold a similar fear and reverence for God, Who is so much more fierce and terrible than even these notorious predators of man. The truth is also that though the croc can easily kill one man, or even perhaps a small group of men, the Lord has proven His ability to extinguish and virtually bring to complete extinction all mankind.¹⁰

Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

¹⁰ Gen. 6:13 *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

Gen. 7:23 *And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 41:11) The apostle quotes this sentiment for the silencing of all flesh in God's presence, (Romans 11:35,) *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? ...* Having said, and largely proved, that man could not contend with God in power, he now adds that he cannot contend with him in, or with respect to justice; because God oweth him nothing, nor is any way obliged to him: which having briefly hinted, to prevent an objection, he returns to his former argument, the description of leviathan.

Job 41:12 I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

The Lord continues revealing to Job details of the leviathan's—the crocodile's—strength and natural power. By considering the might of such a fierce and dreadful creature as this, whose domain anyone with any reasonable sense would never enter, it is hoped that Job can see his own fragility of entering into contention with God. For God's holy presence is far more threatening and dangerous to enter into than even the crocodile's marshy, murky, habitat of the swamp. *I will not conceal his parts*, reveals the Lord, Who is now ready to reveal in even more detail why men should fear Him.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 41:12) *I will not conceal his parts— ...* A description follows of the various parts of the animal, all tending to confirm this general impression, and to fill the hearer with a deep conviction of his formidable character. The words rendered, "I will not conceal," mean, "I will not be silent;" that is, he would speak of them. The description which follows of the "parts" of the animal refers particularly to his mouth, his teeth, his scales, his eyelids, his nostrils, his neck, and his heart.

Job 41:13–32 Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?

¹⁴ *Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.*

¹⁵ *His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.*

¹⁶ *One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.*

¹⁷ *They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.*

¹⁸ *By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.*

¹⁹ *Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.*

²⁰ *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.*

²¹ *His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.*

²² *In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.*

²³ *The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.*

²⁴ *His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.*

²⁵ *When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.*

²⁶ *The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.*

²⁷ *He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.*

²⁸ *The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.*

²⁹ *Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.*

³⁰ *Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.*

³¹ *He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.*

³² *He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.*

The specific and threatening characteristics of the crocodile that are brought to Job's attention include his terrible teeth

(v. 14); the compactness and density of his mighty scales and protective armor (vv. 15–17); his penetrating and menacing eyes (v. 18); his fuming nostrils, mouth, and rancid breath (vv. 19–21); the great strength of his neck (v. 22); and the hardness of his heart, unable also to be swayed by either human reason or emotion (v. 24). The crocodile also possesses such natural defenses that neither human spears, arrows, or darts can penetrate his rough and extremely dense exterior (vv. 26–29). With respect to the crocodile's movements, the Lord reminds Job that the creature makes the deep waters boil like a hot, boiling, and bubbling pot, especially when the creature is subduing its prey (v. 31). Today men refer to this as the crocodile's death roll, in which with rapidity and great force it rolls and twists, disorienting its prey until it is eventually drowned and ready to be consumed as the animal's next meal.

Job 41:33–34 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

³⁴ *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.*

Two verses in this chapter are distinctly important. The first is *None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?* (v. 10). The second is *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride* (v. 34). Though both verses deal directly with creatures that God has made, their real emphasis is the Lord Himself.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 41:10) *Who then is able to stand before me?*—The meaning of this is plain. It is, "If one of my creatures is so formidable that man dare not attack it, how can he contend with the great Creator?" This may perhaps be designed as a reproof of Job. He had expressed a desire to carry his cause before God, and to urge argument before him in vindication of himself. God here shows him how hopeless must be a contest with the Almighty. Man trembles and

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is disarmed of his courage by even the sight of one of the creatures of God. Overpowered with fear, he retires from the contemplated contest, and flees away. How then could he presume to contend with God? What hope could he have in a contest with him?

All of God's creation, including each of His varied and magnificent creatures, reveals characteristics of the Lord's own distinctive glory and might.¹¹ And though most may not initially comprehend the

reason for a creature such as the crocodile, its beauty lies in its great impenetrability, independence, and fearlessness. Like God, it has no equal and fears nothing in all of creation. The crocodile is therefore king of its domain, as God is of His. Since there is nothing that can rival it or anything or anyone who can cause it to fear, it resembles the Lord's own independence and inability to be swayed by human criticism. *Nothing on earth is its equal—a creature without fear* (Job 41:33 NIV).

¹¹ Ps. 104:24–25 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. ²⁵So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

Isa. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

Rom. 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Col. 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Job Repents to God of Uttering Things He Understood Not

Job Chapters 42:1–6

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

ONCE a man has been sufficiently humbled by the Lord and confession of sin is made, all the previous agitation that has existed in his soul subsides. Sincere repentance of sin will therefore produce for the penitent a spirit of peace entering into and then abiding within his heart. Hence where previously there was only contention and confusion because of sin's presence, once it is both confessed and repented of by the sinner, then God's spiritual rest will begin filling his soul. This is now thankfully true of Job. He has recognized his sin, confessed it as wrong, and as a result has entered into sweet fellowship with the Lord. How wonderful also it is when erring and rebellious men confess their transgressions, admit their guilt, and recognize their sin against God! Then wisely, instead of denying their sin,¹ they are forgiven through the grace and mercy of God. *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah* (Ps. 32:5). The conflict, struggle, and contention between the

Lord and Job have now ceased, and Job is more than willing to confess his ignorance of God and how this same prideful insolence has led him to sin against Him.

Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Job's confession begins with his fresh understanding of God's power and ability not only to do anything and everything but also to be able to see everything, and consequently He knows all that transpires in the sinner's heart. Whereas previously Job had believed his thoughts could be concealed from God, now he knows they never could be. As God has revealed through both Elihu's words and His own reproof, every thought of the sinner is both remembered and taken into account. No thought can be withheld from God, and now Job knows this to be true of himself.² For what he had thought in secret ultimately was made known in public.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 42:2) One great object of the address of the Almighty was to convince Job of his majesty, and that object was fully accomplished.

¹ *I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

² *I Chrn. 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. I Kgs. 8:39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) Ps. 44:21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

Luke 5:22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

Jer. 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Not until men spiritually perceive God's ability to detect all the thoughts and intentions within their hearts will they realize that even thoughts are counted as sin against God.³ Job's confession therefore reveals his recent spiritual awakening that no thought can be hidden or kept secret from the Lord. Much of what both Elihu and God had spoken to Job dealt with the internal part of his being, his hidden cogitations and un-uttered words, which he had privately uttered against God. It was this spiritual understanding that God can see all, knows all, and is aware of every thought in the human heart that ultimately brought Job to his knees. *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth* (I Cor. 14:25). Not only then had the Lord heard Job's words, but He had also taken specific account of Job's thoughts.⁴ No doubt, Job's internal reasonings, speculations, and deeper ruminations were just deeper accusations against the Lord and extended even further than even Job's erring words.⁵ Practically, sin lies not merely in what sinners do but is equally present and accountable in what they think.⁶ And just as the inside of the cup is the most unclean,⁷ so also are the thoughts of the sinner far more evil

and accusative of the Lord than even the incriminating words he speaks. *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Gen. 6:5). By divine standards, to think something in the heart⁸ is reckoned exactly the same thing as doing it.⁹ To think against God and bring false accusations against Him is therefore in God's estimation spiritual rebellion.

Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

Because of Job's spiritual ignorance, his pride blinded him to believe he knew more of the Lord than he really did. This human ignorance has resulted in Job's sinning against the very One Whom he initially thought to praise.¹⁰ For this sin he is ready to take full accountability for committing: *therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.* The emphasis is on *I*: *have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.* Job's use of *I* is used with purposed and intentional design, simply because he had come to spiritually realize that he,

3 Matt. 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

4 Matt. 9:4 *And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

5 Job 40:2 *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.*

6 Job 40:8 *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*

6 Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

7 Matt. 23:25 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

8 Zech. 8:17 *And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.*

Prov. 15:26 *The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.*

Rom. 2:5 *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

9 Matt. 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

10 Job 1:20–21 *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, ²¹And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

and no other, was the source of his sin. Job now no longer blames his friends or his God, Whom previously he had foolishly thought had wronged him. Undoubtedly by this time Job is fully aware that to wrongly blame others for sin, especially the Lord, is actually a denial of it. For none can deny his sin and have the truth of God and His Word living within him. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (I John 1:8). Denial of sin is common and was seen in Adam's attempt to transfer his sin to Eve, with Eve also doing the same thing in regard to the devil,¹¹ when in fact all three who were involved in sinning against the Lord in the garden—Adam, Eve, and the devil—were collectively judged for the sin they committed.¹² King Saul also tried unsuccessfully to transfer blame to the people for his sin of willful disobedience to God's commandment.¹³ Hence, though it was absolutely true that Job's friends had troubled him and the devil had both

tempted and assaulted him, none of this mattered now. Job wisely knew within himself that he alone was at fault and that personal confession alone could repair his broken but mercifully salvageable relationship with God.

That which Job did not previously know about God he now astutely confesses as *too wonderful* to be known.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 42:3) too wonderful—I rashly denied that Thou hast any fixed plan in governing human affairs, merely because Thy plan was “too wonderful” for my comprehension.

History details that God allows certain events in men's lives so that His purposes can be fulfilled for them. Joseph was sold into slavery not only because of the envy that lived in his brothers' hearts but also, and most importantly, because this was part of God's plan for his life.¹⁴ Moses

11 Gen. 3:11–13 *And [the Lord] said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*¹² *And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*¹³ *And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

12 Gen. 3:14–19 *And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:*¹⁵ *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*¹⁶ *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*¹⁷ *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;*¹⁸ *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;*¹⁹ *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*
13 I Sam. 15:19–23 *Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?*²⁰ *And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.*²¹ *But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.*²² *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*²³ *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

14 Gen. 45:4–8 *And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.*⁵ *Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*⁶ *For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.*⁷ *And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*⁸ *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

also became abandoned as a child¹⁵ for the singular purpose of being raised up in Pharaoh's court so that he might adequately be prepared to lead God's people out of Egypt.¹⁶ This is verifiable of so many of the saints of old, and it should be considered equally true for the Lord's people today. Hence, in what proved to be the case with Job, Joseph, Moses, and so many others, when it seemed initially that they could be viewed as victims of their circumstances, actually the Lord was purposing a much higher and nobler design in their lives. Ultimately God has a distinct and blessed purpose for every child of God. And this purpose is always and without question to work all things for their final good.¹⁷ But if men fight against this purpose and accuse God of

injustice and sinning against them, then they are entering into a very real conflict with the Lord—simply because to complain against God's will for your life and accuse Him of sinning against you is to question both the sovereignty and goodness of God.

Job's journey was both lengthy and difficult to bear, but in the end his newfound wisdom and knowledge of God, were priceless. Whereas previously Job had only heard of God, now he had actually come to see Him.¹⁸ Job had therefore learned much spiritually, which only a trial like this could have accomplished. He was understandably quite humbled and thankful for the spiritual lessons he had been taught. And although the journey

15 *Exod. 2:1–6* And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. ²And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. ³And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. ⁴And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. ⁵And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. ⁶And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

16 *Exod. 14:21–31* And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²²And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. ²³And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians. ²⁵And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. ²⁶And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. ²⁷And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. ²⁹But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. ³⁰Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. ³¹And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

17 *Jer. 29:11* For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Eph. 1:4–6 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Eph. 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

18 *Job 42:5* I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

was long, the spiritual illumination was indispensable and would forever change Job's faith, his view of God, and his opinion of himself.

Job 42:4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 42:4) The words which God had uttered to Job by way of challenge, Job returns to him in the way of submission.

Once God had sufficiently humbled Job's heart, Job was now in a position to answer God properly. Whereas Job had previously been afraid of offending God through his speech, now he knew that he was able to carry on a proper discourse with the Lord without any inward trepidation. His confession had produced a clean conscience, a heart free from internal accusation, and ultimately a newfound, holy, spiritual confidence. Having now been sufficiently humbled and realizing the degree of his spiritual error, he assumes the role of a receptive and intractible pupil: *declare thou unto me. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end* (Ps. 119:33).

Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

It is one thing to hear of God *by the hearing of the ear* and quite another, and a more profound thing, to actually see Him. Hence whereas previously Job had only heard of God and what others had said concerning Him, now, after his trial, he could actually see the Lord. It is this result that is the purpose of divine trials, so that those who successfully undergo them are brought to spiritual enlightenment, enabling them to perceive the Lord's very personal and intimate involvement in their lives.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 42:5) *But now mine eye seeth thee*—"It is plain," says Dr. Dodd, "that there is some privilege intended here that Job had never enjoyed before, and which he calls a sight of God. He had heard of him by the hearing of the ear, or the tradition delivered down from his forefathers; but he had now a clear and sensible perception of his being and divine perfections; some light thrown in upon his mind, which carried its own evidence with it; and which to him had all the certainty and clearness even of sight itself."

Nothing is as transformative to the sinner's soul as when God and His glory become visible. It is this sight of the Lord that is the very first step of being transformed by Him. It is also the process of beholding God that practically transforms the sinner. *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (II Cor. 3:18).

