
איוב ✡ JOB

The *Book of Job* tells the story of a faithful servant of God, a rich and happy man; God allows Satan to test his faith through misfortune: Job loses his possessions and his children but is resigned to God taking back what he has given; next, he suffers a painful sickness – his wife tells him to curse God but he rebukes her. Then, three of his friends come to offer sympathy (Chs 1–2). After this, we have the long poem that forms the body of the book: in three series of speeches (Chs 3–14, 15–21, 22–27), Job and his friends argue their ideas of divine justice: Eliphaz speaks with the moderation of old age, Zophar has the excitability of youth, and Bildad is a man of measured discourse; but all three defend the traditional thesis of retribution: Job suffers because he has sinned and, when Job protests his innocence, they grow obstinate. Job confronts this theorising with his own sad experience and with the universal experience of injustice. He ponders the mystery of a God of justice who makes the virtuous suffer. This alternating motion has two climaxes: first in the act of faith (Ch. 19), second in the protestation of innocence (Ch. 31). A new character, Elihu, now appears: Job and his friends are mistaken, he says, and then tries to vindicate God's ways (Chs 32–37). God himself cuts him short and, 'from the heart of the tempest', gives Job his answer: no human can judge a God whose wisdom and power are infinite; Job then realises the folly of his words (38:1–42:6). In the epilogue, God rebukes the friends and amply rewards Job (42:7–17).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

Job is a figure from ancient history (Ezk 14:14, 20) who lived in the Patriarchal age. He is traditionally regarded as a model of virtue, whose loyalty to God remained unshaken despite grievous trials. The author has used this old story as the framework of his book and, though the poetic body is quite different from the prologue and epilogue in style and tone, it can at no time have existed without them.

Some argue that the speeches of Yahweh (Chs 38–41) were not in the original poem but this argument misunderstands the book's meaning: although they ignore the preceding debate, by transferring the discussion from the human plane to the divine, it is for this very reason that they provide what is the only solution to the problem: the mysterious nature of the ways of God. The arrangement of Chs 24–27 is not entirely satisfactory but copyists' errors or editorial readjustments may explain this. Arguments against the authenticity of the speeches of Elihu (Chs 32–37) are weightier: Elihu appears abruptly and unannounced and God ignores him completely, which is strange, seeing that he anticipates God's words; the vocabulary and style are also quite different and Aramaisms are much more frequent than elsewhere.

The author is known to us only from his work; he was without doubt an Israelite, brought up on the works of the prophets and the teachings of the sages; he probably lived in Palestine but he must have visited other countries, particularly Egypt. The date of the composition is conjectural: the prose narrative smacks of Patriarchal times and made some think that the book was the work of Moses, but this argument applies only to the prologue/epilogue and, even here, traditional sources or literary imitation may explain the style. The book is later than Jeremiah and Ezekiel and its language has a strong Aramaic flavour; we are therefore in post-Exilic times, when concern with the nation as a whole gave way to an interest in the individual: a likely date is the beginning of the 5th Century BCE.

איוב פרק א

JOB 1

איש היה בארץ-עוץ איוב שמו והיה האיש ההוא תם וישר וירא אלהים וסר מרע: ב ויולדו לו שבעה בנים ושלוש בנות: ג והיה מקנהו שבעת אלפי-צאן ושלושת אלפי גמלים וחמש מאות צמד-בקר וחמש מאות אתונות ועבדה רבה מאד והיה האיש ההוא גדול מכל-בני-קדם: ד והלכו בניו ועשו משתה בית איש יומו ושלוחו וקראו לשלושת אחיותיהם לאכל ולשתות עמם: ה והיה כי הקיפו ימי המשתה וישלח

¹ There was a man in the land of Uz called Job: a sound an honest man who feared God and shunned evil. ² Seven sons and three daughters were born to him ³ and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-donkeys, and many servants besides. This man was the greatest of all the Sons of the East. ⁴ His sons used to hold banquets in one another's houses in turn, and to invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ When the feast days were over, Job would send

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In the prose narrative of Chs. 1-2, the author has preserved the flavour of a folk tale.

- ¹ The term 'Uz' occurs several times in the Bible: a son of Aram (Gn 10:23), a son of Nahor (Gn 22:21) and a descendant of Seir (Gn 36:28); if these are the clues to follow, the location would be north of Syria or south near Edom. The book tells how Job's flocks were exposed to Chaldeans, the tribes between Syria and the Euphrates, and in another direction to attacks from the Sabaeans. The most prominent of his friends was from Teman, which was in Edom. Uz is also connected with Edom in Lm 4:21. The most plausible location, then, would be east of Israel and northeast of Edom, in what is now North Arabia. The LXX has *Αυσίτιδος* for עוץ.
- ² The numbers used in the chapter, 7, 3 & 5, carry the symbolism in the Bible of perfection and completeness; Job's 'seven sons' are listed first because, in the East, sons were considered more valuable than daughters – recall Ruth, who is 'better than seven sons' (Rt 4:15).
- ³ The phrase 'Sons of the East' is used of all who lived east of Palestine, more particularly in Edomite or Arab territory (see #Nb 24:21).
- ⁴ Normally, cardinal numerals tend to disagree in gender with the numbered noun: in v. 2, 'three daughters' consists of the masculine numeral followed by the feminine noun; but here, 'three sisters' consists of the feminine numeral followed by the feminine noun. The distinction appears to be that the normal disagreement occurs when the intent is merely to fix the number (3 daughters as opposed to 2 or 4 daughters); however, when a particular, previously known group is indicated, the numeral tends to agree with the noun in gender. A similar case occurs in Gn 3:13 ('three wives' of Noah's sons).
- ⁵ The NJB has 'purified' in place of 'sanctified'; Job would have conducted purifying rites to remove pollution, which would have made his sons unfit to take part in religious activities (see #Lv 11:1). The MT has the word for 'blessed' (וַיְבָרְכֵם) in place of 'blasphemed'; the original words ('cursed God' or 'blasphemed God') have been replaced by a euphemism that avoids a pejorative term applied to a divine name.

אִיּוֹב וַיְקַדְּשֵׁם וְהַשְׁכִּים בַּבֹּקֶר וְהַעֲלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מִסְפֵּר
כָּל־כִּי אָמַר אִיּוֹב אוֹלִי חָטָאוּ בָנִי וּבָרְכוּ אֱלֹהִים
בְּלִבָּם כִּכָּה יַעֲשֶׂה אִיּוֹב כָּל־הַיָּמִים
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for and sanctify them and, at dawn on the following day, he would make a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and, in their hearts, blasphemed.” This was what Job always did.

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל־יְהוָה
וַיָּבֹא גַם־הַשָּׁטָן בְּתוֹכָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן
מֵאֵין תָּבֹא וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר מְשׁוֹט בָּאָרֶץ
וּמִהַתְהַלֵּךְ בָּהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן הֲשִׁמְתָּ לְבָדָךְ
עַל־עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כָּמֹהוּ בָּאָרֶץ אִישׁ תָּם וַיֵּשֶׁר יָרֵא
אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע: וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר
הֲחִנָּם יִרְאֵ אִיּוֹב אֱלֹהִים: הֲלֹא־אֲתָה אֵת שָׂכָתָ בַּעֲדוֹ
וּבַעֲד־בֵּיתוֹ וּבַעֲדָ כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ מִסָּבִיב מַעֲשֶׂה יָדָיו

⁶ One day, when the sons of God came to attend on Yahweh, among them came Satan. ⁷ Yahweh said to Satan, “Where have you been?” “Prowling about on earth,” he answered, “roaming around there.” ⁸ Then Yahweh said to Satan, “Did you pay any attention to my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth: a sound an honest man who fears God and shuns evil.” ⁹ “Yes,” Satan said, “but Job is not God-fearing for nothing, is he? ¹⁰ Have you not put a wall round him, his house, and his entire domain? ¹¹ However, stretch out your

⁶ As kings do, God also hold receptions and audiences on certain days. On the ‘sons of God’ (בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים), see 38:7, Gn 6:1–4, Ps 29:1, 82:6, 89:6. These are superhuman creatures that make up God’s court and council; they are identified with the angels (the LXX translates the phrase as ‘the angels of God’ – οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ); see #Tb 5:4.

⁷ For ‘Satan’ (throughout Chs 1–2), the MT translates, literally, as ‘the Satan’. When preceded by the article, as in Zc 3:1–2, the term is still not a proper name, becoming so only in 1Ch 21:1. According to Hebrew etymology, it means ‘the Adversary’ (see 2S 19:23, 1K 5:18, 11:14, 23, 25) or ‘the Accuser’ (Ps 109:6), but here a kind of supernatural spy. The Satan is an equivocal figure, distinct from the sons of God, sceptical as regards human beings, anxious to find fault in them, capable of unleashing disaster on them and even of impelling them into sin (see also 1Ch 21:1). If not deliberately hostile to God, he is nonetheless sceptical about God’s success in creating humanity; behind the cynicism and cold, malicious sarcasm, lurks a pessimistic being, whose hostility to human beings is based on envy.

⁸ God’s question is undoubtedly rhetorical, for it is designed to make Satan aware of Job as God extols his fine qualities.

⁹ This is one of the most fundamental questions in the Bible: Do human beings serve God because of what they receive from him?

¹⁰ The final ה in the Qere reading of אֲתָה may have been dropped from the Kethib by haplography.

¹¹ The two imperatives (‘stretch out’ and ‘strike’) and the word ‘hand’ all form a bold anthropomorphic sentence: it is as if God would deliver a blow to Job with his fist, but the intended meaning is that God would intervene to destroy Job’s material and physical prosperity.

בְּרַכְתָּ וּמִקְנֵהוּ פָּרַץ בְּאַרְץ: י^א וְאוֹלָם שְׁלַח־נָא יָדְךָ
וְגַע בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אִם־לֹא עַל־פְּנֶיךָ יִבְרַכְךָ: י^ב וַיֹּאמֶר
יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן הִנֵּה כָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ בְּיָדְךָ רַק אֱלֹיו אֶל־
תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ וַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׁטָן מֵעַם פְּנֵי יְהוָה:

י^ג וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וּבָנָיו וּבָנֹתָיו אֹכְלִים וְשׂוֹתִים יַיִן בְּבֵית
אֲחֵיהֶם הַבְּכוֹר: י^ד וּמִלֶּאֶךָ בָּא אֶל־אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הַבְּקָר
הָיוּ חֹרְשׁוֹת וְהָאֲתָנוֹת רָעוֹת עַל־יְדֵיהֶם: טו וַתִּפֹּל שְׂבָא
וַתִּקָּחֶם וְאֶת־הַנֶּעֱרִים הָכּוּ לְפִי־חֶרֶב וְאִמְלָטָה רַק־אֲנִי
לְבַדִּי לְהִגִּיד לָךְ: טז עוֹד | זֶה מְדַבֵּר זֶה בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵשׁ
אֱלֹהִים נִפְלָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַתִּבְעַר בַּצֹּאן וּבַנֶּעֱרִים
וַתֹּאכְלֶם וְאִמְלָטָה רַק־אֲנִי לְבַדִּי לְהִגִּיד לָךְ: ז' עוֹד | זֶה
מְדַבֵּר זֶה בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר כְּשָׂדִים שָׁמוּ | שְׁלֹשָׁה רָאשִׁים
וַיִּפְשְׁטוּ עַל־הַגְּמָלִים וַיִּקְחוּם וְאֶת־הַנֶּעֱרִים הָכּוּ לְפִי־
חֶרֶב וְאִמְלָטָה רַק־אֲנִי לְבַדִּי לְהִגִּיד לָךְ: יח עַד זֶה

hand and strike his possessions: then, I warrant you, he will curse you to your face.” ¹² “Very well,” Yahweh said to Satan, “all he has is in your power; but keep your hands off his person.” Therefore, Satan left the presence of Yahweh.

¹³ One day, when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother’s house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, “Your oxen were ploughing, with the donkeys grazing beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabaeans attacked and took them away, and put the servants to the sword: I alone escaped to tell you.” ¹⁶ He had not finished speaking when another came and said, “The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burnt the sheep and shepherds to ashes: I alone escaped to tell you.” ¹⁷ He had not finished speaking when another came and said, “The Chaldaeans, in three bands, have raided the camels and made off with them, and put the servants to the

¹² Satan’s proposal puts God in a ‘no win’ situation: if God refuses, it looks as though he fears there may be a basis to Satan’s claim; if God accepts, he comes out of it looking heartless.

¹³ The *Targum to Job* clarifies that this was the first day of the week.

¹⁴ The series of catastrophes and the piety of Job are displayed now in comprehensive terms; everything that can go wrong goes wrong, and yet Job, the pious servant of Yahweh, continues to worship him in the midst of the rubble. This section, and the next, will lay the foundation for the great dialogues in the book.

¹⁵ ‘Sabaeans’ (שְׂבָא) and ‘Chaldaeans’ (v. 17) here mean predatory nomads; the LXX has ‘the ones capturing captured’ (οἱ αἰχμαλωτεύοντες ἡχμαλώτευσαν).

¹⁶ The ‘fire of God’ refers to lightning (1K 18:38, 2K 1:12); the LXX has simply ‘fire’ (Πῦρ); the 1st blow came from enemies, the 2nd from heaven, which might have confused Job more as to the cause of his troubles.

¹⁷ The ‘Chaldaeans’ are possibly the nomadic *Kaldu* who are part of the ethnic Aramaeans; the LXX has simply ‘horsemen’ (ἵππεις).

מִדְבָּר זֶה בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִיךָ וּבָנוֹתֶיךָ אֲכָלִים וְשׂוֹתִים לֵינִי
בְּבֵית אֲחֵיהֶם הַבְּכוֹר: יט וְהִנֵּה רוּחַ גְּדוּלָּה בָּאָה
מֵעֶבֶר הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּגַע בְּאַרְבַּע פְּנוֹת הַבַּיִת וַיִּפֹּל עַל-
הַנְּעָרִים וַיָּמּוּתוּ וַאֲמָלְטָה רַק-אֲנִי לְבַדִּי לְהִגִּיד לָךְ:

כ וַיָּקָם אִיּוֹב וַיִּקְרַע אֶת-מְעָלוֹ וַיִּגְזַז אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּפֹּל
אָרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה: כא וַיֹּאמֶר עָרָם יֵצְתִי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי וְעָרָם
אָשׁוּב שָׁמָּה יְהוָה נָתַן וַיְהוָה לָקַח יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה
מְבָרָךְ:

כב בְּכָל-זֹאת לֹא-חָטָא אִיּוֹב וְלֹא-נָתַן תִּפְלָה לֵאלֹהִים:
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sword: I alone escaped to tell you.” ¹⁸ He had not finished speaking when another came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking at the eldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ when, from the desert, a gale sprang up and struck all four corners of the house, which fell on the young men and they died: I alone escaped to tell you.”

²⁰ Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell down to the ground; ²¹ he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, naked I shall return again; Yahweh gave and Yahweh has taken back; blessed be the name of Yahweh!”

²² In all this, Job committed no sin, and nor he did not reproach God.

¹⁸ This verse, introducing the last of the misfortunes to befall Job at this time, reaffirms the time specified in v. 13.

¹⁹ Both wind and lightning (v. 16) were employed by Satan as his tools; God can permit him such control over factors of the weather when it suits the divine purpose, but God retains ultimate control (see 28:23-27, Pr 3:4, Lk 8:24-25).

²⁰ This double gesture, expressive of sorrow or mourning, is often mentioned in the Bible (see, in the first case, Gn 37:34, Jos 7:6, 2S 1:11, 3:31, etc. and, in the second, Ezr 9:3, Jr 7:29, 48:37, Ezk 7:18).

²¹ Apparently, Job likens mother earth to the womb.

²² Job’s lack of sin is explicitly noted, and this is fundamental to the book.

JOB 2

איוב פרק ב

א ויהי היום ויבאו בני האלהים להתיצב עליהוה ויבוא גם השטן בתוכם להתיצב עליהוה: ב ויאמר יהוה אל השטן אי מזה תבא ויען השטן את יהוה ויאמר משט בארץ ומתהלך בה: ג ויאמר יהוה אל השטן השמת לבך אל עבדי איוב כי אין כמותו בארץ איש תם וישר ירא אלהים וסר מרע ועדנו מחזיק בתמיתו ותסיתני בו לבלעו חנם: ד ויען השטן את יהוה ויאמר עור בעד עור וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו: ה אולם שלחנא ידך וגע אל עצמו ואל בשרו אם לא אל פניך יברכך: ו ויאמר יהוה אל השטן הנו בידך אך את נפשו שמר: ז ויצא השטן

¹ Another day, the sons of God came to attend on Yahweh and Satan came with them too to attend on Yahweh. ² Yahweh said to Satan, "Where have you been?" Satan answered Yahweh, "Prowling about on earth, roaming around there." ³ Then Yahweh asked him, "Did you pay any attention to my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth: a sound an honest man who fears God and shuns evil. He persists in his integrity, though you incited me to ruin him without reason." ⁴ "Skin after skin," Satan replied. "A man will give up all he has to save his life." ⁵ But stretch out your hand and lay a finger on his bone and flesh and he will curse you to your face." ⁶ Yahweh said to Satan, "Very well, he is in your hand; but spare his life." ⁷ So, Satan

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¹ The NJB, following some LXX MSS, omits the 2nd instance of 'to attend on Yahweh' (παράσθηναι ἐναντίον τοῦ κυρίου).

² In place of 'Satan answered Yahweh', the NJB has simply, 'He answered'.

³ For 'without reason', the adverb חנם is used: it means 'gratis', 'free', or 'without cause'; here, the sense has to be gratuitously.

⁴ 'Skin after skin' is an expression whose meaning is clear from the next sentence; the word, 'skin', also means clothes made of skins (Gn 3:21, 27:16) or leather: someone will let himself be stripped of everything he wears, rather than lose his own skin. Once his physical being is affected, he then shows his real character.

⁵ The 'bone and flesh' are idiomatic for the whole person, his physical and his psychical/spiritual being.

⁶ The irony of the passage comes through with this choice of words: the verb שָׁמַר ('spare') means 'keep', 'guard' or 'preserve'; the exceptive clause casts Satan in the role of a saviour – he cannot destroy Job's life but must protect it.

⁷ The word translated as 'sores' is used elsewhere to designate the 6th plague of Egypt (Ex 9:9–11), an endemic disease in Egypt (Dt 28:27), the illness of Hezekiah (2K 20:7), or some other virulent skin disease (Lv 13:18–20:23). Here, it means a pernicious condition affecting the whole body, as in Dt 28:35. The *vav* in the *Qere* reading of וַעַד may have been dropped by haplography from the *Kethib*.

מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּךְ אֶת־אִיּוֹב בְּשָׁחִין רָע מִכָּף רַגְלוֹ
 עַד וְעַד קִדְקְדוֹ: ^ח וַיִּקַּח־לּוֹ חֶרֶשׁ לְהִתְגַּרְדּ בּוֹ וְהוּא
 יָשָׁב בְּתוֹךְ־הָאֵפֶר: ^ט וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִשְׁתּוֹ עֲדָךְ מַחְזִיק
 בְּתַמְתְּךָ בְּרֹךְ אֱלֹהִים וּמַת: ^י וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ כְּדָבָר אַחַת
 הַנִּבְּלוֹת תְּדַבְּרִי גַם אֶת־הַטּוֹב נִקְבֵּל מֵאֵת הָאֱלֹהִים
 וְאֶת־הָרָע לֹא נִקְבֵּל בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־חָטָא אִיּוֹב
 בְּשַׁפְתָּיו: {פ}

^{יא} וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה רֵעֵי אִיּוֹב אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת
 הַבָּאָה עָלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אִישׁ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ אֵלַיִפוֹ הַתִּימְנִי וּבִלְדָּד
 הַשּׁוּחִי וְצוֹפָר הַנַּעֲמָתִי וַיִּוָּעְדוּ יַחְדָּו לָבוֹא לְנוֹד־לוֹ
 וּלְנַחֲמוֹ: ^{יב} וַיֵּשְׂאוּ אֶת־עֵינֵיהֶם מֵרְחוֹק וְלֹא הִכִּירוּהוּ
 וַיֵּשְׂאוּ קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ וַיִּקְרְעוּ אִישׁ מְעָלוֹ וַיִּזְרְקוּ עָפָר עַל־
 רֹאשֵׁיהֶם הַשְּׁמִימָה: ^{יג} וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֹתוֹ לָאָרֶץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
 וְשִׁבְעַת לַיְלוֹת וַאֲיֵין־דָּבָר אֵלָיו דָּבָר כִּי רָאוּ כִּי־גָדֹל
 הַכָּאֵב מְאֹד:

left the presence of Yahweh and struck down Job with painful sores from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. ⁸ Job took a piece of pot to scrape himself and went and sat among the ashes. ⁹ Then his wife said to him, “Why persist in this integrity of yours? Curse God and die.” ¹⁰ “That is how a foolish woman talks,” Job replied. “Should we take the good from God’s hands and not the bad?” In all this misfortune, Job uttered no sinful word.

¹¹ Now, when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that had come on him, each came from his own place: Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, and Zophar of Naamath; and, by common consent, they decided to go and console and comfort him. ¹² Seeing him from a distance, they did not recognise him; they wept aloud, tore their robes, and threw dust in the air over their heads. ¹³ They sat with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, yet no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his pain was great.

⁸ In place of the name ‘Job’, the MT here uses the pronoun ‘he’. The ‘ashes’ likely refers to the place outside the city where the rubbish was collected and burnt; this is the understanding of the LXX, which reads ‘dung-hill outside the city’ (τῆς κοπρίας ἔξω τῆς πόλεως).

⁹ The literal translation of ‘curse’ is ‘bless’, a euphemism. Job’s wife still believed in his integrity (see #4:6) but wishes to shorten his torture.

¹⁰ The word ‘foolish’ (הַנִּבְּלוֹת) has to do with godlessness more than silliness (Ps 14:1); to be foolish is to deny the nature and work of God in life.

¹¹ The three towns are situated in Idumaeen and Arab territory. Edom and ‘the East’ (see #1:3) were regarded by the Israelites as the homeland of the sages (1K 5:10–11, 10:1–3, Pr 30:1, 31:1, Jr 49:7, Ba 3:22–23, Ob 8–9 and Mt 2:1). Like Job, his friends are also non-Israelites.

¹² The three friends offer the penitential gesture and common sign of mourning (see Jos 7:6, 2S 13:19, Ezk 27:30) – they consider Job as good as dead. The NJB, following the LXX, omits ‘in the air’, a gloss possibly inspired by Ex 9:8,10, which turns the action into a gesture of indignation, calling heaven to witness, either to invoke its vengeance or to avert such vengeance from themselves (see Ac 22:23).

¹³ The three friends went into a severe form of mourning, one that is usually reserved for a death.

איוב פרק ג

JOB 3

א אַחֲרֵי־כֵן פָּתַח אִיּוֹב אֶת־פִּיהוּ וַיְקַלֵּל אֶת־יוֹמוֹ: {פ} 1 After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

ב וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: 2 Job answered and said:

ג יָאֲבֹד יוֹם אֲוֹלַד בִּי 3 "Perish the day on which I was born

and the night that told of a man-child conceived.

ד וְהַלֵּילָה אָמַר הָרָה גִּבֹּר:
הַיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִי־חֹשֶׁךְ 4 May that day be darkness,

may God on high have no thought for it,
and may no light shine on it.

ה וְאֵלֶּהוּ חֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת
תִּשְׁכַּן־עָלָיו עֲנָנָה 5 May murk and shadow of death claim it;

clouds hang over it,
blackness of the day terrify it.

ו יִבְעֹתָהּ כַּמְרִירֵי יוֹם:
הַלֵּילָה הַהוּא יִקְחֶהָ אָפֶל 6 That night – let thick darkness seize it,

let it not rejoice among the days of the year
let it not come into the number of the months.

אֶל־יַחֲדָ בִּימֵי שָׁנָה
בְּמִסְפַּר יָרֵחִים אֶל־יָבֵא:

JOB 3

Chs 1–2 are prose narrative; this chapter, however, commences the poetic section of the book (Chs 3–41) containing the cycles of speeches.

¹ The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "In the end, Job broke the silence."

² For this verse, the MT has 'and Job answered' and the LXX has simply 'saying'.

³ This verse has two parallel curses: one of the day of birth, the other of the night of conception. In place of 'man-child', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'boy'; the term is גִּבֹּר, which usually distinguished a man as strong, distinct from children and women.

⁴ This expression by Job in the 1st line is the negation of the divine decree at creation – "Let there be light," and that was the first day.

⁵ The verb translated 'claim' is עֲנָנָה; some think this too simple and think the verb is the homonym, 'pollute' – this is the reading of the Peshitta & Tg. In place of 'terrify it', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'swoop down on it'.

⁶ In place of 'that night', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB opens with the exclamation, "See!" The NJB, following the Peshitta, has "from the days of the year let it be excluded," for the 2nd & 3rd lines.

ז	הִנֵּה הַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא יְהִי גִלְמוּד אֶל־תִּבּוֹא רִנָּה בּוֹ:	7	Yes, may that night be sterile; let no joyful cry penetrate it!
ח	יִקְבְּהוּ אֲרֵר־יּוֹם הָעֲתִידִים עָרַר לוֹיִתָּן:	8	Let those curse it who curse certain days and are ready to rouse Leviathan.
ט	יִחְשְׁכוּ כּוֹכְבֵי נֶשֶׁף יִקּוּלְאוֹר וְאֵין וְאֶל־יִרְאָה בְּעַפְעַפ־שָׁחַר:	9	Dark be the stars of its morning, let it hope in vain for light and never see the eyelids of the morning.
י	כִּי לֹא סָגַר דְּלָתִי בְטָנִי וַיִּסְתֵּר עֵמָל מֵעֵינַי:	10	Since it would not shut the doors of the womb on me to hide sorrow from my eyes.
יא	לָמָּה לֹא מָרַחַם אֲמוֹת מִבְטֵן יִצְאָתִי וְאֶגּוּעַ:	11	“Why was I not stillborn, or why did I not perish as I left the womb?

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- ⁷ The word translated ‘penetrate’ (בוֹ, here following NETB) is literally ‘enter’; the NRSV & NIV translate interpretively: ‘be heard in it’; a shout of joy, such as at a birth, that ‘enters’ a day is certainly heard on that day.
- ⁸ ‘Who curse the day’ refers either to the enemies of light – those who work in the dark – (see 24:13ff) or those who, like Job, curse the day they were born. Or, more probably, sorcerers and magicians whose curses and spells were believed capable of making lucky days unlucky or even produces eclipses, when ‘Leviathan’ temporarily swallowed the sun. Not everyone is satisfied with the reading of the MT, and some think ‘day’ should be ‘sea’ (e.g. NRSV, NIV); but this is an unnecessary change, for there is no textual problem, in the line. ‘Leviathan’ (also called the Dragon or Fleeing Serpent – see #40:25, Ps 74:14, 104:26, Is 27:1, 51:9 and Am 9:3) was a monster of primeval chaos (see #7:12); there was a common superstitious fear that a powerful curse against the present order might stir him to action. The ‘Dragon’ of Rv 12:3, who embodies Evil’s hostility to God, has certain characteristics in common with this serpent of chaos.
- ⁹ The expression ‘eyelids of the morning’ refers to the very first rays of dawn (see also 41:18); there is some debate whether it refers to ‘eyelids’, ‘eyelashes’ or ‘eyeballs’.
- ¹⁰ This use of doors for the womb forms an implied comparison; the night should have hindered conception (see Gn 20:18 & 1S 1:5).
- ¹¹ Job follows his initial cry with a series of rhetorical questions; he argues thus: since he was born (v. 10), the next chance he had of escaping this life of misery would have been to be stillborn (vv. 11–12, 16); in vv. 13–19 Job sees death as falling into a peaceful, trouble-free sleep.

יב מדוע קדמוני ברבים
 ומה־שדים כי אינק:
 יג כִּי־עַתָּה שִׁכַּבְתִּי וְאִשְׁקוּט
 יִשְׁנֹתִי אֲזִי יָנוּחַ לִי:
 יד עַם־מַלְכִּים וְיַעֲצִי אֶרֶץ
 הַבָּנִים חֲרָבוֹת לָמוֹ:
 טו אֲזִי עַם־שָׂרִים זָהָב לָהֶם
 הַמַּמְלָאִים בְּתֵיהֶם בֶּסֶף:
 טז אֲזִי כְנָפֶל טְמוֹן לֹא אֶהְיָה
 כְּעַלְלִים לֹא־רָאוּ אֹר:
 יז שֵׁם רָשָׁעִים חָדְלוּ רָגֹז
 וְשֵׁם יָנוּחוּ יִגְיעִי כַח:

12 Why were there knees to receive me,
 breasts for me to suck?
 13 Now I should be lying and would be peaceful,
 I would be asleep and at rest,
 14 with the kings and counsellors of earth
 who have rebuilt ruins for themselves,
 15 or with princes who have gold
 and silver cramming their houses;
 16 or, buried like a stillborn child, I should not have existed,
 like infants that never see the light.
 17 Down there, the wicked cease from turmoil,
 and there the weary are at rest.

-
- 12 The sufferer is looking back over all the possible chances of death, including when he was brought forth, placed on the knees or lap, and breastfed.
 13 The text uses a combination of the perfect (lying/asleep) and imperfect (peaceful/rest); the particle 'now' (עַתָּה) gives to the perfect verb its conditional nuance – it presents actions in the past that are not actually accomplished but seen as possible.
 14 In the light of Is 58:12 and 61:4, this verse could refer to the Babylonian and Assyrian kings, who often boasted of having 'rebuilt ruins'; but the pronoun 'for themselves' rather suggests funerary dwellings, built in advance in waste or lonely places, as was customary in Egypt. It may be that the Hebrew word for 'ruins' was commonly used for the Egyptian pyramids.
 15 In place of 'houses', the NJB has 'tombs' (i.e. their houses of eternity). Archaeological excavation, notably at Ur and in Egypt, has revealed immense wealth stored away in the tombs of royal and princely families.
 16 The noun כְּנָפֶל ('stillborn child') is the abortive thing that falls (hence the verb) from the womb before the time is ripe (Ps 58:9); the idiom using the verb 'to fall' from the womb means to come into the world (Is 26:18). The epithet טְמוֹן ('hidden') is appropriate to the verse: the child comes in vain and disappears into the darkness – it is hidden forever.
 17 'Down there' means in Sheol (see #Nb 16:33), the place where the infant who is stillborn is either buried (the grave) or resides (the place of departed spirits) and thus does not see the light of the sun.

יח	יחד אֲסִירִים שְׁאֲנָנוּ לֹא שְׁמָעוּ קוֹל נִגְשׁ:	18	Prisoners, all left in peace, hear no more the shouts of the oppressor.
יט	קָטָן וְגָדוֹל שָׁם הוּא וְעֶבֶד חֲפְשֵׁי מֵאֲדֹנָיו:	19	The small and the great are there, and the slaves are free of their masters.
כ	לְמָה יִתֵּן לְעַמִּל אֹר וְחַיִּים לְמָרִי נֶפֶשׁ:	20	“Why does he give light to a man of grief? Why give life to those of bitter heart,
כא	הַמְּחַפִּים לְמוֹת וְאֵינָנוּ וְיַחֲפֹרְהוּ מִמָּטְמוֹנִים:	21	who long for death that never comes, and hunt for it more than for buried treasure?
כב	הַשֹּׂמְחִים אֵלֵי-גִיל יִשְׂשׂוּ כִּי יִמְצְאוּ-קֶבֶר:	22	They would be glad to the point of jubilation and shout with joy when they find the grave.
כג	לְגֹבֶר אֲשֶׁר-דָּרְכוּ נִסְתָּרָה וַיִּסְדֹּךְ אֱלֹהֵי בַעֲדוֹ:	23	Why give light to one whose way is hidden, whom God shuts in all alone?

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- ¹⁸ In place of ‘prisoners’, here following the MT, the LXX has ‘the men of old time’ (οἱ αἰώνιοι). The Hebrew word here translated as ‘oppressors’ is use of the taskmasters in Ex 3:7.
- ¹⁹ The LXX renders ‘free’ as ‘unafraid’ (οὐ δεδουλωμένος), although the negative (οὐ) has disappeared in some MSS to give the reading ‘and the servant that feared his master’.
- ²⁰ In vv. 11, 12 & 16, there was the first series of questions in which Job himself was in question; now the questions are more general for all mankind – why should the sufferers in general have been afflicted with life?
- ²¹ At the end of the 1st line, the MT simply has ‘there is not’ with a pronominal suffix and a conjunction (וְאֵינָנוּ): ‘and there is not it’; the LXX (τυγχάνουσιν, ‘attain’) and Vg (venit, ‘it comes’) add a verb to explain this form.
- ²² In place of ‘to the point of jubilation’, the NJB (following the Peshitta – ‘gather themselves together’) has the conjectural ‘to see the grave-mound’. The expression ‘when they find the grave’ means when they finally die.
- ²³ ‘God’ here translates אֱלֹהֵי, the only explicit mention in this poem. Job, like many Semites, accepted God as the cause of both good and evil (disaster, calamities, et cetera); see 2:10, Is 45:7, Am 3:6, Lm 3:38. After speaking of people in general (in the plural in vv. 21–22), Job returns to himself specifically (in the singular, using the same word, גֹּבֶר, that he employed of himself in v. 3): he is the man whose way is hidden.

כד כִּי־לִפְנֵי לַחֲמִי אֲנַחֲתִי תִבָּא
וַיִּתְּכוּ כַּמִּים שֶׁאֲנִי:
כה כִּי פָּחַד פָּחַדְתִּי וַיֵּאֲתֵינִי
וְאֲשֶׁר יִגְרֹתִי יִבֹּא לִי:
כו לֹא שְׁלוֹתִי | וְלֹא שְׁקֻטִּי וְלֹא־נַחֲתִי
וַיִּבֹּא רָגֶז:

24 “For sighing comes in place of my food,
and my groans pour out like water.
25 The thing that I fear has happened,
and whatever I dread befalls me.
26 I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, I have no rest;
turmoil has come upon me.”

²⁴ For the 1st line, here following the NETB, the NRSV has, “For my sighing comes like (before) my bread,” and the NJB has “My only food is sighs.”

²⁵ The word translated ‘has happened’ (וַיֵּאֲתֵינִי) is Aramaic.

²⁶ Literally translated, the 2nd line reads simply ‘and trouble came’; Job is essentially saying that, since the trouble has come upon him, there is not a moment of rest and relief.

איוב פרק ד

JOB 4

- א ויען אליפז התימני ויאמר:
- ב הנסה דבר אליך תלאה
ועצר במלין מי יוכל:
- ג הנה יסרת רבים
וידיים רפות תחזק:
- ד בושל יקימון מליך
וברכים כרעות תאמץ:
- ה כי עתה | תבוא אליך ותלא
תגע עריך ותבהל:
- ו הלא יראתך כסלתך
תקותך ותם דרכיך:
- ¹ Eliphaz the Temanite spoke next. He said:
- ² “If one attempts a word with you, will you bear with us?
Who in any case could refrain from speaking now?
- ³ See, you have schooled many others,
given strength to feeble hands.
- ⁴ Your words supported any who wavered
and strengthened any failing knee.
- ⁵ Now your turn has come, and you lose patience,
at the first touch on yourself, you are overwhelmed!
- ⁶ Does not your piety give you confidence,
and your integrity of life give you hope?

JOB 4

- ¹ Literally translated, this verse reads, “*Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:*” here, we follow the NJB.
- ² In place of ‘one’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘we’ and NETB has ‘someone’; in the MT, the verb has no expressed subject. The Piel verb here translated ‘attempts’ is difficult: it would normally be translated ‘has one tried (words with you)’.
- ³ The deictic particle הנה (‘see’) summons attention.
- ⁴ Both verbs in the 1st line are imperfects, and probably carry the same nuance as the last verb in v. 3, namely, either customary imperfect or preterite (the customary has the aspect of stressing that this was what Job used to do). The phrase ‘failing knee’ refers one who may be under a heavy load whose knees begin to shake and buckle (see also Heb 12:12).
- ⁵ The sentence of the 1st line has no subject, but the context demands that the subject be the same kind of trouble that has come upon people that Job has helped.
- ⁶ Job’s ‘integrity’ (translating a Hebrew word related to ‘blameless’ in 1:1) is not yet questioned. Eliphaz is not being sarcastic to Job: he knows that Job is a God-fearing man who lives out his faith in life; however, he also knows that Job should apply to himself the same things he tells others.

זָכַרְנָא מִי הוּא נָקִי אַבְדִּי	ז	7	Can you recall anyone guiltless that perished?
וְאֵיפָה יִשְׂרָאֵל נִכְחָדוּ:			Where then have the honest been wiped out?
כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי חֲרָשֵׁי אֶזְרָא	ח	8	As I have seen, those who plough iniquity
וְזָרְעֵי עֵמֶל יִקְצְרֶהוּ:			and sow disaster reap just that.
מִנְשֵׁמַת אֱלֹהִים יֵאָבְדוּ	ט	9	Under the breath of God, they perish:
וּמְרוּחַ אַפּוֹ יִכָּלוּ:			a blast of his anger, and they are destroyed.
שִׁאֲגַת אַרְיָה וְקוֹל שַׁחַל	י	10	The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion,
וְשִׁנֵּי כְּפִירִים נִתְּעוּ:			and the teeth of the young lions are broken.
לִישׁ אַבְדִּי מִבְּלִי-טָרֶף	יא	11	The mighty lion dies for lack of prey
וּבְנֵי לְבִיא יִתְּפָרְדּוּ:			and the lioness's whelps are dispersed.
וְאֵלֵי דְבַר יִגְנֹב	יב	12	Now a word came stealthily to me,
וְתִקַּח אֲזִנִּי שִׁמְעַן מִנְהוּ:			a whisper has come to my ears.

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- 7 Eliphaz will first argue that the suffering of the righteous is disciplinary and not punitive, then that it is the wicked who deserve judgment.
- 8 In place of 'as I have seen', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'I speak from experience'. In place of 'iniquity', the LXX has 'the barren places' (τὰ ἄτοπα).
- 9 In place of 'under the breath' (מִנְשֵׁמַת), the LXX has 'by the command' (ἀπὸ προστάγματος) probably to limit the anthropomorphism. The 'breath of God' occurs frequently in Scripture: in Gn 2:7, it imparts life, but here it destroys it.
- 10 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB, reads, "The lion roars, his savage growls, like the fangs of a lion cub, are broken off." For this verse, the LXX reads, "The strength of the lion and the voice of the lioness and the exulting cry of dragons are quenched." (σθένος λέοντος, φωνὴ δὲ λεαίνης, γαυρίαμα δὲ δρακόντων ἐσβέσθη)
- 11 The word לִישׁ ('mighty lion') occurs only here, Pr 30:30 & Is 30:6; it has cognates in several of the Semitic languages, and so seems to indicate lion as king of the beasts.
- 12 For the 1st line, the NJB has, "I have received a secret revelation." The text of this verse in the LXX offers special problems; it reads, "But if there had been any truth in your words, none of these evils would have fallen upon you; shall not my ear receive extraordinary things from him?" (εἰ δέ τι ῥῆμα ἀληθινὸν ἐγγέγονει ἐν λόγοις σου, οὐδὲν ἄν σοι τούτων κακὸν ἀπῆντησεν. πότερον οὐ δέξεταιί μου τὸ οὖς ἐξαίσια παρ' αὐτοῦ;) The major error involves a dittography from the word for 'secret', yielding 'truth'.

יג בְּשֵׁעָפִים מְחִזְזִינֹת לַיְלָה
 בְּנִפְלֵ תִרְדָּמָה עַל-אָנָשִׁים:
 יד פָּחַד קָרָאֲנִי וְרַעְדָּה
 וְרַב עֲצֻמוֹתַי הִפְחִיד:
 טו וְרוּחַ עַל-פָּנַי יִחַלֶּף
 תִּסְמָר שְׁעֵרַת בְּשָׂרִי:
 טז יַעֲמֹד | וְלֹא-אֶפִּיר מֵרְאֵהוּ
 תִּמּוֹנָה לִנְגִד עֵינַי
 דִּמְמָה וְקוֹל אֲשָׁמַע:
 יז הָאָנוּשׁ מֵאֱלֹהִים יִצְדֵּק
 אִם מַעֲשֵׂהוּ יִטְהַר-גִּבֹּר:

13 By night, when dreams confuse the mind
 and deep sleep falls on men,
 14 a shiver ran through me, and a terror,
 and filled all my bones with fright.
 15 A breath slid over my face,
 the hairs of my body bristled.
 16 It stood there; I did not know his face,
 but the form stayed there before my eyes.
 Silence – then I heard a voice:
 17 “Can a mortal seem upright before God?
 Or a man pure before his Maker?

- 13 The word for ‘deep sleep’ is תִּרְדָּמָה; it is used in the creation account when God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam; and it is used in the story of Jonah when the prophet was asleep during the storm. The LXX interprets it to mean ‘fear’, rendering the whole verse, “but terror falls upon men with dread and a sound in the night” (φόβοι δὲ καὶ ἡχώ νυκτερινή, ἐπιπίπτων φόβος ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπους).
- 14 The two words ‘shiver’ (פָּחַד) and ‘terror’ (רַעְדָּה) strengthen each other as synonyms (see also Ps 55:6); the compound subject of the verb (קָרָאֲנִי) is רַעְדָּה, placed at the end of the colon.
- 15 The word רוּחַ (‘breath’) can also be ‘spirit’; the implication here is that it was something that Eliphaz felt (what he saw follows in v. 16). Commentators are divided on whether this is an apparition, a spirit, or a breath. The word can be used in either the masculine or the feminine, and so the gender of the verb does not favour the meaning ‘spirit’; in fact, in Is 21:1, the same verb, חָלַף, is used with the subject being a strong wind or hurricane ‘blowing across’. It may be that such a wind has caused Eliphaz’s hair to stand on end here. The verbs in this verse are imperfects; in the last verse, the verbs were perfects when Eliphaz reported the fear that seized him: in this continuation of the report the description becomes vivid with the change in verbs, as if the experience were in progress.
- 16 The LXX reads, “I arose and perceived it not, I looked and there was no form before my eyes; but I only heard a breath and a voice.” (ἀνέστην, καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνων· εἶδον, καὶ οὐκ ἦν μορφή πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου, ἀλλ’ ἦ αὔραν καὶ φωνήν ἤκουον)
- 17 An alternative translation for ‘before’ is ‘more than’ (as NIV), yet this does not seem the most probable: the idea of someone being more righteous than God is too strong to be reasonable – Job will not do that; but he will imply that God is unjust. In addition, Eliphaz had this vision before

יח הֵן בַּעֲבָדָיו לֹא יֵאֱמִין
 וּבְמַלְאָכָיו יִשִּׁים תְּהִלָּה:
 יט אֶף־שְׂכָנֵי בֵּית־חֹמֶר
 אֲשֶׁר־בַּעֲפָר יְסֻדָּם
 יִדְכָּאוּם לִפְנֵי־עֵשׂ:
 כ מִבֹּקֶר לְעֶרֶב יִכָּתוּ
 מִבְּלִי מַשִּׁים לִנְצַח יִאֲבָדוּ:
 כא הֲלֹא־נִסֵּעַ יִתְּרָם בָּם
 יָמוּתוּ וְלֹא בַחֲכָמָה:

- 18 God cannot rely even on his own servants;
 even with his angels he finds fault.
- 19 What then of those who live in houses of clay,
 whose foundation is in the dust?
 They are crushed as easily as a moth.
- 20 Between morning and evening, they are destroyed;
 they vanish forever, with no one regarding it.
- 21 Their tent-peg is snatched from them,
 and they die devoid of wisdom.””

hearing of Job's trouble and so is not addressing the idea that Job is making himself more righteous than God. He is stating that no man is righteous before God. Vv. 18–21 will show that no one can claim righteousness before God; in 9:2 & 25:4, the preposition 'with' is used (see also Jr 51:5, where the preposition should be rendered 'before' [the Holy One]).

- 18 The 'servants of God' are angels, although the Tg here interprets them as prophets). The word תְּהִלָּה ('fault') is a *hapax legomenon* and so has created some confusion in the various translations; it seems to mean 'error' or 'folly'. The word is translated 'crooked in what he thinks about' (σκολιόν τι ἐπενόησεν) in the LXX but Symmachus connects it with the word for 'madness'.
- 19 'Those who live in houses of clay' are human beings, for the human body was made of clay (10:9, 33:6, Is 64:7); in 2Co 4:7, the body is an 'earthen vessel' (a clay pot). The NJB includes the last line in v. 20.
- 20 The form יִכָּתוּ ('destroyed') is the Hophal imperfect of the root 'to be pounded/pulverised/reduced to ashes' (Jr 46:5, Mi 1:7). The NJB ends the last line with the conjectural, "... with no one to bring them back."
- 21 A more literal translation of 'devoid of wisdom' is 'and not with wisdom' or possibly 'for lack of wisdom' or 'and it is not Wisdom's fault'. However, the immediate context, insisting on human frailty in general and the brevity of life, suggests that human beings have not found, or cannot find, time (see Ps 90:12) to acquire wisdom, or what little they have acquired is powerless against death. The 'tent-peg' is an image for sudden disaster that comes to the wicked.

איוב פרק ה

א קרא-נא הַיֵּשׁ עֹנֵד
וְאֵל-מִי מְקַדְּשִׁים תִּפְנֶה:
ב כִּי-לֹא-יִלְאֹוּל יִהְרֶג-כַּעַשׁ
וּפְתָה תִּמְיֵת קִנְאָה:
ג אֲנִי-רָאִיתִי אֲוִיל מְשֻׁרֵשׁ
וְאֶקֻּב נֹוהוּ פִתְאֻם:
ד יִרְחֲקוּ בְנָיו מִיֶּשַׁע
וְיִדְכָּאוּ בַשַּׁעַר וְאֵין מַצִּיל:
ה אֲשֶׁר קִצְרוּ רָעַב יֹאכֵל
וְאֵל-מִצְנִים יִקְחֶהוּ
וְשֹׂאף צָמִים חִילָם:
ו כִּי לֹא-יֵצֵא מֵעֵפֶר אֹון
וּמֵאֲדָמָה לֹא-יֵצֵמַח עֵמֶל:

JOB 5

1 "Make your appeal then. Will you find an answer?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For, vexation kills the fool,
and anger kills the simple.
3 I have seen the senseless taking root
when a curse fell suddenly on his house.
4 His children are far from safety,
ruined at the gate, and no one to deliver them.
5 The hungry eat their harvest;
they take it even out of the thorns,
and covetous people thirst for their possessions.
6 No, misery does not grow out of the soil
nor sorrow spring from the ground.

JOB 5

- 1 The 'holy ones', or 'sons of God' – the LXX has 'holy angels' (ἁγγέλων ἁγίων) – see also 1:6, 15:15, Ex 15:11, Ps 82:1, cannot help Job since they are at fault (4:18). The LXX freely interprets the verb in the 2nd colon as 'if you will see' (εἴ ... ὄψῃ).
- 2 The two words for 'foolish person' in this verse are common in wisdom literature: the 1st, אֲוִיל, is the fool who is a senseless person; the 2nd, פְּתָה, is the naive and silly person, the simpleton, the one who is easily led astray.
- 3 The NRSV and NETB, following the MT, have 'I cursed' in place of 'a curse fell suddenly on', here (loosely) following the LXX and Peshitta; the text of vv. 3–4 is uncertain and the translation is largely conjectural.
- 4 The 'gate' is that of the town, a common meeting place where justice was dispensed. The NJB has 'defend' in place of 'deliver', here following the NRSV & NETB; this entire clause could be subordinated to the preceding clause and rendered simply 'without a deliverer'.
- 5 The 2nd line follows the MT (literally, 'and unto from thorns he takes it') & NRSV; the NJB has the conjectural 'God snatches it from their mouths'.
- 6 Trouble does not come from outside man, nor does it come as a part of the natural order, but rather it comes from the evil nature of man.

ז	כִּי־אָדָם לְעֵמֶל יוֹלֵד וּבְנֵי־רֶשֶׁף יִגְבִּיהוּ עוֹף:	7	Human beings are born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upwards.
ח	אוֹלָם אֲנִי אֶדְרֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים וְאֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲשִׁים דְּבַרְתִּי:	8	“But, if I were you, I should appeal to God and before God I would lay my case.
ט	עֲשֵׂה גְדֻלוֹת וְאִין חֶקֶר נִפְלְאוֹת עַד־אִין מִסְפָּר:	9	His works are great, past all reckoning, marvels beyond all counting.
י	הַנָּתַן מָטָר עַל־פְּנֵי־אָרֶץ וְשָׁלַח מַיִם עַל־פְּנֵי חוּצוֹת:	10	He gives rain to the earth and sends water on the fields.
יא	לְשׁוֹם שְׂפָלִים לְמָרוֹם וְקוֹדְרִים שֹׁגְבוּ יֵשַׁע:	11	He sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

⁷ The *NJB* opens with the conjectural, “It is people who breed trouble for themselves.” In place of ‘sparks’, here following the *NRSV* & *NETB* (translating בְּנֵי־רֶשֶׁף – ‘sons of flame’), the *NJB* has ‘eagles’ (reading נֶשֶׁף for רֶשֶׁף); the *LXX* has ‘the young vulture’ (νεοσσοὶ δὲ γυπὸς). ‘Resheph’, the Phoenician god of thunder and lightning, may have had the eagle as his symbol.

⁸ The word אוֹלָם is a strong adversative ‘but’; this forms the contrast with what has been said previously and so marks a new section. After Eliphaz’s earlier ironical question (see #1), he now apparently draws a distinction between those who have recourse to angels and those who, like himself, are not afraid to address God directly; on this score, he invites Job to correct his attitude towards God and to behave with greater loyalty to his Creator. The *MT* employs אֱל in the 1st line and אֱלֹהִים in the 2nd, but the *LXX* uses κυρίως (‘LORD’) in both places in this verse; however, in the 2nd colon it also has ‘master of all’ (πάντων δεσπότης), which is replaced in Aquila’s version by παντοκράτωρ, prompting some to suggest that the second name for God in the verses should be ‘Shaddai’.

⁹ This verse summarises Eliphaz’s approach well, for he has good understanding of the truth, but has difficulty in making the correct conclusions from it.

¹⁰ The use of the verb ‘gives’ underscores the idea that rain is a gift from God; this would be more keenly felt in the Middle East where water is scarce.

¹¹ At the opening of this verse, the *NJB* inserts, ‘if his will’ and, for the 2nd line, reads, “and exalts the afflicted to the heights of prosperity;” here, we follow the *NRSV*. The word שְׂפָלִים (‘those who are lowly’) refers to those who are down – the lowly and despised of the earth; they are the opposite of the ‘proud’ (see Ps 138:6). Here, there is a deliberate contrast between ‘lowly’ and ‘on high’.

יב מִפֶּר מַחֲשָׁבוֹת עֲרוּמִים
 וְלֹא־תַעֲשֶׂנָּה יָדֵיהֶם תִּשְׂיָה:
 ג לִכְד חֲכָמִים בְּעֶרְמָם
 וְעֵצַת נִפְתָּלִים נִמְהָרָה:
 יד יוֹמָם יִפְגְּשׁוּ־חֹשֶׁךְ
 וְכָלִילָה יִמְשְׁשׁוּ בַצֹּהָרִים:
 טו וַיִּשַׁע מִחֶרֶב מִפִּיהֶם
 וּמִיד חֲזָק אֲבִיוֹן:
 טז וַתְּהִי לִדְל תִּקְוָה
 וְעֵלְתָה קִפְצָה פִּיהָ:
 זי הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁרִי אֲנוֹשׁ יוֹכַחְנוּ אֱלֹהִים
 וּמוֹסֵר שְׂדֵי אֱלֹהִים:

12 He frustrates the plans of the crafty
 so that they cannot succeed in their intrigues.
 13 He traps the crafty in the snare of their own trickery,
 throws the plans of the cunning into disarray.
 14 In the daylight, they come up against darkness,
 and grope their way as if noon were night.
 15 He saves the needy from the sword of their mouth,
 and the needy from the grasp of the mighty.
 16 So, the poor have hope,
 and injustice shuts its mouth.
 17 “Blessed are those whom God corrects!
 Therefore, do not scorn the lessons of Shaddai!

-
- 12 The word עֲרוּמִים means ‘crafty’ or ‘shrewd’; it describes the shrewdness of some to achieve their ends (see Gn 3:1, where the serpent is more cunning than all the creatures, that is, he knows where the dangers are and will attempt to bring down the innocent). In the next verse, it describes the clever plans of the wise – those who are wise in their own sight.
 13 The 1st line is the only part of the Book of Job quote in the NT (1Co 3:19, although Rm 11:35 seems to reflect 41:11 and Ph 1:19 is similar to 13:6).
 14 God so confuses the crafty that they are unable to fulfil their plans – it is as if they encounter darkness in broad daylight; this is like the Syrians in 2K 6:18–23.
 15 The word ‘needy’ occurs only in the 2nd line, but it serves as the object of the verb ‘saves’ in the 1st. For the 1st line, the NJB has the conjectural, “He rescues the bankrupt from their jaws.”
 16 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Hope springs afresh for the weak, and wickedness must shut its mouth.” Other translations for ‘injustice’ are ‘wickedness’ (NJB), ‘iniquity’ (NETB) and ‘unrighteousness’ (NASB).
 17 Eliphaz suggests that Job’s misfortunes are therefore disciplinary, a painful but salutary lesson; Elihu says the same (33:19ff). ‘Shaddai’ (שְׂדֵי) was a name for God in the patriarchal period (see #Gn 17:1); it is a deliberate archaism in this book, occurring 31 times. The word אֲשֶׁרִי (‘blessed’) is often rendered ‘happy’, but this relates to what happens rather than to the heavenly bliss of the one who is right with God.

יח	כִּי הוּא יַכְאִיב וַיַּחְבֹּשׁ יִמְחֹץ וַיְדוּ תִרְפִּינָה:	18	For, he wounds but he binds up; he strikes but his hands heal.
יט	בֶּשֶׁשׁ צָרוֹת יִצִּילֶךָ וּבְשִׁבְעַ לֹא-יַגַּע בְּךָ רָע:	19	Six times, he will deliver you from sorrow, and the seventh time, evil will not touch you.
כ	בְּרָעַב פִּדְּךָ מִמוֹת וּבְמִלְחָמָה מִיַּד חֶרֶב:	20	In famine, he will save you from death, and in war from the stroke of the sword.
כא	בְּשׁוֹט לִשׁוֹן תִּחְבֵּא וְלֹא-תִירָא מִשָּׂד בִּי יְבוֹא:	21	You will be safe from the lash of the tongue, unafraid at the approach of destruction.
כב	לִשָּׂד וּלְכַפֵּן תִּשְׁחַק וּמַחֲיַת הָאָרֶץ אֶל-תִּירָא:	22	You will laugh at pillage and famine, and have no fear of the beasts of the earth.
כג	כִּי עַם-אֲבֹנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה בְּרִיתְךָ וַחֲיַת הַשָּׂדֶה הַשְּׁלָמָה-לָךְ:	23	You will have a pact with the stones of the field, and live in amity with wild beasts.
כד	וַיִּדְעַת כִּי-שְׁלוֹם אֹהֶלְךָ וּפִקְדַת נֹדְךָ וְלֹא תַחֲטָא:	24	You will know that your tent is secure, and your fold unharmed when you inspect it.

