Job

HEBREW BIBLE

Job

אִיּוֹב

Translated from the Hebrew with AI (Claude) and edited

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Job · Hebrew Bible

Translated from the Hebrew with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/bible/job

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Set in Source Serif 4, Noto Serif Hebrew.

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INTRODUCTION

Job is blameless and upright, rich and blessed with children. In a scene in the heavenly court, "the Adversary" (in Hebrew *ha-satan*, not yet the Satan of later tradition) suggests that Job is good only because it pays, and God allows him to be tested. Job loses his wealth, his children and his health; sitting in ashes, he refuses to curse God.

Then the prose story gives way to poetry. Job curses the day he was born, and three friends who have come to comfort him—Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar—argue in three rounds of speeches that God is just, so Job must have sinned. Job insists that he is innocent and demands that God answer him. A younger man, Elihu, intervenes. Finally God speaks from the whirlwind, not to explain Job's suffering but to show him the vastness and strangeness of creation. Job yields, and a short prose epilogue restores his fortunes.

The book's date is uncertain; most scholars place the poem between the sixth and fourth centuries BC. Its Hebrew is among the most difficult in the Bible, rich in rare words, and its questions about innocent suffering have made it one of the most discussed books of world literature.

Job

A blameless man loses everything; his friends argue that he must have sinned; he demands an answer from God, and God answers from the whirlwind.

PROLOGUE: THE ADVERSARY'S CHALLENGE

Blameless Job loses his wealth, his children and his health, yet refuses to curse God.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him.[1]

Job 1:3 His livestock numbered seven thousand sheep and goats, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, and he had a great many servants. That man was the greatest of all the people of the East.

Job 1:4 His sons used to go and hold a feast, each in his own house on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

1 Uz was a land probably east or southeast of Israel, toward Edom or northern Arabia.

Job 1:5 Whenever the days of feasting had run their course, Job would send for them and consecrate them. He would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings for each one of them, for Job said, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This is what Job always did.[2]

Job 1:6 One day the members of the divine court came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Adversary also came among them. The LORD said to the Adversary, "Where have you come from?" The Adversary answered the LORD, "From roaming the earth and walking about on it."[3]

Job 1:8 The LORD said to the Adversary, "Have you given any thought to my servant Job? There is no one like him on earth, a man blameless and upright, who fears God and turns away from evil." The Adversary answered the LORD, "Is it for nothing that Job fears God?

Job 1:10 "Haven't you yourself put a hedge around him and his household and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock has spread out over the land. But just stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

Job 1:12 The LORD said to the Adversary, "Very well, all that he has is in your hand; only do not stretch out your hand against him." So the Adversary went out from the presence of the LORD. One day, when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother,

2 The Hebrew says "blessed," a scribal euphemism for "cursed"; so also in 1:11, 2:5 and 2:9.
3 "Members of the divine court" is literally "sons of God." "The Adversary" is Hebrew *ha-satan*, "the accuser," a member of the heavenly court, not yet the Satan of later tradition.

Job 1:14 a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys grazing beside them, and raiders from Sheba swooped down and took them, and they put the servants to the sword. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:16 While he was still speaking, another came and said, “The fire of God fell from the sky and blazed among the sheep and the servants and consumed them. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:17 While he was still speaking, another came and said, “Chaldeans formed three bands, made a raid on the camels and took them, and they put the servants to the sword. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:18 While he was still speaking, another came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother.

Job 1:19 “Then suddenly a great wind came from across the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It fell on the young people, and they died. I alone have escaped to tell you.” Then Job got up, tore his robe and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and bowed low,

Job 1:21 and he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with wrongdoing.

Job 2:1 One day the members of the divine court came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Adversary also came among them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD said to the Adversary, “Where have you come from?” The Adversary answered the LORD, “From roaming the earth and walking about on it.”

Job 2:3 The LORD said to the Adversary, "Have you given any thought to my servant Job? There is no one like him on earth, a man blameless and upright, who fears God and turns away from evil. He still holds fast to his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him for nothing."

Job 2:4 The Adversary answered the LORD, "Skin for skin! A man will give all that he has for his life. But just stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse you to your face."[4]

Job 2:6 The LORD said to the Adversary, "Very well, he is in your hand; only spare his life." So the Adversary went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with painful sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself with as he sat among the ashes.

Job 2:9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding fast to your integrity? Curse God and die." He said to her, "You are talking like one of the foolish women. Shall we accept the good from God and not accept the bad?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

THE THREE FRIENDS ARRIVE

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar come to comfort Job and sit with him seven days in silence.

Job 2:11 When Job's three friends heard of all this disaster that had come upon him, they came, each from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They had agreed to meet and go together to show him sympathy and comfort him.[5]

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4 "Skin for skin" seems to be a proverb, perhaps from bartering; its exact sense is uncertain.

5 Teman was a region of Edom; Shuah and Naamah cannot be identified with certainty.

Job 2:12 They lifted up their eyes from a distance and did not recognize him. They raised their voices and wept, and each of them tore his robe, and they threw dust into the air over their heads. Then they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.

JOB'S LAMENT: CURSED BE THE DAY

Job curses the day he was born and asks why life is given to the miserable.

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

Job 3:2 Job spoke up and said:

JOB

Job 3:3 Perish the day on which I was born,
and the night that said, "A boy is conceived!"
That day—let it be darkness;
may God above not seek it out,
nor light shine on it.
Let darkness and deep shadow claim it; let a cloud settle over it;
let the blackness of the day terrify it.[6]

Job 3:6 That night—let gloom seize it;
let it not be joined to the days of the year;
let it not come into the count of the months.
Yes, let that night be barren;
let no shout of joy come into it.
Let those who curse days damn it,
those skilled to rouse Leviathan.[7]

6 The Hebrew of the last line is uncertain; it may refer to eclipses.
7 Leviathan is a sea monster of ancient Near Eastern myth, a figure of chaos; those able to rouse it were apparently sorcerers.

Job 3:9 Let the stars of its twilight be dark;
let it wait for light, and have none,
and not see the eyelids of the dawn,
because it did not shut the doors of the womb that bore me
or hide trouble from my eyes.
Why did I not die at birth,
come out of the belly and breathe my last?

Job 3:12 Why were there knees to receive me,
or breasts for me to suck?
For then I would be lying down in quiet;
I would be asleep, and at rest,
with kings and counselors of the earth
who rebuilt ruins for themselves,
or with princes who had gold,
who filled their houses with silver.

Job 3:16 Or like a stillborn child, hidden away, I would never have been,
like infants who never saw the light.
There the wicked cease their turmoil,
and there the weary are at rest.
Prisoners are at ease together;
they do not hear the taskmaster's voice.

Job 3:19 Small and great are there alike,
and the slave is free from his master.
Why is light given to one in misery,
and life to the bitter in soul,
who long for death, but it does not come,
who dig for it more than for hidden treasure,
who would rejoice to the point of exulting,
and be glad to find the grave?

Job 3:23 to a man whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?
For my sighing comes in place of my bread,
and my groans pour out like water.
For the thing I dreaded has overtaken me;
what I feared has come upon me.
I have no ease, no quiet, no rest,
and turmoil comes.[8]

THE FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES

Each friend in turn defends God's justice, and Job answers each one.

