



# Truth Seekers Fellowship

Equipping The Faithful To Be Fruitful

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## THE WAY OF WISDOM

**JOB, ECCLESIASTES, PROVERBS, PSALMS  
AND NEW TESTAMENT SELECTIONS**

**BIBLE STUDY 2021-22**

**NOTES BY STACY TYSON**

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AWARE | ALIVE | AWAKE | FREE | FAITHFUL | FRUITFUL

**WE PROCLAIM CHRIST**  
*by warning and teaching all people with all wisdom  
so that we may present every person mature in Christ.*

*Toward this goal I also labor,  
struggling according to his power  
that powerfully works in me.*

| Colossians 1:28-29 |

*The Way of Wisdom: Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Psalms  
and New Testament Selections*

Fall—Spring Bible Study 2021-2022

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# 1 Introduction

## *Choices and Consequences*

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### 1.1 The Divine Drama of Choice Begins....

“Refusing to accept the boundary between **Wisdom** and wisdom becomes in effect the original sin.”

{Samuel E. Balentine, *Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018)}.

#### **Genesis 2:25–3:7**

25 And the man and his wife were both **naked** [Hebrew: *arom*] and were not ashamed.

1 Now the serpent was more **crafty** [Hebrew: *arum*] than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, **knowing** [Hebrew: *yada* - *to perceive or know*] good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be

desired to make one **wise**, [Hebrew: *sekel* - to be insightful, clever ] she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

#### 1.1.1 Naked (*arom*) and Crafty/Shrewd (*arum*)

**arom**: to be naked

**arum**: to be crafty or prudent or

**Job 5:12** He [The LORD] frustrates the devices of the **crafty**, so that their hands achieve no success.

**Proverbs 12:16** The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the **prudent** ignores an insult.

**Proverbs 13:16** Every **prudent** man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly.

**Proverbs 27:12** The **prudent** sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.

#### 1.1.2 **yada**: to perceive or know

#### 1.1.3 **sekel**: to be insightful or clever, to be successful or prosper

#### **Psalm 36:3**

The words of his mouth [the wicked] are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to **act wisely** and do good.

**Proverbs 15:24**

The path of life leads upward for the **prudent**,  
that he may turn away from Sheol beneath.

**Daniel 9:22**

He [Gabriel] made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you **insight** and understanding.

**Deuteronomy 29:9** Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may **prosper** in all that you do.

! **At the heart of Eve (and Adam's) temptation and ultimate sin is the acceptance of a voice that *claims* to be wiser than the Lord-God's.**

1.1.4 **The Core Question:**

“Put simply, is wisdom a human quality, achieved by human intelligence and insight? Or is wisdom a heavenly gift, bestowed by the gods (or God), utterly inaccessible to mortals who do not subscribe to one or another of the world's religions?”

{Samuel E. Balentine, *Wisdom Literature* }.



“The great spiritual battle between good and evil produces a related motif, namely, the necessity of choice. **We might think of wisdom literature as the drama of the soul’s choice** (a phrase Dorothy L. Sayers used for *Dante’s Inferno*). Even if a proverb is stated as an objective observation, the overall force of wisdom literature is that we understand that **we are being confronted with a choice that is unavoidable**. “The wage of the righteous leads to life, / the gain of the wicked to sin” (Prov. 10:16). The choice is ours. This motif of choice is well summarized by a passage near the end of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus confronts his listeners with the need to choose between the broad way that leads to destruction and the narrow way that leads to life (Matt. 7:13–14).

{Leland Ryken, *Short Sentences Long Remembered: A Guided Study of Proverbs and Other Wisdom Literature*, 15}.

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## 1.2 What is The Wisdom Literature of the Bible?

“It may be said with confidence, then, that **the fear of the Lord** was the dominating concept and organizing theological principle in Wisdom literature. It was the response of faith to the divine word of promise and blessing just as it had functioned in the days of Abraham and Moses.

{Walter C. Kaiser Jr, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 136.}

<b>c. 2166</b> Abraham Born	<b>1446-1406 BC</b> Moses and Exodus	<b>971-931 BC</b> Reign of Solomon	<b>715-686 BC</b> Reign of Hezekiah	<b>586 BC</b> Fall of Jerusalem
<b>Job</b>	Book of Moses	<b>Ecclesiastes</b>	<b>Proverbs</b>	

! We will be studying the Wisdom Books of the Hebrew Scriptures in their chronological order.

### 1.2.1 Job

There is a general consensus among conservative scholars that the events of Job took place during the Patriarchal period, around the time of Abraham. This makes Job the oldest book of the Bible. This book ponders the core question of life in the created order of a good and righteous God: *Is God worthy of trust and worship even if His ways remain inscrutable to us?*

### 1.2.2 Ecclesiastes

Traditionally, Solomon is credited as the author of Ecclesiastes. However, this has become hotly debated since the book never mentions Solomon by name. Nevertheless, the book claims that its wisdom ultimately comes from the “one Shepherd” (12:11), a clear reference to God Himself (see Gen. 48:15; Ps. 23:1; 28:9; 80:1). In this book, The Preacher ponders some of life's enduring perplexities.

### 1.2.3 Proverbs

Proverbs claims Solomon as its author and/or collector (1:1; 10:1), including the proverbs copied by Hezekiah's men (25:1). There are also two groups of sayings from 1) “the wise” (22:17–24:22; 24:23–34), and 2) “oracles” from Agur (30:1–33) and Lemuel (31:1–9). The book was probably compiled into its final form around the time of Hezekiah.