- ¹⁸ Vv. 18–23 give the reasons why someone should accept the chastening of God – the hand that wounds is the same hand that heals; but, of course, the lines do not apply to Job because his suffering is not due to divine chastening.
- ¹⁹ Eliphaz uses the style of the ‘numerical proverbs’ (see Pr 6:16–19, 30:15ff, Am 1:3, Mi 5:5). A number that seems to be sufficient for the point (6, here) is increased by one, as if to say there is always one more; by using this, Eliphaz simply means ‘in all troubles’.
- ²⁰ Tg Job here sees an allusion to the famine of Egypt and the war with Amalek.
- ²¹ In place of ‘destruction’, the NJB has the conjectural ‘the despoiler’. Here, the Tg saw a reference to Balaam and the ruin brought by the Midianites.
- ²² In place of ‘pillage and famine’, which have already been mentioned, the NJB has the conjectural ‘drought and frost’; the repetition has prompted others to suggest deleting the whole verse and the LXX translates ‘pillage and famine’ as ‘the unrighteous and the lawless’ (ἀδίκων καὶ ἀνόμων) but there is no difficulty in having the repetition of the words as found in the MT.
- ²³ In Palestine, the soil must be cleared of ‘stones’ (see 2K 3:19, 25, Is 5:2). The LXX omits the 1st line of this verse.
- ²⁴ The word here used for ‘safe’ (שְׁלוֹם) can also mean ‘peace’, ‘security’ or ‘wholeness’.

כה וידעת כי־רב זרעך
 וצאצאיך כעשב הארץ:
 כו תבוא בכלל אלי־קבר
 בעלות גדיש בעתו:
 כז הנה־זאת חקרנוה כן־היא
 שמענה ואתה דע־לך:

25 You will see your children multiply;
 your offspring grow like the grass in the fields.
 26 At a ripe age, you will go to the grave,
 as a wheat sheaf stacked in due season.
 27 All this we have observed, and it is so!
 Heed it; you will be the wiser for it!"

²⁵ The literal translation of 'children' is 'seed' and that for 'offspring' is 'shoots' (parallel to 'seed' in the 1st line). Some commentators suggest that Eliphaz seems to have forgotten about, or was insensitive to, Job's loss of his children, and that his conventional theology is untouched by human feeling.

²⁶ The word translated 'at a ripe age' has been given an array of meanings: 'health', 'integrity' (Peshitta), 'like a new blade of corn' and 'in your vigour'; the numerical value of the letters in the word **בכלל** is 2, 20, 30, and 8, or 60: this has led some commentators to say that, at 60, one would enter the ripe old age.

²⁷ With this verse, the speech by Eliphaz comes to a close; his two mistakes with it are: **1** that the tone was too cold and **2** the argument did not fit Job's case.

איוב פרק ו

JOB 6

וַיֹּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: ^א 1 Job spoke next. He said:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>ב לוֹ שָׁקוֹל יִשְׁקָל בְּעָשִׂי
וְהִיטִי וְהִוֵּתִי בְּמֵאזְנִים יִשְׁאוּ-יָחַד:
ג כִּי-עֲתָה מִחוּל יָמַי יִכָּבֵד
עַל-כֵּן דְּבָרִי לָעוֹ:
ד כִּי חֲצִי שְׁדֵי עַמּוּדֵי
אֲשֶׁר חֲמַתָּם שְׁתָּה רוּחִי
בְּעוֹתֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲרֻכּוּנִי:
ה הִינֵה-קִפְּרָא עַל־דָּשָׁא
אִם יִגְעָה-שׁוֹר עַל-בָּלִילוֹ:
ו הֵיאֵכָל תִּפֹּל מִבְּלִי-מֶלַח
אִם-יִשְׁ-טֶעַם בְּרִיר חֲלָמוֹת:</p> | <p>2 “Oh, if only my misery could be weighed,
and all my misfortunes laid on the scales!
3 For they outweigh the sand of the sea:
that is why my words are wild.
4 The arrows of Shaddai are in me;
my spirit drinks their poison,
God’s terrors stand paraded against me.
5 Does a wild ass bray when it has grass
or an ox low over its fodder?
6 Is not food insipid, eaten without salt;
is there any taste in mallow juice?</p> |
|---|--|

JOB 6

- ¹ The orthodox explanation cannot be valid in Job’s case, as the reader knows from Chs. 1–2. His ‘ills’ exceed all ordinary misfortunes and his relationship with ‘Shaddai’ (v. 4) seems destroyed.
- ² The conjunction לוֹ (‘oh’) introduces the wish – an unrealisable wish – with the Niphal imperfect. The translation (‘misfortunes’) here follows the Qere (וְהִוֵּתִי); the Kethib/Qere difference may be due to a scribe misreading a (possibly small/short) vav as a yod.
- ³ The point of the comparison with the ‘sand of the sea’ is that the sand is immeasurable: so, the grief of Job cannot be measured.
- ⁴ The LXX translators knew a liquid should be used with the verb ‘drink’ but they understood ‘whose violence drinks up my blood’ (θυμὸς αὐτῶν ἐκπίνει μου τὸ αἷμα); for the rest of the verse, they have, ‘whenever I am going to speak, they pierce me’ (ὅταν ἄρξωμαι λαλεῖν, κεντοῦσί με).
- ⁵ There have been suggestions to identify the animal of the 1st line as something other than a wild donkey (the NJB has ‘wild ox’), but the traditional interpretation has been confirmed. The verb נָהַק (‘bray’) occurs in Arabic and Aramaic but, in Hebrew, only in Job (here and 30:7, where it refers to unfortunate people in the wilderness who utter cries like the hungry wild donkey).
- ⁶ The NJB, following the Tg, has ‘egg white’ in place of ‘mallow juice’ (here following the NRSV); the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

ז	מֵאֲנֵה לִנְגֹועַ נַפְשִׁי הֵמָּה כְּדוֹי לַחֲמִי:	7	The very things my appetite revolts at are now my diet in sickness.
ח	מִי־יִתֵּן תְּבוֹא שְׂאֵלָתִי וְתִקְוָתִי יִתֵּן אֱלֹהִים:	8	“Oh, that I might have my request and that God would grant my hope!
ט	וַיֹּאֵל אֱלֹהִים וַיִּדְכָּאֵנִי יָתֵר יָדוֹ וַיִּבְצַעֵנִי:	9	May it please God to crush me, to give his hand free play and do away with me!
י	וַתְּהִי־עוֹד נִחְמָתִי וְאִסְלָדָה בַּחִלָּה לֹא יֶחְמוֹל כִּי־לֹא כָחַדְתִּי אִמְרֵי קְדוֹשׁ:	10	This, at least, would give me comfort – then I would rejoice in spite of pitiless fear – for I never rebelled against the decrees of the Holy One.
יא	מִה־כֹּחִי כִי־אֵיחָל וּמִה־קֶּצֶי כִי־אֲאַרְיֶךְ נַפְשִׁי:	11	What is my strength, that I should wait? And what is my end, that I should be patient?

⁷ The text of this very difficult verse follows the *NJB*, which itself follows the *Vg* (*Quæ prius nolebat tangere anima mea, nunc, præ angustia, cibi mei sunt.*), joining the two lines together into a single sentence. The *NRSV* reads, “My appetite refuses to touch them; they are like food that is loathsome to me.” Job’s repugnance for his wretched food (both real and symbolic) signifies his disgust with life itself; to his well-nourished friends, this is incomprehensible.

⁸ What Job hopes for and asks for is death.

⁹ For this verse, the *LXX* reads, “Let the Lord begin and wound me, but let him not utterly destroy me.” (ἀρχάμενος ὁ κύριος τρωσάτω με, εἰς τέλος δὲ μὴ με ἀνελέτω.) This is a paraphrase based on a pun with ‘free hand’; *Tg Job* has, “God has begun to make me poor; may he free his hand and make me rich,” apparently basing the reading on a metaphorical interpretation.

¹⁰ The ‘Holy One’ is Yahweh (see *Is* 6:3, *Hab* 3:3): death would be preferable (v. 9) in these circumstances; at least Job could have the consolation of not having ‘rebelled against the decrees’ of God. Several commentators suggest deleting the last colon as having no meaning in the verse, and because (in their view) it is probably the addition of an interpolator who wants to make Job sound more pious; but Job is at least consoling himself that he is innocent, and at the most anticipating a worth-while afterlife.

¹¹ Now, in vv. 11–13, Job describes his hopeless condition, continuing his defence of his despair and lament; the section begins with a series of rhetorical questions in which Job affirms that he does not have the strength to wait for the blessings that Eliphaz is talking about.

יב	אִם־כֹּחַ אַבְנִים כֹּחִי אִם־בָּשָׂרִי נְחוּשׁ: הֲאִם אֵין עֲזָרָתִי בִי וְתִשְׁיָה נִדְחָה מִמֶּנִּי:	12	Is mine the strength of stone, is my flesh made of bronze?
יג		13	Can I support myself on nothing? Has not every resource deserted me?
יד	לֹמֶס מִרְעָהוּ חֶסֶד וְיִרְאַת שַׁדַּי יַעֲזֹב: אֲחֵי בָגְדוּ כְמו־נַחֲל כַּאֲפִיק נַחֲלִים יַעֲבְרוּ:	14	“Refuse kindness to your friend and you forsake the fear of Shaddai.
טו		15	My brothers are treacherous like the seasonal stream, as fleeting torrents they flow away:
טז	הַקִּדְרִים מִנִּי־קָרָח עָלִימוּ יִתְעַלֶּם־שֹׁלֵג: בָּעֵת יִזְרְבוּ נֹצְמָתוֹ בְּחֶמּוֹ נִדְעָכוּ מִמְּקוֹמָם:	16	The ice makes their waters dark when, above them, the snow melts.
יז		17	Yet, come the burning summer, they run dry; they vanish when it is hot.

- ¹² The questions imply negative answers: Job is saying that it would take great strength to hold up under these afflictions, but he is only flesh and bone, and the sufferings have almost completely overwhelmed him; to endure all of this, he would need a strength he does not have.
- ¹³ The NJB, following the LXX (*βοήθεια*) and *Peshitta*, has ‘help’ in place of ‘resource’, here following the NRSV; the word means something like ‘recovery’, or the powers of recovery; it was used in 5:12 and, in 11:6, it applies to a condition of the mind, such as mental resource. Job is thinking not so much of relief or rescue from his troubles, but of strength to bear them.
- ¹⁴ Kindness to others is a sign of true religion. The NRSV, following the Vg and *Peshitta*, has ‘withhold’ in place of ‘refuse’, here following the NJB; the MT has ‘dissolve’. The 1st line is difficult, literally reading, “To the despairing, from his friend, kindness.”
- ¹⁵ The word translated ‘seasonal stream’ (נַחֲל) differs from words for rivers or streams in that it describes a brook with an intermittent flow of water: a brook where the waters are not flowing is called a deceitful brook (Jr 15:18, Mi 1:14); one where the waters flow is called faithful (Is 33:16). Job condemns his three friends, likening them to treacherous gullies that contain no water.
- ¹⁶ The text of this verse is difficult; the literal translation would be, “Blackened (or troubled) because of the ice, on them the snow disappears,” but the term הַקִּדְרִים is better translated as ‘dark’, for it refers to the turbid waters filled with melting snow or ice, or to the frozen surface of the water, but not to waters that are muddied.
- ¹⁷ The LXX, perhaps confusing the word נִדְעָכוּ (‘vanish’) has ‘it is not known what it was’ (οὐκ ἐπεγνώσθη ὅπερ ἦν) for the 2nd line.

יח ילִפְתּוּ אַרְחוֹת דְּרָכָם
 יעֲלוּ בְתֵהוּ וַיֵּאבְדּוּ:
 יט הַבֵּיטוּ אַרְחוֹת תֵּמָא
 הַלִּיכַת שְׂבָא קוֹו־לָמוּ:
 כ בָּשׁוּ כִי־בֹטַח
 בָּאוּ עֲדִיָּה וַיִּחָפְרוּ:
 כא כִּי־עָתָה הֵייתֶם לֹא
 תִרְאוּ חֲתָת וּתִירָאוּ:
 כב הַכִּי־אֲמַרְתִּי הָבוּ לִי
 וּמִכְחָכֶם שַׁחֲדוּ בְעָדַי:
 כג וּמִלְטוֹנִי מִי־דָצָר
 וּמִי־ד עָרִיצִים תִּפְדּוּנִי:
 כד הוֹרוּנִי וְאֲנִי אַחֲרִישׁ
 וּמֵה־שְׁגִיתִי הִבִּינוּ לִי:

18 Caravans leave the trail to find them,
 go deep into wastelands, and are lost.
 19 The Caravans of Tema look to them,
 the merchants of Sheba hope in them.
 20 Their trust brings only embarrassment;
 they come there only to be thwarted.
 21 "And this is how you now treat me,
 terrified at the sight of me, you take fright.
 22 Have I said, "Give me something,
 make some present for me at your own cost.
 23 Snatch me from the grasp of an oppressor
 ransom me from the grip of a violent man?"
 24 Put me right, and I shall say no more;
 show me where I have been at fault.

18 The 'caravans' would follow the course of the wadis, which would themselves wind down and be lost in the sand.

19 The words 'to them' and 'in them' are not in the MT but are supplied for clarity. 'Tema' is the area of the oasis SE of the head of the Gulf of Aqaba; 'Sheba' is in South Arabia (in 1:15 the Sabaeans were raiders; here they are travelling merchants).

20 'Their trust' follows the Peshitta and Tg; the MT has 'he has hoped'. The LXX, misreading the preposition 'there' as the noun 'their cities' has, for this verse, "And they that trust in cities and riches shall come to shame." (*καὶ αἰσχύνην ὀφειλήσουσιν οἱ ἐπὶ πόλεσιν καὶ χρήμασιν πεποιθότες.*)

21 The word חֲתָת ('terrified') is a *hapax legomenon* (the word חַת means 'terror' in 41:25); it probably means that in Job's suffering they recognised some dreaded thing from God and were afraid to speak any sympathy toward him.

22 For the next two verses Job lashes out in sarcasm against his friends: if he had asked for charity, for their wealth, he might have expected their cold response, but all he wanted was sympathy and understanding.

23 The verse now gives the ultimate reason why Job might have urged his friends to make a gift – if it were possible.

24 Job asks if he has sinned either inadvertently or through ignorance (see Lv 4, Nb 15:22–29, Ps 19:11).

כה	מִה־נִמְרָצוּ אִמְרֵי־יֹשֶׁר	25	How forceful are honest words!
	וּמִה־יִזְכֶּיחַ הַזִּכְחַת מִכֶּם:		But your reproof – what does it reprove?
כו	הֲלֹהֹזֶכַח מְלִים תַּחֲשֹׁבוּ	26	Do you think you can censure mere words,
	וְלִרוּחַ אִמְרֵי נָאֵשׁ:		and treat the speech of the desperate as wind?
כז	אֶף־עַל־יְתוֹם תִּפְּלוּ	27	You would even cast lots over the orphan,
	וְתִכְרוּ עַל־רֵיעֵכֶם:		and bargain over your friend!
כח	וְעַתָּה הִזְאִילוּ פְּנוּ־בִי	28	Come, I beg you, look at me:
	וְעַל־פְּנֵיכֶם אִם־אֶכְזָב:		I shall not lie to your face.
כט	שׁוּבוּ־נָא אֶל־תְּהִי עוֹלָה	29	Relent then, no harm is done;
	וּשְׁבִי וְשׁוּבוּ עוֹד צְדִיקִיבָה:		and reconsider, since I am upright.
ל	הֲיִשְׁבֹּלְשׁוֹנִי עוֹלָה	30	Is there any evil on my lips?
	אִם־חֲפִי לֹא־יִבִּין הָוֹת:		Cannot my taste discern misfortune?"

²⁵ For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Fair comment can be borne without resentment." The LXX paraphrases this verse, reading, "But as it seems, the words of a true man are vain, because I do not ask strength of you." (ἀλλ' ὥς ἔοικεν, φαῦλα ἀληθινοῦ ῥήματα, οὐ γὰρ παρ' ὑμῶν ἰσχυρὸν αἰτοῦμαι.)

²⁶ In the context, 'treat' is probably the meaning, although the MT simply has for the 2nd line: "and as to wind the words of a despairing man." The translation here (following NETB) follows the same approach as the RSV, NIV, and NAB, which take the idiom of the verb ('imagine') with the preposition on 'wind' to mean 'reckon as wind'.

²⁷ The word 'lots' is not in the text; the verb is simply 'you cast' (תִּפְּלוּ); however, the word 'lots' is also omitted in 1S 14:42. Job is saying his friends are the kind of people who would cast lots over the child of a debtor, who, after the death of the father, would be sold to slavery.

²⁸ The construction of the 2nd line uses אִם as in a negative oath to mark the strong negative: Job is underscoring his sincerity here.

²⁹ In the 2nd line, the translation follows the Kethib reading (וּשְׁבִי, 'reconsider') rather than the Qere, which repeats 'relent' (וְשׁוּבוּ).

³⁰ This verse makes a fitting transition to Ch. 7, which forms a renewed cry of despair from Job, who still feels himself innocent, but in the hands of cruel fate which is out to destroy him.

איוב פרק ז

א הלא־עבֹד לַאֲנוֹשׁ עַל־עַל־אֶרֶץ
וְכִימִי שְׂכִיר יָמָיו:
ב כְּעֶבֶד יִשְׁאַף־צֶלַע
וְכַשְׂכִּיר יִקְוֶה פְעֻלּוֹ:
ג בֵּן הַנִּחְלָתִי לִי יֶרְחִי־שׂוֹא
וְלֵילֹת עֲמַל מְנוּלִי:
ד אִם־שָׁכַבְתִּי וְאַמְרָתִי
מִתִּי אֶקּוֹם וּמִדֹּד־עֶרֶב
וְשִׁבְעָתִי נִדְדִים עַד־נֹשֶׁף:
ה לִבֶּשׁ בְּשָׂרִי רֶמָה וְגִישׁ וְגֹשׁ עֶפֶר
עוֹרִי רָגַע וַיִּמָּאֵס:

JOB 7

1 "Do not human beings have a hard service on earth,
and do we not live a hired man's life?
2 Like a slave, longing for the shade,
or a hired man looking for his wages,
3 So, I have inherited months of futility
and nights of suffering are my lot.
4 Lying in bed, I wonder, "When will it be day?"
But the night is long,
and I toss and turn until dawn.
5 Worms and loathsome scabs cover my body;
my skin hardens and oozes pus.

JOB 7

- 1 'Hard service' (literally, 'army') is in the sense of military service (see 14:14), which involves both fighting and forced labour; the LXX translates this as 'trial' (πειρασμός) and the Vg as *Militia* (warfare or war service). The 'hired man', paid by the day (Dt 24:15, Mt 20:8), works for another from morning to night, as the slave does (Lv 25:39–40). The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here seems to be a simple case of a dropped letter.
- 2 The two verbs in this verse stress the eager expectation and waiting. The first, שִׁאֵף, means 'to long for', 'to desire'; and the second, קִוָּה, has the idea of 'to hope for', 'to look for', 'to wait'; the words would give the sense that the servant or hired man had the longing on his mind all day.
- 3 In place of 'I have inherited' (הַנִּחְלָתִי), the LXX reads 'I also have endured' (καὶ γὰρ ὑπέμεινα), possibly reading a ך for the ך; Job's point is that his sufferings have been laid on him by another, and so he has inherited them.
- 4 In place of 'I toss and turn', the NJB has 'crazy thoughts obsess me'; the term נִדְדִים (a *hapax legomenon*) refers to the restless tossing and turning of a sick man at night.
- 5 The word for 'worms' (רֶמָה, a collective noun) is usually connected with rotten food (Ex 16:24), or the grave (Is 14:11). Job's disease is a malignant ulcer of some kind that causes the rotting of the flesh. In both the *Kethib* and the *Qere*, the ך in וְגִישׁ/וְגִישׁ is written as a small letter in almost all Hebrew MSS.

ו	יָמַי קָלוּ מִנִּי־אָרֶג וַיִּכְלוּ בְּאֶפֶס תְּקוּהָ:	6	My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and they end, leaving no hope behind.
ז	זָכֹר כִּי־רוּחַ חַיִּי לֹא־תָשׁוּב עֵינַי לִרְאוֹת טוֹב:	7	"Remember that my life is but a breath, and that my eyes will never again see joy.
ח	לֹא־תִשׁוּרְנִי עֵין רָאִי עֵינֶיךָ בִּי וְאִינְנִי:	8	The eye that sees me will look on me no more, your eyes will turn my way but I shall be gone.
ט	כָּלָה עָנָן וַיֵּלֶךְ בֶּן יוֹרֵד שְׁאוֹל לֹא יַעֲלֶה:	9	A cloud dissolves and is gone, so those who go down to Sheol never come up.
י	לֹא־יָשׁוּב עוֹד לְבֵיתוֹ וְלֹא־יִפְרְנוּ עוֹד מְקוֹמוֹ:	10	They never come home again, nor do their houses know them anymore.
יא	גַּם־אֲנִי לֹא אַחֲשֶׁךְ־פִּי אֲדַבֶּרֶה בְּצַר רוּחִי אֲשִׁיחָה בְּמַר נַפְשִׁי:	11	"Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth: in my anguish of spirit I shall speak, in my bitterness of soul, I shall complain.

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- ⁶ The 'shuttle' is the part which runs through the meshes of the web; in Jg 16:14, the word means a loom, but here it must be the shuttle. Hezekiah uses the imagery of the weaver, the loom, and the shuttle for the brevity of life (Is 38:12). For the 1st line, the LXX reads, "My life is lighter than a word." (βίος μου ἐστὶν ἐλαφρότερος λαλιᾶς.) The 2nd line has a wonderful play on the word for 'hope' (תְּקוּהָ), which can also mean 'thread' (as in Jos 2:18, 21): Job is saying that his life is coming to an end for lack of thread/lack of hope.
- ⁷ Accepting the human lot of suffering and death, Job breaks into prayer (he does this frequently, whereas the friends never do), asking God for a few moments of peace before he dies.
- ⁸ The meaning of the verse, which is omitted by the LXX, is that God will relent, but it will be too late; God now sees him with a hostile eye; when he looks for him, or looks upon him in friendliness, it will be too late.
- ⁹ The author expresses the current view that return from Sheol (the abode of the dead) is impossible (see #Nb 16:33).
- ¹⁰ Most commentators and theologians believe that theological knowledge was very limited at such an early stage, so they would not think it possible for Job to have bodily resurrection in view.
- ¹¹ 'Mouth' here is metonymical for what he says – he will not withhold his complaints.

יב הִים־אֲנִי אִם־תִּנָּן
 כִּי־תִשָּׂם עָלַי מִשְׁמָר:
 יג כִּי־אֶמְרָתִי תִנְחַמֵּנִי עֲרֹשִׁי
 יֵשָׁא בְשִׁיחִי מִשְׁכָּבִי:
 יד וְחִתְּתָנִי בְחִלְמוֹת
 וּמַחֲזִינוֹת תִּבְעֵתָנִי:
 טו וְתִבְחַר מִחֲנֹק נַפְשִׁי
 מוֹת מַעֲצָמוֹתִי:
 טז מֵאִסְתִּי לֹא־לְעֹלָם אֶחֱיָה
 חֲדָל מִמֶּנִּי כִּי־הֵבֵל יָמִי:

12 Am I the Sea, or the sea monster,
 that you should set a guard over me?
 13 If I say, "My bed will comfort me,
 my couch will ease my complaints,"
 14 then you scare me with dreams
 and terrify me with visions,
 15 so that I would choose strangling
 and death rather to this body.
 16 I loathe my life – I would not live forever;
 leave me, then, for my days are but a breath.

-
- 12 The word תִּנָּן ('sea monster') can also be translated as 'dragon' (as NRSV) or 'whale'; NETB has 'creature of the deep'. In the Babylonian cosmologies, Tiamath (the Sea) cooperated in the birth of the gods and was then conquered and subdued by one of their number; the imagination of the people, or of poets, seized on this story: Yahweh became the conqueror who then set chaos in order and, ever after, held the Sea and its monsters in control (see #3:8, 9:13, 26:12, 40:25ff, Ps 65:7, 74:13–14, 77:16, 89:9–10, 93:3–4, 104:7,26, 148:7, Is 27:1, 51:9).
- 13 Sleep is the recourse of the troubled and unhappy; here, 'bed' is metonymical for sleep: Job expects sleep to give him the comfort that his friends have not. The particle כִּי could also be translated 'when' (as NRSV) but 'if' (as NJB & NETB) works better to introduce the conditional clause and to parallel the earlier reasoning of Job in v. 4 (using אִם).
- 14 Here, Job is boldly saying that it is God who is behind the horrible dreams that he is having at night.
- 15 Unlike the figure in an ancient Egyptian text who 'is tired of life', Job does not contemplate suicide, which occurs very rarely in the Old Testament (see #2S 17:23). The word נַפֶּשׁ is often translated 'soul' but, since Hebrew thought does not make such a distinction between body and soul, it is usually better to translate it with 'person'; when a suffix is added to the word (as here), then that pronoun would serve as the better translation, as here with 'my soul' = 'I' (meaning with every fibre of my being). The NJB has the conjectural 'what I suffer' in place of 'this body' (literally, 'my bones'), here following the NRSV.
- 16 There is no object for the verb 'loathe' in the text but the most likely object would be 'my life' from the last verse, especially since in this verse Job will talk about not living forever. Some have thought the object should be 'death', meaning that Job despised death more than the pains, but that is a forced meaning;

זי מה־אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי תַגְדִּלְנוּ
 וְכִי־תִשֵּׂית אֱלֹוֵי לִבְךָ:
 יח וְתִפְקֹדֵנוּ לְבִקְרִים
 לְרִגְעִים תִּבְחַנֵּנוּ:
 יט כִּמָּה לֹא־תִשְׁעָה מִמֶּנִּי
 לֹא־תִרְפְּנִי עַד־בִּלְעִי רִקִּי:
 כ חֲטָאתִי מָה אֶפְעֹל |
 לָךְ נֹצֵר הָאָדָם
 לָמָּה שִׁמַּתָּנִי לְמִפְגַּע לָךְ
 וְאַהִיָּה עָלַי לְמִשָּׂא:
 כא וּמָה | לֹא־תִשָּׂא פִשְׁעִי
 וְתַעֲבִיר אֶת־עֹנִי
 כִּי־עַתָּה לַעֲפָר אֶשְׁכֵּב
 וְשִׁחַרְתָּנִי וְאִינֶנִּי:

17 “What is man, that you make so much of him,
 and that you set your heart on him,
 18 that you visit him every morning
 and test him every moment?
 19 Will you never take your eyes off me
 long enough for me to swallow my spittle?
 20 Suppose I have sinned, what have I done to you,
 you tireless watcher of humanity?
 Why do you choose me as your target?
 Why should I be a burden to you?
 21 Can you not tolerate my sin,
 not overlook my fault?
 For soon I shall be lying in the dust,
 you will look for me and I shall be no more.”

-
- 17 Bitterly ironical, the author seems to echo phrases from Ps 8. God’s ‘care’ for human beings here becomes relentless scrutiny. The author of Ps 139 finds in this a cause for trust, but Job sees hostility in it. Reacting against a legalistic view of religion and of sin, he is groping his way towards a God of mercy (v. 21).
- 18 The verb פָּקַד is a very common one in the Bible; while it is frequently translated ‘visit’, the visit is never comparable to a social call; when God ‘visits’ people it always means a divine intervention for blessing or cursing – but the visit always changes the destiny of the one visited.
- 19 Job wonders if God would not look away from him even briefly, for the constant vigilance is killing him.
- 20 Sin cannot harm God; Job hypothetically admits sin in order to provoke God, who is acting unlike a merciful God by making Job his ‘target’. The final ‘to you’ (4th line) follows the LXX (ἐπὶ σοί); the MT has ‘to myself’ (עָלַי) – the results of a scribal change known as *tiqqune sopherim*, made to avoid using improper language about God. It offended the Jews to think of Job’s being burdensome to God: Job’s sin could have repercussions on him, but not on God.
- 21 These last unexpected words re-introduce the idea of God mysteriously interested in human beings.

איוב פרק ח

JOB 8

א וַיַּעַן בִּלְדָּד הַשׁוּחִי וַיֹּאמֶר:	1 Bildad the Shuhite spoke next. He said:
ב עַד־אֵן תִּמְלֹל־אֱלֹהִים	2 "How long will you talk like this
וְרוּחַ כְּבִיר אִמְרֵי־פִי:	the words of your mouth like a great wind?
ג הֲאֵל יַעֲוֶה מִשְׁפָּט	3 Does God pervert justice
וְאִם־שֹׁדֵי יַעֲוֶה־צֶדֶק:	or Shaddai pervert what is right?
ד אִם־בְּנֵיךָ חָטְאוּ־לּוֹ	4 If your sons sinned against him,
וַיִּשְׁלַחֵם בְּיַד־פְּשָׁעָם:	he has delivered to the penalty of their sin.
ה אִם־אַתָּה תִּשְׁחַר אֶל־אֱלֹהִים	5 If you now seek God
וְאֶל־שֹׁדֵי תִתְחַנֵּן:	and plead with Shaddai,
ו אִם־זָךְ וַיִּשָּׁר אֶתָּה	6 If you are pure and upright,
כִּי־עָתָה יַעֲרִיר עָלֶיךָ	then he will rouse himself for you
וְשִׁלְּמָךְ נֹת צְדִיקְךָ:	and restore you to your rightful place.

JOB 8

- ¹ The debate now heats up, and Bildad implies that Job accuses God of perverting justice (v. 3); he also implies (v. 4) that Job suffers for the sin of his children, whose transgression has the power to destroy the collective personality of the clan to which they belong.
- ² The 2nd colon of the verse reads literally, "*and a strong wind the words of your mouth;*" the simplest way to treat this is to make it an independent nominal sentence: "*the words of your mouth are a strong wind.*" Some have made it parallel to the first by apposition, understanding 'how long' to do double duty. Or, as here, the line (beginning with a *vav*) can also be subordinated as a circumstantial clause.
- ³ The NJB, following the LXX, has 'deflect' (*ἀδουήσῃ*) in place of the 1st 'pervert' and 'falsify' (*ταράξει*) in place of the 2nd, here following the MT.
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'penalty of their sin' (here following NETB) is 'hand of their rebellion'.
- ⁵ Before this verse, the NJB inserts v 6^a, transposed from the beginning of v6: "*You for your part, if you are pure and honest.*"
- ⁶ This verse is numbered 6^b in the NJB (see #5); many commentators delete the 1st line as a moralizing gloss on v. 5, but the phrase makes good sense, and simply serves as another condition; besides, the expression is in the LXX (*εἰ καθαρὸς εἶ καὶ ἀληθινός*). Ironically, the word for 'upright' (יָשָׁר) is used of Job in the prologue (see 1:1, 8).

ז וְהָיָה רֵאשִׁיתְךָ מִצְעָר
 וְאַחֲרִיתְךָ יִשְׁגָּה מְאֹד:
 ח כִּי־שָׁאֵל־נָא לְדֹר רִישׁוֹן
 וְכוֹזֵן לַחֲקֹר אֲבוֹתָם:
 ט כִּי־תִמּוֹל אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא נִדַּע
 כִּי צֵל יְמִינוּ עַל־אָרֶץ:
 י הֲלֹא־הֵם יִזְרֹדוּ וְאָמְרוּ לָךְ
 וּמַלְבָּם יוֹצְאוּ מִלִּים:
 יא הֲיִגְאֶה־גִּמְא בְּלֹא בָצָה
 יִשְׁגָּה־אָחוּ בְּלִי־מַיִם:
 יב עֲדָנוּ בְּאֲבוֹ לֹא יִקָּטֵף
 וּלְפָנַי כָּל־חֲצִיר יִיבֹשׁ:
 יג כֵּן אֲרֻחוֹת כָּל־שֹׁכְחֵי אֵל
 וְתִקּוֹת חֲנָף תֵּאבֵד:

7 Your former state will seem so small,
 so great will your future be.
 8 “Question the generation that has passed,
 and consider what their ancestors found.
 9 For we are of yesterday, we know nothing;
 our life on earth passes like a shadow.
 10 They will teach you, they will tell you,
 and their thought is expressed in these sayings:
 11 “Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh?
 Can reeds flourish where there is no water?
 12 Even when in flower and before being cut,
 fastest of all plants, they wither.
 13 Such are the paths of all who forget God;
 so perishes the hope of the godless.

-
- 7 The reference to ‘*your former state*’ is a reference to Job’s former estate of wealth: what Job had before will seem so small in comparison to what lies ahead.
 8 ‘*Consider*’ (as NRSV) is a conjectural translation, reading בּוֹזֵן for כּוֹזֵן (‘*made firm by*’).
 9 The ‘*shadow*’ is the symbol of ephemeral things (14:2, 17:7, Ps 144:4): it passes away quickly.
 10 Ancestral tradition is the foundation of the wisdom teaching and maintains that the punishment of the wicked is as certain and observable as the laws of nature (vv. 11ff).
 11 The use of the words for plants that grow in Egypt suggests that Bildad either knew Egypt or knew that much wisdom came from Egypt; the 1st line refers to papyrus, which grows to a height of 2m, the 2nd refers to the reed grass that grows on the banks of the Nile (see Gn 41:2, 18).
 12 The idea here is that, as the plants begin to flower but before they are to be cut down, there is no sign of withering or decay in them; however, if the water is withdrawn, they will wither sooner than any other herb.
 13 The NJB, following the LXX, has ‘*is the fate*’ () in place of ‘*are the paths*’, here following the MT (and NRSV).

אֲשֶׁר-יִקוּט כְּסָלוֹ יד
 וּבֵית עֶכְבִּישׁ מִבְּטָחוֹ:
 יִשְׁעֶן עַל-בֵּיתוֹ וְלֹא יַעֲמֹד טו
 יִחְזִיק בּוֹ וְלֹא יָקוּם:
 רֶטֶב הוּא לִפְנֵי-שֶׁמֶשׁ טז
 וְעַל גִּנְתּוֹ יִנְקֶתוּ תֵּצֵא:
 עַל-גֹּל שָׂרָשָׁיו יִסְבְּכוּ יז
 בֵּית אֲבָנִים יִחְזֶה:
 אִם-יִבְלַעְנוּ מִמָּקְמוֹ יח
 וְכַחֵשׁ בּוֹ לֹא רָאִיתִי:
 הֵן-הוּא מְשׁוֹשׁ דֶּרֶכּוֹ יט
 וּמַעֲפָר אַחֵר יִצְמָחוּ:

14 Their hope is nothing but gossamer,
 their confidence a spider's web.
 15 Let him lean on his house; it will not stand firm;
 cling to it, it will not hold.
 16 Like some lush plant in the sunlight,
 its shoots spreading over the garden.
 17 His roots twined around a heap of stones;
 among the rocks he shall live.
 18 If he is uprooted from his place,
 then it denies it ever saw him.
 19 See, this is the joy of his way,
 and others are springing up in the soil.

-
- 14 The word יִקוּט ('gossamer') is does not occur anywhere else; here, it looks like it should be a noun that parallels 'spider's web' in the following colon.
- 15 The idea is that he grabs hold of the house, not to hold it up, but to hold himself up or support himself, but it cannot support him; this idea applies to both the spider's web and the false security of the pagan.
- 16 The figure now changes to a plant that is flourishing and spreading and then suddenly cut off. The word רֶטֶב ('lush') literally means 'to be moist' or 'to be watered'; it occurs in Arabic, Aramaic, and Accadian, but only twice in the Bible: here as the adjective and in 24:8 as the verb. Some have emended 'garden' to 'roofs' but here we keep the MT reading; for 'over the garden', the LXX ends the verse with 'out of his corruption' (ἐκ σαρκίας αὐτοῦ), a reading which arose from an internal Greek change: σαρκίας having replaced πρᾶσίας.
- 17 The expression 'of stones' follows the LXX (λίθων) and is not in the MT. 'He shall live' follows the LXX (ζήσεται); the MT has 'he saw' (יִחְזֶה).
- 18 The NRSV, following the MT, has 'if one destroys' in place of 'if he is uprooted' (here following NETB); the indefinite subject allows for a passive interpretation of the verb, which means 'swallow' in the Qal but 'engulf' or 'destroy' in the Piel.
- 19 The translation of the 1st line here follows the MT, but the line is difficult: as it is, the expression must be ironic, saying that the joy of its way of life is short-lived. However, most commentators are not satisfied with this and some change מְשׁוֹשׁ to מְשׁוֹשׁ and read "behold him lie rotting on the path."

כ הַנְּאִל לֹא יִמָּאֲס־תָּם
 וְלֹא־יִחְזֹק בְּיַד־מְרַעִים:
 כא עַד־יִמְלֶה שְׂחֹק פִּיךָ
 וּשְׂפָתֶיךָ תִּרְוַעַה:
 כב שׂנְאִיךָ יִלְבְּשׁוּ־בִשָּׁת
 וְאַהֲלֵ רָשָׁעִים אֵינָנּוּ:

20 “Surely, God will neither spurn a blameless man,
 nor grasp the hand of the evildoer.
 21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
 and your lips with shouts of joy.
 22 Those who hate you will be covered with shame
 and the tent of the wicked will vanish.”

²⁰ The idiom ‘to grasp the hand of’ someone means to support or help the person.

²¹ This verse follows the NRSV; the NJB has the conjectural (but similar) translation: “Once again, laughter may fill your mouth and cries of joy break from your lips.”

²² Vv. 20–22 show several points of similarity with the style of the Book of Psalms: ‘those who hate you’ and the ‘evildoer’ are fairly common words to describe the ungodly in the Psalms. In the 1st line, Bildad is showing Job that he and his friends are not among those who are his enemies, and that Job himself is really among the righteous; it is an appealing way to end the discourse.

איוב פרק ט

JOB 9

א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: ¹ Job spoke next. He said:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
| ב | אֲמַנִם יִדְעֵתִי כִּי־בֵן | 2 | "Indeed, I know it is as you say: |
| | וּמִה־יִצְדָּק אֲנוֹשׁ עִם־אֵל: | | how could anyone be just before God? |
| ג | אִם־יִחַפֵּץ לָרִיב עִמּוֹ | 3 | No one trying to argue with him |
| | לֹא־יִעֲנֶנּוּ אַחַת מִנִּי־אֱלֹף: | | could give him one answer in a thousand. |
| ד | חֲכָם לִבָּב וְאַמִּיץ כֹּחַ | 4 | He is wise of heart and mighty in strength, |
| | מִי־הַקָּשָׁה אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁלֹם: | | who then can successfully defy him? |
| ה | הַמַּעֲתִיק הָרִים וְלֹא יָדְעוּ | 5 | He moves the mountains, though they do not know it; |
| | אֲשֶׁר הִפְכֵם בְּאַפוֹ: | | he throws them down when he is angry. |
| ו | הַמֵּרְגִיז אֶרֶץ מִמְּקוֹמָהּ | 6 | He shakes the earth, and moves it from its place, |
| | וְעַמּוּדֶיהָ יִתְפַּלְצוּן: | | making all its pillars tremble. |

JOB 9

- ¹ There is not much logical sequence in the argumentation; here, Job replies to Eliphaz (compare 9:2 with 4:17) rather than to Bildad.
- ² In place of 'anyone', here following the *NJB*, *NETB* has 'a human' and the *NRSV* has 'a mortal'; however, the attempt to define אֲנוֹשׁ as 'weak' or 'mortal' man is not compelling, and such interpretations are based on etymological links without the clear support of usage.
- ³ In a lawsuit, the Creator has the advantage of strength. There is no human or divine judge of God (who is implicitly compared to a thief or kidnapper, v. 12), a thought that anticipates the theme of the umpire (see vv. 33–35).
- ⁴ The 1st line of the verse simply has, "Wise of heart and mighty in strength:" the entire line is a *casus pendens* that will refer to the suffix on אֵלָיו in the 2nd colon. So, the question is, "Who has resisted the one who is wise of heart and mighty of strength?" Again, the rhetorical question is affirming that no one has done this.
- ⁵ The 2nd line, beginning with the relative pronoun, can either be read as a parallel description of God (as here, following the *NJB*), or it can be subordinated by the relative pronoun to the 1st (as in the *NRSV*).
- ⁶ The ancients believed the earth rested on 'pillars', which God 'shakes' in times of earthquake (38:6, 1S 2:8, Ps 75:3, 104:5). Vv. 5–7 recall current eschatological imagery (see #Am 8:9).

ז	הָאֵמֶר לַחֶרֶס וְלֹא יִזְרַח וּבַעַד כּוֹכָבִים יַחְתֵּם:	7	The sun, at his command, forbears to rise, and on the stars, he sets a seal.
ח	נָטָה שָׁמַיִם לְבָדּוֹ וְדוֹרָךְ עַל־בִּמְתֵּי יָם:	8	He and no other has stretched out the heavens and trampled on the Sea's back.
ט	עָשָׂה־עַשׂ כְּסִיל וְכִימָה וַחֲדָרֵי תִמָּן:	9	He has made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the Mansions of the South.
י	עָשָׂה גְדֻלּוֹת עֲדָאִין חֶקֶר וְנִפְלְאוֹת עֲדָאִין מִסְפָּר:	10	The works he does are great and unfathomable and his marvels are beyond counting.
יא	הֵן יַעֲבֹר עָלַי וְלֹא אֶרְאֶה וְיַחְלִף וְלֹא־אֶבִּין לוֹ:	11	If he passes me, I do not see him; he slips by, imperceptible to me.
יב	הֵן יַחְתֹּף מִי יִשְׁיִבֵנּוּ מִי־אֵמֶר אֵלָיו מַה־תַּעֲשֶׂה:	12	If he snatches his prey, who is going to stop him or dare to ask, "What are you doing?"

- ⁷ There are various views on the meaning of the 1st line: some think it refers to some mysterious darkness like the judgment in Egypt (Ex 10:21–23), or to clouds building, often in accompaniment of earthquakes (see Jl 2:10, 3:15–16, Is 13:10–13); it could also refer to an eclipse. All this assumes that the phenomenon here is limited to the morning or the day; but it could simply be saying that God controls light and darkness. The ‘*seal*’ on the stars prevents them from appearing and shining. Ba 3:34 speaks of the opposite process.
- ⁸ From actual physical phenomena, the author reverts to the origins of creation, when God ‘*trampled on the Sea’s back*’ (the NRSV has ‘*the waves of the Sea*’), i.e. imposed his authority on it, mastering it at the beginning of the world; the same expression is used in Dt 33:29. On the personification of the Sea, see #7:12.
- ⁹ For this verse, the LXX reads, “The one making the Pleiades, Hesperus, Arcturus and the Mansions of the South” (ὁ ποιῶν Πλειάδα καὶ Ἑσπερον καὶ Ἀρκτοῦρον καὶ ταμίεια νότου). In place of ‘Pleiades’, the Vg has ‘Hyades’ (*Hyadas*).
- ¹⁰ Only slight differences exist between this verse and 5:9 which employs the simple ו conjunction before אֵין in the 1st colon and omits the ו conjunction before נִפְלְאוֹת in the 2nd colon: there is probably great irony in Job using the same words, but Job’s meaning here is different than Eliphaz.
- ¹¹ The pronoun ‘him’ is not in MT, but the Peshitta and Vg have it (probably for translation purposes as well).
- ¹² In normal usage, the verb חָתַף (‘*snatches*’) refers to the wicked actions of a man.

יג אֱלֹהִים לֹא־יִשָּׁב אַפּוֹ
 תַּחְתּוֹ שָׁחֲחוּ עֲזָרֵי רָהַב:
 יד אֲף כִּי־אֲנֹכִי אֶעֱנֶנּוּ
 אֲבַחֲרָה דְּבָרֵי עַמּוֹ:
 טו אֲשֶׁר אִם־צִדְקָתִי לֹא אֶעֱנֶה
 לְמִשְׁפָּטִי אֶתְחַנֵּן:
 טז אִם־קִרְאתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי
 לֹא־אֶאֱמִין כִּי־יִאֲזִין קוֹלִי:
 יז אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעֲרָה יִשׁוּפְנִי
 וְהִרְבָּה פְּצָעֵי חַנָּם:
 יח לֹא־יִתְּנֵנִי הִשָּׁב רוּחִי
 כִּי יִשְׁבַּעֲנִי מִמָּרָרִים:

13 God does not renounce his anger:
 beneath him, Rahab's minions still lie prostrate.
 14 "How then, can I answer him,
 and choose my arguments against him.
 15 Although I am innocent, I cannot answer him;
 I can only plead for mercy with my judge!
 16 If I summoned him and he answered me,
 I cannot believe he would listen to what I said.
 17 He crushes me with a tempest
 and multiplies my wounds without cause.
 18 He will not allow me to recover my breath,
 but fills me with bitterness.

-
- 13 The meaning of the 1st line is that God's anger will continue until it has accomplished its purpose (23:13–14). 'Rahab' (רָהַב), a monster of Chaos, doubling with Leviathan or Tannin, is the mythical personification of the primal waters, the Sea (Tiamath). To emphasise the creative mastery of Yahweh, the popular and the poetic imagination alike celebrated him as the conqueror or splitter of Rahab (see #7:12, 26:12, Ps 89:10, Is 51:9). In an historical context, Rahab personifies the Red Sea, and then Egypt (see Ps 87:4, Is 30:7).
- 14 The NJB opens with, "And here I am, proposing to defend myself;" here, we follow the NRSV. The verb 'to answer' frequently has a forensic sense: to speak as a witness, or to plead one's own cause. God being at once judge and interested party, Job cannot conduct the case by human rules of procedure. (The longing for self-justification by form of law recurs in other passages of the dialogue.) Job ends by doubting his own innocence (vv. 20–21). He fastens on the apparent caprice (v. 24) rather than the infinite wisdom (defended by Zophar, Ch. 11) of the judgements of God.
- 15 The LXX and Peshitta omit the opening 'although', here following the MT (אֲשֶׁר).
- 16 The idea of 'answer' in the 1st line is that of responding to the summons, i.e., appearing in court; this preterite and the perfect before it have the nuance of hypothetical perfects since they are in conditional clauses.
- 17 In place of 'with a tempest' (here following the MT and NRSV), the NJB has 'for one hair', following the Tg and Peshitta.
- 18 The verb יִתְּנֵנִי essentially means 'give' but, followed by the infinitive (without the lamed here), it means 'permit' or 'allow'.

יט אִם־לִכְחַ אֲמִיץ הִנֵּה
 וְאִם־לְמַשְׁפֹּט מִי יוֹעִידֵנִי:
 כ אִם־אֶצְדֵּק פִּי יִרְשִׁיעֵנִי
 תִּם־אֲנִי וַיִּעַקְשֵׁנִי:
 כא תִּם־אֲנִי לֹא־אֲדַע נַפְשִׁי
 אֲמֹאֵס חַיִּי:
 כב חַת הִיא
 עַל־כֵּן אֲמַרְתִּי
 תִּם וְרָשָׁע הוּא מְכֻלָּה:
 כג אִם־שׁוֹט יִמִּית פֶּתְאֹם
 לְמַסַּת נִקִּים יִלְעָג:
 כד אֶרֶץ | נִתְּנָה בְיַד־רָשָׁע
 פְּנֵי־שֹׁפְטֶיהָ יִכְסֶה
 אִם־לֹא יִפְּוֹא מִי־הוּא:

19 If it is a matter of strength, he is the strong one!
 If I go to court, then who will summon him?
 20 Though I am innocent, my mouth would condemn me,
 though I am innocent, he would prove me perverse.
 21 I am blameless. I do not know myself.
 I loathe my life!
 22 It is all one,
 and hence I boldly say:
 he destroys innocent and guilty alike.
 23 When a sudden deadly scourge descends,
 he laughs at the plight of the innocent.
 24 The earth has been given into the power of the wicked;
 he veils the faces of its judges.
 Or, if not he, who else?

-
- 19 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has “Shall I try to force? Look how strong he is!” ‘Summon him’ follows the Peshitta; the MT has ‘summon me’.
 20 In place of ‘my mouth’, the NJB has the conjectural ‘his mouth’, meaning God’s response to Job’s complaints; however, the MT is far more expressive, and ‘my mouth’ fits the context in which Job is saying that even though he is innocent, if he spoke in a court setting in the presence of God he would be overwhelmed, confused, and no doubt condemn himself.
 21 Job believes he is blameless and not deserving of all this suffering; he will hold fast to that claim, even if the future is uncertain, especially if that future involved a confrontation with God.
 22 The LXX omits the phrase ‘it is all one’.
 23 In place of ‘plight’, the NRSV has ‘calamity’; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. For this verse, the LXX reads, “For the vile are extraordinary in death but the just are ridiculed.” (ὅτι φαῦλοι ἐν θανάτῳ ἐξαισίων, ἀλλὰ δίκαιοι καταγελῶνται)
 24 With implicit faith in an all-embracing Providence, Job does not hesitate to credit God with responsibility for all these outrages.

כה וַיָּמִי קָלוּ מִנִּירָץ
 בָּרָחוּ לֹא־רְאוּ טוֹבָה:
 כו חָלְפוּ עִם־אֲנִיּוֹת אָבָה
 כז כְּנֹשֶׁר יָטוּשׁ עַל־אֶכָּל:
 אֶם־אֲמַרִי אֶשְׁכַּחַה שִׁיחִי
 אֶעֱזֹבָה פָּנַי וְאֲבִלִיגָה:
 כח יִגְרָתִי כָל־עֲצַבְתִּי
 יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־לֹא תִנְקֶנִּי:
 כט אֲנֹכִי אֶרְשָׁע
 לְמַה־זֶּה הֶבֶל אֵיגַע:
 ל אֶסְהַתְּרַחֲצִי בַּמּוֹ בְּמִי־שֹׁלֵג
 וְהִזְכּוֹתִי בְּבָר כַּפִּי:

25 “My days are swifter than a runner
 they flee with never a glimpse of happiness.
 26 They skim past like a reed canoe,
 like an eagle swooping on its prey.
 27 If I decide to stifle my complaining,
 change countenance and wear a smiling face,
 28 I become afraid at the thought of all my woes,
 for I know you do not regard me as innocent.
 29 If I am guilty,
 why should I put myself to useless trouble?
 30 If I wash myself in melted snow,
 clean my hands with soda,

-
- 25 Job returns to the thought of the brevity of his life but now the figure is the swift runner instead of the weaver's shuttle.
 26 The word *אָבָה* ('reed') is a different word than was used in 8:11; what is in view here is a light boat made from bundles of papyrus that glides swiftly along the Nile (cf. Is 18:2, where papyrus vessels and swiftness are associated).
 27 Job entertains three possibilities: to forget his complaint (vv. 27–29), to cleanse himself (vv. 29–32) and the possibility of an umpire (vv. 33–35), but none of these works.
 28 Eliphaz and Bildad have counselled meekness (5:17, 8:5–6) but Job knows that such an assumed attitude can change neither his real one nor God's attitude to him.
 29 The 1st line simply has 'I am guilty'; it is the same type of construction found in v. 24 and the opposite of that in v. 20. This as an example of the use of the imperfect to express a necessity according to the judgment of others; it would therefore mean, 'if I am to be guilty'.
 30 For 'melted snow' (*בְּמִי*), the *Peshitta* and *Tg* read with the *Qere* but the *Kethib* simply has 'snow' (*בַּמּוֹ*). In Ps 51:9 and Is 1:18, snow forms a simile for purification; some protest that snow water is not necessarily clean but, if fresh melting snow is meant, then the runoff would be very clear and the image works well here. Nevertheless, others have followed the later Hebrew meaning for *שֹׁלֵג*, 'soap' (NRSV, NIV); even though that makes a nice parallelism, it is uncertain whether that meaning was in use at the time this text was written.

לא אֶזְבֹּחַ תִּטְבֹּלֵנִי
 וְתַעֲבוּנִי שְׁלֵמוֹתַי:
 לב כִּי־לֹא־אִישׁ כְּמוֹנִי אֶעֱנֶנּוּ
 נִבּוֹא יַחְדּוֹ בַּמִּשְׁפָּט:
 לג לֹא יֵשֶׁב־בֵּינֵינוּ מוֹכִיחַ
 יֵשֶׁת יָדוֹ עַל־שְׁנֵינוּ:
 לד יִסֹּר מֵעַלֵי שִׁבְטוֹ
 וְאַמְתּוֹ אֶל־תִּבְעַתְנִי:
 לה אֲדַבֵּר וְלֹא אִירָאֵנּוּ
 כִּי לֹא־כֵן אֲנֹכִי עַמָּדִי:

31 you will only plunge me into the pit,
 until my own clothes abhor me.
 32 For he is not a mortal like me, that I might answer him
 or appear alongside him in court.
 33 There is no arbiter between us,
 to lay his hands on both,
 34 to stay his rod from me,
 or keep away his daunting terrors.
 35 Nonetheless, unafraid of him, I shall speak:
 since I do not see myself like that at all!

-
- 31 In place of 'pit', the LXX has 'filth' (ῥύπαν) but the pointing in the MT gives the meaning 'pit' or 'ditch'; however, the word 'pit' in the MT includes the idea of 'filth', making the emendation unnecessary.
 32 'He' in the 1st line has been supplied: the personal pronoun that would be expected as the subject of a noun clause is sometimes omitted.
 33 An alternative reading for the 1st line is, "Would that there were an arbiter between us." The idiom of 'lay his hand on both' may come from a custom of a judge putting his hands on the two in order to show that he is taking them both under his jurisdiction and the expression can also be used for protection (see Ps 139:5); Job, however, has a problem in that the other party is God, who himself will be arbiter in judgment.
 34 Note that the ט in שִׁבְטוֹ is presented as an enlarged letter, just as it appears in almost all Hebrew MSS.
 35 The 2nd line is rather cryptic, literally reading "but not so I with me;" the NIV renders it "but as it now stands with me, I cannot," which is very smooth and interpretive, the NRSV has "for I know I am not what I am thought to be" and NETB has "but it is not so with me;" here, we follow the NJB.

