

2.3.4 Job's Friends

“Having heard about Job's perils, three of his friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, apparently prominent men—visited him. “Eliphaz” is an Edomite name (Gen 36:4), and as a Temanite he was from either Teman in Edom, known for its wisdom (Jer 49:7; Obad 8), or Tema in Arabia. “Bildad” is not used elsewhere in the Bible, and “Shuhite” may suggest a relationship to Shuah, Abraham's youngest son (Gen 25:2). “Zophar” is used only in Job, and his lineage as a Naamathite is unknown, although some have suggested that Naamah, a Judean town (Josh 15:41), was his hometown. A fourth friend, Elihu, was present though he is not mentioned until later (chap. 32).

{Roy B. Zuck, *Job, Everyman's Bible Commentary*, 20}

2.4 A Crash Course in Hebrew Poetry

The defining feature of Hebrew poetry is *parallelism* or the “*rhyming of ideas*.” Whereas in English, we associate poetry with the rhyming of sound, the Hebrews composed poetry in terms of **associating ideas** and **concepts**. Hebrew poetry is mainly stated in two “lines” that are parallel to one another which work together to suggest a unified idea or concept. There are a few one line statements and statements that cover 3 or more lines. Understanding the basic two line form will give you most of what you need to know in order to understand what is being communicated.

It has long been observed that there are **three main types** of parallelism. We will call these focus, contrast, and extension/expansion.

2.4.1 Focus

The second line restates or clarifies what was stated in the first line:

Job 3:25

For the thing that I fear comes upon me,
and what I dread befalls me.

Job 4:6

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

2.4.2 Contrast

The second line explains the first line by stating the opposite or inverted idea. There is often a stated or implied “but” in the second line.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
[but] fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Job 9:18

He will not let me get my breath,
but fills me with bitterness.

2.4.3 Extension/Expansion

The second line (and possibly more) extend the idea and fill it out.

Job 3:17–19 17

There the wicked cease from troubling,
and there the weary are at rest.
18 There the prisoners are at ease together;
they hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
19 The small and the great are there,
and the slave is free from his master.

Job 4:10–11

The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion,
the teeth of the young lions are broken.
11 The strong lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

2.5 The Name of God and His Titles in Job

“It is especially in the name Yahweh, ... that God reveals Himself as the God of grace. . . . The name points to the unchangeableness of God. Yet it is not so much the unchangeableness of His essential Being that is in view, as the unchangeableness of His relation to His people. . . . It stresses the covenant faithfulness of God, is His proper name par excellence, (Ex. 15:3; Ps. 83:19; Hos. 12:6; Isa. 42:8) and is therefore used of no one but Israel’s God.” {Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 49}

2.5.1 Uses of God’s NAME and Titles in Job by Speaker

“... did you know that Job is the only character in the dialogues who ever calls God by His proper, personal, covenant name: Yahweh? Or did you know that 42 of the 583 total Old Testament uses of the name *Eloah* (the singular form of Elohim) are found in the dialogues of the book of Job? This is a strikingly disproportionate amount of use in one book for such a rare divine designation. Also, did you know that one of Job’s friends, Bildad, only ever refers to God with the name El—the most generic and abstract name for “god” available? Meanwhile, the trustworthy, omniscient narrator of Job only ever uses the two names Elohim and Yahweh to refer to God (but prefers Yahweh). And God, in his closing dialogues, refers to Himself with almost every possible variation of His name found in the book of Job except for Yahweh—His proper, personal name.

None of this is readily apparent in the English. English-speaking readers have no way of knowing which of the three names for God (El, Eloha, or Elohim) is translated “God” at any given time in the book of Job (or the rest of the Old Testament). Additionally, we are less likely to understand the extreme significance of the name Yahweh in the book because the English replacement (“Lord”) feels almost as generic to us as “God.” Most of us don’t notice the near absence of God’s personal name in the dialogues. {Michael Minkoff, “God’s Names in Job,” WEB}