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Here we observe that Job no longer claims any personal self-righteousness.¹⁹ Instead, because of God's intervention in his life, his spiritual evaluation of himself has dramatically changed. Whereas previously he had exalted himself, pridefully thinking himself able to question the Lord, now he abhors the very same man he once defended. But even though Job abhorred himself, the result produced was quite the opposite as what might be expected. For whenever there is sincere and genuine repentance for sin, a healing in self will be produced—since all truth, even truth purposed for man's contrition, if believed, sets men free.²⁰ There are thus two primary results that will be evidenced when confession of sin is made by the penitent. The first is an indignation and hatred for the sin. This is not an ungodly reaction

¹⁹ Job 27:6 *My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*
²⁰ John 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

but is actual proof of sincere remorse for the sin committed. The second result will be a renewed spiritual energy entering the soul as the person is determined never again to sin in the same manner again. Because God also forgives the penitent, the weight of sin will be lifted and a fresh new spiritual life can begin. Second Corinthians speaks of this process, when men experience godly sorrow and are spiritually energized to pursue a much holier life. *For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter* (II Cor. 7:11). Barnes' notes on this topic are lengthy but worthy of consideration, to learn how godly sorrow and genuine repentance for sin can produce transformation in the soul.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 7:11) *For behold this self-same thing*—For see in your own case the happy effects of godly sorrow. See the effects which it produced; see an illustration of what it is suited to produce. The construction is, “For lo! this very thing, to wit, your sorrowing after a godly manner, wrought carefulness, clearing of yourselves,” etc. The object of Paul is to illustrate the effects of godly sorrow, to which he had referred in 2 Corinthians 7:10.²¹ He appeals, therefore, to their own case, and says that it was beautifully illustrated among themselves.

What carefulness—(σπουδὴν *soudēn*). This word properly denotes “speed, haste;” then diligence, earnest effort, forwardness. Here it is evidently used to denote the diligence and the great anxiety which they manifested to remove the evils which existed among them. They went to work to remove them. They did not sit down to mourn over them merely, nor did they wait for God to

remove them, nor did they plead that they could do nothing, but they set about the work as though they believed it might be done. When people are thoroughly convinced of sin, they will set about removing it with the utmost diligence. They will feel that this can be done, and must be done, or that the soul will be lost.

What clearing of yourselves—(ἀπολογία *apologian*). Apology. This word properly means a plea or defense before a tribunal or elsewhere; Acts 22:1; 2 Timothy 4:16.²² Tyndale renders it, “Yea, it caused you to clear yourselves.” The word here properly means “apology” for what had been done; and it probably refers here to the effort which would be made by the sounder part of the church to clear themselves from blame in what had occurred. ... The whole church was roused, and all felt, and all endeavored in the proper way to free themselves from the blame, and to remove the evil from among them.

Yea, what indignation—Indignation against the sin, and perhaps against the persons who had drawn down the censure of the apostle. One effect of true repentance is to produce decided hatred of sin. It is not mere regret, or sorrow, it is positive hatred. There is a deep indignation against it as an evil and a bitter thing.

Yea, what fear—Fear lest the thing should be repeated. Fear lest it should not be entirely removed. Or it may possibly mean fear of the displeasure of Paul, and of the punishment which would be inflicted if the evil were not removed. But it more probably refers to the anxious state of mind that the whole evil might be corrected, and to the dread of having any vestige of the evil remaining among them.

Yea, what vehement desire—This may either mean their fervent wish to remove the cause of complaint, or their anxious desire to see the

21 II Cor. 7:10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

22 Acts 22:1 *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.*

II Tim. 4:16 *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.*

Job Repents to God of Uttering Things He Understood Not

apostle. It is used in the latter sense in 2 Corinthians 7:7,²³ and according to Doddridge and Bloomfield this is the meaning here. Locke renders it, “desire of satisfying me.” It seems to me more probable that Paul refers to their anxious wish to remove the sin, since this is the topic under consideration. The point of his remarks in this verse is not so much their affection for him as their indignation against their sin, and their deep grief that sin had existed and had been tolerated among them.

Yea, what zeal—Zeal to remove the sin, and to show your attachment to me. They set about the work of reformation in great earnest. . . .

In all things ...—The sense of this is, “You have entirely acquitted yourselves of blame in this business.” The apostle does not mean that none of them had been to blame, or that the church had been free from fault, for a large part of his former Epistle is occupied in reproving them for their faults in this

business, but he means that by their zeal and their readiness to take away the cause of complaint, they had removed all necessity of further blame, and had pursued such a course as entirely to meet his approbation. They had cleared themselves of any further blame in this business, and had become, so far as this was concerned, “clear” (*ἀγνοῦς hagnous*) or pure.

Whenever there is true recognition of sin, as evidenced in Job, and also a godly and healthy repentance for it, many positive results will follow. This includes indignation and hatred for the sin committed, a fear of ever repeating it again, a vehement desire to be cleansed by God from it, and a zeal for even greater spiritual transformation in the life. No doubt, most if not all of these things were experienced in Job's life—preparing him for an even more pure pursuit of godliness and fellowship with God in the future.

²³ *II Cor. 7:7* And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

Job Prays for His Three Friends and is Greatly Blessed by the Lord

Job Chapter 42:7–17

Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

ONCE He has sufficiently humbled Job, the Lord turns His attention to Job's three friends. God singles out Eliphaz because he is the oldest and has taken the lead role in correcting Job. He led the improper correction of God's servant, and God will make sure that he bears the brunt of His discipline. The Lord is angry, and He wants to ensure that Eliphaz and Job's other two friends are fully aware of the reason for His anger.

Notice that God's demeanor has completely changed toward Job. Instead of spiritually correcting Job, He now comes to Job's defense. Because Job confessed his sin, God became his friend, and as such, He now defends Job's faith. The Lord also reveals that Job has spoken correctly when with sincerity and genuineness, he acknowledges God's majesty.¹ By confessing his sin, Job has justified his God, and in the course of events he now speaks what is right about God. This was not true when Job had darkened God's counsel by words without knowledge,² but it is true now.

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to

my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 42:7) Job uttered indeed, some improper sentiments about God and his government; he expressed himself with irreverence and impatience; he used a language of boldness and complaint wholly improper, but this was done in the agony of mental and bodily suffering, and when provoked by the severe and improper charges of hypocrisy brought by his friends. What "they" said, on the contrary, was unprovoked. It was when they were free from suffering, and when they were urged to it by no severity of trial. It was, moreover, when every consideration required them to express the language of condolence, and to comfort a suffering friend.

Job's religious friends had once thought themselves superior to God's servant, but in the end they would need him for their forgiveness. Their pride had lifted them up, and God wanted to make sure that they were adequately humbled before they began anew their own search for truth. Job would also need to assume the role of a priest to make intercession so that forgiveness might be given to the very ones who had condemned him. God would accept offerings solely from the one who had patiently endured his trial and in the end justified his God.

1 Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

2 Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Job 42:9 *So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.*

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did exactly as the Lord commanded them. Their submission reveals that though they had sinned against God and Job, it was foolishness that had prompted their actions and not maliciousness. Because the Lord provided a mediator for their sin in the person of Job, He could then provide for them forgiveness. This text parallels our need for Jesus as our Mediator,³ since through Christ's suffering and His spiritual trial He intercedes for the sins of all men.⁴ Only after men are tried and come through their trials successfully can their lives also bless others, teaching us that through divine trials the Lord increases men's spiritual ministries and intensifies their impacts on the lives of others. None also will be better equipped to serve the Lord than those who by faith have successfully overcome the trials that God has purposed for their lives.

Job 42:10 *And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

The penitent heart will progress toward becoming the forgiving heart. Thus, the

truly repentant will not only confess their own sin but will also show compassion toward others who have similarly sinned. Truly repentant sinners are therefore fully aware that all have sinned,⁵ and none more so than themselves. It is also not hard either to pray for or to forgive others for their sins if the Lord has forgiven our own. Job esteemed the sins and transgressions of his three friends to be practically no greater than his own.

What God had allowed Satan to take away from Job⁶ He now restores double. What a wonderful truth this is, that when God permits loss in order to teach higher lessons of spirituality, His grace will provide even more blessings afterward! The Lord not only gives the grace needed for reproof and forgiveness but also supplies many other blessings after His correction has accomplished its purpose. It was also when Job humbly prayed for his friends that he received full release from his own captivity. Because of the spiritual nature of Job's captivity and Satan's influence in it, it was necessary that God free him since no other spiritual power could.

Job 42:11 *Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had*

3 I Tim. 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

4 I John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

5 Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

6 Job 1:12-19 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.¹² And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:¹³ And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:¹⁴ And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.¹⁵ And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:¹⁹ And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

7 Job 2:6-7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.⁷ So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

God's kindness is such that not only does He restore His own fellowship with Job, but He also returns many friends and family to come to his aid and assist him in his healing. He had lost much because of Satan's actions, and the Lord knew that it was necessary to bless him with much to balance his previous pain and suffering. No longer would Job need to sit alone in dust and ashes,⁷ since all his brethren, including his closest relatives, came to comfort him. Undoubtedly the Lord knows that human companionship is necessary for men to be fully blessed. Therefore, when men find peace through reconciliation with God, which can happen only when they discover true humility, God ensures that they gain peace and sweet fellowship with others as well. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him* (Prov. 16:7). Job was at this point in his life; he pleased the Lord, and God now revealed His faithfulness to His Word.

(Benson Commentary, Prov. 16:7) *When a man's ways please the Lord*—The best way to have our enemies reconciled unto us, is for us first to be reconciled unto God; for such is the love which the Lord hath to pious and virtuous persons, that when all their designs and actions are such as he approves, he often inclines even those that were their foes to become their friends, disposing their hearts to kindness toward them.

The book of Revelation gives us a striking illustration of God's power to bring enemies of the gospel to behold and acknowledge His love for the saved. *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come*

and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee (Rev. 3:9).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rev. 3:9) The truth taught here is, that it is in the power of the Lord Jesus so to turn the hearts of all the enemies of religion that they shall be brought to show respect to it; so to incline the minds of all people that they shall honor the church, or be at least outwardly its friends. Such homage the world shall yet be constrained to pay to it.

And to know that I have loved thee—This explains what he had just said, and shows that he means that the enemies of his church will yet be constrained to acknowledge that it enjoys the smiles of God, and that instead of being persecuted and reviled, it should be respected and loved.

By freeing Job and forgiving him of his sin, the Lord demonstrated that Job was His own. This is exactly what Job had claimed, and ultimately his faith and previous confessions were proven right.

Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 42:12) The last days of a good man sometimes prove his best, his last works his best works, his last comforts his best comforts; for his path, like that of the morning light, shines more and more unto the perfect day.

In reality, Job's initial losses were only temporary, as God had always intended them to last but for a season. In the end, the latter end of Job's life was much sweeter and more blessed than the beginning. By this it is shown that God not only forgives the penitent but also seeks to bless and prosper his life in so many other ways after His will has been accomplished in

⁷ Job 30:19 *He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.*
Job 42:6 *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

their lives. The Lord had always known from the beginning what He had purposed for Job, that though there would be temporary loss of family, possessions, and health, after his painful trial there would be everlasting and eternal gain. Indeed, the book of Job cannot be properly discerned or sufficiently understood until we see the final end design purposed by the Lord. And this was to ultimately bless Job and reveal to him the pity and tender mercy that exists in God once confession, and not denial of sin, is made. *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy* (Jas. 5:11).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 5:11) And have seen the end of the Lord—That is, the end or design which the Lord had in the trials of Job, or the result to which he brought the case at last—to wit, that he showed himself to be very merciful to the poor sufferer; that he met him with the expressions of his approbation for the manner in which he bore his trials; and that he doubled his former possessions, and restored him to more than his former happiness and honor.

Though spiritual trial is necessary, God's pity will remain with the afflicted, and His mercy will await them after their purposed end. After Jesus's trial in the wilderness, the Lord sent angels to minister to Him.⁸ By this it can be learned that after divine trials the Lord immediately comes to the aid of those who have successfully undergone them—simply because there is both a time for trials and

a time when the Lord comforts His people after them. By this God's mercy and pity are evidenced, proven by His compassion and forgiveness to the penitent.

Job 42:13–15 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

¹⁴*And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.*

¹⁵*And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.*

It is remarkable, just as Barnes mentions, that before Job's trial none of his family's names are revealed, but now after his successful spiritual journey, the names of his daughters are recorded as a testament to the degree of blessing showered upon his life.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 42:14) It is remarkable that in the former account of the family of Job, the names of none of his children are mentioned, and in this account the names of the daughters only are designated. "Why" the names of the daughters are here specified, is not intimated. They are significant, and they are "so" mentioned as to show that they contributed greatly to the happiness of Job on the return of his prosperity, and were among the chief blessings which gladdened his old age. The name Jemima (יְמִימָה *yemiyamah*) is rendered by the Vulgate "Diem," and by the Septuagint, Ἡμέραν *Hēmeran*, "Day." The Chaldee adds this remark: "He gave her the name Jemima, because her beauty was like the day." The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Chaldee, evidently*

⁸ *Matt. 4:1–11 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. ³And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. ⁵Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. ⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. ¹¹Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

regarded the name as derived from יוֹם *yôm*, “day,” and this is the most natural and obvious derivation. The name thus conferred would indicate that Job had now emerged from the “night” of affliction, and that returning light shone again on his tabernacle.

Job’s children, especially his daughters, reveal the great blessing and abundance given to him by God as generally it is the men, and not the women, who are specifically named in relationship to a Father’s descendants. Hence by mentioning and giving the names of Job’s godly daughters, the great extent of blessing given to him by God is revealed. His daughters are described as fair and beautiful, reflecting the changed condition of Job’s own life. Previously his children were not named, but now even his daughters are purposed for distinction and historical religious remembrance.

Job 42:16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, even four generations.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 42:16) As God appointed to Adam another seed instead of that which was slain, Genesis 4:25,⁹ so he did to Job with advantage. God has ways to repair the losses, and balance the griefs, of those who are deprived of their property, or are written childless, as Job was when he had buried all his children, and was robbed of all his sheep and cattle by the Chaldeans and Sabceans.