### 1.2.4 Wisdom Psalms

“Using both formal and thematic criteria, the following psalms may easily be classified as wisdom psalms: 1, 37, 49, and 112. To these may be added 32, 34, 111, 127, 128, and 133. If meditation on the law of God is also used, Psalms 119 and 19:7–14 may also be included. Perhaps Psalm 78, with its invitation to “give ear, my people, to my teaching” and its proverbial and riddle forms (v. 2), also qualify it to be classed with the wisdom psalms. Thus we conclude that Psalms 1, 19b, 32, 34, 37, 49, 78, 111, 112, 119,



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## 1.4 Why Study Wisdom Literature?

### 1.4.1 Wisdom is Rooted in the Reality of Creation.

“Yet there was much more here than just a response of faith, belief, obedience, and worship. **It was the entrée into the understanding and enjoyment of the created realm.** One of God’s blessings was his work of creation; this too was part of his work in history!... And the very wisdom by which he had formed the world originally, he offered to men and women as his wisdom. **Without that wisdom, humanity was destitute of effective leadership and bankrupt in its appreciation or apprehension of God, humanity, and things; in fact, life itself became meaningless and devoid of satisfaction and joy.** But when the fear of the Lord led the way, then life was a blessing from God.

{Walter C. Kaiser Jr, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 136}

### 1.4.2 Wisdom Nourishes the Soul.

#### **Proverbs 24:13–14**

My son, eat honey, for it is good,  
and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.  
14 Know that wisdom is such to your soul;  
if you find it, there will be a future,  
and your hope will not be cut off.

1.4.3 Wisdom is More Valuable than Riches.

**Proverbs 16:16**

How much better to get **wisdom** than gold!

To get **understanding** is to be chosen rather than silver.

1.4.4 Wisdom and Good Understanding are Vitally Linked.

**Psalm 111:10**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;

all those who practice it have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever!

! the phrase “good understanding” has the term *sekel* that we discussed earlier in Genesis 3.

1.4.5 Wisdom Opens the Way to The Truly Good Life.

1.4.6 The Search for Wisdom Opens the Way to Righteous Wonder.

1.4.7 Wisdom is Essential to Character Development.

## 2 The Book of Job

*Is God Worthy?*

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### 2.1 A Basic Outline for Job

#### 1 Prologue (chaps. 1–2)

- 1.1 Job's Character (1:1–5)
- 1.2 Job's Testing (1:6–2:10)
- 1.3 Job's Friends (2:11–13)

#### 2 The Cycles of Speeches (3:1–42:6)

- 2.1 Job's Lament (3)
- 2.2 The Speeches: Round 1 (4–14)  
*The Lord's Governance of the World*
- 2.3 The Speeches: Round 2 (15–21)  
*The Place of the Wicked in the World*
- 2.3 The Speeches: Round 3 (22–31)  
*The Communication Breakdown*

#### **Job's Meditation on Wisdom (28)**

Job's Summary of the Situation (29–31)

- 2.4 Elihu's four speeches (32–37)

#### **2.5 God's two speeches and Job's replies (38:1–42:6)**

#### 3 Epilogue (42:7–17)

- 3.1 God Condemns Job's Friends (42:7–9)
- 3.2 God Restores Job's prosperity and family (42:10–17)

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## 2.2 Chapters 1-2: The Core Questions

### Job 1:9

Then Satan answered the LORD and said,  
**“Does Job fear God for no reason?”**

### Job 2:9

Then his wife said to him, **“Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”**

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## 2.3 The Key Characters

### 2.3.1 Job

#### Job 1:1

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job,  
 and that man was  
 blameless and upright,  
 one who feared God and turned away from evil.

#### Job 2:9

But he said to [his wife], “You speak as one of the foolish women  
 would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not  
 receive evil?” **In all this Job did not sin with his lips.**

“The narrator makes explicit the connection between Job’s  
 integrity and his discourse: “In all this Job did not sin or give  
 offense<sup>23</sup> to God” (1:22); “In all this Job did not sin with his  
 lips” (2:10). **Thus the outcome of the test will be determined  
 by what Job has to say about and to God.**”

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible’s  
 Wisdom Literature*, 73}

“... the story cannot find resolution until someone can satisfactorily answer the question posed by Job’s last words in the prologue: “*Should we accept only good from God and not accept evil?*” The rest of the book strains to explain how those who are “honest,” of “absolute integrity,” “revere God,” and “avoid evil,” can construct any sort of meaningful affirmation that connects the words God, good, and evil.”

{Samuel E. Balentine, *Wisdom Literature*}

**! The ultimate expression of faith in the Scriptures is the long-suffering commitment to not abandon the LORD God even if it *appears or seems like* He has abandoned us.**

### 2.3.2 The LORD God (YHWH)

**Job 1:8** And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”

- The LORD is shown to be a “**Tester**” throughout the Hebrew Scriptures:

#### **Abraham in Genesis 22**

#### **David in Psalm 26**

##### **Psalm 26:1–3**

Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

2 Prove me, O LORD, and try me;

**test my heart and my mind** [Heb: *my kidneys and heart*].

3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes,  
and I walk in your faithfulness.

**! The LORD does not tempt people to Evil:**

**James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

! **We might say that where the Adversary tempts us to evil, the Lord uses the same events to test/ approved our righteousness.**

- Throughout this whole ordeal, the LORD takes *responsibility* for what happens to Job even as it comes directly from the hand of the Adversary:

**Job 2:3**

And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him **without reason.**”

### 2.3.3 The Satan (The Accuser/Adversary)

“The satan’s accusation operates on two levels. On the one hand, if Job “fears God” for *something*, then his integrity is a facade. The question turns on whether Job’s reverence has ... a taint of self-interest, .... **On the other hand, the satan’s questioning of Job’s integrity points an accusing finger at YHWH**, Job’s benefactor. ... YHWH stands accused of two interrelated “crimes,” according to this “inciter” and bona fide member of the divine council: affording Job and his family special protection and effecting their prosperity. YHWH does not refute these charges. The question is whether YHWH’s blessings have had a decisive hand in shaping Job’s integrity, in motivating Job’s fear of God.