איוב פרק י

א נִקְטָה נַפְשִׁי בְחַיִּי
אֶעֱזֹבָה עָלַי שִׁיחִי
אֲדַבְּרָה בְּמַר נַפְשִׁי:
ב אִמַּר אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֶל־תִּרְשִׁיעַנִי
הוֹדִיעֵנִי עַל מַה־תִּרְיַבְנִי:
ג הַטֹּב לָךְ | כִּי־תַעֲשֶׂק
כִּי־תִמְאָס יִגִּיעַ כְּפִידְךָ
וְעַל־עֲצַת רְשָׁעִים הוֹפְעֵת:
ד הֲעֵינִי בִשָּׂר לָךְ
אִם־כְּרֵאוֹת אֲנוֹשׁ תִּרְאֶה:
ה הֲכִימִי אֲנוֹשׁ יָמֶיךָ
אִם־שְׁנוֹתֶיךָ כִּימֵי גֶבֶר:

JOB 10

1 "I am weary of my life,
I shall give free rein to my complaint;
I shall let my embittered souls peak out.
2 I shall say to God: Do not condemn me;
tell me why you contend against me.
3 Is it good for you to oppress,
in contempt for what you yourself have made,
thus abetting the schemes of the wicked?
4 Do you have eyes of flesh?
Do you see as human beings see?
5 Are your days like the days of mortals
or your years like human years,

JOB 10

- 1 The verb translated 'loathe' (נִקְטָה) is pointed like a Qal form but is originally a Niphal; some wish to connect the word to Accadian cognates for a meaning 'I am in anguish' but the meaning 'I am weary' (following NETB) fits the passage well.
- 2 The verb here translated as 'contend against' (תִּרְיַבְנִי) is generally used in a legal context.
- 3 The construction translated 'to oppress' uses כִּי with the imperfect verb ('that you oppress'); technically, this clause serves as the subject, and 'good' is the predicate adjective and, in such case, one often uses an English infinitive to capture the point. The LXX changes the meaning considerably, reading, "Is it good for you if I am unrighteous, for you have disowned the work of your hands?" (ἢ καλὸν σοι, ἐὰν ἀδικοῦσῃ, ὅτι ἀπείπω ἔργα χειρῶν σου)
- 4 In this verse, Job asks whether or not God is liable to making mistakes or errors of judgment; he wonders if God has no more insight than his friends have. Of course, the questions are rhetorical, for he knows otherwise, but his point is that God seems to be making a mistake here.
- 5 For the 2nd instance of 'years' in the 2nd line, the MT has 'days'. God knows the heart and does not need to sound Job's innocence by torture (v. 4, see vv. 6-7a); as the master of time, he has no need of immediate vengeance and can afford to be patient (v. 5, see v. 7b).

ו	כִּי־תִבְקֹשׁ לַעֲוֹנִי וּלְחַטָּאתִי תִדְרוֹשׁ: עַל־דַּעְתְּךָ כִּי־לֹא אֶרְשָׁע וְאִין מִיֶּדְךָ מַצִּיל:	6	that you must seek out my faults and investigate my sins?
ז	יָדֶיךָ עָצְבוּנִי וַיַּעֲשׂוּנִי יָחַד סָבִיב וְתַבְלַעְנִי: זָכַרְנָא כִּי־כַחֲמַר עָשִׂיתָנִי וְאֶל־עָפָר תִּשְׁיִבְנִי:	7	You know very well that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your grasp.
ח	הֲלֹא כַחֲלָב תִּתִּיבְנִי וְכִגְבֵנָה תִּקְפִּיאָנִי: עוֹר וּבָשָׂר תִּלְבִּישָׁנִי וּבַעֲצָמוֹת וְגִידִים תִּשְׁכַּכְנִי:	8	Your hands having shaped and created me, now you turn and destroy me!
ט	חַיִּים וַחֲסֵד עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי וּפָקַדְתָּ שְׁמֶרָה רוּחִי: וְאֵלֶּה צַפֹּנֹת בְּלִבְבְּךָ יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־זֹאת עָמְדָּ:	9	Having made me, remember, as though of clay, now you mean to turn me back into dust.
י		10	Did you not pour me out like milk, and then let me thicken like curds?
יא		11	You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bone and sinew.
יב		12	You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit.
יג		13	Yet, all the while, you had a secret plan: I know that you were bidding your time.

-
- 6 The imperfect verbs in this verse are best given modal nuances: does God have such limitations that he must make such an investigation?
- 7 The fact is that humans are the work of God's hands: they are helpless in the hand of God; but it is also unworthy of God to afflict his people.
- 8 'Now you turn' follows the LXX (*μετὰ ταῦτα μεταβαλὼν*) and NRSV (the NJB has 'now you change your mind'); the MT has 'together round'.
- 9 In place of 'as though of clay', here following the NJB, the NRSV, following the MT more literally, has 'like clay'.
- 10 Primitive medicine imagined the formation of the embryo as a congealing of the mother's blood under the influence of the seminal element.
- 11 The verb שָׁכַךְ ('knit ... together') is found only here and in the parallel passage of Ps 139:13.
- 12 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "In your love, you gave me life and, in your care, watched over my every breath."
- 13 The contradiction between how God had provided for and cared for Job's life and how he was now dealing with him could only be resolved by Job with the supposition that God had planned this severe treatment from the first as part of his plan.

אִם־חָטָאתִי וּשְׁמַרְתָּנִי יד
 וּמַעֲוֹנִי לֹא תִנְקֶנִי:
 אִם־רָשַׁעְתִּי אֲלֹלִי לִי טו
 וְצַדִּיקְתִּי לֹא־אֲשָׂא רֹאשִׁי
 שִׁבְעַת קָלוֹן וּרְאָה עֵינָי:
 וַיִּגָּאֶה כַּשַּׁחַל תְּצוּדֵנִי טז
 וְתֵשֵׁב תִּתְפַּלֵּא־בִי:
 תַּחֲדָשׁ עֲדִידָךְ נִגְדִי ז'
 וְתִרְבַּב כַּעֲשׂוֹךְ עֲמָדִי
 חֲלִיפוֹת וְצָבָא עִמִּי:
 וְלִמָּה מֵרַחֵם הִצַּאתָנִי יח
 אֲגֹזַע וְעֵין לֹא־תִרְאֵנִי:
 כַּאֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיִיתִי אֶהְיָה יט
 מִבֶּטֶן לֶקְבֶּר אוֹבֵל:

14 If I sin, you watch me,
 and then do not acquit me of my iniquity.
 15 Woe to me, if I am guilty:
 even if I am upright, I dare not lift my head;
 I am full of shame and look upon my affliction.
 16 Proud as a lion, you hunt me down,
 repeating your exploits against me.
 17 You attack me again and again,
 your fury against me ever increasing;
 you bring fresh troops against me.
 18 “Why did you bring me out of the womb?
 I should have died then, before any eye had seen me,
 19 a being that had never been,
 to be carried from womb to grave.

14 In place of ‘iniquity’ (here following the NRSV), the NJB has ‘faults’.

15 For the last line, the NJB has the conjectural translation, ‘and drunk with pain’ and the NIV, conjecturally re-pointing the same verb, has ‘and drowned in my affliction’; the LXX omits this line.

16 The NJB has ‘multiplying’ in place of ‘repeating’, here following the NJB; (the MT has 2 verbs without a coordinating conjunction – ‘then you return, you display your power’).

17 For the last line, the NJB has, “your troops assailing me, wave after wave;” the LXX reads ‘and you have brought against me trials’ (ἐπὶ ἡγάγες δὲ ἐπὶ ἐμὲ πειρασθήσῃς).

18 The two imperfect verbs in the 2nd line are used to stress regrets for something which did not happen.

19 Job is here wishing, “If only I had never come into existence.”

כ הלא־מעט ימי יחדל ויחדל
 ישית וישית מִמֶּנִּי ואבליגה מעט:
 כא בטרם אלך ולא אשוב
 אל־ארץ חשך וצלמות:
 כב ארץ עֲפֹתָהּ כְּמוֹ אֶפֶל
 צלמות ולא סִדְרִים וְתַפַּע כְּמו־אֶפֶל:

20 The days of my life are few enough:
 turn your eyes away; leave me a little joy,
 21 before I go, never to return,
 to the land of darkness and shadow dark as death,
 22 where dimness and disorder hold sway,
 and light itself is like dead of night."

20 The 1st line is a conjectural translation; the MT reads, "Are not my days few? (Let him) cease!" In place of the jussive of the Kethib יחדל ('let him cease'), the Qere has ויחדל ('cease'); in the 2nd line, the Kethib/Qere difference may be due to a scribe misreading a (possibly small/short) vav as a yod.

21 The verbs of the 1st line are simple, 'I go' and 'I (cannot) return'; but Job clearly means before he dies, so the 2nd verb may be given a potential imperfect translation to capture the point. The NJB and NIV offer a more of an interpretive paraphrase: "before I go to the place of no return."

22 Vv. 21–22 speak of Sheol (see #Nb 16:33). Literally translated, this verse reads, "[to the] land of darkness, like the deep darkness of the shadow of death, without any order, and the light is like the darkness."

איוב פרק יא

JOB 11

- א וַיַּעַן צִפְרַּיִם הַנַּעֲמָתִי וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Zophar the Naamathite spoke next; he said:
- ב הֲרַב דְּבָרִים לֹא יַעֲנֶה 2 "Should a multitude of words go unanswered;
וְאִם-אִישׁ שִׁפְתָּיִם יַצְדִּיק: is wordiness a proof of uprightness?
- ג בְּדִיף מְתִים יַחְרִישׁוּ 3 Will your babble reduce others to silence;
וְתִלְעַג וְאֵין מַכְלֵם: will you jeer with no one to refute you?
- ד וַתֹּאמֶר זָךְ לִקְחִי 4 These were your words, "My conduct is pure;
וְזָכַר הָיִיתִי בְּעֵינֶיךָ: in your eyes I am free of blame!"
- ה וְאוֹלָם מִי־יִתֵּן אֱלֹהֵי דְבָר 5 But O that God would speak,
וַיִּפְתַּח שִׁפְתָּיו עִמָּךְ: open his lips against you,
- ו וַיַּגִּד-לְךָ | תַּעֲלֹמוֹת חֲכָמָה 6 and show you the secrets of wisdom,
כִּי-כַפְלִים לְתוֹשִׁיָּה for true wisdom is many-sided.
- וְדַע Know then
כִּי-יִשָּׂה לְךָ אֱלֹהֵי מַעֲוֹנָךְ: that God has forgiven some of your sins.

JOB 11

- 1 The 3rd friend (Zophar) cannot restrain his theological passion; he turns aside Job's claim (v. 4) and accuses him of sin (v. 6), but the 'secrets of wisdom' will not be what Zophar thinks (see 42:7).
- 2 The LXX (Ὁ τὰ πολλὰ λέγων), Tg Job and Vg (*qui multa loquitur*) all change 'multitude of words' to 'one who is abundant of words', making a closer parallel to the 2nd line, but the MT makes good sense as it stands.
- 3 The Hiphil verb יַחְרִישׁוּ has a causative sense, 'reduce to silence'.
- 4 'Conduct' follows the LXX (ἔργους); the MT has 'teaching'.
- 5 Job had expressed his eagerness to challenge God; Zophar here wishes that God would take up that challenge.
- 6 The translation of the last line, here following NETB, is uncertain; the NRSV reads, "that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves" and the NJB has "that God is calling you to account for your sin."

ז החקר אֱלֹהֵי תִמְצָא
 אִם עַד־תִּכְלִית שְׂדֵי תִמְצָא:
 ח גְּבַהֵי שָׁמַיִם מֵה־תִּפְעַל
 עֲמֻקָּה מִשְׁאוֹל מֵה־תִּדְעַ:
 ט אֲרָכָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִדָּה
 וְרַחְבָּה מִנֵּי־יָם:
 י אִם־יִחְלֹף וַיִּסְגֹּר
 וַיִּקְהֵל וּמִי יִשְׁבְּנוּ:
 יא כִּי־הוּא יָדַע מִתִּישׁוּא
 וַיֵּרֶא־אֲוֹן וְלֹא יִתְבּוֹנֵן:
 יב וְאִישׁ נָבוֹב יִלְבֹּב
 וְעִיר פָּרָא אָדָם יוֹלֵד:

7 Can you claim to fathom the depth of God;
 can you reach the limit of Shaddai?
 8 It is higher than the heavens: what can you do?
 It is deeper than Sheol: what can you know?
 9 Its measure is longer than the earth
 and broader than the sea.
 10 If he intervenes to close or convoke the assembly,
 who is to prevent him?
 11 For he knows deceitful men;
 when he sees evil, will he not consider it?
 12 But a stupid person will get understanding,
 when a wild ass is born human.

-
- 7 The abstract תִּכְלִית may mean the end or limit of something, perhaps to perfection; for the 2nd line, the LXX reads, “have you come to the end of that which the Almighty has made?” (ἡ εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα ἀφίκου, ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ παντοκράτωρ;)
- 8 ‘It is higher than the heavens’ follows the Vg (*Excelsior caelo est*); the MT has ‘the heights of the heavens’ and the LXX has ‘Heaven is high’ (ὕψηλός ὁ οὐρανός).
- 9 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “It would be longer to measure than the earth.”
- 10 The literal translation of ‘intervenes’ (יִחְלֹף) is ‘passes by’ or ‘passes through’.
- 11 For this verse, here following NETB, the NRSV reads, “For he knows those who are worthless; when he sees iniquity, will he not consider it?” and the NJB has, “He knows how deceptive human beings are, and, when he sees their iniquity, will he not consider it?”
- 12 For this verse (here following the NRSV), the NJB reads, “Hence, empty-headed people would do well to study sense and people who behave like wild donkeys to let themselves be tamed;” the meaning of the MT uncertain, though the implication is clearly insulting for Job. Many commentators do not like the last line of the verse and offer even more emendations: some change ‘human’ to ‘a stallion’, rendering ‘a witless wight may get wit when a mule is born a stallion’; and others approached the verse by changing the verb from ‘is born’ to ‘is taught’, resulting in ‘a hollow man may get understanding, and a wild donkey’s colt may be taught’ (as NAB).

אִם־אֶתָּה הַכִּינֹת לִבִּי
 וּפְרִשְׁתָּ אֱלֹו כַּפִּי:
 אִם־אֲנִי בְיָדְךָ הִרְחִיקָהוּ
 וְאַל־תִּשְׁכַּן בְּאֹהֶלֶיךָ עוֹלָה:
 כִּי־אֲזִי תִשָּׂא פָנֶיךָ מִמּוֹם
 וְהָיִיתִי מִצֵּק וְלֹא תִירָא:
 כִּי־אֶתָּה עֹמֵל תִּשְׁכַּח
 כָּמֹם עָבְרוּ תִזְכָּר:
 וּמִצָּהָרִים יָקוּם חֹלֶד
 תִּעֲנֶפֶה כַּבֶּקֶר תִּהְיֶה:
 וּבִטְחֶת כִּי־יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה
 וְחִפְרֹת לִבְטַח תִּשְׁכַּב:

13 “If you reconsider your attitude,
 you will stretch out your hands towards him.
 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away,
 and do not let wickedness reside in your tents.
 15 Surely then you will be able to lift up an unsullied face,
 unwavering and free from fear.
 16 You will forget about your misery,
 thinking of it as a flood that has passed away.
 17 Then life will be brighter than noon
 and its darkness will be bright as morning.
 18 Confident because there is hope;
 you will be protected and take your rest in safety.

-
- 13 The pronoun ‘you’ is emphatic, designed to put Job in a different class than the ‘deceitful men’ (v. 11) – at least to raise the possibility of his being in a different class. The ‘attitude’ is that of a prayer of supplication (see Ex 9:29, 33, 1K 8:38, Is 1:15). In vv. 13–20, Zophar assumes that Job’s misery is due to his iniquity; if he repents, he will be restored; but it is precisely Job’s integrity that prohibits him from espousing his friends’ short-sighted theology.
- 14 For the 1st line, many commentators follow the Vg (*Si iniquitatem quæ est in manu tua abstuleris a te*) and read, “if you put away the sin that is in your hand;” they do this because the imperative comes between the protasis (v. 13) and the apodosis (v. 15) and does not appear to be clearly part of the protasis: this idea is close to the MT, but the MT is much more forceful – if you find sin in your hand, get rid of it.
- 15 The words ‘lift up’ are chosen to recall Job’s statement that he could not lift up his head, and the word ‘unsullied’ recalls his words ‘filled with shame’; the sentence here says that he will lift up his face in innocence and show no signs of God’s anger on him.
- 16 For a second time (see v. 13), Zophar employs the emphatic personal pronoun; could he be providing a gentle reminder that Job might have forgotten the sin that has brought this trouble? After all, there will come a time when Job will not remember this time of trial.
- 17 Some translations (e.g. NRSV) add a pronoun before ‘life’ to make it specifically related to Job (‘your life’) but this is not necessary; the word used here has the nuance of lasting life.
- 18 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, “after your troubles, you will sleep secure.”

יט וּרְבֹצֶתָּ וְאֵין מַחְרִיד
וְחָלּוּ פְנֶיךָ רַבִּים:
כ וְעֵינֵי רָשָׁעִים תִּכְלֶינָה
וּמָנוֹס אֲבָד מֵנֶהֱם
וְתִקְוָתָם מִפֶּחֱנֶפֶשׁ:

19 When you lie down to rest, no one will trouble you,
and many will seek your favour.
20 But the eyes of the wicked fail,
escape eludes them;
they hope to breathe their last.”

¹⁹ The literal translation of ‘seek your favour’ is ‘stroke your face’, a picture drawn from the domestic scene of a child stroking the face of the parent. The verb is a Piel, meaning ‘stroke’ or ‘make soft’; it is used in the Bible of seeking favour from God (supplication) but it may, on the human level, also mean seeking to sway people by flattery.

²⁰ The literal translation of ‘breathe their last’ is ‘the breathing out of the soul’, which was interpreted in older English Bibles as ‘give up the ghost’; the line is simply saying that the brightest hope that the wicked have is death. The verse attacks Job, whose only hope is death (3:21, 6:9 & 10:21).

איוב פרק יב

JOB 12

א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: ¹ Job spoke next; he said:

ב אָמַנְם כִּי אֶת־עַם
וְעִמָּכֶם תָּמוּת חֲכָמָה:
ג גַּם־לִי לֵבָב | כְּמוֹכֶם
לֹא־נִפְל אֲנִכִּי מֵכֶם
וְאֶת־מִי־אֵין כְּמו־אֱלֹהִים:
ד שָׁחַק לְרַעְהוּ | אֱהִיָּה
קָרָא לְאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעֲנֶהוּ
שָׁחוּק צָדִיק תָּמִים:
ה לִפִּיד בּוֹז לְעִשְׁתּוֹת שְׂאֲנָן
נִכּוֹן לְמוֹעֲדֵי רָגֶל:

² "Doubtless, you are the people,
and wisdom will die with you!
³ But I have a brain, as well as you,
I am not inferior to you,
and who does not know all that?
⁴ I am a laughing-stock to his friend,
I who cried to God and whom he answered.
A righteous and blameless man is a laughing-stock.
⁵ Those at ease have contempt for misfortune,
but it is ready for those whose feet are unstable.

JOB 12

- ¹ This long speech of Job falls into three parts: in 12:2–25, Job expresses his resentment at his friends' attitude of superiority and acknowledges the wisdom of God; then, in 13:1–28, Job expresses his determination to reason with God, expresses his scorn for his friends' advice, and demands to know what his sins are; and finally, in 14:1–22, Job laments the brevity of life and the finality of death.
- ² The expression 'you are the people' is a way of saying that the friends hold the popular opinion: i.e., they represent it. Commentators do not think the parallelism is served well by this, and so offer changes for 'people': some have suggested 'you are complete' (based on Arabic), 'you are the strong one' (based on Ugaritic) and the NJB has 'you are the voice of the people'. Job answers with sarcasm and contrasts his situation (a 'laughing-stock', v. 4) with 'those who provoke God' (v. 6).
- ³ Because the 3rd line is repeated in 13:2, many commentators delete it from this verse (as does the LXX). The Peshitta translates נִפְל ('inferior') as 'little'. Job is saying that he does not fall behind them in understanding.
- ⁴ In place of 'his friend', here following the MT, NETB has 'my friend' and the NRSV & NIV have 'my friends'.
- ⁵ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "'Add insult to injury,' think the prosperous, 'strike the fellow now that he is staggering!'" NETB has, "For calamity, there is derision (according to the ideas of the fortunate) – a fate for those whose feet slip!"

יִשְׁלֹוּ אֱהָלִים | לְשֹׁדִדִּים
 וּבִטְחוֹת לְמִרְגִּזֵּי אֵל
 לַאֲשֶׁר הֵבִיא אֱלֹהֵי בִידּוֹ:
 וְאוֹלָם שְׁאֵל־נָא בַּהֲמוֹת וְתִרְדָּ
 וְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיְגַד־לָךְ:
 אֹי שִׁיחַ לָאָרֶץ וְתִרְדָּ
 וַיִּסְפְּרוּ לָךְ דְּגֵי הַיָּם:
 מִי לֹא־יָדַע בְּכָל־אֵלֶּה
 כִּי יַד־יְהוָה עָשְׂתָה זֹאת:
 אֲשֶׁר בִּידּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ כָּל־חַי
 וְרוּחַ כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר־אִישׁ:

6 Yet the tents of brigands are left in peace:
 those who provoke God dwell secure,
 who carry their god in their hands!
 7 “But ask the animals and they will teach you,
 the birds of the air and they will tell you.
 8 Or speak to the earth and it will teach you,
 and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
 9 Which of all of these does not know
 that the hand of Yahweh has done this!
 10 In his hand is the life of every living thing
 and the breath of every human being!

-
- 6 The meaning of the last line is uncertain; it seems to refer to those who make power their god, or perhaps those who believe they are invested with the power of God.
 7 Even the beasts know that God’s unrestrained and irresistible omnipotence is behind everything.
 8 In place of ‘earth’, here following the MT, the NJB has ‘creeping things of the earth’, the NRSV has ‘plants of the earth’ and the NIV has ‘reptiles’; others have suggested that ‘earth’ refers to the underworld.
 9 Some commentators have trouble with the name ‘Yahweh’ in this verse, which is not the pattern in the poetic section of Job; at least 5 Hebrew MSS have ‘God’ (as does the NJB). Many believe that ‘God’ was the original but that the reminiscence of Is 41:20 led the copyist to introduce the Tetragrammaton; however, one could argue equally that the few MSS with ‘God’ were the copyists’ attempt to correct the text in accordance with usage elsewhere. The expression ‘has done this’ probably refers to everything that has been discussed, namely, the way that God in his wisdom rules over the world, but specifically it refers to the infliction of suffering in the world.
 10 If, as all creation witnesses, God is the cause of all things (vv. 7–10), his is the ultimate responsibility for the prevalence of injustice (vv. 4–6). The two words, נֶפֶשׁ and רוּחַ, are synonymous in general; they could be translated ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’, but ‘soul’ is not precise for נֶפֶשׁ, and so ‘life’ is to be preferred; since that is the case for the 1st half of the verse, ‘breath’ will be preferable in the 2nd part. Human life is made of ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’, so, the 2nd line reads ‘and the spirit of all flesh of man’; if the text had simply said ‘all flesh’, that would have applied to all flesh in which there is the breath of life (see Gn 6:17, 7:15). However, to limit this to human beings requires the qualification with ‘man’.

יא	הֲלֹא־אָזֵן מְלִין תִּבְחַן וְחֹךְ אֹכֵל יִטְעֵם-לּוֹ: בִּישִׁישִׁים חֲכָמָה וְאַרְךְ יָמִים תִּבּוֹנָה: ג	11	Does not the ear test words as the palate tastes food?
יב	עִמּוֹ חֲכָמָה וְגִבּוּרָה לֹו עֲצָה וְתִבּוֹנָה: יד	12	Is not wisdom found in the old, and understanding with length of days?
יג	הֵן יִהְרֹס וְלֹא יִבְנֶה יִסְגֵּר עַל־אִישׁ וְלֹא יִפְתָּח: טו	13	In him, there is wisdom, and power too, and good counsel no less than discretion.
יד	הֵן יַעֲזֹר בַּמַּיִם וַיִּבְשּׁוּ וַיִּשְׁלַחֻם וַיַּהֲפֹכוּ אֶרֶץ: טז	14	If he destroys, no one can rebuild; if he imprisons, no one can release.
טו	עִמּוֹ עֹז וְתוֹשִׁיָּה לֹו שֹׁגֵג וּמְשַׁגֵּה:	15	If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he releases them, they destroy the land.
טז		16	In him are strength and prudence; deceived and deceiver alike are his.

-
- ¹¹ The final preposition with its suffix is to be understood as a pleonastic *dativus ethicus* and not translated.
- ¹² For the 1st line, the MT has the simple statement, 'among the aged – wisdom'; since this seems to be more the idea of the friends than of Job, scholars have variously tried to rearrange it: some have proposed that Job is citing his friends ('with the old men, you say, is wisdom') and others have simply made it a question (as NRSV). However, following NETB, we here others take לוֹ from the previous verse (see #11) and make it a negative (rhetorical) question.
- ¹³ The NRSV & NETB have 'God' in place of 'him', here following the MT & NJB. Human wisdom, cut and dried with reassuring maxims, cannot compare with God's wisdom, which is demonstrated by mighty works (vv. 14–16) and baffles the wisest of peoples (vv. 16–25).
- ¹⁴ The verse employs antithetical ideas: 'destroys' and 'rebuild', 'imprisons' and 'release' (the Niphal verbs in the sentences are potential imperfects); all of this is to say that humans cannot reverse the will of God.
- ¹⁵ The LXX clarifies the end of the 1st line with 'he will dry the earth' (ξηρανεῖ τὴν γῆν). The verb הִפָּךְ ('destroy') is used in 9:5 for 'moving' mountains and in Gn for the destruction of Sodom.
- ¹⁶ The word תְּבוּנָה is here rendered 'prudence', following NETB (the NRSV has 'wisdom'); some object that God's power is intended here, and so a word for power and not wisdom should be included (the NJB has 'resourcefulness'), but v. 13 mentioned wisdom. The point is that it is God's efficient wisdom that leads to success (one could interpret this as a metonymy of cause, the meaning being victory or success).

ז	מוליך יועצים שולל ושפטים יהולל:	17	He leads counsellors away stripped, turns judges into fools.
יח	מוסר מלכים פתח ויאסר אזור במתניהם:	18	He undoes the belts of kings and binds a loincloth round their waists.
יט	מוליך כהנים שולל ואתנים יסלף:	19	He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty.
כ	מסיר שפה לנאמנים וטעם זקנים יקח:	20	He strikes the most assured of speakers dumb and robs old people of their discretion.
כא	שופך בוז עלנדיבים ומזיח אפיקים רפה:	21	He pours contempt on the nobly born, and unbuckles the belt of the strong.
כב	מגלה עמקות מניחשך ויצא לאור צלמות:	22	He unveils the depths of darkness, and brings deep shadows to the light.
כג	משגיא לגוים ויאבדם שטח לגוים וינחם:	23	He builds nations up and then ruins them; he makes peoples expand, then leads them away.

-
- 17 After 'stripped', the NJB adds 'of their wits'. The 'judges', like the 'counsellors', are nobles in the cities; God may reverse their lot, either by captivity or by shame, and they cannot resist his power.
- 18 The text of this verse is obscure: here, we read 'bond' in place of 'discipline' (following the Tg); the reference is apparently to the stripping and roping together of captives.
- 19 Except for 'priests', the phraseology of the 1st line is identical to v. 17^a.
- 20 Here, 'discretion' (as NJB) could also be reads as 'discernment' (as NRSV & NETB), 'taste' or 'opinion'.
- 21 The NRSV has 'princes' in place of 'the nobly born', here following the NJB. For the 2nd line, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB reads, 'and disarms the mighty'.
- 22 The phrase 'deep shadows' is traditionally rendered 'the shadow of death'.
- 23 The NJB has the conjectural 'suppresses them' in place of 'leads them away'; the difficulty with the verb (יִנְחֵם) is that it means 'lead' or 'guide' but not 'lead away' or 'disperse', unless this passage provides the context for such a meaning. Moreover, it never has a negative connotation.

כד מִסִּיר לֵב רָאשֵׁי עַם־הָאָרֶץ
וַיִּתְּעֻם בְּתֵהוּ לֹא־דֶרֶךְ:
כה יִמְשְׁשׁוּ־חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אֹר
וַיִּתְּעֻם כְּשִׁכּוֹר:

24 He strips understanding from the leaders of the earth
and makes them wander in a trackless waste.
25 They grope about in unlit darkness;
he makes them stagger like a drunkard."

²⁴ The literal translation of 'the leaders of the earth' is 'the heads of the peoples of the earth'.

²⁵ The Hiphil verb 'stagger' (וַיִּתְּעֻם) is the same that was in v. 24 ('wander') but, in this verse, some translators (e.g. the *NJB*) emend the text to a Niphal of the verb and put it in the plural, to get the reading 'they reel to and fro'. But, even if the verse closes the chapter and there is no further need for a word of divine causation, the Hiphil sense works well here – causing people to wander like a drunken man would be the same as making them stagger.

איוב פרק יג

א הִנֵּכֶל רָאִיתָ עֵינַי
שָׁמְעָה אָזְנִי וַתִּבֶּן לָהּ:
ב כְּדַעְתְּכֶם יָדַעְתִּי גַם־אֲנִי
לֹא־נָפַל אֲנִי מִכֶּם:
ג אִלֵּים אֲנִי אֶל־שָׁדַי אֲדַבֵּר
וְהוֹכַח אֶל־אֵל אַחֲפָז:
ד וְאִלֵּים אַתֶּם טִפְלֵי־שָׁקֶר
רִפְּאִי אֵלֶּל כֻּלְּכֶם:
ה מִי־יִתֶּן הַחֲרָשׁ תַּחֲרִישׁוֹן
וְתִהְיֶה לָכֶם לַחֲכָמָה:
ו שְׁמַעוּ־נָא תוֹכַחְתִּי
וְרַבּוֹת שְׁפָתַי הִקְשִׁיבוּ:

JOB 13

1 “Indeed, my eye has seen all this;
me ear has heard and understood it.
2 What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
3 But I would speak to Shaddai;
I desire to argue my case with God.
4 As for you, you are plasterers of lies,
all worthless physicians!
5 If only you would remain silent,
that would be your wisdom?
6 Kindly listen to my accusation
and give your attention to the way I shall plead.

JOB 13

In this chapter, Job attacks his friends for ‘*speaking wickedly for God*’ (v. 7) and offering ‘*proverbs of ashes*’ (v. 12).

- 1 The MT has simply ‘*all*’ for ‘*all this*’; there is no reason to add anything to the text to gain this meaning.
- 2 The literal translation of ‘*what you know*’ is ‘*like your knowledge*’; the pronoun, ‘*I*’, makes the subject emphatic and stresses the contrast: ‘*I know – I also*’. The verb ‘*fall*’ is used in the 2nd line, as it was in 4:13, to express becoming lower than someone, i.e., ‘*inferior*’.
- 3 The verb translated ‘*speak*’ (אֲדַבֵּר) is simply the Piel imperfect; it can be classified as a desiderative imperfect, saying, ‘*I wish to speak*’, which is reinforced with the verb ‘*desire*’ in the 2nd line. The infinitive הוֹכַח (‘*to argue*’), has the legal sense here of arguing a case (cf. 5:17).
- 4 In place of ‘*plasterers of lies*’ (following the MT), NETB has ‘*inventors of lies*’, the NRSV has ‘*you whitewash with lies*’ and the NJB has ‘*you are all charlatans*’. Literally translated, ‘*worthless physicians*’ would be ‘*healers of worthlessness*’.
- 5 Job is being rather sarcastic here, suggesting that, if his friends were to shut up, then they would prove themselves to be wise (see Pr 17:28).
- 6 Job returns to legal procedure (see v. 18 and #9:14); he himself elects to cross-examine God, spurning the so-called sages who presume to plead his cause. However, Job first will argue with his friends: his cause that he will plead with God begins in v. 13.

ז הלא תדברו עולה
 ולו תדברו רמיה:
 ח הפניו תשאון
 אם-לא תריבון:
 ט הטוב כי-יחקר אתכם
 אם-כהתל באנוש תהתלו בו:
 י הוכח יוכיח אתכם
 אם-בסתר פנים תשאון:
 יא הלא שאתו תבעת אתכם
 ופחדו יפל עליכם:
 יב זכרניכם משלי-אפר
 לגבי-חמר גביכם:

7 Will you speak wickedly for God?
 Will you speak deceitfully for him?
 8 Will you show partiality towards him,
 arguing the case for God?
 9 Would you do well if he were to scrutinise you?
 Can you deceive him, as one deceives another?
 10 He would inflict a harsh rebuke on you
 if you secretly show partiality.
 11 Does his majesty not terrify you?
 Does dread of him not overcome you?
 12 Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;
 your defences are defences of clay.

-
- 7 The expression 'for God' means 'in favour of God' or 'on God's behalf' (as NETB); Job is amazed that they will say false things on God's behalf.
 8 The idiom used in the 1st line is 'will you lift up his face'; here, Job is being very sarcastic, for this expression usually means that a judge is taking a bribe.
 9 The verb here translated 'scrutinise' means 'search out', 'investigate', or 'examine'; in the conditional clause, the imperfect verb expresses the hypothetical case.
 10 Note that, as Job attacks the unrighteousness of God boldly, he nonetheless has confidence in God's righteousness that would not allow liars to defend him.
 11 The word translated 'his majesty' (שאתו) forms a play on the word 'show partiality' (תשאון) in the last verse. The literal translation of 'dread of him' is 'his dread'.
 12 The word translated 'your maxims' is זכרניכם (literally, 'your remembrances'), which not only can mean the act of remembering, but also what is remembered – what provokes memory or is worth being remembered; in the plural it can mean all the memorabilia, and in this verse all the sayings and teachings. The parallelism of 'dust' and 'ashes' is fairly frequent in scripture but 'proverbs of ashes' is difficult: the genitive is certainly describing the proverbs, but it could be classified as a genitive of apposition (i.e. proverbs that are/have become ashes). Ashes represent something that at one time may have been useful but now has been reduced to what is worthless.

יג	הַחֲרִישׁוּ מִמֶּנִּי וְאִדְבַּרְהָ אֲנִי וַיַּעֲבֹר עָלַי מָה:	13	“Stop talking to me and I will speak and let come on me what may.
יד	עַל־מָה אֲשָׂא בְשָׁרִי בִשְׁנֵי וְנִפְשִׁי אֲשִׁים בְּכַפִּי:	14	I will take my flesh between my teeth and put my life in my hands.
טו	הֵן יִקְטֹלֵנִי לֹא לוֹ אֵיחָל אֶדְדַּרְכִּי אֶל־פָּנָיו אוֹכִיחַ:	15	Let him kill me: I have hope in him; but I will justify my conduct in his eyes.
טז	גַּם־הוּא־לִי לִישׁוּעָה כִּי־לֹא לְפָנָיו חָנָף יָבוֹא:	16	This is what will save me, for the wicked would not appear before him.
יז	שִׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ מִלְתִּי וְאַחֲוֹתִי בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם:	17	“Listen carefully to my words, and pay attention to my explanation.
יח	הִנֵּה־נָא עָרַכְתִּי מִשְׁפָּט יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־אֲנִי אֶצְדָּק:	18	You see, I have prepared my case, for I know that I shall be vindicated.

- ¹³ The MT opens the verse with the pregnant construction, ‘be silent from me’; the LXX omits ‘from me’, as does the Vg. Job has prepared his case and, despite the risk he is taking (vv. 14–15), he will state it boldly, certain that he shall be vindicated.
- ¹⁴ The 1st line here follows the LXX (*ἀναλαβὸν τὰς σάρκας μου τοῖς ὀδοῦσιν*) and; the MT (and Vg – *Quare lacero carnes meas dentibus meis*) has, “Why do I take my flesh in my teeth?”
- ¹⁵ There is a textual difficulty in the 1st line that factors into the interpretation of the verse: in place of ‘not’ (לֹא), here following the *Kethib*, the *Qere* has לוֹ (‘in him’). The NRSV takes the former (‘see, he will kill me; I have no hope’) but the NIV, NJB and NETB have the latter (as do we). Job is not out to win back his happiness but to vindicate his innocence before man and, in particular, before God.
- ¹⁶ Job’s passionate desire to appear before God, his would-be slayer, testifies to his innocence, for the ‘wicked’ would not dare to do this.
- ¹⁷ The infinitive absolute of the 1st line intensifies the imperative, which serves here with the force of an immediate call to attention. The verb has to be supplied in the 2nd line, for the MT has just ‘and my explanation in your ears’; both ‘words’ and ‘explanation’ are Aramaisms (the latter appearing in Dn 5:12 for the explanation of riddles).
- ¹⁸ Job imagines a legal action between himself and God. On this occasion, he forgets that there is no independent judge (9:32–33); he no longer sees God as a judge but only as an opponent.

ט מִי־הוּא יִרְיֵב עִמָּדִי
 כִּי־עַתָּה אֲחַרִּישׁ וְאָגוּעַ:
 כ אֲדֹשְׁתִּים אֶל־תַּעַשׂ עִמָּדִי
 אֲזִמְכֶיךָ לֹא אֶסְתֵּר:
 כא כַּפֶּךָ מֵעַל הָרַחֵק
 וְאַמְתֵּךְ אֶל־תִּבְעַתְנִי:
 כב וְקֹרָא וְאַנְכִי אֶעֱנֶה
 אֲוֹ־אֲדַבֵּר וְהִשִּׁיבֵנִי:
 כג כַּמָּה לִי עֲוֹנוֹת וְחַטָּאוֹת
 פֶּשְׁעֵי וְחַטָּאתִי הִדִּיעֵנִי:
 כד לָמָּה־פָנִיךָ תִּסְתִּיר
 וְתַחֲשַׁבֵנִי לְאֹיֵב לָךְ:

19 Who wants to contest my case?
 In advance, I agree to be silent and to die!
 20 Only grant me two concessions,
 and then I shall not hide from your face:
 21 Remove your hand, which lies so heavy on me,
 no longer make me cower from you terror.
 22 Then call and I shall answer,
 or let me speak and you will answer.
 23 How many are my iniquities and my sins?
 Let me know my transgression and my sin.
 24 Why do you hide your face,
 and look on me as an enemy?

-
- ¹⁹ Job turns against God the legal accusation that Yahweh (Is 1:18, Ho 2:4, Mi 6:1–2) and his servant (Is 50:8) have already hurled at his people. The 2nd line (literally, “*for now I shall be silent and die*”) may be another legal formula. He who challenges his opponents is already prepared to be proved wrong and take the consequences. Sure of his case, Job accepts this.
- ²⁰ The first concession is to face God as an equal and to recover his liberty (v. 21); the second is to speak first in the debate (v. 22).
- ²¹ The opening of the 1st line is a common, but bold, anthropomorphism; the fact that the word used is actually ‘*palm*’, rather than ‘*hand*’ (with the sense of power), may stress Job’s feeling of being trapped or confined (see also Ps 139:5, 7).
- ²² The imperatives in this verse function like the future tense in view of their use for instruction or advice; the chiastic arrangement of the verb forms is interesting: imperative + imperfect, imperfect + imperative (the imperative is used for God, but the imperfect is used when Job is the subject). Job is calling for the court to convene – he will be either the defendant or the prosecutor.
- ²³ Job is willing to learn from God whether his ‘*faults*’ (v. 26) are the cause of his misery; this seems to be a rhetorical flourish (compare 31:35–36) – he has done no wrong that would call for such treatment (see 1:1, 8, 22).
- ²⁴ The anthropomorphism of ‘*hide your face*’ indicates a withdrawal of favour and an outpouring of wrath (see Ps 30:7, Is 54:8, Ps 27:9). Sometimes God ‘*hides his face*’ to make himself invisible or aloof (see 34:29). In either case, if God covers his face, it is because he considers Job an enemy – at least, this is what Job thinks.

כה הֵעֵלָה נִדְף תַּעֲרוֹץ
 וְאֶת־קֶשׁ יִבֵּשׁ תִּרְדֹּף:
 כו כִּי־תִכְתֹּב עָלַי מִרְרוֹת
 וְתוֹרִישֵׁנִי עֲוֹנוֹת נְעוּרַי:
 כז וְתֵשֶׂם בַּסֵּד | רַגְלִי
 וְתִשְׁמֹר כָּל־אַרְחוֹתַי
 עַל־שְׂרָשֵׁי רַגְלִי תִתְחַקֶּה:
 כח וְהוּא כְרֻקָּב יִבְלֶה
 כְּבִגְדֹת אֲכָלוּ עֵשׂ:

25 Will you frighten a windblown leaf
 and pursue a dry straw?
 26 You who write bitter allegations against me
 and tax me with the faults of my youth.
 27 You have put my feet in the stocks;
 you examine my every step
 and set a bound to the soles of my feet!
 28 For his part, he crumbles away like a rotten thing,
 or like a moth-eaten garment.

²⁵ The literal translation of 'windblown' is 'driven'.

²⁶ The meaning of the 1st line is that of writing down a formal charge against someone (cf. Job 31:15).

²⁷ For the 3rd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "and you measure my footprints one by one!"

²⁸ 'His part' refers to that of a human being (see 14:1). The word רֻקָּב ('a rotten thing') is used elsewhere in the Bible of dry rot in a house or rotting bones in a grave; it is used in parallelism with 'moth' both here and in Ho 5:12. The LXX has 'wineskin' (ἀσκῶν), which results from an alternative pointing of the Hebrew word. Some critics suggest reading this verse after 14:2 or 14:6.

איוב פרק יד

א אָדָם יְלֹוד אִשָּׁה
קָצֵר יָמִים וְשָׁבַע-רָגָז;
ב כְּצִיץ יֵצֵא וַיִּמָּל
וַיִּבְרַח כַּצֵּל וְלֹא יַעֲמֹד;
ג אֶף-עַל-זֶה פִקַּחַת עֵינֶיךָ
וְאַתִּי תְּבִיא בַּמִּשְׁפָּט עִמָּךְ;
ד מִי־יִתֵּן טְהוֹר מִטָּמֵא
לֹא אֶחָד:
ה אִם חֲרוּצִים יָמָיו
מִסְפַּר-חֳדָשָׁיו אַתָּה
חֲקוּ עֲשִׂית וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר:

JOB 14

- 1 “Man, born of woman,
is short of days and full of trouble,
- 2 comes up like a flower and withers,
fleeting as a shadow and does not last.
- 3 Do you fix your eyes on such a one?
Do you bring me into judgement with you?
- 4 Will anyone produce the pure from what is impure?
No one can!
- 5 Since his days are determined,
since his tale of months depends on you,
since you assign him bounds he cannot pass,

JOB 14

This chapter presents an elegy on human misery. Job (see 7:1) sees his own suffering as the fate of every human being and thence draws his argument: why God should use his strength against such a mean creature is incomprehensible.

- 1 The 1st of the threefold apposition for אָדָם (*‘man’*) is *‘born of woman’*: the genitive after a passive participle denotes the agent of the action; the 2nd description is simply *‘short of days’*: the meaning here is that his life is short (*‘days’* being put as the understatement for *‘years’*); the 3rd expression is *‘consumed/full/sated with/of trouble/restlessness’*: the latter word, רָגָז, occurred in 3:17 (and see also the idea in 10:15).
- 2 The *‘shadow’* does not stay fixed but continues to advance toward darkness.
- 3 The idiom *‘fix your eyes on’* someone means to prepare to judge him. The text of the 2nd line has the 1P pronoun as the accusative (*‘me’*) but many wish to emend it to say *‘him’*.
- 4 Job acknowledges human vileness but pleads it as an excuse. The emphasis is laid on the physical (and therefore ritual) uncleanness that a human contracts from the moment of conception (see Lv 15:19ff) and birth (see Lv 12:2ff), being born of woman (Job 14:1, see Ps 51:5). The ritual uncleanness involves a corresponding moral weakness, a tendency to sin.
- 5 Job is saying that God preordains the number of the days of man; he knows the number of the months and fixes the limit of human life.

ו	שְׁעָה מֵעֲלֹיו וַיַּחְדֹּל	6	turn your eyes from him and desist,
	עַד־יִרְצֶה בְּשָׂכִיר יוֹמוֹ:		that he may fulfil his day like a hired man.
ז	כִּי יֵשׁ לָעֵץ תִּקְוָה	7	There is hope for a tree:
	אִם־יִכָּרֵת וְעוֹד יַחְלִיף		when felled, it can start sprout again
	וַיִּנָּקְתּוּ לֹא תַחְדָּל:		and its new shoots will not cease.
ח	אִם־יִזְקִין בָּאָרֶץ שָׂרְשׁוֹ	8	Though its roots grow old in the earth
	וּבַעֲפָר יָמוּת גִּזְעוֹ:		and its stump dies in the soil,
ט	מִרֵּיחַ מַיִם יִפְרֹחַ	9	yet, at the scent of water, it buds
	וַעֲשֶׂה קָצִיר כְּמוֹ־נֹטַע:		and puts out branches like a new plant.
י	וְגִבֹּר יָמוּת וַיַּחֲלֹשׁ	10	But man dies and is powerless,
	וַיִּגָּע אָדָם וְאֵיזֶה:		he expires and then where is he?
יא	אֲזָלוּ־מַיִם מִנַּיִים	11	As water disappears from a lake
	וְנָהָר יִחְרַב וַיִּבָּשׁ:		and a river wastes away and dries up,

- ⁶ The verb **וַיַּחְדֹּל**, literally translated, means ‘and let him desist’, which some take to mean ‘and let him rest’; but, since this is rather difficult in the line, commentators have suggested other meanings, and several emend the text slightly to make it an imperative rather than an imperfect (as here, following the *NRSV* & *NJB*).
- ⁷ The figure now changes to a tree for the discussion of the finality of death. At least the tree will sprout again when it is cut down. Why, Job wonders, should what has been granted to the tree not also be granted to humans?
- ⁸ The *LXX* translates ‘soil’ (literally, ‘dust’) with ‘rock’ (*πέτρεα*), probably in light of the earlier illustration of the tree growing in the rocks. Job is thinking here of a tree that dies or decays because of a drought rather than being uprooted, because the v. 9 tells how it revives with water.
- ⁹ The personification adds to the comparison with people – the tree is credited with the sense of smell to detect the water.
- ¹⁰ The word **חֲלָשׁ** in Aramaic and Syriac means ‘to be weak’ (interestingly, the *Peshitta* translated it with ‘fade away’ here). In the transitive sense, the verb means ‘to weaken’ or ‘to defeat’ (Ex 17:13); here it may have the sense of ‘be lifeless’. Many commentators emend the text to read ‘passes away’, but the basic idea of ‘be powerless’ (following *NETB*) is satisfactory in the text. The break to a question in the 2nd line adds a startling touch to the whole verse: the obvious meaning is that he is gone; the *LXX* weakens the question to ‘and is no more’ (*οὐκέτι ἔσται*).
- ¹¹ The word **יָם** (‘lake’) can also mean ‘sea’.

יב ואִישׁ שָׁכַב וְלֹא־יָקוּם
 עַד־בִּלְתִּי שָׁמַיִם לֹא יִקְיֹצוּ
 וְלֹא־יִעָרְוּ מִשְׁנָתָם:
 יג מִי יִתֵּן בְּשֹׁאֹל תַּצְפִּנֵּנִי
 תִּסְתִּירֵנִי עַד־שׁוּב אַפֶּיךָ
 תִּשֵּׂית לִי חֶק וְתִזְכְּרֵנִי:
 יד אִם־יָמוּת גִּבֹּר הַיְּחִיָּה
 כָּל־יָמַי צָבָאִי אֵיחָל
 עַד־בֹּא חֲלִיפָתִי:
 טו תִּקְרָא וְאֲנֹכִי אֶעֱנֶךָ
 לַמַּעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ תִּכְסֶּף:
 טז כִּי־עָתָה צַעֲדֵי תִסְפֹּר
 לֹא־תִשְׁמַר עַל־חַטָּאתִי:

12 so, man lies down and does not rise;
 until the heavens wear out, he will not awake
 or be roused from his sleep.
 13 “Will no one hide me in Sheol,
 and shelter me there until your anger is past,
 fixing a certain day for calling me to mind?
 14 If a man dies, will he live again?
 All the days of my service I would wait
 until my relief comes.
 15 Then you would call, and I should answer;
 you would long for the work of your hands.
 16 For then, you would not number my steps;
 you would not keep watch over my sin.

12 In place of ‘wear out’, here following *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, *Theodotion*, the *Peshitta* and *Vg (atteratur)*, the MT has ‘until ... not’, which is an unusual (if not impossible) construction, found in only one other type of context; in its 6 other occurrences (Nb 21:35, Dt 3:3, Jos 8:22, 10:33, 11:8, 2K 10:11), the context refers to the absence of survivors.

13 The text does not say that death would be followed by a period in Sheol, after which Job would return to life. The situation as imagined does, however, bring this possibility to mind. Job, in his desperation, longs for refuge in the only place that he can think of, other than the earth: heaven being reserved to God (see Ps 115:16). If Job could hide somewhere until God’s fury is exhausted, he might once more look on a God of mercy. The idea is developed in vv. 14–17; we see Job awaiting his ‘relief’ while God, no longer angry, longs to see Job again; every possible fault has been forgiven and, therefore, all question of sin is forgotten.

14 The LXX removes the interrogative nature of the 1st line and makes the statement affirmative, i.e., that man will live again (ἐὰν γὰρ ἀποθάνῃ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται).

15 The idea here is that God would, sometime in the future, call Job into his fellowship again when he longed for the work of his hands (Job 10:3).

16 The 2nd line of the verse can be contrasted with the 1st, the 1st being the present reality and the 2nd the hope looked for in the future.

ז' חָתַם בַּצֹּרֹר פֶּשְׁעִי
 וְתָטַף עַל-עוֹנִי:
 יח וְאוֹלָם הָרֶנוּף לֹא יָבוֹל
 וְצוּר יַעֲתֹק מִמָּקוֹמוֹ:
 ט אֲבָנִים | שֹׁחֲקוּ מֵיָם
 תִּשְׁטֹף-סִפִּיחִיהָ עַפְרָאֲרָץ
 וְתִקּוֹת אִנּוּשׁ הָאֲבֹדֶת:
 כ תִּתְקַפֶּהוּ לְנֹצַח וַיִּהְיֶה
 מִשְׁנֵה פָנָיו וְתִשְׁלַחֵהוּ:
 כא יִכְבְּדוּ בָנָיו וְלֹא יֵדַע
 וְיִצְעָרוּ וְלֹא-יִבִּין לָמוֹ:
 כב אֶדְ-בִּשְׁרוֹ עָלָיו יִכְאֹב
 וְנִפְשׁוֹ עָלָיו תִּאָּבֵל:

17 You would seal up my crime in a bag,
 and put a cover over my fault.
 18 “Alas! Just as the mountain eventually falls down,
 the rock moves from its place.
 19 As water wears away the stones
 and torrents wash away the soil,
 so you destroy a man’s hope.
 20 You overpower him once for all, and he is gone;
 first, you disfigure him, then you dismiss him.
 21 His children may be honoured – he does not know it;
 they may come down in the world – he does not care.
 22 He feels only the pain of his own body,
 makes no lament, except for his own self.”

-
- 17 The verb translated ‘*put a cover over*’ was used in 13:4 for ‘*plasterers of lies*’; the idea is probably that God coats or paints over the sins so that they are forgotten (see Is 1:18).
 18 ‘*Eventually falls down*’ follows the LXX (πιπτων διαπρεσσειται) and Peshitta (the NRSV has ‘*falls and crumbles away*’); the MT is corrupt: the word יָבוֹל usually refers to a flower fading.
 19 In place of ‘*torrents*’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has a conjectural ‘*cloudburst*’; the MT meaning (סִפִּיחִיהָ – ‘*after-growths*’) is changed by just about everyone. The meaning for Job is that death shatters all of man’s hopes for the continuation of life.
 20 In place of ‘*you disfigure him*’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘*you change their countenance*’ and NETB has ‘*you change his appearance*’; some emend the text to read an imperfect verb rather than a participle, but this is unnecessary.
 21 There is no expressed subject for the verb ‘*they honour*’, so it is here taken as a passive. NETB interprets both lines of this verse as conditional clauses, adding ‘*if*’ at the start of each and taking the 2nd clause of each as the apodosis. The point of this verse is that, in death, a man does not realise what is happening here in the present life.
 22 The literal translation of the 2nd line is ‘*his soul laments over him*’ (see #Ps 6:5).

איוב פרק טו

JOB 15

- א וַיַּעַן אֱלִיפָז הַתִּימָנִי וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Eliphaz of Teman spoke next. He said:
- ב הַחֲכָם יַעֲנֶה דַעַת־רוּחַ 2 "Does anyone wise respond with windy knowledge,
וַיִּמְלֵא קָדִים בִּטְנוֹ: or feed on an east wind?
- ג הֲזֹכֵחַ בְּדַבָּר לֹא יִסְבֹּן 3 Do they make a defence with ineffectual words
וּמַלִּים לֹא־יוֹעִיל בָּם: and speeches good for nothing?
- ד אַף־אַתָּה תִּפְרַר יִרְאָה 4 You do worse: you suppress reverence;
וְתִגְרַע שִׁיחָה לְפָנֵי־אֱלֹ: you discredit discussion before God.
- ה כִּי יֹאמֶר עֲוֹנָךְ פִּיךָ 5 Your very fault inspires you to speak like this;
וְתִבְחָר לְשׁוֹן עֲרוּמִים: hence, you adopt this language of cunning.
- ו יִרְשִׁיעֶךָ פִּיךָ וְלֹא־אֲנִי 6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;
וְשִׁפְתֶיךָ יַעֲנוּ־בְךָ: your own lips bear witness against you.

JOB 15

- ¹ In the 1st round of speeches, Eliphaz had emphasised the moral perfection of God, Bildad his unwavering justice, and Zophar his omniscience; since this did not bring the expected response from Job, the friends see him as a menace to true religion, and so they intensify their approach. Eliphaz, as dignified as ever, rebukes Job for his arrogance and warns about the judgment the wicked bring on themselves.
- ² The word translated 'windy knowledge' (דַעַת־רוּחַ) means 'knowledge without any content' or 'vain knowledge'.
- ³ Eliphaz draws on Job's previous claim (cf. 13:3) but will declare it hollow.
- ⁴ The term here translated as 'discussion' means the application of the mind to religious truths, coupled with the idea of speech: meditation (the NRSV uses this word) and study of the Law often took the form of real utterance.
- ⁵ The verb יֹאמֶר has the meaning 'to teach' or 'to instruct', but it is unlikely that the idea of revealing is intended; if the verb is understood metonymically, then 'to inspire' or 'to prompt' will be sufficient.
- ⁶ Job's tongue betrays him: his protestations of innocence reveal anxiety to conceal guilt.

ז הראישון אדם תולד
 ולפני גבעות חוללת:
 ח הבסוד אלוה תשמע
 ותגרע אליך חכמה:
 ט מה־ידעת ולא נדע
 תבין ולא־עמנו הוא:
 י גס־שב גס־ישיש בנו
 כביר מאבִּיך ימים:
 יא המעט ממך תנחומות אל
 ודבר לאט עמך:
 יב מה־יקחך לבך
 ומה־ירזמון עיניך:
 יג כִּי־תשיב אל־אל רוחך
 והצאת מפִּיך מלין:

7 “Are you the first-born of the human race,
 brought into the world before the hills?
 8 Have you been a listener at God’s secret council,
 or established a monopoly of wisdom?
 9 What knowledge do you have that we have not,
 what understanding that is not ours too?
 10 One of us is an old, grey-headed man
 loaded with more years than your father!
 11 Can you ignore these divine consolations
 and then moderate tone of our words?
 12 How passion carries you away,
 and how you roll your eyes,
 13 when you vent your anger on God
 and speeches come tripping off your tongue!