Job had suffered the loss of time, so God mercifully rewarded him with more time. Job’s life proved to be long and fruitful—until also all the pain and suffering he had endured became a distant memory. Without question his time of blessing was more than double his time of affliction. Property, children, and even time were restored to this man who feared God. The Lord’s double blessing on Job’s life also demonstrates that the only thing that can

match God’s justice is God’s mercy. What a wonderful and impactful truth this is, revealing that God does not deal with us according to our iniquities but rather because of His great heavenly mercy, He removes our transgressions from us! *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us* (Ps. 103:10–12).

Job 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

After Job’s long, full, and blessed life, the Lord decided that his time on the earth was now finished. Little did Job know that his fear of God, and the trials he experienced, would become recorded biblical history. Through the writing of this scripture and by Job’s life, others could be taught what Job needed to undergo and learn by experience. It is also important to remember that Job’s trial was not an isolated incident, simply because God works this often with man. *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man* (Job 33:29). Ultimately the story of Job and the trials he experienced are not unique to one man but have been repeated with many others. The Lord allows this, yea produces it, in an attempt to hide pride from man. *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man* (Job 33:17). It is this pride that Elihu first addressed in Job, which also, if not repented of, could lead only to more suffering in his life. *He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword* (Job 33:18). The book of Job finds its place in the canon as one of the most important books ever written. Because it is very likely the oldest book of the Bible, it contains some of the

⁹ Gen. 4:25 *And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

most important biblical truths necessary for gaining God's salvation—including the truth that men must repent of their sin¹⁰ before they can be forgiven for it. This truth is documented by Job's own memorable utterance, *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes* (Job 42:6). Few can read and contemplate the great lessons in the book of Job and not be eternally changed in the process—the most critical lesson being that God resists the proud and gives grace and favor to the humble,¹¹ the exact kind of man that

Job later proved himself to be. It is thus the humble whom God favors, those who possess a broken and contrite spirit and tremble at His Word. This is the lesson of Job, something that all wise men can learn from simply by reading and believing the inspired and God-breathed¹² Word of God. *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word* (Isa. 66:2). Amen.

10 Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

Acts 8:22 *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

11 Jas. 4:6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

12 II Tim. 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

THE BOOK OF JOB

The Oldest Lesson in the World

James 5:11

*Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen
the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful,
and of tender mercy.*

E. W. Bullinger, D.D.

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or

“The End of the Lord”

as seen in the Book of Job

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Preface

FEW Books of the Bible have received more attention than the Book of Job; both as to translations and as to commentaries. The Apocalypse, perhaps, exceeds it; because of its relation to the future, in which we are naturally more interested.

The Book of Job carries us back to the remote past, and contains the oldest lesson in the world. It is significant that this oldest book should be devoted to imparting that knowledge, in comparison with which all other knowledge sinks into insignificance. It is the lesson which is essential to our having peace with God for Time, and to our enjoying the peace of God for Eternity.

In the first part of this work we have endeavoured to set this forth; and in the Second Part we have given a new translation, concerning which a few words are necessary.

No apology is needed for adding one more to the many excellent presentations of the Book of Job: because there are six points which make this to differ from all previous translations; and which, taken together, make the present effort quite distinctive in its character.

1. It is METRICAL. The decasyllabic measure has been chosen because the stateliness of that rhythm accords with the weighty language and lofty themes of the original, better than any other; and certainly better than the jingle of the Anapaestic measure.

2. It is based on the literary STRUCTURE of the book. This, we believe, is, for the first time given in full; in sum, and in detail. Over and above its own inherent beauty and interest, the structure is most useful, if not necessary, because it gives the SCOPE of the various passages, and thus enables us to judge as to the sense in which certain difficult words and phrases are to be understood.

Thus the *Structure* determines the *Scope*; and the *Scope*, in turn, furnishes the key to the interpretation of the words.

3. THE FIGURES OF SPEECH also are noted as far as possible. These again guide us as to the translation; and their use is seen to be important as throwing light on many, otherwise enigmatical, expressions. It is the observance of Figures of Speech which has given Bengel's Commentary on the New Testament a unique place among such works. His example in such a matter is one which it is wise to follow, however humbly and imperfectly.

To translate a Figure of Speech *literally* is to obscure the very point for which it was used, to lose the emphasis it was intended to mark, and to miss the truth it was meant to teach.

4. Our aim also has been to make our Translation as **IDIOMATIC** as possible. Too close an adherence to the literal rendering of *words* necessarily leads to English which, to say the least, is often incoherent; and conveys no definite sense to the English reader.

Literality, indeed, is required; but it must be literality to the *sense* and not merely to the words. The English reader must have the same idea in his mind that was in the mind of the Foreign writer, irrespective of the actual words employed in conveying that meaning.

This, of course, applies to a translation from any language into English. The first requisite is that it must be English. This is a condition which must take precedence even of verbal faithfulness: because, unless we can understand the English, we cannot judge whether it represents the original faithfully or not.

We have therefore striven to translate the Hebrew *idioms* into the corresponding English *idioms*, rather than the Hebrew *words* into English *words*. In all such cases we have given the literal meaning of the Hebrew words in our notes, so that our readers may see exactly what has been done in order to obtain the sense; and judge for himself how far that has been accomplished.

In this we have followed the example of the Translators of the Authorized Version. They give, for example, the beautiful English rendering of Gen. xxix. 1, "Then Jacob went on his journey,"¹ but they point out in the margin that the Hebrew idiom is "*And Jacob lift up his feet.*" So in Psalm xx. 3 they beautifully turn the Hebrew, thus, "The Lord . . . accept thy burnt sacrifice."² But they explain in the margin that the Hebrew rendered "accept" means to "turn to ashes"; because that was the way in which the Lord accepted a Sacrifice. He *turned it to ashes*, by causing Divine fire to fall from the heavens and consume it. This is how He "had respect" to Abel's offering: this is how he "testified of Abel's gifts": this is how Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous" (Heb. xi. 4).³

We have followed the example thus set in the A.V.: which is for this reason a "Version," while the R.V., being more literal to the *words*, is more correctly a "Translation," rather than a "Version."

Our aim has been, therefore, to translate into English *phrase*, and not merely into English words; to keep to the solemnity of the style of the Authorized Version, and not to vulgarize it by adopting twentieth-century English.

In the sacredness of its diction the A.V. has never been surpassed in any language. By its, sometimes, too strict adherence to Hebrew idioms, it has actually caused them to pass into, and become absolutely, English idioms.

We must not, however, confuse such idioms with English Archaisms; for the two are quite distinct: For example, "held his peace" is old English and not Hebrew; so are such expressions as "three score and ten," "give up the ghost," &c.

1 Gen. 29:1 "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east."

2 Psalm 20:3 "Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah."

3 Heb. 11:4 "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

On the other hand, many pure Hebraisms have become naturalized English expressions, and are now the common property of both languages: e.g., “at the hands of;” “by the hand of;” “with the edge of the sword;” “respector of persons;” “sick unto death;” &c.

All this will show the difficulties which are inherent in any such attempt as the present; and will give us a claim to the indulgence of our critics for any failure in attaining our high ideal.

5. It is CRITICAL. We have followed the Hebrew Text of Dr. Ginsburg’s magnificent and monumental work. His Critical Massoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible⁴ must henceforth be the standard for all subsequent translations.

We have availed ourselves of his readings, and given his critical notes, in which he has recorded his own assured conclusions, as well as those based on the documentary authority of ancient Codices and Versions.

We have called attention to only a few of his more “conjectural” readings, where they seemed to be of importance.

6. THE DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES have all been indicated either in the Translation (where the Rhythm allowed it), or in the Notes. Those used in this book may be thus defined and distinguished.

ELOHIM is God, as the *Creator*, carrying out His *will*; God, standing in the relation of Creator to His creatures.

EL, is God, as the *Omnipotent*. The Creator showing forth His power in carrying out His *work*. “The Almighty” would have been, perhaps, the most appropriate rendering, had not this word been, in the A. V., appropriated as the rendering of “Shaddai.”

ELOAH is the God who is to be *worshipped* and *reverenced*, the living God, in contrast with all idols and false gods.

ADONAI is God as *the Ruler* in the earth; and this in relation to the whole Earth, rather than as limited to His own People. It is thus distinguished from Jehovah.

JEHOVAH is *the Eternal God*, “Who is, and was, and is to come.” The self-existent God, Who stands in *Covenant* relation to His own People.

SHADDAI is God as *All-Bountiful*. The giver of every good gift; the fountain of all Divine help; and the supplier of all human need. Not merely Almighty as regards His power, but All-Bountiful as regards His resources.

These are the Divine titles used in the book of Job, and it will be observed that *Eloah* and *Shaddai* are the titles that specially mark the character of the book.

In our judgment, all the Divine Names and Titles should have been preserved in their original forms in translating the Bible into any language. They should have

⁴ Published by the Trinitarian Bible Society of London 1894, price one guinea.

been *transferred* (with explanations) instead of being *translated*. No one word in any language can ever explain all that is contained and implied in the Hebrew original.⁵

We have not ventured systematically on so bold a course; but we have adopted it where possible in certain cases, especially with the names *Eloah* and *Shaddai*. When we have not been able to do this, we have indicated the different titles in the notes. We have also uniformly distinguished them by the use of different types: for example:—

ELOHIM, God the *Creator*, we have printed “God.”

EL, God the *Omnipotent* or *Almighty*, we have printed “GOD.”

ELOAH, God the object of *Worship*, we have printed “GOD.”

ADONAI, God the *Ruler* in the Earth, we have printed “Lord” (as in A.V.).

JEHOVAH, God the *Eternal One*, we have printed LORD (as in A.V.).

SHADDAI, God as the *All-Bountiful*, we have printed “GOD.”

Thus, the distinguishing features of the following version are:

1. That it is Rhythmical.
2. That it based on the Structure of the book.
3. That it notes the Figures of Speech.
4. That it is Idiomatic.
5. That it gives the critical readings of Dr. Ginsburg’s Hebrew Bible.
6. That it distinguishes the various Divine Names and Titles.

These six points give our New Translation a special character. They fully justify our attempt; and they absolve us from all suspicion of presumption in aiming at the production of such a work. To combine them together in one book was worthy of our best efforts.

We do not suppose, for a moment, that what we have been able to do is superior to what others have done. But, if, in parts, we have accomplished what some have left undone, or succeeded where others have failed, it is due, not to our own merit, but to the great distinguishing principles on which the work is based; while any imperfections are due to our own failure in carrying them out.

We are conscious only of an honest endeavour to make the book itself, and its important lesson, more clear.

Nothing can add to our own pleasure in translating, and to the pleasure of those who shall read it, but the pleasure experienced in the heart by learning the great lesson which it teaches.

⁵ To adopt the *heathen* names and titles, and use them to represent the God of revelation is a still greater mistake.

May we, together, come to the knowledge of Divine “Wisdom”; and, while we justify God and condemn ourselves, learn how mortal man can be just with God; and that, while God is just, He is the Justifier of all who believe in the Lord Jesus.

Christ is the “spirit.” In the book of Job we have the “body.” But, “as the body without the spirit is dead,” so the “letter” of the word without Christ (the “spirit”) is dead also. May His words be spirit and life, *i.e.*, true spiritual life, to ourselves,

E. W. Bullinger
25, Connaught Street,
London, W. November, 1903.

The Book and Its Structure

“Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (Jas. v. 11).

WE have all “heard of the patience of Job.” But, the great and important question is this, Have we “seen the end” which the Lord had in view in all His dealings with Job? The “end” which He brought about in His own perfect way?

The object and purpose of the book are one. Whatever is said and done; whoever speaks or acts; all has reference to one person; and all is designed to bring about one “end.”

It is a long book. It consists of forty-two chapters, relating to various events, and different agencies; all brought to bear upon one person, and all directed to one “end”—“the end of the Lord.”

We see Heaven, and Earth, and Hell; Jehovah, and Satan; the Chaldeans, and Sabeans; fire from heaven, and wind from the wilderness; Job’s friends, his wife, and children, all engaged and employed in order to secure one “end.”

It is a wonderful book in itself, apart from either the patience of Job, or the end of the Lord.

We might study it with reference to the history involved in the book; its national character; its place in the Canon of Scripture: the time when it was written; the various references to arts and sciences, to natural history, to astronomy, to various objects of Nature, such as jewels, etc. We might study its eschatology; its knowledge of mineralogy, metallurgy and mining operations. We might notice its language; the words and expressions employed, especially those that are peculiar to the book. All these and many other matters might well form subjects of separate study: but we leave all these; because, however interesting each subject might be in itself, it is not the “end” for which the book is given to us.

Ancient it is beyond all dispute. It probably belongs to the period covered by the book of Genesis; and, possibly, to the time of Abraham.¹ Its lesson, therefore, is the oldest lesson we could have; and it takes us back to the first lesson taught in the Bible itself.

In Gen. i. and ii. we have the creation of man. In Gen. iii. we have the fall of man, and the chapter ends with the statement that man was driven out from the Garden of Eden in judgment (v. 24).² Then, in Gen. iv., what have we but *the way back again to God*, in grace? God’s way, which Abel took; and man’s way, which Cain invented.

¹ See note on ch. i. 1, in New Translation.

² Gen. 3:24 *So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

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This, therefore, is the oldest lesson in the world. It is the first great lesson which stands on the fore-front of revelation; and the lesson of the book of Job follows this up and expands it by answering the solemn question, “How should man be just with God?”³

This is not only the oldest lesson, but it is the most important lesson that it is possible for us to learn. If we know not this lesson, it matters not what else we may know. Our knowledge may be vast, extensive, and deep on all other subjects; but it will not carry us beyond the grave.