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible’s Wisdom Literature*, 72}

### 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}

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## 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/](http://www.michaelminkoff.com/gods-names-in-job/)

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## 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}

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## 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)

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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.

## 2.10 The Speeches: Round 2 (15–21)

### *The Place of the Wicked in the World*

! In this second round of speeches, the friends repeat their theology of sin and suffering showing that they are not unable to fully commiserate with Job's situation. Now, they become more harsh and intolerant of Job's position.

Also in this second round, the friends drop their pleas for Job to repent. They view him more as a possible "lost cause."

“The second round underscores the theme of the fate of the wicked, with each visitor stressing a slightly different aspect of the subject. Eliphaz said that the wicked are in distress and are endangered (chap. 15), Bildad spewed out the point that the wicked are ensnared and forgotten (chap. 18), and Zophar lambasted Job with the heartless observation that the wicked are shortlived and lose their wealth (chap. 20).”

{Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 68}

#### 2.10.1 Eliphaz's second speech (15)

**Key Statements:** 15:4; 15:14-16

“In his first speech, elderly Eliphaz had followed the decorum of the Middle East by speaking politely and indirectly, having been careful not to strike Job's wounded soul. In his second oration, Eliphaz abandoned such courtesy and “openly and sharply attacks Job with one dagger-thrust after another.” At first Eliphaz considered Job a righteous man temporarily chastened by God, but now Eliphaz saw him as a hardened sinner in arrogant rebellion against God.”{Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 69}

▷ Eliphaz rebukes Job's obstinate attitude (15:1-16)

“Job had challenged their claim that wisdom accompanied only old age (12:12), so Eliphaz retorted with the affirmation that “both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father” (15:10). Job, though a mature man, should have respect for the wisdom of his elders. From Eliphaz’s vantage point, Job’s contesting of their theology was an inexcusable act of disrespect for the elderly. {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 70}

- ▷ Eliphaz reminds Job about the fate of the wicked (15:17-35)
- ! 15:27 - In the Old Testament a *fat person* symbolizes selfish luxury and spiritual insensitivity (Psalms 73:7; 119:70; Jeremiah 5:28)

#### 2.10.2 Job’s second reply to Eliphaz (16–17)

##### **Key Statements:** 16:19-22

- ▷ Job states his disgust with his “friends” (16:1-5)
- ▷ Job addresses God’s attack (16:6–17)
- ▷ Job desires a representative (16:18–17:2)

“After speaking of the earth, Job referred to heaven, confident that there was a “witness” in heaven (someone who would testify and work on his behalf) and an “advocate” on high. Was Job appealing to the God whom he had just described so vociferously as his enemy? The context, particularly 16:21, seems to connote that Job meant someone else—that he was sure that in heaven he had a sponsor who could stand on his behalf and plead with God for his cause.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 78}

- ▷ Job seeks God’s pledge (17:3–5)

“Job then turned to God Himself, asking Him to lay down a pledge for Job (17:3a). This was apparently a custom in which a person, when going to trial, would give a bond or security to the other party as a certainty that no advantage would be taken of him. ... Here Job was saying that no one would agree to stand up for him as his advocate at his trial. God, therefore, who is the Judge, must provide the bond and agree to appear in court.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 79}

- ▷ Job despairs, “Where is Hope?” (17:6–16)

### 2.10.3 Bildad’s second speech (18)

! Many of Eliphaz’ themes reappear in Bildad’s speech:

	Eliphaz	Bildad
<i>Darkness comes to the wicked</i>	15:22–23, 30	18:5–6, 18
<i>The wicked are like plants that do not thrive</i>	15:30b, 32–3	18:16
<i>Flames destroy the wicked</i>	15:30, 34	18:15
<i>The affluence of the wicked is removed</i>	15:27–31	18:7, 15–16
<i>Anguish terrifies the wicked</i>	15:21, 24	18:11, 14
<i>The tents of the wicked are destroyed</i>	15:34	18:6, 14–15
<i>The wicked oppose or do not know God</i>	15:4, 13, 25–26	18:21

- ▷ Bildad denounces Job (18:1–4)
- ▷ Bildad describes the downfall of the wicked (18:5–21)

### 2.10.4 Job’s second reply to Bildad (19)

**Key Statements:** 19:23–27

- ▷ Job laments his friends (19:1–6)
- ▷ Job laments God making him His enemy (19:7–12)

“It is noteworthy that both he and his colleagues regarded Job’s misfortunes as coming from God’s hand, but their reasons differed vastly. The three friends looked on the misfortunes as retribution for sin, whereas Job saw them as totally unfair actions.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 85}

- ! Some have suggested that Job is addressing not God Himself, the his friends “traditional view” of God. This is nowhere suggested in the text and Job makes it clear that he is addressing God Himself.
- ▷ Job laments his family and friends rejecting him (19:13–22)
- ▷ Job knows he will ultimately be justified, even if in death (19:23–29)

“Verses 25 and 26 have been variously interpreted because of a number of uncertainties in the text.