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

ELIPHAZ: THE INNOCENT DO NOT PERISH

Eliphaz recounts a vision in the night and urges Job to accept the discipline of Shaddai.

ELIPHAZ

Job 4:2 If one ventures a word to you, will you be weary of it?
Yet who can hold back from speaking?
Look, you have instructed many,
and you have strengthened weak hands.
Your words have raised up those who stumbled,
and you have made firm the knees that buckled.

Job 4:5 But now it has come to you, and you are weary;
it touches you, and you are dismayed.
Is not your fear of God your confidence,
and your hope the integrity of your ways?
Think now: who that was innocent ever perished?
Where were the upright ever wiped out?

8 "Hedged in" echoes the Adversary's complaint in 1:10 that God had put a protective hedge around Job.

Job 4:8 As I have seen, those who plow iniquity
and those who sow trouble reap the same.
By the breath of God they perish;
by the blast of his anger they are consumed.
The roar of the lion, the growl of the fierce lion—
yet the teeth of the young lions are broken.
The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the lioness's cubs are scattered.

Job 4:12 A word came to me by stealth;
my ear caught a whisper of it
amid unsettling thoughts from visions of the night,
when deep sleep falls on people.
Dread came upon me, and trembling,
and made all my bones shudder.
A spirit glided past my face;
the hair of my body bristled.

Job 4:16 It stood still, but I could not make out its appearance; a
form was before my eyes;
there was a hush, and then I heard a voice:
"Can a mortal be righteous before God?
Can a man be pure before his Maker?"
Look, he does not trust his servants,
and he charges his angels with error.[9]

Job 4:19 How much more those who live in houses of clay, whose
foundation is in the dust,
who are crushed like a moth!
Between morning and evening they are shattered;
unnoticed, they perish forever.
Is not their tent cord pulled up within them?
They die, and not in wisdom.

9 The word rendered "error" is uncertain.

Job 5:1 Call out now—is there anyone who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
For resentment kills the fool,
and jealousy slays the simple.
I myself have seen a fool taking root,
but suddenly I cursed his dwelling.
His children are far from safety;
they are crushed in the gate, with no one to rescue them.[10]

Job 5:5 The hungry eat up his harvest, taking it even from among
the thorns,
and the thirsty pant after their wealth.
For affliction does not come up out of the dust,
nor does trouble sprout from the ground;
but humans are born to trouble,
as sparks fly upward.[11]

Job 5:8 But as for me, I would seek out God,
and to God I would lay out my case.
He does great things beyond searching out,
wonders beyond number.
He gives rain on the earth
and sends water on the open fields.
He sets the lowly on high,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

Job 5:12 He frustrates the plans of the crafty,
so that their hands achieve no success.
He catches the wise in their own craftiness,
and the counsel of the devious is swept headlong.
By day they run into darkness,
and at noon they grope as if it were night.
He saves from the sword of their mouth,
and the needy from the hand of the mighty.

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10 The "holy ones" are members of the heavenly court. The city gate was where legal cases were heard.

11 The Hebrew of the first two lines is uncertain. "Sparks" is literally "sons of Resheph," a Canaanite god of plague and fire; some take it to mean birds.

Job 5:16 So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts its mouth.
Look, happy is the one whom God reproves;
so do not reject the discipline of Shaddai.
For he wounds, but he binds up;
he strikes, but his hands heal.
In six troubles he will rescue you;
in seven no harm will touch you.[12]

Job 5:20 In famine he will ransom you from death,
and in war from the power of the sword.
You will be hidden from the lash of the tongue,
and you will not fear destruction when it comes.
At destruction and famine you will laugh,
and you will not fear the wild animals of the earth.
For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field,
and the wild animals of the field will be at peace with you.

Job 5:24 You will know that your tent is at peace;
you will inspect your fold and find nothing missing.
You will know that your descendants are many,
and your offspring like the grass of the earth.
You will come to the grave in ripe old age,
as a stack of sheaves is gathered in its season.
Look, this we have searched out; it is so.
Hear it, and know it for yourself.

JOB: MY FRIENDS HAVE FAILED ME

Job calls his friends as treacherous as dry streambeds and asks God to leave him alone.

Job 6:1 Then Job answered and said:

12 Shaddai is an ancient divine name of uncertain meaning, traditionally rendered "the Almighty."

JOB

Job 6:2 If only my anguish could be weighed,
and my calamity laid with it on the scales!
For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas;
that is why my words have been rash.
For the arrows of Shaddai are in me; my spirit drinks their poison;
the terrors of God are arrayed against me.

Job 6:5 Does the wild donkey bray over its grass,
or the ox low over its fodder?
Can tasteless food be eaten without salt?
Is there any flavor in the slime of mallow?
I refuse to touch them;
they are like loathsome food to me.
If only my request would be granted,
and God would give me what I hope for![13]

Job 6:9 If only God would be willing to crush me,
to let loose his hand and cut me off!
Then I would still have this comfort, and I would leap for joy in pain that does not spare—
that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
What strength do I have, that I should wait?
What end do I have, that I should be patient?
Is my strength the strength of stones?
Is my flesh bronze?[14]

13 The meaning of "mallow" (perhaps the white of an egg) and of the next two lines is uncertain.
14 The verb rendered "leap for joy" is uncertain.

Job 6:13 Is it not that I have no help within me,
and any resource has been driven from me?
The despairing should have loyalty from a friend,
even one who forsakes the fear of Shaddai.
My brothers have been as treacherous as a wadi,
like the channels of wadis that run dry,
that are dark with ice,
where the snow hides itself.[15]

Job 6:17 When they warm up, they vanish;
when it is hot, they disappear from their place.
Caravans turn aside from their course;
they go up into the wasteland and perish.
The caravans of Tema look for them,
the travelers of Sheba hope for them.
They are ashamed, because they trusted;
they come there and are disappointed.[16]

Job 6:21 That is what you have now become;
you see something terrible, and you are afraid.
Did I ever say, "Give me something,"
or "Pay a bribe for me from your wealth,"
or "Rescue me from the hand of the enemy,"
or "Ransom me from the hand of the ruthless"?
Teach me, and I will be silent;
make me understand where I have gone wrong.
How forceful are honest words!
But what does your arguing prove?[17]

15 A wadi is a desert streambed that runs with water only in the rainy season.
16 Tema was an oasis in northern Arabia, and Sheba a kingdom in southern Arabia; both were centers of the caravan trade.
17 The Hebrew of the first line is uncertain.

Job 6:26 Do you mean to argue against words,
and treat the speech of a desperate man as wind?
You would even cast lots over an orphan
and bargain over your friend.
But now, be willing to look at me;
would I lie to your face?
Turn back, please; let there be no injustice;
turn back—my being in the right is still at stake.
Is there injustice on my tongue?
Can my palate not tell what is ruinous?

Job 7:1 Do not mortals have hard service on earth,
and are not their days like the days of a hired worker?
Like a slave who longs for the shade,
like a hired worker who waits for his wages,
so I have been allotted months of emptiness,
and nights of trouble have been assigned to me.
When I lie down, I say, "When will I get up?" But the night
drags on,
and I am sated with tossing until dawn.