But the knowledge of this lesson will serve us for eternity; and secure our eternal blessing and happiness. If we know this lesson, it matters little what else we do *not* know.

No wonder then that this oldest lesson in the world is thus set at the very opening of God’s Word, following immediately upon the record of the Fall. No wonder that, thus, at the threshold of the Word of God, we have the foundation of Gospel truth securely laid.

The “end” which the Lord had in view in the book of Job was to enforce this lesson in the most powerful way; a way which should serve as an object lesson for all time; and by the manner in which it is set forth should impress its importance upon the hearts and minds of all.

Its very structure is designed to attract our attention by exhibiting in a wonderful manner the perfect workmanship of the Spirit of God. The Structure itself speaks to us, if we have ears to hear. It says: If the outward form of the book be so perfect, how perfect must be its spiritual lesson; and how Divine must be its one great object; viz., “the end,” which Jehovah had in view from the beginning; “the end” which was so blessedly accomplished; and “the end” for which it is given to us.

The Structure of the book is as follows:—

THE BOOK OF JOB AS A WHOLE.

- A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.
- B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan’s assault. Job stripped of all.
- C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.
- D | iii. 1 —xxxi. 40. Job and his friends.
- E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.
- D | xxxviii. 1. —xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.
- C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.
- B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan’s defeat. Job blessed with double.
- A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.

We will now consider these members in this order; and watch the process by which Jehovah brings about His own “end”; and accomplishes His own purposes.

³ Job 9:2 *I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*

Introduction

A. (chap. i. 1–5.)

THE introduction is exceedingly simple. A few brief sentences tell us all that is necessary for us to know about Job:—

- Where he lived (v. 1).
- What he was (v. 1).
- What he had (v. 2, 3).
- What he did (v. 5).
- What he said (v. 5).

He was perfect: Heb., *תָּם* (*tām*), *upright, sincere, without guile*. He did possess that wisdom and understanding which fears the Lord, and departs from evil; but the only true wisdom, which always *justifies God and condemns one's self*, he did not know.

True wisdom is to know what is “a broken heart” and “a contrite spirit.” These are the sacrifices with which God is well pleased; and apart from these all other “wisdom” and all other sacrifices are worthless.

Until man knows this he cannot know either God or himself.

To teach Job this important lesson is the “end” of all that we read in this book. All that is done and all that is said is intended to do for Job.

- What the “mighty famine” did for the lost son (Luke xv.);¹
- What another famine did for Joseph's brethren (Gen. xlv. 16);²
- What Nathan's parable did for David (2 Sam. xii. 1–13);³
- What a glorious vision did for Isaiah (chap. vi. 1–5),⁴ and for Daniel (chap. x. 1–8);⁵
- What a wondrous miracle did for Peter (Luke v. 1–8).⁶

The same work must be done for Job; and the same result must be produced in his case as in theirs.

- As the lost son confessed “I have sinned”;
- As Joseph's brethren acknowledged “We are verily guilty”;
- As David said “I have sinned against the Lord”;
- As Isaiah confessed “I am undone ... unclean”;

1 *Luke 15:11–19*

2 *Gen. 44:16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.*

3 *II Sam. 12:1–13*

4 *Isa. 6:1–5*

5 *Dan. 10:1–8*

6 *Luke 5:1–8*

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And as Daniel declared “My comeliness was turned into corruption”;
So must Job be brought to say, “I am vile” (chap. xl. 4).⁷
“I abhor myself,” “I repent in dust and ashes” (chap. xlii. 6).⁸

This is “the end of the Lord,” for the Lord Himself must be the teacher of this Divine lesson.

Man may be used by God to bring it about; but God alone can be the bringer near of His own salvation, and the bestower of His own righteousness.

All this is quite apart from mere “religion,” as such. Job was religious; just as the heathen may be “very religious.” Religion is the attempt of man to become righteous by morality and ordinances; but, the moment God produces a broken heart and a contrite spirit, the sinner is lifted completely out of the region of religion, and becomes the possessor of the “righteousness of God” Himself.

The book of Job, therefore, as we have said, is the illustration and the spiritual enlargement of the oldest lesson in the world as first taught in Gen. iv. 1–5.⁹ It is an object lesson which exhibits before our eyes the Divine answer to man’s great question—the question of this book:

“How shall mortal man be just with God?”

The first time the Lord God speaks to man after the Fall, He sets forth in his brief question, “Where art thou?” the lost and helpless condition of man.

This is the first great lesson which man has to learn; and his attempt to answer this great question is that which forms the first step in his attainment of true “wisdom.”

The first question of the Bible is intended to reveal to man his lost condition; and when he has discovered this, he asks the first question in the New Testament, intended to express this conviction, when he cries “Where is He?” (Matt. ii. 2).¹⁰ Where is the Saviour whom Thou hast provided for lost sinners? Where is the Saviour whom Thou has given and sent?

The answer to this question is the oldest lesson in the world.

Unless we recognize this, as the “end” and design of the book, we shall never understand it, or learn its lesson for ourselves.

Jehovah dwells only “with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Is. lvii. 15);¹¹ to this man only, He says, “will I look” (Is. lxvi. 2).¹² But neither the one nor the other

⁷ Job 40:4 Behold, I am insignificant. How can I reply to You? I place my hand over my mouth.

⁸ Job 42:6 Therefore I retract my words, and I repent in dust and ashes.

⁹ Gen. 4:1–5

¹⁰ Matt. 2:2 asking, “Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

¹¹ Isa. 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

¹² Isa. 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

is seen in the case of Job, until we have come to the end of the book, and have “seen the end of the Lord.”

The “end of the Lord” was not merely to teach Job what man was, or what the world was.

The deceitfulness of man and the hollowness of the world are soon discovered by all. It needs no special Divine process to learn that lesson.

The men who flattered him in his prosperity were the very ones to treat him with contumely in his adversity (see chaps. xxix.—xxx.).

Those who shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David,” shouted “Crucify Him” a few days later. When the lost son had plenty to spend, he had plenty to share it with him; but when “he began to be in want, no man gave unto him” (Luke xv. 13, 16).¹³

Sad it is to learn all this about the deceitfulness of man, if we have not previously learned the faithfulness of God.

True, we have “heard of the patience of Job”; and if that had been all there was to hear, it would have been only an additional ground for his self-confidence; and a ground for our own depression and disappointment; for we fail to produce such patience as his.

But there is something for us to *see* as well as *hear*; and that is, “the end of the Lord”; even that “the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” But this is seen only by those who have themselves been made broken in heart, and contrite in spirit, under His mighty hand.

The one who ends this blessed work is the one who begins it. He began it here with this question to the Adversary in the first chapter; and he ends it with His double blessing in the last chapter.

¹³ Luke 15:13 *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.*

Luke 15:16 *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

The Adversary's Assault

B. (chap. i. 6–ii. 10.)

THE structure is as follows:—

B	F	a i. 6. Presentation of the Adversary.
		b i. 7. Jehovah's question.
		c i. 8. His approbation of Job.
		d i. 9–11. Calumniation of the Adversary.
		e i. 12–. Limited permission given.
		f i. –12. Departure of Adversary.
		g i. 13–19. Inflictions (Job's possessions).
		h i. 20, 21. Job's patience.
		i i. 22. Job not sinning.
F		a ii. 1. Presentation of the Adversary.
		b ii. 2. Jehovah's question.
		c ii. 3. His approbation of Job.
		d ii. 4, 5. Calumniation of the Adversary.
		e ii. 6. Limited permission given.
		f ii. 7–. Departure of Adversary.
		g ii. –7. Inflictions (Job's person).
		h ii. 8–10–. Job's patience.
		i ii. –10. Job not sinning.

WE now come to witness the process by which this wondrous work was carried out; and to see the “end” which was thus brought about.

It is opened with the Adversary's assault on Job. An assault permitted by God, and used and over-ruled by Him, in order to accomplish His purpose. He can make the wrath of man to praise Him; and He can make the enmity of Satan to serve Him.

This assault of the Adversary is given us in chap. i. 6–ii. 10,¹ and is divided into two parts; one part corresponding with the other, member for member.

The first part affects Job's *possessions*, and the second affects Job's *person*; and the whole member is presented in the form of an extended alternation.

Job was tempted to “curse God”;² but, he did not thus sin. Instead of falling under this temptation, he uttered those memorable words, “The Lord gave and the Lord

¹ Job 1:6–2:10

² In spite of the fact that the current Hebrew Text, here, has “bless God,” both the A.V. and R.V. translate it “curse God,” under some fancied, but mistaken, idea that the word can bear both meanings. The real explanation is that, though they are incorrect as translations, they are correct as to fact; for chaps. i. 5, 11,

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hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (chap. i. 21). When tempted a second time to “curse God,”¹ he replied, “Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?” (chap. ii. 10).

Beautiful as this is, it is only partly true; because it assumes that all our *evils* and *losses* are ruled by the Lord. It is true that He rules; but, He also over-rules. He rules our good, and over-rules our evil. Job’s words manifest wonderful resignation, but it is only *religion*. Such sentiments can be expressed, and yet the speaker may not know either God or himself; and he may be wholly destitute of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

All that Job here *uttered*, could be said without these inward evidences of Divine workmanship; and of true wisdom.

It is this workmanship which we are to *see* in this book. It is this which manifests “the end” which the Lord had in view for Job, and for us.

Divine Love ruled and over-ruled all. It wounded that it might heal: it brought low that it might lift up: it humbled that Job might be exalted, for ever and ever.

To bring about this end Satan was allowed to disturb Job’s nest, and be the willing instrument which God would over-rule.

There is much that is mysterious in these first two chapters. They lift the veil for a brief moment and show how it is “against wicked spirits in heavenly places” that our conflict is waged.

There is nothing here for us to explain. It is written to explain unseen things to us. All is blessedly clear and simple to *faith*, where *reason* is useless.

Job’s is not the only case which Scripture gives us as to the activities of the great Adversary.

The Twelve Apostles were allowed to be “sifted:” and the Lord prayed, not that Peter might not fall, but that Peter’s faith might not fail. It was the failure of Peter himself that was the trial of his faith, and proved it to be more precious than gold that perisheth.

To this end, Infinite love controls and permits and over-rules all, and causes “all things to work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. viii. 28).³

This is why Satan was allowed access to our first parents. It was to bring forth the precious promise of the seed of the woman, and the announcement of Satan’s doom (Gen. iii. 15).⁴

and ii. 5, 9, are among certain of the “emendations of the *Sopherim*,” lists of which are carefully noted and preserved in the *Massorah*. See a further note on this in our New Translation, which follows in Part II.

³ Rom. 8:28

⁴ Gen. 3:15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

This was why he was allowed to bruise the heel of the Lord of glory and of life; not only that His people might be saved, but that “by death” he who had the power of death might be ultimately destroyed (Heb. ii. 14),⁵ and that his *head might be crushed* for ever.

This is why he is allowed to have a part in the destruction of “the flesh;” it is that “the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”⁶ (1 Cor. v. 5).⁷ Satan intends one thing, but God uses him for another; and works out the very opposite to Satan’s will. The man who was thus “delivered” to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. v. 5) was afterwards restored and blessed (2 Cor. ii. 1–11),⁸ and Satan got no “advantage.”

This is why he was allowed to receive one who was “delivered” to him; it was that such an one thereby might learn “not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. i. 20).⁹

This is why he is allowed to send his messengers as a thorn for the flesh, to buffet the saints of God; it is that they may thereby learn and prove the sufficiency of Divine grace, and the fulness of Divine power (2 Cor. xii. 7–9).¹⁰ Satan may intend one thing, but God uses him for another. In all these things he is a minister—used for the ultimate blessing, comfort and help of the people of God, and for their present spiritual profit.

He cannot go beyond the limits assigned to him. This is revealed in these chapters: see “e,” and “e,” chap. i. 12;¹¹ ii. 6.¹²

He was allowed to be the author of Job’s trials and losses: but all his labour was wasted; for it ended in Job’s receiving a double blessing for time, and for earth, and “the righteousness of God” for ever and ever.

May we have grace to learn the same precious lesson, and receive the same everlasting blessing.

May our eyes be opened to see the great lesson of this book, and the perfection of the Divine words and ways which brought about “the end of the Lord.”

5 Heb. 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

6 See *Things to Come*, May, 1903, page 131.

7 1 Cor. 5:5 *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

8 II Cor. 2:1–11

9 1 Tim. 1:20 *Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

10 II Cor. 12:7–9 *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

11 Job 1:12 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

12 Job 2:6 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*

Job and His Three Friends

D. (chaps. iii. 1—xxxi. 40.)

WE may pass over the small member C (chap. ii. 11–13),¹ the three verses which tell of the arrival of Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. That member is necessary to connect the threads of the history; but only a few words are used over the brief announcement of the fact.

We come, therefore, at once to the next member, "D." It is a large one, consisting of twenty-nine chapters. It contains and records the conference of Job with his three friends; the design of which is to show that man, apart from Divine revelation, has not true wisdom and cannot find out or know God: and cannot understand or know himself. Until man has this knowledge, he will neither justify God nor condemn himself. He may understand Jehovah's "works," but His "ways" cannot be known. His works are seen by all; but His ways are secret and hidden, and can be known only by revelation to His People. Hence we read (Ps. ciii. 7):²

"He made known his WAYS unto Moses,
His ACTS unto the children of Israel."

It is this great truth which is now to be first shown us in this book. The first part of the lesson is *negative*: that man by searching cannot find out God; or attain to true heavenly wisdom. This is the point of this member. There are three series of these conferences, in which each takes part. The following is the Structure:³

D. (iii. 1—xxxi. 40). *Job and his Friends.*

D	Z	iii.	Job's Lamentation (Introduction).
	G ¹	k ¹	iv., v. Eliphaz.
		l ¹	vi., vii. Job.
		k ²	viii. Bildad.
		l ²	ix., x. Job.
		k ³	xi. Zophar.
		l ³	xii.–xiv. Job.
	G ²	k ⁴	xv. Eliphaz.
		l ⁴	xvi., xvii. Job.
		k ⁵	xviii. Bildad.