-
- 7 The verse compares Job to the first human, a being who could have claimed great wisdom, then goes on to contrast him with Wisdom herself, brought forth before the hills were made (Pr 8:25) and ever afterwards a member of God’s council (Pr 8:22–31); but see Job 28:12–28, Ws 8:3–4.
 8 The meaning of סוד is ‘confidence’ but, in this context, the implication is ‘secret council’ (see Jr 23:18); it is a question of confidence on the part of God, that only wisdom can know (see Pr 8:30–31): Job seemed to them to claim to have access to the mind of God.
 9 The last clause means that one possesses something through knowledge.
 10 The participle שב, from שִׁיב (‘to have white hair’, 1S 12:2), only occurs elsewhere in the Bible in the Aramaic sections of Ezra.
 11 The word תנחומות (‘consolations’) occurs only here and in 21:34. The words of comfort and consolation that they have been offering to Job are here said to be ‘of God’, but Job will call them miserable comforters (16:2).
 12 In place of ‘how you roll your eyes’, the NRSV has ‘how your eyes flash’; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.
 13 The word translated ‘anger’ (רוחך) literally means ‘spirit’ or ‘breath’ but the fact that this is turned against God means that it must be given a derived meaning, or a meaning that is metonymical.

יד מה־אָנוֹשׁ כִּי־יִזְכֶּה
 וְכִי־יִצְדָּק יִלּוּד אִשָּׁה:
 טו הֲנָ בְקִדְשׁוֹ לֹא יֵאֱמִין
 וְשָׁמַיִם לֹא־זָכוּ בְּעֵינָיו:
 טז אֵף כִּי־נִתְעַב וְנֶאֱלַח
 אִישׁ־שֶׁתָּה כַּמִּים עוֹלָה:
 יז אַחֲוֶה שִׁמְע־לִי
 וְזֶה־חֲזִיתִי וְאֶסְפָּרָה:
 יח אֲשֶׁר־חֲכָמִים יִגִּידוּ
 וְלֹא כִחְדוּ מַאֲבֹתָם:
 יט לָהֶם לְבָדָם נִתְּנָה הָאָרֶץ
 וְלֹא־עֲבַר זָר בְּתוֹכָם:

14 How can anyone be pure,
 anyone born of woman be upright?
 15 God cannot rely even on his holy ones;
 to him, even the heavens seem impure.
 16 How much more, this hateful, corrupt thing,
 humanity, which soaks up wickedness like water!
 17 “Listen to me, I have a lesson for you:
 what I have seen I will declare –
 18 and the tradition of the sages,
 who have remained faithful to their ancestors,
 19 to whom alone the land was given –
 no foreigner included among them.

-
- 14 Eliphaz resumes his earlier theme (4:17) and that of Job (14:4) but gives it another direction. Human intrinsic impurity is not now considered as the reason for frailty (4:17–19) or as an excuse for unavoidable transgression (14:1–4), but as the root from which great sins grow; ‘*iniquity*’ is the vocabulary of Eliphaz.
- 15 The question here is whether the reference in the 2nd line is to material ‘*heavens*’ (as in Ex 24:10 & Job 25:5), or to heavenly beings; the latter seems preferable in this context.
- 16 The two descriptions here used are ‘*hateful*’, meaning ‘*disgusting*’ (a Niphal participle with the value of a Latin participle) and ‘*corrupt*’ (a Niphal participle which occurs elsewhere only in Ps 14:3 & 53:4), always in a moral sense.
- 17 The demonstrative pronoun is used in the 2nd line as a nominative, to introduce an independent relative clause.
- 18 The literal translation of ‘*their ancestors*’ is ‘*their fathers*’; some commentators change one letter and follow the reading of the LXX: ‘*and their fathers have not hidden*’ (καὶ οὐκ ἔκρυψαν πατέρας αὐτῶν).
- 19 Eliphaz probably thinks that Edom was the proverbial home of wisdom, and so the reference here would be to his own people. If, as many interpret, the biblical writer is using these accounts to put Yahwistic ideas into the discussion, then the reference would be to Canaan at the time of the fathers. At any rate, the tradition of wisdom to Eliphaz has not been polluted by foreigners but has retained its pure and moral nature from antiquity.

כ	כָּל־יְמֵי רָשָׁע הוּא מִתְחַלֵּל וּמִסְפֵּר שָׁנִים נִצְפָּנוּ לְעָרִיץ:	20	The life of the wicked is unceasing torment; the years allotted to the tyrant are numbered.
כא	קוֹל־פַּחַדִּים בְּאָזְנוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם שׁוֹדֵד יְבֹאֲנוּ:	21	A cry of panic fills his ear; when all is peace, his destroyer swoops down on him.
כב	לֹא־יֵאֱמִין שׁוֹב מִנִּי־חֶשֶׁךְ וְצָפוּ וְצָפוּי הוּא אֶל־יִחְרָב:	22	No more can he count on escaping from the dark, but knows that he is destined for the sword.
כג	נֹדֵד הוּא לֶלֶחֶם אִיהָ יָדָע כִּי־נִכּוֹן בִּידּוֹ יוֹסֶחֶשֶׁךְ:	23	They wander abroad for bread, saying, "Where is it?" They know that a day of darkness is at hand.
כד	יִבְעֲתֵהוּ צָר וּמִצּוֹקָה תִּתְקַפֶּהוּ כְּמֶלֶךְ עֹתִיד לְכִידּוֹר:	24	Distress and anguish overwhelm him, as when a king is poised for the assault.
כה	כִּי־נָטָה אֶל־אֵל יָדוֹ וְאֶל־שָׂדֵי יִתְגַּבֵּר:	25	He raised his hand against God; boldly, he defied Shaddai!
כו	יָרוּץ אֵלָיו בְּצוּאָר בְּעֵבִי גִבִּי מִגִּנּוֹי:	26	Head lowered, he charged him, with his massively bossed shield.
כז	כִּי־כָסָה פָּנָיו בְּחֶלְבּוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ פִּימָה עַל־כִּסְלֵו:	27	His face had grown full and fat, and his thighs too heavy with flesh.

²⁰ Literally translated, the 1st line (here following the NJB) reads, "all the days of the wicked, he suffers."

²¹ The word 'fills' is not in the MT but has been supplied in the translation.

²² 'Destined' is a conjectural translation: the MT has 'lain in wait for' (וְצָפוּי in the Qere or וּצָפוּ in the Kethib).

²³ For this verse, the NJB, conjecturally following the LXX, reads: "... marked down as meat for the vulture. He knows that his ruin is at hand."

²⁴ The NJB adds, as an extra line at the start of this verse, "The hour of darkness terrifies him."

²⁵ The symbol of the raised hand is an image of attempting to strike, or shaking a fist at, someone; it is a symbol of a challenge or threat.

²⁶ Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "He runs against him with the neck;" the NRSV, interpreting this as 'with a stiff neck', reads, "running stubbornly against him."

²⁷ This verse tells us that he is not in any condition to fight, because he is bloated and fat from luxurious living.

כח וַיִּשְׁכְּנוּ עָרִים נִכְחָדוֹת
 בָּתִּים לֹא־יֵשְׁבוּ לָמוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַתְּדוּ לְגָלִים:
 כט לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂר וְלֹא־יִקּוּם חֵילוֹ
 וְלֹא־יִטֶּה לָאָרֶץ מִנָּלָם:
 ל לֹא־יִסּוּר מִנִּי־חֹשֶׁךְ
 יִנְקֹתוּ תִיבֵשׁ שְׁלֵהֶבֶת
 וְיִסּוּר בָּרוּחַ פִּיּוֹ:
 לא אֶל־יֶאֱמֵן בִּשְׂוֹ נִתְעָה
 כִּי־שׂוֹא תִהְיֶה תְּמוּרָתוֹ:
 לב בְּלֹא־יִזְמוּ תִּמְלָא
 וְכִפְתּוֹ לֹא רַעֲנָנָה:
 לג יַחֲמֹס כְּגֶפֶן בִּסְרוֹ
 וַיִּשְׁלַךְ כְּזֵית נֹצְתוֹ:
 לד כִּי־עֲדַת חֲנָף גִּלְמוּד
 וְאֵשׁ אֲכָלָה אֶהְיֶה־שֹׂחַד:

28 He had occupied the towns he had destroyed,
 with their uninhabited houses
 about to fall into ruins.
 29 No great profit will come to him, his luck will not hold,
 he will cast his shadow over the country no longer.
 30 He will not escape the dark:
 A flame will scorch his young shoots
 and the wind will carry off his blossom.
 31 Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself,
 or delusion will be his.
 32 It will be paid in full before their time
 and his branches will never again be green.
 33 Like the vine, he will shake of his unripe fruit,
 and shed his blossom like the olive tree.
 34 Yes, the company of the godless is barren,
 and fire consumes the tents of the venal.

- 28 These are not towns that he, the wicked, has destroyed, but that were destroyed by a judgment on wickedness; accordingly, Eliphaz is saying that the wicked man is willing to risk such a curse in his confidence in his prosperity.
- 29 'Shadow' follows the LXX (σκιὰν); the MT has an unknown word (מִנָּלָם) and the NRSV has 'nor will they strike root in the earth'.
- 30 In place of 'blossom', here following the LXX (βλαστὸν), the MT has 'mouth' (פִּי); the NJB parenthesises the 1st line.
- 31 The NJB has the conjectural 'his great height' in place of 'emptiness' and omits 'deceiving himself'.
- 32 For the 1st line, the NJB has the conjectural, "His palm trees will wither before their time."
- 33 The verb translated 'shake off' means 'to treat violently' or 'to wrong'; it indicates that the vine did not nourish the grapes well enough for them to grow, and so they dry up and drop off.
- 34 For the 1st line, the LXX reads, "for death is the witness of an ungodly man" (μαρτύριον γὰρ ἀσεβοῦς θάνατος).

לֹהֵם הָרָה עֵמֶל וְיֵלֵד אֶזְזֹן
וּבִטְנָם תִּכְיֶין מְרֻמָּה:

35 Whoever conceives malice breeds disaster,
and bears as offspring only a false hope.”

³⁵ The same notion is presented in identical form in Is 59:4, in almost identical form in Ps 7:14, and with a different image in Job 4:8, 5:6–7 and Pr 22:8; see also, with eschatological elaboration, Ga 6:8.

איוב פרק טז

JOB 16

א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Job spoke next. He said:

ב שָׁמַעְתִּי כְּאֵלֶּה רַבּוֹת
ג מִנְחָמֵי עֲמַל כְּלָכֶם:
הִקֵּץ לְדִבְרֵי־רוּחַ
ד אֹי מִה־יִּמְרִיצֶךָ כִּי תַעֲנֶה:
ז אָנֹכִי כְכֶם אֲדַבֵּר
ח לוֹ יֵשׁ נַפְשְׁכֶם תַּחַת נַפְשִׁי
ט אֲחַבִּירָה עָלֵיכֶם בְּמַלִּים
י וְאֶנִּיעָה עָלֵיכֶם בְּמוֹ רֹאשִׁי:
יא אֲאַמְצֶכֶם בְּמוֹ־פִי
יב וְנִיד שְׁפָתַי יִחְשָׁד:
יג אִם־אֲדַבֵּר לֹא־יִחְשָׁד כְּאַבִּי
יד וְאֲחַדְלָה מִה־מְנִי יְהִלֵּךְ:

2 "I have heard many such things:
what miserable comforters you are!
3 "Have windy words no limit?"
Or, "What provokes you to answer?"
4 Oh yes, I could talk as you do,
if you were in my place;
I could overwhelm you with speeches,
shaking my head over you.
5 I could speak words of encouragement
and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain.
6 When I speak, my suffering does not stop;
if I say nothing, how much of it leaves me?

JOB 16

- 1 In the face of God's continuing hostility (vv. 6–16), Job reaffirms his innocence (v. 17).
- 2 The expression 'miserable comforters' (מִנְחָמֵי עֲמַל) uses the Piel participle and translates literally as 'comforters of trouble' – i.e., comforters who increase trouble rather than relieving it.
- 3 The LXX reads this verse rather differently: "What, is there any reason in vain words, or what will hinder you from answering?" (τί γάρ; μὴ τάξις ἐστὶν ῥήματος πνεύματος; ἢ τί παρενοχλήσει σοι, ὅτι ἀποκρίνη;) *(The LXX reads this verse rather differently: "What, is there any reason in vain words, or what will hinder you from answering?" (τί γάρ; μὴ τάξις ἐστὶν ῥήματος πνεύματος; ἢ τί παρενοχλήσει σοι, ὅτι ἀποκρίνη;))*
- 4 'Overwhelm' is conjectural; the MT has 'dispose' (אֲחַבִּירָה). The gesture of head shanking can mean sympathy, contempt, or mockery.
- 5 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "and then have no more to say."
- 6 Job will continue to suffer, whether he speaks or remains silent; this is how he justifies his words (6:26) in his rebuttal of Eliphaz (see 15:5–6).

ז	אֲדַעֲתָהּ הֲלֹאֲנִי הַשְׁמֹות כָּל־עַדְתִּי: וְתִקְמָטְנִי לְעַד הִיא	7	Surely now he has worn me out; you have devastated my entire household.
ח	וַיָּקָם בִּי כַחֲשִׁי בִפְנֵי יַעֲנָה: אָפּוּ טָרְף וַיִּשְׁטֹמְנִי	8	You have seized me and it has become a witness; my leanness has risen up and testifies against me.
ט	חָרַק עָלַי בְּשָׁנָיו צָרִי יִלְטֹשׁ עֵינָיו לִי: פָּעְרוּ עָלַי בְּפִיהֶם	9	He has torn me in his wrath and persecuted me; he has gnashed on me with his teeth; my adversary sharpens his eyes on me.
י	בַּחֲרָפָה הִכּוּ לַחֲיִי יָחַד עָלַי יִתְמַלְאוּן: יִסְגִּירֵנִי אֶל אֵל עֲוִיל	10	They have opened their mouths against me; they have struck me insolently on the cheek; and they all set on me at once.
יא	וְעַל־יָדֵי רָשָׁעִים יִרְטֵנִי: שָׁלוֹ הָיִיתִי וַיַּפְרֹפְרֵנִי וְאַחֲזָ בְעַרְפִּי וַיַּפְצֹּץֵנִי וַיִּקְיַמְנִי לֹא לְמַטָּרָה: יִסְבּוּ עָלַי רַבִּיו	11	Yes, God has handed me over to the godless, and cast me into the hands of the wicked.
יב		12	"I was living at peace, until he made me totter, taking me by the neck to shatter me; he has set me up as his target.
יג		13	He surrounds me with his archers,

7 In poetic discourse, there is often an abrupt change from person to another: some take the subject of this verb to be God, others the pain.

8 Vv. 7–8 are obscure; the translation follows the MT, but this may possibly be corrupt.

9 The figure used now is that of a wild beast: God's affliction of Job is compared to the attack of such an animal (cf. Am 1:11).

10 For the 1st line, here following NETB, the NJB reads, "My enemies look daggers at me, and open gaping jaws."

11 In place of 'the godless' (עוֹל, here following several ancient versions, and cf. 27:7), the MT has 'a lad' (עוֹלִיל).

12 The LXX translates the 2nd line, "he took me by the hair of the head and plucked it out;" (λαβὼν με τῆς κόμης διέτιλεν).

13 The meaning of 'his archers' (following the NRSV & NETB) is supported for רַבִּיו in view of Jr 50:29. The LXX, Peshitta, Vg and Tg, followed by several translations and commentators (like the NJB) prefer 'arrows'; they see this as a more appropriate figure without asking who the archers might be (see 6:4), but the point is an unnecessary distinction, for the figure is an illustration of the affliction that God has brought on him.

יִפְלַח כְּלִיזֹתִי וְלֹא יִחְמַל יִשְׁפֹּךְ לָאָרֶץ מִרְרָתִי:			pitilessly piercing my loins and pouring my gall out on the ground.
יִפְרָצְנִי פָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי־פָרֶץ	יד	14	He bursts upon me again and again,
יִרָץ עָלַי כְּגִבּוֹר:			charging on me like a warrior.
שָׁק תַּפְרֹתִי עָלַי גְּלֹדִי	טו	15	I have sewn sackcloth over my skin,
וְעַל־לְחִי בַּעֲפָר קֶרְנִי:			and thrown my forehead in the dust.
פְּנֵי חֲמֹרְמָרָה חֲמַרְמְרוּ מִנִּי־בְכִי	טז	16	My face is red with tears,
וְעַל עִפְעָפִי צִלְמוֹת:			and deep darkness covers my eyelids.
עַל לֹא־חֶמֶס בְּכַפִּי	יז	17	Nonetheless, my hands are free of violence,
וְתַפְלֹתִי זֹכָה:			and my prayer is pure.
אֲרֶץ אֶל־תִּכְסֵּי דָמִי	יח	18	Cover not my blood, O earth,
וְאֶל־יְהִי מָקוֹם לְזַעֲקָתִי:			and let my cry mount without cease!
גַּם־עֲתָה הִנֵּה־בַשָּׁמַיִם עֵדִי	יט	19	Henceforth, I have a witness in heaven;
וְשֹׁהֵד בַּמָּרְמִים:			my defender is there on high.

-
- ¹⁴ The verb רָצַע means ‘to make a breach’ in a wall (Is 5:5, Ps 80:13); it is used figuratively in the birth and naming of Peres in Gn 38:29. Here, the image is now of a military attack that breaks through a wall: the text uses the cognate accusative and then, with the addition of עַל־פְּנֵי (*‘in addition’*), it repeats the cognate noun. A smooth translation that reflects the 3 words is difficult. Note that the פ in פָּרֶץ is here presented as a small letter, just as it appears in almost all *Hebrew MSS*.
- ¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘forehead’ (following the *NJB*) is ‘horn’; the *NRSV*, taking the word figuratively, has ‘strength’.
- ¹⁶ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here does not lend itself to trivial explanation.
- ¹⁷ The preposition עַל here introduces a concessive clause.
- ¹⁸ Blood, if not covered with earth, cries to heaven for vengeance (Gn 4:10, 37:26, Is 26:21, Ezk 24:8). Job wishes to leave behind a lasting appeal for vindication: on earth, his blood; with God, his prayer. His cry is personified and can be the ‘witness’ and Job’s ‘defender’ (v. 19). However, these same terms might be applied to God, the God of faithfulness and kindness, to whom Job may be appealing in a sudden access of hope.
- ¹⁹ The ‘witness’ is either God or someone else ‘in heaven’, which would be an angel (see 5:1, 33:23 and 9:33).

כ מְלִיצֵי רַעִי
 אֶל־אֱלֹהֵי דִלְפָּה עֵינַי:
 כא וְיִזְכֶּה לְגִבֹּר עִם־אֱלֹהֵי
 וּבֶן־אָדָם לְרַעְהוּ:
 כב כִּי־שָׁנוֹת מִסֶּפֶר יֵאָתִיו
 וְאַרְחָ לֹא־אָשׁוּב אֶהְלֵךְ:

20 Interpreter of my thoughts, there with God,
 before whom flow my tears.
 21 He pleads the cause of a man at grips with God,
 as a man might defend his fellow.
 22 For the years of my life are numbered,
 and I am leaving by the road of no return.

20 The MT lacks 'before whom', following the LXX. The NRSV interprets this verse differently: "My friends scorn me; my eye pours out tears to God."
 21 'As' follows the Tg, Vg and Peshitta; the MT has 'and'.
 22 Possibly, Job hopes for vindication before his death and wants God to hear him because time is running out. Or possibly, he gives up hope of this and simply awaits death.

איוב פרק יז

א רוחי חבלה ימי נזעכו
קברים לי:
ב אם-לא התלים עמדי
ובהמרותם תלן עיני:
ג שימה-נא ערבני עמד
מי הוא לידי יתקע:
ד כילבם צפנת משכל
על-כן לא תרמם:
ה לחלק יגיד רעים
ועיני בגיו תכלנה:
ו והציגני למשל עמים
ותפת לפנים אהיה:

JOB 17

1 "My breathing is growing weaker
and the gravediggers are gathering for me.
2 Surely, mockery is with me
and my eye dwells on their provocation.
3 So, you must go bail for me to yourself –
for who will clap his hand on mine?
4 For you have shut their hearts to reason,
therefore you will not let them triumph.
5 If a man denounces his friends for reward,
the eyes of his children will fail.
6 "He has made me a byword to foreigners,
and a creature on whose face to spit.

JOB 17

- ¹ The literal translation of the MT would give, "My breath is ruined, my days are being extinguished, for me – the tombs." The NRSV has, "My spirit is broken, my days are extinct, the grave is ready for me."
- ² For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "*their harshness haunts my nights.*"
- ³ To 'clap his hand on mine' is a gesture of legal procedure (see Pr 6:1, 17:18, 22:26, Si 29:14–20), by which the guarantor went surety for the debtor to offer bail. His friends being unhelpful, Job, apparently, asks God himself to be his guarantor.
- ⁴ For the 2nd line, the NJB has the conjectural, '*hence not a hand is lifted*'; the MT has '*you will not stand up*'.
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'reward' is 'a portion'. This verse is obscure: the words are not that difficult but their contextual sense is. Some take the idea to mean "he denounces his friends for a portion," while others have a totally different idea of "he invites his friends to share with him." The former fits the context better, indicating that Job's friends speak out against him for personal gain; the 2nd half promises that his children will suffer loss for this attempt at gain. The line is surely proverbial, and a number of other interpretations can be found in the commentaries.
- ⁶ 'Byword' follows many ancient MSS; the MT has 'to rule over' (wrong vowel arrangement).

ז וְתָכָה מִכַּעַשׂ עֵינַי
 וְיִצְרִי כַּעַל כָּלָם:
 ח יִשְׁמוּ יֹשְׁרִים עַל־זֹאת
 וְנִקִּי עַל־חֲנֹף יִתְעַרֵּר:
 ט וַיֵּאָחֶז צַדִּיק דְּרָכּוֹ
 וְטָהֲר־יָדָיו יִסִּף אֱמָץ:
 י וְאוֹלָם כָּלָם תָּשְׁבוּ וּבֹאוּ נָא
 וְלֹא־אֲמַצָּא בָכֶם חָכָם:
 יא יָמֵי עֲבָרוֹ זְמַתִּי נִתְקָו
 מִזְרָשֵׁי לִבִּי:
 יב לֵילָה לְיוֹם יִשְׁימוּ
 אֹזֶר קְרוֹב מִפְּנֵי־חָשֶׁךְ:

7 I am nearly blind from grief
 and all my limbs are like a shadow.
 8 The honest are appalled at the sight,
 the innocent are indignant at the sinner.
 9 The upright holds to their way
 and those with clean hands grow stronger!
 10 "But you, come back now, all of you!
 I shall not find one wise man among you!
 11 My days are over, so are my plans,
 my heart's desires are broken.
 12 Yet they would have me believe that night is day,
 that light to dispel the darkness is at hand.

⁷ For the 2nd line, the NJB has the conjectural 'and my limbs are reduced to a shadow'.

⁸ 'Appalled' is a Biblical expression for the emotion of those who witness divine punishment inflicted on the guilty. So it is with Job's friends: seeing his sufferings, they expatiate in conventional terms on the justice of God. Job derides this ready-made wisdom and formal piety.

⁹ The last 2 words are the imperfect verb יִסִּף, which means 'he adds', and the abstract noun אֱמָץ ('strength'); the latter is not found elsewhere; its Piel verb occurs in Job 4:4 & 16:5.

¹⁰ For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Come on then, all of you, back to the attack!" The MT has two verbs: the 1st (a jussive) means 'to return' while the 2nd (an imperative) means 'come'.

¹¹ 'So are my plans' is conjectural (following the NJB); the MT (and the NRSV) makes 'plans' the subject of the following verb, 'broken off'. Job now turns to the thought of death, as frequently in ending his replies (7:21, 10:21-33). The word translated 'my heart's desires' (מִזְרָשֵׁי) has been linked to the root יָרַשׁ ('to inherit') yielding a meaning 'the possessions of my heart', but it is actually to be connected to אָרַשׁ ('to desire'), an Accadian cognate; the LXX has 'limbs' (ἀρῆα), which may come from an Aramaic word for 'ropes', but an emendation based on the LXX would be risky.

¹² For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "'The light,' they say, 'is near to the darkness;'" the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

יג אִם־אֶקְוֶה שְׂאוֹל בֵּיתִי
 בַּחֲשֵׁךְ רַפְדֹּתִי יִצְעָעִי:
 יד לִשְׁחַת קִרְאֹתִי אָבִי אֶתָּה
 אִמִּי וְאַחֹתִי לְרֵמָה:
 טו וְאֵי־הָ אֵפוֹ תִּקְוֹתִי
 וְתִקְוֹתִי מִי יִשׁוּרְנָה:
 טז בְּדִי שְׂאֹל תִּרְדָּנָה
 אִם־יַחַד עַל־עָפָר נָחַת:

13 Since all I want is to dwell in Sheol
 and in that darkness there to make my bed!
 14 I cry to the Pit, "You are my father!" –
 to the worm, "My mother" or – "My sister!"
 15 Where then is my hope?
 Who can see any happiness for me?
 16 Will they come down to Sheol with me,
 all of us sinking into the dust together?"

¹³ The opening אם (normally translated 'if') here has more of the sense of 'since' (following NETB).

¹⁴ In place of 'Pit', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'tomb' and NETB has 'corruption'; the word (שְׁחַת) may be derived from the root שָׁחַת ('to destroy') or from שָׁחַ ('to sink down'). The same problem surfaces in Ps 16:10, where it is parallel to 'Sheol'.

¹⁵ 'Happiness' follows the LXX (ἀγαθά); the MT (and the NRSV) repeats 'hope' (תִּקְוֹתִי).

¹⁶ 'With me' follows the LXX (μετ' ἐμοῦ) and NJB; the MT (and the NRSV) has 'to the locks (of Sheol)'. 'Sinking' follows the LXX (καταβήσονται) and Peshitta; the MT has 'rest' (straightforward vowel emendation).

איוב פרק יח

JOB 18

וַיַּעַן בִּלְדָּד הַשּׁוּאִי וַיֹּאמֶר:	1 Bildad of Shuah spoke next. He said:
ב עַד־אָנָּה תְּשִׁימוֹן קִנְיִי לְמַלְיָן	2 “What prevents you from saying something?
תְּבִינִי וְאַחֵר נִדְבָר:	Think – for it is our turn to speak!
ג מִדּוֹעַ נִחְשְׁבֵנוּ כַּבְהֵמָה	3 Why do you regard us as animals?
נְטָמִינוּ בְּעֵינֶיכֶם:	Why are we stupid in your sight?
ד טָרַף נַפְשׁוֹ בְּאַפּוֹ	4 Tear yourself to pieces in your anger,
הֶלְמַעַנְךָ תַּעֲזֹב אֶרֶץ	but the world will not turn to desert,
וַיַּעֲתֶק־צוּר מִמְּקוֹמוֹ:	the rocks will not shift from their places.
ה גַּם אֹור רְשָׁעִים יִדְעָךְ	5 The light of the wicked must be put out;
וְלֹא־יִגַּה שְׂבִיב אִשׁוֹ:	the flame of their fire must not shine.
ו אֹור חֶשֶׁךְ בְּאַהֲלוֹ	6 In his tent, the light is dimmed;
וַיִּגְלוּ עָלָיו יְדָעָךְ:	the lamp that shone on him is snuffed.

JOB 18

- 1 Bildad attacks Job with less subtlety than Eliphaz: He describes the miserable existence of the wicked, indicating that it is the proof of sin; his speech falls into 2 main parts: why is Job so contemptuous toward his friends (2–4), and the fate of the wicked (5–21).
- 2 This verse is presumably addressed to Zophar and Eliphaz (the verb is plural).
- 3 The verb נְטָמִינוּ has been explained from different roots: Some take it from תָּמָא ('to be unclean') and translate the 2nd line, "Why should we be unclean in your eyes?" Most connect it to טָמַם ('to stop up'), meaning 'to be stupid' in the Niphal. Another suggestion is to follow the LXX (συνωπλήσασθαι ἐν οὐσίοις σου) and read from דָּמַם ('to be reduced to silence'), while yet others take it from דָּמָה ('to be like'). But what is missing is the term of comparison – like what? Various suggestions have been made, but all are simply conjectures.
- 4 The construction in the 1st line uses the participle and then 3rd person suffixes: 'one who tears himself in his anger', but it is clearly referring to Job, and so the direct 2nd person pronouns are be used to make that clear.
- 5 The lamp or the light can have a number of uses in the OT; here, it is an implied metaphor for prosperity and happiness, for the good life itself.
- 6 This thesis of Bildad will be questioned by Job in 21:17 – how often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out?

ז	יִצְרוּ צַעְדֵי אֹנֹן וּתְשַׁלִּיכֵהוּ עַצְתּוֹ:	7	His vigorous stride loses its power; his own counsel throws him down.
ח	כִּי־שָׁלַח בְּרֶשֶׁת בְּרִגְלָיו וְעַל־שִׁבְכָּה יִתְהַלֵּךְ:	8	For, into the net, his own feet carry him and he walks into the net.
ט	יֵאָחֵז בְּעֶקֶב פֶּח יִחְזַק עָלָיו צָמִים:	9	A trap grips him by the heel; a snare lays hold of him.
י	טָמוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ חֲבָלוֹ וּמִלְכָּדָתוֹ עָלֵי נְתִיב:	10	A rope is hidden for him in the ground and pitfalls lie across his path.
יא	סָבִיב בַּעֲתָהּ בִּלְהוֹת וְהִפִּיעָהּ לְרִגְלָיו:	11	Terrors threaten him from all sides, following him step by step.
יב	יְהִי־רָעֵב אֹנֹן וְאֵיד נָכוֹן לְצַלְעוֹ:	12	Hunger becomes his companion; by his side, Disaster stands.
יג	יֹאכַל בְּדֵי עוֹרוֹ יֹאכַל בְּדָיו בְּכוֹר מוֹת:	13	Disease devours his skin; Death's first-born gnaws his limbs.

- ⁷ For the 1st line LXX has, “Let the least of men hunt his goods” (Θηρεύσαισαν ἐλάχιστοι τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ). For the 2nd line, the NJB, following the LXX (σφάλλαι δὲ αὐτοῦ ἢ βουλῇ) has ‘his own designs falter’ but this involves transposition: the verb is שָׁלַךְ (‘throw’) not כָּשַׁל (‘stumble’).
- ⁸ The word שִׁבְכָּה (‘net’) is used in the OT for the lattice window (2K1:2) and the Arabic cognate means ‘to be intertwined’; thus, the term could describe a net, matting, grating, or lattice and, here, it would be the netting stretched over a pit.
- ⁹ The word פֶּח (‘trap’) specifically refers to a bird-trap; the word translated ‘snare’ does not occur elsewhere.
- ¹⁰ The suffix on ‘rope’ must be a genitive expressing that the trap was for him, to trap him, and so an objective genitive.
- ¹¹ Bildad is referring here to all the things that afflict a person and cause terror.
- ¹² The 1st line is conjectural; the NRSV has, “His strength is consumed by hunger.”
- ¹³ ‘Disease devours’ is conjectural; the MT reads ‘He devours scraps (of skin)’. ‘Death’s first born’ means the worst disease of all, probably the plague.

יִנָּתֵק מֵאֹהֶלוֹ מִבֶּטְחוֹ יד
 וְתִצְעָדֵהוּ לְמֶלֶךְ בְּלֵהוֹת:
 תִּשְׁכֹּן בְּאֹהֶלוֹ מִבְּלִילֹ טו
 יִזְרָה עַל־נֹהוּ גִפְרִית:
 מִתַּחַת שְׂרָשָׁיו יִבְשׁוּ טז
 וּמִמַּעַל יִמָּל קִצִּירוֹ:
 זְכְרוֹ־אֲבָד מִנִּי־אָרֶץ יז
 וְלֹא־שֵׁם לוֹ עַל־פְּנֵי־חוּץ:
 יִהְדָּפֵהוּ מֵאוֹר אֶל־חֹשֶׁךְ יח
 וּמִתֵּבֵל יִנָּדֶהוּ:
 לֹא גֵן לוֹ וְלֹא־נֶכֶד בְּעָמּוֹ טט
 וְאֵין שְׂרִיד בְּמִגְוָרָיו:
 עַל־יוֹמוֹ נִשְׁמוּ אַחֲרָנִים כ
 וְקִדְמָנִים אַחֲזוּ שְׁעָר:

14 He will be torn from the shelter of his tent,
 and you will drag him to the King of Terrors.
 15 You can live in the tent, since it is no longer his,
 and brimstone will be scattered on his sheepfold.
 16 Below, his roots dry out
 and his branches wither above.
 17 His memory fades from the land;
 his name is forgotten in the countryside.
 18 Driven from the light into the darkness,
 he is banished from the world.
 19 He has no offspring or posterity among his people
 and no survivor where he used to live.
 20 His end appals those of the west
 and fills those of the east with terror.

-
- 14 The 'King of Terrors', a figure from oriental and Greek mythology (Nergal, Pluto, etc.), seems here to have infernal spirits (Furies) at his command to plague criminals even during their lifetime.
 15 The 2nd line is a literal translation (the NRSV has 'habitation' in place of 'sheepfold') but the text is perhaps corrupt. Some critics suggest 'his tent will be set on fire' to complete the parallelism between brimstone, symbolic of sterility (see Dt 29:22, Ps 11:6, Is 34:9) and perhaps here a disinfectant.
 16 Throughout this section, the NRSV uses plural pronouns in place of the singular ones used here.
 17 For the 2nd line, the NRSV has, "and they have no name in the street."
 18 The verbs in this verse are plural; without the expressed subject they should be taken in the passive sense.
 19 The two words גֵּן ('offspring') and נֶכֶד ('posterity') are always together and form an alliteration; this is hard to capture in English but some have tried: 'son and scion' and 'breed or brood'.
 20 The word אַחֲרָנִים ('those of the west') literally means 'those coming after' and קִדְמָנִים ('those of the east') means 'those coming before'.

כא אֲדֹ-אֱלֹהִים מְשַׁכְּנֹת עוֹלָם
זֶה מְקוֹם לֹא-יָדַע-אֵל:

²¹ Surely such are the dwellings of the ungodly –
the home of everyone who knows not God.”

²¹ The literal translation of ‘*dwellings*’ is ‘*tabernacles*’.

איוב פרק יט

JOB 19

א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Then Job answered; he said:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ב עַד־אָנָה תּוֹגִיוֹן נַפְשִׁי | 2 "How long will you torment me |
| וְתִדְכָּאוּנִי בְמִלִּים: | and crush me with your words? |
| ג זֶה עֲשׂוּר פְּעָמִים תְּכַלְמוּנִי | 3 You have insulted me ten times already: |
| לֹא־תִבְשׁוּ תִהְכְּרוּ־לִי: | have you no shame at maltreating me? |
| ד וְאִם־אֶמְנָם שְׁגִיתִי | 4 Even if I had gone astray, |
| אֲתִי תִלִּין מִשׁוּגָתִי: | my error would still be my own affair. |
| ה אִם־אֶמְנָם עָלִי תִגְדִּילוּ | 5 If, indeed, you take this superior attitude |
| וְתוֹכִיחוּ עָלַי חֲרַפְתִּי: | and claim that my disgrace is my own fault, |

JOB 19

- ¹ Job is completely stunned by Bildad's speech and feels totally deserted by God and his friends. Yet, from his despair, a new hope emerges with a stronger faith: even though he knows he will die in his innocence, he knows that God will vindicate him and that he will be conscious of the vindication. There are 4 parts to this reply: Job's impatience with the speeches of his friends (2-6); God's abandonment of Job and his attack (7-12); Job's forsaken state and appeal to his friends (13-22); and Job's confidence that he will be vindicated (23-29).
- ² The literal translation of 'torment me' is 'torment my soul', with 'soul' representing the self or individual. The MT has a verb from יָגַה ('to afflict' or 'to torment'), which is supported by the versions, but the LXX has 'will you tire me' (ἐγκασιπὼν ποιήσετε), which is apparently from יָגַע. The form in the MT is unusual because it preserves the final (original) *yod* in the Hiphil, so this unusual form has been preserved, and is the correct reading. A modal nuance for the imperfect fits best here: "How long do you intend to do this?"
- ³ The number 'ten' is a general expression to convey that this has been done often (see Gn 31:7, Nb 14:22).
- ⁴ A fault could be excused by suffering (see #6:24). At the end of this verse, the LXX adds 'by speaking words that are unbefitting, words erroneous and untimely' (λαλῆσαι ῥῆμα, ὃ οὐκ ἔδει, τὰ δὲ ῥήματά μου πλανᾶται καὶ οὐκ ἐπὶ καιροῦ). However, Job does not admit his sin (he has asserted his innocence often enough, 9:21, 10:7, 16:17); his point is that his conduct is a matter between him and God, and not for them to be judge (in v. 22, he accuses them of pursuing him like God).
- ⁵ Job's friends have been using his shame, his humiliation in all his sufferings, as proof against him in their case.

ו	דְּעוֹ-אָפוּ כִּי-אֱלֹהִים עֹתֵנִי וּמִצּוּדוֹ עָלַי הִקְיָה:	6	I tell you that God has wronged me and enveloped me in his net.
ז	הֲנִי אֶצְעַק חֲמָס וְלֹא אֶעֱנֶה אֲשׁוּעַ וְאֵין מִשְׁפָּט:	7	If I cry out, "Violence," I am not heard; I cry aloud but there is no justice.
ח	אֶרְחִי גֹדֶר וְלֹא אֶעְבּוֹר וְעַל נְתִיבוֹתַי חֹשֶׁךְ יִשִּׁים:	8	He has built an impassable wall across my path and has set darkness on my paths.
ט	כְּבוֹדִי מֵעָלַי הִפְשִׁיט וַיִּסַּר עֲטֹרַת רֹאשִׁי:	9	He has deprived me of my honour and taken the crown from my head.
י	יִתְּצֵנִי סָבִיב וְאֵלֶּךְ וַיִּסַּע כְּעֵץ תְּקוּנֹתַי:	10	He assails me from all sides until I vanish; he uproots my hope like a tree.
יא	וַיַּחַר עָלַי אָפוּ וַיַּחֲשִׁבֵנִי לוֹ כְּצָרִיו:	11	Inflamed with anger against me, he regards me as one of his foes.
יב	יַחַד לְבָאוּ גְדוּדָיו וַיִּסְלּוּ עָלַי דְּרָכָם וַיַּחֲנוּ סָבִיב לְאֹהֲלִי:	12	His troops come on together, make a siege against me, and encamp around my tent.
יג	אֲחֵי מֵעָלַי הִרְחִיק	13	"He has alienated my brothers from me,

⁶ God, not Job's sins, casts the net (cf. 18:8).

⁷ For the 1st line, here following the MT, the LXX reads, "Behold! I laugh at reproach; I will not speak." (ἰδοὺ γελῶ ὀνειδεῖ καὶ οὐ λαλήσω.)

⁸ Some commentators take the word חֹשֶׁךְ ('darkness') to be related to an Arabic word for 'thorn hedge'.

⁹ These images are common in the Bible: God has stripped away Job's reputation; the 'crown' is the esteem and dignity he once had.

¹⁰ The metaphors are changed now to a demolished building and an uprooted tree.

¹¹ The 2nd line is a little difficult: the MT has "and he reckons me for him like his adversaries." Most (as the NJB) change the last word to a singular in harmony with the versions, but some retain the MT pointing and try to explain it variously: some suggest that the plural comes from a cultic recitation of Yahweh's deeds against his enemies; more likely, it is distributive, as here.

¹² For the 2nd half the 1st line, the NJB has, "directing their line of advance towards me."

¹³ Society has expelled Job from its ranks, even the most intimate circle of household, family, and friends.

		וַיִּדְעִי אֶדְזָרוּ מִמֶּנִּי:			my relative stake care to avoid me.
יד		חָדְלוּ קְרוֹבֵי	14		My intimate friends have gone away
		וּמִיִּדְעֵי שְׂכֻחוֹנָי:			and the guests in my house have forgotten me.
טו		גָּרִי בֵּיתִי וְאִמְהַתִּי לִזְרַח תַּחֲשָׁבֵנִי	15		My slave-girls regard me as a stranger,
		נֹכְרִי הֵייתִי בְּעֵינֵיהֶם:			a foreigner as far as they are concerned.
טז		לְעַבְדִּי קִרְאתִי וְלֹא יַעֲנֶנּוּ	16		My servant does not answer when I call him;
		בְּמוֹפִי אֶתְחַנֵּן-לוֹ:			I am obliged to beg favours from him!
יז		רוּחִי זָרָה לְאִשְׁתִּי	17		My breath is unbearable to my wife,
		וְחִנְתִּי לְבָנַי בְּטָנִי:			my stench to my own brothers.
יח		גַּם-עוֹלִים מֵאִסּוּ בִּי	18		Even the children look down on me,
		אֲקוּמָה וַיִּדְּבְרוּ-בִּי:			whenever I stand up, they start jeering at me.
יט		תִּעֲבוּנִי כָּל-מֵתֵי סוּדִי	19		All my dearest friends recoil from me in horror;
		וְזֶה-אֶהְבֵּתִי נִהְפְּכוּ-בִּי:			those I loved best have turned against me.
כ		בְּעוֹרִי וּבְבָשָׁרִי דִּבְקָה עַצְמִי	20		My flesh is rotting under my skin;
		וְאֶתְמַלֵּטָה בְּעוֹר שָׁנִי:			my bones are sticking out like teeth.

¹⁴ The phrase, 'the guests in my house', has been transposed from the beginning of v. 15.

¹⁵ The word נֹכְרִי ('foreigner') is a person from another race, from a strange land; the previous word, גָּר ('stranger') is a more general word for someone who is staying in the land but is not a citizen.

¹⁶ In place of 'beg favours', here following the NJB, the NRSV has simply 'plead'.

¹⁷ 'My own brothers' translates literally as 'the sons of my womb'. The formula is unusual for meaning the children of a father, though the expression 'fruit of the womb' may occasionally mean this (Dt 28:53, Ps 132:11, Mi 6:7). As the poet tells us that Job's sons are all dead (see 8:4, 29:5), he presumably means the sons of the same mother, i.e. Job's brothers, which seems to be confirmed by 3:10 (see also Ps 69:8, 'the sons of my mother').

¹⁸ The verb דָּבַר followed by the preposition ב indicates speaking against someone, namely, scoffing or railing against them (see Ps 50:20, 78:19).

¹⁹ The literal translation of 'closest friends' is 'men of my confidence'.

²⁰ The verse has been corrected following the LXX; the MT has, "My bones cling to my skin and to my flesh, and I escape by the skin of my teeth."

כא חֲנִי חֲנִי אֲתָם רַעִי
 כִּי יַד־אֱלֹהִים נִגְעָה בִּי:
 כב לִמָּה תִרְדָּפֵנִי כְמו־אֵל
 וּמִבְשָׂרִי לֹא תִשְׂבַּעוּ:
 כג מִי־יִתֶּן אָפוֹ וַיִּכְתְּבוּן מִלִּי
 מִי־יִתֶּן בַּסֶּפֶר וַיַּחֲקֹוּ:
 כד בַּעַט־בְּרֹזֶל וְעַפְרָת
 לְעַד בַּצּוֹר יִחַצְבוּן:
 כה וְאֲנִי יִדְעֹתִי גֹאֲלִי חִי
 וְאַחֲרוֹן עַל־עַפָּר יָקוּם:
 כו וְאַחֲרֵי עוֹרִי נִקְפוֹזָאת
 וּמִבְשָׂרִי אֲחֻזָּה אֱלֹהִים:

21 Pity me; pity me, my friends,
 since the hand of God has struck me.
 22 Must you persecute me just as God does,
 never satisfied with my flesh?
 23 "Will no one let my words be recorded,
 inscribed on some monument
 24 with an iron chisel and with lead,
 engraved into to rock forever?
 25 I know that I have a living Defender
 and that he will rise up last, on the dust of the earth.
 26 After my skin has been thus destroyed,
 without my flesh I shall look on God.

²¹ In place of 'struck', here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'touched'.

²² The idiom of eating the pieces of someone means 'slander' in Aramaic (see *Dn* 3:8), Arabic and Accadian.

²³ Job wishes that his words were made permanent – does this refer to his whole argument, or to what he is about to say? They are to be 'inscribed on some monument', as some inscriptions were engraved on a cliff at the Nahr El-Kelb in Lebanon by military conquerors over many centuries.

²⁴ In place of 'lead' (following the *MT* and the *NRSV*), the *NJB*, following *Jr* 17:1, has 'engraving tool'.

²⁵ The word, גֹּאֲלִי, approximately translated as 'Defender', is a technical term of Israelite law (see *#Nb* 35:19). It is often used of God, the Saviour of his people and avenger of the oppressed. The early Jewish rabbis applied the term to the Messiah, and this probably induced St Jerome to translate here 'my Redeemer' (as in the *NRSV*).

'Rise up to stand' is a legal expression, used often of witness or of judge (*31:14*, *Dt* 19:16, *Ps* 12:5, *Is* 2:19, 21); 'last' recalls *Is* 44:6, 48:12.

²⁶ The 1st line here follows the *NRSV*; the *NJB* has the conjectural, "After my awakening, he will set me close to him." The meaning of this verse is too uncertain a one on which to base a firm conclusion, but it is probable that Job is alluding to the possibility of resurrection. However, this doctrine appears late in Hebrew thought (see *Dn* 12:1–3), probably in Maccabaeian times, and nowhere in the rest of the book does Job consider the possibility (see *Ch.* 14).

כז אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי | אֶחָזֶה-לִּי
 וְעֵינַי רְאוּ וְלֹא-זָר
 כח כָּלֹו כְּלִי־תִי בְּחֻקִּי:
 כִּי תֹאמְרוּ מִה־נִּרְדֹּף-לֹו
 כט וְשִׁרְשׁ דְּבַר נִמְצָא-בִּי:
 גִּירוּ לָכֶם | מִפְּנֵי-חֶרֶב
 כִּי־חֲמָה עֹנֹת חֶרֶב
 לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּן שְׁדִין שְׁדוֹן:

27 He whom I shall see will take my part:
 my eyes will be gazing on no stranger.
 My heart sinks within me.
 28 If you say, "How will we persecute him?"
 and "The root of the matter is found in him;"
 29 Then beware of the sword,
 for wrath bursts into flame at wicked deeds
 so that you will know that there is a judgement!"

²⁷ The literal translation of 'heart' is 'kidneys' – a poetic expression for the set of emotions.

²⁸ The MT ends with 'in me'; if that is retained, then the question would be in the 1st colon and the reasoning of the 2nd colon would be Job's. But over 100 MSS have 'in him', so this reading is accepted by most editors.

²⁹ 'Bursts into flame' follows the LXX; the MT is unintelligible; the NRSV has 'for wrath brings the punishment of the sword'. The Kethib/ Qere difference here is likely due to a scribe misreading a (possibly small/short) *vav* as a *yod*.

איוב פרק ב

JOB 20

א וַיַּעַן צִפּוֹר הַנַּעֲמָתִי וַיֹּאמֶר:	1 Zophar of Naamath spoke next. He said:
ב לִכְן שְׁעָפִי יִשְׁבּוּנִי	2 “My thoughts urge me to reply to this,
וּבְעֹבֹר חוּשֵׁי בִי:	because of the feelings within me.
ג מוֹסֵר כְּלִמְתִּי אֲשַׁמֶּעַ	3 I have put up with prating that outrages me
ד וְרוּחַ מְבִינָתִי יַעֲנֵנִי:	and now my mind inspires me with an answer.
ה הֲזֹאת יֵדַעַת מִנִּי־עַד	4 Do you not know that since time began
ו מִנִּי שָׁיִם אָדָם עַל־אָרֶץ:	and human beings were set on the earth,
ז כִּי רִנַּנְתָּ רָשָׁעִים מִקְרֹב	5 the triumph of the wicked has always been brief
ח וְשִׂמְחַת חַנָּף עַד־רָגַע:	and the sinner’s gladness has never lasted long?
ט אִם־יַעֲלֶה לְשָׁמַיִם שִׂיאֹו	6 Towering to the sky, he may have been,
י וְרָאָשׁוֹ לְעַב יָגִיעַ:	his head touching the clouds.
יא כְּגִלְלוֹ לִנְצַח יֵאָבֵד	7 He vanishes, like his own dung, forever,
יב רָאִיו יֹאמְרוּ אֵינֹו:	while those who used to see him ask, “Where is he?”

JOB 20

- ¹ Zophar breaks in with an impassioned argument about the brevity and prosperity of the life of the wicked but every statement that he makes is completely irrelevant to the case at hand.
- ² The word translated ‘feelings’ (following NETB) is normally taken from the root ‘to hasten’ and rendered ‘agitation’ (NRSV) or ‘impatience’ (NJB), but there is a similar Arabic word with the meaning ‘feeling’ or ‘sensation’ (see also Qo 2:25).
- ³ The ‘prating’ (the NRSV has ‘censure’) that Zophar speaks of is, in part, 19:28–29.
- ⁴ The question is rhetorical, affirming that Job must know this.
- ⁵ The literal translation of ‘brief’ is ‘quite near’.
- ⁶ The Old Testament often alludes to the monstrous pride of the first human beings (see Gn 11:4, Is 14:13–14, Ezk 28:2, 17).
- ⁷ In place of ‘his own dung’ (following the NRSV), the NJB has ‘a phantom’; there have been many attempts to change the word here to ‘like a whirlwind’, or something similar, but there is no reason to remove a coarse expression from Zophar.

ח	כַּחֲלוֹם יֵעוֹף וְלֹא יִמָּצְאוּהוּ וַיֵּדֶד כְּחִזְיוֹן לַיְלָה: ט	8	Like a dream he takes his flight, not to be found; like a vision in the night, he fades away.
ט	עֵין שִׁזְפָתוֹ וְלֹא תוֹסִיף וְלֹא-עֹד תִּשׁוּרְנֵנוּ מִקוֹמוֹ: י	9	The eye accustomed to see him sees him no more; his home will never set eyes on him again.
י	בָּנָיו יִרְצוּ דָלִים וַיָּדָיו תִּשְׁבְּנָה אוֹנוֹ: יא	10	His sons will have to reimburse the poor and his hands pay back his riches.
יא	עֲצָמוֹתָיו מִלֵּאוֹ עָלוֹמוֹ וְעָמוֹ עַל-עֹפֶר תִּשְׁכַּב: יב	11	His bones used to be full of youthful vigour: and there it lies, in the dust with him, now!
יב	אִם-תִּמְתִּיק בְּפִיו רָעָה יִכְחִידָנָה תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנוֹ: יג	12	If evil were sweet to his mouth, he would shelter it under his tongue.
יג	יַחְמֹל עָלֶיהָ וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבָנָה וַיִּמְנַעֲנָה בַתּוֹךְ חִפּוֹ: יד	13	Cultivating it carefully, he would let it linger on his palate.
יד	לַחֲמוֹ בְּמַעֲיוֹ נִהְפֵּךְ מִרוֹרֶת פִּתְגָּמִים בְּקִרְבּוֹ: טו	14	Such food goes bad in his belly, working inside him like the poison of a viper.
טו	חֵיל בָּלַע וַיִּקְאֵנוּ מִבֶּטְנוֹ יִרְשָׁנוּ אֵל: טז	15	Now he has to vomit up the wealth he has swallowed: God makes him disgorge it.

8 The verb 'found' has no expressed subject and so is equivalent to a passive.

9 Here, a part of the person (the eye, the instrument of vision) is put by metonymy for the entire person.

10 The NJB has the conjectural 'children' (ולדדיו) in place of 'hands', here following the MT (וַיָּדָיו) and NRSV.

11 'Bones' is often used metonymically for the whole person, being the framework for everything inside, as well as the body itself.

12 The conjunction אם introduces clauses that are conditional or concessive; with the imperfect verb, it indicates what is possible.

13 A more literal ending is, "... on the middle of his palate." Here, we follow the NJB; the NRSV reads, "and hold it in their mouths."

14 Some commentators suggest that the ancients believed that serpents secreted poison in the gall bladder.

15 The choice of words is excellent: the verb יָרַשׁ means either 'inherit' or 'disinherit'. The context makes it clear that God is administering the emetic to make the wicked throw up the wealth; however, since wealth is the subject, there is a disinheritance meant here.

טז ראש־פִּתְנִים יִנָּק
 תִּהְרָגְהוּ לְשׁוֹן אֶפְעָה:
 יז אֶל־יָרָא בַּפִּלָּגוֹת
 נִהְרֵי נַחֲלֵי דְבֶשׁ וְחֶמְאָה:
 יח מִשִּׁיב יָגַע וְלֹא יִבְלַע
 כָּחִיל תְּמוּרָתוֹ וְלֹא יַעֲלֶס:
 יט כִּי־רָצָן עֲזַב דָּלִים
 בֵּית גָּזָל וְלֹא יִבְנֶהוּ:
 כ כִּי לֹא־יָדַע שְׁלוֹ בִּבְטָנוֹ
 בַּחֲמוּדוֹ לֹא יִמְלֹט:
 כא אִין־שָׁרִיד לֹא־כָּלּוֹ
 עַל־פֶּן לֹא־יַחֲיִל טוֹבוֹ:
 כב בְּמִלְאוֹת שְׁפָקוֹ יֵצֵר לוֹ
 כָּל־יָד עֲמַל תִּבְאֶנּוּ:

16 He used to suck viper's venom,
 and the tongue of the adder kills him.
 17 No more will he know the rivers,
 or the streams of honey and cream.
 18 He gives back his ill-gotten gain without swallowing it,
 and not enjoy the wealth from his business.
 19 Since he once crushed and abandoned the poor,
 he has seized a house that he did not build.
 20 Since his avarice could never be satisfied,
 now all his hoarding will not save him.
 21 Since nothing could escape his greed,
 his prosperity will not last.
 22 In the fullness of his sufficiency,
 misery will come upon him with all its force.

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- ¹⁶ Some have suggested that this verse is a gloss on v. 14 and should be deleted. However, the word for 'adder' (אֶפְעָה) is a rare word, occurring only here and in Is 30:6 and 59:5, and it is unlikely that such a word would be used in a gloss.
- ¹⁷ The literal translation of 'cream' is 'curds'; it refers curdled milk, possibly a type of butter.
- ¹⁸ Literally translated, the 2nd line ends, "according to the wealth of his exchange." This means he cannot enjoy whatever he gained in his business deals. Some MSS have a כ preposition, making the translation easier, but this is evidence of a scribal correction.
- ¹⁹ For the 1st line, the NJB, following the Tg, has, "Since he once destroyed the huts of the poor." Yet, while the text as it stands is general and not very striking, there is nothing wrong with it. For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "plundering houses instead of building them up."
- ²⁰ The literal translation of 'avarice' is 'belly'.
- ²¹ The point, throughout the argument, is that insatiable greed and ruthless plundering to satisfy it will be recompensed with utter and complete loss.
- ²² The word שְׁפָקוֹ ('his sufficiency') occurs only here.