Job 7:5 My flesh is clothed with worms and crusts of dirt;
my skin cracks and oozes.
My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
and they come to an end without hope.
Remember that my life is a breath;
my eye will never again see good.
The eye that sees me will see me no more;
your eyes will be on me, and I will be gone.[18]

18 The Hebrew word for "hope" (*tiqvah*) can also mean "thread," a pun on the weaver's image.

Job 7:9 As a cloud fades and is gone,
so whoever goes down to Sheol does not come up.
He will not return to his house again,
and his place will know him no more.
So I, for my part, will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.[19]

Job 7:12 Am I the Sea, or the sea monster,
that you set a guard over me?
When I say, "My bed will comfort me,
my couch will ease my complaint,"
then you frighten me with dreams
and terrify me with visions,
so that I would choose strangling,
death rather than these bones of mine.[20]

Job 7:16 I loathe my life; I will not live forever.
Let me alone, for my days are a breath.
What are mortals, that you make so much of them,
that you give them so much thought,
that you inspect them every morning
and test them every moment?
How long will you not look away from me,
nor let me alone long enough to swallow my spit?

19 Sheol is the shadowy realm of the dead.
20 The Sea and the sea monster (Hebrew *tannin*) were forces of chaos in ancient Near Eastern myth, held in check by the gods.

Job 7:20 If I have sinned, what do I do to you, you watcher of humankind?
Why have you made me your target,
so that I have become a burden to myself?
Why do you not pardon my offense and take away my iniquity?
For soon I will lie down in the dust;
you will search for me, but I will be gone.[21]

BILDAD: ASK THE FORMER GENERATION

Bildad insists that God does not pervert justice; if Job is pure, God will restore him.

Job 8:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

BILDAD

Job 8:2 How long will you say these things,
and the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?
Does God pervert justice?
Does Shaddai pervert righteousness?
If your children sinned against him,
he handed them over to the power of their offense.
If you will seek God earnestly
and plead with Shaddai,
if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you
and restore your rightful dwelling.

21 Ancient Jewish tradition holds that scribes changed "a burden to you" to "a burden to myself" here.

Job 8:7 Though your beginning was small,
your end will be very great.
Ask now of the former generation,
and consider what their ancestors searched out.
For we are only of yesterday and know nothing;
our days on earth are a shadow.
Will they not teach you and tell you,
and bring words out of their hearts?

Job 8:11 Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh?
Can reeds flourish without water?
While still green and not yet cut,
they wither before any other grass.
Such are the paths of all who forget God;
the hope of the godless will perish.
His confidence snaps like a thread,
and his trust is a spider's house.[22]

Job 8:15 He leans on his house, but it will not stand;
he grabs hold of it, but it will not hold.
He is a lush plant in the sun,
its shoots spreading over its garden.
Its roots twine around a heap of stones;
it looks for a home among the rocks.
If it is torn from its place,
then the place will disown it: "I never saw you."

Job 8:19 Look, that is the joy of its way,
and from the dust others will spring up.
Look, God will not reject a blameless person,
nor take the hand of evildoers.
He will yet fill your mouth with laughter,
and your lips with a shout of joy.
Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,
and the tent of the wicked will be no more.

22 The word rendered "snaps like a thread" is uncertain.

JOB: NO ARBITER BETWEEN US

Job says no mortal can win a case against God and wishes for an arbiter between them.

Job 9:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 9:2 Truly, I know that it is so;
but how can a mortal be in the right with God?
If someone wished to bring a case against him,
he could not answer him once in a thousand.
He is wise in heart and mighty in strength;
who has defied him and come out unharmed?
He moves mountains, and they do not know it,
when he overturns them in his anger.

Job 9:6 He shakes the earth from its place,
and its pillars tremble.
He commands the sun, and it does not rise;
he seals up the stars.
He alone stretches out the heavens
and treads on the back of the Sea.
He makes the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
and the chambers of the south.[23]

Job 9:10 He does great things beyond searching out,
and wonders beyond number.
Look, he passes by me, and I do not see him;
he moves on, and I do not perceive him.
Look, he snatches away; who can stop him?
Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"
God will not turn back his anger;
beneath him the helpers of Rahab bowed down.[24]

23 The identification of these constellations is traditional but uncertain.
24 Rahab here is a mythical sea monster of chaos, not the Rahab of Jericho.

Job 9:14 How then could I answer him,
or choose my words to argue with him?
Even if I were in the right, I could not answer;
I would have to plead for mercy with my judge.
If I summoned him and he answered me,
I do not believe he would listen to my voice.
For he crushes me with a storm
and multiplies my wounds for nothing.
He will not let me catch my breath,
but fills me with bitterness.

Job 9:19 If it is a matter of strength, look—he is mighty!
And if of justice, who will appoint me a hearing?
Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me;
though I am blameless, he would prove me crooked.
I am blameless—I do not care about myself;
I despise my life.
It is all one; that is why I say,
he destroys both the blameless and the wicked.

Job 9:23 When a scourge brings sudden death,
he mocks the despair of the innocent.
The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges—
if not he, then who?
My days are swifter than a runner;
they flee away and see no good.
They glide past like boats of reed,
like an eagle swooping on its prey.

Job 9:27 If I say, "I will forget my complaint;
I will put off my sad face and be cheerful,"
I dread all my sufferings,
for I know you will not hold me innocent.
I am going to be found guilty;
why then should I labor in vain?
If I washed myself with snow
and cleansed my hands with lye,
you would still plunge me into a pit,
and my own clothes would abhor me.

Job 9:32 For he is not a man like me, that I could answer him,
that we could come to trial together.
There is no arbiter between us
to lay his hand on us both.
Let him take his rod away from me,
and let his terror not frighten me.
Then I would speak and not fear him,
for within myself I am not like that.[25]

Job 10:1 I am sick of my life;
I will give free rein to my complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
I will say to God, "Do not condemn me;
let me know why you bring a case against me."
Does it seem good to you to oppress, to reject the work of
your hands
and smile on the schemes of the wicked?

25 An arbiter is a third party who decides between two sides in a dispute.

Job 10:4
Do you have eyes of flesh?
Do you see as a mortal sees?
Are your days like the days of a mortal,
or your years like the years of a man,
that you seek out my iniquity
and search for my sin,
although you know that I am not guilty,
and there is no one to rescue from your hand?

Job 10:8
Your hands shaped me and made me,
every part of me—and now you destroy me.
Remember that you made me like clay;
and will you turn me back to dust?
Did you not pour me out like milk
and curdle me like cheese?
You clothed me with skin and flesh
and knit me together with bones and sinews.

Job 10:12
You granted me life and steadfast love,
and your care has guarded my spirit.
Yet these things you hid in your heart;
I know that this was your purpose:
if I sinned, you would watch me
and not hold me innocent of my iniquity.
If I am guilty, woe to me! And if I am in the right, I cannot lift my head,
filled with shame and seeing my affliction.

Job 10:16
If I hold my head high, you hunt me like a lion
and again show your wondrous power against me.
You bring fresh witnesses against me and increase your anger toward me;
troops come against me wave after wave.
Why did you bring me out of the womb?
I should have died, and no eye would have seen me.
I would have been as though I had never been,
carried from the womb to the grave.