**The first problem pertains to the identity of the Redeemer.**

Some scholars say that he is a person other than God because of Job’s similar requests for an arbiter between himself and God (9:33) and for a witness or advocate (16:19) and because Job still sensed God’s distance later (23:3). Others identify the Redeemer as God Himself because of the parallel statement, “I shall see God” (19:26) and because his witness was said to be “in heaven” and “on high” (16:19).

“Redeemer,” used forty-four times in the Old Testament, comes from a verb meaning “to lay claim to a person or thing, to free or deliver.” A redeemer in the Old Testament was a person who provided protection or legal preservation for a close relative who could not do so for himself. He could redeem the relative’s property that had passed into other hands (cf. Lev 25:23–25; Ruth 4:4–15); he could avenge a slain relative (Num 35:19–27; 2 Sam 14:11; 1 Kings 16:11); he could marry his brother’s childless widow (Ruth 4:10); he could buy a close relative out of slavery (Lev 25:47–55); and he could defend his cause in a lawsuit (Psalm 119:154; Prov 23:11; Jer 50:34).

Verse 25 stresses the word “I”: “I, even I, know that my Redeemer lives.” Although Job expected death, he knew that his Defender, or Protector, was alive and would certainly take up

his cause and vindicate him. Then Job added, “And at the last He will take His stand on the earth” (19:25b). The words “at the last” have been taken by some scholars to mean in the future or at the last minute. But because the Hebrew word is an adjective, not an adverb, it describes the Redeemer, the One who will rise, and therefore the word should be rendered “the last One,” or “He who comes last or later.” God will have the final say, as it were

**What does “stand on the earth” mean?** The word translated “earth” is literally “dust,” and some scholars understand it to mean the grave, as dust is so used (7:21; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26; 34:15). However, “dust” also can mean the earth (5:6; 8:19; 14:8; 41:33, marg.). The latter may be preferred. Job’s thought is that his living Vindicator, who will be the last One and thus will have the final word, will stand on the earth as a witness stands in a trial and will testify to Job’s innocence for all to hear.

**“Even after my skin is destroyed” (19:26a) is the most difficult portion of this passage to interpret.** According to some scholars the verb should be rendered “destroyed,” as the NASB does.<sup>14</sup> Other scholars suggest that the verb means “surround” and that the clause should be rendered “afterward with my skin they surround this [namely, my body].”<sup>15</sup> The translation “flayed” is a third possibility, preferred by this writer. Job was not expecting to be flayed alive, but rather was referring figuratively to the peeling of his skin as a picture of death encroaching upon him slowly. The verb means “stripped off” and is used in Isaiah (10:34) of cutting off branches of a tree. In the Hebrew, the word “this” appears at the end of the line and is not translated in the NASB and other versions. It may refer back to skin, “this skin of mine,” or, perhaps more likely, it may mean “thus”: “after my skin is stripped off thus [in this way].”

The King James Version supplies the words “worms” and “body” (“though after my skin worms destroy this body”) in an effort to supply a noun for the verb “destroy,” which is plural, and to supply an object to the word “this.” However, the plural verb in Hebrew without a subject may be rendered as a passive and need not have a subject. It can therefore legitimately be rendered “is stripped off” (rather than “worms destroy”).

**The second half of verse 26 is also subject to interpretation. When Job said, “from my flesh I shall see God,”** did he mean from the vantage point of his flesh (i.e., in his flesh while still alive) or did he mean, apart from his flesh (i.e., after death)? The former view is supported by Job’s statement in the next verse that his eyes would see God. However, the poetic feature known as parallelism suggests that the two lines of 19:26

be taken together. Because death is implied in 19:26a, it is to be expected in 19:26b. Furthermore, Job did expect to die soon (16:18–22; 17:1, 16; 30:23). Also, the word “from” normally means “apart from.”

Job was so certain that he would see God that he repeated the thought: “whom I myself shall behold” (19:27). “See” (19:26) and “behold” (19:27) are the same Hebrew word, meaning to see in a vision or in a supernatural condition. His gazing on God, his Redeemer, for all eternity would certainly be for his benefit (for “myself”). Then Job added, apparently for emphasis, “and whom my eyes shall see and not another.” He himself would see God, face to face, and he would not be a stranger or enemy to God, as he was then.

Such an amazing thought, however, so overwhelmed Job that he exclaimed, “my heart faints within me” (19:27c). His heart (literally, kidneys, considered by the Hebrews to be the seat of deepest emotions) was spent or consumed within him (literally, in his bosom). He was exhausted emotionally by the astounding prospect of a face-to-face encounter with God.

**When did Job expect to be vindicated by his living Redeemer?** At least three answers are given: (1) during his lifetime (then why did he desire that his words be engraved for future generations, and how can this view be reconciled with his words “after my skin is destroyed?”), (2) after death and in a bodily resurrected state (but though he spoke of seeing God with his eyes, he said his seeing would be apart from his flesh), (3) in the afterlife, but not in a resurrected body. The latter seems to be as far as Job went, because he did not give a definitive statement about the resurrection. He said “[apart] from my flesh,” not “with new resurrected flesh.” Also, the resurrection view does not reckon with the then current belief in Sheol (7:9, 21; 10:21–22; 14:7–14; 16:22). He longed to see God—and knew that he would because his living Redeemer-Vindicator would stand on his behalf and plead his case. This was the longed-for Arbiter (9:33), Witness-Advocate (16:19), whom we know as Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Job’s assurance of vindication after death was a giant step in his walk of faith and another indication that he was sure the three friends were wrong in their accusations. Death, inevitable and imminent, would be a gate, not a wall, to solving his problem.” {Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 89–92}