כג יהי | לִמְלֵא בִטְנוֹ
 יִשְׁלַח־בּוֹ חֶרֶן אֲפֹ
 וַיִּמְטֵר עָלָיו בִּלְחֹמוֹ:
 כד יִבְרַח מִנֶּשֶׁק בְּרֹזֶל
 תַּחֲלִפֵּהוּ קֶשֶׁת נְחוּשָׁה:
 כה שֶׁלֶף וַיֵּצֵא מִגּוֹה
 וּבָרַק מִמֶּרְתּוֹ יֶהֱלֵךְ
 עָלָיו אֲמִים:
 כו כָּל־חֹשֶׁךְ טָמֹן לְצַפּוֹנָיו
 תֹּאכְלֵהוּ אֵשׁ לֹא־נִפְחָ
 יֵרַע שָׂרִיד בְּאֵהָלוֹ:
 כז יִגְלוּ שָׁמַיִם עֹנָו
 וְאָרֶץ מִתְקוֹמָמָה לוֹ:
 כח יִגַּל יִבּוֹל בֵּיתוֹ
 נְגֵזוֹת בַּיּוֹם אֲפֹ:
 כט זֶה | חֵלֶק־אָדָם רָשָׁע מֵאֱלֹהִים
 וְנַחֲלַת אִמְרוֹ מֵאֵל:

23 While he fills his belly,
 God send his wrath on him,
 hurling against his flesh a hail of arrows.
 24 If he escapes the weapons of iron,
 the bow of bronze will transfix him.
 25 He draws it out, and it comes out of his body.
 Yes, the glittering point comes out of his liver;
 terrors advance on him.
 26 The hidden darkness is waiting to carry him off.
 A fire unlit by human hand devours him
 and consumes what remains in his tent.
 27 The heavens reveal his iniquity,
 and the earth rises up against him.
 28 The income of his house pours away,
 like the torrents, on the day of retribution.
 29 Such is the fate God reserves for the wicked,
 the heritage decreed for them by God!"

23 The NJB, following the LXX, omits 'while he filled his belly'. 'Arrows' is a conjectural translation; the meaning of the MT (עָלָיו) is uncertain (for the 2nd line, the NRSV has 'and rain it upon him as his food').

24 In the 2nd line, the NRSV & NETB insert the words 'an arrow from' before 'the bow of bronze'.

25 For this verse, here following the MT & WEBBE, the NJB (following the LXX) reads, "Out of his back sticks an arrow, from his gall a shining point."

26 The first line alludes to the dark powers of Sheol, prefigured in one of the plagues of Egypt (Ex 10:21).

27 The NJB has 'lay bare' in place of 'reveal', here following the NRSV & NETB.

28 The meaning of the Hebrew of the 2nd line is uncertain: the NRSV & NETB end: "on the day of God's wrath;" here, we follow the NJB.

29 For the word אִמְרוֹ ('decreed'), some propose reading 'his appointment' and the others 'his word'.

איוב פרק כא

JOB 21

- א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר:
- ב שִׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ מִלְּתִי
- וְתִהְיֶזְאֵת תַּנְחוּמֵיכֶם:
- ג שְׂאוּנִי וְאַנְכִי אֲדַבֵּר
- וְאַחֲרֵי דִבְרֵי תִלְעִיג:
- ד הֲאֲנֹכִי לְאָדָם שִׁיחִי
- וְאִם־מְדוּעַ לֹא־תִקְצֹר רוּחִי:
- ה פָּנוּ־אֵלַי וְהִשְׁמוּ
- וְשִׁימוּ יָד עַל־פִּי:
- ו וְאִם־זִכְרָתִי וְנִבְהַלְתִּי
- וְאַחֲזוּ בְּשָׂרִי פִלְצוֹת:
- ז מְדוּעַ רְשָׁעִים יֵחִיו
- עֲתִקּוּ גַם־גִּבְרוּ חֵיל:
- 1 Job spoke next. He said:
- 2 "Listen carefully to my words;
let this be the consolation you allow me.
- 3 Permit me to speak in my turn;
mock me when I have spoken.
- 4 Is my complaint just about a fellow mortal?
I have good grounds to be perturbed!
- 5 Give your attention to me; you will be dumbfounded
and will place your hand over your mouth.
- 6 When I think of it, I am dismayed
and my flesh creeps.
- 7 Why do the wicked still live on,
grow old and even increase in power?

JOB 21

- ¹ This discourse is directed at the friends only, and Job points out that the wicked remain unpunished (7–13) though they repudiate God (14–18; cf. v. 15 with 1:9). Belief in hereditary guilt is ineffective; finally, the honourable funeral of the wicked (27–34) is a travesty of justice.
- ² The LXX negates the 2nd sentence, reading, "that I may not have this consolation from you" (ὅνα μὴ ἢ μοι παρ' ὑμῶν αὕτη ἢ παράλλησις).
- ³ The verb translated 'mock' is the imperfect of לַעֲג, which is here modal (expressing permission). The verb is in the singular, suggesting that Job is addressing Zophar; however, most of the versions put it into the plural.
- ⁴ The point seems to be that if his complaint were merely against men, he might expect sympathy from other men; but no one dares offer him sympathy when his complaint is against God: so, he will give free expression to his spirit.
- ⁵ You would 'place your hand over your mouth', since to speak would be useless or unwise.
- ⁶ The word translated 'think' (זִכְרָתִי) is derived from the verb 'to remember'.
- ⁷ The verb עֲתִקּוּ ('grow old') literally means 'to proceed' or 'to advance'; here, it is 'to advance in years'. This clause could serve as an independent clause or a separate sentence but it more likely continues the question of the first colon and is parallel to the verb 'live'.

ח זרעם נכון לפנייהם עמם
 וצאצאיהם לעיניהם:
 ט בתייהם שלום מפחד
 ולא שבט אלוה עליהם:
 י שורו עבר ולא יגעל
 תפלט פרתו ולא תשכל:
 יא ישלחו בצאן עויליהם
 וילדיהם ירקדון:
 יב ישאו כתר וכנור
 וישמחו לקול עוגב:
 יג יבלו יכלו בטוב ימיהם
 וברגע שאול יחתו:
 יד ויאמרו לאל סור ממנו
 ודעת דרכיך לא חפצנו:
 טו מה־שדי כי־נעבדנו
 ומה־נועיל כי נפגע־בו:

8 They see their prosperity assured,
 and their offspring with them before their eyes.
 9 The peace of their houses has nothing to fear,
 the rod that God wields is not for them.
 10 Their bull does not fail at breeding time;
 their cow calves and never miscarries.
 11 They let their infants frisk like lambs,
 their children dance around.
 12 They sing to the tambourine and harp,
 and rejoice to the sound of the pipe.
 13 They end their lives in happiness
 and go down in peace to Sheol.
 14 Yet these are the ones who say to God, “Go away!
 We do not want to learn your ways.
 15 Who is Shaddai, that we should serve him?
 What should we gain from praying to him?”

⁸ In place of ‘with them’, the NJB has the conjectural, ‘secure’, linking with the 1st line.

⁹ In 9:34, Job was complaining that there was no umpire to remove God’s rod from him, but here he observes no such rod is on the wicked.

¹⁰ The use of the verb יגעל (‘fail’) here is interesting; it literally means ‘rebuke’ or ‘abhor’ and, in the causative stem, ‘to occasion impurity’.

¹¹ The NJB has ‘like deer’ in place of ‘around’, an addition by analogy with Ps 114:4–6.

¹² The verb translated ‘they sing’ is simply ‘they lift up’, but the understood object is ‘their voices’.

¹³ In place of יבלו (‘they wear out’), here following the Ketiv, the Qere has יכלו (‘they end’). ‘Go down’ follows the Peshitta (repointing to יחתו); the MT has ‘they are terrified’ (יחתו).

¹⁴ ‘God’ is a conjectural translation (literally ‘him’); the MT has the 1st person.

¹⁵ The interrogative clause is followed by כי, similar to Ex 5:2, “Who is Yahweh, that I should obey him?”

טז הֲנִן לֹא בִידֵם טוֹבָם
 עֲצַת רָשָׁעִים רַחֲקָה מִנִּי:
 יז כַּמָּה | נִרְרָשָׁעִים יִדְעָךְ
 וַיֵּבֶא עֲלֵימוֹ אִידֵם
 חֲבָלִים יַחֲלֹק בָּאָפוֹ:
 יח יִהְיוּ כְתָבָן לַפְּנִירוֹחַ
 וְכִמְצָן גִּנְבָתוֹ סוּפָה:
 יט אֱלֹהֵי יִצְפֹּן-לִבְנֵי אֹנוֹ
 יִשְׁלֵם אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּדַּע:
 כ יֵרָאוּ עֵינָיו כִּידוֹ
 וּמַחֲמַת שַׁדַּי יִשְׁתָּה:
 כא כִּי מֵהֶחֱפָצוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו
 וּמִסֵּפֶר חֲדָשָׁיו חֲצָצוֹ:
 כב הֲלֹאֵל יִלְמַד-דַּעַת
 וְהוּא רָמִים יִשְׁפּוֹט:

16 Surely, they have won their own prosperity,
 since God has kept so far from their plans?"
 17 How often do we see the light of the wicked put out,
 disaster overtake him,
 or the retribution of God destroy his possessions?
 18 How often does the wind blow him away like straw
 or a whirlwind carry him off like chaff?
 19 You say God is storing up punishment for his children;
 let it be paid back to him, so that he may know it!
 20 He himself should witness his own ruin,
 and himself drink the anger of Shaddai.
 21 Once he is gone, what joy can he gain from his family,
 once the number of his months has been cut off?
 22 Will any teach wisdom to God,
 to him who is judge of those on high?

-
- 16 The implication is that their well-being is not from God, which is the problem Job is raising in the chapter.
 17 The 3rd line is conjectural, following the NJB; the NRSV reads, "How often does God distribute pains in his anger." A more literal translation of the MT would be, "does he destroy the wicked," or, "does he allocate portions?"
 18 The words 'how often' are not in the MT but, to retain the sense that the wicked do not suffer as others, this verse must either be taken as a question or as a continuation of the question in v. 17.
 19 An old and respectable theory (Ex 34:7, Dt 5:9) later qualified (Dt 24:16, Jr 31:29, Ezk 18, see also Jn 9:1-3). Job demonstrates its inadequacy: the sinner will neither know nor feel the punishment (see 14: 21-22).
 20 'His own ruin' follows several ancient texts; the MT is difficult to understand.
 21 The rare word חֲצָצוֹ ('cut off') is likely an Arabic cognate; there is also an Accadian word, 'to cut in two', which fits the context here well.
 22 The phrase 'those on high' translates רָמִים, a plural masculine participle of רוּם ('to be high', 'to be exalted'). This is probably a reference to the

כג	זֶה יָמוּת בְּעֵצֶם תְּמוֹ כָּלֹו שְׁלֹאֲנָן וְשִׁלּוֹ: עֲטִינּוֹ מִלֵּאֹ חֶלֶב וּמֶחַ עֲצָמוֹתָיו יִשְׁקָה: זֶה יָמוּת בְּנֶפֶשׁ מָרָה וְלֹא־אָכַל בְּטוֹבָה: יַחַד עַל־עֵפֶר יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְרִמָּה תִכְסֶּה עֲלֵיהֶם:	23	Again, one person dies in the fullness of strength, in all possible happiness and ease.
כד		24	His loins are full of milk and the marrow in the bones good and moist.
כה		25	Another dies in bitterness of heart, never having tasted happiness.
כו		26	They lie together down in the dust and the worms soon cover them both.
כז	הֵן יִדְעֹתִי מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִזְמוֹת עָלַי תַּחֲמָסוּ: כִּי תֹאמְרוּ אֵיךְ בֵּית־נָדִיב אֵיךְ אֶהְיֶה מְשַׁכְּנֹת רָשָׁעִים: הֲלֹא שְׁאַלְתֶּם עוֹבְרֵי דֶרֶךְ וְאַתֶּם לֹא תִגְבְּרוּ:	27	“Oh, I know your thoughts, what you so spitefully think about me!
כח		28	“What has become of the great lord’s house,” you say, “where is the tent where the wicked used to live?”
כט		29	Have you never questioned people who travel, do you not understand the testimony they give:

angels, but there is an older interpretation in which it refers to ‘the Most High’, taking the word as a singular form with an enclitic ׀.

23 Another shocking revelation: death strikes indiscriminately.

24 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB, following the Peshitta, has ‘thighs padded with fat’.

25 Literally translated, the 1st line reads, “and this (man) dies in heart of bitterness.”

26 Once dead, the good and the wicked are indistinguishable.

27 The word for ‘thoughts’ has more to do with their intent than their general thoughts: Job knows that when they talked about the fate of the wicked, they really were talking about him.

28 The rhetorical questions imply that the answers will be ‘vanished’ or ‘gone’.

29 For this verse, here following the MT, the LXX reads, “Ask those who go by the way, and do not disown their signs.” (ἐρωτήσατε παραπορευομένους ὁδόν, καὶ τὰ σημεῖα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀπαλλοτριώσετε.)

ל כִּי לַיּוֹם אֵיד יִחְשָׁךְ רַע
 לַיּוֹם עֲבָרוֹת יוֹבְלוּ:
 לֹא מִי־יִגִּיד עַל־פְּנֵי דֶרֶכּוֹ
 וְהוּא־עָשָׂה מִי יִשְׁלֹם־לוֹ:
 לִבּ וְהוּא לְקִבְרוֹת יוֹבֵל
 וְעַל־גְּדִישׁ יִשְׁקוֹד:
 לֵג מִתְקוֹלוֹ רִגְבִי־נַחַל
 וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל־אָדָם יִמְשׁוֹךְ
 וְלִפְנָיו אֵין מִסְפָּר:
 לֹד וְאֵיךְ תִּנְחַמּוּנִי הַבֵּל
 וְתִשׁוּבַת־יֶכֶם נִשְׁאֲר־מַעַל:

30 On the day of disaster, the wicked is spared;
 on the day of retribution, he is rescued?
 31 Who is there then to reproach him for his deeds
 and who pays him back for the things he has done?
 32 He is carried away to the cemetery,
 and a watch is kept at his tomb.
 33 The clods of the ravine lie easy on him,
 and the whole population walk behind,
 and in front of him countless numbers.
 34 So, what sense is there in your empty consolation?
 Your answers are the leftovers of infidelity!"

30 The verb translated 'rescued' means 'to be led forth' (to be 'led forth in the day of trouble' means to be rescued).

31 These rhetorical questions expect the answer, "No one!"

32 The word translated 'tomb' refers to the tumulus, the burial mound that is erected on the spot where the person is buried. The verb in the 2nd line is 'he will watch', but the subject is unspecified, so the translation is passive.

33 The NJB omits the 3rd line, which it considers a gloss.

34 The word מַעַל ('infidelity') is used for 'treachery', 'deception', or 'fraud'; here, Job is saying that their way of interpreting reality is dangerously unfaithful.

אִיּוֹב פֶּרֶק כּב

א וַיַּעַן אֱלִיפָז הַתִּמְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר:

ב הֲלֹא לִי סֶכֶן-גָּבֹר

כִּי-יִסְכֵּן עָלֵימוֹ מִשְׁכִּיל:

ג הַחֶפֶץ לְשֹׂדֵי כִי תַצְדֵּק

וְאִם-בָּצַע כִּי-תִתֶּם דְּרָכֶיךָ:

ד הַמִּירָאתְךָ יִכְיֶחֱךָ

יָבוֹא עִמָּךְ בַּמִּשְׁפָּט:

ה הֲלֹא רַעַתְךָ רַבָּה

וְאִין-קֹץ לַעֲוֹנֹתֶיךָ:

ו כִּי-תַחֲבֹל אֶחָיֶךָ חֲנָם

וּבְגָדֶי עָרוּמִים תִּפְשִׁיט:

ז לֹא-מִים עֵינֶיךָ תִּשְׁקָה

וּמָרְעֵב תִּמְנַע-לָחֶם:

JOB 22

¹ Eliphaz of Teman spoke next. He said:

² “Can a human being contribute anything to God?

Can even the wisest be of service to him?

³ Does Shaddai derive any benefit from your righteousness,
or profit from your blameless conduct?

⁴ Do you think he is punishing you for your piety
and bringing you to justice for that?

⁵ No, for your great wickedness, more likely:
for your unlimited sins!

⁶ You have exacted unearned pledges from your brothers,
stripped people naked of their clothes.

⁷ You have failed to give water to the weary
and refused bread to the hungry.

JOB 22

- ¹ The 3rd cycle of discourses now begins with Eliphaz's final speech, but there may be some disorder in Chs 24–27, since Zophar does not speak.
- ² No one is of any use to God, no matter how wise or righteous (v. 3); hence, it can be presumed that the divine judgement on Job is exact and justified. Eliphaz proceeds to show that it is so by detailing Job's wrongdoings (vv. 6–11).
- ³ The word חֶפֶץ (*'benefit'*) in this passage has the nuance of a special favour; it does not just express the desire for something or the interest in it, but the profit one derives from it.
- ⁴ Of course, the point is that God does not charge Job because he is righteous; the point is he must be unrighteous.
- ⁵ The adjective רַבָּה (*'great'*) normally has the idea of 'great in quantity' (the *ESV* has *'abundant'*) rather than "great in quality".
- ⁶ The verb חָבַל means 'to take pledges'; in this verse, Eliphaz says that Job not only took things the poor need but did so for no reason.
- ⁷ The term עֵינֶיךָ can be translated 'weary', 'faint', 'exhausted', or 'tired'; here it may refer to the fainting because of thirst (the *NJB* has *'thirsty'*), which would make a good parallel to the 2nd line.

ח	וְאִישׁ זָרוּעַ לוֹ הָאָרֶץ וְנִשְׁוֹא פָנָיו יֵשֵׁב בָּהּ	8	You have handed the land over to the powerful, for the favoured to move in.
ט	אֶל־מְנוֹת שְׁלַחַת רִיקָם וְזַרְעוֹת יְתָמִים יִדְכָּא:	9	You have sent widows away empty-handed and the arms of orphans you have crushed.
י	עַל־כֵּן סְבִיבוֹתֶיךָ פָּחִים וְיִבְהֻלְךָ פֶּחַד פִּתְאֹם:	10	Therefore, snares are all around you, and sudden terrors make you afraid,
יא	אוֹחֲשֶׁךָ לֹא־תִרְאֶה וְשִׁפְעַת־מַיִם תִּכְסֶּךָ:	11	or darkness, so that you cannot see, and you have been submerged in the flood.
יב	הֲלֹא־אֱלֹהֵי גְבוּהַ שָׁמַיִם וְרָאָה רֹאשׁ כּוֹכָבִים כִּי־רָמּוּ:	12	“Does not God live high in the heavens? See the highest of stars, how lofty they are!
יג	וְאָמַרְתָּ מִה־יָדַע אֵל הַבֶּעַד עֲרַפֵּל יִשְׁפּוֹט:	13	Therefore, you have said, “What does God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud?
יד	עָבִים סִתְּרוּ־לוֹ וְלֹא יִרְאֶה וְחוּג שָׁמַיִם יִתְהַלֵּךְ:	14	The clouds, to him, are an impenetrable veil, as he goes his way on the vault of heaven.”
טו	הָאָרֶץ עוֹלָם תִּשְׁמֹר אֲשֶׁר דָּרְכוּ מִתִּי־אָוֶן:	15	Will you still follow the old path trodden by the wicked?

- 8 ‘The powerful’ translates ‘a man of arm’ (cf. Ps 10:15), which is in comparison to the 2nd line, where ‘the favoured’ translates ‘man of face’ (see Is 3:5).
- 9 The list of faults with which Eliphaz unfairly taxes Job is notable for its insistence on sins against justice and charity towards others, even by omission. ‘You have crushed’ follows the LXX, Peshitta, Tg & Vg; the MT has ‘were crushed’.
- 10 In place of ‘therefore’, here following the NRSV, the NJB opens with, “No wonder, then, if ...”
- 11 The NJB, following the LXX (τὸ φῶς σοι σκοτός ἀπέβη), opens with ‘light has turned to darkness’, reading אִו (‘or’) as אֹר (‘light’).
- 12 The parallel passage in Is 40:26–27, as well as the context here, shows that the imperative is to be retained in the 2nd line.
- 13 Job has not said this, but Eliphaz is drawing this blasphemous conclusion: if God is not concerned, it is because he does not know.
- 14 Literally translated, ‘vault’ is ‘circle’ or ‘dome’; here, it is the dome that covers the earth, beyond which God sits enthroned.
- 15 The text in vv. 15–16 is no doubt making reference to the flood in Genesis, one of the perennial examples of divine judgment.

טז אֲשֶׁר־קִמְטוּ וְלֹא־עָתָּה
 נָהָר יוֹצֵק יִסּוּדָם:
 יז הָאֲמֹרִים לֹאֵל סוּר מִמֶּנּוּ
 וּמִה־יַּפְעַל שְׂדֵי לָמוֹ:
 יח וְהוּא מָלֵא בְתֵיהֶם טוֹב
 וְעֲצַת רָשָׁעִים רָחֵקָה מִנִּי:
 יט יֵרָאוּ צַדִּיקִים וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ
 וְנָקִי יִלְעַג־לָמוֹ:
 כ אִם־לֹא נִכְחַד קִימָנוּ
 וַיִּתְּרֵם אֲכָלָה אֵשׁ:
 כא הַסֶּכֶן־נָא עִמּוֹ וּשְׁלָם
 בָּהֶם תְּבוֹאֲתָהּ טוֹבָה:
 כב קַח־נָא מִפִּי תוֹרָה
 וְשִׁים אֲמָרָיו בְּלִבְבְּךָ:

16 They were borne off before their time;
 their foundations were washed away by a flood.
 17 For they said to God, "Go away!
 What can Shaddai do to us?"
 18 Yet, he himself had filled their houses with good things,
 although the counsel of the wicked was far from me!
 19 At such a spectacle, the upright rejoice
 and the innocent deride them:
 20 "See how our enemies have been destroyed!
 See how their wealth has perished in the flames!"
 21 " Well then! Make peace with him, be reconciled,
 and all your happiness will be restored to you.
 22 Welcome the teaching from his lips,
 and keep his words close to your heart.

-
- 16 The word translated 'flood' is נָהָר ('river' or 'current'); it is taken here in its broadest sense of the waters on the earth that formed the current of the flood (Gn 7:6, 10).
 17 'To us' follows the LXX (ἡμῶν) and Peshitta; the MT has 'to them'.
 18 The LXX ends with 'from him' (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ) and this reading is followed by several commentators; but the MT reading should be retained, for Eliphaz is recalling the words of Job. Vv. 17–18 are deleted by a number of commentators as a gloss, as they have many similarities to 21:14–16. But Eliphaz is recalling what Job said, in order to say that the prosperity to which Job alluded was only the prelude to a disaster he denied.
 19 This verse refers to the rejoicing of the righteous when judgment falls on the wicked. In Ps 2:4, God mocks the wicked by judging them.
 20 The word translated 'our enemies' (קִימָנוּ) is found only here; it means 'hostility' but is used here as a collective for those who are hostile.
 21 The NRSV & NETB have 'God' in place of 'him', here following the MT & NJB.
 22 The word translated 'teaching' is תוֹרָה ('Torah'), its only occurrence in the book of Job.

כג אִם־תָּשׁוּב עַד־שְׂדֵי תִבְנֶה
 תִּרְחִיק עוֹלָה מֵאֹהֶלְךָ:
 כד וְשִׁית־עַל־עֹפֶר בָּצֵר
 וּכְצֹר נְחָלִים אוֹפִיר:
 כה וְהָיָה שְׂדֵי בָצֵרֶיךָ
 וּכְסֹף תּוֹעֲפּוֹת לָךְ:
 כו כִּי־אֶזַע עַל־שְׂדֵי תִתְעַנֵּג
 וְתִשָּׂא אֶל־אֱלֹהִים פָּנֶיךָ:
 כז תַּעֲתִיר אֵלָיו וְיִשְׁמָעֶךָ
 וּנְדַרְיָךְ תִּשְׁלֹם:
 כח וְתִגְזַר־אֲמַר וַיִּקַּם לָךְ
 וְעַל־דְּרָכֶיךָ נִגַּה אוֹר:
 כט כִּי־הִשְׁפִּילוּ וְתֹאמַר גּוֹה
 וְשָׁח עֵינָיִם יוֹשַׁע:

23 If you return, humbled, to Shaddai
 and drive wickedness far from your tent,
 24 if you lay your gold down on the dust,
 Ophir down among the rocks of the ravines,
 25 Shaddai will be bars of gold to you
 and silver piled in heaps.
 26 Then you will delight yourself in Shaddai
 and you will lift your face to God.
 27 You will pray, and he will hear;
 and you will be able to fulfil your vows.
 28 Whatever you decide to do will go well,
 and light will shine on your path.
 29 For he casts down the pride of the arrogant,
 but he saves those of downcast eyes.

23 'Humbled' (literally 'and humble yourself') follows the LXX (καὶ ταπεινώσῃς σεαυτὸν, reading תַּעֲנֶה); the MT has 'you will be built' (תִּבְנֶה).

24 The word for 'gold' here is the rare בָּצֵר, which may be derived from an Arabic cognate, *bazaar* ('to see', 'to examine'); if this is the case, the word here would refer to refined gold. The word also forms a fine wordplay with בָּצֵרֶיךָ ('among the rocks').

25 The form for 'gold' here is plural, which could be a plural of extension. For the 1st line, the LXX (ἔσται οὖν σου ὁ παντοκράτωρ βοηθὸς ἀπὸ ἐχθρῶν) and Vg (*Eritque Omnipotens contra hostes tuos*) have "The Almighty will be your helper against your enemies."

26 The word translated 'delight yourself' is the same verb as in Ps 37:4; some suggest it comes from a root meaning 'depend upon'.

27 At the end of this verse, NETB adds the implied words, 'to him'.

28 The phrase 'decide to do' translates גָּזַר (literally, 'cut').

29 The verse has been emended; the MT is unintelligible (literally, "for they cast down, and you have said, 'Pride!'"). The NRSV has, "When others are humiliated, you say it is pride; for he saves the humble."

ל יִמְלֹךְ אֱיֹנֶקֶי
וְנִמְלֹךְ בְּכִיד:

³⁰ He rescues anyone who is innocent;
have your hands clean, and you will be saved.”

³⁰ The meaning of the Hebrew, here translated as ‘*have your hands clean*’, is uncertain.

איוב פרק כג

JOB 23

- א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Job spoke next. He said:
- ב גַּם־הַיּוֹם מְרִי שְׁחִי 2 "My lament is still rebellious;
יָדִי כְבֹדָה עַל־אַנְחָתִי: despite my groans, his hand is just as heavy.
- ג מִי־יָתֵן יִדְעָתִי וְאַמְצָאֵהוּ 3 Oh, that I knew where I might find him,
אָבוֹא עַד־תְּכוֹנָתוֹ: that I might come even to his dwelling!
- ד אֶעֱרֹכֶה לִפְנֵי מִשְׁפָּט 4 I should set out my case to him,
וְפִי אֲמַלֵּא תוֹכָחוֹת: advancing any number of grievances.
- ה אֲדַעַה מַלְּיָם יַעֲנֵנִי 5 I would learn how he would answer me
וְאֶבְיִנָּה מִה־יֹּאמֶר לִי: and understand what he would say to me.
- ו הַבֶּרֶב־כֹּחַ יָרִיב עִמָּדִי 6 Would he contend with me with all his strength?
לֹא אֲדַהֲוֵא יֵשָׁם בִּי: No, he would only have to give his attention to me.
- ז שֵׁם יֵשָׁר נֹכַח עִמּוֹ 7 There, an upright person could reason with him,
וְאֶפְלָטָה לְנֶצַח מִשְׁפָּטִי: and I should be acquitted forever by my judge.

JOB 23

- 1 Job answers Eliphaz but not until he introduces new ideas for his own case with God.
- 2 For the 1st line, the NRSV, following the Tg, Vg (*Nunc quoque in amaritudine est sermo meus*) and Peshitta, has, "Today also my complaint is bitter." 'His hand' follows the LXX (χείρ αὐτοῦ) and Peshitta; the MT has 'my hand'.
- 3 The form וְאַמְצָאֵהוּ translates literally as 'and I will find him' but, in the optative clause, this verb is subordinated to the preceding verb; it is not unusual to have the perfect verb followed by the imperfect in such coordinate clauses. This could also be translated making the 2nd verb a complementary infinitive: 'knew how to find him'.
- 4 The word מִשְׁפָּט is normally 'judgment' or 'decision' but, in this context, it refers to the legal case that Job will bring before God.
- 5 Literally translated, the 1st line ends 'the word he would answer me'.
- 6 The word translated 'contend' (יָרִיב) is often used in a legal context.
- 7 For the 2nd line, here following the MT, the NJB, following the LXX (ἐξαγάγοι δὲ εἰς τέλος τὸ κρίμα μου), has "and so I should win my case forever."

ח הַן קִדְּם אֶהְלֵךְ וְאֵינֶנּוּ
וְאַחֹר וְלֹא-אֶבִּין לוֹ:
ט שְׂמֹאֹל בַּעֲשָׂתוֹ וְלֹא-אֲחֹז
יַעֲטֹף יָמִין וְלֹא אֶרְאֶה:
י כִּי-יֵדַע דְּרֹךְ עַמִּדִּי
יב בָּחֲנֵנִי כַזֶּהב אֲצֵא:
יא בְּאֲשֶׁרוֹ אֲחֻזָּה רַגְלִי
יג דְּרָכּוֹ שְׁמַרְתִּי וְלֹא-אֶטָּ:
יד מִצְוַת שְׁפָתָיו וְלֹא אֶמִּישׁ
טו מִחֲקֵי צַפְנָתִי אִמְרֵי-פִיו:
והוא באחד ומי ישיבנו
ונפשו אותה ויעש:
זכיהנה רבות עמו:
על-בן מפניו אבהל
אתבונן ואפחד ממנו:

8 "If I go to the east, he is not there;
or to the west, I cannot perceive him.
9 In the north, he hides, and I cannot behold him,
if I turn to the south, I still cannot see him.
10 Yet he knows every step I take!
When he has tested me, I shall come out like gold.
11 My footsteps have followed close in his;
I have walked in his way without swerving.
12 I have not neglected the commandment of his lips;
in my heart, I have cherished the words of his mouth.
13 But he stands alone, and who can dissuade him?
Whatever he plans, that he carries out.
14 For he will complete what he appoints for me;
and many such things are in his mind.
15 Therefore, I am terrified at his presence.
When I consider, I am afraid of him.

8 In this section, Job describes the power and inaccessibility of God.

9 For 'north', MT has 'left hand', the Semitic idiom for directions: one faces the rising sun, and so left is north, right is south.

10 'Every step I take' (literally, 'my walking and my stopping') follows the Peshitta; the MT has 'the way with me'.

11 The last clause, 'without swerving', functions adverbially in the sentence.

12 'In my heart' follows the LXX (ἐν δὲ κόλπῳ μου); the MT is unintelligible. Job is referring to the Law.

13 'He stands alone' (literally, 'he is in one') perhaps denotes divine sovereignty (see Dt 6:4).

14 The text is saying that many similar situations are under God's rule of the world – his plans are infinite.

15 For this verse, here following WEBBE, the NJB has, "That is why I am full of fear before him, and the more I think, the greater grows my dread of him."

טז וַאֲלֵהֶרֶץ לִבִּי
 וְשׁוּדֵי הַבְּהִילָנִי:
 זי כִּי־לֹא נִצַּמְתִּי מִפְּנֵי־חָשֶׁךְ
 וּמִפְּנֵי כֶסֶה־אֶפֶל:

16 God has undermined my courage;
 Shaddai has filled me with fear.
 17 The darkness having failed to destroy me,
 I am plunged back into obscurity by him!

-
- ¹⁶ The verb הֵרַךְ means 'to be tender'; in the Piel, it would have the meaning 'to soften'; it is used in parallel constructions with the verbs for 'fear'. The implication is that God has made Job fearful.
- ¹⁷ The translation of this very obscure verse is conjectural and taken to mean that Job regrets not having been set free by death before the dread hour of darkness. However, the negative can also be understood as referring to both halves of the verse and translate, "*I am not yet plunged back into obscurity by him.*" The NRSV has, "*If only I could vanish in darkness, and thick darkness would cover my face.*"

איוב פרק כד

א מִדּוֹעַ מַשְׁדֵּי לֹא־נִצָּפְנוּ עֲתִים
וַיִּדְעוּ לֹא־חָזוּ יָמָיו:
ב גְּבֻלוֹת יִשְׁגּוּ
עֶדֶר גָּזְלוּ וַיִּרְעוּ:
ג חֲמֹר יְתוּמִים יִנְהֹגוּ
יַחְבְּלוּ שׁוֹר אִלְמָנָה:
ד יִטּוּ אֲבִינִים מִדֶּרֶךְ
יַחַד חֲבָאוּ עַנְי־אֶרֶץ:
ה הֵן פְּרָאִים | בְּמִדְבָּר
יֵצְאוּ בַּפֶּעַל מִשְׁחָרֵי לִטְרֶף
עֲרֵבָה לוֹ לֶחֶם לַנְּעָרִים:
ו בַּשָּׂדֶה בְּלִילוֹ יִקְצִירוּ יִקְצֹרוּ
וְכָרֶם רָשָׁע יִלְקְשׁוּ:

JOB 24

- 1 “Why does Shaddai not keep the times;
why do his faithful never see his days?
- 2 The wicked move boundary-marks away,
they carry off flock and shepherd.
- 3 They drive away the orphan’s donkey;
as security, they seize the widow’s ox.
- 4 The needy have to keep out of the way;
poor country people have to keep out of sight.
- 5 Like wild desert donkeys,
they go out to work scavenging;
the wasteland provides food for their children.
- 6 They go harvesting in a field not their own;
they go pilfering in the vineyards of the wicked.

JOB 24

- 1 The literal translation of ‘not keep the times’ is ‘not have times in reverse’; here, the ‘times’ refers to a store from which to lengthen a human life and so provide opportunity for punishment. ‘Days’ refers to the ‘Day of Yahweh’, which is the day of universal retribution (see #Am 5:18).
- 2 The word ‘wicked’, here following the LXX, is omitted by the MT; ‘and shepherd’ follows the LXX; the MT has ‘and make him feed’. With wicked tyrants (vv. 2–4), Job contrasts the oppressed poor (vv. 5–12), whose wretchedness cries to heaven.
- 3 The word ‘security’ here is meant in the sense of a pledge (for a loan).
- 4 The widows and orphans, all are deprived of their rights and forced out of the ways and into hiding just to survive.
- 5 The word ‘provides’ is not in the MT but is here included following NETB.
- 6 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here may reflect a scribe’s misreading of a (possibly small/short) *vav* as a *yod*.

ז	עָרוֹם יִלְּנוּ מִבְּלִי לְבוּשׁ וְאֵין כְּסוּת בַּקֶּרֶה:	7	They spend the night naked, lacking clothes, with no covering against the cold.
ח	מִזֶּרֶם הָרִים יִרְטְבוּ וּמִבְּלִי מַחֲסֵה חֶבְקוֹ-צֹר:	8	Mountain rainstorms cut them through; unsheltered, they hug the rocks.
ט	יִגְזְלוּ מִשֹּׁד יְתוֹם וְעַל-עֲנִי יִחַבְּלוּ:	9	The orphan child is torn from the breast; the child of the poor is exacted as security.
י	עָרוֹם הֵלְכוּ בְּלִי לְבוּשׁ וְרַעֲבִים נִשְׂאוּ עֹמֶר:	10	They go about naked, lacking clothes, and starving while they carry the sheaves.
יא	בֵּין-שׁוֹרְתָם יִצְהִירוּ יִקְבִּים דְּרָכָם וַיִּצְמָאוּ:	11	Between their terraces, they press out oil; they have to tread the winepress while thirsty.
יב	מֵעִיר מָתִים יִנְאָקוּ וְנַפְש־חֲלָלִים תִּשׁוּעַ וְאֵלֹהִהּ לֹא-יִשְׁמָע תְּפִלָּה:	12	From the towns come the groans of the dying and the gasp of the wounded crying for help. Yet God remains deaf to their prayer!
יג	הִמָּה הֵיוּ בַּמֶּרְדִּי-אֹר לֹא-הִכִּירוּ דְרָכָיו	13	“ There are those who reject the light: who know nothing of its ways

⁷ In place of ‘against the cold’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV (and others) has ‘in the cold’.

⁸ The word translated ‘hug’ (following the NJB – the NRSV has ‘cling to’) more literally means ‘embrace’.

⁹ ‘Breast’ follows the LXX (μαστοῦ); the MT has ‘devastation’ (different vowel arrangement). The verb with no expressed subject is here again taken in the passive: ‘they tear’ becomes ‘(child) is torn’.

¹⁰ The NJB transposes vv. 10–11 to just after v. 6 (though no explanation for this is given).

¹¹ The meaning of the 1st line (here following the NRSV – JPS has, “From out of the populous city men groan”) is uncertain; the NJB has the conjectural, “Two little walls, their shelter at high noon,” and WEBBE has, “They make oil within the walls of these men,” The final verb, a preterite with the 1st consecutive, is here interpreted as a circumstantial clause.

¹² ‘Dying’ follows the Peshitta, reading מָתִים for מְתִים (‘men’). The 3rd line follows the Peshitta; the MT has, “God does not apply attention to folly.”

¹³ The attack on the enemies of light brings us back to the oppressors: God allows them to work in the dark.

	וְלֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בְּנִתְיָבְתָיו: לְאֹרֶץ קוֹם רוּצָח יִקְטֹל-עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן וְבַלִּילָה יִהְיֶה כְּגֹנֵב:	יד		and who do not frequent its paths.
14			14	The murderer rises at dusk; he kills the poor and needy in the night and is like a thief.
	וְעֵין נֹאֵף שְׁמֶרֶה נֶשֶׁף לֹאמֹר לֹא-תִשׁוּרְנִי עֵין וְסִתֵּר פָּנִים יֵשִׁים: חֲתֹר בַּחֲשֵׁךְ בָּתִּים יוֹמָם חֲתָמוּ-לָמוֹ לֹא-יֵדְעוּ אֹרֶךְ:	טו	15	The eye of the adulterer watches for twilight, thinking, “No one will see me,” as he masks his face.
	כִּי יַחֲדוּ בְּקֹר לָמוֹ צִלְמוֹת כִּי-יִפִּיר בַּלְהוֹת צִלְמוֹת: קִלְ-הוּא עַל-פְּנֵי-מַיִם תִּקְלָל חֲלָקְתָם בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא-יִפְנֶה דֶּרֶךְ בְּרָמִים: צִיָּה גַם-חֹם יִגְזֹלוּ מִימֵי-שֶׁלֶג שְׂאוֹל חֲטָאוֹ:	טז	16	In the dark, they break into houses; in the daytime, they keep out of sight: they do not know the light.
		יז	17	For all of them, morning is a time of deep darkness, for they are friends of the terror of deep darkness.
		יח	18	“ Swift is he on the face of the waters; his estate is accursed throughout the land, no trader turns toward his vineyard.
		יט	19	As drought and heat make snow disappear, so does Sheol anyone who has sinned.

¹⁴ He is like a thief that works during the night, just before the daylight, when the advantage is all his and the victim is most vulnerable.

¹⁵ The literal translation for ‘*thinking*’ is ‘*saying*’.

¹⁶ The *NJB* transposes the 1st line to the end of v. 14; the remainder is included as 16^b.

¹⁷ The 2nd line here follows the *NRSV*; the *NJB* has, “*since that is when they know what fear is.*” The *MT* is corrupt.

¹⁸ The *NJB* transposes vv. 18–25 to after 27:23. The text is damaged and is difficult to interpret, appearing to affirm the friends’ doctrine: divine punishment for the wicked. But the solutions proposed (attribution to Bildad or to Zophar, or to add ‘*you say*’ in v. 18) remain hypothetical.

¹⁹ For the 2nd line, the *MT* reads simply, “*Sheol, they have sinned.*” ‘*Sheol*’ is the abode of the dead.

כ יִשְׁכַּחְהוּ רֶחֶם | מִתְקוֹ רֶמָּה
 עוֹד לֹא-יִזְכָּר
 וְתִשָּׁבֵר כַּעַץ עוֹלָה:
 כא רָעָה עֲקָרָה לֹא תִלָּד
 וְאַלְמָנָה לֹא יִיטִיב:
 כב וּמִשָּׁד אֲבִירִים בָּכָחוּ
 יָקוּם וְלֹא-יֵאֱמִין בַּחַיִּין:
 כג יִתְּנֶלֶז לְבַטָּח וַיִּשְׁעֶן
 וַיַּעֲיִיחֵהוּ עַל-דַּרְכֵיהֶם:
 כד רוֹמוֹ מָעַט | וַאֲיָנָנוּ
 וְהַמָּכוּ כָּכֹל יִקְפָּצוּן
 וּכְרָאשׁ שִׁבְלֵת יִמְלוּ:
 כה וְאִם-לֹא אָפוּ מִי יִכְזִיבֵנִי
 וַיִּשֶׁם לֹאֵל מִלְתִּי:

20 The womb forgets him; the worm finds him sweet;
 he is remembered no more.
 Thus, wickedness is blasted as a tree is struck.
 21 He used to ill-treat the childless woman
 and show no kindness to the widow.
 22 Yet, he who lays mighty hold on tyrants
 rises up to take away a life that seemed secure.
 23 He let him build his hopes on false security,
 but kept his eye on every step he took.
 24 He had his time of glory, now he vanishes,
 wilting like the saltwort once it is picked,
 and withering like an ear of corn.
 25 "Is this not so? Who can prove me a liar
 or show that my words have no substance?"

20 For the 2nd line, the *NJB* has the conjectural, "and his name is recalled no longer."

21 'Ill-treat' follows the *Tg*; the *MT* has 'pasturing' (the form in the text is the active participle).

22 It is clear that God is the subject of the main clause.

23 God may allow the wicked to rest in comfort, but all the time he is watching them closely with the idea of bringing judgment on them.

24 The 2nd line has been corrected in accordance with the *LXX* (ἐμαράνθη δὲ ὥσπερ μολόχη ἐν καύματι).

25 The word לֹאֵל ('not') is used here substantially ('nothing').

איוב פרק כה

JOB 25

א וַיַּעַן בִּלְדָּד הַשּׁוּאִי וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Bildad of Shuah spoke next. He said:

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| ב | הַמֶּשֶׁל וּפְחַד עָמוֹ | 2 | “What sovereignty, what awe is his |
| | עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו: | | who creates his peace on his heights! |
| ג | הֵיטָּם מִסְפֵּר לְגִדּוּדָיו | 3 | Who can count his armies? |
| | וְעַל־מִי לֹא־יָקוּם אוֹרָהוּ: | | On whom does his light not rise? |
| ד | וּמִה־יִצְדָּק אֲנוֹשׁ עִם־אֱלֹ | 4 | Could anyone think God regards him as virtuous, |
| | וּמִה־יִזְכָּה יָלוּד אִשָּׁה: | | the child of woman as pure! |
| ה | הֵן עַד־יָרַח וְלֹא יֵאָהִיל | 5 | Why, the very moon lacks lustre, |
| | וְכֹכָבִים לֹא־זָכוּ בְּעֵינָיו: | | the very stars seem impure to him! |
| ו | אֵף כִּי־אֲנוֹשׁ רִמָּה | 6 | How much less a human, this maggot, |
| | וּבֶן־אָדָם תּוֹלָעָה: | | the child of man, this worm!” |

JOB 25

- ¹ This discourse (it is suspiciously short and possibly mutilated, see #26:1) seems to anticipate the Discourse of Yahweh. It may, however, be integral to the Dialogue, if regarded as Bildad’s reply to Job’s insinuation that God is unable to intervene on the side of justice in human affairs.
- ² On peace among the angels, see Is 24:21, Rv 12:7-12, and among the stars see Is 40:26, Si 43:10.
- ³ In place of ‘his light’ in the 2nd line, the LXX has ‘his ambush’ (ἐνεδρα παρ’ αὐτοῦ), perhaps reading אַרְבּוֹ instead of אוֹרָהוּ. But while that captures the idea of troops and warfare, the change should be rejected because the armies are linked with stars and light. The expression is poetic; the LXX interpretation tried to make it concrete (the NJB has “Against whom does his lightning not surge forth?”).
- ⁴ Bildad here does not produce new expressions; rather, he simply uses what Eliphaz had said (see Job 4:17-19 and 15:14-16).
- ⁵ ‘Lacks lustre’ follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT is corrupt.
- ⁶ The MT lacks the word ‘this’, before ‘maggot’ and ‘worm’, here added for clarity.

איוב פרק כו

JOB 26

וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: ^א 1 Job spoke next. He said:

ב מִה־עֲזָרָתָ לְלֹא־כֹחַ
הוֹשַׁעַת זְרוּעַ לֹא־עֹז:
ג מִה־יַּעֲצָתָ לְלֹא חֲכָמָה
וְתִשְׂיָה לְרֹב הוֹדַעַתָּ:
ד אֶת־מִי הַגִּדָּתָ מִלִּין
וְנִשְׁמַת־מִי יֵצֵא מִמֶּנָּה:
ה הָרָפָאִים יִחֻלְלוּ
מִתַּחַת מַיִם וְשִׁכְנֵיהֶם:
ו עָרוֹם שְׂאוֹל נִגְדָּו
וְאֵין כְּסוֹת לְאַבְדּוֹן:
ז נֹטָה צִפּוֹן עַל־תְּהוֹ
תָּלָה אֶרֶץ עַל־בְּלִי־מָה:

2 “ To one so weak, what a help you are,
for the powerless, what a rescuer!
3 What excellent advice you give the unlearned;
you are never at a loss for a helpful suggestion!
4 For whom are these words of yours intended,
and whose spirit has come forth from you?
5 “ The Shadows tremble underneath the earth,
the waters and their denizens are afraid.
6 Before his eyes, Sheol is bare;
Perdition itself is uncovered.
7 He it was who spread the North above the void
and poised the earth on nothingness.

JOB 26

- ¹ The *NJB* transposes vv. 1–4 to after 26:14, contending that vv. 5–14, rather than continuing Job’s speech, complete the speech of Bildad.
- ² The ‘powerless’ is expressed here by the negative before the word for ‘strength’ – ‘he who has no power’.
- ³ The phrase לְרֹב (‘never at a loss’) literally means ‘to abundance’.
- ⁴ Job’s rejoinder to Bildad, who seems to have lost sight of the precise point under discussion, is ironical. He leaves unnamed the ‘spirit’ in Bildad, but the implication is that it is evil or unworthy.
- ⁵ The literal translation of ‘Shadows’ is ‘Rephaim’ – either the dead (see Ps 88:10) or the weak and powerless. The ‘waters’ are those of the abyss, peopled in popular imagination by the monsters subdued at the creation (see #7:12). The *NRSV*, following the *MT*, omits ‘are afraid’, lost through haplography after ‘under the earth’ (which the *MT* joins to the next line).
- ⁶ ‘Perdition’ translates אַבְדּוֹן (*Abaddon*, which the *NRSV* retains), a synonym for Sheol (Rv 9:11); the name may indicate a god of the underworld.
- ⁷ The firmament was thought to revolve on its northern quarter. The earth rests on pillars (see 9:6) but what these stand on is beyond human

ח צָרַר־מִים בְּעִבּוֹ
 וְלֹא־נִבְקַע עֲנַן תַּחְתָּם:
 ט מֵאֲחֹז פְּנֵי־כֶסֶה
 פָּרְשָׁז עָלָיו עֲנָנוּ:
 י חִק־חָג עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם
 עַד־תַּכְלִית אֹר עִם־חֹשֶׁךְ:
 יא עֲמוּדֵי שָׁמַיִם יִרְפּוּ
 וַיִּתְמְהוּ מִגְּעָרָתוֹ:
 יב בִּכְחוֹ רָגַע הַיָּם
 וּבִתְבוּנָתוֹ וּבִתְבוּנָתוֹ מִחַן רָהַב:
 יג בְּרוּחוֹ שָׁמַיִם שִׁפְרָה
 חִלְלָה יָדוֹ נַחַשׁ בָּרַח:
 יד הֵן־אֱלֹהִים קְצוֹת דְּרָכָם
 וּמֵה־שִׁמְךָ דָּבַר נִשְׁמַע־בּוֹ
 וְרַעַם גְּבוּרָתוֹ מִי יִתְבּוֹנֵן:

8 He fastens up the waters in his clouds,
 without the clouds bursting under their weight.
 9 He covers the face of the full moon,
 spreading his clouds across it.
 10 He has circumscribed a limit on the surface of the waters,
 at the boundary between light and dark.
 11 The pillars of the heavens tremble,
 awe-struck at his threats.
 12 By his power, he has whipped up the Sea;
 by his skill, he has crushed Rahab.
 13 His breath has made the heavens luminous;
 his hand transfixed the Fleeing Serpent.
 14 This is only a fraction of what he has done
 and all we catch of it is the feeblest echo.
 But who can conceive the thunder of his power?"

knowledge (38:6). This is the only verse in the Bible that hints at infinite space. In place of 'the North', the NRSV has the name 'Zaphon', usually associated with the dwelling of the gods according to Canaanite mythology.

8 In place of 'bursting', here following NETB, the NJB has 'giving way'.

9 The verse refers to times of lunar eclipse. 'Full moon' is a conjectural translation (כֶּסֶה); the MT has 'throne' (כִּסֵּה). 'Spreading' translates פָּרְשָׁז, a hybrid combining 2 roots.

10 This verse refers to the visible horizon when looking out to sea.

11 The high mountains, which support the vault of heaven, are rocked by thunder, the voice of God (Ps 29) or by earthquake (Ps 18:7).

12 The different order of letters between the *Kethib* and *Qere* readings would benefit from further analysis.

13 The 'Fleeing Serpent' is Leviathan (see #3:8 and #7:12).

14 The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "How little is the word we hear of him."

איוב פרק כז

JOB 27

- א וַיִּסֹּף אִיּוֹב שְׁאֵת מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר:
- ב חַי־אֵל הַסִּיר מִשְׁפָּטִי
וְשִׁדִּי הַמֵּר נַפְשִׁי:
ג כִּי־כָל־עוֹד נִשְׁמָתִי בִּי
וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּאַפִּי:
ד אִם־תִּדְבַּרְנָה שְׁפָתַי עוֹלָה
וְלִשׁוֹנִי אִם־יִהְיֶה רַמְיָה:
ה חֲלִילָה לִּי אִם־אֶצְדִּיק אֶתְכֶם
עַד־אֲגוּעַ לֹא־אֶסִּיר תַּמָּתִי מִמָּוִי:
ו בְּצַדִּיקְתִּי הַחֲזַקְתִּי וְלֹא אֲרַפֶּה
לֹא־יִחַרְף לִבִּי מִיָּמִי:
ז יְהִי כְרַשַׁע אֵיבִי
וּמִתְקוֹמָמִי כְעוֹל:
- 1 Job continued his solemn discourse. He said:
2 “I swear by the living God who denies me justice,
by Shaddai who has filled me with bitterness,
3 that as long as my spirit is left in me,
and the breath of God breathes in my nostrils,
4 my lips will never speak evil
nor my tongue whisper any lie.
5 Far from admitting you to be in the right,
I shall maintain my integrity to my dying day.
6 I take my stand on my uprightness, I shall not stir:
in my heart, I need not be ashamed of my days.
7 “Let my enemy meet the fate of the wicked,
my adversary, the lot of the evildoer!

JOB 27

- 1 ‘Solemn discourse’ translates the word מִשְׁל, which could mean the oath that Job is about to take.
2 Job invokes the very God he has accused, to curse him if his words are not true. Parallel to this is an oath (vv. 3–4).
3 The word נִשְׁמָת (‘spirit’) is the ‘breath’ that was breathed into Adam in Gen 2:7; its usage includes the animating breath, the spiritual understanding, and the functioning conscience – so the whole spirit of the person. The word רוּחַ (‘breath’ in the 2nd line) may also be translated as ‘wind’ or ‘spirit’, depending on the context; here, since it talks about the nostrils, it is translated ‘breath’.
4 The verse begins with אִם, the formula used for the content of the oath; thus, the content of the oath proper is here in v. 4. The verb translated ‘whisper’ means ‘to mumble’ or ‘to meditate’; the implication is that he will not communicate deceitful things, no matter how quiet or subtle.
5 ‘Far from admitting’ is another oath formula (compare 2S 20:20).
6 ‘Be ashamed of’ is a conjectural translation, following the NJB (reading יִחַרְף); the MT has ‘insult’ (יִחַרְף).
7 For this verse, the LXX makes a free paraphrase, “No, but let my enemies be as the overthrow of the ungodly, and they that rise up against me as the

ח כִּי מִהֲתִקְוֹת חֲנֹף כִּי יִבָּצַע
 כִּי יִשָּׁל אֱלֹהֵי נַפְשׁוֹ:
 ט הֲצַעֲקָתוֹ יִשְׁמַע | אֵל
 כִּי־תָבֹא עָלָיו צָרָה:
 י אִם־עַל־שָׂדֵי יִתְעַנֵּג
 יִקְרָא אֱלֹהֵי בְכַל־עֵת:
 יא אֲזַכֵּר אֶתְכֶם בִּיד־אֵל
 אֲשֶׁר עָם־שָׂדֵי לֹא אֲכַחֵד:
 יב הֲנֵאתֶם בְּלִבְכֶם חַיִּיתֶם
 וְלִמָּה־זֶה הִבֵּל תִּהְבְּלוּ:
 יג זֶה | חֶלֶק־אָדָם רָשָׁע | עִם־אֵל
 וְנַחֲלַת עֹרִיצִים מִשָּׂדֵי יִקְחוּ:
 יד אִם־יִרְבּוּ בָנָיו לְמוֹ־חֶרֶב
 וְצִאצָּצִיו לֹא יִשְׁבְּעוּ־לֶחֶם:

8 For, what is the hope of the godless, when he is cut off,
 when God takes away his life?
 9 Will God hear his cry
 when trouble comes upon him?
 10 Did he make Shaddai all his delight,
 calling on him at every turn?
 11 I am showing you the way that God works,
 making no secret of Shaddai's designs.
 12 All of you have seen it yourselves;
 why then have you become altogether vain?
 13 "This is the fate that God assigns to the wicked,
 the inheritance that the violent receive from Shaddai.
 14 If he has many children, they are but for the sword;
 his descendants will never have enough to eat.

destruction of transgressors." (οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ εἴησαν οἱ ἐχθροί μου ὥσπερ ἡ καταστροφή τῶν ἀσεβῶν, καὶ οἱ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἐπανιστανόμενοι ὥσπερ ἡ ἀπώλεια τῶν παρα νόμων.)