Job 10:20 Are not my days few? Then stop!
Turn away from me, so that I may have a little cheer
before I go, never to return,
to the land of darkness and deep shadow,
a land of gloom like blackness, of deep shadow and no order,
where the light itself is like blackness.

ZOPHAR: THE DEPTHS OF GOD

Zophar says God punishes Job less than he deserves and urges him to put away iniquity.

Job 11:1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

ZOPHAR

Job 11:2 Should a flood of words go unanswered,
and a man full of talk be vindicated?
Should your babble silence others,
and should you mock with no one to shame you?
For you say, "My teaching is pure,
and I am clean in your sight."
But oh, that God would speak
and open his lips against you,

Job 11:6 and tell you the secrets of wisdom, for sound wisdom has two sides!
Know then that God is overlooking some of your iniquity.
Can you find out the depths of God?
Can you find out the limit of Shaddai?
It is higher than the heavens—what can you do?
Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?[26]

26 The Hebrew of the first two lines is uncertain.

Job 11:9 Its measure is longer than the earth
and broader than the sea.
If he sweeps by and locks someone up
and summons the court, who can turn him back?
For he knows worthless people;
when he sees iniquity, will he not take note of it?
But a hollow man will gain understanding
when a wild donkey's colt is born human.

Job 11:13 If you set your heart right
and stretch out your hands toward him,
if there is iniquity in your hand, put it far away,
and do not let injustice dwell in your tents.
Then you will lift up your face without blemish;
you will be firm and will not fear.
You will forget your trouble;
you will remember it like waters that have flowed past.

Job 11:17 Your life will rise brighter than noonday;
its darkness will be like the morning.
You will be confident, because there is hope;
you will look around and lie down in safety.
You will lie down, and no one will make you afraid;
many will seek your favor.
But the eyes of the wicked will fail;
every way of escape will be lost to them,
and their hope will be to breathe their last.

JOB: I WOULD ARGUE MY CASE WITH GOD

Job scorns his friends' wisdom, demands a hearing from God, and laments how briefly a mortal lives.

Job 12:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 12:2 No doubt you are the people,
and wisdom will die with you!
But I have a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you.
Who does not know such things as these?
I have become a laughingstock to my friends, I who called
on God and he answered me—
a laughingstock, the righteous and blameless man!

Job 12:5 Those at ease hold misfortune in contempt,
ready for those whose feet slip.
The tents of robbers are at peace, and those who provoke
God are secure,
those who carry their god in their hand.
But ask the beasts, and they will teach you,
the birds of the sky, and they will tell you.[27]

Job 12:8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;
the fish of the sea will recount it to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing,
and the breath of every human body.[28]

Job 12:11 Does not the ear test words
as the palate tastes food?
Wisdom is with the aged,
and understanding in length of days.
With him are wisdom and might;
counsel and understanding are his.
Look, he tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt;
he shuts a person in, and no one can open.

27 The Hebrew of the first four lines is uncertain.
28 This is the only place in the poetic dialogue where the divine name, the LORD, appears.

Job 12:15 Look, he holds back the waters, and they dry up;
he sends them out, and they overwhelm the land.
With him are strength and sound wisdom;
the deceived and the deceiver are his.
He leads counselors away stripped
and makes fools of judges.

Job 12:18 He loosens the bonds of kings
and binds a loincloth around their waists.
He leads priests away stripped
and overthrows those long established.
He deprives the trusted of speech
and takes away the discernment of the elders.
He pours contempt on nobles
and loosens the belt of the strong.

Job 12:22 He uncovers deep things out of darkness
and brings deep shadow into the light.
He makes nations great, then destroys them;
he spreads nations out, then leads them away.
He strips the leaders of the earth's people of their understanding
and makes them wander in a trackless waste.
They grope in darkness without light;
he makes them stagger like a drunkard.

Job 13:1 Look, my eye has seen all this;
my ear has heard and understood it.
What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
But I would speak to Shaddai;
I want to argue my case with God.
As for you, you smear everything with lies;
worthless physicians, all of you.

Job 13:5 If only you would keep completely silent;
that would be your wisdom!
Hear now my argument,
and listen to the pleadings of my lips.
Will you speak falsely for God
and speak deceitfully for him?
Will you show him partiality?
Will you plead the case for God?

Job 13:9 Will it go well with you when he examines you?
Or can you deceive him as one deceives a mortal?
He will surely rebuke you
if in secret you show partiality.
Will not his majesty terrify you,
and dread of him fall upon you?
Your maxims are proverbs of ash;
your defenses are defenses of clay.

Job 13:13 Be silent before me, and let me speak,
and let come on me what may.
Why should I take my flesh in my teeth
and put my life in my hand?
Look, though he kill me, I will wait for him;
yet I will argue my ways to his face.
This too will be my salvation,
that no godless person can come before him.[29]

Job 13:17 Listen carefully to my words,
and let my declaration ring in your ears.
Look now, I have prepared my case;
I know that I will be vindicated.
Who is there who will bring a case against me?
For then I would be silent and die.
Only grant me two things,
and then I will not hide from your face.

29 The text read aloud, printed here, has “I will wait for him”; the written consonants read “I have no hope.”

Job 13:21 Withdraw your hand far from me,
and do not let dread of you terrify me.
Then call, and I will answer;
or let me speak, and you reply to me.
How many are my iniquities and sins?
Make me know my offense and my sin.
Why do you hide your face
and count me as your enemy?[30]

Job 13:25 Will you frighten a windblown leaf
and pursue dry chaff?
For you write bitter things against me
and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
You put my feet in the stocks and watch all my paths;
you mark the soles of my feet.
One wastes away like something rotten,
like a garment eaten by moths.

Job 14:1 A human being, born of woman,
is short of days and full of turmoil.
He comes up like a flower and withers;
he flees like a shadow and does not last.
Do you fix your eyes on such a one?
Do you bring me into judgment with you?
Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?
No one.

Job 14:5 Since his days are determined, and the number of his
months is with you,
and you have set him limits he cannot pass,
look away from him and let him be,
until, like a hired worker, he finishes his day.
For there is hope for a tree:
if it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its shoots will not fail.

30 The Hebrew for "enemy" (*oyev*) sounds almost like Job's name (*iyyov*).

Job 14:8 Though its root grows old in the ground
and its stump dies in the dust,
at the scent of water it will bud
and put out branches like a young plant.
But a man dies and lies powerless;
a human breathes his last, and where is he?
As waters vanish from a lake,
and a river runs dry and is parched,

Job 14:12 so a person lies down and does not rise;
until the heavens are no more, they will not wake
or be roused from their sleep.
If only you would hide me in Sheol, conceal me until your anger has passed,
set me a fixed time, and then remember me!
If a man dies, will he live again?
All the days of my hard service I would wait
until my relief should come.

Job 14:15 You would call, and I would answer you;
you would long for the work of your hands.
For then you would count my steps;
you would not keep watch over my sin.
My offense would be sealed up in a bag,
and you would cover over my iniquity.
But as a mountain falls and crumbles away,
and a rock is moved from its place,

Job 14:19 as water wears away stones, and torrents wash away the soil of the earth,
so you destroy the hope of a mortal.
You overpower him forever, and he passes on;
you change his face and send him away.
His children come to honor, and he does not know it;
they are brought low, and he does not perceive it.
He feels only the pain of his own body,
and mourns only for himself.