- ▷ **Elohim**
Narrator: 1:1; 1:22; 2:1, 3; 32:2 **Job:** 1:5; 28:23 **Servant of Job:** 1:16 **Wife:** 2:9 **Eliphaz:** 5:7 **Zophar:** 20:29 **Elihu:** 34:9,14 **God:** 38:7
- ▷ **Yahweh**
Narrator: 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 12 (x2); 2:1 (x2), 2 (x2), 3, 4, 6, 7; 38:1; 40:1, 3, 6; 42:1, 7 (x2), 9 (x2), 10 (x2), 11, 12 **Job:** 1:21 (x3), 12:9,15
- ▷ **Eloah**
Job: 3:4, 23; 6:4, 8, 9; 9:13; 10:2; 12:4; 16:20, 21; 19:6, 21, 26; 21:9, 19; 27:3, 8; 27:10; 29:2, 4; 31:2, 6 **Eliphaz:** 4:9, 17; 5:17; 15:8; 22:12, 26; 24:12 **Zophar:** 11:5, 6, 7 **Elihu:** 33:12, 26; 35:10; 36:2; 37:15, 22 **God:** 39:17; 40:2
- ▷ **El**
Eliphaz: 5:7; 15:4, 11, 13, 25; 22:2; 22:13,16,17 **Bildad:** 8:3, 5, 13, 20; 18:21; 25:4 **Job:** 9:2; 12:6; 13:3, 7, 8; 16:11; 21:14, 22; 23:16; 27:2, 9, 11, 13; 31:14, 23, 28 **Zophar:** 20:15, 29 **Elihu:** 32:13; 33:4, 6, 14, 29; 34:5, 10, 12, 23, 31, 37; 35:2,17,13; 36:5, 26; 37:5, 10, 14 **God:** 38:41; 40:9, 19
- ▷ **Almighty (Shaddai)**
Eliphaz: 5:17; 15:25; 22:3, 17, 23, 25, 26 **Job:** 6:4, 14; 13:3; 19:22; 21:15, 20; 23:16; 24:1; 27:2, 10, 11, 13; 29:5; 31:2, 35 **Bildad:** 8:3, 5 **Zophar:** 11:7 **Elihu:** 32:8; 33:4; 34:10, 12; 35:13; 37:23 **God:** 40:2
- ▷ **Maker**
Eliphaz: 4:17 **Elihu:** 32:22; 35:10; 36:3
- ▷ **Holy One**
Job: 6:10
- ▷ **Redeemer/Avenger**
Job: 19:25
- ▷ **Adonai (“Lord”)**
Job: 28:28

*List Adapted from www.michaelminkoff.com/gods-names-in-job/

2.6 Job's Lament (Chapter 3)

I wish I had never been born...

“In his sad soliloquy of a death wish, Job did not curse God, as Satan had predicted, nor did he contemplate suicide. **He laments his misery, but does not complain of injustice, or lament his integrity.**” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, Everyman's Bible Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1978), 22}

2.7 Some Basic Features of the Speeches

*Adapted from Roy B. Zuck *Job* in *Everyman's Bible Commentary*

1. All the way through, the “friends” remain committed to their basic theological assumption:
 - a) all suffering is punishment for sin
 - b) Job is suffering
therefore
 - c) Job is a sinner, has sinned, is sinning

2. The “friends” become more pointed and vicious as the speeches progress. In the first round they *hint* at Job's supposed sin. In the second round they *insinuate* his sin. By the third round there is open accusation. *They all affirm that Job simply needs to repent of his sin in order to be restored.*

“They all condemn Job; for on their philosophy, they must either justify Job at God's expense or justify God at Job's; and, understandably, they chose the latter.” (J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, 6 vols. 3:51)

3. Job continually affirms his innocence without wavering.

4. Job states clearly that it is the LORD who had afflicted him in his first 5 speeches. In these, he suggests the LORD is simply cruel and continually bullies humanity.

5. In his “first round speeches” Job asks the LORD “Why?” In 6 of his 8 speeches, Job expresses his need to present his case before the LORD.
6. Job’s speeches are always longer than the preceding friend’s speech. Each of the three “friends” speeches get shorter in each round.
7. The three friends each emphasize a different aspect of the LORD’s supposed character:
Eliphaz touches on the *distance* between the LORD and mankind and His just punishment of the wicked;
Bildad emphasizes the LORD’s *justice* and *greatness* and His just punishment of the wicked;
Zophar touches on the LORD’s *incomprehensibility* and His swift and just punishment of the wicked.
8. Eliphaz bases his arguments in **observation** and **experience**.
Bildad bases his arguments in **tradition**.
Zophar bases his arguments on **assumption**.
9. Bildad and Zophar often echo Eliphaz’s speeches adding their own emphasis.