- 8 The NJB, following the Peshitta, has, "For what hope does the godless have when he prays and raises his soul to God?" Here, we follow the WEBBE.
- 9 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Is God likely to hear his cries when disaster descends on him?"
- 10 Job repeats what Eliphaz has said about the punishment of the wicked but refuses to apply it to himself.
- 11 The object suffix attached to the verb translated 'showing' is plural, indicating that Job is addressing all his friends.
- 12 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "If all of you had understood them for yourselves, you would not have wasted your breath in empty words." The LXX ends with, "you all know that you are adding vanity to vanity."
- 13 The fragmentary speech of vv. 13–23 can hardly belong to Job; it repeats the argument of one of his friends, most probably that of Zophar.
- 14 The last part of the 1st line has been identified as a breviloquence.

טו שְׂרִידוֹ בַּמּוֹת יִקְבְּרוּ
וְאֶלְמֶנְתָיו לֹא תִבְכֶּינָה:
טז אִם־יִצְבֹר כַּעֲפָר כֶּסֶף
וְכַחֲמֶר יִכִּין מַלְבוּשׁ:
יז יִכִּין וְצָדִיק יִלְבֹּשׁ
וְכֶסֶף נָקִי יִחַלֵּק:
יח בָּנָה כְּעֵשׂ בֵּיתוֹ
וְכִסְכָּה עָשָׂה נֹצֵר:
יט עָשִׂיר יִשְׁכַּב וְלֹא יֵאָסֵף
עֵינָיו פָּקַח וְאֵינָנו:
כ תִּשְׁיָגְהוּ כַּמַּיִם בַּלָּהוֹת
לַיְלָה גִּנְבֶּתוֹ סוֹפָה:
כא יִשְׁאַהוּ קָדִים וּלְדָךְ
וְיִשְׁעֲרֶהוּ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ:
כב וְיִשְׁלַךְ עָלָיו וְלֹא יַחְמֹל
מִיָּדוֹ בְּרוּחַ יִבְרַח:

15 Plague will bury those he leaves behind him,
and their widows make no lamentation.
16 Though he should amass silver like dust
and pile up fine clothes like clay,
17 what he piles up the just man will wear,
while the upright will share his silver.
18 All he has built himself is a spider's web,
made himself a watchman's shack.
19 He goes to bed rich, but never again:
he wakes to find it has all gone.
20 Terror overtakes him in like a flood,
and at night, a whirlwind sweeps him off.
21 The east wind picks him up and drags him away,
snatching him up from his homestead.
22 Without pity, it turns him into a target,
as he flees headlong from its power.

¹⁵ The word translated as 'Plague' is literally 'Death' but it can mean the worst of diseases; here it is personified (cf. 18:13, Jr 15:2, 43:11, Rv 6:8).

¹⁶ NETB adds the explanatory 'mounds of' before 'clay'.

¹⁷ The NJB includes 'what he piles up' in v. 16 (as 'let him gather').

¹⁸ 'Spider' follows the LXX; the MT has 'moth'. The verse presents two images of instability.

¹⁹ The MT ends the 1st line with 'but he is not put together again'; here, we follow the LXX and Peshitta.

²⁰ Many commentators want a word parallel to 'at night' in the 1st line and so offer בַּיּוֹם ('in the day') for כַּמַּיִם ('like waters') as well as a number of others. But 'waters' sometimes stand for major calamities, and so may be retained here; besides, not all parallel structures are synonymous.

²¹ The NJB opens with 'An east wind'; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

²² The phrase, 'without pity' translates a verb used adverbially.

בג יִשְׁפֹּק עָלָיו כַּפָּיָם
וְיִשְׂרֹק עָלָיו מִמְּקוֹמוֹ:

²³ It claps his hands at him in derision;
he is hissed wherever he goes.

²³ The subject in vv. 22–23 is the East Wind (v. 21).

איוב פרק כח

א כִּי יֵשׁ לְכֶסֶף מוֹצֵא
וּמְקוֹם לְזָהָב יִזְקוּ:
ב בְּרִזֵּל מֵעֶפֶר יִקַּח
וְאֵבֶן יִצּוֹק נְחוּשָׁה:
ג קֶצֶן שֵׁם לַחֲשָׁד
וְלִכְלֹת־תְּכֵלֶת הוּא חֹקֶר
אֵבֶן אֶפֶל וְצִלְמוֹת:
ד פָּרֵץ נָחַל מֵעַם-גֵּר
הַנִּשְׁכָּחִים מִנִּיר־גֹּל
דָּלוּ מֵאֲנוּשׁ נְעוּ:
ה אֶרֶץ מִמֶּנָּה יֵצֵא-לֶחֶם
וְתַחְתֶּיהָ נִהְפָּךְ כְּמוֹ-אֵשׁ:
ו מְקוֹם-סַפִּיר אֲבִינִי
וְעִפְרָת זָהָב לוֹ:

JOB 28

1 “ Surely, there is a mine for silver,
and a place for refining gold.
2 Iron is extracted from the earth;
the smelted rocks yield copper.
3 Man makes an end of darkness;
to the utmost limit, he digs
the black rock in shadow dark as death.
4 They open shafts in a valley;
they are forgotten by travellers,
swinging suspended far from human beings.
5 That earth from which bread comes
is ravaged underground as if by fire.
6 There, the rocks have veins of sapphire
and their dust contains gold.

JOB 28

- 1 The word ‘mine’ translates מוֹצֵא (literally, ‘source’); mining was not a major industry in Canaan or Israel and mined products were imported.
- 2 A more literal translation of ‘earth’ is ‘dust’.
- 3 The text appears at first to be saying that by opening up a mine shaft, or by taking lights down below, the miner dispels the darkness. But the verse might be more general, meaning that man goes deep into the earth as if it were day.
- 4 The 1st line is conjectural; the MT is unintelligible (the NJB has ‘*Foreigners bore into ravines in unfrequented places*’). The 2nd line, here following the NRSV, is not present in the NJB. Mining was left to foreign slaves and prisoners of war. It usually took place in deserted parts of the country, notably in the desert of Sinai.
- 5 The NJB, following the Vg, omits ‘as if’.
- 6 An alternative translation for ‘sapphire’ is ‘lapis lazuli’.

ז	נְתִיב לֹא־יֵדְעוּ עֵיט וְלֹא שׁוֹפְתוּ עֵין אִיהַ:	7	That is a path unknown to birds of prey, unseen by the eye of any falcon.
ח	לֹא־הִדְרִיכוּהוּ בְּנִי־שַׁחַן לֹא־עָדָה עָלָיו שַׁחַל:	8	Proud animals have not trodden it; the lion has never walked there.
ט	בַּחֲלָמִישׁ שֶׁלַח יָדוֹ הִפְךָ מְשָׁרֵשׁ הָרִים:	9	Man attacks the flint, upturning mountains by their roots.
י	בַּצּוֹרוֹת יֹאֲרִים בִּקְעָה וְכָל־יֶקֶר רָאֲתָה עֵינָיו:	10	He cuts canals through the rock, on the watch for anything precious.
יא	מִבְּכֵי נְהָרוֹת חֲבֵשׁ וְתַעֲלֶמְהָ יֵצֵא אוֹר:	11	He probes the sources of the rivers, bringing hidden things to light.
יב	וְהַחֲכָמָה מֵאֵן תִּמְצָא וְאִי זֶה מְקוֹם בִּינָה:	12	But where shall Wisdom be found? Where is the home of Understanding?
יג	לֹא־יֵדַע אָנוּשׁ עֶרְבָה וְלֹא תִמְצָא בָּאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים:	13	“No human being knows the way to her, she is not to be found on earth where they live.

⁷ In place of ‘falcon’, here following the NRSV (and MT), the NJB, following the LXX (γυπός) has ‘vulture’.

⁸ Literally translated, ‘Proud animals’ is ‘Sons of pride’; in 41:26, this phrase refers to carnivores.

⁹ ‘By their roots’ translates מְשָׁרֵשׁ. In mining, people have gone below ground, under the mountains, and overturned rock and dirt; it is also interesting that here in a small way humans do what God does – overturn mountains (cf. 9:5).

¹⁰ ‘Canals’ here literally translates as ‘Niles’; the NRSV has ‘channels’.

¹¹ ‘Probes’ (here from the NRSV) follows the LXX (ἀνεκάλυψεν) and Vg (the NJB uses ‘explores’); the MT has ‘binds’. The ‘rivers’ are those that rise from the subterranean abyss.

¹² In place of ‘Understanding’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘Intelligence’.

¹³ ‘The way to her’ follows the LXX (ὁδὸν αὐτῆς); the MT has ‘her pride’.

ד	תְּהוֹם אָמַר לֹא בִי־הִיא וַיֹּם אָמַר אֵין עֲמָדִי:	14	"She is not in me," says the Abyss; 'Nor here,' replies the Sea.
טו	לֹא־יִתֵּן סָגוֹר תַּחֲתֶיהָ וְלֹא יִשְׁקַל בְּסֹף מַחִירָה:	15	She cannot be bought with fine gold, nor paid for with any weight of silver.
טז	לֹא־תִסָּלֶה בְּכֶתֶם אוֹפִיר בְּשֵׁהֶם יָקָר וְסַפִּיר:	16	She cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, precious onyx or sapphire.
יז	לֹא־יַעֲרֹכְנָה זָהָב וְזִכּוּכִית וּתְמוֹרֶתָהּ כָּל־יָפוֹ:	17	Neither gold nor glass compares with her, for her, a vase of fine gold would be no exchange.
יח	רֵאמוֹת וּגְבִישׁ לֹא יִזְכָּר וּמִשְׁךְ חֲכָמָה מִפְּנִינִים:	18	No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; better go fishing for Wisdom than for pearls!
יט	לֹא־יַעֲרֹכְנָה פִּטְדַּת־כּוֹשׁ בְּכֶתֶם טָהוֹר לֹא תִסָּלֶה:	19	Topaz from Cush is worthless in comparison, and gold – even refined – is valueless.
כ	וְהַחֲכָמָה מֵאֵין תְּבוּאָה וַאֲיֵזָה מְקוֹם בִּינָה:	20	Where, then, does Wisdom come from? Where is the home of Understanding?

-
- 14 The 'Abyss' (תְּהוֹם) is the 'deep' of Gn 1:2, or the Primordial Sea; it was always understood to be a place of darkness and danger. As remote as it is, it asserts that wisdom is not found there (personification). So here we have the abyss and the sea, then death and destruction – but they are not the places that wisdom resides.
- 15 The NRSV omits 'fine' and the NJB has 'solid'; here, we follow NETB.
- 16 An alternative translation for 'sapphire' is 'lapis lazuli' and, in place of 'onyx' (here following the NRSV & NETB), the NJB has 'agate'; the exact identity of these stones is uncertain.
- 17 The word 'glass' translates literally as 'clear' – transparent substances were rare in the ancient world, and so expensive.
- 18 In Lm 4:7 these 'pearls' are described as red and so have been identified as rubies (so NIV) or corals.
- 19 The NRSV has 'Ethiopia' in place of 'Cush'; an alternative translation is 'Nubia'.
- 20 In place of 'Understanding', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'Intelligence'.

כא וְנִעְלְמָה מֵעֵינֵי כָל־חַי
 וּמִעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נִסְתָּרָה:
 כב אֲבִדוֹן וּמוֹת אָמְרוּ
 בְּאָזְנוֹנוּ שָׁמַעְנוּ שְׁמָעָה:
 כג אֱלֹהִים הִבִּין דֶּרֶכָּהּ
 וְהוּא יָדַע אֶת־מְקוֹמָהּ:
 כד כִּי־הוּא לִקְצוֹת־הָאָרֶץ יָבִיט
 תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִרְאֶה:
 כה לַעֲשׂוֹת לְרוּחַ מִשְׁקָל
 וּמִים תִּכַּן בְּמִדָּה:
 כו בַּעֲשֹׂתוֹ לַמָּטֶר חָק
 וְדֶרֶךְ לַחֲזִיז קִלּוֹת:
 כז אֲזַרְאָה וַיִּסְפְּרָה
 הִכִּינָהּ וַגִּסְחָקְרָה:

21 "For, She cannot be seen be any living creature,
 she is hidden from the birds of the sky.
 22 Destruction and Death both say,
 "We have heard only rumours of her."
 23 God alone understands her path
 and knows her place.
 24 For he sees to the ends of the earth
 and observes all that lies under heaven.
 25 When he willed to give weight to the wind
 and measured out the waters with a gauge,
 26 when he imposed a law on the rain
 and mapped a route for thunderclaps to follow,
 27 then he saw and evaluated her,
 established her, founded her, putting her to the test.

-
- 21 The *vav* ('for') on the opening verb is unexpressed in the *LXX*; but it should not be overlooked, as it introduces a subordinate clause of condition.
 22 In place of 'Destruction', here following *NETB*, the *NJB* has 'perdition' and the *NRSV* has 'Abaddon'.
 23 Vv. 23–24 assert, in no uncertain terms, that Wisdom can only be fully understood by the omnipotent, omniscient God.
 24 This verse is parenthesised in the *NJB*.
 25 The verb, 'measured', is the Piel perfect, meaning 'to estimate the measure' of something; in the verse, the perfect verb continues the function of the infinitive preceding it, as if it had a *vav* prefixed to it. Whatever usage that infinitive had, this verb is to continue it.
 26 The literal translation of 'thunderclaps' is 'the roaring of voices'.
 27 The 2nd line here follows the *MT* (and *NRSV*); the *NJB*, following five other *MSS*, has, "looked her through and through, assessing her."

כח וַיֹּאמֶר | לָאָדָם
הֵן יִרְאֵת אֲדֹנָי הִיא חֲכָמָה
וְסוּר מִרַע בִּינָה:

²⁸ Then he said to human beings,
"Wisdom – that is the fear of the Lord;
Intelligence – avoidance of evil."

²⁸ This final verse is in a certain tension with the previous lines; for humankind, wisdom is fear of God (the sacred name, Yahweh, is not used – 'Lord' here translates אֲדֹנָי, 'Adonai') and avoidance of evil – a link with 1:2, 8. Obviously, this is not the transcendental wisdom described in vv. 1–27.

איוב פרק כט

JOB 29

א	וַיִּסָּף אִיּוֹב שְׂאֵת מְשָׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר:	1	Job again continued his solemn discourse. He said:
ב	מִיָּתְנָנִי כִּירְחִיקָדָם	2	“O that I were back in the months that have gone,
ג	כִּימִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁמְרֵנִי:		and the days when God watched over me,
ד	בְּהִלּוֹ גָּרוּ עָלַי רֹאשֵׁי	3	when his lamp shone over my head
ה	לְאֹזְרוֹ אֶלֶךְ חֹשֶׁךְ:		and his light was my guide in the darkness?
ו	כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיִיתִי בִּימֵי חֶרְפִּי	4	“Shall I ever see my days of harvest again,
ז	בְּסֻדֹּ אֱלֹהֵי עָלַי אֶהְיֶה:		when God protected my tent,
ח	בְּעֹד שְׂדֵי עַמִּדִּי	5	when Shaddai still dwelt with me,
ט	סְבִיבוֹתַי נְעָרִי:		and my children were around me,
י	בְּרַחֵץ הַלֵּיכִי בַחֲמָה	6	when my feet were bathed in milk,
יא	וַיִּצְוֶה יָצוֹק עָמִדִּי פִלְגֵי־שֶׁמֶן:		and streams of oil poured for me from the rocks?
יב	בְּצִאתִי שַׁעַר עֲלִי־קֶרֶת	7	When I went out to the gate of the city,
יג	בְּרַחוּב אֶבֶן מוֹשְׁבִי:		when I took my seat in the square,

JOB 29

- ¹ The note, ‘Job again continued his solemn discourse’, perhaps indicates that originally the passage belonged in another context; however, attempts at subdividing the speech do not give satisfactory results, and it has an internal unity that it is best not to disturb.
- ² The imperfect verb in the 2nd line has a customary nuance – ‘when God would watch over me’ or ‘when God used to watch over me’.
- ³ ‘Lamp’ and ‘light’ are symbols of God’s blessings of life and all the prosperous and good things it includes.
- ⁴ ‘God protected my tent’ follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT (and NRSV) has ‘the friendship of God was on my tent’.
- ⁵ Some commentators suggest that עַמִּדִּי (‘around me’) of the 2nd colon of v. 6 (which is too long) belongs to the 2nd colon of v. 5 and should be pointed as the verb עָמְדוּ (‘they stood’); however, there is a purpose for the imbalance of the metric pattern at the end of a section.
- ⁶ The NJB omits ‘for me’. In former days, Job enjoyed a relationship with God and the extravagant imagery of this verse indicates his prosperity.
- ⁷ The area referred to as ‘the square’ should not be thought of in terms of modern western dimensions: the wide space or plaza mentioned here is the open area in the gate complex, where legal and business matters were conducted.

ח	רְאוּנִי נְעָרִים וְנַחֲבָאוּ וְיֹשִׁישִׁים קָמוּ עִמָּדוֹ:	8	as soon as I appeared, the young men stepped aside, and the old men rose to their feet.
ט	שָׂרִים עָצְרוּ בְּמִלִּים וְכַף יָשִׁימוּ לִפְיָהֶם:	9	Men of note broke off their speeches, and put their hands over their mouths.
י	קוֹל־נְגִידִים נֶחְבְּאוּ וְלִשְׁוֹנָם לֶחֶם דְּבָקָה:	10	The voices of rulers were silenced, and their tongues stayed still in their mouths.
יא	כִּי אָזֶן שָׁמְעָה וְתֹאשְׁרָנִי וְעֵין רָאָתָה וְתַעֲיִדָנִי:	11	On hearing me, people congratulated me, on seeing me, people deferred to me,
יב	כִּי־אִמְלֹט עָנִי מִשׁוּעַ וְיִתּוֹם וְלֹא־עֹזֵר לוֹ:	12	because I freed the poor who cried for help and the orphan who had no helper.
יג	בְּרַכַּת אָבִד עָלַי תִּבָּא וְלֵב אֶלְמָנָה אֲרַנֶּה:	13	The dying man's blessing rested on me and I gave the widow's heart cause to rejoice.
יד	צִדֵּק לְבַשְׁתִּי וְיִלְבָּשֵׁנִי כַּמְעִיל וְצִנִּיף מִשְׁפָּטִי:	14	I put on uprightness and it clothed me, fair judgement was my cloak and my turban.
טו	עֵינַיִם הִיִּיתִי לַעֲוֹר וְרַגְלַי לַפֶּסֶח אֲנִי:	15	I was eyes for the blind, and feet for the lame.

8 The young men would yield the place of leadership to Job and the old men would rise and remain standing until Job took his seat.

9 This verse continues listing the signs of respect shown to Job.

10 The literal translation of 'silenced' is 'hidden'.

11 The 1st occurrences of 'me' in each line are not in the MT but are added for clarity.

12 In place of 'who cried for help', the NJB has 'in distress'.

13 The word translated 'to rejoice' (אַרְנֶה) is derived from רָנַן ('give a ringing cry').

14 The figure of clothing is used for the character of the person: to wear righteousness is to be righteous.

15 Job here proclaims his charitable nature.

טז אב אֲנֹכִי לֹא־בִּיּוֹנִים
וְרֹב לֹא־יִדְעָתִי אֶחְקְרֶהוּ:
יז וְאֲשֶׁבֶרָה מִתְּלַעּוֹת עוֹל
וּמִשְׁנֵי אֲשֶׁלֶיךָ טָרֶף:
יח וְאָמַר עַם־קִנִּי אֲנוּעַ
וְכַחֹל אֲרָבָה יָמִים:
יט שְׂרָשֵׁי פִתּוּחַ אֱלִי־מַיִם
וְטֵל יֵלִין בְּקִצְרִי:
כ כְּבוֹדִי חֹדֶשׁ עֹמֵד
וְקִשְׁתִּי בְיָדִי תַחֲלִיף:
כא לִי־שִׁמְעוּ וַיִּחַלּוּ
וַיִּדְמוּ לָמוֹ עֲצָתִי:
כב אַחֲרֵי דְבָרִי לֹא יִשְׁנוּ
וְעֲלִימוֹ תִטֹּף מִלְתִּי:
כג וַיִּחַלּוּ כַּמָּטֶר לִי
וּפִיהֶם פָּעְרוּ לְמַלְקוֹשׁ:

16 Who but me was father of the poor?
The stranger's case had a hearing from me.
17 I used to break the fangs of the wicked,
and snatch their prey from their jaws."
18 Then I thought, "I shall die in my nest,
after days as numerous as the sand.
19 My roots can reach the water,
with the dew all night on my branches.
20 My glory will be forever new
and the bow in my hand forever strong."
21 They waited anxiously to hear me
and listened in silence to what I had to say.
22 When I had finished, no one contradicted,
my words dropping on them, one by one.
23 They waited for me as though for rain,
open-mouthed as though for a late shower.

-
- 16 There are places in the OT where the word 'father' is metaphorical, especially in a legal setting like this, where the poor need aid.
17 The word rendered 'fangs' is used frequently of the teeth of wild beasts; the poet is comparing the oppressing enemy to a preying animal.
18 The NJB has the conjectural 'honour' in place of 'my nest'. For the 2nd line, the NRSV reads, "and I shall multiply my days like the phoenix."
19 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV (& NETB), the NJB reads, "the dews of the night settle on my leaves."
20 The 'bow' symbolises strength (see Gn 49:24).
21 The NJB transposes vv. 21–25 to before v. 11; a footnote therein explains that their (original) displacement is probably due to a copyist's error.
22 The NRSV has 'like the dew' in place of 'one by one' (a more literal translation would be 'drop by drop').
23 The analogy is that they received his words eagerly as the dry ground opens to receive the rains.

כד אֶשְׁחַק אֱלֹהִים לֹא יֶאֱמִינוּ
 וְאֹזֶר פָּנַי לֹא יִפְלֹאוּ:
 כה אֶבְחַר דֶּרֶכַם וְאֶשָּׁב רֹאשׁ
 וְאֶשְׁכֹּן כְּמֶלֶךְ בִּגְדֹד
 כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲבִלִים יִנְחָם:

24 If I smiled at them, it was too good to be true;
 they watched my face for the least sign of favour.
 25 As their chief, I told them which course to take,
 like a king living among his troops,
 like one who comforts mourners.

²⁴ The meaning of the 2nd line is uncertain; the *NRSV* has, “and the light of my countenance they did not extinguish.”

²⁵ For the last line, the *NJB* has the conjectural, “and I led them wherever I chose.”

איוב פרק ל

א וְעַתָּה | שִׁחֲקוּ עָלַי
צְעִירִים מִמֶּנִּי לַיָּמִים
אֲשֶׁר־מָאַסְתִּי אֲבוֹתָם
לָשִׁית עִם־כָּלְבֵי צֹאֲנִי:
ב גַּם־כֹּחַ יְדֵיהֶם לָמָּה לִּי
עָלִימוּ אֲבַד בָּלַח:
ג בַּחֲסָר וּבְכָפֹן גִּלְמוּד
הַעֲרָקִים צִיָּה
אָמַשׁ שׂוֹאָה וּמִשְׂאָה:
ד הַקֹּטְפִים מִלוֹחַ עֲלִי־שִׁיחַ
וְשָׂרֵשׁ רִתְּמִים לַחֲמָם:
ה מִן־גֹּי יִגְרֹשׁוּ
יִרְעוּ עָלֵימוּ כְּגֹב:
ו בַּעֲרוֹץ נַחְלִים לְשֹׁכֵן
חֲרֵי עֵפֶר וְכַפִּים:

JOB 30

- 1 “ But now I am the laughing-stock
of people who are younger than I am
and whose parents I would have disdained
to put with the dogs guarding my flock.
- 2 What use to me was the strength of their hands?
All their vigour is gone.
- 3 Through want and hunger
they gnaw the parched land –
that place of gloom and desolation.
- 4 They used to pick mallow among the scrub,
making their meals of roots of broom.
- 5 Outlawed from the community,
people shout after them as after a thief.
- 6 They had to live in the sides of ravines,
in holes in the earth or in clefts of rock.

JOB 30

- 1 Job has sunk below the level of paupers and outcasts (cf. 24:4ff).
- 2 The reference in the 1st line is to the fathers of the scorers, who are here regarded as weak and worthless.
- 3 Before ‘the parched land’, the NJB adds ‘the roots of’; this may have fallen out of the text after ‘to gnaw’ by haplography.
- 4 ‘Mallow’ (following the NRSV – the NJB has ‘saltwort’) is a plant that grows in salt marshes.
- 5 The phrase ‘the community’ (following NETB) translates גֹּי, an Aramaic term meaning ‘midst’ (of society); but there is also a similar Phoenician word that means ‘community’.
- 6 The use of the infinitive construct in the 1st line expresses that they were compelled to do something.

ז בֵּין־שִׁיחִים יִנְהָקוּ
 תַּחַת חֲרוּל יִסְפָּחוּ:
 ח בְּנֵי־נָבֵל גַּם־בְּנֵי בְלִי־שֵׁם
 נָפְאוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ:
 ט וְעַתָּה נִגְיַנְתָּם הֵייתִי
 וְאֵהִי לָהֶם לְמִלָּה:
 י תַּעֲבוּנִי רַחֲקוּ מִנִּי
 וּמִפְּנֵי לֹא־חֲשָׁכוּ רַק:
 יא כִּי־יִתְּרִי יִתְּרוּ פֶתַח וַיַּעֲנֵנִי
 וְרָסָן מִפְּנֵי שִׁלְחוֹ:
 יב עַל־יְמִין פָּרַחַח יָקוּמוּ
 רַגְלֵי שִׁלְחוֹ
 וַיִּסְלּוּ עָלַי אֲרָחוֹת אֲיָדָם:
 יג נִתְּסוּ נִתִּיבָתִי
 לְהוֹתִי יַעֲלִילוּ לֹא עֹזֵר לְמוֹ:

7 You could hear them braying from the bushes
 as they huddled together in the thistles.
 8 Children of scoundrels, worse, nameless people,
 they have been struck out of society!
 9 And now they mock me in song
 and use me as a byword!
 10 Filled with disgust, they keep their distance;
 on seeing me, they spit without restraint.
 11 Since God has loosened my bowstring and humbled me,
 they too throw off the bridle in my presence.
 12 Their brats surge forward on my right,
 to see when I am having little peace,
 and advance on me with threatening strides.
 13 They break up my path,
 promote my calamity, and no one stops them.

7 The word 'braying' (יִנְהָקוּ) has Aramaic, Arabic and Ugaritic cognates, and is a sign of an animal's hunger.

8 'Sons of scoundrels' (בְּנֵי־נָבֵל) means they were mentally and morally base and defective, and 'nameless' means without honour and respect, worthless (because unnamed).

9 Opposition comes to Job from the rabble but it is God who has broken his bowstring (v. 11), rendering him powerless.

10 The literal translation of 'keep their distance' is 'they are far from me'.

11 The translation, 'my bowstring', follows the Qere (יִתְּרִי); the Kethib has 'his bowstring' (יִתְּרוֹ).

12 There are various possible translations of this difficult verse, depending on the emendations adopted; the NRSV has: "On my right hand, the rabble rise up; they send me sprawling and build roads for my ruin."

13 In place of the conjectural 'stops', the MT has 'helps'.

י	כַּפְרֵץ רָחֵב יֵאָתִיו תַּחַת שָׂאָה הַתְּגַלְגָּלוֹ: הַהֶפֶד עָלַי בַּלְהוֹת תִּרְדֹּף בְּרוּחַ נִדְבָתִי וְכָעֵב עֲבָרָה יִשְׁעָתִי:	14	They move in, as if through a wide breach, amid the crash they roll on.
טו	וְעֵתָה עָלַי תִּשְׁתַּפֵּד נַפְשִׁי יֶאֱחִזּוּנִי יְמֵי־עֵנִי: לֵילָה עֲצָמִי נִקָּר מֵעָלַי וְעֶרְקִי לֹא יִשְׁכָּבוֹן: בְּרַב־כַּחַּס יִתְחַפֵּשׂ לְבוּשִׁי כְּפִי כִתְנָתִי יֶאֱזָרְנִי: הָרָנִי לַחֲמֹר וְאֶת־מִשְׁלַל כְּעָפָר וְאֶפֶר:	15	Terrors round on me; they disperse my honour like the wind; my hope of safety vanishes like a cloud.
טז	יז	16	“ And my soul is poured out within me; days of grief have gripped me.
יח	יט	17	The night saps my bones from on me; the wounds that gnaw me never sleep.
כ	כא	18	Violently, he has caught me by my clothes, has gripped me by the collar of my coat.
	כב	19	He has thrown me into the mud; I am no more than dust and ashes.”
	כג	20	“ I cry to you, and you give me no answer; I stand before you but you take no notice.

¹⁴ For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural, ‘and I go tumbling beneath the rubble’.

¹⁵ The translation of the 2nd line (following NETB) assumes that the ‘terrors’ are the subject of the verb.

¹⁶ The 1st line can either mean that Job is wasting away (i.e., his life is being poured out), or it can mean that he is grieving.

¹⁷ The NRSV & NETB lack the words ‘from on me’, here following the MT & NJB.

¹⁸ The 1st line follows the LXX; the MT reads, “Violently, he has disfigured my clothes.”

¹⁹ For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “and I have become like dust and ashes.”

²⁰ The sudden change from 3rd person (v. 19) to 2nd person (v. 20) is indicative of the intense emotion of the sufferer.

כא	תִּהְפֹּךְ לֹא־כֹזֵר לִי בְּעֵצֶם יָדְךָ תִּשְׁטַמְּנִי:	21	You have grown cruel to me and your strong hand persecutes me.
כב	תִּשְׂאֲנִי אֶל־רוּחַ תִּרְפִּיבִנִי וְתִמְגֹּגֵנִי תִשׁוּה תוֹשִׁיָה:	22	You carry me away astride the wind and blow me to pieces in a storm.
כג	כִּי־יָדַעְתִּי מוֹת תִּשְׁיבִנִי וּבֵית מוֹעֵד לְכָל־חַי:	23	Yes, I know that you are taking me towards death, to the common meeting-place of all the living.
כד	אֵךְ לֹא־בָעִי יִשְׁלַח־יָד אִם־בְּפִידּוֹ לָהֶן שׁוֹעַ:	24	“ Yet, have I ever laid a hand on the poor when they cried out for justice in calamity?
כה	אִם־לֹא בִּכְיִתִּי לְקִשְׁה־יּוֹם עֲגָמָה נִפְשִׁי לְאַבְיוֹן:	25	Have I not wept for those whose life is hard and felt pity for the penniless?
כו	כִּי טוֹב קִוִּיתִי וַיָּבֹא רָע וַאֲיַחְלָה לְאוֹר וַיָּבֹא אֶפֶל:	26	I hoped for happiness, but sorrow came; I looked for light, but there was darkness.
כז	מִעֵי רִתְחוֹ וְלֹא־דָמוּ קִדְמָנִי יְמִיעָנִי:	27	My stomach seethes, is never still, days of suffering have struck me.

²¹ For ‘persecutes’, the LXX reads ‘has whipped’ (ἐμαστίγωσας), but there is no reason to adopt this change.

²² In place of ‘storm’, here following the Kethib, (תשוה), the Qere has ‘counsel’ (תשיה), which makes no sense here.

²³ The imperfect verb in the 1st line is progressive: it is future, but it is also already underway.

²⁴ This verse follows the LXX (εἰ γὰρ ὄφελον δυναίμην ἐμαυτὸν χειρώσασθαι, ἢ δεηθεὶς γε ἑτέρου, καὶ ποιήσει μοι τοῦτο); the MT is largely unintelligible. For the 1st line, the NRSV has, “Surely, one does not turn away from the needy.”

²⁵ The literal translation of ‘those whose life is hard’ is ‘the hard of day’.

²⁶ In place of ‘hoped’ and ‘looked’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, respectively, ‘looked’ and ‘waited’.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘stomach’ (following the NJB) is ‘bowels’; the NRSV has ‘inward parts’ and NETB has ‘heart’.

כח קִדְר הִלְכֹתִי בְּלֹא חֶמֶה
 קָמַתִּי בִקְהָל אֲשׁוּעַ:
 כט אֶח הָיִיתִי לַתְּנִים
 וְרַע לַבְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה:
 ל עֲזָרִי שָׁחַר מֵעָלַי
 וְעֲצָמַי־חָרָה מִנִּי־חָרֵב:
 לא וַיְהִי לֵאבֹל פְּנֵרִי
 וְעִגְבִּי לְקוֹל בְּכִים:

28 I go about in sunless gloom,
 and if I rise in the council, I rise to weep.
 29 I have become brother to the jackal
 and companion to the ostrich.
 30 My skin has turned black on me;
 my bones burn with fever.
 31 My harp is tuned to dirges,
 my pipe to the voice of mourners.

²⁸ For the 1st line, the NJB has the conjectural, “Sombre I go, yet no one comforts me.”

²⁹ The point of this verse is that Job’s cries of lament are like the howls and screeches of these animals, not that he lives with them.

³⁰ The word translated ‘fever’ (חָרֵב) actually means ‘heat’.

³¹ The verb הָיָה (‘to be’) followed by the preposition ל means ‘to serve the purpose of’.

איוב פרק לא

א בְּרִית כְּרָתִי לְעֵינַי
וְמָה אֶתְבוֹנֵן עַל-בְּתוּלָה:
ב וְמָה חֵלֶק אֱלֹהֵי מִמַּעַל
וְנִחַלַת שְׂדֵי מְמַרְמִים:
ג הֲלֹא-אִיד לְעוֹל
וְנִכְר לַפְּעֻלֵי אוֹן:
ד הֲלֹא-הוּא יִרְאֶה דְרָכַי
וְכָל-צַעְדֵי יִסְפֹּר:
ה אִם-הִלַּכְתִּי עִם-שׁוֹא
וְתַחַשׁ עַל-מְרֻמָּה רַגְלִי:
ו יִשְׁקָלֵנִי בְּמֵאזְנֵי-צֶדֶק
וְיָדַע אֱלֹהֵי תִמְתִּי:

JOB 31

1 "I had made a covenant with my eyes
not to linger on any virgin.
2 Now what portion does God allot from above,
one's heritage from Shaddai on high?
3 Does not calamity befall the unrighteous,
and disaster the workers of iniquity?
4 Does he not see my ways;
does he not count all my steps?
5 If I been a fellow traveller with falsehood,
or hastened my steps towards deceit,
6 let him weigh me on accurate scales:
then he, God, will recognise my integrity!

JOB 31

- ¹ In this protestation of innocence, Old Testament morality reaches its highest stage of development, directly prefiguring the morality taught in the Gospel. The form of this protestation of innocence is that of a conditional imprecation against oneself, required of the accused by law (Ex 22:9-10, Nb 5:20-22, 1K 8:31-32). Job begins with secret sins, mediated through the eyes (cf. v. 7).
- ² For the 2nd line, here following *NETB*, the *NJB* reads, "*what fate does Shaddai apportion from his heaven?*"
- ³ This verse follows the *NRSV*; the *NJB* reads, "*if not the disasters appropriate to the wicked and the calamities fit for evildoers?*"
- ⁴ In place of '*my ways*', here following the *NRSV* & *NETB*, the *NJB* has '*how I behave*'.
- ⁵ '*Deceit*' probably refers to fraud in barter or in the market. The normal approach is to take this verse as the protasis and have it resumed in v. 7, after a parenthesis in v. 6; however, some take v. 6 as the apodosis and a new protasis in v. 7.
- ⁶ God is undoubtedly the understood subject of the jussive in the 1st line.

ז	אם תטה אשרי מני הדרך ואחר עיני הלקד לבי ובכפי דבק מאוס:	7	If my feet have wandered from the rightful path, or if my eyes have led my heart astray, or if my hands are smirched with any stain,
ח	אזרעה ואחר יאכל וצאצאי ישרשו:	8	let someone else eat what I have sown and let my young shoots all be rooted out.
ט	אם-נפתה לבי על-אשה ועל-פתח רעי ארבותי:	9	If my heart has been seduced by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbour's door,
י	תטחן לאחר אשתי ועליה יכרעון אחריו:	10	let my wife go and grind for someone else, let others have intercourse with her!
יא	כי-היא הוא זמה והיא והוא עון פלילים:	11	For I would have committed a sin of lust, a crime punishable by the law,
יב	כי אש היא עד-אבדון תאכל ובכל-תבואתי תשרש:	12	a fire, indeed, burning all to Perdition, which would have uprooted my whole revenue.

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- 7 Job has not coveted or stolen the possessions of others; here, he is talking of other sins against the neighbour.
- 8 The word translated 'young shoots' can mean 'what sprouts up' as well as the more traditional 'crops'.
- 9 The sin here is that of adultery.
- 10 The Tg interpreted the verb טַחֵן ('grind') in a sexual sense, and this has influenced other versions and commentaries; but the literal sense fits well in this line (the idea is that she would be a slave for someone else). The 2nd line of then might build on this to explain what kind of a slave – a concubine.
- 11 According to a footnote to the NJB, this verse is probably a gloss. There is a *Kethib-Qere* reading in each half verse; in the 1st, the *Kethib* (הוא) is masculine for the subject but the *Qere* (היא) is feminine going with 'sin of lust'; in the 2nd line the *Kethib* (והיא) is the feminine agreeing with the preceding noun, but the *Qere* (והוא) is masculine agreeing with 'crime'.
- 12 In place of 'Perdition' (here following the NJB), the NRSV has 'Abaddon' and NETB has 'Destruction'.

אִם-אֶמְאָס מִשְׁפָּט עֲבָדֵי וְאִמָּתִי בְּרָבָם עֲמָדִי:	יג	13	If I had ever infringed the rights of slave or slave-girl in legal actions against me –
וְמָה אֶעֱשֶׂה כִּי-יָקוּם אֵל וְכִי-יִפְקֹד מֶה אֲשִׁיבָנּוּ:	יד	14	what shall I do, when God rises up? What shall I say, when he holds his assize?
הֲלֹא-בִבְטֶן עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּכְנֶנּוּ בְּרַחֲם אֶחָד:	טו	15	Did he not create them in the womb like me, the same God forming us in the womb?
אִם-אֶמְנֹעַ מִתַּפְץ דָּלִים וְעֵינֵי אִלְמָנָה אֲכַלָּה:	טז	16	“ Have I been insensible to the needs of the poor, or let a widow’s eyes grow dim?
וְאָכַל פִּתִּי לְבָדִי וְלֹא-אָכַל יְתוֹם מִמֶּנָּה:	יז	17	Have I eaten my bit of bread on my own without sharing it with the orphan?
כִּי מִנְעוּרִי גִדְּלָנִי כְּאָב וּמִבְטֶן אִמִּי אֲנַחֲנָה:	יח	18	I, whom God has fostered father-like from childbirth, and guided from my mother’s womb?
אִם-אֶרְאֶה אֹבֵד מִבְּלִי לְבוּשׁ וְאֵין כֶּסֶת לְאַבְיוֹן:	יט	19	Have I ever seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the poor with nothing to wear,

¹³ The Law had always humanely regulated relations between master and servant. V. 15 bases the rights of slaves on the fact that all human beings are God’s creation. Paul observes that slaves and master have the one Lord.

¹⁴ In place of ‘rises up’ (in judgement), here following the MT, the LXX has ‘takes vengeance on me’ (ἐτασίν μου ποιήσεται).

¹⁵ For ‘them’, the MT actually reads ‘him’.

¹⁶ Literally translated, the 1st line reads, “Have I kept the poor from their desire?”

¹⁷ The literal translation of the 2nd line is, “and an orphan did not eat from it.”

¹⁸ The expression ‘from my mother’s womb’ is obviously hyperbolic, ‘all my life’.

¹⁹ For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Have I ever seen a wretch in need of clothing?”

כ אִם־לֹא בִרְכוּנִי חִלְצוּ
 וּמִגֹּז כְּבִשִׁי יִתְחַמֵּם:
 כא אִם־הִנִּיפֹתִי עַל־יְתוֹם יָדִי
 כִּי־אֶרְאֶה בִשְׁעַר עֲזָרְתִּי:
 כב כִּתְּפִי מִשְׁכָּמָה תִּפּוֹל
 וְאַזְרְעִי מִקְנֶה תִּשְׁבֵּר:
 כג כִּי פֶחַד אֵלֵי אֵיד אֶל
 וּמִשְׁאֲתוֹ לֹא אוּכַל:
 כד אִם־שָׁמַתִּי זָהָב כֶּסֶלִי
 וְלִפְתֵּם אִמַּרְתִּי מִבִּטְחִי:
 כה אִם־אֲשַׁמַּח כִּי־רַב חֵילִי
 וְכִי־כִבִּיר מִצָּאָה יָדִי:
 כו אִם־אֶרְאֶה אֹזֶר כִּי יֵהֵל
 וְיֹרַח יִקַּר הַלֵּךְ:
 כז וַיִּפֹּת בִּסְתֵר לִבִּי
 וַתִּשָּׁק יָדִי לְפִי:

20 whose heart did not bless me,
 as he felt the warmth of the fleece from my lambs?
 21 Have I raised my hands against an orphan,
 presuming on my credit at the gate?
 22 If so, let my shoulder fall from its socket;
 let my arm break off at the elbow!
 23 For I should be in terror of disaster from God,
 and I could not have stood before his majesty.
 24 “ Have I put my faith in gold,
 saying to fine gold, “Ah, my security?”
 25 Have I ever gloated over my great wealth,
 or the riches that my hands have won?
 26 Or has the sight of the sun in its glory,
 or the glow of the moon as it walked the sky,
 27 secretly stolen my heart
 so that I blew them a kiss?

20 The literal translation of ‘heart’ is ‘loins’.

21 To ‘raise one’s hand against’ was to show hostility or to intimidate (see Is 11:15, 19:16, Zc 2:13) and so defeat someone at law.

22 The point is that if he has raised his arm against the oppressed it should be ripped off at the joint.

23 ‘His majesty’ translates וּמִשְׁאֲתוֹ – the preposition is causal.

24 This verse mocks the greed and arrogance of the rich, who think they can do without God.

25 For this verse, the NRSV reads, “If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, or because my hand had gotten much.”

26 In place of ‘the sun’ (which is parallel to ‘the moon’ in the next line), the MT has ‘the light’.

27 After the cult of Mammon, Job next rejects the cult of celestial bodies. Kissing the hand was a gesture of adoration.

כח	גַּם־הוא עֹן פְּלִילִי כִּי־כַחַשְׁתִּי לֵאלֹה מַמְעַל:	28	That too would be a criminal offence, to have denied the supreme God.
כט	אִם־אֲשַׁמַּח בַּפִּיד מִשְׁנָאִי וְהִתְעַרְרֹתִי כִּי־מֵצְאוֹ רָע:	29	Have I rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune, or exulted when disaster overtook him –
ל	וְלֹא־נִתַּתִּי לַחֲטָא חֲבִי לְשָׂאֵל בְּאֵלֶּה נַפְשׁוֹ:	30	I, who would not allow my tongue to sin, or to lay his life under a curse?
לא	אִם־לֹא אָמְרוּ מְתֵי אֹהֲלִי מִי־יִתֵּן מִבְּשָׂרוֹ לֹא נִשְׂבַּע:	31	The people of my tent, did they not say, "Who has not been satisfied with my meat?"
לב	בַּחוּץ לֹא־יָלִין גֵּר דִּלְתִּי לְאֶרֶח אֶפְתָּח:	32	No stranger ever had to sleep outside; my door was always open to the traveller.
לג	אִם־כִּסִּיתִי כְּאָדָם פֶּשְׁעִי לְטִמּוֹן בַּחֲבִי עֹנִי:	33	Have I ever concealed my transgression as others do or kept my fault a secret in my breast?
לד	כִּי אֶעְרוֹץ הֶמּוֹן רַבָּה וּבּוֹז־מִשְׁפָּחוֹת יַחֲתִנֵּי וְאָדָם לֹא־אַצֵּא פֶתַח:	34	Have I ever stood in fear of common gossip, or dreaded any family's contempt, and so kept quiet, not venturing out of doors?

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- 28 In Dt 17:2, false worship of heavenly bodies is a capital offense; in this passage, Job is talking about just a momentary glance at the sun or moon and the brief lapse into a pagan thought – but it is still sin.
- 29 Job does not mean an appropriate revenge, regarded as perfectly normal practice (see, however, Ex 23:4–5, Lv 19:18, Pr 20:22, 25:21–22) but goes even further, not allowing himself to rejoice over the misfortunes of an enemy or to curse him.
- 30 This verse is a parenthesis in which Job stops to claim his innocence.
- 31 For the 2nd line, the NRSV reads, “*O that we might be sated with his flesh!*” The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.
- 32 In the ancient East, hospitality was regarded as a major virtue.
- 33 An alternative reading for ‘as others do’ is ‘as Adam did’.
- 34 Vv. 33–34 do not refer to any specific sin but to an attitude that presupposes guilt.

לה מי יתן-לי | שִׁמְעָ לִי
 הוֹדֹתִי שְׁדֵי יַעֲנֵנִי
 וְסִפֵּר כָּתַב אִישׁ רִיבִי:
 לוֹ אִם-לֹא עַל-שִׁכְמִי אֶשָּׂאנוּ
 אֶעֱנֶנּוּ עֲטָרוֹת לִי:
 לוֹ מִסֵּפֶר צַעְדֵי אֲגִידנוּ
 כְּמוֹ-נָגִיד אֶקְרָבנוּ:
 לה אִם-עָלִי אֲדַמְתִּי תִזְעַק
 וְיִחַד תִּלְמִיָּה יִבְכּוּן:
 לוֹ אִם-כָּחָה אֶכְלֹתִי בְלִי-כֶסֶף
 וְנָפֵשׁ בַּעֲלֶיהָ הִפָּחֲתִי:
 מ תַּחַת חֹטָה | יֵצֵא חֹחַ
 וְתַחַת-שְׁעָרָה בְּאִשָּׁה
 תָּמוּ דְבָרַי אִיּוֹב:

35 Will no one give me a hearing?
 I have said my last word; now let Shaddai reply!
 When my adversary has drafted his writ against me,
 36 I shall wear it on my shoulder
 and bind it round my head like a royal turban.
 37 I shall give him an account of my every step
 and go as a prince to meet him.
 38 "If my land cries for vengeance against me
 and its furrows weep in concert,
 39 if I have eaten its produce without paying,
 and caused the death of its owners,
 40 let brambles grow instead of wheat,
 rank weeds instead of barley."
 The words of Job are ended.

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- 35 With considerable bravado, Job offers his 'Last word' (literally *taw*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet – the NRSV uses 'signature'). Any indictment of him would be merely a badge of honour, since he can give full account of his life.
 36 Job proposes to wear the scroll with the accusation written on it; confident of refuting the charge, he would wear it as a badge of honour.
 37 Before 'as a prince', the NJB adds the words 'as boldly'.
 38 The NJB transposes vv. 38–40a to before v. 16; the text mistakenly places them at the end of Job's apologia.
 39 This verse recounts another sin against society: the dishonest acquisition of land.
 40 The phrase, 'rank weeds' is approximate for some plant, the name of which has the root meaning 'bad smell'. The last line is an editorial note.

איוב פרק לב

JOB 32

א וַיִּשְׁבְּתוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה מַעֲנוֹת אֶת־אִיּוֹב
ב כי הוא צָדִיק בְּעֵינָיו: ב וַיַּחַר אֵף | אֱלִיהוּא בֶן־בְּרַכְאֵל
הַבּוּזִי מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת רָם בְּאִיּוֹב חָרָה אָפּוֹ עַל־צַדִּיקוֹ נִפְשׁוֹ
ג וּבְשִׁלְשֶׁת רֵעָיו חָרָה אָפּוֹ עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
ד מָצְאוּ מַעֲנֶה וַיִּרְשִׁיעוּ אֶת־אִיּוֹב: ד וְאֱלִיהוּ חָכָה אֶת־
ה אִיּוֹב בַּדְּבָרִים כִּי זָקְנִים־הָמָּה מִמֶּנּוּ לַיָּמִים: ה וַיֵּרָא
וְאֱלִיהוּא כִּי אֵין מַעֲנֶה בְּפִי שְׁלֹשֶׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּחַר
אָפּוֹ:

ו וַיַּעַן | אֱלִיהוּא בֶן־בְּרַכְאֵל הַבּוּזִי וַיֹּאמֶר
ז צָעִיר אָנִי לַיָּמִים וְאַתֶּם יוֹשִׁיעִים
ח עַל־כֵּן זָחַלְתִּי וְאִירָא |
ט מַחֲוֹת דַּעִי אֶתְכֶם:

¹ So, these men stopped answering Job, for he was righteous in his own eyes. ² And the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel, the Buzite, of the clan of Ram, was kindled against Job. He was angry because he justified himself rather than God; ³ and he was angry with the three friends for finding no answer yet condemning Job. ⁴ Now, Elihu had waited to speak to Job, because they were older than he; ⁵ but, when Elihu saw there was no answer in the mouth of the three men, his anger burst out.

⁶ Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite began to speak. He said:

“I am still young and you are old.

Therefore, I held back;

I did not dare show you my opinion.

JOB 32

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- ¹ The LXX (ἐναντίον αὐτῶν), Peshitta and Symmachus end the verse with ‘in their eyes’; this is adopted by some commentators but it does not fit the context.
- ² ‘Elihu’ means ‘my God is he’; ‘Buzite’ suggests that he was an Aramaean living not far from Edom; the Buz of Gn 22:21 is a brother of Uz (see 1:1) and an Aramaean (compare Gn 11:26–32).
- ³ The verse ending is one of the eighteen ‘corrections of the scribes’; it originally read, “and they declared God in the wrong.” The thought was that, in abandoning the debate, they had conceded Job’s point.
- ⁴ The translation ‘waited to speak to Job’ requires repointing the word בְּדַבָּרִים to בְּדַבְּרָם; if the MT is retained, it would mean ‘he waited for Job with words’, which, while understandable, is awkward.
- ⁵ The 1st clause beginning with a *vav* consecutive and the preterite can be subordinated to the next similar verb as a temporal clause.
- ⁶ Literally translated, the 1st line ends, “answered and said.”

ז אִמְרַתִּי יָמִים יִדְבְּרוּ
 וְרַב שָׁנִים יִדְעוּ חֲכָמָה:
 ח אֲכֵן רוּחַ־הָיָא בְּאָנוּשׁ
 וְנִשְׁמַת שְׁדֵי תְּבִינָם:
 ט לֹא־רַבִּים יַחֲכֹמוּ
 וְזָקְנִים יִבְיֵנוּ מִשְׁפָּט:
 י לְכֵן אִמְרַתִּי שְׁמַע־לִי
 אַחֲוָה דְּעֵי אֶף־אֲנִי:
 יא הֵן הוֹחֵלְתִּי לְדַבְּרֵיכֶם
 אֲזִין עַד־תְּבוֹנְתֵיכֶם
 עַד־תַּחֲקֹרוּן מִלִּין:
 יב וְעַדִּיכֶם אֶתְּבוֹנֵן
 וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי לֹא־יָוֵב מוֹכִיחַ
 עוֹנָה אֲמַרְיוּ מִכֶּם:

7 I thought, "Age ought to speak,
 advancing years will convey wisdom."
 8 There is, you see, a spirit residing in humanity,
 the breath of God conferring intelligence.
 9 It is not the old that are wise,
 nor the aged who know fair judgement.
 10 Therefore, I say: Listen to me;
 now it is my turn to tell what I know.
 11 Up to now, I was hanging on your words;
 I paid attention to your arguments
 as each of you chose his words.
 12 I paid very close attention;
 yet I see that none of you has confounded Job,
 not one of you has refuted what he says.

⁷ The literal translation of 'age' is 'days'.

⁸ Elihu contrasts 'charismatic' wisdom, revealed by the spirit, with the wisdom of experience. The traditional wisdom of the East, brought into Israel by the sages, insisted on the primacy of divine wisdom (see Pr 21:30), the connexion between wisdom and uprightness (see Ps 119:99–100, Pr 1:7, 10:31, 15:33) and the conviction that God is the giver of wisdom (Pr 2:6, 15:33). Inspired wisdom was also known outside the schools of the sages (see Gn 41:38–39, Is 11:2). In Dn 5:11–14, Wisdom is the sphere of operation of the spirit. This is developed in Ws (1:5–7, 7:22–23, 9:17) in preparation for the new revelation of the Spirit in the New Testament (see 1Co 2:6–16). The WEBBE has 'Spirit' in place of 'breath', here following the NJB.

⁹ In the 1st line, 'the old' follows the LXX (οἱ πολυχρόνιοι), Peshitta & Vg (longævī); the MT has 'the many'.

¹⁰ In most Hebrew MSS, the imperative, 'listen', is singular, and so addressed to Job; but 2 Hebrew MSS and the versions have the plural: Elihu was probably addressing all of them.

¹¹ The word translated 'arguments' means 'understanding': perception and comprehension; it can also refer to what that produces (see Ps 49:4).

¹² The particle וְהִנֵּה ('yet') has a deictic force here, calling attention to the thought that is now presented.

יג	פֶּן־תֹּאמְרוּ מִצֵּאֵנוּ חִכְמָה אֶל יִדְפְּנוּ לֹא־אִישׁ:	13	So do not say, “We have found wisdom; our teaching is divine and not human.”
יד	וְלֹא־עֲרֹךְ אֵלַי מִלִּין וּבְאִמְרֵיכֶם לֹא אֲשִׁיבֵנוּ:	14	I am not going to follow the same line of argument; my reply to Job will be couched in different terms.
טו	חֲתוּ לֹא־עֲנוּ עוֹד הֶעֱתִיקוּ מֵהֶם מִלִּים:	15	“They are nonplussed for an answer; words have failed them.
טז	וְהוֹחַלְתִּי כִּי־לֹא יִדְבְּרוּ כִּי עָמְדוּ לֹא־עֲנוּ עוֹד:	16	I have been waiting. Since they do not speak, since they have given up the argument.
יז	אֲעֲנֶה אֶף־אֲנִי חֲלָקִי אֲחֹזֶה דְּעִי אֶף־אֲנִי:	17	Now I shall have my say; my turn has come to say what I know.
יח	כִּי מִלְתִּי מִלִּים הִצִּיקְתָּנִי רוּחַ בְּטִנִּי:	18	For I am full of words: the spirit within me constrains me.
יט	הִנֵּה־בְטִנִּי כִּי־נֹן לֹא־יִפְתַּח כָּאֲבוֹת חֲדָשִׁים יִבְקַע:	19	Within me, it feels like new wine that has no vent; like new wineskins, it is ready to burst.

¹³ Elihu exaggerates the claims of those whom he criticises.

¹⁴ ‘The same line of argument’ follows the LXX (λαλῆσαι τοιαῦτα ῥήματα); the MT has ‘an argument directed to me’.

¹⁵ Elihu now gives another reason why he will speak – the arguments of these friends failed miserably; however, before he gets to his argument, he will first qualify his authority.

¹⁶ Some translations (such as the NRSV) take the 1st line as a question: “And must I wait because they do not speak?” However, this is not convincing because the silence of the friends is the reason for him to speak, not to wait.

¹⁷ For this verse (here following the NJB), the NRSV reads, “I also will give my answer; I also will declare my opinion.”

¹⁸ The verb צוּק means ‘to constrain’, ‘to urge’ or ‘to press’; it is used in Jg 14:17 & 16:16 with the sense of wearing someone down with repeated entreaties. Elihu cannot withhold himself any longer.