THE SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES

The friends describe the terrible fate of the wicked; Job holds to his innocence.

Job 15:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

ELIPHAZ: THE TERRORS OF THE WICKED

Eliphaz accuses Job of undermining reverence and describes the dread that pursues the wicked.

ELIPHAZ

Job 15:2 Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge
and fill his belly with the east wind?
Should he argue with talk that is no use,
with words that do no good?
But you are tearing down reverence
and cutting short devotion before God.
For your guilt teaches your mouth,
and you choose the tongue of the crafty.

Job 15:6 Your own mouth condemns you, not I;
your own lips testify against you.
Were you born the first human being?
Were you brought forth before the hills?
Do you listen in on God's council?
Do you keep wisdom to yourself?
What do you know that we do not know?
What do you understand that is not with us as well?

Job 15:10 The gray-haired and the aged are among us,
older in years than your father.
Are the consolations of God too small for you,
or a word spoken gently to you?
Why does your heart carry you away,
and why do your eyes flash,
that you turn your spirit against God
and let such words out of your mouth?

Job 15:14 What is a mortal, that he could be pure,
or one born of woman, that he could be righteous?
Look, God does not trust even his holy ones,
and the heavens are not pure in his eyes—
how much less one who is loathsome and corrupt,
a man who drinks wrongdoing like water!
I will tell you; listen to me,
and what I have seen I will recount—

Job 15:18 what the wise have declared
without hiding what came from their fathers,
to whom alone the land was given,
when no stranger passed among them:
All his days the wicked man writhes in pain,
through all the years stored up for the tyrant.
The sound of terrors is in his ears;
in a time of peace the destroyer comes upon him.

Job 15:22 He has no hope of returning from darkness,
and he is marked out for the sword.
He wanders for bread—where is it?
He knows that the day of darkness is ready at hand.
Distress and anguish terrify him;
they overpower him like a king poised for the attack.
For he stretched out his hand against God
and played the hero against Shaddai.

Job 15:26 He charged at him with his neck stiff,
behind the thick bosses of his shields.
For he covered his face with his fat
and piled up flesh on his loins;
he settled in ruined cities, in houses where no one should live,
houses destined to be heaps of rubble.

Job 15:29 He will not grow rich, and his wealth will not last,
nor will his possessions spread over the land.
He will not escape
from darkness; a flame will wither his shoots,
and he will pass away at the breath of his mouth.
Let him not trust in emptiness and be led astray,
for emptiness will be his reward.[31]

Job 15:32 Before his day comes it will be paid in full,
and his branch will not be green.
He will be like a vine that sheds its unripe grapes,
like an olive tree that casts off its blossom.
For the company of the godless is barren,
and fire consumes the tents of bribery.
They conceive trouble and give birth to evil,
and their womb prepares deceit.

JOB: MY WITNESS IS IN HEAVEN

Job calls his friends miserable comforters, describes God's assault on him, and appeals to a heavenly witness.

Job 16:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 16:2 I have heard many things like these;
miserable comforters are you all!
Is there no end to windy words?
Or what provokes you, that you keep answering?
I too could talk as you do,
if you were in my place; I could string words together
against you
and shake my head at you.

31 The meaning of the word rendered "possessions" is uncertain.

Job 16:5
I could strengthen you with my mouth,
and the comfort of my lips would ease your pain.
If I speak, my pain is not eased,
and if I hold back, how much of it leaves me?
But now he has worn me out;
you have devastated my whole household.
You have shriveled me up, and it has become a witness;
my gauntness rises up against me and testifies to my face.

Job 16:9
His anger has torn me, and he hates me; he has gnashed his teeth at me;
my enemy sharpens his eyes against me.
They have gaped at me with their mouths; they have struck my cheeks in scorn;
together they mass against me.
God hands me over to the unjust
and throws me into the hands of the wicked.

Job 16:12
I was at ease, and he shattered me; he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces;
he set me up as his target.
His archers surround me; he pierces my kidneys and does not spare;
he pours out my gall on the ground.
He breaks through me, breach upon breach;
he rushes at me like a warrior.

Job 16:15
I have sewn sackcloth over my skin
and thrust my horn into the dust.
My face is red with weeping,
and deep darkness lies on my eyelids,
though there is no violence in my hands
and my prayer is pure.
Earth, do not cover my blood;
let my cry find no resting place.[32]

32 The horn is an image of strength and dignity. Blood left uncovered was thought to cry out for justice (compare Gen 4:10).

Job 16:19 Even now, look, my witness is in heaven,
and the one who vouches for me is on high.
My friends scorn me;
my eye drips tears to God,
that he would argue a man's case with God,
as a human being does for his friend.
For only a few years will pass,
and I will go the way from which I will not return.[33]

Job 17:1 My spirit is broken, my days are snuffed out;
the grave is waiting for me.
Surely mockers surround me,
and my eye dwells on their provocation.
Lay down a pledge for me with yourself;
who else will strike hands with me?
Since you have closed their hearts to understanding,
you will not let them triumph.[34]

Job 17:5 One who denounces his friends for a share of the spoil—
the eyes of his children will fail.
He has made me a byword among peoples,
one in whose face they spit.
My eye has grown dim with grief,
and all my limbs are like a shadow.
The upright are appalled at this,
and the innocent stirs himself up against the godless.[35]

33 The Hebrew of "My friends scorn me" is uncertain; it may mean "My advocate is my friend."
34 Striking hands sealed an agreement to stand surety for someone.
35 The Hebrew of 17:5 is uncertain.

Job 17:9 Yet the righteous holds to his way,
and the one with clean hands grows stronger.
But you—all of you, come back again,
and I will not find a wise man among you.
My days are past, my plans are torn apart,
the desires of my heart.
They turn night into day:
"Light is near," they say, in the face of darkness.

Job 17:13 If I hope for Sheol as my home,
if I spread my bed in darkness,
if I say to the Pit, "You are my father,"
and to the worm, "My mother," and "My sister,"
where then is my hope?
And my hope—who will see it?
Will it go down to the bars of Sheol?
Shall we descend together into the dust?

BILDAD: THE LAMP OF THE WICKED GOES OUT

Bildad describes the traps, disease and oblivion that overtake the wicked.

Job 18:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

BILDAD

Job 18:2 How long until you put an end to words?
Consider, and then we will speak.
Why are we counted as cattle,
stupid in your eyes?
You who tear yourself apart in your anger—
is the earth to be abandoned for your sake,
or the rock moved from its place?
Yes, the light of the wicked goes out,
and the flame of his fire does not shine.[36]

36 The Hebrew of the first line is uncertain.

Job 18:6 The light grows dark in his tent,
and his lamp above him goes out.
His strong strides are hemmed in,
and his own scheme throws him down.
For his own feet thrust him into a net,
and he walks onto a mesh.
A trap seizes him by the heel;
a snare grips him tight.