¹ Job 2:11–13 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

² Ps. 103:7–3

³ For an explanation of these Structures see *A Key to the Psalms; The Vision of Isaiah*, and other works by the same author and publisher.

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	l ⁵ xix	Job.
	k ⁶ xx.	Zophar.
	l ⁶ xxi.	Job.
G ³	k ⁷ xxii.	Eliphaz.
	l ⁷ xxiii., xxiv.	Job.
	k ⁸ xxv.	Bildad.
	l ⁸ xxvi.—xxvii.	10. Job.
	k ⁹ xxvii. 11—xxviii. 28.	Zophar. ⁴
Z xxix—xxx.		Job's Justification (Conclusion).

We do not propose to expand or to further elaborate the respective utterances of the various speakers.⁵

Too much importance may easily be placed upon them; for, after all, they are merely the gropings of the human mind to “find out God”; only the effusions of darkened understandings.

We must not quote the sentiments, either of Job or his friends, as though they were necessarily Bible-truth. We have the true, and truly inspired, record of what these men said: but it does not follow that what they said was necessarily either true or inspired.

No! Jehovah, when He speaks later in the book, distinctly declares that they had “darkened counsel by words without knowledge” (xxxviii. 2).⁶ They may have been aged men, and great; but, as Elihu says, “great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment” (chap. xxxii. 9).⁷

At the “end” of the whole matter Jehovah tells the three friends that “ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right” (xlii. 7, 8).⁸ Neither had Job, until he confessed himself a sinner. THEN Jehovah could add, “as my servant Job hath.” But that is not yet; at this stage they did not know God; and Job did not know himself.

It would therefore, as we have said, take us too far from the end we have in view to go into detailed examination of all their utterances.

We must content ourselves with noticing the drift or scope of these gropings of the human mind; and in doing this we shall see that man has not changed during the course of centuries. Their imaginations are the same with those of men to-day, their reasonings, too, are the same.

Eliphaz reasons on human experience.
Bildad reasons on human tradition; while
Zophar reasons on human merit.

4 We attribute this member to Zophar. For our reasons, see note on chap. xxvii. 11 in New Translation.

5 This will be done exhaustively in our New Translation, given in Part II.

6 Job 38:2 *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

7 Job 32:9 *Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.*

8 Job 42:7–8 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.*

If we look at the three colloquies as a whole, the one great lesson for ourselves is this: that man, with all his wisdom, and all his powers, cannot get to know God, and cannot meet man's needs. He can neither satisfy the righteous claims of God, nor heal the wounds of the sinner's heart.

All these reasonings were wrong in their conclusions, as they were false in their logic. They reasoned from the *particular* to the *general*: *i.e.*, they argued that what they had seen and observed in their own respective spheres was true universally.

They may speak truly of the "works" of God, and of what they had seen in the case of individuals; but it did not follow that they could gather from these few cases what was the law which regulated the "ways" and dealings of God with mankind.

Eliphaz is the first to answer Job's complaints. His three utterances are given (1) chaps. iv., v., (2) chap. xv., and (3) chap. xxii.

His reasonings, as we have said, are based on human experience. He argued from the particular to the general, and hence arrived at a wrong conclusion. He based his argument on his own experience. "As I have seen" is the burden of his speech. As he had "seen" that it was the wicked who always suffer, and the righteous who prosper, so he concluded that as Job was suffering he must therefore have committed some dreadful sin. At first he only insinuates this. He asks Job if he had not noticed the same thing himself. He says (chap. iv. 7-9):⁹

- iv. 7. Bethink thee: when has the guiltless been destroy'd?
Or when where any upright ones cut off?
- 8. I've always seen, that they who evil plough,
And mischief sow, they ever reap the same,
- 9. They perish, smitten by the blast of ~~God~~;
And by His angry blast they are consumed.

Again in chap. v. 3-5, Eliphaz says:—

- v. 3. I—when I've seen the foolish striking root,
Have forthwith shown what would take place; [and said]:—
- 4. 'His children will be far from safety set,
'And crushed to death when passing in the gate,
'With no one near at hand to rescue them.
- 5. 'His harvest he will eat, still famishing,
'E'en though he take it from the hedge of thorns:
'A snare doth wait to swallow up their wealth."

So, in His second address, Eliphaz again appeals to experience (chap. xv. 17-21):—

⁹ Job 4:7-9 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

In all our quotations we give our own translation. It will be literal to the *sense*, and to the Hebrew idiom, though it may not be always so to the words. It will at any rate be *English* which can be understood. It is by no means a paraphrase. It may be taken as faithfully representing the original, and will often be found more literal even to the *words* than some other translations. (See *Things to Come*, March, 1903, page 106.)

- xv. 17. Give heed to me: and thee I will instruct;
And that which I have seen I will declare:
18. (Which wise men plainly have made known to us,
And have not hid them: truths their fathers taught:
19. The men to whom alone their land was given,
And among whom no alien passed). [They said]:—
20. ‘The wicked sorely labours all his days,
‘His years reserved for the oppressor’s greed,
21. ‘A voice of terror ever fills his ears:
‘And when he prospers, then the spoiler comes.’

And so Eliphaz proceeds to the end of his second discourse, to show how, according to his experience, it is ever the wicked who suffer and are cut off, while the good are rewarded and preserved.

In his third address (chap. xxii.), Eliphaz enforces the same argument; and appeals to Job, begging him to mark well that it is ever thus with the wicked and the good. He says:—¹⁰

- xxii. 15. Oh, that thou would’st consider well the way
Which wicked men of old have ever trod.
16. They, who were snatched away before their time;
Their strong foundation swept, as with a flood.
17. Who, unto God did say,
‘Depart from us’!
[And ask’d] What Shaddai could do to them!
18. Yet, He it was who filled their homes with good.
This way of wicked men is far from me.
19. The righteous see that THEY may well rejoice;
The innocent will laugh at them [and say]:—
20. ‘Surely OUR substance hath not been destroyed;
‘While THEIR abundance is consumed with fire’

Job has not much difficulty in dealing with such arguments as these. After again bewailing his misery, he says (chap. vi. 22–27):—

- vi. 22. Came ye because I said, Give aught to me?
Or, Of your substance bring to me a gift?
23. Or, From the adversary’s power deliver me?
Or, Ransom me from the oppressor’s hand?
24. Teach me, I pray; and I will hold my peace:
And make me understand where I have erred.
25. How forcible are words of uprightness!
But as for YOUR words, how will THEY convince?
26. Do YE reprove by fast’ning on MY words,
When one who’s desperate speaks [at random] like
27. The wind? Orphans ye might as well assail;
And feast upon the miseries of your friend.

¹⁰ As we give, in Part II, the translation of the whole book by itself, we shall relegate all the *notes* to that, and not interrupt the flow of the words here. Anything necessary to explain differences between our translation and that of others will be found in those notes.

BILDAD proceeds upon similar lines: except that he reasons from the experience of many, rather than from his own (the experience of one). He goes back to antiquity, and leans on the authority of the "Fathers." He speaks, as Eliphaz had done, of the merited end of those who forget God: implying that Job's condition proved that his troubles were deserved. He says (chap. viii. 8–13):—

- viii. 8. Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age;
And of their fathers set thyself to learn.
9. (For we're of yesterday, and nothing know:
Yea, as a shadow are our days on earth).
10. Shall THEY not wisdom teach, and to thee tell
Wise things from their experience [such as these]:
11. 'The reed: Can it grow high without the mire?
'The flag: Can it thrive where no water is?
12. 'While yet 'tis green, and while it stands uncut,
'Sooner than any grass 'tis withered up.
13. 'So is the end of all who GOD forget:
'So perisheth the hope of godless men."

After elaborating this point, Bildad gives the other side of the picture (chap. viii. 20):—

- viii. 20. But upright men GOD never casts away;
Nor will He take ill-doers by the hand.

To all this JOB has ready his reply (chap. ix. and x.). Bildad's words had no more weight than those of Eliphaz; for Job answers:—

- ix. 2. Most surely do I know that this is so:
But how can mortal man be just with GOD?
3. If man contend in argument with HIM,
Of thousand things he could not answer one.
4. However wise of heart, and stout of limb,
Who ever bravèd HIM, and prosperèd?

ZOPHAR next follows; and he repeats the same charges. But he does not appeal to experience, or to the past; he enforces the necessity of human merit more baldly than the other two. His teaching is exactly like that of the present day. He preaches the gospel of humanity. He talks of man "preparing his heart" and "putting away his sin," as the ground and means of securing God's favour: and that, without good works, there is no hope for man. Referring to Job's previous words, he says (chap. xi. 2–6, 13–15, 20):—

- xi. 2. Will not a mass of words admit reply?
And must a man of lips perforce be right?
3. Thy talk may put to silence mortal men:
THEM thou may'st mock, none putting thee to shame.
4. Thou mayest say indeed to one of THEM,
'Pure is my doctrine: in His eyes I'm clean.'
5. But, oh! that Eloah would speak to thee:

- His lips unclose; and, speaking, stop thy mouth,
6. And show thee some of wisdom's secret depths,
That they are far beyond all that is seen.
Then wouldst thou know that ~~GOD~~ exacteth less
Than all that thine iniquity deserves.
- xi. 13. [But as for thee]: Hadst thou prepared thy heart.
And stretched forth thy hands to Him in prayer,
14. If sin were in thine hand, 'twould be forgiv'n;
Evil had been removed from thy tent.
15. Thou wouldst thy face uplift without a stain;
Yea, thou wouldst stand secure, and need not fear:
16. For all thy misery thou wouldst then forget;
Or think of it as waters passed away...
20. But as for wicked men, their eyes will fail,
And every refuge to them useless prove.
Their hope will vanish like a puff of breath.

Brave words are these! but they are not the truth. They show that the speaker (like his companions) knew neither God nor Job.

No one with any knowledge of God would speak of Him as exacting anything of a poor, helpless sinner as a ground of merit,

No one who knew anything of man could adjure him to prepare his heart; for "the preparations of the heart are from the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 1).¹¹

Doubtless man *ought* to prepare his heart; and, if he were right, he *would* do so. If he were not a fallen creature he *could* do so.

But this is just the very central point of the whole question.

Man *is* fallen. He "cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God."

What then is he to do? Ah! that is the very thing that Job's friends cannot tell him. They can talk of everything else; but, when it comes to this, they stop short, or speak words that are utterly vain and useless.

"Natural Religion"¹² is the burden of their theme. Though proceeding on different lines, using different arguments, and appealing to different evidences, they were all agreed, as all false religions are to-day, in one thing; and that is, that *man must do something* to merit God's favour. If he does it, he will be rewarded. If he does it not, he will be punished. They cannot agree as to what that *something* is to be; but they are agreed that it must be *something*; and if your something is not like theirs, they may perhaps kill you! as Cain and Abel. That is an important fact in this oldest lesson in the world. Hence, neither ELIPHAZ's experience, nor BILDAD's tradition, nor ZOPHAR's merit, could bring relief to JOB. As Jehovah declared (chap. xxxviii. 2),¹³ they "darkened counsel by words without knowledge."

11 *Prov. 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.*

12 Article x. of *The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*. See John vi. 44, 65 Eph. ii. 8.

13 *Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

Yes, that was the secret cause of all their failure. “Without knowledge.” They said many things that were true and sublime; eloquent and beautiful; but they knew not, and, therefore, could not speak the truth of God.

Truth first wounds before it heals; but they only hurt, and, therefore, could not comfort. They produced complaint, but not conviction.

Job’s answer to Zophar shows the effect of his argument. He, like the others, had condemned Job; but he had not convinced him.

Job replies (chapter xii. 2-4):—

- xii. 2. Ye are the people: not a doubt of that:
And as for wisdom, it will die with you.
3. But I have intellect as well as you:
And I am not inferior to you.
Who hath not knowledge of such things as these?
4. Sport to his friends! And have I come to this!
Ev’n I, who call on **GOD**, and whom He hears.
A just, a perfect man, to be your sport.¹⁴

In chap. xiii. 1–5, Job again answers Zophar, and says:—

- xiii. 1. Behold, all these things mine own eye hath seen;
Mine ear hath heard, and understood them all.
2. What ye know, I know also, even I.
In no one thing do I fall short of you.
3. It is to Shaddai that I would speak;
With **GOD** to reason, that is my desire.
4. But as for **YOU**; framers of lies are ye;
Physicians of no value are ye all.
5. Would that ye altogether held your peace.
That, of itself, would show that ye are wise.

Again in chap. xvi. 2–4, Job replies in the same strain to Eliphaz:—

- xvi. 2. Of such like things I have abundance heard:
[Yea], ministers of trouble are ye all.
3. Shall such vain words come never to an end?
Or what emboldens thee to answer still?
4. For I also could speak as well as you.
If **YE** were in distress instead of **ME**,
I could heap words together against **YOU**;
Against you I could shake my head in scorn.

Again in chap. xix. 2–6, and 21, 22, Job answers Bildad, and says:—

¹⁴ Perhaps in allusion to chap. xi. 12

Job 11:12 For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.

- xix. 2. How long will ye [thus grieve and] vex my soul?
And break me all to pieces with your words?
3. Already, ten times, me ye have reproached.
And yet are not ashamed to wrong me thus.
4. Be it that I have sinned as ye say:
My sin is with myself [and God] alone.
5. If still 'gainst me ye magnify yourselves,
And plead against me that I must have sinned;
6. Then know that Eloah hath overthrown
My cause; and made His net to close me round.
- xix. 21. Have pity; pity me, O ye, my friends;
For 'tis Eloah's hand hath stricken me.
22. Why take on YOU that which pertains to GOD?
Will not my body's ills suffice for you?