2.8 **The Speeches: Round 1 (4–14)** *The Lord’s Governance of the World*

2.8.1 Eliphaz’s first speech (4–5)

Who can be right/pure before The LORD?

Key Statements: 4:12–21; 5:27

- ▷ Eliphaz rebukes Job (4:1-6)
- ▷ Eliphaz states his theology of suffering (4:7-11)

- ▷ Eliphaz establishes his authority with his “vision” (4:12-21)
- ▷ Eliphaz gives Job his advice: Seek God (5:1–17).
- ▷ Eliphaz encourages Job to accept Divine Discipline (5:18-27)

2.8.2 Job’s first reply to Eliphaz (6–7)

Why Shouldn’t I Complain? The LORD is harassing me!

Key Statements: 6:4; 6:8-9; 6:14;7:17-18

- ▷ Job defends his complaints (6:1-7)
- ▷ Job despairs in his suffering (6:8-13)
- ▷ Job expresses disappointment with friends (6:14-23)
- ▷ Job appeals to his friends (6:24-30)
- ▷ Job expresses his misery (7:1-6)
- ▷ Job appeals to the LORD (7:7-21)

2.8.3 Bildad’s first speech (8)

Does God Pervert Justice?

Key Statements: 8:2–7; 8:11–13; 8:20–22

- ▷ Bildad asserts God’s justice (8:1-7)
- ▷ Bildad appeals to tradition/history (8:8-10)
- ▷ Bildad insinuates Job has forgotten God (8:11-19)

- ▷ Bildad insinuates Job will be blessed again IF he repents (8:20-22)

2.8.4 Job's first reply to Bildad (9–10)

Who can be in the right before God? and Who can plead with Him?

Key Statements: Job 8:20–22 20; 9:13–17 13; 9:32–35; 10:2; 10:4–7

- ▷ Job affirms God's greatness (9:1-12)
- ▷ Job suggests God is indeed great but *awesomely unfair* (9:13-24)

“The reference [to Rahab] is to the Babylonian creation myth in which Marduk defeated Tiamat and then captured her helpers. God in His anger and power was able to conquer all the forces of evil, real and mythical. Rahab is another name for Tiamat, and for Leviathan, mentioned earlier (7:12). Rahab is also mentioned elsewhere in the Bible (Job 26:12; Psalms 87:4; 89:10; Isa 30:7; 51:9). {Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 48}

- ▷ Job continues to lament God's seeming unfairness (9:25-10:22)

2.8.5 Zophar's first speech (11)

Key Statements: 11:2–6

- ▷ Zophar rebukes Job's "babbling" (11:1-6)
- ▷ Zophar praises God's wisdom (11:7-12)

“Zophar’s stress on God’s unfathomable wisdom, however, involved Zophar in a contradiction. For if God’s ways are unknowable, how could Zophar know that God was overlooking some of Job’s sin?” {Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 54}

- ▷ Zophar urges Job to repent (11:13-20)

2.8.6 Job’s first reply to Zophar (12–14)

Key Statements: 12:2–3; 12:7–12; 13:7–9; 13:13–16 13

! In this reply, half of Job’s speech is addressed to his friends (12:1—13:12) half to God Himself (13:13—14:22).

- ▷ Job repudiates his friends “wisdom” through experience and nature (12:1-12)
- ▷ Job argues that All are powerless before God (12:13-25)
- ▷ Job repudiates his friends counsel and states his desire to present his case before God (13:1-12)
- ▷ Job makes his appeal to God (13:13-27)

“Though He slay me, I will hope in Him” (13:15a) is a beautiful expression of faith, widely quoted and familiar to many Christians. However, the rendering is based on marginal notes in the Hebrew rather than on the accepted Hebrew text. The word “Though” should read “Behold” and the words “in Him” should be replaced by the word “not,” so that the verse reads, “Behold, He will slay me; I do not have hope.” Not only is that a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew, but it also correlates better with the preceding verse. Job fully anticipated that his self-defense would result in his being killed by God. But he was more concerned for maintaining justice than for maintaining his life: “Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.” {Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 61}

- ▷ Job laments the frailty of humanity before God (13:28-14:6)

- ▷ Job despairs about death's finality (14:7-17)
- ▷ Job reaches his lowest point of despair (14:18-22)

2.9 **Spoiler / Looking Ahead:
The LORD's Response to Job's Friends:**

Job 42:7-9

After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: **"My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.** 42:8 Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. **For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."** 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.