Job 18:10 A noose is hidden for him in the ground,
a trap for him on the path.
Terrors frighten him on every side
and chase him at his heels.
His strength is famished,
and disaster stands ready at his side.
It eats away the parts of his skin;
the firstborn of Death eats away his limbs.[37]

Job 18:14 He is torn from the tent where he felt safe
and marched off to the king of terrors.
What is none of his dwells in his tent;
sulfur is scattered over his home.
Below, his roots dry up,
and above, his branches wither.
His memory perishes from the earth,
and he has no name in the street.[38]

Job 18:18 He is thrust from light into darkness
and driven out of the world.
He has no offspring or descendant among his people,
no survivor where he once lived.
Those in the west are appalled at his day,
and those in the east are seized with horror.
Surely such are the dwellings of the unjust,
and this is the place of one who does not know God.

37 "The firstborn of Death" is probably a deadly disease, pictured as the eldest child of personified Death.
38 The Hebrew of "What is none of his dwells in his tent" is uncertain.

JOB: I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES

Abandoned by family and friends, Job wishes his words carved in rock and declares he will see God.

Job 19:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 19:2 How long will you torment me
and crush me with words?
These ten times you have insulted me;
are you not ashamed to wrong me?
Even if it is true that I have erred,
my error stays with me.
If indeed you would make yourselves great against me
and use my disgrace as an argument against me,
then know that God has wronged me
and has closed his net around me.

Job 19:7 Look, I cry out, "Violence!" but I get no answer;
I call for help, but there is no justice.
He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass,
and he has set darkness on my paths.
He has stripped my glory from me
and taken the crown from my head.
He tears me down on every side, and I am gone;
he has uprooted my hope like a tree.

Job 19:11 His anger burns against me;
he counts me as one of his enemies.
His troops come on together; they build their siege ramp
against me
and camp all around my tent.
He has put my brothers far from me;
my acquaintances are wholly estranged from me.
My relatives have failed me,
and my close friends have forgotten me.

Job 19:15 The guests in my house and my maidservants count me a
stranger;
I have become a foreigner in their eyes.
I call to my servant, but he does not answer;
I must plead with him with my own mouth.
My breath is repulsive to my wife,
and I am loathsome to my own brothers.
Even young children despise me;
when I get up, they talk against me.

Job 19:19 All my intimate friends abhor me,
and those I loved have turned against me.
My bones cling to my skin and my flesh,
and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.
Have pity on me, have pity on me, you my friends,
for the hand of God has struck me!
Why do you pursue me as God does?
Will you never have enough of my flesh?

Job 19:23 Oh, that my words were written down!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a scroll,
with an iron stylus and with lead,
carved in the rock forever!
But I know that my redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand up upon the dust.
And after my skin has been stripped off like this,
yet from my flesh I will see God,[39]

39 A redeemer (Hebrew *go'el*) was a kinsman who vindicated or avenged a family member. Verses 19:25–27 are textually difficult; "from my flesh" can also mean "without my flesh."

Job 19:27 whom I myself will see, whom my own eyes will behold,
and not a stranger.
My insides waste away within me!
If you say, "How we will hound him!"
and "The root of the matter is found in him,"
then be afraid of the sword yourselves, for wrath brings the punishments of the sword,
so that you may know there is a judgment.[40]

ZOPHAR: THE JOY OF THE WICKED IS BRIEF

Zophar says the wicked must vomit up the riches they have swallowed.

Job 20:1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

ZOPHAR

Job 20:2 So my troubled thoughts compel me to answer,
because of the agitation within me.
I hear a rebuke that insults me,
and out of my understanding a spirit gives me an answer.
Do you not know this from of old,
since humankind was placed on the earth:
that the joy of the wicked is brief,
and the gladness of the godless lasts but a moment?

Job 20:6 Though his pride rises up to the heavens
and his head reaches the clouds,
he will perish forever like his own dung;
those who saw him will say, "Where is he?"
He will fly away like a dream and not be found;
he will be chased away like a vision of the night.
The eye that glimpsed him will see him no more,
and his place will look on him no more.

40 The Hebrew of 19:29 is uncertain.

Job 20:10 His children will seek the favor of the poor,
and his own hands will give back his wealth.
His bones were full of youthful vigor,
but it will lie down with him in the dust.
Though evil tastes sweet in his mouth,
though he hides it under his tongue,
though he savors it and will not let it go,
and keeps it back in his mouth,

Job 20:14 his food turns sour in his stomach;
it becomes the venom of cobras within him.
He swallowed riches, and he vomits them up;
God drives them out of his belly.
He will suck the poison of cobras;
the viper's tongue will kill him.
He will not look upon the streams,
the rivers flowing with honey and curds.

Job 20:18 He gives back what he toiled for and does not swallow it;
he does not enjoy the profit of his trading.
For he crushed and abandoned the poor;
he seized a house he did not build.
Because he knew no contentment in his belly,
he will not escape with what he desires.

Job 20:21 Nothing was left over after he had eaten;
therefore his prosperity will not endure.
In the fullness of his plenty he will be in distress;
the full force of misery will come upon him.
When he is about to fill his belly, he will send his burning
anger against him
and rain it down on him as his food.

Job 20:24 He flees from an iron weapon;
a bronze bow pierces him through.
He draws it out, and it comes out of his back;
the glittering point comes out of his gallbladder;
terrors come upon him.
Utter darkness lies in wait for his treasures;
a fire not fanned will devour him;
it will consume what is left in his tent.

Job 20:27 The heavens will reveal his guilt,
and the earth will rise up against him.
The produce of his house will be carried off,
swept away on the day of his anger.
This is the wicked man's portion from God,
the inheritance decreed for him by God.

JOB: WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER?

Job points out that the wicked live long, prosper, and go to their graves in peace.

Job 21:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 21:2 Listen closely to my words,
and let this be the comfort you give me.
Bear with me while I speak,
and after I have spoken, mock on.
As for me, is my complaint against a human being?
And why should I not be impatient?
Look at me and be appalled,
and lay your hand over your mouth.

Job 21:6 When I think of it, I am dismayed,
and shuddering seizes my flesh.
Why do the wicked live on,
grow old, and even grow mighty in power?
Their offspring are established in their presence,
and their descendants before their eyes.
Their houses are safe from fear,
and no rod of God is upon them.

Job 21:10 Their bull breeds without fail;
their cow calves and does not miscarry.
They send out their little ones like a flock,
and their children dance.
They sing to the tambourine and the lyre
and rejoice at the sound of the pipe.
They spend their days in prosperity,
and in a moment they go down to Sheol.

Job 21:14 They say to God, “Leave us alone!
We have no desire to know your ways.
What is Shaddai, that we should serve him?
What would we gain by praying to him?”
Look, their prosperity is not in their own hands;
the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

Job 21:17 How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? How often
does disaster come upon them,
does he deal out pains in his anger?
How often are they like straw before the wind,
like chaff that the storm carries off?
God stores up a man’s guilt for his children?
Let him pay the man himself back, so that he knows it!

Job 21:20 Let his own eyes see his ruin,
and let him drink of the wrath of Shaddai.
For what does he care about his household after him,
when the number of his months is cut off?
Can anyone teach God knowledge,
seeing that he judges those on high?
One person dies in full vigor,
wholly at ease and secure,

Job 21:24 his pails full of milk
and the marrow of his bones moist.
Another dies with a bitter soul,
never having tasted good things.
Together they lie down in the dust,
and worms cover them both.
Look, I know your thoughts,
the schemes by which you would wrong me.[41]

Job 21:28 For you say, “Where is the house of the nobleman?
Where is the tent where the wicked lived?”
Have you not asked those who travel the roads?
Do you not accept their testimony,
that the evil man is spared on the day of disaster,
that he is led to safety on the day of wrath?