Zophar now makes his second address (chap. xx.); but it is the old theme: “the triumphing of the wicked is short” (v. 5)¹⁵. He ends it with the words:

- xx. 29. Such is the sinner's portion sent from God.
And such the lot GOD hath appointed him.

In his third address,¹⁶ which, as we have seen from [structure D at the beginning of this chapter], is contained in chap. xxvii. 11—xxviii. 28, Zophar takes up and repeats the very words with which he had concluded his second address, xx. 29.

Zophar commences by saying that he also can teach, and that this he will do by showing what are God's ways and dealings with unwise men who do not fear Him or depart from evil; for His “hand,” or power can be clearly seen.

- xxvii. 11. I would now speak about the ways of GOD;
And Shaddai's dealings [with you] not conceal.
12. Ye, surely, must have seen them for yourselves:
Or, are ye then, so, altogether vain?
13. THIS is the lot of wicked men from GOD:
Th' oppressor's heritage from Shaddai's hand;
14. If children multiply, 'tis for the sword:
Of bread, his offspring will not have enough:
15. Their issue will be buried at their death.
But widows will not lamentation make.
16. Though silver, like the dust, he should heap up,
And raiment make in number like the sand;
17. Though he prepare, the just will put it on;
His silver will the innocent divide.
18. The house he builds: 'tis frail as is the moth's;
Or, as the hut which vineyard watcher makes.
19. He lies down rich, [his wealth] not gathered in:¹⁷

¹⁵ Job 20:5 *That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?*

¹⁶ For our reasons for assigning this portion to Zophar, see notes in our New Translation.

¹⁷ See note in New Translation. His wealth is all put out in trade or at usury: he wakes up one morning to find it all lost.

- He openeth his eyes,—and it is gone!
20. Terrors will overtake him as a flood:
A whirlwind in the night will sweep him off.
21. The East-wind catcheth him, and he is gone:
Yea, as a storm, it hurls him from his place.
22. He, who before, was wont to flee from him¹⁸
Will now come down on him, and will not spare;
23. In triumph he will clap his hands at him;
And hiss him forth from out his dwelling-place.

Thus Zophar sums up the one great argument which all the three friends had united in using against Job.

It is impossible for us to regard the above last quotation as the utterance of Job, inasmuch as Job's own arguments were exactly the opposite.

This will be clearly seen if we compare it with what were really Job's views as he expressed them in ch. xii. 6 and xxi. 7–12:—

- xii. 6. Prosp'rous and peaceful are the spoilers' tents;
Security is theirs who GOD provoke;
Abundance doth Eloah give to them.

And again:—

- xxi. 7. Why [suffers God] ungodly men to live,
And to grow old; yea, to wax strong in power?
8. With them, their seed's established: yea, with them,
Their offspring live, and grow before their eyes.
9. Their houses are in peace: they know no fear.
No scourge descends upon them from **GOD'S** hand...
11. Their little children skip about like lambs;
Their elder children mingle in the dance.
12. With timbrel and with harp they lift their voice;
And merry make with cheerful sound of pipe.

When we compare this with Zophar's sentiments in chap. xxvii. 13, we ask, Could Job, who held such views as these, so totally different from all that his three friends had urged with such persistence and force; could he have possibly uttered the words of chap. xxvii. 13–23—especially in the face of Elihu's words in chap. xxxii. 12?¹⁹ “None of you convinced Job.”

This seems to complete the evidence, which we give in our New Translation, for considering chap. xxvii. 11—xxviii. 28, as the third and last discourse of Zophar.

In chap. xxviii. Zophar concludes the whole argument maintained by himself and his friends.

¹⁸ See note in New Translation.

¹⁹ *Job 32:12* Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

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He takes high ground. His point is that, seeing God's "hand" or way, is to punish those who do not fear Him, and to inflict His judgment on those who do not "depart from evil," wisdom may be thus defined in his concluding words (xxviii. 28):²⁰—

Lo! Wisdom is to reverence the Lord:
And Understanding is to flee from sin.

Job was in trouble, and oppressed with his calamities: but he urges that this could not be on account of his sins; for he *was* possessed of this "wisdom" and "understanding." He *did* "fear the Lord," and "depart from evil;" and yet he suffered.

This is the point of the whole contention. It is, here, all summed up in the briefest possible compass.

It was a libel on Job, for Zophar thus to speak.

The wisdom of which he spoke is quite within the reach of the natural man. Thousands exhibit this wisdom every day. They find that it pays. It is good policy. But it is only "copy-book" morality: like "Honesty is the best policy;" of which it has been said that he who is honest only because it is good policy, might be dishonest if it were better policy.

Moreover, Job did possess this wisdom. He claimed it; and the Lord vouched for it in chaps. i. 8,²¹ and ii. 3.²²

So far, therefore, as Zophar's definition of "wisdom" went, it failed to establish his case against Job. And Job (in chaps. xxix.-xxxi.) proceeds to demonstrate this.

All the arguments of chap. xxviii. are verily correct if used of *true* wisdom, "the wisdom that is from above" (Jas. iii. 17).²³

It is *not* correct if used of the human wisdom of the natural man.

To "reverence the LORD," and to "depart from sin" does not, in, or of, itself, constitute the wisdom that is "from above." It is only a *part* of it: and we may not put a *part* as though it were the whole.

The true or heavenly wisdom ever *justifies God, and condemns one's self.*

One may "reverence" the LORD, and yet not justify Him.

One may "depart from sin," and yet not condemn one's self; but rather, find in this very departure a ground for self-justification, instead of self-condemnation.

²⁰ Job 28:28 *And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

²¹ Job 1:8 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

²² Job 2:3 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

²³ Jas. 3:17 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

The great “end” of this whole book is to show that heavenly wisdom is evidenced by a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

There can be no true fear of God without the one; and no effective departure from evil without the other.

Zophar’s wisdom is only a part of what true wisdom really is. For a “broken heart” cannot but fear the LORD; and a “contrite spirit” cannot but depart from the evil it laments.

It is Elihu’s great mission to show what that wisdom is which cometh down from above. And he does this in chap. xxxiii. 27, 28;²⁴ and xxxiv. 31.²⁵ It is, he says, when man takes his place as a sinner before the mighty God.

We see the same great lesson in Psalm xi., where the Divine Teacher Himself teaches David to say:

“I acknowledge my transgressions:
And my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only have I sinned,
And done this evil in thy sight:
That THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest” (vv. 3, 4).²⁶

This is what God requires in the sinner. This is the “wisdom” which He alone imparts. Hence David goes on to say in the sixth verse:—

“Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts;
And in the hidden part THOU SHALT MAKE ME TO KNOW
WISDOM.”

This wisdom we do not know by nature. We have to be “MADE” to know it (see Prov. xxx. 24,²⁷ margin; and 2 Tim. iii. 15).²⁸

In chap. xxxviii. 36, Jehovah Himself tells Job the same thing: *viz.*, that it is He

“Who hath put WISDOM in the inward parts;
And UNDERSTANDING given to the heart.”²⁹

The Lord Jesus gave utterance to the same great truth in Matt. xi. 19,³⁰ and Luke vii. 35,³¹ when He said

24 Job 33:27–28 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

25 Job 34:31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:

26 Ps. 11:3–4

27 Prov. 30:24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

Margin Heb. Wise made wise.

28 II Tim. 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

29 Compare chap. xxxv. 11, and xxxix. 17.

30 Matt. 11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

31 Luke 7:35

“WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN.”

This enigmatical (and perhaps proverbial) saying means in this case, that, CHRIST, who is “the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. i. 24:³² compare Prov. viii. 22, 23;³³ and iii. 19),³⁴ is ever justified by those who are His, and learn of Him what He, their wisdom, is.

The context shows that his enemies condemned Him, while they justified themselves. They said that He was a glutton and a drunkard; and that John had a devil. They, therefore, showed by this that they could not be His children; for Wisdom’s children ever justify Him, and condemn themselves.

Job had not *this* wisdom yet. Nor did his friends know anything whatever about it. When Job had learned it, THEN he “*said the thing that was right*” (but not before), for then he condemned himself and justified God (ch. xlii. 7).³⁵ His friends had to learn it after that; and take the place of death-deserving sinners, by laying their hand on the head of their burnt-offering, and thus *owning* that they deserved its death.

But they had not learned this in chap. xxviii. 28.³⁶ They all knew that it was wise and prudent to fear the Lord and depart from evil; because this was the way to escape from His judgments and merit His favour. This was their experience and their constant contention. This was their good policy. These were their “good works,” on which they depended.

While Zophar, therefore, urged this sentiment about “wisdom,” against Job, neither the one nor the other knew what heavenly wisdom was. But this is what they were to learn; for this is the oldest lesson in the world; and “the end of the Lord” was to “make them to know” it.

In Job’s last reply to Zophar, he has to meet this special point. But he falls back upon his old position; and he holds fast to his own righteousness (ch. xxvii. 6).³⁷ He thus justifies himself and condemns God.

Job saw in Zophar’s words the insinuation that he did not possess what Zophar described as “wisdom,” or “understanding”: seeing that Job’s calamities showed that he had not “the fear of the Lord”; and had not departed from evil.

Job therefore proceeds to show that this argument of Zophar’s would not hold: inasmuch as his wonderful former prosperity was evidence which proved that he must have possessed this wisdom, and feared the Lord (chap. xxix.); and his innocency of

32 1 Cor. 1:24 *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

33 Prov. 8:22-23 *He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*

34 Prov. 3:19 *The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.*

35 Job 42:7 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

36 Job 28:28 *And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

37 Job 27:6 *My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

life (chap. xxxi.) was proof that the sudden reversal of his position (chap. xxx.) could not have come upon him on account of his sins.

These are the points of Job's last words. His concluding address is very beautiful: but we cannot give it here. We must refer our readers to our New Translation, where they will find these three points of his argument fully set forth:—

- (1) His former prosperity (ch. xxix.).
- (2) Its sudden reversal (ch. xxx.).
- (3) His innocency of life (ch. xxxi.).

In the course of the first of these chapters it will be noted that (in ch. xxix.) Job refers to *himself* no less than *forty* times! while the references to Jehovah are no more than *five*! It is all self. Self-occupation overshadows all. In ch. xxix. it is the "I" of his prosperity; in ch. xxx. it is the "I" of his troubles; in ch. xxxi. it is the "I" of his self-righteousness. Self is justified and God is condemned. How changed is this, when we come to "the end." There we have the large "I" indeed; but oh! what a different "I" it then is. Then, it is the "I" of heavenly wisdom; the "I" which condemns himself and justifies God.

- "I—am vile";
"I—abhor myself";
"I—repent in dust and ashes."

But that blessed "end" is not yet, as these three chapters will soon make manifest.

The Ministry of Elihu

E. (chaps. xxxii. —xxxvii.)

WE now come to the ministry of Elihu. Its importance is shown, as we have said, by the fact that it occupies the central position among all the subjects of the Book. This may be seen by reference to the structure of the Book as a whole.

Elihu's ministry occupies the central place, because it is necessary, in order to explain what goes before, and to prepare us for what is to follow. It is necessary, so that we may have it pointed out to us where Job and his three friends were all, alike, wrong.

The root error of each side to this controversy is laid bare by Elihu; and the true remedy is plainly declared.

His ministry occupies no less than *six* chapters (chaps. xxxii.—xxxvii.); and this great central member has its own structure, as have all the others.

We must content ourselves with giving the general plan of it as a whole, without going into further minute detail. Neither is it necessary for us here to do more than select such portions as serve to bring out the one great subject of the book; and make manifest "the end of the Lord"—that "end" for which the book is written.

The ministry of Elihu, according to its structure, falls into four parts. After the introduction (chap. xxxii.), we have:—

- (1) His words to Job (chap. xxxiii. 1–33).
- (2) His words to Job's friends (chap. xxxiv. 2–37).
- (3) His words to Job (chap. xxxv. 2–16).
- (4) His words on God's behalf (chap. xxxvi. 2—xxxvii. 24).

The connecting history of Elihu (chap. xxxii. 1–5)¹ is given in prose; and is strictly historical in its character, setting forth the facts which must be known in order that we may have a proper understanding of the whole.

The two counts of the great indictment are set forth with unmistakable clearness. Like the keynote in music, they furnish us with the true point from which we are to start, and to which we are to return; and which is to be kept in view throughout.

These two counts are expressed as being at once the cause of Elihu's righteous anger, and the ground of his intervention. They are stated with the utmost distinctness and conciseness in chap. xxxii. 2, 3.

"Against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God."

¹ Job 32:1–5

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“Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer [*for Job*], and had condemned God.”²

Elihu proves this in chap. xxxiv. 5,³ and 10–12;⁴ and the context shows the ancient reading to be the true one; and most in harmony, both with the text and with the context.

For Elihu proceeds:—

- (1) To show Job’s friends that they had not answered him.
- (2) To point out to Job his great and fundamental mistake in justifying himself.
- (3) To justify God, and speak on his behalf.

All this worked together to secure “the end of the Lord.”

Elihu’s ministry has this one peculiarity, which makes it stand out in sharp contrast with other ministries, ancient and modern.

IT IS ALL FOR GOD!

It is all on God’s side; not man’s. It is necessarily, therefore, against Job, and against his friends (Isa. lv. 8).⁵ Though being wholly for God, it is really for man’s own best interests; because it is the only way to peace, and rest, and blessing.