¹⁹ The phrase, ‘like new wineskins’, translates כָּאֲבוֹת חֲדָשִׁים, but only here does the phrase have this meaning. The LXX has ‘smiths’ for ‘new’, giving ‘like smith’s bellows’.

כ אֲדַבֶּרָה וַיְרוּח־לִי
 אֶפְתַּח שִׁפְתֵי וְאֶעֱנֶה:
 כא אֶל־נָא אִשָּׁא פָנֶי־אִישׁ
 וְאֶל־אָדָם לֹא אֶכְנֶה:
 כב כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֶכְנֶה
 כְּמַעַט יִשְׁאַנִּי עֲשָׂנִי:

20 To gain relief, I must speak;
 I must open my lips and reply.
 21 I shall not take anyone's side;
 I shall not flatter anyone.
 22 I do not know how to flatter –
 or my Creator would make short work of me.

²⁰ The opening cohortative expresses Elihu's resolve to speak.

²¹ Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "I will not lift up the face of a man;" Elihu is going to show no favouritism but speak his mind.

²² Literally translated, this verse ends, "would quickly carry me away."

איוב פרק לג

א וְאוֹלָם שָׁמַע־נָא אִיּוֹב מִלִּי
וְכָל־דִּבְרֵי הָאָזְיָנָה:
ב הִנֵּה־נָא פִתַּחְתִּי פִי
דְּבַרָּה לְשׁוֹנִי בְחָפִי:
ג יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּי אֶמְרִי
וְדַעַת שְׁפָתַי בְּרוּר מִלָּלוֹ:
ד רוּחַ־אֵל עָשָׂתָנִי
וְנִשְׁמַת שְׁדֵי תַחֲיֵנִי:
ה אֶסְתַּוְּכַל הַשִּׁיבָנִי
עֲרֹכָה לִפְנֵי הַתִּיצֵבָה:
ו הִנֵּה־אֲנִי כַפִּידָ לְאֵל
מִחֹמֶר קִרְצָתִי גִם־אֲנִי:
ז הִנֵּה אֲמַתִּי לֹא תִבְעֶתְךָ
וְאֶכְפִּי עָלֶיךָ לֹא־יִכְבֹּד:

JOB 33

1 "So, Job, please listen to my words
and attend to all I have to say.
2 Now, I have opened my mouth,
and the tongue in my mouth has spoken.
3 My words declare the uprightness of my heart;
my lips will speak in all sincerity.
4 God's was the spirit that made me,
Shaddai the breath that gave me life.
5 Refute me if you can.
Prepare yourself: take up your position!
6 Look, before God, I am your equal;
like you, I was moulded out of clay.
7 No fear of me, therefore, need affright you
and my hand will not lie heavy over you.

JOB 33

- 1 Note the explicit reference to Job. The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "and give ear and hear all my words."
- 2 The perfect verbs in this verse should be classified as perfects of resolve: "I have decided to open ... speak."
- 3 More literally translated, the 2nd line reads, "and the knowledge of my lips they will speak purely."
- 4 Some want to put this verse after v. 6, while others omit the verse entirely. Elihu is claiming here that he (or his argument) is inspired by God.
- 5 In place of 'prepare yourself', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'set your words in order before me' and NETB has 'set your arguments in order'; in the MT, there is no explicit object to the verb 'prepare'.
- 6 The verb translated 'moulded' actually means 'nipped off', as a potter breaks off a piece of clay when moulding a vessel.
- 7 'My hand' follows the LXX (χείρ μου); the MT is unclear (the NRSV has 'pressure').

ח	אָד אַמַרְתָּ בְּאָזְנִי וְקוֹל מְלִין אֲשַׁמַּע:	8	How could you say in my hearing – for the sound of your words did not escape me –
ט	זָךְ אָנִי בְּלִי־פֶשַׁע	9	“I am clean, and sinless,
	חָף אֲנֹכִי וְלֹא עוֹן לִי:		I am pure, without fault.
י	הֵן תִּנּוּאוֹת עָלַי יִמָּצֵא	10	Look, he invents excuses against me
	יַחֲשִׁבֵנִי לְאֹיֵב לוֹ:		and regards me as his enemy.
יא	יִשֵּׁם בְּסֵד רַגְלִי	11	He puts me in the stocks,
	יִשְׁמַר כָּל־אַרְחָתִי:		he watches my every path?”
יב	הֵן־זֹאת לֹא־צִדְקָתָא אֶעְיֹד	12	In saying so, I tell you, you are wrong:
	כִּי־יִרְבֶּה אֱלֹהֵי מַאֲנוֹשׁ:		for God is greater than any man.
יג	מִדּוּעַ אֵלָיו רִיבוֹת	13	Why then quarrel with him,
	כִּי כָל־דְּבָרָיו לֹא יַעֲנֶה:		for not replying to you, word for word?
יד	כִּי־בִאֲחַת יְדְבַר־אֵל	14	God speaks first in one way,
	וּבִשְׁתֵּים לֹא יִשׁוּרְנָה:		and then in another, although we do not realise it.

⁸ Elihu summarises Job’s claims and gives the rather simplistic answer that ‘God is greater than any mortal’. However, he also argues that God does speak to humans ‘in dreams’ and also by chastening them with pain. He also describes the intercessory role of ‘an angel’, or ‘mediator’, who will offer a ransom, so that the sufferer is healed. Nevertheless, this occurs apparently only on the condition that a person admits that he sinned (v. 27). This is obviously not appropriate to Job’s situation, but Elihu rattles on (vv. 31–33).

⁹ Vv. 9–11 summarise several of Job’s protestations. The ח at the start of the 2nd line appears as a small letter in almost all *Hebrew MSS*.

¹⁰ This verse summarises Job’s claims of baseless persecution by God (cf. 10:13ff, 19:6ff, 13:24). ‘Excuses’ follows the *Peshitta*; the *MT* has ‘enmities’.

¹¹ Compare this verse with 13:27.

¹² For the 2nd line, the *LXX* has “he that is above men is eternal” (αἰώνιος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐπάνω βροτῶν).

¹³ Literally translated, the 2nd line ends with ‘all his words’; the pronoun must refer to ‘man’ in the previous verse, but many wish to change it to ‘my words’, since it would be summarising Job’s complaint to God.

¹⁴ The *Peshitta* and *Vg* (*non repetit*) end with, “and he does not repeat it.”

טו	בַּחֲלוֹם חֲזִיּוֹן לַיְלָה בְּנִפְל תִּרְדָּמָה עַל-אַנְשִׁים בְּתַנּוּמוֹת עָלֵי מִשְׁכָּב: אִזּוּ יִגְלֶה אֶזְנוֹ אַנְשִׁים וּבְמִסְרָם יַחְתֵּם: לְהַסִּיר אָדָם מַעֲשֵׂה וְגוֹה מִגִּבּוֹר יִכְסֶה: יַחֲשֹׁד נַפְשׁוֹ מִנִּי-שַׁחַת וְחַיָּתוֹ מִעֵבֶר בְּשִׁלַּח: וְהוֹכַח בְּמִכְאוֹב עַל-מִשְׁכָּבוֹ וְרִיב וְרוֹב עֲצָמָיו אֶתָּן: וְזִהְמָתוֹ חֵיתוֹ לֶחֶם וְנַפְשׁוֹ מֵאֵכֶל תֹּאוֹה:	15	In dreams and in night-visions, when slumber has settled on humanity, and people are asleep in bed, 16 he speaks in someone's ear, frightens him with apparitions 17 to turn him from what he is doing and to keep him from pride. 18 Thus, he preserves his soul from the abyss, his life from passing down the River. 19 Again, he corrects by the sufferings of the sickbed, with continual strife in his bones, 20 and the thought of food revolts him, however tasty it is,
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¹⁵ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on mortals, while they slumber on their beds."

¹⁶ The 2nd line here follows the LXX (ἐν εἰδήσειν φόβου τοιοῦτοις αὐτοὺς ἐξεφόβησεν) and NJB; the MT has 'and he seals by their correction'. The LXX reading involves re-pointing יַחְתֵּם to יַחְתֵּם.

¹⁷ 'What he is doing' follows the Tg; the MT has 'the work' and the LXX has 'iniquity' (ἀδικίας).

¹⁸ The word בְּשִׁלַּח at times refer to a weapon, but most commentators look for a parallel with 'the Pit'. One suggestion is emendation to שְׁאוֹלָה ('to Sheol'). Here, we read שִׁלַּח, referring to the passageway to the underworld. The idea of crossing the river of death fits well, although the reading 'to perish by the sword' also makes sense and is followed by the NIV.

¹⁹ After the method of revelation (vv. 15–18), Elihu speaks of a second method (cf. v. 14) by which God speaks to humanity: by ordeal, such as Job is experiencing. The translation here follows the Kethib reading (וְרִיב); the Qere reading (וְרוֹב) gives, "his many bones are firm."

²⁰ The literal translation of the 2nd line is simply, "the food of desire."

כא יִכַּל בְּשָׁרוֹ מְרָאִי
 וּשְׁפִי וְשָׁפוּ עֲצַמָּתוֹ לֹא רָאוּ:
 כב וּתְקַרֵּב לִשְׁחַת נַפְשׁוֹ
 וְחַיָּתוֹ לַמָּמְתִּים:
 כג אִם־יֵשׁ עָלָיו מְלַאֲךְ מַלְאֲכֵי
 אֶחָד מִנִּי־אֱלֹהִים
 לְהַזְכִּיר לְאָדָם יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 כד וַיַּחֲנֹנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר
 פִּדְעֵהוּ מִדֶּדֶת שְׁחַת
 מִצְּאֹתַי כָּפָר:
 כה רִטְפֹּשׁ בְּשָׁרוֹ מִזֶּנֶר
 יָשׁוּב לִימֵי עֲלוּמָיו:
 כו יַעֲתֶר אֶל־אֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְצֵהוּ
 וַיֵּרָא פָּנָיו בְּתִרְעָה
 וַיֵּשֶׁב לְאַנוּשׁ צְדָקָתוֹ:

21 and his flesh rots away while you watch it
 and the bones beneath are laid bare,
 22 and his soul his drawing nearer to the abyss
 and his life to those who bring death.
 23 Then, if there is an Angel near him,
 a Mediator, one in a thousand,
 to remind him where his duty lies,
 24 to take pity on him and to say,
 "Spare him from going down to the abyss:
 I have found the ransom for his life,"
 25 his flesh will recover its childhood freshness,
 he will return to the days of his youth.
 26 He will pray to God who has restored him to favour,
 and will come into his presence with joy;
 he will tell others how he has received saving justice.

²¹ The translation, 'are laid bare' follows the Qere reading (וְשָׁפוּ); the Kethib reading (וּשְׁפִי) gives 'bare height'.

²² In place of 'those who bring death' (here following the MT and NRSV), the NJB, following the LXX (ἐν ᾧ ἔδην), has, 'the dwelling of the dead'.

²³ The literal translation of 'Mediator' is 'interpreter'; the 'Angel' interprets the meaning of suffering to the sick, makes him realise his sinfulness (v. 27) and intercedes for him with God (v. 24, see #5:1). The idea is found elsewhere in the OT: the just person's intercession (see #42:8) and his atonement for others (Is 53:10); the angels are intermediaries of prophetic revelation (Ezk, Dn, and Zc) and protectors of human beings (Ps 91:11-13), conveying their prayers to God (Tb 12:12); but see Rv 8:3ff. Later Jewish apocryphal literature gives specific illustrations of this doctrine. It is an easy transition from this to the 'guardian angel' or mediating angel of Christian doctrine (see #Tb 5:4, Mt 18:10, Ac 12:15).

²⁴ 'Spare him' follows the Peshitta (the NRSV has 'deliver him'); the MT is unintelligible. 'For his life' is restored and not present in the NRSV.

²⁵ The word רִטְפֹּשׁ ('will recover') is found nowhere else.

²⁶ For the 3rd line, the NRSV reads, "and God (he) repays him for his righteousness."

כז	יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־אֲנָשִׁים וַיֹּאמֶר חָטָאתִי וַיִּשָּׁר הָעֲוִיּוֹתַי וְלֹא־שָׁוָה לִי:	27	He will sing this hymn before his companions: "I sinned and left the path of right but he has not punished me as my sin deserved.
כח	פָּדָה נַפְשִׁי מִנְּפֹשׁ מַעְבֵּר בַּשַּׁחַת וְחִיתִי וְחִיתוֹ בְּאֹר תִּרְאֶה:	28	He has spared my soul from going down to the abyss and is making my life see the light."
כט	הֵן־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים יַפְעֵל־אֵל פְּעָמִים שְׁלוֹשׁ עַם־גִּבֹּר:	29	God indeed does all these things, again and yet again for humans,
ל	לְהָשִׁיב נַפְשׁוֹ מִנִּי־שַׁחַת לְאֹר בְּאֹר הַחַיִּים:	30	to snatch souls back from the abyss and to make the light of the living still shine.
לא	הַקָּשֶׁב אֵיזֹב שִׁמְעֵ־לִי הַחֲרֹשׁ וְאַנְכִי אֲדַבֵּר:	31	"Pay attention, Job, listen to me; keep quiet: I have more to say.
לב	אִם־יִשְׁמְלִין הַשִּׁיבִנִי דַּבֵּר כִּי־חִפְצָתִי צִדִּיקָךְ:	32	If you have anything to say, refute me, speak out, for I desire to justify you.
לג	אִם־אֵין אַתָּה שֹׁמֵע־לִי הַחֲרֹשׁ וְאַאֲלֹפֶךָ חֲכָמָה:	33	If not, then listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom."

²⁷ The 3rd line has been emended following the LXX (καὶ οὐκ ἴστω ἡτασέν με ὧν ἡμαρτον); the MT has 'and he has not had equality for me'; the NRSV has 'and it has not been paid back to me'.

²⁸ The Kethib/Qere differences here are likely caused by a scribe misreading (possibly small/short) *vav* letters as *yod*.

²⁹ In place of 'for humans' (here following the MT), NETB has 'in his dealings with humans'.

³⁰ For the 2nd line, the NRSV, following the Peshitta text, has, "so that they may see the light of life."

³¹ To an extent, the tone of this section prefigures God's reply in Ch. 38.

³² The verb 'to justify' is an infinitive construct – the object of 'I desire'.

³³ 'Be silent' follows the NRSV & NETB; the NJB opens the 2nd line with, "keep quite: I will teach."

איוב פרק לד

JOB 34

א וַיַּעַן אֱלִיהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Elihu continued his speech. He said:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| ב | שִׁמְעוּ חֲכָמִים מִלִּי | 2 | “ Now, you sages, listen to what I say, |
| | וַיִּדְעוּם הָאֲזִינוּ לִי: | | lend me your ears, you learned men. |
| ג | כִּי־אֶזֶן מִלִּין תִּבְחַן | 3 | The ear distinguishes the value of what is said, |
| | וְחֹךְ יִטַּעַם לֶאֱכֹל: | | just as the palate can tell one food from another. |
| ד | מִשְׁפָּט נִבְחָרָה־לָנוּ | 4 | Let us choose what is right; |
| | נִדְעָה בִּיגִינוּ מֶה־טוֹב: | | let us determine among ourselves what is good. |
| ה | כִּי־אָמַר אִיּוֹב צִדְקָתִי | 5 | Job has been saying, “I am innocent |
| | וְאֵל הַסִּיר מִשְׁפָּטִי: | | and God denies me fair judgement. |
| ו | עַל־מִשְׁפָּטִי אֶכְזָב | 6 | Concerning my right, should I lie? |
| | אֲנוּשׁ חֲצִי בְלִי־פֶשַׁע: | | My wound is incurable, for no fault of mine.” |
| ז | מִי־גִבֹּר כָּאִיּוֹב | 7 | Can anyone else exist like Job, |
| | יִשְׁתַּה־לָּעַג בְּמַיִם: | | who laps up mockery like water, |

JOB 34

- 1 This speech of Elihu focuses on defending God. It can be divided into these sections: Job is irreligious (2-9), God is just (10-15), God is impartial and omniscient (16-30), Job is foolish to rebel (31-37).
- 2 The word translated ‘learned me’ means ‘the men who know’ and, without a complement, it means ‘to possess knowledge’.
- 3 The word translated ‘palate’ can also refer to the tongue or the mouth in general.
- 4 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Let us consider together God’s ruling and decide what we all mean by good.”
- 5 The word translated ‘innocent’ normally means ‘righteous’ but, in this context, it means ‘in the right’.
- 6 The word אֶכְזָב (‘should I lie’) is a Piel imperfect, which can be taken as a question; many (NJB & NRSV) emend to the Pual.
- 7 Misreading Job’s attitude, Elihu classifies him as one of the ‘scornful’ attacked in wisdom literature (cf. Pr 21:24).

ח	וְאֶרַח לַחֲבֵרָה עִם־פֹּעֲלֵי אֹון וְלִלְכֹת עִם־אֲנָשֵׁי־רָשָׁע:	8	who goes in company with evildoers and marches in step with the wicked?
ט	כִּי־אָמַר לֹא יִסְכֹּן־גִּבֹּר בְּרָצְתּוֹ עִם־אֱלֹהִים:	9	Did he not say, “No one derives any benefit from taking delight in God?”
י	לִכְן אֲנָשִׁי לִבִּב שְׁמָעוּ־לִי חֲלִלָה לֹאל מִרְשָׁע וְשֹׁדֵי מַעֲוֹל:	10	Listen to me then, like intelligent people. Far be evil from God or injustice from Shaddai!
יא	כִּי פָעַל אָדָם יִשְׁלֹם־לוֹ וּכְאֶרַח אִישׁ יִמְצָאֵנוּ:	11	For he pays back people for what they do, treating each as his own conduct deserves.
יב	אֶף־אֲמַנָּם אֵל לֹא־יִרְשִׁיעַ וְשֹׁדֵי לֹא־יַעֲוֹת מִשְׁפָּט:	12	Be sure of it: God never does wrong; Shaddai does not pervert justice.
יג	מִי־פָקַד עָלָיו אֶרֶצָה וּמִי שָׂם תִּבְלָ כְּלָה:	13	Did someone else entrust the world to his care? Who gave him charge of the universe?
יד	אִם־יִשְׁיִם אֱלֹו לְבוֹ רוּחוֹ וְנִשְׁמָתּוֹ אֱלֹו יֹאסֹף:	14	If he were to recall his heart, his spirit, to concentrate his breath back in himself,

⁸ The word לַחֲבֵרָה (*‘company’*) is a *hapax legomenon* but its meaning is clear from the connexions to related words and this context as well.

⁹ In place of *‘taking delight in’*, the NJB has *‘enjoying the society of’*.

¹⁰ The literal translation of *‘intelligent people’* is *‘men of heart’*; the heart is used for the capacity to understand and make the proper choice.

¹¹ This verse expounds the classic formulation of the doctrine of retribution.

¹² In place of *‘justice’*, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has *‘what is just’*.

¹³ The argument seems to be this: God is not the vice-regent of the universe; he does not administer the laws of someone else: they are the creation of his own omnipotence. Neither self-interest, therefore, nor force, can make him violate justice (see Ws 11:20–26, 12:11–18).

¹⁴ *‘Recall’* follows the Peshitta; the MT uses *‘apply’*, wherein *‘his breath’* is attached to the 1st line. The NJB and NRSV omit *‘his heart’* from the 1st line as superfluous.

טו	יָגוּעַ כָּל־בָּשָׂר יֶחָד וְאָדָם עַל־עֹפָר יָשׁוּב:	15	all flesh would instantly perish and all people would return to dust.
טז	וְאִם־בִּינָה שְׁמַעְתָּ זֹאת הִאֲזִינָה לְקוֹל מִלִּי:	16	If you have any intelligence, listen to this; lend your ear to the sound of my words.
יז	הֲאֵף שׁוֹנֵא מִשְׁפָּט יַחְבֹּשׁ וְאִם־צֹדִיק כְּבִיר תִּרְשִׁיעַ:	17	Could an enemy of fair judgement ever govern? Would you condemn the supremely righteous one,
יח	הֲאָמַר לַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלִיעַל רָשָׁע אֶל־נְדִיבִים:	18	who says to a king, "You are a worthless man," and to nobles, "You are wicked,"
יט	אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִשְׂא פְּנֵי שָׂרִים וְלֹא נִבְרַשׁוּעַ לַפְּנִי־דָל כִּי־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו כָּלָם:	19	who is unimpressed by princes and makes no distinction between rich and poor, since all alike have been made by him?
כ	רָגַע יָמָתוֹ וַחֲצוֹת לַיְלָה יִגְעָשׁוּ עִם וַיִּעָבְרוּ וַיִּסִּירוּ אֶבִיר לֹא בִיד:	20	They die suddenly at midnight; they perish and disappear: and the mighty are taken away by no hand.
כא	כִּי־עֵינָיו עַל־דְּרָכֵי־אִישׁ וְכָל־צִעְדָּיו יִרְאֶה:	21	For his eyes keep watch on human ways, and he observes his every step.

¹⁵ Vv. 14–15 present a remarkable summary of the traditional Jewish concept of what God actually is – existence itself depends on him!

¹⁶ The 2nd line, following the *NJB*, is a fairly literal translation; the *NRSV* & *NETB* end with, "listen to what I say."

¹⁷ The 2 words 'supreme' and 'righteous' could be taken separately, but they seem to form a fine nominal hendiadys, because the issue is God's justice; so, the word for power becomes the modifier.

¹⁸ The word בְּלִיעַל means both 'worthless' and 'wicked'; it is common in proverbial literature and, later, it became a description of Satan.

¹⁹ The verb translated 'makes (no) distinction' means 'to give recognition' and, in this passage with לַפְּנֵי, it means to show preferential treatment to the rich before the poor. The word for 'rich' here is unusual, found parallel to 'noble' (Is 32:2).

²⁰ For the 3rd line, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, "it costs him no effort to remove a tyrant."

²¹ The *NJB* omits the pronoun 'his' in the 2nd line.

כב	אֵין־חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֵין צִלְמוֹת לְהַסְתֵּר שָׁם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן:	22	There is no darkness, no shadow dark as death where evildoers can hide themselves!
כג	כִּי לֹא עַל־אִישׁ יֵשִׁים עוֹד לְהִלָּךְ אֶל־אֵל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט:	23	He serves no writ on anyone, no summons to appear before God's court.
כד	יִרְעַ כְּבִירִים לֹא־חֶקֶר וַיַּעֲמֵד אֲחֵרִים תַּחְתָּם:	24	He breaks the powerful without enquiry and sets up others in their places.
כה	לִכְן יִפִּיר מַעֲבָדֵיהֶם וְהִפִּךְ לַיְלָה וַיִּדְכָּאוּ:	25	He knows the sort of thing they do! He overthrows them at night, to be trampled on.
כו	תַּחַת־רִשְׁעִים סָפְקָם בַּמָּקוֹם רָאִים:	26	He beats them like criminals, chained up for all to see,
כז	אֲשֶׁר עַל־כֵּן סָרוּ מֵאַחֲרָיו וְכָל־דִּרְכָּיו לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ:	27	since they have turned their backs on him, having understood so little of his ways
כח	לְהַבִּיאַ עָלָיו צַעֲקַת־דָּל וַצַּעֲקַת עֲנִיִּים יִשְׁמַע:	28	as to make the cries of the weak rise to him and let him hear the appeal of the afflicted."
כט	וְהוּא יִשְׁקֵט וּמִי יִרְשָׁע וַיִּסְתֵּר פָּנָיו וּמִי יִשׁוּרְנוּ	29	When he is quiet, who can condemn him? When he hides his face, who can behold him?

²² The construction of the 2nd line uses the Niphal infinitive construct from סָתַר ('to hide').

²³ The 1st line is conjectural (the NRSV has 'For he has not appointed a time for anyone'); the MT is unintelligible.

²⁴ The literal translation of 'without enquiry' is 'no investigation'.

²⁵ The Hebrew term 'night' is an accusative of time.

²⁶ The text of vv. 26–33 is very corrupt and the translation is uncertain. The LXX omits vv. 28–33.

²⁷ The verb הִשְׁכִּילוּ means 'to be prudent' or 'to be wise'; from this is derived the idea of 'be wise in understanding God's will' and 'be successful because of prudence' – i.e., successful with God.

²⁸ The verse begins with the infinitive construct of בֹּא ('go'), showing the result of their impious actions.

²⁹ The verb 'condemn' here is somewhat difficult, although it does make good sense in the sentence – it is just not what the parallelism suggests.

	וְעַל־גּוֹי וְעַל־אָדָם יַחַד:		Yet he is over the individual and the nation alike,
ל	מִמֶּלֶךְ אָדָם חָנָף	30	so that the godless should not reign,
	מִמְּקֹשֵׁי עָם:		or those who ensnare the people.
לא	כִּי־אֵל־אֵל הָאָמַר נִשְׁאַתִּי	31	When such a one says to God,
	לֹא אֲחַבֵּל:		"I was misled, I shall not do wrong any more;
לב	בְּלִעְדֵי אַחְזָה אֶתָּה הֲרֹנִי	32	although I have sinned, instruct me;
	אִם־עוֹל פָּעַלְתִּי לֹא אֲסִיף:		although I did wrong, I will not do it again,"
לג	הַמַּעֲמֹד יִשְׁלַמְנָה כִּי־מֵאֲסָתָ	33	Shall his recompense be as you desire, that you refuse it?
	כִּי־אַתָּה תִּבְחַר וְלֹא־אֲנִי		For you must choose, and not I.
	וְמֵה־יָדַעְתָּ דְּבַר:		Therefore speak what you know.
לד	אֲנֹשֵׁי לֵבָב יֹאמְרוּ לִי	34	"Men of understanding will tell me,
	וְגִבֹּר חָכֶם שָׁמַע לִי:		yes, every wise man who hears me:
לה	אֵיזֹב לֹא־בִדְעַת יִדְבֹּר	35	Job's words are spoken without any knowledge,
	וְדִבְרָיו לֹא בַהֲשִׁיל:		what he says shows no intelligence.
לו	אָבִי יִבְחֹן אֵיזֹב עַד־נֶצַח	36	Kindly examine him thoroughly,
	עַל־תְּשֻׁבַת בְּאֲנֹשֵׁי־אָוֶן:		since his answers imply that he is a criminal.

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- 30 To the objection that punishment can seem to spare the wicked, Elihu replies that justice is being tempered with mercy (cf. Ws 11:23, 12:2).
- 31 'I was misled' is conjectural (the NRSV has 'I have endured punishment'); the MT has 'I have carried'.
- 32 'Although I did wrong' follows the Vg; the MT has 'that I may see'.
- 33 Job's criticism of God's methods is based on a rigid idea of justice; if this were accurate, it would forbid God ever to pardon. So, Job should not apply this idea to his own case; he should rather believe that God is testing him from a different motive.
- 34 For this verse (as WEBBE), the NJB reads, "Ordinary sensible people, however, will say to me, and so will any sage who has been listening to me."
- 35 Adding 'that' in the translation clarifies Elihu's indirect citation of the wise individuals' words.
- 36 'Kindly' is a conjectural translation; the MT (אָבִי – literally 'my father') apparently implies a wish or plea.

לֹ
כִּי יִסִּיף עַל־חַטָּאתוֹ פֶּשַׁע
בִּיגִינוֹ יִשְׁפֹּק
וַיִּרְבֵּ אֲמָרָיו לֵאלֹהִים:

³⁷ For, to his sin he now adds transgression,
clapping his hands among us
and heaping abuse on God.""

³⁷ In place of 'transgression' (following NETB), the NJB & NRSV (and many others) have 'rebellion'.

איוב פרק לה

JOB 35

א וַיַּעַן אֱלִיהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר: ¹ Elihu continued his speech. He said:

ב	הַזֹּאת חֲשַׁבְתָּ לְמִשְׁפָּט	2	"Do you think this to be just?
	אֲמַרְתָּ צְדִיקִי מֵאֵל:		You say, "I am in the right before God."
ג	כִּי־תֹאמַר מִה־יִסְכֹּן־לְךָ	3	If you dare to ask him, "What does it matter to you?"
	מִה־אֵעִיל מִחַטָּאתִי:		or "How am I better off than if I had sinned?"
ד	אֲנִי אֲשִׁיבָךְ מִלֵּין	4	I will answer you
	וְאֶת־רַעֲיֶיךָ עִמָּךְ:		and you friends as well.
ה	הִבֵּט שָׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה	5	Take a look at the skies and see,
	וְשׁוּר שְׁחָקִים גְּבוּהוּ מִמֶּךָ:		observe how high the clouds are above you.
ו	אִם־חַטָּאת מִה־תִּפְעֹל־בּוֹ	6	If you sin, how can you affect him?
	וּרְבוּ פְשָׁעֶיךָ מִה־תַּעֲשֶׂה־לּוֹ:		If you heap up crimes, what effect has it on him?
ז	אִם־צִדְקָת מִה־תִּתֶּן־לּוֹ	7	If you are upright, what do you give him?
	אוֹ מִה־מִּידָךְ יִקַּח:		What benefit does he receive at your hands?

JOB 35

- ¹ This short speech falls into two sections: Elihu refutes Job's claim that goodness avails nothing (35:2-8), asserting that when the cry of the afflicted goes unanswered they have not learned their lesson (35:9-16).
- ² The 2nd line could be interpreted in a number of ways: the MT has simply, "my right from God." It could be "I am right before God," "I am more just/right than God", "I will be right before God" or "My just cause against God."
- ³ An alternative translation for the 2nd line, following the LXX, is, "What good is it to me (to be) without sin?"
- ⁴ Elihu takes up other sayings of Job (3:13, 15) to refute them, particularly those in which he reproaches God for unjustly rewarding human actions and for acting as though he took no interest in human activities, whether good or bad; see especially 7:20, 9:22.
- ⁵ Elihu implies that God is further beyond human reach, an idea appearing in the speeches of Eliphaz (22:12), Zophar (11:7), and even Job (9:8).
- ⁶ On this argument, see 7:20.
- ⁷ The questions posed here are parallel to those of the previous verse.

ח	לְאִישׁ-כְּמוֹד רָשָׁעַךְ וּלְבֶן-אָדָם צְדִיקְתֶּךָ: מִרַב עֲשׂוּקִים יִזְעִיקוּ יִשְׁוּעוּ מִזְרוֹעַ רַבִּים: וְלֹא-אָמַר אֵיהָ אֱלֹהֵי עֲשֵׂי נָתַן זִמְרוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה: מִלִּפְנֵי מְבַהֲמוֹת אָרֶץ וּמִעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יַחֲכֹמְנוּ: שֵׁם יִצְעֲקוּ וְלֹא יֵעָנֶה מִפְּנֵי גָאוֹן רָעִים: אֲדָ-שׁוּא לֹא-יִשְׁמַע אֵל וְשִׁדִּי לֹא יִשׁוֹרְנָה: אֶף כִּי-תֹאמַר לֹא תִשׁוֹרְנֵנוּ דִּין לִפְנֵינוּ וְתִחֲזֹלֵל לָנוּ:	ט	י	יא	יב	יג	יד					
8	Your wickedness affects only your fellows, and your uprightness, other human beings.	9	They too groan under the weight of oppression, they cry for help under the tyranny of the mighty.	10	But no one says, “Where is God, my Maker, who makes glad songs ring out at night, who has made us more intelligent than wild animals, wiser than birds in the sky?”	11	Then they cry out, but get no answer, to be spared from the arrogance of the wicked.	12	Of course, God does not listen to trivialities; Shaddai pays no attention to them.	13	How much less when you say, “I cannot see him, my case is open and I am waiting for him.”	14

- ⁸ A Christian interpretation would possibly criticise Elihu for exalting God’s greatness at the cost of his grace and his transcendence at the expense of his immanence; he sets up a material instead of a spiritual stand of profit and loss and does not realise that God *does* gain what he desires most by the goodness of men and loses what he most loves by their evil.
- ⁹ Elihu seems to be thinking of those who are victims of the malice of others (v. 8). If God does not help them, it is because they do not have faith in him and rely on self-sufficiency instead of asking him to save them.
- ¹⁰ For the 2nd line, the NRSV has ‘*who gives strength in the night*’ (there have been several attempts to emend the line, none of which are particularly helpful or interesting).
- ¹¹ Elihu is here stressing the unique privileges that human beings have.
- ¹² The adverb שָׁם (‘*then*’) connects this verse to v. 11; the word can be locative (‘*there*’) or temporal, as it is here.
- ¹³ The cry is an empty cry, not a prayer to God.
- ¹⁴ Elihu is referring especially to 23:3–9; see also 13:18–22.

טו וְעֵתָּה כִּי־אֵין פֶּקֶד אִפּוֹ
 וְלֹא־יֵדַע בַּפֶּשׁ מָאֵד:
 טז וְאִיּוֹב הִבֵּל יַפְצָה־פִּיהוּ
 בְּבִלִּי־דַעַת מְלִין יִכְבֵּר:

- 15 Or, "His anger never punishes,
 he does not seem aware of human rebellion."
 16 Hence, when Job speaks, he talks to no purpose,
 ignorantly babbling on and on."

¹⁵ 'Human rebellion' follows the *Theodotion & Symmachus* (the *NRSV* has 'transgression'); the *MT* is corrupt (בַּפֶּשׁ – which may be related to an Arabic word for 'belch').

¹⁶ The word הִבֵּל means 'vanity', 'futility' or 'to no purpose'.

איוב פרק לו

JOB 36

^א וַיִּסֶף אֱלִיהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר: ¹ Elihu went on speaking. He said:

^ב כְּתֹר־לִי זַעִיר וְאַחֲוֹךְ	² “Be patient a little longer while I explain,
כִּי עוֹד לְאֱלֹהֵי מַלְאִכִּים:	for I have more to say on God’s behalf.
^ג אֲשָׁא דְעִי לְמִרְחֹק	³ I shall range far afield for my arguments
וְלִפְעֻלִי אֶתֶן-צֶדֶק:	to prove my Maker just.
^ד כִּי-אֲמַנָּם לֹא-שֶׁקֶר מִלִּי	⁴ I guarantee: nothing I shall say will be untrue:
תָּמִים דְּעוֹת עֲמָד:	you have a man of sound learning here.
^ה הֵן-אֵל בְּבִיר וְלֹא יִמָּאֵס	⁵ God is powerful and does not reject the pure of heart,
כְּבִיר כָּח לֵב:	or let the sinner live on in all his power.
^ו לֹא-יַחֲיֶה רָשָׁע	⁶ He does not keep the wicked alive,
וּמִשְׁפָּט עֲנִיִּים יִתֵּן:	but gives the afflicted their right.
^ז לֹא-יִגְרַע מִצְדִּיק עֵינָיו	⁷ He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous.
וְאֶת-מְלָכִים לְכִסֵּא	But, with kings on their thrones,

JOB 36

- ¹ The text of this chapter is obscure and it is hard to identify Elihu’s fresh contribution at this point.
- ² The verb כְּתֹר (*‘be patient’*) is the Piel imperative; in Hebrew, the word means ‘to surround’ and is related to the noun for crown; however, in Syriac it means ‘to wait’. This section of the book contains a number of Aramaic words.
- ³ The expression in the 1st line means that he will give a wide range to knowledge; that he will speak comprehensively.
- ⁴ The word תָּמִים (*‘sound’*) is often translated ‘perfect’ (cf. NRSV); it is the same word used of Job in 2:3. Elihu is either a complete stranger to modesty or is confident regarding the knowledge that he believes God has revealed to him for this situation.
- ⁵ Line emended: the MT has, “God is powerful and does not reject, powerful by force of heart.” The latter instance of ‘power’ is here transposed to the 2nd line, which is strictly part of v. 6.
- ⁶ This verse follows the NRSV; the NJB includes the 1st part of v. 7.
- ⁷ Many commentators emend ‘his eyes’ to ‘his right’ (עֵינָיו for דִּינֹ), but there is no compelling reason for the change.

			וַיִּשְׁיֵבם לְנֶצַח וַיִּגְבְּהוּ:		he seats the righteous and exalts them forever.
ח	וְאִם־אֲסוּרִים בַּזָּקִים	8	וְלִכְדּוֹן בַּחֲבִל־עָנִי:		But, if they are bound with chains,
ט	וַיַּגֵּד לָהֶם פְּעָלָם	9	וּפְשָׁעֵיהֶם כִּי יִתְגַּבְּרוּ:		and caught in the bonds of affliction,
י	וַיַּגֵּל אֲזָנָם לְמוֹסֵר	10	וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־יִשׁוּבוּן מֵאָוֶן:		he reveals the import of their deeds,
יא	אִם־יִשְׁמָעוּ וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ	11	יָכֻלוּ יְמֵיהֶם בְּטוֹב		of the sins of pride they have committed.
	וּשְׁנֵיהֶם בְּנְעִימִים:		וְאִם־לֹא יִשְׁמָעוּ בְּשַׁלַּח יַעֲבֹרוּ		In their ears, he sounds a warning,
יב	וַיִּגְוְעוּ בַּבִּלְיָ־דַעַת:	12	וַחֲנַפ־לֵב יִשִּׁימוּ אָף		ordering them to turn back from doing wrong.
יג	לֹא יִשְׁוְעוּ כִּי אֶסְרָם:	13	תָּמַת בְּנֹעַר נַפְשָׁם		If they take notice and obey him,
יד	וַחֲיֵתָם בְּקִדְשִׁים:	14			the rest of their days are prosperous
					and the years pass pleasantly.
					If not, they go down the River
					and perish in their stupidity.
					The stubborn, who cherish their anger
					and do not cry for help when he chains them,
					die in the bloom of youth
					or live among the male prostitutes of the temple.

⁸ Some translators (cf. *NJB*) assume this verse is still talking about kings but this diverts attention from Elihu's emphasis on the righteous.

⁹ The verb נָגַד means 'to declare' or 'to tell'; here, it is clear that God is making known the sins that caused the enslavement or captivity, so 'he reveals' makes a good interpretive translation.

¹⁰ The idiom in the 1st line is 'he uncovers their ears'.

¹¹ Elihu asserts that affliction is an instruction that will lead to prosperity, if heeded (see v. 15). However, Job's situation is different (vv. 17–23): his iniquity is the reason he has been tried by affliction (v. 21).

¹² On the translation 'the River', see #33:18.

¹³ 'Cherish' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'place' (יִשִּׁימוּ).

¹⁴ For the 2nd line, the *NRSV* has 'and their life ends in shame'.

טו יִחַלֵּץ עָנִי בְּעָנָיו
 ויִגַּל בְּלֶחֶץ אָזְנוֹ:
 טז וְאַף הִסִּיתָּ מִפִּי צָר
 רָחַב לֹא־מוֹצָק תַּחְתִּיהָ
 וְנַחַת שְׁלַחְנָךְ מִלֵּא דָשֵׁן:
 יז וְדִין־רָשָׁע מִלֵּאֵת
 דִּין וּמִשְׁפָּט יִתְמָכוּ:
 יח כִּי־חֲמָה פֶּן־יִסִּיתָּ בְּסֶפֶק
 וְרַב־כֶּפֶר אֶל־יָטֶךְ:
 יט הֲיִעֲרֹךְ שׁוֹעֵךְ לֹא בָצָר
 וְכָל מֵאֲמָצִיכָה:
 כ אֶל־תִּשְׁאַף הַלֵּילָה
 לַעֲלוֹת עַמִּים תַּחְתָּם:
 כא הִשְׁמַר אֶל־תִּפְּן אֶל־אֹן

15 God saves the afflicted by his affliction,
 opening his ear by his misery.
 16 You, too, he would like to snatch from torment.
 While you were enjoying boundless abundance,
 to the comfort of your table, filled with rich food.
 17 You did not bring the wicked to trial
 and did not give fair judgement to the orphan.
 18 Beware that abundance does not lead you astray,
 that expensive presents do not corrupt you.
 19 Will your cry avail to keep you from distress,
 or will all the force of your strength?
 20 Do not long for the night,
 when peoples are cut off in their place.
 21 Beware! Do not turn to iniquity;

¹⁵ See Ps 40:6, Is 40:5.

¹⁶ The word נַחַת ('comfort') could be translated 'set' if it is connected with the verb נוּחַ ('to rest').

¹⁷ This verse, evidently corrupt, is variously translated. The conjectural translation here (following the NJB) divides and arranges the vowels of the text in a different way from the MT. Others suggest 'you will judge the judgement of the wicked and (your hands) will grasp injustice' or, without making any emendation, 'if you incur a verdict of guilty, verdict and sentence will carry the day'.

¹⁸ The 1st line expression is idiomatic; literally translated, the text reads, "Because wrath lest it entice you."

¹⁹ Vv. 19–21 here follow the NRSV; the MT is irremediably corrupt and the translation is uncertain. The NJB is heavily emended, as shown below:

¹⁹ Take the powerful to the law, not merely the penniless, those whose arm is strong, not merely the weak.

²⁰ Do not crush people you do not know to install your relations in their place.

²¹ Avoid any tendency to wrongdoing, for this is why affliction is testing you now.

²⁰ The meaning of the 2nd line is difficult and there are numerous suggestions for emending the text (see #19).

²¹ Normally, 'tried' would be the translation for Niphal of בָּחַר; although the Qal (בָּחַרְתָּ) is used here, the context favours 'tried' over 'chosen'.

כִּי־עַל־זֶה בַּחֲרַתְּ מַעֲנִי:		because of that, you have been tried by affliction.
כב הֲנֵאֱלֹהִים יִשְׁגִּיב בְּכַחוֹ	22	See, God is sublime in his strength
מִי כִמְהוּ מוֹרָה:		and who can teach lessons as he does?
כג מִי־פָקֵד עָלָיו דְּרָכּוֹ	23	Who has prescribed for him his way,
ומִי־אָמַר פְּעֻלַּת עוֹלָה:		or said to him, "You have done wrong?"
כד זָכַר כִּי־תִשְׁגִּיֵּא פַעֲלֹ	24	Consider, rather, how you may praise his work,
אֲשֶׁר שָׁרְרוּ אָנָשִׁים:		a theme that many have sung.
כה כֹּל־אָדָם חֲזוּ־בּוֹ	25	This is something that everyone can see,
אֲנֹשׁ יִבִּיט מֵרְחֹק:		gazing, as we do, from afar.
כו הֲנֵאֱלֹהִים שְׂגִיֵּא וְלֹא נִדַּע	26	Yes, the greatness of God exceeds our knowledge;
מִסֵּפֶר שָׁנָיו וְלֹא־חֶקֶר:		the number of his years is past counting.
כז כִּי יִגְרַע נְטִפֵי־מַיִם	27	It is he who makes the raindrops small
יִזְקוּ מֵטֶר לְאֵדָו:		and pulverises the rain into mist.
כח אֲשֶׁר־יִזְלוּ שְׁחָקִים	28	The clouds then pour this out,
יִרְעֲפוּ עָלָיו אָדָם רַב:		sending it streaming down on the human race.
כט אַף אִם־יִבִּין מִפְּרִשֵׁי־עַב	29	Who can fathom how he spreads the clouds,
תִּשְׁאֹזֶת סִכָּתוֹ:		or why such crashes thunder from his tent?

- 22 After interpreting the ways of God, Elihu proceeds to a eulogy of God's power and wisdom. The same procedure is used by Paul in Rm 11:33.
- 23 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has, "Who has ever told him which course to take."
- 24 The expression in the 1st line, 'that you praise', serves as an object of the verb 'consider'.
- 25 For this verse, here following the NJB, NETB has, "All humanity has seen it; people gaze on it from afar."
- 26 The end of the 1st line has the construction, 'and we do not know'; this clause is used adverbially, in the sense of 'beyond our understanding'.
- 27 The word translated 'mist' (עֵד) occurs also in Gn 2:6. Some think it represents an underground watercourse that wells up to water the ground.
- 28 In place of 'clouds' (here following the NJB & NETB), the NRSV has 'skies'.
- 29 The cloud is the 'tent of Yahweh', spreading across the sky to the growling of thunder (his 'voice').

ל הַנִּפְרֵשׁ עָלָיו אֹרֹחַ
 וְשָׁרְשֵׁי הַיָּם כֶּסֶה:
 לֹא כִי־בָם יָדִין עַמִּים
 יִתֶּן־אֲכָל לַמִּכְבִּיר:
 לֵב עַל־כַּפַּיִם כֶּסֶה־אֹר
 וַיַּצֵּן עָלֶיהָ בַּמִּפְגִּיעַ:
 לֵג יִגִּיד עָלָיו רָעוֹ
 מִקְנָה אֵף עַל־עוֹלָה:

30 He scatters his lightning before him
 and covers the roots of the sea.
 31 By these means, he governs the peoples,
 giving them plenty to eat.
 32 He covers his hands with the lightning,
 assigning it the mark where to strike.
 33 Its crashing gives warning of his coming;
 he is jealous with anger against iniquity.

³⁰ In place of 'scatters his lightning' (here following the NRSV and MT), the NJB, following the Tg, has 'spreads his mist'. In place of 'roots of the sea', the NJB has the conjectural 'tops of the mountains'.

³¹ The NJB transposes this verse to before v. 29, on the strength of its introductory words, referring to the clouds (?); in place of 'governs' (יָדִין), it has the conjectural 'sustains' (יִזוֹן).

³² Some commentators prefer to link the word translated as 'hands' with the later Hebrew word for 'arch'.

³³ 'He is jealous with anger' follows the NRSV (the NJB has 'anger flashes out'); the meaning of the MT is uncertain.

איוב פרק לו

א אֶף־לִזְאוֹת יַחֲרֹד לִבִּי
וַיֵּתֶר מִמְּקוֹמוֹ:
ב שָׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ בְּרָגַז קִלּוֹ
וְהִגָּה מִפִּי יֵצֵא:
ג תַּחַת־כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁרָהוּ
וְאוֹרֹו עַל־כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ:
ד אַחֲרָיו יִשְׁאֹג־קוֹל
יִרְעַם בְּקוֹל גָּאוֹנוֹ
וְלֹא יַעֲקֹבֵם כִּי־יִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ:
ה יִרְעַם אֵל בְּקוֹלוֹ נִפְלְאוֹת
עֲשֵׂה גְדִלוֹת וְלֹא נֵדַע:
ו כִּי לִשְׁלֹג יֹאמֶר הֲוֹא־אֶרֶץ
וְגֶשֶׁם מָטָר
וְגֶשֶׁם מְטָרוֹת עָזוֹ:

JOB 37

1 "At this, my very heart quakes
and leaps out of its place.
2 Listen carefully to the blast of his voice
and the sound that issues from his mouth.
3 His lightning is hurled across the heaven;
it strikes to the extremities of earth.
4 After it comes a roaring sound,
God thunders with majestic voice.
He does not check them when his voice is heard.
5 God thunders wonderfully with his voice
and does great deeds that we cannot understand.
6 For he says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,'
likewise to the shower of rain,
and to the showers of his mighty rain.

JOB 37

- ¹ In place of 'quakes', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'trembles' and NETB has 'pounds'.
² 'Listen carefully' follows NETB; the NJB has 'listen, oh listen'; the MT reads שָׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ – the imperative is followed by the infinitive absolute from the same root to express the intensity of the verb.
³ The literal translation of 'extremities' is 'wings'.
⁴ The NJB has 'his thunderbolts', in place of 'them', here following the MT.
⁵ The NJB emends the 1st line to, "Yes, certainly God shows us marvels." The form is the Niphal participle, 'wonders', from the verb פָּלַא. Some suppress the repeated verb, 'thunders', and supply other verbs, such as 'shows' or 'works', enabling them to make 'wonders' the object of the verb, rather than leaving it in an adverbial role. But no change is needed, for one is not surprised to find repetition in Elihu's words.
⁶ For this verse, here following WEBBE, the NJB reads, "When he says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth!' and to the showers, 'Now rain hard!'"

ז	בִּיד־כָּל־אָדָם יַחְתּוֹם לְדַעַת כָּל־אֲנָשִׁי מַעֲשָׂהוּ:	7	he brings all human activity to a standstill, for everyone to acknowledge his work.
ח	וּתְבוֹא חַיָּה בְּמוֹ־אָרֶב וּבְמַעֲוֹנֶתֶיהָ תִּשְׁכֵּן:	8	The animals go back to their lairs and remain in their dens.
ט	מִן־הַחֹדֶר תְּבוֹא סוּפָה וּמִמְזָרִים קָרָה:	9	The storm wind comes from the Mansion of the South, and the scattering wind ushers in the cold.
י	מִנְשַׁמַּת־אֵל יִתֵּן־קָרָח וְרָחֵב מַיִם בְּמוֹצָק:	10	At the breath of God, ice is made and the surface of the waters freezes over.
יא	אֶף־בְּרִי יִטְרִיחַ עָב יִפִּיץ עָנָן אוֹרוֹ:	11	He weighs the clouds down with moisture, and the storm clouds radiate his lightning.
יב	וְהוּא מְסַבּוֹת מִתְהַפֵּךְ בְּתַחְבּוּלָתוֹ לַפַּעֲלָם כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא עַל־פְּנֵי תֵבֶל אֶרֶצָה:	12	They turn round and round by his guidance, they carry out his orders to the letter on that surface of the habitable world.

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- ⁷ This reading of the 2nd line involves a change in the text, for in the MT 'men' is in the construct, which would be translated, 'all men whom he made'; this is the translation followed by the NRSV. The present translation assumes that אֲנָשִׁי should have been אֲנָשִׁים, with the final ם being lost through haplography.
- ⁸ For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, "and take shelter in their lairs."
- ⁹ The literal translation of 'Mansion of the South' (see 9:9) is the 'mansion' or 'storehouse' (see 38:22, Ps 135:7) of the hurricane, which is a southerly wind. For 'scattering', the NJB has 'north'.
- ¹⁰ For the 2nd line, here following (loosely) the NJB, the NRSV reads, "and the broad waters are frozen fast" and NETB has "and the breadth of the waters freeze solid."
- ¹¹ The word 'moisture' is drawn from רִי as a contraction of רִי. Other translators have emended the text to get 'hail' (NAB), 'lightning', or even 'the Creator', but there is no reason to change the reading of the MT when it makes perfectly good sense.
- ¹² The NJB emends the 1st line to, "He himself guides their wheeling motion, presiding over their seasonal changes." Here, we follow the NRSV.

יג אִם־לִשְׁבֹּט אִם־לְאַרְצוֹ
 אִם־לְחַסֵּד יִמְצָאֶהוּ:
 יד הֲאֵזִינָה זֹאת אֵיזֹב
 עֹמֵד וְהִתְבּוֹנֵן נִפְלְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים:
 טו הֲתִדַּע בְּשׁוֹם־אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵיהֶם
 וְהִפִּיעַ אֹזֶר עֲנָנוּ:
 טז הֲתִדַּע עַל־מִפְלְשֵׁי־עֵב
 מִפְּלְאוֹת תְּמִים דְּעִים:
 יז אֲשֶׁר־בְּגָדֶיךָ חֲמִים
 בְּהִשְׁקֹט אֶרֶץ מִדְּרוֹם:
 יח תִּרְקִיעַ עֲמוֹ לִשְׁחָקִים
 חֲזָקִים כְּרָאִי מוֹצֵק:
 יט הוֹדִיעֵנו מִה־נֹּאמַר לוֹ
 לֹא־נַעֲרֹךְ מִפְּנֵי־חֹשֶׁךְ:
 כ הִי־סִפְּרָלוֹ כִּי אֲדַבֵּר
 אִם־אֶמֶר אִישׁ כִּי יִבְלַע:

13 Whether for correction, or for his land,
 or as a work of faithful love, he causes it to happen.
 14 “ Listen to this, Job;
 stop and reflect on the marvellous works of God.
 15 Do you know how God controls them
 or how his clouds make the lightning flash?
 16 Do you know how he balances the clouds –
 a miracle of consummate skill?
 17 When your clothes are hot to your body
 and the earth lies still under the south wind,
 18 can you, like him, stretch out the sky,
 tempered like a mirror of cast metal?
 19 Teach me what we should say to him:
 better discuss no further, since we are in the dark.
 20 Does he take note when I want to speak?
 When human beings give orders, does he take it in?

13 The literal translation of ‘correction’ is ‘rod’.

14 The NJB has ‘without flinching’ (at the end of the 1st line) in place of ‘stop’ (and the beginning of the 2nd line).

15 The verb translated ‘controls’ is בָּשׂוֹם (from שָׂם, ‘set’), so the idea is how God lays or sets a command for them.

16 The concept of balancing probably refers to floating or suspension (cf. NIV, ‘how the clouds hang poised’).

17 The ‘south wind’ blows in Israel during the summer months and brings a quiet heat.

18 The ‘mirror of cast metal’ describes the firmament, the brazen summer sky.

19 The verb translated ‘discuss’ means ‘to arrange’, ‘to set in order’; from the context, the idea of a legal case is included.

20 The verb translated ‘I want to speak’ works well as a desiderative imperfect.

כא וְעֵתָהּ | לֹא רָאוּ אֹר
 בְּהִיר הוּא בִּשְׁחָקִים
 וְרוּחַ עֲבָרָה וְתַטְהֵרֵם:
 כב מִצְפּוֹן זֶהָב יֵאֲתָהּ
 עַל־אֱלֹהֵי גִזְרָא הוּד:
 כג שְׁדֵי לֹא־מִצְאָנָהּוּ שְׁגִי־אֶכַח
 וּמִשְׁפָּט וְרַב־צִדְקָה לֹא יַעֲנֶה:
 כד לִכֵּן יִרְאוּהוּ אַנְשִׁים
 לֹא־יִרְאֶה כָּל־חֲכָמֵי־לֵב:

21 There are times when the light vanishes,
 behind darkening clouds;
 then comes the wind, sweeping them away.
 22 Golden splendour spreads from the north;
 God is clothed in awesome majesty.
 23 Shaddai is far beyond our reach; he is great in power,
 but justice and righteousness he does not oppress.
 24 No wonder, then, that people fear him,
 for he does not regard the wise in heart."

²¹ The 'light' here must refer to the sun in the skies that had been veiled by the storm; then, when the winds blew the clouds away, it could not be looked at because it was so dazzling. Elihu's analogy will be that God is the same – in his glory one cannot look at him or challenge him.

²² The *NJB* includes the 1st line as part of the previous verse.

²³ The *MT* places the major disjunctive accent under 'power', indicating that 'but justice' is a disjunctive clause starting the second half of the verse (with *ESV*, *NASB*, *NIV*, *NLT*). Ignoring the Masoretic accent, the *NRSV* has "he is great in power and justice."

²⁴ For the 2nd line, the *NJB* has the conjectural, 'everyone thoughtful holds him in awe'. This verse is a typical wisdom ending; compare 28:28 and Pr 1:7.

איוב פרק לח

JOB 38

א וַיַּעַן יְהוָה אֶת־אִיּוֹב מִנְּהַסְעֵרָה [מִן | הַסְעָרָה] 1 Then Yahweh answered Job from the heart of the tempest;
וַיֹּאמֶר: and he said:

ב מִי זֶה | מַחְשִׁיךְ עֵצָה בְּמַלְיָן
בְּלִידְעָתָּה:

2 “Who is this, obscuring counsel
with his ignorant words?