2.10.5 Zophar’s second speech (20)

- ▷ The exulting of the wicked is short lived (20:1–11)
- ▷ Hidden evil will be revealed (20:12–19)
- ▷ The wicked will be utterly destroyed by God (20:20–29)

“Job had stated that his Witness and Advocate were in heaven, ready to defend him, and he had appealed to the earth to allow his need for vindication to remain visible (16:18–19). However, Zophar denied the possibility of either. Instead, the heavens would “reveal his iniquity” and “the earth [would] rise up against him” (20:27) in condemnation, not vindication.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 96}

2.10.6 Job’s second reply to Zophar (21)

**Key Statements:** 21:7; 21:17; 21:34

<b>Zophar Chapter 20</b>	<b>Job Chapter 21</b>
<i>The Wicked...</i> perish (20:7)	<i>The Wicked...</i> live (21:7)
triumph only a short time (20:5)	continue on (21:7)
lose their loftiness and vigor (20:6, 11)	become very powerful (21:7)
lose all in their tent (20: 26)	enjoy their children and grandchildren (21:8)
lose the wealth in their houses (20:21, 23, 28)	live safely in their houses (21:9a) and their herds increase (21: 10)
suffer God’s fierce anger (20:23, 28)	know nothing of God’s rod of judgment (21:9)
have sons who must beg from the poor (20:10)	have happy children (21:11–12)
will have their riches expelled out of their bellies (20:15) and cannot enjoy prosperity and ease (20:17–18)	spend their days in prosperity (21:13)
have their sins revealed (20:27)	get away with sinful defiance of God (21:14–15)
are forgotten at death (20:7–9)	are given an honorable burial (21:32–33)

- ▷ Job asks his friends to listen and look and be appalled (21:1–6)
- ▷ Job asks, “Why then to the wicked prosper?” (21:7–16)
- ▷ Job asks, “When have you seen the wicked destroyed?” (21:17–26)
- ▷ Job asserts the wicked is spared in the day of calamity (21:27–34)

## 2.11 **The Speeches: Round 3 (22–31)** *The Communication Breakdown*

“In cycle one, Job’s visitors implied that Job was a sinner and appealed to him to repent. In cycle two, they insinuated that he was guilty and stressed the terrible fate of the wicked, but gave no opportunity for repentance. In the third cycle, they attacked with open accusations of specific sins, and only Eliphaz again gave a call for Job to turn back to God. Job stood his ground in response to all three rounds of attack. He denied the premise of their implications, he denied their assertion that the wicked always suffer, and he denied that he himself was a deliberate transgressor. {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 102}

### 2.11.1 Eliphaz’s third speech (22)

**! In this episode, Eliphaz misquotes or twists Job’s earlier statements in order to accuse him.**

- ▷ “Can a man be profitable to God?” (22:1-5)
- ▷ “Job, isn’t your evil abundant?”(22:6-11)
- ▷ “Job, how can you question God’s knowledge?” (22:12-20)
- ▷ Eliphaz exhorts Job to turn from his sinful ways (22:21-30)

### 2.11.2 Job’s third reply to Eliphaz (23–24)

- ▷ Job expresses his longing to present his case before God (23:1-7)
- ▷ Job is confident in his righteousness, but where can God be found to hear his case? (23:8-17)

- ▷ “Why does God not make His justice more evident!?” (24:1-12)

“In chapter 24 Job was doing two things: lambasting God for being so apathetic toward injustice, and pointing Eliphaz to an even greater problem than the one Eliphaz had raised. That senior plaintiff had said that God was majestic and distant from man, but of greater concern to Job was God’s apparent neglect to use that majesty to correct the world’s wrongs. He wondered why God did not set aside specific times for judging so that those who trusted Him could see Him at work on those days (24:1). This is an understandable but strange inquiry in view of Job’s previous statement that God is unique and does as He pleases.

{Roy B. Zuck, Job, 109–110}

- ▷ Those who rebel in the darkness are not punished quickly, but God allows them to persist to death (24:13-25)

### 2.11.3 Bildad’s third speech (25)

- ▷ What is anyone or anything to God - all pale to insignificance in His presence (25:1-6)

### 2.11.4 Job’s third reply to Bildad (26–27)

- ▷ Job turns Bildad’s words against him (26:1-14)
- ▷ Job takes an oath on his integrity (27:1-6)
- ▷ “The godless are powerless before God!” (27:7-12)
- ▷ “God will give the wicked an inheritance of destruction!” (27:13-23)

! **Take NOTE: Zophar does not give a third speech**

## 2.11.5 The Meditation on Wisdom (28)

“Many scholars assign this chapter to Zophar, Bildad, or even God, or treat it as a poem that was not part of the book of Job originally. It does seem to be unrelated to what precedes and follows it, and it is in a different mood, but the subject matter—man’s inability to discover God’s wisdom—is in keeping with Job’s words (26:14, as well as 9:10–12; 12:13; 17:10; 23:8–10).<sup>14</sup> This chapter is fittingly Job’s, for he had been refuting the three counselors, who had maintained that they knew God’s ways. Job now affirmed that it is not possible for man to presume that he can discern the inscrutable mysteries of the majestic God.” {Roy B. Zuck, *Job*, 122–123}

“Rather than viewing Job 28 as an inserted interruption in the flow of the argument between Job and his friends, it should be seen as the writer’s attempt to give his readers a revelatory perspective in the midst of so much talk that was devoid of divine wisdom.” {Walter C. Kaiser Jr, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 135.}

- ▷ Analogy: Man can mine precious metals out of the earth with great difficulty (28:1-11)
- ▷ BUT wisdom can neither be “mined” or bought (28:12-22)
- ▷ Only God knows the way to Wisdom and Wisdom is the fear of The Lord (28:23-28)

**Job 28:28** And [God] said to man,  
 “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom,  
 and to turn away from evil is understanding.”