His name, “Elihu,” means *my-God-is-He*. “Barachel”⁶ means *whom-God-hath-blessed*. The meanings of these names are in harmony with the ministry which Elihu was called to exercise. He was, “in God’s stead,” to minister God’s blessing.

In a few brief sentences, he sums up the whole situation, and condenses the whole twenty-nine chapters of the discussion. At the outset, he brings God in as the One who is alone to be considered in so great a matter.

This at once puts an end to all the strife of words.

Elihu does not reason, as the three friends of Job had done. He used no arguments based on human experience, human tradition, or human merit: for in all this could be found no answer to Job’s great question (ch. ix. 2):⁷—

² This is another of the emendations of the Sopherim. The primitive Hebrew Text was “God;” and the Sopherim say, in their Massoretic note, that they changed it to “Job.” This change was made from a mistaken notion of reverence, and to avoid what they looked upon as bordering on blasphemy. (See note on ch. i. 5, in our New Translation; and Ginsburg’s *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 345–367. See especially p. 361.)

³ Job 34:5 *For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.*

⁴ Job 34:10–12 *Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.*

⁵ Isa. 55:8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

⁶ Barachel was, it says, a “Buzite;” i.e., he was descended from Buz, second son of Nahor, the brother of Abram (see Gen. xxii. 20, 21). Elihu would, therefore, appear to have been a family connection of Abram. (See longer note in New Translation.)

⁷ Gen. 22:20–21 *And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,*

⁷ Job 9:2 *I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*

“HOW SHOULD MORTAL MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?”

No! There was “no answer.”

No matter how clear the premisses might be; no matter how clever the arguments; or how sound the reasonings; or how true the experience; or how meritorious the works; “there was no answer.”

Oh! what weighty words are these. Job was “righteous in his own eyes” (chap. xxxii. 1).⁸ And God alone could give the needed spiritual eyesight.

Job could meet all the wisdom of man. He could find an answer to what his friends brought forward. But all of them together could not answer Job’s great question:

“HOW SHOULD MORTAL MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?”

Having explained his reason for intervening, and why he had delayed doing so till then; he at once lays bare the point at issue (chap. xxxii. 11–14). Elihu first addresses the three friends, and says:—

- xxxii. 11. Lo! I have listened unto your discourse;
To all your reasonings I have given ear,
Waiting till ye had searched out what to say.
12. But, though to you I carefully gave heed,
There was not one of you convinced Job.
Not one who really answered what he said.
13. I pray you, say not ‘We have wisdom found’;
For God alone can put him right; not man.

This exactly states the case. They had condemned Job, but had not convinced him. This has ever been man’s method from that day to this. But God’s way is first to *convince* a man, so that man may then *condemn himself*. Unless, and until, that be done, nothing is done. Truly, God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, nor our ways His ways (Isa. lv. 8).⁹

Ah! God alone knows how to do this. He can break the hardest heart, and subdue the stoutest will. This is utterly beyond man’s power; and altogether out of man’s sphere. This is the “end of the Lord,” which is to be brought about before the book closes.

Having put his finger on this, the weak spot in all that Job’s friends had said, he proceeds to do the same in the case of Job himself. But, he first shows how well he is qualified to do this:

- xxxiii. 1. And now, Job, I pray thee hear me speak,
And be attentive to my every word.
2. Behold, now, I have opened my mouth;
My tongue shall utterance give, distinct and clear;
3. For all that I shall say comes from my heart,

⁸ Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

⁹ Isa. 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

- My lips shall speak what is sincere and true.
4. God's Spirit made me [at the first] and [still]
 'Tis the Almighty's breath must quicken me.
5. If thou art able, answer me, I pray:
 Array thy words in order; take thy stand.
6. Lo! I am here—thou wished it—in God's stead.¹⁰
 And of the clay I have been formed [like thee].
7. Behold, my terror will not make thee fear;
 Nor heavy will my hand upon thee press.
8. But surely thou hast spoken in mine ears,
 And I have heard a voice of words [like these]:
9. 'A man without transgression—pure am I:
 'Yea, I am clean; without iniquity,
10. '[God] is against me; seeking grounds of strife;
 'And He doth count me as His enemy.
11. 'My feet He setteth fast within the stocks,
 'And taketh observation of my ways.'
12. Behold, thou art not just: I answer thee,

HOW GREAT IS GOD COMPARED WITH MORTAL MAN.

13. Why, then, against Him didst thou dare complain
 That by no word of His He answereth thee?
14. FOR GOD doth speak. He speaks in sundry ways:
 Again, again, though man regard it not.
15. He speaks in dreams, and visions of the night.
 When, deep in slumber, lying on their bed,
 There falls on men an overwhelming sleep.
16. Then opens He their ear that they may hear,
 Pressing, as with a seal, the warning given,
17. To make a man withdraw himself from sin;
 Or keep him from the [dangerous] way of pride.
18. Back from the pit 'tis thus He keeps a man;
 And saves his life from falling by the sword.
19. He speaks again, when, chastened, on his bed,
 Another lies, his bones all racked with pain;
20. So that his daily food he doth abhor,
 And turns against his choicest dainty meat.
21. His flesh, it wastes away, and is not seen:
 His bones, before concealed, show through his skin,
22. Unto destruction he is drawing nigh;
 And death's dark angel waits to end his life.
23. Then, then He speaks with him by messenger.

¹⁰ See chaps. xiii. 3, 18–22; xvi. 21; xxiii. 3–9; xxx. 20; xxxi. 35.

Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

Job 13:18–22

Job 16:21 Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, As a man pleads for his neighbor!

Job 23:3–9

Job 30:20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

Job 31:35 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit;

- Who can interpret: One, 'mong thousands chief,
Who will reveal to man HIS righteousness.
24. Then He doth show him grace [Divine, and saith],
 'Deliver him from going down to death;
 'A Ransom I have found—Redemption's price.'
25. Young, as a child, becomes his flesh again,
And to his youthful days he doth return.
26. He supplication makes to Eloah,
Who grace and favour showeth unto him;
So that he looks unto [God's] face with joy.
Thus He doth give to man HIS righteousness.
27. This, then, becomes the burden of his song:
 'I sinned! and I perverted what was right;
 'Although no profit from it did I gain.
28. 'My soul HE hath redeemed from the pit:
 'My life shall yet again behold the light.'
29. Thus doth GOD speak in all these sundry ways:
Time after time; and yet again He speaks:
30. That from destruction He may save a soul.
And make him joy in light—the light of life.
31. Mark this, O Job; and hearken unto me,
I will now speak: and, as for thee, hold thou
Thy peace; while I, with words of wisdom, teach.
32. If there be any answer, answer me.
Speak: for I long to see thee justified.
33. If not, do thou then hearken unto me;
Hold thou thy peace, while wisdom I impart."

In answer to Job's complaint that God would not speak or answer him, Elihu thus shows that God *does* speak to men in various ways. He speaks by His providence; in visions; by sickness; and, above all, by His special messengers, whom He sends to interpret Himself to men. Just as the chief Messenger Himself was sent, in later days, to "interpret¹¹ the Father" (John i. 18).¹²

In his further addresses, Elihu disposes of many other of the false notions both of Job and of his friends.

Truth soon exposes folly. Job had said he was "pure," and "clean," and "innocent" (ch. xxxiii. 9);¹³ while, in the very same breath, he brings utterly false charges against God.

In one sentence Elihu lays the sharp axe of truth at this corrupt root, when he says, "God is greater than man." How simple, and yet how powerful! Because it follows, of course, that, if this be so, God must be the judge as to what is right and wrong, and not man. He alone can determine the standard of righteousness which He demands.

But this declaration which is thus placed at the foundation of all that Elihu has to say, is the very truth that man will not have, either then or now.

¹¹ This is the meaning of the Greek *ἐξηγήσασθαι* (*exegeomai*), from which we have the noun *exegegesis*.

¹² John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

¹³ Job 33:9 *I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.*

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Whether he be religious or infidel; whether he speak from platform or pulpit, man constantly sits in judgment on God; on His works, on His Word, on His ways. Man presumes and dares to decide what God has done; what God will, and ought to, do; and what God has said. He gives high-sounding names to these things, which only manifest his folly. He calls them "Science," and "Philosophy," and "Higher Criticism." He assumes the position of Judge, and decides what is, or is not, worthy of God. But in all this there is nothing new. It is exactly what God has given us in this book of Job. Here we are shown that, what is, has ever been. Job and his friends utter the same follies as those we hear on all sides to-day. But

"GOD IS GREATER THAN MAN."

This is the great fact which puts everything in its right place.

When the time comes for Jehovah Himself to speak to Job, this is the text He takes; this is the truth He enforces; and this it is, with which Elihu commences, that brings about "the end of the Lord."

We cannot go through Elihu's ministry word by word, but we must notice two other passages (chap. xxxiv. 31-37 and xxxv. 2-16), in which he vindicates God, and speaks on God's behalf.

- xxxiv. 31. If Job had spoken unto GOD, and said:
 'I have borne chastisement: and never more
32. 'Will I transgress. That which I do not see
 'Teach me Thyself. If in the past I wrought
 'Iniquity, I will not work it more.'
33. Shall He requite on thine own terms [and say]
 'As thou wilt choose [so be it], not as I?'
 Say therefore, now, O Job, if thou dost know.
34. For ME, would men of understanding speak:
 Yea, every wise man listening now [will say],
35. 'Job, without knowledge, spoke in ignorance,
 'And without understanding were his words.
36. Oh would that Job were proved unto the end;
 For his replies are those of evil men.
37. Rebellion he doth add unto his sin.
 'Mong us, he, in defiance, claps his hands,
 And against GOD he multiplies his words.'

This is Elihu's estimate of Job, and of all who do not bow to the fundamental truth that "God is greater than man." In Job's case, Elihu's desire was granted; for Job was tried and proved "unto the end"—"the end of the Lord."

In the next chapter, he again enforces the great truth (xxxv. 2-16), and continues his address. He asks:—

- xxxv. 2. Dost thou count this sound judgment? Thou didst say,
 'My righteousness surpasses that of GOD';

3. Yea, thou dost ask: What is the gain to thee?
And, 'Shall I profit more than by my sin?'
4. I—even I will make reply to thee,
And, with thee, to these friends of thine, as well:—
5. Look up unto the heav'ns; consider them:
Survey the skies, so high above thy head.
6. If thou hast sinned, What doest thou to Him?
Be thy sins many, What dost thou to Him?
7. If thou art just, What dost thou give to Him?
Or from thy hand what [gift] will He receive?
8. Thy sin may hurt a mortal like thyself:
Thy righteousness may profit one like thee.
9. Men make an outcry when they are oppressed;
'They cry for help when 'neath the tyrant's pow'r;
But no one saith, "Where is my Maker—GOD?"
10. Who giveth songs to us in sorrow's night;
And teacheth us beyond the beasts of earth,
And makes us wiser than the fowl of heaven.
12. But, why He answers not, though men may cry:
Is the o'erweening pride of evil doers.
For vanity, God will in no wise hear,¹⁴
Nor will th' Almighty hold it in regard.
14. How much less, thee, when THOU dost say to HIM!
 'I see Him not: [He doth not hear my cry?].
Yet, judgment is before Him, Therefore, wait.
15. But now, because He hath not punished
[Thou say'st] 'His anger doth not visit sin,
 'Nor strictly mark widespread iniquity.'
16. Thus, Job hath filled his mouth with vanity,
And, without knowledge, multiplied his words.

Having thus spoken to Job and his friends, Elihu goes on to speak on God's behalf (chapter. xxxvi. 2–5):—

- xxxvi. 2. Bear with me while I, briefly, make thee see
That there are words to say on GOD'S behalf.
3 My knowledge I shall gather from afar;
And, to my Maker, righteousness ascribe.
4 Truly, no falsehood shall be in my word,

14 See chap. xxx. 20; xxxi. 35; xix. 7; ix 16, and compare xii. 4; xxiv. 1; Ps. xxii. 7, 8; xlii. 10, etc.

Job 30:20 *I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.*

Job 31:35 *Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.*

Job 19:7 *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.*

Job 9:16 *If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.*

Job 12:4 *I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.*

Job 24:1 *Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?*

Ps. 22:7-8 *You have not given the weary water to drink, And you have withheld bread from the hungry. But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.*

Ps. 42:10 *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*

5. Th' Omniscient One it is who deals with thee.
Lo—GOD IS GREAT—but naught doth He disdain;
In power great, in wisdom great is He.

Elihu then goes on to expand this truth, fetching his knowledge from afar, as he had said; and thus he prepares the way for the ministry of Jehovah Himself.

The Ministry of Jehovah Himself

D. (chap. xxxviii. 1 —xlii. 6.)

The next great portion of this book is taken up with the Ministry of Jehovah Himself to Job.

This is the most important of all; and it is the most beautiful.

It is important, because we have Jehovah acting as His own minister. He Himself becomes the preacher.

Surely, it is a matter of the intensest interest to ask in wonder, *What is the theme on which He will speak? what is the text which He will expound?* For in this we shall discover what is to be, and ought to be, the great subject of all preaching and ministry to-day.

Whatever it was, it produced the desired effect; and brought about, at once, “the end” which the Lord had in view from the beginning. It ended in bringing Job to occupy the only place where God brings near His righteousness.

What then was the text? and what the theme that produced this wondrous result?

Elihu’s ministry was designed to furnish both. It was thus absolutely necessary in order that it might prepare the way, by announcing the subject which Jehovah was so powerfully and abundantly about to enlarge, expound, and apply:

“GOD IS GREATER THAN MAN.”

This was the theme that led up to the only answer that could be given to the great question of the book.¹

“HOW SHOULD MORTAL MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?”

Elihu’s declaration furnishes the key to and answers Job’s question.