Job 21:31 Who will denounce his way to his face?
Who will repay him for what he has done?
He is carried to the grave,
and a watch is kept over his tomb.
The clods of the valley are sweet to him;
everyone follows after him,
and those who went before him are without number.
How then can you comfort me with empty breath?
Your answers are nothing but betrayal.

41 The word rendered “pails” is uncertain.

THE THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES

Eliphaz accuses Job outright, Bildad speaks briefly, and Job swears to his integrity.

Job 22:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

ELIPHAZ: YOUR WICKEDNESS IS GREAT

Eliphaz charges Job with crimes against the poor and urges him to return to Shaddai.

ELIPHAZ

Job 22:2 Can a man be of use to God?
Even a wise man is of use only to himself.
Does it give Shaddai pleasure if you are righteous,
or profit if you make your ways blameless?
Is it for your fear of him that he rebukes you
and enters into judgment with you?
Is not your wickedness great,
and is there no end to your iniquities?

Job 22:6 For you have taken pledges from your brothers for nothing
and stripped the naked of their clothing.
You have given no water to the weary
and withheld bread from the hungry.
The man with power owned the land,
and the favored man lived in it.
You have sent widows away empty-handed,
and the arms of the orphans were crushed.

Job 22:10 That is why snares are all around you
and sudden terror dismays you,
or darkness, so that you cannot see,
and a flood of water covers you.
Is not God high in the heavens?
See the highest stars, how lofty they are!
Yet you say, "What does God know?
Can he judge through the thick darkness?

Job 22:14 Thick clouds veil him so that he does not see,
as he walks on the circle of the heavens.”
Will you keep to the ancient path
that wicked men have trodden?
They were snatched away before their time;
their foundation was washed away by a river.
They said to God, “Leave us alone!”
and “What can Shaddai do to us?”

Job 22:18 Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things—
but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
The righteous see it and are glad,
and the innocent mock them:
“Surely our foes are destroyed,
and fire has consumed what they left.”
Come to terms with him and be at peace;
in this way good will come to you.[42]

Job 22:22 Accept teaching from his mouth
and lay up his words in your heart.
If you return to Shaddai, you will be restored;
if you put wrongdoing far from your tent,
if you lay your gold in the dust
and the gold of Ophir among the stones of the streams,
then Shaddai will be your gold
and your silver piled high.[43]

42 Eliphaz here takes up Job’s own words from 21:16.
43 Ophir was a distant land famed for its fine gold.

Job 22:26 For then you will delight in Shaddai
and lift up your face to God.
You will pray to him, and he will hear you,
and you will fulfill your vows.
You will decide on a matter, and it will be done for you,
and light will shine on your ways.
When they are brought low, you will say, "Up!"
and he will save the downcast.
He will rescue even one who is not innocent;
he will be rescued through the cleanness of your hands.[44]

JOB: IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE TO FIND HIM

Job longs to lay his case before God and describes the misery of the poor.

Job 23:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 23:2 Even today my complaint is bitter;
my hand is heavy on my groaning.
Oh, that I knew where I might find him,
that I might come to his dwelling!
I would lay out my case before him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
I would learn what he would answer me
and understand what he would say to me.[45]

Job 23:6 Would he contend with me in his great power?
No, he would surely pay attention to me.
There an upright person could reason with him,
and I would be acquitted by my judge forever.
Look, I go east, but he is not there;
west, but I do not perceive him;
north, where he is at work, but I do not catch sight of him;
he turns south, but I do not see him.

44 The Hebrew of 22:29–30 is uncertain.
45 The Hebrew is uncertain; some ancient versions read "his hand."

Job 23:10 Yet he knows the way I take;
if he tested me, I would come out like gold.
My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and not turned aside.
I have not departed from the command of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.
But he stands alone, and who can turn him back?
What he desires, that he does.

Job 23:14 For he will carry out what he has decreed for me,
and many such things are in his mind.
That is why I am terrified in his presence;
when I consider, I am afraid of him.
God has made my heart faint;
Shaddai has terrified me.
Yet I am not silenced by the darkness,
nor by the thick gloom that covers my face.

Job 24:1 Why are times not stored up by Shaddai,
and why do those who know him never see his days?
People move boundary stones;
they seize flocks and pasture them.
They drive away the orphan's donkey;
they take the widow's ox as a pledge.
They push the needy off the road;
the poor of the land all hide together.[46]

Job 24:5 Look, like wild donkeys in the wilderness, they go out to their work, searching for food;
the desert gives them bread for their children.
They harvest fodder in the field
and glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
They spend the night naked, without clothing,
with no covering against the cold.

46 "Times" and "his days" are times of judgment.

Job 24:8 They are drenched by the mountain rains
and cling to the rock for want of shelter.
The fatherless child is snatched from the breast,
and they take pledges from the poor.
They go about naked, without clothing;
hungry, they carry the sheaves.
Between the terraces they press out oil;
they tread the winepresses yet go thirsty.

Job 24:12 From the city people groan, and the throats of the wounded
cry for help,
yet God pays no heed to the outrage.
These are among those who rebel against the light;
they do not know its ways
and do not stay in its paths.
At first light the murderer rises; he kills the poor and the
needy,
and in the night he is like a thief.

Job 24:15 The adulterer's eye watches for twilight, thinking, "No eye
will see me,"
and he puts a cover over his face.
In the dark they dig through houses;
by day they shut themselves in;
they do not know the light.
For to all of them morning is deep darkness;
they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.

Job 24:18 He is swift on the face of the waters; their portion in the land is cursed;
no one turns toward their vineyards.
Drought and heat snatch away the snow waters;
so Sheol snatches those who have sinned.
The womb forgets him; the worm feeds sweetly on him; he is remembered no more;
so wrongdoing is broken like a tree.
He preys on the barren woman who bears no children
and does no good to the widow.[47]

Job 24:22 Yet he drags off the mighty by his power;
they rise up, but have no assurance of life.
He gives them security, and they rely on it,
but his eyes are on their ways.
They are exalted a little while, and then are gone; they are brought low and gathered up like everything else;
they wither like the heads of grain.
If it is not so, who will prove me a liar
and show that my words are worth nothing?

BILDAD: HOW CAN A MORTAL BE RIGHTEOUS?

Bildad praises God's dominion and calls a human being a maggot and a worm.

Job 25:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

47 The Hebrew of 24:18–24 is uncertain; some scholars think these verses voice the friends' view, quoted by Job.

BILDAD

Job 25:2 Dominion and dread are with him;
he makes peace in his heights.
Can his troops be numbered?
On whom does his light not rise?
How then can a mortal be righteous before God?
How can one born of woman be pure?
Look, even the moon is not bright,
and the stars are not pure in his eyes—
how much less a mortal, who is a maggot,
a human being, who is a worm!

JOB: THE FRINGES OF HIS WAYS

Job mocks Bildad's help and describes God's power over the dead, the clouds and the sea.