“When God, in His creative work, prescribed laws for the wind, waters, rain, and lightning, He explored wisdom, which is treated as a tangible object or idea (28:27). (Cf. Prov 8:27–30, which is strikingly similar.) He saw it, probed it (a possible rendering for the word “declared”), established it, and investigated it. Together these verbs suggest that He perfectly fathomed the

nature of wisdom—in stark contrast to man’s inability even to find it. The verb “established” may point to His setting forth laws regarding the relationship of wisdom to man. The necessity of divine, propositional revelation is indicated next: “to man He said” (28:28). Although man is impotent to discover or purchase wisdom, he can know its very essence, for God has unveiled what otherwise would remain “hidden from the eyes of all living” (28:21). That essence of wisdom is twofold, “the fear of the Lord [Adonai]” and “to depart from evil.”

All man’s scientific investigations, technological advances, and intellectual achievements—remarkable as they are, whether in Job’s day or the present—fail miserably to provide “a full explanation of [God’s] government [or to] disclose all that we would wish to know about God. Instead, real wisdom consists in establishing one’s life in submissive veneration before God, in revering God in an attitude of confidence that He does all things right (although that rightness may not always be apparent to man). True wisdom also consists in a rejection of evil, in a regulating of one’s conduct in paths of piety, and in actions and attitudes that accord with God’s standards of holiness and godliness. Fearing God and turning from evil may be summarized as adoration of God and obedience to God. Thus the truly wise man is the one whose life is centered on God, not self, and is regulated by God. Man in right relationship to God, worshiping Him, serving Him, obeying Him—that is wisdom and understanding!” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 125–12}.

#### 2.11.6 Job’s Final Lament and Appeal (29-31)

- ▷ Job longs for his former days of glory (29:1-20)
- ▷ Job laments that though he used to be respected by all, now he is laughed at and rejected (29:21-30:8)
- ▷ Job expresses his anguish as God has allowed the “rabble” to turn against him (30:9-15)
- ▷ Job laments in the affliction (physical and emotional) God has set loose on him (30:16-31)

“ [Chapter 31 ] may be divided into three sections: (1) Job had no secret sensual desires or dishonesty before men (31:1–12), (2) Job had not abused his power toward his slaves, the poor, or the helpless (31:13–23), (3) Job had shown no dishonesty or unfairness toward God or man (31:24–40). {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 134}

- ▷ Job makes an oath that he has not acted unrighteously (31:1-8)
- ▷ Job makes an oath that he has not acted in adulterous ways (31:9-12)
- ▷ Job makes an oath that he has not taken advantage of his servants (31:13-15)
- ▷ Job makes an oath that he has not withheld help from the poor, widowed, or orphaned (31:16-23)
- ▷ Job makes an oath that he has put no trust in wealth or idolatry (31:24-28)

“ **It is noteworthy that this is the fifth time that Job mentioned God in the chapter** (31:2–4, 6, 14–15, 23, 28). Without question Job was aware of God’s omniscience, judgment, creative power, majesty, and existence.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 137}

- ▷ Job makes an oath that he has not sought the ruin of his enemy, withheld food from family and strangers, or hidden his transgressions (31:29-34)
- ▷ Job once again appeals to God to listen and make clear the indictment against Job if there is one (31:35-37)

“ Job was so certain of his innocence of motive and action that he would proudly carry the indictment of God, whom he called his **adversary** (*literally, man of my indictment*; cf. 13:24; 16:9; 19:11, where different words for adversary are used), on his shoulder and wear it as a crown.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 138}

- ▷ Job makes his final oath of innocence (31:38-40)

## 2.12 Elihu's four speeches (32–37)

“[Elihu] made an honest effort to provide answers to Job’s complaints about God rather than repeat the you-have-what-you-deserve view of the other three. Whereas Elihu’s three elders had recommended that Job repent of willful sin committed prior to his calamities, Elihu recommended (1) that Job repent of pride that developed because of the suffering, and (2) that Job exalt God’s work (36:24), consider His works (37:14), and fear Him (37:24). The three counselors had claimed that Job was suffering because he was sinning, but Elihu explained that he was sinning because he was suffering! His suffering led him to an attitude of pride before God and a questioning of God’s ways. The triad diagnosis pertained to sinful actions in Job’s past experience, whereas Elihu’s diagnosis dealt with sinful attitudes in Job’s present life.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 141}

“In the first of Elihu’s four speeches, he refuted Job’s charges that God did not hear him (chap. 33). In his second speech, he refuted Job’s charge that God is unjust (chap. 34). And in his third speech, he refuted Job’s charge that it is useless to serve God (chap. 35). He discussed God’s communications to man (through dreams and pain) (chap. 33); he commented on God’s justice with man (chap. 34); and he discussed God’s sovereignty over man (chap. 35). Then in the final speech (chaps. 36–37), he again elaborated on God’s justice and sovereignty.”  
{Roy B. Zuck, Job, 144}

### 2.12.1 Elihu’s first speech (32–33)

- ▷ Elihu is introduced (32:1-5)
- ▷ Elihu gives reasons for his speech (32:6–22)
- ▷ Elihu addresses Job: “God is speaking; you are not listening!” (33:1-33)

“It is no accident that his name is **Elihu**, which means “He is my God.” He comes not as a friend but as an arbiter, someone Job himself had requested (see 31:35).