ג אֲזַר־נָא כְּגִבֹּר חֲלָצִיד
וְאֶשְׁאַלְךָ וְהוֹדִיעָנִי:

3 Brace yourself like a fighter;

ד אֵיפָה הָיִיתָ בִּיסְדֵי־אָרֶץ
הֲגִד אִם־יִדְעָתָּ בִּינָה:

4 Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations?
Tell me, since you are so well informed!

ה מִי־שָׁם מִמְדֵּיהָ כִּי תִדַּע
אֹז מִי־נָטָה עָלֶיהָ קוֹ:

5 Who decided its dimensions – if you know?
Or who stretched the measuring line across it?

ו עַל־מָה אֲדָנִיָּה הַטְּבָעוּ
אֹז מִי־יָרָה אֲבֵן פְּנִתָּה:

6 What supports its pillars at their bases?
Who laid its cornerstone

ז בְּרֶן־יַחַד פּוֹכְבֵי בֹקֶר
וַיִּרְיָעוּ כָּל־בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

7 to the joyful concert of the morning stars
and unanimous acclaim of the sons of God?

JOB 38

- 1 'From the heart of the tempest' is the familiar imagery for a theophany, evoking the overwhelming power of God (see Ps 18:7–15, 50:3, Ezk 1:4, Na 1:3, #Ex 13:22 and #19:16). The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference (separating מִנְּהַסְעֵרָה into 2 words) would benefit from an explanation.
- 2 The referent of 'counsel' here is not the debate between Job and the friends but the purposes of God (see Ps 33:10, Pr 19:21, Is 19:17).
- 3 'Fighter' follows the Tg and Peshitta; the MT has 'man' (emendation of vowels), as also in 40:7.
- 4 The verb 'tell' is imperative; it has no object ('me') in the MT.
- 5 The particle כִּי is taken here to introduce a conditional clause ('if you know'); others (cf. NRSV) take it as 'surely', with a biting irony.
- 6 The world was conceived of as having bases and pillars but these poetic descriptions should not be pressed too far.
- 7 In place of 'sons of God', the NRSV has 'heavenly beings' (see #1:6).

ח וַיִּסָּד בַּדְּלָתִים יָם
 בְּגִיחוֹ מִרְחֹם יָצָא:
 ט בְּשׁוּמֵי עָנָן לִבְשׁוֹ
 וְעָרְפָּל חֲתָלְתּוֹ:
 י וַאֲשֶׁבֶר עָלָיו חֻקִּי
 וְאֲשִׁים בְּרִיחַ וּדְלָתִים:
 יא וְאָמַר עַד־כִּפָּה תָּבוֹא וְלֹא תִסָּיֵף
 וּפֹאֲי־יִשִּׁית בְּגָאוֹן גִּלְיָד:
 יב הַמִּימִיד צוֹיֶתָ בֶּקֶר
 יְדַעְתָּה שַׁחַר [יְדַעְתָּ הַשַּׁחַר] מִקְמוֹ:
 יג לֶאֱחֹז בְּכַנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ
 וַיִּנְעֲרוּ רָשָׁעִים מִמֶּנָּה:
 יד תִּתְהַפֵּךְ כַּחֲמֶר חֹתֶם
 וַיִּתְּצֻבוּ כִּמּוֹ לְבוּשׁ:
 טו וַיִּמְנַע מִרָשָׁעִים אוֹרָם
 וַיִּזְרַע רָמָה תִּשְׁבֵּר:

8 Who pent up the sea behind closed doors
 when it leapt tumultuous from the womb,
 9 when I wrapped it in a robe of mist
 and made black clouds its swaddling band,
 10 when I cut out the place I had decreed for it
 and imposed gates and a bolt?
 11 “Come so far,” I said, “and no further;
 here, your proud waves must break!”
 12 Have you ever in your life given orders to the morning
 or sent the dawn to its post,
 13 to grasp the earth by its edges
 and shake the wicked out of it?
 14 She turns it as red as a clay seal,
 she dyes it as though it were a dress,
 15 stealing the light from evildoers
 and breaking the arm raised to strike.

8 ‘Who pent up’ follows the Vg (*Quis conclusit*); the MT has ‘he pent up’.

9 The noun translated ‘swaddling band’ is found only here; a derived verb occurs in Ezk 16:4 and a related noun in Ezk 30:21.

10 In place of ‘cut out’ (literally, ‘broke’), the NRSV & NETB have ‘proscribed’.

11 The 2nd line follows the LXX (ἀλλ’ ἐν σεαυτῇ συντριβήσεται σου τὰ κύματα); the MT has ‘here, he will put to pride your waves’.

12 The literal translation of ‘in your life’ is ‘from your days’. The Kethib/Qere difference here involves the transfer of the ה from the end of one word to the start of the next.

13 The ע in רָשָׁעִים is presented as a raised (‘suspended’) letter, just as it appears in almost all Hebrew MSS.

14 ‘She dyes it’ is conjectural; the MT has ‘and they stand forth’.

15 The ע in מִרָשָׁעִים is presented as a raised (‘suspended’) letter, just as it appears in almost all Hebrew MSS.

טז הבאת עד-נְבִיִּים
 וּבַחֲקֹר תְּהוֹם הַתְּהֻלֶּכֶת:
 יז הִנֵּגְלוּ לְךָ שַׁעֲרֵי־מוֹת
 וְשַׁעֲרֵי צִלְמוֹת תִּרְאָה:
 יח הִתְבַּנֵּנָה עַד־רַחְבֵּי־אָרֶץ
 הִגֵּד אִם־יָדַעְתָּ כֻּלָּהּ:
 יט אֵי־זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ יִשְׁכֵּן־אֹר
 וְחֹשֶׁךְ אֵי־זֶה מְקוֹמוֹ:
 כ כִּי תִקְחֵנוּ אֶל־גְּבוּלוֹ
 וְכִי־תִבֵּן נְתִיבוֹת בֵּיתוֹ:
 כא יָדַעְתָּ כִּי־אֲזַ תּוֹלַד
 וּמִסְפַּר יָמֶיךָ רַבִּים:
 כב הִבַּאת אֶל־אֲצֻרוֹת שֶׁלֶג
 וְאֹצְרוֹת בָּרָד תִּרְאָה:

16 Have you been right down to the sources of the sea
 and walked about at the bottom of the Abyss?
 17 Have you been shown the gates of Death,
 have you seen the gates of the deep darkness?
 18 Have you an inkling of the extent of the earth?
 Tell me all about it if you have!
 19 Which is the way to the home of the light,
 and where does darkness live?
 20 You could then show them the way to their proper places;
 you could understand their paths home!
 21 Surely you do know, for you were born when they were,
 and the number of your days is great!
 22 "Have you visited the place where the snow is stored?
 Have you seen the stores of hail,

¹⁶ The 'sources of the sea' were the springs from which, it was thought, the seas were supplied.

¹⁷ The NJB, following the LXX, has 'janitors' in place of 'gates' in the 2nd line. The 'deep darkness' is Sheol (see #Nb 16:33). On the 'gates of Death', see Is 38:10, Ps 9:13, 107:18, Ws 16:13.

¹⁸ For the 1st line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?"

¹⁹ Light is personified as an entity distinct from the sun. She goes home every evening, when Darkness replaces her.

²⁰ The pronominal suffixes in this verse are singular, referring to either the light or the darkness; however, because either is referred to, the translation has employed plurals, since singulars would imply that only the second item ('darkness') was the referent.

²¹ This verse (following the NRSV) is a truly sarcastic jibe; Job would have had to have been born before the Creation, like Wisdom in Pr 8:22ff.

²² Snow and ice are thought of as being in store, brought out by God for specific purposes, such as times of battle (see Jos 10:11, Ex 9:2, Is 28:17, Is 30:30 & Ps 18:13).

כג	אֲשֶׁר־חֲשַׁכְתִּי לַעֲת־צָר לְיוֹם קָרֵב וּמִלְחָמָה:	23	which I keep for times of distress, for days of battle and war?
כד	אֵי־זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ יַחֲלֹק אֹר יִפֹּץ קָדִים עַל־אָרֶץ:	24	From which direction does the lightning fork, where in the world does the east wind blow out?
כה	מִי־פִלַּג לַשֹּׁטֶף תַּעֲלֶה וְדֶרֶךְ לַחֲזִיז קְלוֹת:	25	Who bores a channel for the downpour or clears the way for the rolling thunder,
כו	לְהַמְטִיר עַל־אָרֶץ לֹא־אִישׁ מְדַבֵּר לֹא־אָדָם בּוֹ:	26	so that rain may fall on lands where no one lives, and the deserts void of human dwelling,
כז	לְהַשְׁבִּיעַ שָׂאָה וּמִשְׁאָה וְלַהֲצַמִּיחַ מִצָּא דָשָׁא:	27	to meet the needs of the lonely wastes and make the ground put forth grass?
כח	הֵי־שֶׁל־לְמֹטֵר אָב אֹז מִי־הוֹלִיד אֶגְלֵי־טָל:	28	Has the rain a father? Who begets the dewdrops?
כט	מִבֶּטֶן מִי יֵצֵא הַקָּרָח וּכְפָר שָׁמַיִם מִי יִלְדוּ:	29	What womb brings forth the ice, who gives birth to the frost of heaven,
ל	כָּאֵבֶן מִים יִתְחַבְּאוּ וּפְנֵי תְהוֹם יִתְלַכְּדוּ:	30	when the waters grow hard as stone and the surface of the deep freezes?

23 The terms translated 'battle' and 'war' are different but both may be translated 'war' or 'battle', depending on the context.

24 For the 1st line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "What is the way to the place where the light is distributed."

25 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt?"

26 Astonishingly, rain falls on 'lands where no one lives' – such puzzling prodigality!

27 Vv. 26–27 emphasise the generosity of God, or possibly his care for creatures other than human beings.

28 The answer to these questions is, of course, that God is the Father.

29 The term שָׁמַיִם may be translated 'heaven(s)' or 'sky' depending on the context.

30 Some suggest that the verb translated 'grow hard' is not derived from 'to hide' but from a homonym, 'to congeal'; however, this may be too difficult to support.

לא הִתְקַשֵּׁר מַעֲדָנוֹת כִּימָה
 או־מִשְׁכוֹת כָּסִיל תִּפְתָּח:
 לב הִתְצִיא מְזֻרוֹת בְּעֵתוֹ
 וְעִישׁ עַל־בְּנֵיהֶ תִּנְחֵם:
 לג הִידַעַת חֻקֹּת שָׁמַיִם
 אִם־תִּשְׁשִׁים מִשְׁטְרוֹ בָּאָרֶץ:
 לד הִתְרִים לַעֲב קוֹלֶךָ
 וְשִׁפְעַת־מִים תִּכְסֶּךָ:
 לה הִתְשַׁלַּח בְּרָקִים וּלְכוּ
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְךָ הִנֵּנוּ:
 לו מִי־שֵׁת בִּטְחוֹת חֲכָמָה
 אוֹ מִי־נָתַן לִשְׁכוֹי בִּינָה:
 לו מִי־סִפֵּר שְׁחָקִים בְּחֲכָמָה
 וַנִּבְלִי שָׁמַיִם מִי יִשְׁכִּיב:

31 “Can you fasten the harness of the Pleiades,
 or untie Orion’s bands?
 32 Can you guide the Crown season by season
 and show the Bear and its cubs which way to go?
 33 Have you grasped the celestial laws?
 Could you establish their rule on the earth?
 34 Can your voice carry as far as the clouds
 and make the pent up waters cover you?
 35 Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go
 and answer, “Here we are?”
 36 Who endowed the ibis with wisdom
 and gave the cock his intelligence?
 37 Whose skill details every cloud
 and tilts the water-skins of heaven

³¹ The word translated ‘harness’ is found only here and in 1S 15:32.

³² The ‘Crown’ is the constellation Corona Borealis, according to one of the possible derivations of the word (the NRSV uses the Hebrew name ‘Mazzaroth’). Alternatives are: ‘the shepherd’s star’ (compare the Vg: ‘Lucifer’) or ‘the Hyades’, since Aldebaran marked the rainy season and time for ploughing. The ‘cubs’ of the ‘Bear’ (Ursa Major) are perhaps the constellation of Ursa Minor.

³³ In place of ‘establish their rule’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘make their writ run’.

³⁴ The NJB, following the LXX (ὑπακούσεται σου), has ‘do your bidding’ in place of ‘cover you’ (here following the MT & NRSV).

³⁵ For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Will lightning flashes come at your command?”

³⁶ The words ‘ibis’ and ‘cock’ are uncertain translations (the NRSV has, “Who has put wisdom into the inward parts, or given understanding to the mind?”). The word translated ‘cock’ occurs only here but is rendered thus by the Tg. ‘Ibis’ (טחיות) seems to be a transcription of ‘Thoth’, the Egyptian ibis-god of wisdom; the word occurs once elsewhere (Ps 51:6) but with a totally different meaning. Both these birds were credited with having the faculty of foreknowledge: the ibis announcing the flooding of the Nile, the cock announcing the coming of day.

³⁷ The word translated ‘tilts’ actually means ‘causes to lie down’.

לח בצקת עפר למוצק
 ורגבים ידבקו:
 לט התצוד ללביא טרף
 ותית כפירים תמלא:
 מ כי-ישחו במעונות
 ישובו בסכה למו-ארב:
 מא מי יבין לערב צידו
 כי-ילדו אל-אל ישועו
 יתעו לבלי-אכל:

38 until the dust runs into a mass
 and the cracks in the ground close up?
 39 “Do you go hunting prey for the lioness;
 do you satisfy the hunger of young lions
 40 where they crouch in their dens,
 waiting eagerly in the bushes?
 41 Who makes provision for the raven
 when his little ones cry out to God,
 wandering about in search of food?

³⁸ The word translated ‘runs into a mass’ (following the NRSV – the NJB has ‘solidifies’) means ‘flow’ or ‘cast’ (as in casting metals); thus, the noun developed the sense of ‘hard’, as in cast metal.

³⁹ The speech moves from inanimate nature to the animal kingdom. The fiercest and wildest species, and also the most bizarre, are selected. God provides for all of them.

⁴⁰ For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “or lie in wait in their covert” and NETB has “when they wait in ambush in the thicket?”

⁴¹ This verse is difficult, making some suspect that a line has dropped out: the little birds in the nest hardly go wandering about looking for food.

איוב פרק לט

א הִידַעְתָּ עֵת לִדְתַּי יַעֲלִי־סֹלֶעַ
חֲלָל אֵילֹת תִּשְׁמֹר:
ב תִּסְפֹּר יָרְחִים תִּמְלֹאנָה
וְיִדַעְתָּ עֵת לִדְתָּנָה:
ג תִּכְרַעְנָה יִלְדֶיהָ תִּפְלַחְנָה
חֲבִלֵיהֶם תִּשְׁלַחְנָה:
ד יִחַלְמוּ בְנֵיהֶם יִרְבוּ בִּבְרָא
יֵצְאוּ וְלֹא־שָׁבוּ לָמוֹ:
ה מִי־שָׁלַח פָּרָא חֲפָשִׁי
וּמִסְרֹת עָרֹד מִי פִתָּח:
ו אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמְתִי עֲרֵבָה בֵּיתוֹ
וּמִשְׁכְּנֹתָיו מִלְחָה:
ז יִשְׁחַק לַהֲמוֹן קָרִיָּה
תִּשְׁאֹת נָגַשׁ לֹא יִשְׁמַע:

JOB 39

1 "Do you know when mountain goats give birth?
Have you ever watched deer in labour?
2 Can you number the months that they fulfil?
Do you know the time when they give birth?
3 They crouch to give birth to their young;
they get rid of their burdens.
4 Their calves become strong and grow up in the open;
they go forth and never come back to them.
5 Who has given the wild donkey his freedom;
who has undone the harness of the brayer?
6 I have given him the steppe as his home,
the salt plain as his habitat.
7 He scorns the turmoil of the town,
obeys no driver's shouts.

JOB 39

- 1 The wild goats and the hinds are selected because their breeding goes unobserved and uncared for except by God; so too, the ostrich (v. 13).
- 2 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV (and MT), the NJB reads, "Have you ever counted the months that they carry their young?"
- 3 The verb translated 'give birth' literally means 'cleave' and this would not have the object 'their young'. We have emended the פ to ט and get a verb 'to drop', as used in 21:10; others hold out for the MT, arguing it is an idiom, 'to breach the womb'.
- 4 The Aramaism translated 'in the open' (found only here) has the idea of the open countryside.
- 5 For this verse, the NRSV reads, "Who has let the wild ass go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift ass?" and NETB has, "Who let the wild donkey go free? Who released the bonds of the donkey?"
- 6 In place of 'steppe', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'wasteland'.
- 7 The animal is happier in open countryside than in a busy town, and on its own rather than being driven by a herdsman.

ח	יְתוֹר הָרִים מְרַעֵהוּ וְאַחַר כָּל־יֶרֶק יִדְרוֹשׁ:	8	The mountains are the pastures that he ranges in quest of every green plant.
ט	הֲיֹאבֶה הַיָּם עֲבֹדֶךָ אִם־יָלִין עַל־אֲבוֹסֶךָ:	9	“Is the wild ox willing to serve you or spend a night beside your manger?
י	הֲתִקְשְׁרֵרִים בְּתֵלֶם עֲבֹתוֹ אִם־יִשְׁדֹּד עֲמָקִים אַחֲרֶיךָ:	10	If you tie the wild ox to a furrow with a rope, will he harrow the valleys behind you?
יא	הֲתִבְטַח־בּוֹ כִּי־רַב כָּחוֹ וְתַעֲזֹב אֵלָיו יִגִּיעֶךָ:	11	Can you rely on his massive strength and leave your heavy work to him?
יב	הֲתִתְאַמֵּין בּוֹ כִּי־יָשִׁיב יִשׁוּב זֶרְעֶךָ וְגִרְנֶךָ יֵאָסֶף:	12	Can you depend on him to bring in your grain and pile it on your threshing-floor?
יג	כִּנְף־רֶנְנִים נִעְלָסָה אִם־אֲבִרָה חֲסִידָה וְנִצָּה:	13	“Can the wing of the ostrich be compared with the plumage of stork or falcon?

⁸ ‘Every green plant’ follows NETB; the NRSV has ‘every green thing’ and the NJB has ‘anything green’.

⁹ In place of ‘manger’ (following the NJB), the NRSV has ‘crib’ and NETB has ‘feeding trough’. Note the unusual dagesh on the *resh* in רִים.

¹⁰ Some think that the addition of the ‘wild ox’ (רִים) here is a copyist’s error, making the stich too long, and therefore delete it; also, binding an animal to the furrow with ropes is unusual. So, with a slight emendation, they read, “Will you bind it with a halter of cord?” While the MT is unusual, the sense is understandable, and no changes, even slight ones, are absolutely necessary.

¹¹ A looser interpretation of the word translated ‘leave’ is ‘commit’.

¹² There is a textual problem here: the *Kethib* has יָשׁוּב, meaning ‘(that) he will return’, but the *Qere* has יָשִׁיב, meaning ‘that he will bring in’; the latter is the preferred reading, since the object follows it. For commentators who think the line too unbalanced for this, the object is moved to the 2nd colon, and the reading ‘returns’ is taken for the 1st. However, the MT is perfectly clear as it stands. The word here translated ‘depend’ is normally translated ‘believe’ in the Bible; the idea is that of considering something dependable and acting on it. (The idea of reliability is found also in the Niphal stem usages.)

¹³ The whole section of the ostrich (vv. 13–18) is absent from the LXX and is thought by some scholars to be an addition. This verse follows the Tg; the MT is corrupt. The NRSV has, “The ostrich’s wings flap wildly, though its pinions lack plumage.”

י	כִּי־תַעֲזֹב לָאָרֶץ בְּצִיָּה וְעַל־עֹפֶר תַּחֲמָם: וְתִשְׁכַּח כִּי־רָגַל תִּזְוֶרָה וְחַיִּית הַשָּׂדֶה תִּדּוּשָׁה: הַקָּשִׁיחַ בְּנִיָּה לֹא־לָהּ לְרִיק יִגְיַעַה בְּלִי־פֶחֶד: כִּי־הָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים חֲכָמָה וְלֹא־חָלַק לָהּ בִּבְיָנָה: כַּעֲת בַּמְרוֹם תִּמְרִיא תִּשְׁחַק לְסוֹס וּלְרֹכֶבּוֹ: יֵט הִתְתֵּן לְסוֹס גִּבּוֹרָה הַתְּלַבִּישׁ צֹאֲרוֹ רַעְמָה: כ הִתְרַעִישָׁנוּ כָּאֲרָבָה הוֹד נָחֲרוּ אֵימָה:	14	She leaves her eggs on the ground with only earth to warm them, 15 forgetting that a foot may tread on them or a wild animal crush them. 16 She is harsh to her chicks as if they were not hers, little she cares if her labour goes for nothing. 17 For, God has deprived her of wisdom and given her no share of intelligence. 18 Yet, if she bestirs herself to use her height, she can make fools of horse and rider too. 19 “Are you the one who makes the horse so brave and cover his neck with flowing mane? 20 Do you make him leap like a grasshopper? His haughty neighing inspires terror.
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14 The word translated ‘leaves’ may have the connotation of ‘lays’ or ‘places’, rather than simply abandoning.

15 The literal translation of ‘wild animal’ is ‘animal of the field’.

16 The verb translated ‘she is harsh’ is used for hardening the heart elsewhere (see Is 63:17).

17 The ostrich is not renowned for its wisdom!

18 For the 1st line, the NRSV has, ‘When she spreads her plumes aloft’; the meaning of the MT uncertain – literally, ‘she springs up’, which could suggest flight.

19 Here, the ‘horse’ is the warhorse. The 2nd half of the verse contains a *hapax legomenon*, here translated ‘flowing mane’, which is usually connected with the word for ‘thunder’.

20 The word translated ‘neighing’ could mean ‘snorting’ as well (see Jr 8:16; it comes from the root ‘to blow’); if the horse is running and breathing hard, this could be the sense here.

כא יִחַפְּרוּ בְּעֵמֶק וַיִּשִׁישׁ בְּכַח
 יֵצֵא לִקְרַאת־נֶשֶׁק:
 כב יִשְׁחַק לִפְחַד וְלֹא יַחַת
 וְלֹא־יָשׁוּב מִפְּנֵי־חֶרֶב:
 כג עָלָיו תִּרְנָה אֶשְׁפָּה
 לֵהֵב חֲנִית וְכִידּוֹן:
 כד בָּרַעַשׁ וּרְגָז יִגְמַא־אָרֶץ
 וְלֹא־יֵאֱמִין כִּי־קוֹל שׁוֹפָר:
 כה בְּדִי שֹׁפָר | יֹאמֶר הָאָח
 וּמִרְחוֹק יֵרִיחַ מִלְחָמָה
 רָעַם שָׁרִים וְתִרְוּעָה:
 כו הַמְּבִינָתָךְ יֹאבֶר־נָגַן
 יִפְרֹשׁ כַּנְּפוֹ לְתִימָן:
 כז אֶס־עַל־פִּיךָ יִגְבִּיָּה נֶשֶׁר
 וְכִי יָרִים קִנּוּ:

21 Exultantly he paws the soil of the valley,
 and charges the battle-line in all his strength.
 22 He laughs at fear and is not dismayed;
 he does not turn back from the sword.
 23 Upon it rattles the quiver,
 the flashing spear and the javelin.
 24 Trembling with impatience, he swallows the ground;
 when the trumpet sounds, there is no holding him.
 25 At each trumpet blast, he neighs exultantly.
 He scents the battle from afar,
 the thundering of the commanders and the war cry.
 26 "Is it your wisdom that sets the hawk flying,
 when he spreads his wings to travel south?
 27 Does the eagle soar at your command
 to make her eyrie in the heights?

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- 21 In place of 'he paws', the MT has 'they dig'. The armies would prepare for battles that were usually fought in the valleys, and so the horse was ready to charge.
- 22 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "He laughs at fear; he is afraid of nothing, he recoils before no sword."
- 23 The weapon referred to as a 'javelin' could also be a scimitar.
- 24 The phrase 'swallows the ground' is a metaphor for the horse's running.
- 25 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "When the trumpet sounds, it says 'Aha!' From a distance it smells the battle, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."
- 26 Migration is proof of the instinctive wisdom infused by the Creator (Jr 8:7).
- 27 The literal translation of 'command' is 'mouth'.

כח סֶלַע יִשְׁכֵּן וַיִּתְּלֶנָּה
עַל שֵׁן-סֶלַע וּמְצוּדָה:
כט מִשָּׁם חִפָּה-אֶכֶל
לְמִרְחֹק עֵינֶיהָ יִבִּיטוּ:
ל וְאֶפְרָחוּ יַעֲלֶה-דָּם
וּבֶאֱשֶׁר חָלְלִים שָׁם הוּא:

28 She spends her nights among the crags
with a rocky crag as her fortress,
29 from which she spies her prey,
fixing it with her far-ranging eye.
30 Even her young drink blood;
where anyone has been killed, she is there."

²⁸ Literally translated, 'rocky crag' is 'tooth of a rock'.

²⁹ The word translated 'spies' means 'search' but can be used for a wide range of matters, including spying.

³⁰ The word חָלְלִים designates someone who is fatally wounded, literally the 'pierced one', meaning anyone or thing that dies a violent death.

איוב פרק מ

JOB 40

- א וַיַּעַן יְהוָה אֶת־אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Still speaking to Job, Yahweh said:
- ב הֲלֹב עַם־שָׂדֵי יִסּוֹר 2 “Will Shaddai’s opponent correct him?
מוֹכִיחַ אֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנָּה: Has God’s critic thought up an answer?”
- ג וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר: 3 Job replied to Yahweh, saying:
- ד הֵן קָלְתִּי מָה אֲשִׁיבָךְ 4 “My words have been frivolous: what can I reply?
יָדִי שָׁמַתִּי לְמוֹפִי: I had better lay my hand over my mouth.
- ה אַחַת דִּבַּרְתִּי וְלֹא אֶעֱנֶה 5 I have spoken once, I shall not answer;
וּשְׁתִּים וְלֹא אוֹסִיף: twice, I will say no more.”
- ו וַיַּעַן־יְהוָה אֶת־אִיּוֹב מִנְּסַעֲרָה [מִן | סַעֲרָה] 6 And Yahweh gave Job his answer from the heart of the tempest;
וַיֹּאמֶר: and he said:
- ז אֲזַר־נָא כַּגִּבֹּר חֲלָצִיךָ 7 “Brace yourself like a fighter,
אֲשֶׁאֲלֶךָ וְהוֹדִיעֲנִי: I will question you and you shall inform me!
- ח הֲאֵף תִּפְּר מִשְׁפָּטִי 8 Do you really want to reverse my judgement,
תִּרְשִׁיעֲנִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדָּק: put me in the wrong and yourself in the right?

JOB 40

- 1 The LXX lacks this introductory verse. Job wanted debate with God; God confronts him with the mystery of his wisdom, manifest in his works.
- 2 The verb יִסּוֹר (*‘correct’*) is found only here but comes from a common root; several corrections have been offered: the NJB reads *‘give way’* (יִסּוֹר).
- 3 Now Job has his first chance to answer God.
- 4 Job offers an elaborate statement – of silence. Is this evasive, or humility, or defiance? He does not say that he has sinned (see 42:7).
- 5 Literally translated, the verse ends, *“I will not add.”*
- 6 The Kethib/Qere difference (separating מִנְּסַעֲרָה into 2 words) would benefit from an explanation.
- 7 *‘Fighter’* follows the Tg and Peshitta; the MT has *‘man’* (emendation of vowels), as also in 38:3.
- 8 The verb תִּפְּר (*‘reverse’*) means *‘annul’*, *‘break’*, or *‘frustrate’*.

ט	וְאַם־זְרוּעַ כָּאֵל לָךְ וּבְקוֹל כְּמָהוּ תִרְעַם:	9	Has your arm the strength of God's? Can your voice thunder as loud?
י	עֲדָה נָא גְאוֹן וְגִבָּה וְהוֹד וְהָדָר תִּלְבָּשׁ:	10	Come on, display your majesty and grandeur, and robe yourself in splendour and glory.
יא	הַפֶּץ עֲבָרוֹת אַפְּךָ וּרְאֵה כָּל־גָּאָה וְהַשְׁפִּילָהּ:	11	Let the fury of your anger burst forth; humble the haughty at a glance!
יב	רְאֵה כָּל־גָּאָה הַכְּנִיעֶהּ וְהַדֵּךְ רָשָׁעִים תַּחְתָּם:	12	At a glance, bring down all the proud; strike down the wicked where they stand.
יג	טָמְנָם בְּעֶפְרָ יָחַד פְּנִיָּהֶם חִבֵּשׁ בְּטָמוֹן:	13	Bury the lot of them in the ground; shut them, every one, in the Dungeon.
יד	וְגַם־אֲנִי אוֹדֶךָ כִּי־תוֹשַׁע לִךְ יְמִינֶךָ:	14	Then I shall be the first to acknowledge you, since your own right hand can save you.
טו	הִנֵּה־נָא בַּהֲמוֹת אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּךְ חֲצִיר כִּבְקָר יֹאכֵל:	15	Look at Behemoth, my creature, just as you are! He feeds on green stuff like the ox.
טז	הִנֵּה־נָא כַּחוֹ בְּמַתְנָיו וְאוֹזְנוֹ בְּשָׁרֵירֵי בִטְנוֹ:	16	What strength he has is in his loins, what power in his stomach muscles!

⁹ The literal translation of the 1st line is, “Do you have an arm like God?”

¹⁰ God now seems to be taunting Job.

¹¹ God is challenging Job to unleash his power and judge wickedness in the world.

¹² ‘Proud’ follows the LXX; the MT repeats ‘haughty’.

¹³ The ‘Dungeon’ (the NRSV has ‘world below’) is Sheol (see #Nb 6:33), where the Shades are dumb.

¹⁴ The verb rendered ‘acknowledge’ is usually translated ‘praise’, but with the sense of a public declaration or acknowledgment.

¹⁵ ‘Behemoth’ is the plural form of a word meaning ‘beast’ or ‘cattle’. Behemoth has been identified with the elephant, or with a mythical buffalo mentioned in Ugaritic texts, or, as here, the hippopotamus, as symbol of brute force, controlled by God but beyond human power to tame.

¹⁶ In vv. 15 & 16, הִנֵּה has the deictic force: it calls attention to something by pointing it out.

יִחַפֵּץ זָנְבוֹ כְּמוֹ-אֵרֶז יז
 גִּידֵי פִתְחוֹ יִשְׁרְגּוּ: יח
 עֲצָמָיו אֲפִיקֵי נְחֹשֶׁה יח
 גְּרָמָיו כְּמַטֵּיל בְּרָזָל: יח
 הוּא רִאשִׁית דְּרָכֵי-אֱלֹהִים יט
 הָעֹשֵׂה יָגֵשׁ חֶרְבוֹ: יט
 כִּי-בֹל הָרִים יִשְׁאוּ-לוֹ כ
 וְכָל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה יִשְׁחַקוּ-שָׁם: כ
 תַּחַת-צִאֲלִים יִשְׁכַּב כא
 בְּסִתֵּר קִנָּה וּבְצֶה: כא
 יִסְכְּהוּ צִאֲלִים צֶלֶלָו כב
 יִסְבּוּהוּ עֲרֵבֵי-נַחַל: כב
 הֵן יַעֲשֶׂק נָהָר לֹא יַחְפּוֹז כג
 יִבְטַח | כִּי-יָגִיחַ יֵרֶדֶן אֶל-פִּיהוּ: כג
 בְּעֵינָיו יִקְחֵנוּ כד
 בְּמוֹקְשִׁים יִנְקֹב-אַף: כד

17 It makes its tail stiff like a cedar;
 the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
 18 His bones are bronze tubes,
 his limbs like iron bars.
 19 He is the first of the works of God.
 His maker threatened him with the sword,
 20 for the mountains yield food for him
 where all the wild animals play.
 21 Under the lotus leaves he lies,
 hiding among the reeds in the swamps.
 22 The leaves of the lotus give him shade;
 the willows by the stream shelter him.
 23 If the river overflows, he does not worry;
 he is secure though Jordan rushes against his mouth.
 24 Who is going to catch him by the eyes
 or put traps through his nose?

17 The verb חִפֵּץ ('makes stiff') occurs only here.

18 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "his frame, like forged iron."

19 The literal translation of 'works' is 'ways'.

20 The NJB emends the verse to, "forbidding him the mountain regions and all the wild animals that play there."

21 In place of 'leaves', the NRSV has 'trees' and NETB has 'plants'; the NJB lacks the word.

22 The suffix on 'shade' is singular, but it must refer to that of the lotus leaves.

23 'Overflows' follows the LXX; the MT has 'oppresses' (the NRSV has 'is turbulent').

24 The pronoun 'who' is restored, having fallen out of the text after the last word of v. 23.

כה תִּמְשֹׁךְ לוֹיִתָּן בַּחֲבֶה
 וּבְחֶבֶל תִּשְׁקִיעַ לְשׁוֹנוֹ:
 כו הַתְּשִׁים אֶגְמֹן בְּאַפּוֹ
 וּבְחוֹחַ תִּקְבֹּל לַחֲיוֹ:
 כז הִירְבֵּה אֵלֶיךָ תַּחֲנוּנִים
 אִם־יִדְבֹּר אֵלֶיךָ רַכּוֹת:
 כח הִיכָרֶת בְּרִית עִמָּךְ
 תִּקְחֶנּוּ לְעֶבֶד עוֹלָם:
 כט הַתְּשַׁחֲקֵבּוּ בַּצִּפּוֹר
 וְתִקְשְׁרֶנּוּ לְנִעְרוּתֶיךָ:
 ל יִכְרוּ עָלָיו חֲבָרִים
 יַחְצוּהוּ בֵּין כְּנַעֲנִים:
 לא הִתְמַלֵּא בְּשָׁכוֹת עוֹרוֹ
 וּבְצִלְצֵל דְּגִים רֹאשׁוֹ:
 לב שִׁים־עָלָיו כַּפָּךְ
 זָכֹר מִלְחָמָה אֶל־תּוֹסֶף:

25 “Leviathan, too! Can you catch him with a fishhook
 or hold his tongue down with a rope?
 26 Can you put a cane through his nose
 or pierce his jaw with a hook?
 27 Will he plead lengthily with you,
 addressing you in different tones?
 28 Will he strike a bargain with you
 to become your slave for life?
 29 Will you play with him, like a bird,
 and keep him on a lead to amuse your little girls?
 30 Is he to be sold by the fishing guild
 and then retailed by merchants?
 31 Can you riddle his hide with harpoons,
 or his head with fishing spears?
 32 You have only to lay a finger on him
 never to forget the struggle or risk it again!

25 Vv. 25–32 are included in most English translations as 41:1–8; here, we follow the *MT* & *NJB*. ‘Leviathan’ is generally considered to be the crocodile (or similar creature).

26 The *NJB* has ‘nostrils’ in place of ‘nose’, here following the *NRSV* & *NETB*.

27 The verse asks if the animal, when caught, tied and under control, would keep on begging for mercy: No! That is not in the nature of the beast.

28 The literal translation of ‘strike a bargain’ is ‘cut a covenant’.

29 The verb translated ‘play’ is שָׁחַק (‘sport’ or ‘trifle’, see Ps 104:26).

30 The ‘merchants’ (literally, ‘Canaanites’) were teams of fishermen, the merchants of the East.

31 The *NJB* has ‘darts’ in place of ‘harpoons’.

32 The verse uses two imperatives, which can be interpreted in sequence: do this, and then this will happen.

איוב פרק מא

א הִנֵּה־תַּחֲלֹתָיו נִכְזָּבָה
הַגִּם אֶל־מִרְאֵיו יִטֹּל:
ב לֹא־אֶכְזֹר כִּי יַעֲוֶרְנִי
וּמִי הוּא לִפְנֵי יִתְיַצֵּב:
ג מִי הַקְּדִימָנִי וְאֶשְׁלֵם
תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם לִי־הוּא:
ד לֹא לֹא־אֲחֲרִישׁ בְּדָיו
וּדְבַר־גְּבוּרֹת וְחֵין עֲרָפוֹ:
ה מִי־גָלָה פָּנָי לְבוֹשׁוֹ
בְּכַפֵּל רִסְנוֹ מִי יָבוֹא:
ו דִּלְתֵּי פָּנָיו מִי פִתַּח
סְבִיבוֹת שָׁנָיו אֵימָה:
ז גִּאֲוָה אֶפִּיקִי מִגִּנָּים
סָגֹר חֹתֶם צָר:

JOB 41

1 "Any hope you might have would be futile;
the mere sight of him would overwhelm you
2 When roused, he grows ferocious:
who could ever stand up to me?
3 Who has ever attacked him with impunity?
No one beneath all heaven!
4 Next, I will talk of his limbs
and describe his matchless strength:
5 Who can undo the front of his tunic
or pierce the double armour of his breastplate?
6 Who dare open the gates of his mouth?
Terror reigns round his teeth!
7 His back is like rows of shields,
shut, a tight seal,

JOB 41

- 1 This is verse 9 in the NRSV (see #40:25); all other verse numbers therein are accordingly increased. 'You' in the 1st line follows the *Peshitta*; the MT has 'he'. The NRSV has, "Any hope of capturing him..."
- 2 The MT has 'me' in place of 'him', a theological emendation – God being the only one who is irresistible.
- 3 'Attacked him with impunity' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'attacked me to make me give back'.
- 4 The significance of the *Kethib*/ *Qere* difference here is not trivial.
- 5 'Breastplate' follows the LXX (θώρακος, reading סְרִיזָן); the MT has 'bridle' (רִסְנוֹ).
- 6 The literal translation for 'his mouth' is 'his face'.
- 7 'Back' follows the LXX; the MT has 'pride'.

ח	אֶחָד בְּאַחַד יָגֵשׁ וְרוּחַ לֹא־יָבֹא בֵּינֵיהֶם:	8	each is so close to the next that no breath could pass between,
ט	אִישׁ־בְּאַחִיהוּ יִדְבְּקוּ יִתְלַכְדוּ וְלֹא יִתְפָּרְדּוּ:	9	sticking to one another, making an impervious whole.
י	עֲטִישָׁתוֹ תִּהְיֶה אוֹר וְעֵינָיו כְּעַפְעֵפֵי־שַׁחַר:	10	His sneezes radiate light; his eyes are like the eyelashes of the dawn.
יא	מִפִּיּוֹ לִפְיֵדִים יִהְיוּ כִּידוּדֵי אֵשׁ יִתְמַלְטוּ:	11	From his mouth come fiery torches, sparks of fire leap out of it.
יב	מִנְחִירָיו יֵצֵא עָשָׁן כְּדוּד נִפּוֹחַ וְאַגְמֹן:	12	His nostrils belch smoke as from a boiling cauldron or burning reeds.
יג	נִפְשׁוֹ גְּחָלִים תִּלְהֶט וְלֶהֱב מִפִּיּוֹ יֵצֵא:	13	His breath could kindle coals, flame issues from his mouth.
יד	בְּצוּאָרוֹ יֵלֵן עֹז וְלִפְנָיו תְּדוּץ דָּאֲבָה:	14	His strength resides in his neck; terror leaps before him as he goes.
טו	מִפְּלִי בְּשָׂרוֹ דְּבָקוּ יִצּוּק עָלָיו בַּל־יִמּוּט:	15	The strips of his flesh cling together, firmly set in and immovable.

⁸ The expression 'each ... to the next' is literally 'one with one'.

⁹ The literal translation of 'to one another' is 'a man with his brother'.

¹⁰ The crocodile sneezes a shower of water drops, shining in the sun.

¹¹ The image is that of pent-up breath with water in a hot steam jet coming from its mouth, like a stream of fire in the rays of the sun.

¹² The word 'burning' is supplied; the Peshitta and Vg have 'a seething and boiling pot' (reading אַגְמֹן for אַגְמֹן), a view that is widely accepted.

¹³ The language is hyperbolic, probably to reflect the pagan ideas of the dragon of the deep in a polemical way – they feared it as a fire breathing monster but, in reality, it might have been a steamy crocodile.

¹⁴ The NJB has the conjectural 'violence' in place of 'terror'; the word, דָּאֲבָה, is a hapax legomenon.

¹⁵ The last clause says 'it cannot be moved' but this part functions adverbially in the sentence.

טז	לְבוֹ יִצּוֹק כְּמוֹ-אַבֵּן וְיִצּוֹק כְּפֶלֶחַ תַּחְתִּית:	16	His heart is as hard as rock, unyielding as the lower millstone.
יז	מִשְׁתּוֹ יִגְּרוּ אֱלֹהִים מִשְׁבָּרִים יִתְחַטְּאוּ:	17	When he stands up, the gods take fright; because of the crashing, they retreat.
יח	מִשְׁיָגְהוֹ חֶרֶב בְּלִי תָקוּם חֲנִית מַסֵּעַ וְשָׁרִיָּה:	18	Sword may strike but will not affect him, no more will spear, javelin or lance.
יט	יַחֲשֵׁב לְתֶבֶן בְּרֹזַל לְעָץ רַקְבּוֹן נְחוֹשֶׁה:	19	It counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood.
כ	לֹא-יִבְרִיחֵנוּ בֶן-קֶשֶׁת לֶקֶשׁ נִהַפְכוֹ-לוֹ אֲבִי-קַלֵּעַ:	20	No arrow can make him flee; a sling-stone tickles him like hay.
כא	בְּקֶשׁ נִחְשְׁבוּ תוֹתַח וְיִשְׁחַק לְרַעַשׁ כִּידּוֹן:	21	A club is counted like a straw, he laughs at the whirring javelin.
כב	תַּחְתּוֹ חֲדוּדֵי חֶרֶשׁ יִרְפֹּד חֲרוּץ עַל־טִיט:	22	His underparts are like sharp potsherds, and moves across the slime like a harrow.
כג	יִרְתִּיחַ בְּסִיר מְצוּלָה יָם יִשִּׁים בְּמִרְקָחָה:	23	He makes the depths seethe like a cauldron; he makes the sea fume like a scent burner.

¹⁶ The description of his heart being 'hard' means that he is cruel and fearless; the word is used elsewhere for cast metal.

¹⁷ The NJB has the conjectural 'waves' in place of 'gods'.

¹⁸ The verb קוּם ('stand') with בְּלִי ('not') has the sense of 'has no effect'.

¹⁹ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Iron means no more to him than straw, nor bronze than rotten wood."

²⁰ The literal translation for 'arrow' is 'son of the bow'.

²¹ The verb in the 1st line is plural but, since there is no expressed subject, it is translated as a passive here.

²² The literal translation of 'underparts' is 'under him'.

²³ The idea is either that the sea is stirred up like the foam from beating the ingredients together, or it is the musk-smell that is the point of comparison.

כד אַחֲרָיו יֵאִיר נְתִיב
 יִחְשָׁב תְּהוֹם לְשִׁיבָה:
 כה אֵין-עַל-עֶפְרָ מְשֻׁלּוֹ
 הֶעָשׂוּ לְבַל־יִחַת:
 כו אֶת-כָּל-גְּבוּהַ יִרְאֶה
 הוּא מֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל-בְּנֵי-שָׁחַץ:

24 Behind him, he leaves a glittering wake –
 a white fleece seems to float on the deeps.
 25 He has no equal on earth;
 a creature without fear.
 26 He looks the haughtiest in the eye:
 of all the lordly beasts, he is king.”

²⁴ When he dives, the air bubbles rise; as he swims, he leaves a gleaming furrow.

²⁵ Literally translated, ‘creature’ is ‘one who was made’.

²⁶ The ‘lordly beasts’ are the wild animals (see 28:8), type of the powerful things of the earth that God alone can control (40:7–14).

איוב פרק מב

JOB 42

א וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר: 1 Then Job gave this answer to Yahweh:

ב יָדַעַת יַדְעָתִי כִּי־כָל תּוּכָל
וְלֹא־יִבְצֹר מִמֶּךָּ מִזְמָה:
ג מִי זֶה | מַעֲלִים עֲצָה בְּלִי־דַעַת
לְכֵן הִגַּדְתִּי וְלֹא אָבִין
נִפְלְאוֹת מִמֶּנִּי וְלֹא אֲדַע:
ד שִׁמְעֵנָּה וְאַנְכִי אֲדַבֵּר
אֲשַׁאלְךָ וְהוֹדִיעֵנִי:
ה לְשִׁמְעֵ־אָזְנוֹ שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ
וְעַתָּה עֵינֵי רָאִיתִיךָ:
ו עַל־כֵּן אֲמַאֵס וְנִחַמְתִּי
עַל־עֲפָר וָאֵפֶר:

2 “I know that you are all powerful:
what you conceive, you can perform.
3 “Who is this obscuring counsel with ignorant words?”
You have told me about works I cannot understand,
about marvels beyond me, of which I know nothing.
4 Listen, please, and let me speak:
I will question you and you shall inform me.
5 Before, I knew you only by hearsay
but now, having seen you with my own eyes,
6 I retract what I have said,
and repent in dust and ashes.”

JOB 42

¹ For this verse, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* reads, “Then Job answered the LORD.”

² The significance of the *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here (an added *yod*) is not obvious.

³ Job is here repeating God’s question of 38:2.

⁴ The *NJB* parenthesises this verse, which it considers to be probably a gloss (see 33:31, 38:3).

⁵ Job’s experience was not, strictly speaking, a vision (see #Ex 33:20), but a fresh appreciation of the true nature of God. Previously, Job’s conception of God had been conventional and second-hand, but now he experiences the mystery for himself and bows down before the Almighty. His questions have not been answered but he has come to understand that God cannot be called to account, and that his wisdom may give an unsuspected meaning to such realities as suffering and death.

⁶ ‘Dust and ashes’ were the common gestures of sorrow and repentance (see 2:8).

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי דִבֶּר יְהוָה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־אֵיּוֹב
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אֱלִיפָז הַתִּימָנִי חֲרָה אַפִּי בְךָ וּבִשְׁנֵי
רֵעֶיךָ כִּי לֹא דִבַּרְתֶּם אֵלַי נְכוֹנָה כְּעַבְדִּי אֵיּוֹב: {ס}
ח וַעֲתָה קְחוּ־לָכֶם שִׁבְעַה־פָּרִים וְשִׁבְעַה אֵילִים וּלְכוּ
אֶל־עַבְדִּי אֵיּוֹב וְהַעֲלִיתֶם עֹלָה בַּעֲדָכֶם וְאֵיּוֹב עַבְדִּי
יִתְפַּלֵּל עֲלֵיכֶם כִּי אִם־פָּגַיוּ אֲשָׁא לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם
נְבִלָה כִּי לֹא דִבַּרְתֶּם אֵלַי נְכוֹנָה כְּעַבְדִּי אֵיּוֹב: ט וּלְכוּ
אֱלִיפָז הַתִּימָנִי וּבִלְדָד הַשּׁוּחִי צִפֹּר הַנַּעֲמָתִי וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶם יְהוָה וַיֵּשָׂא יְהוָה אֶת־פָּגִי אֵיּוֹב:

י וַיְהִי וַיָּשֶׁב אֶת־שִׁבּוֹת שְׁבִית אֵיּוֹב בְּהִתְפַּלְּלוֹ בְּעַד
רָעָהּ וַיִּסַּף יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְאֵיּוֹב לְמִשְׁנָה:
יא וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־אֶחָיו וְכָל־אֶחָיו וְכָל־יָדְעָיו לִפְנֵים
וַיֹּאכְלוּ עִמּוֹ לֶחֶם בְּבֵיתוֹ וַיִּגְדּוּ לוֹ וַיִּנְחֻמוּ אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל־
הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־הֵבִיא יְהוָה עָלָיו וַיִּתְּנוּ־לוֹ אִישׁ קִשְׁיָה
אֶחָת וְאִישׁ גֶּזֶם זָהָב אֶחָד: יב וַיְהִי בֶרֶךְ אֶת־אַחֲרֵית

⁷ When Yahweh had spoken these words to Job, Yahweh said to Eliphaz of Teman, “I burn with anger against you and your two friends, for not speaking correctly about me as my servant Job has done. ⁸ So now, take seven bullocks and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and make a burnt offering for yourselves, while Job, my servant, offers prayers for you. I shall accept his prayer and shall not punish you for not speaking about me correctly, as my servant Job has done.” ⁹ Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah and Zophar of Naamath went away to do as Yahweh had ordered, and Yahweh listened to Job with favour.

¹⁰ Yahweh restored Job’s condition, when Job prayed for his friends. And Yahweh gave him double what he had before. ¹¹ Then all his brothers, all his sisters and all his friends of former times came to see him. Over dinner in his house, they showed him their sympathy and comforted him for all the evils Yahweh had brought on him. Each of them gave him a silver coin, and each a gold ring. ¹² Yahweh blessed

⁷ The NJB has the pronoun, ‘he’, in place of the 2nd instance of the Name, ‘Yahweh’.

⁸ Job acts as intercessor like Abraham (Gn 18:22–32), Moses (see #Ex 32:11), Samuel (1S 7:5, 12:19, 2M 15:14) and Jeremiah (Jr 11:14, see Ezk 14:14, 20). His painful ordeal has apparently given power to his prayers. In the background, we descry the servant (see Is 53:12) whose suffering is unequivocally atonement for the sins of others.

⁹ The phrase, ‘listened to Job with favour’, means that God answered his prayer.

¹⁰ The Kethib/ Qere difference here may be due to a scribe misreading a (possibly small/short) *vav* as a *yod*.

¹¹ ‘Silver coin’ translates קִשְׁיָה, an ancient monetary unit of unknown value. Some MSS have ‘sheep’.

¹² This was an exceptionally large amount of livestock.

אִיּוֹב מֵרָאשֵׁתוֹ וַיְהִי־לּוֹ אַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר אֲלָף צֹאן
וְשֵׁשֶׁת אֲלָפִים גַּמְלִים וְאֶל־ף־צֶמֶד בָּקָר וְאֶל־ף אֲתוֹנוֹת:
יְהִי־לּוֹ שִׁבְעָנָה בָּנִים וְשָׁלוֹשׁ בָּנוֹת: ^ד וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם־
הָאֶחָת יְמִימָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית קְצִיעָה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁלִישִׁית
קֶרֶן הַפֹּדֶד: ^{טו} וְלֹא נִמְצָא נָשִׁים יְפֹת כַּבָּנוֹת אִיּוֹב
בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲבִיהֶם נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵיהֶם:
^{טז} וַיְחִי אִיּוֹב אַחֲרֵי־זֹאת מָאָה וָאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וַיֵּרָא
וַיִּרְאֶה אֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בְּנֵי בָנָיו אַרְבַּעָה דְּרוֹת: ^{יז} וַיָּמָת
אִיּוֹב זָקֵן וְשֹׁבֵעַ יָמִים:
{ש}

Job's latter days more than his former days; he came to own fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. ¹³ He had seven sons and three daughters; ¹⁴ his first daughter he called 'Turtledove', the second 'Cassia' and the third, 'Mascara'. ¹⁵ In all the land, there were no women as beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance like their brothers. ¹⁶ After this, Job lived for one hundred and forty years and saw his children and his children's children to the fourth generation. ¹⁷ Then, Job died, old and full of days.

^{17a} α γέγραπται δὲ αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι μεθ' ὧν ὁ κύριος ἀνίστησιν. —

^{17a} It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will raise up.

¹⁸ Οὗτος ἐρμηνεύεται ἐκ τῆς Συριακῆς βίβλου ἐν μὲν γῇ κατοικῶν τῇ Αυσίτιδι ἐπὶ τοῖς ὁρίοις τῆς Ἰδου μαίας καὶ Ἀραβίας, προσηρχεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὄνομα Ἰωβαβ· λαβὼν δὲ γυναῖκα Ἀράβισσαν γεννᾷ υἱόν, ᾧ ὄνομα Εννων, ᾧ δὲ

¹⁸ This man is described in the Syriac book as dwelling in the land of Austis, which was on the borders of Idumaea and Arabia; and his name before was Jobab; and, having taken an Arabian wife, he fathered a son whose name was Ennon. He himself was the son of

¹³ In place of 'seven sons' (which, in the MT, is spelled unusually), the Tg has 'fourteen sons'.

¹⁴ The NRSV leaves the daughters' names untranslated: יְמִימָה ('Jemimah'), קְצִיעָה ('Keziah') and קֶרֶן הַפֹּדֶד ('Keren-Happuch').

¹⁵ Normally, daughters inherited only if there were no sons (see Nb 27:1-11); Job must have been exceptionally rich.

¹⁶ The Kethib/Qere difference here may be due to a letter being dropped by haplography (note the אַת as the next word).

¹⁷ The LXX has two additions. The 2nd (and longer) tells us that Job lived in the land of Austis, on the borders of Idumaea and Arabia; it identifies Austis with Jobab (Gn 36:33).

^{17a} This first addition shows that the doctrine of the resurrection was thought in the 2nd Century BCE to be implicit in the book.

¹⁸ The name 'Austis' translates the Greek Αυσίτιδι.

αὐτὸς πατὴρ μὲν Ζαρε, τῶν Ησαυ υἱῶν υἱός, μητὴρ δὲ Βοσορρας, ὥστε εἶναι αὐτὸν πέμπτον ἀπὸ Αβρααμ.
¹⁹ καὶ οὗτοι οἱ βασιλεῖς οἱ βασιλεύσαντες ἐν Εδωμ, ἧς καὶ αὐτὸς ἤρξεν χώρας· πρῶτος Βαλακ ὁ τοῦ Βεωρ, καὶ ὄνομα τῇ πόλει αὐτοῦ Δεν ναβα· μετὰ δὲ Βαλακ Ἰωβαβ ὁ καλούμενος Ἰωβ· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον Ασομ ὁ ὑπάρχων ἡγεμὼν ἐκ τῆς Θαιμανίτιδος χώρας· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον Αδαδ υἱὸς Βαραδ ὁ ἐκκόψας Μαδιαμ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ Μωαβ, καὶ ὄνομα τῇ πόλει αὐτοῦ Γεθθαιμ.
²⁰ οἱ δὲ ἐλθόντες πρὸς αὐτὸν φίλοι· Ελιφας τῶν Ησαυ υἱῶν Θαιμανων βασιλεύς, Βαλδαδ ὁ Σαυχαίων τύραννος, Σωφαρ ὁ Μιναίων βασιλεύς.

his father Zara, a son of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth generation from Abraham. ¹⁹ And these were the kings who reigned in Edom, which country he also ruled over. First there was Balak, the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dennaba. After Balak, there was Jobab, who is called Job; and after him there was Asom, who was governor out of the country of Teman; and after him there was Adad, the son of Barad, who destroyed Midian in the plain of Moab; and the name of his city was Gethaim. ²⁰ And the friends that came to him were Eliphaz of the sons of Esau, king of the Temanites, Baldad sovereign of the Sauchaeans, and Sophar, king of the Minaeans.

¹⁹ The name 'Midian' translates the Greek *Μαδιαμ*.

²⁰ The royalty of Job's three friends is not mentioned elsewhere.