May Jehovah use it for the eternal blessing not only of Job, but of all who devoutly study this book.

Let us note, and mark it well; *Jehovah’s address is entirely about Himself!* No other subject is allowed to share or distract our attention.

This it is that brings about “the end of the Lord.” This it is that accomplishes the mighty work.

¹ See chaps. iv. 17; ix. 2; xv. 14; xxxiv. 5; and xxxiii. 9 above.

Job 4:17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Job 15:14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Job 34:5 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

Job 33:9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

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Oh! what an important lesson for all who would minister or speak for God. He Himself is to be the one great theme of all our testimony. Nothing lower; nothing less; nothing different.

And what a blow to the new idea of “Evolution,” whether Scientific or “Christian.” Here, we have Jehovah in every line for four long chapters speaking of His own works as being each His own specific creation, and the result of his own creative acts.

Just as, in Genesis i., we have the great Creator speaking, moving, creating, making, and blessing, *thirty-five* times in that one chapter; so here, in every line, Jehovah speaks of Himself as the Creator of everything in all its wondrous details as to object, and purpose, and effect. So that it is impossible to receive the testimony of the Word of God, and the conjectures of Evolution. There is not room for both. One must go.

If we accept God’s Word, we cannot admit the very first idea of even what is called “Christian” Evolution. If we accept Evolution, then we make the Word of God worse than a lie; we make it an imposture of the gravest kind.

According to Genesis i., and these four chapters of Job, God created each thing with its own specific attributes, and powers of reproducing “after its kind”; each with its own definite object and purpose.

According to “Christian” Evolution, God did nothing of the kind. He created a “cell”: and from this, we are asked to believe, all else was *evolved!*

We answer, it is easier to *believe* God than to believe this hypothesis. To do the latter is simply *credulity*, and not *faith* at all: for no one has ever yet seen one thing evolve into a *different* thing. We can see flowers and animals “improved” or otherwise by cultivation; but no flower has ever evolved into an *animal!* These can be respectively developed or improved, but if they be left, they at once revert to their original type, and do not go on to evolve into a higher and different species altogether.

No; the two systems are *incompatible*. And we believe God. We accept the great truth here announced: that “God is greater than man.” He is the Almighty Creator: and our testimony is to be of Him, and of His Word, and of His grace, and of His power, and of all His other wondrous attributes.

But, alas, to-day the pulpits are occupied with the praise of man; man’s wonderful discoveries and inventions are dwelt upon. His wisdom and cleverness are extolled. Man is practically deified; while God is deposed, or bowed out of His own creation. It is the gospel of humanity that is preached, rather than the Gospel of God.

His Word, instead of being proclaimed, is criticised. And, instead of obeying it, man is sitting in judgment upon it!

This oldest lesson in the world, therefore, comes like a lightning flash, exposing the vanity of modern ministry, and illuminating the darkness by which we are surrounded.

No wonder “the end of man” is so different from “the end of the Lord.” No wonder that, instead of the sinner’s being humbled in the dust before the mighty God, he is exalted with self-righteousness and pride. No wonder that, instead of being brought down, he is puffed up. No wonder that the results of man’s ministry are so opposite to the results of Jehovah’s ministry, as we see it in this book.

The object and aim of the one is to make man moral and right for time; while the “end” of the other is the humbling of man, so that he may be made Divinely righteous for ever.

The moral improvement of man is the end and aim of man to-day; while the conviction of sin, as the condition of eternal blessing, is the object of Jehovah—“the end of the Lord.”

The very precepts and persuasions addressed to men (whether sinners or saints) only serve to minister to the natural pride of the human heart; and thus tend to defeat the very end in view.

They only lift man into a temporary sense of being more or less right; while the one object of the Gospel is to convict him of being altogether wrong: for this is the one necessary condition before man can know God’s righteousness. Man must be humbled before he can be exalted.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are as busy to-day as ever—trying to *make men good*, by reasoning and persuasion. But they only “darken counsel by words without knowledge.”

Oh, for more, like Elihu, who shall speak “on God’s behalf”: who shall expose the vanity of this gospel of humanity; and point men to the living God.

This is the lesson which we learn from the fact that Jehovah, when He intervenes, and undertakes to accomplish all, where all others have failed, speaks only of Himself.

Apart from all that He says; apart from the beauty and glory of all that He reveals; the fact that Himself is His one great theme speaks to us, if we have ears to hear; and that fact says:—

True ministry is to interpret (chap. xxxiii. 23)² *the God of Grace to lost sinners*. And this was the object of Christ’s own ministry on earth (John i. 18).³

With this in our minds we shall be able better to understand and appreciate the address itself. It is divided into two parts: and at the end of each, Job manifests its Divine effect. At the end of the first half Job speaks, but only to say that he cannot say anything. And at the end of the last half, he speaks to some effect, and manifests “the end of the Lord.”

The structure of Jehovah’s address, as a whole, and in all its parts, is wonderful indeed. But we must refer our readers to our New Translation, where it is given in sum and in detail:

² Job 33:23 *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:*

³ John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

- 'Tis I who ask thee: make thou Me to know.
8. Wilt thou My righteousness quite disannul?
And ME condemn; that THOU may righteous seem?
9. Hast thou an arm, then, like the mighty GOD?
Or, Canst thou thunder with a voice like His?
10. Deck thyself now with glory and with might;
Array thyself with majesty and pow'r:
11. Send far and wide thy overflowing wrath;
And on each proud one look, and bring him low.
12. Each proud one single out, and humble him,
Yea, crush the evil-doers where they stand.
13. Hide them away together in the dust;
Their persons in the deepest dungeon bind.

Consequent Admission.

14. THEN ALSO I MYSELF WILL OWN TO THEE
THAT THY RIGHT HAND TO SAVE THEE WILL SUFFICE.

Jehovah ends the second part of his address with describing Leviathan:—

Appeal to His Power: (Particular).

- xli. 1. Canst thou draw up Leviathan with hook?
Or, catch as with [an angler's] line his tongue?
2. Canst thou insert into his nose, a reed?
Or, Canst thou pierce his jaw through with a thorn?
3. Will he make many humble pray'rs to thee?
Or, Will he ever say soft things to thee?
4. Will he engage in covenant with thee
That thou shouldst take him for thy life-long slave?
5. Wilt thou, as with some linnet, play with him?
Or, Wilt thou cage him for thy maidens' sport?
6. Will trading dealers haggle o'er his price?
And retail him among the merchantmen?
7. Wilt thou with darts attempt to fill his skin?
Or, [fill] his head with spears for catching fish?
8. Lay thou thy hand upon him; though but once;
Think only of the contest. Do no more.
9. Behold, all hope of taking him is vain;
Ev'n at the sight of him one is cast down.
10. None so foolhardy as to stir him up.

Consequent Inference.

11. BEFORE ME, THEN, [HIS MAKER], WHO CAN STAND?
WHO E'ER FIRST GAVE TO ME, THAT I SHOULD HIM
REPAY? SINCE ALL BENEATH THE HEAV'NS IS MINE?

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Jehovah then proceeds to speak in further detail of Leviathan; concludes as follows (chap. xli. 27):—

27. Iron he counts no better than a straw;
And brass, no better is than rotten wood.
28. The arrow will not make him flee away;
Sling-stones are only stubble unto him.
29. Like harmless chaff he counts the pond'rous club;
And at the whizzing of a spear will laugh...
33. His equal is not found on all the earth;
He hath been made insensible of fear.
34. On all things high he looketh [dauntlessly],
And over all proud beasts himself is king.

This is followed immediately by “the end of the Lord,” as manifested in Job’s answer (chap. xlii. 2–6).

Job’s Answer.

2. I know, I know, that THOU canst all things do.
No purposes of THINE can be withstood.
3. [Thou asked’st—chap. xxxviii. 2]:⁵—
 ‘Who is this that counsel hides,
 And darkens all, because of knowledge void?’
’Tis I! —I uttered things I could not know;
Things far too wonderful, and past my ken.
4. But hear, I pray Thee, let me speak this once.
[Thou said’st—chap. xxxviii. 3⁶ and xl. 7]:⁷—
 ‘Tis I who ask thee: Answer me.’
5. I’d heard of Thee with hearing of the ear,
But now that I have had a sight of Thee.
6. Wherefore I loathe myself; and I repent
In dust and ashes.

Here then we reach the culminating point of this wonderful book.

Jehovah’s ministry had accomplished Jehovah’s “end.”

Job, now, justified God and condemned himself, and thus manifested his possession of true “wisdom.”

Job was humbled in the dust, with ashes on his head: and realized that in the light of God’s glory and greatness, he was nothing.

Ah! we may try to be nothing; and we may sing, “Oh, to be nothing”; but all our trying and all our singing will never produce that result; or bring us into this, the only place of blessing.

⁵ Job 38:2 *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

⁶ Job 38:3 *Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

⁷ Job 40:7 *Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

If we succeeded in our trying, it would be only artificial; and that can never take the place of what is real. If we could thus, by our own effort, bring ourselves to *feel* that we are nothing, *that* would only be, in itself, a ground for feeling that we were something, after all. If we were able, of ourselves, to bring about so wonderful a result, it would only tend to increase our “confidence in the flesh.”

No! If we would have the reality, and *be* nothing, as well as *feel* nothing, it must be brought about in the only way that can *really* accomplish it. It must be Divinely produced if it is to be a Divine reality.

We must have a true sense of the glory and greatness of God. That alone will show us, and convince us, that we *are* “nothing.” We shall soon *feel* it *then*.

A man may feel great and important while he stands in his own little garden; but let him stand beneath the stupendous heights of snow-capped peaks; let him be in the mighty ocean when its waves run mountains-high; and then he will see himself to be the puny pygmy that he really is: then only will he realize his own impotence, and thankfully cast himself on God’s omnipotence.

Oh! what a crisis it is in a man’s experience when he is brought to this point; to see and confess that he has been all wrong; having wrong thoughts of God, wrong thoughts of God’s ways, and of God’s words: with wrong thoughts about himself and about others.

Oh! to get true thoughts of God. This is to get right, indeed: and, if we be right here we shall be right about other things.

This is what we see as the result of Jehovah’s own ministry.

This is the “end of the Lord” with Job. It was to produce this confession:

“I am vile.”

“I abhor myself.”

“I repent in dust and ashes.”

Here is the “I,” indeed, but in a very different connection from that of chaps. xxix.—xxx.

No more contention with God or man.

No more self-justification.

All such things lost in a true apprehension of the greatness and the glory of the living God.

This is far more than assenting to the doctrine of “moral depravity.”

It is far more than saying we are “miserable sinners.”

It is the experimental realization of the accomplishment of a Divine work:

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“Mine eye seeth THEE,
Wherefore I abhor MYSELF”

These two things are inseparably linked together. It is impossible to do the one without the other.

May it be the blessed portion and the happy experience of all who read these words.

The Conclusion

C., B., & A. (chap. xlii. 7–17.)¹

WE must consider the remaining members together, as they all three form part of the moral conclusion: though the literary conclusion is confined to a few verses (11–17).

Now that “the end of the Lord” has been “seen,” all else is, by comparison, a matter of very small importance.

It is necessary, however, that we should be told of the departure of Job’s three friends, inasmuch as we were told of their arrival: that we should hear of Job’s double blessing, as we heard of his double series of calamities.

All this is needful in order to complete the whole, and put the finishing touch to the book; but a very few verses suffice to dismiss such details as these.

Nevertheless, they are worthy of our closest attention.

When Job got right with God, and had his new thoughts of Him; he not only had new thoughts about himself, but about his friends, and all else. In verse 10, we are told that

“HE PRAYED FOR HIS FRIENDS.”

Yes, for those with whom he had so bitterly contended; and toward whom he had used such opprobrious expressions: “He prayed for his friends.”

He had called them “miserable comforters”; and now, he was to be a blessed comforter to them.

He had called them “physicians of no value”; and now, he would be a good physician, to their value for ever and ever.

Job was a new man; and fervent prayers took the place of bitter words.

This is “the end of the Lord.” It is perfect: for it is Divine.

His friends needed an “Interpreter” now: for they were not yet right with God. They had spoken “folly” about God, as He tells them, here (in verse 8). They had not spoken of God the thing that was right. Neither had Job, before he received the ministry of Jehovah. But, since then, he had.

For now he had said:—

¹ Job 42:7–17

“I know that Thou canst do everything...

“I am vile...

“I abhor myself...

“I repent in dust and ashes.”

This was “the thing that was right”; and Job had said it. Twice over this is affirmed (verses 7 and 8). His friends had not yet said it, and thus had not yet come to that place of blessing. Therefore it was that they were commanded to offer a burnt offering; and, that Job should pray for them.

How blessed for us to see the perfection of this Divine workmanship.

All Eliphaz’s *experience* was gone. All Bildad’s *tradition* was flung to the winds. All Zophar’s *merit* was now seen to be of no avail.

All alike are now humbled before God. All contention is over. The revelation of the glory of God, followed by the manifestation of His grace, has ended in conviction of sin, tears of repentance, the sweet savour of the burnt-offering, and the voice of prayer.

What more is there for us to be told? This:

The overthrow of the Adversary. At the beginning, he despoiled Job of all his possessions: at “the end” “the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before” (v. 10); and we are told “the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (v. 12).

This is “the end.” It was not Job’s wisdom, or Job’s good works: it was not Job’s merit, or Job’s repentance; but

“The Lord GAVE” (v. 10).

and

“The Lord BLESSED” (v. 12).

This explains the verse with which we commenced (James v. 11):² “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.”

Job had been brought to the end of himself; and was thus in a right position to see the “end of the Lord”: that, though He is very “great,” yet He is also “very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

² Jas. 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.