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder*, 104}

“**Elihu’s brand of wisdom depends entirely upon divine inspiration**, as opposed to accumulated appropriation. His style is not so much pompous as it is audacious. His willingness to step on the toes of his elders is by no means a character flaw meant to undermine the young sage’s credibility. To the contrary, Elihu’s unabashed demeanor is more an indication of what he is up against: **the lumbering inertia of traditional wisdom and the corruption of divine instruction . . .**

Elihu’s character is one that reflects the sentiments of certain early readers of Job who espouse a more prophetic understanding of wisdom over against **the traditional model of human observation and accumulated insight.**

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder*, 107-108}

### 2.12.2 Elihu’s second speech (34)

- ▷ Elihu turns Job’s words against him (34:1–9)
- ▷ Elihu defends God’s justice to refute Job (34:10–37)

“**To what extent was Elihu correct?** Certainly he was accurate in speaking of God’s authority, sustenance and control of life, omniscience, power to judge sin, and sovereign privilege to be silent when He so chooses. Even Job had argued for those truths. And undoubtedly Elihu was right in reprimanding Job for his gall in demanding that God answer him (34:29) by showing him where he had sinned (34:32) and by recompensing on his terms (34:33). But like his three superiors, Elihu, in order to defend God, had to assume that Job was lying about his innocence. None of the five—Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu, and Job—knew of the contest in heaven between God and Satan. Consequently, Elihu’s accusation was inaccurate. He failed to take into account the possibility that Job was suffering without

due cause in specific sins. “The Bible recognizes that desert and fortune are not precisely matched. Any bland assurance that they are can never satisfy men of Job’s honesty.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 152}

### 2.12.3 Elihu’s third speech (35)

- ▷ Elihu turns Job’s words against him: Righteousness does matter! (35:1-3)
- ▷ Elihu refutes Job’s assertions about the benefits of a righteous life (35:4-16)

“... Elihu was affirming that God’s actions (of justice and benevolence) toward man are self-determined, not man-centered. God is not under man’s control or subject to man’s bribes (35:8). In other words, Elihu said that God’s standards of justice are not flexible or partial. If He shows mercy, it is not because He has been induced by man’s goodness; and if He inflicts judgment, it is not because He has been injured or fears man. Instead, Elihu said, both mercy and judgment are given because man deserves them.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 154}

### 2.12.4 Elihu’s fourth speech (36–37)

- ▷ Elihu declares God is both just and powerful in dealing with both the righteous and the wicked who are afflicted (36:1–25)
- ▷ Elihu extols Job to consider God’s majesty made known in His wondrous works and realize that the Almighty does not listen to those who are wise in their own devices (36:26–37:24)

## 2.13 **God's two speeches and Job's replies (38:1–42:6)**

**Job 9:16–17** If I summoned Him and he answered me,  
I would not believe that he was listening to my voice.

**9:17 For he crushes me with a whirlwind**  
and multiplies my wounds without cause;...

“The sufferer’s repetitious plea that God answer him was granted. “Let me speak, then reply to me” (13:22) and “Let the Almighty answer me!” (31:35) are two of Job’s persistent demands for communication from God. Having bemoaned the absence of an arbiter (9:33), having longed for a witness or advocate (16:19), and having expressed assurance of a Redeemer who would vindicate his cause after death (19:25), Job was confronted by God Himself.

... In content as well as timing it was unlike what Job expected. Nothing was said about Job’s suffering; no discussion was included about the theology of evil; nor was even any extensive answer given to the brash charges the patriarch had made about the Sovereign’s injustices (only two brief questions were asked [40:2, 8]). **Instead of answering questions, God asked them!...**

**God was not on the witness stand; Job was!**

{Roy B. Zuck, Job, 163}

### 2.13.1 God’s first speech (38:1–40:2)

▷ God challenges Job (38:1-3)

“As a friend of God, Job would have been expected to defend and vindicate God’s ways to others. But instead, his charge that God’s dealings were unjust, that God was his enemy, made His designs appear dark and severe. His words were “without knowledge,” that is, without a true awareness of the facts, without an understanding of God’s and Satan’s heavenly controversy,

which had precipitated Job's trial. **Likewise, believers today should not presume to know fully God's ways, His "counsel" (or plan) for them. To act on inadequate knowledge of divine purposes is to run the risk of beclouding and misrepresenting His intents.**

{Roy B. Zuck, Job, 164–165}

▷ God questions Job about aspects of Creation (38:4–39:30)

! In 38:8-11, the Ocean/Sea is depicted as a baby being born and confined to its crib or playpen. It was not—as suggested earlier in 3:8; 7:12; 9:13; 26:12—a monster to be defeated, an image coming out of Mesopotamian mythology.

“All the [animal] examples exhibit the creative genius and providential care of God. His concern for these animals demonstrates that His domain exceeds that of man's immediate needs, thus further demonstrating the gap between God's designs and man's. **The creation of these animals, most of which are useless to man, suggests “a superfluous element of luxury in the divine bounty.”** {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 170}

### 2.13.2 Job's first reply to God (40:3–5)

! Job had previously called to God, “Call to me and I will answer” (13:22a). After God's first round of questions, Job has a new perspective: “*Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you!?*”

### 2.13.3 God's second speech (40:6–41:34)

▷ God challenges Job again on the issue of His justice (40:6–14)

▷ God questions Job about two *untamable creatures*: Behemoth and Leviathan (40:15–41:34).

“Scholars vary in their identification of these creatures, and they also vary in their opinions as to whether the creatures were real or mythological. Those scholars who view them as creatures of Canaanite myths point to parallels in ancient mythological literature, to the fanciful language that describes Leviathan (e.g., 41:18–22), and to the references to Leviathan in Job (3:8) and elsewhere in the Bible as a mythological monster. For other scholars, it seems preferable to view these animals as actual creatures because (a) God said that He made Behemoth (40:15) and Leviathan (Psalm 104:26b), (b) the detailed description of the anatomy of each animal suggests real animals, (c) the animals of myths were based on actual animals, although features may have been combined or exaggerated, as in the seven-headed deity, Leviathan, (d) the ten animals listed in God’s first speech are actual, and (e) both animals in the second speech are mentioned elsewhere in Scripture apart from mythological connotations (e.g., Psalm 104:26; Joel 1:20, where the word translated “beasts” is the word “Behemoth”). If they are real, then the smoke from Leviathan’s nostrils and fire from his mouth may be explained as poetic hyperbole.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 177–178}

#### 2.13.4 Job’s second reply to God (42:1–6)

“Elihu had warned him of the error of his charges against God (33:9–13; 34:31–33; 35:2–3; 36:23) and of the error of his attitude of pride (32:2; 33:17; 35:12–13; 36:9; 37:24). And God Himself had confronted Job with his proud audacity to indict Him (40:2) and to condemn Him (40:8). {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 185}

“But of what did Job repent? Obviously he did not repent of the charges his three consolers had brought against him. His oath of innocence (chap. 31) and God’s assessment of him (1:1, 8; 2:3) prove the falsity of their accusations of sins committed before his calamities. Job repented of his proud rebellion, of his impudent insistence that God respond to him and that he correct His ways. **Job, then, admitted to sinning because he suffered, not to suffering because he sinned.** {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 185}

## 2.14 Epilogue (42:7–17)

### 2.14.1 God commends Job's words and condemns Job's friends (42:7–9)

- ! The justification of Job's speaking what is right about God shows that Job was saying what was true of God in that he was not being punished for sin. And although Job had accused God of cruelty and injustice, he repented of this view in the end. Job maintains a higher view of God and continually runs to God for answers rather than running away from Him as his wife suggested at the beginning.
- ! The words of Three Friends are condemned by God as not being right because they continually "box God in" in His sovereignty. They continually suggest that God *must* take a certain course of action. They miss the point entirely that God is free in His power and wisdom to do as He pleases.

### 2.14.2 God's restoring of Job's prosperity and family (42:10–17)

“ Three interesting facts are included about the daughters: (1) their names were revealed, whereas the sons remain to us anonymous (42:14), (2) they were unusually beautiful, and (3) they, along with their brothers, were designated as heirs of Job's estate (42:15). Why the three daughters were named is unknown; perhaps it was to draw attention to their unusual role in bringing blessing to Job in his posttrial days. “Jemima” means “dove,” “Keziah” means “perfume” (cassia being a bark used as a perfume), and “Keren-happuch” means “horn of eyepaint” (i.e., a bottle of dye used to paint the eyelashes, eyelids, and eyebrows to make the eyes more attractive). All three names were indicative of the daughters' beauty. Their share in their father's inheritance

may have been his expression of gratitude for his new family or proof of his restored wealth.” {Roy B. Zuck, Job, 188}

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## 2.15 Conclusions about Job

“Without wonder, wisdom withers; its journey is cut short. Without wisdom, wonder wanders, aimlessly so. By (re)reading the biblical corpus through the lens of wonder, ancient wisdom comes to life for a new generation of readers.”

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom's Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible's Wisdom Literature*, 27}

1. God does not answer any of the questions raised by Job and his friends. He never tells Job WHY he suffered.
2. Based on the first point, the book of Job does not answer the question, “Why do the righteous suffer?”

“How do [these speeches of God] contribute to the explanation of the mystery that is involved in the sufferings of good men? **The fact is, this discourse is not directed to an elucidation of that mystery at all. It is not the design of God to offer a vindication of his dealings with men in general, or a justification of his providence towards Job.** He has no intention of placing himself at the bar of his creatures and elevating them into judges of his conduct. He is not amenable to them and he does not recognize their right to be censors of him and of his ways.

The righteousness of his providence does not depend upon their perceiving or admitting it. The LORD does not here stand on the defensive, not allowing it to seem as if he were in any need of being relieved from the strictures of Job, or as if it were of any account to him whether feeble worms approved his dealings or confessed the propriety of his dispensations. He puts himself in a totally different attitude, and moves upon quite another plane. He is the sovereign LORD of all, accountable to no being but himself. **He does not appear to vindicate himself, but to rescue Job.** Job has been exposed to the fierce assaults of Satan

and has successfully withstood them. ... Job was fully vindicated against Satan's baseless slander. {William Henry Green, *Conflict and Triumph: The Argument of the Book of Job*}

3. At the heart of the book is the question raised by The Adversary/Satan in the first chapter, "Does Job fear God for no reason?" Through the other implications made by the Adversary in chapters 1 & 2 it is clear that the main question for us all is, "Would we still worship God if He did not bless us?" or maybe better, "**Is God worthy of worship even if He remains incomprehensible?**"
4. The book ultimately shows that human observation, reason and speculation do not lead to Wisdom; only the fear of the Lord gives us access to His Wisdom.
5. Finally, the book shows us that The Almighty has entangled His reputation with His people. Fear/Worship of the One True God says to all creation, "He is Worthy!"

“The reader must understand this: Job had to be proved blameless, or God would have been proved a liar. Yahweh, the covenant God, had made it so the vindication of His own name depended on the vindication of Job's character! So much for a distant Clock-Maker.” {Michael Minkoff, "God's Names in Job," WEB}