Job 26:1 Then Job answered and said:

JOB

Job 26:2 How you have helped the powerless!
How you have saved the arm without strength!
How you have counseled one without wisdom,
and what sound advice you have displayed in abundance!
To whom have you uttered these words,
and whose breath has come out of you?
The shades writhe
beneath the waters and those who dwell in them.
Sheol is naked before him,
and Abaddon has no covering.[48]

48 The shades (Hebrew *rephaim*) are the dead; Abaddon ("Destruction") is another name for the realm of the dead.

Job 26:7 He stretches out the north over the void
and hangs the earth upon nothing.
He wraps up the waters in his thick clouds,
and the cloud does not burst beneath them.
He covers the face of the full moon
and spreads his cloud over it.
He has marked out a circle on the face of the waters,
at the boundary between light and darkness.
The pillars of heaven tremble
and are astounded at his rebuke.[49]

Job 26:12 By his power he stilled the sea;
by his understanding he struck down Rahab.
By his wind the heavens were made fair;
his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
Look, these are but the fringes of his ways; how faint a whisper we hear of him!
But the thunder of his mighty deeds—who can understand it?[50]

JOB: I WILL NOT PUT AWAY MY INTEGRITY

Job swears he will never concede his friends are right, then describes the portion of the wicked.

Job 27:1 Job again took up his discourse and said:

49 "The full moon" may also be read "the throne."
50 The "fleeing serpent," like Rahab, is a monster of chaos from ancient Near Eastern myth.

JOB

Job 27:2 As God lives, who has denied me justice,
and Shaddai, who has made my life bitter,
as long as my breath is in me
and the breath of God is in my nostrils,
my lips will not speak falsehood,
and my tongue will not utter deceit.
Far be it from me to declare you in the right!
Until I die
I will not put away my integrity.

Job 27:6 I hold fast to my righteousness and will not let it go;
my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.
Let my enemy be like the wicked,
and my opponent like the unjust.
For what hope has the godless when he is cut off,
when God takes away his life?

Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry
when distress comes upon him?
Will he delight in Shaddai?
Will he call upon God at all times?
I will teach you about the hand of God;
what is with Shaddai I will not conceal.
Look, all of you have seen it yourselves;
why then do you speak such empty vapor?

Job 27:13 This is the wicked man's portion from God,
the inheritance that tyrants receive from Shaddai:
If his children are many, they are for the sword,
and his offspring will not have enough bread.
Those who survive him are buried by plague,
and his widows do not weep.[51]

51 Some scholars think 27:13–23 belonged originally to a third speech of Zophar, since it echoes the friends' views.

Job 27:16 Though he heaps up silver like dust
and piles up clothing like clay,
he may pile it up, but the righteous will wear it,
and the innocent will divide the silver.
He builds his house like a moth's,
like a hut that a watchman makes.
He lies down rich, but will do so no more;
he opens his eyes, and it is gone.

Job 27:20 Terrors overtake him like a flood;
in the night a storm carries him off.
The east wind lifts him up, and he is gone;
it sweeps him from his place.
It hurls itself at him without pity,
as he flees headlong from its power.
It claps its hands at him
and hisses at him from its place.

WHERE CAN WISDOM BE FOUND?

A poem says humans mine the earth for treasure, but only God knows the way to wisdom.

JOB

Job 28:1 There is a mine for silver,
and a place where gold is refined.
Iron is taken from the dust,
and copper is smelted from the stone.
Someone puts an end to darkness and searches out the farthest limits
for the ore in gloom and deep darkness.

Job 28:4 He opens a shaft far from where people live, in places
forgotten by any foot;
far from humans they dangle and sway.
The earth—out of it comes bread,
but underneath it is turned up as by fire.
Its stones are the place of sapphires,
and it holds dust of gold.
That path no bird of prey knows,
and the falcon's eye has not seen it.[52]

Job 28:8 Proud beasts have not trodden it;
the lion has not passed over it.
He puts his hand to the flint
and overturns mountains by the roots.
He cuts channels in the rocks,
and his eye sees every precious thing.
He dams up the sources of the rivers
and brings hidden things to light.

Job 28:12 But wisdom—where can it be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
No mortal knows its worth,
and it is not found in the land of the living.
The deep says, "It is not in me,"
and the sea says, "It is not with me."
It cannot be bought with fine gold,
nor can silver be weighed out as its price.

52 The Hebrew of 28:4 is uncertain.

Job 28:16 It cannot be paid for with the gold of Ophir,
with precious onyx or sapphire.
Gold and glass cannot equal it,
nor can it be exchanged for vessels of fine gold.
Coral and crystal are not worth mentioning;
the price of wisdom is above pearls.
The topaz of Cush cannot equal it;
it cannot be paid for with pure gold.[53]

Job 28:20 But wisdom—where does it come from?
And where is the place of understanding?
It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing
and concealed from the birds of the air.
Abaddon and Death say,
"With our ears we have heard a rumor of it."
God understands the way to it,
and he knows its place.
For he looks to the ends of the earth
and sees everything under the heavens.

Job 28:25 When he gave the wind its weight
and measured out the waters,
when he made a decree for the rain
and a path for the thunderbolt,
then he saw it and declared it;
he established it and searched it out.
And he said to humankind, "Look, the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom,
and to turn away from evil is understanding."

JOB'S FINAL DEFENSE: THE DAYS OF OLD

Job recalls the days when God watched over him and he was honored at the city gate.

Job 29:1 Job again took up his discourse and said:

53 Cush is the land south of Egypt, on the upper Nile.

JOB

Job 29:2 Oh, that I were as in the months of old,
as in the days when God watched over me,
when his lamp shone above my head
and by his light I walked through darkness,
as I was in the prime of my life,
when the friendship of God was upon my tent,
when Shaddai was still with me
and my children were all around me,

Job 29:6 when my steps were bathed in cream
and the rock poured out streams of oil for me,
when I went out to the gate of the town
and took my seat in the square!
The young men saw me and stepped aside,
and the old men rose and stood.
Princes held back their words
and laid their hands on their mouths.

Job 29:10 The voices of the nobles were hushed,
and their tongues stuck to the roofs of their mouths.
For the ear that heard me called me blessed,
and the eye that saw me bore witness for me,
because I rescued the poor who cried for help,
and the orphan who had no one to help him.
The blessing of the one about to perish came upon me,
and I made the widow's heart sing.

Job 29:14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
my justice was like a robe and a turban.
I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame.
I was a father to the needy,
and I investigated the case of the one I did not know.
I broke the fangs of the unjust
and snatched the prey from his teeth.
I thought, "I will die in my nest,
and I will multiply my days like the sand."[54]

Job 29:19 My roots spread out to the water,
with the dew all night on my branches.
My glory was always fresh with me,
and my bow ever new in my hand.
People listened to me and waited
and kept silent for my counsel.
After I spoke they did not speak again,
and my words fell on them like drops.

Job 29:23 They waited for me as for the rain
and opened their mouths as for the spring rain.
I smiled at them when they had no confidence,
and they did not cast down the light of my face.
I chose their way and sat as their chief;
I lived like a king among his troops,
like one who comforts mourners.

54 "Like the sand" may also be read "like the phoenix," as in some Jewish tradition.

JOB: BUT NOW THEY LAUGH AT ME

Job describes the outcasts who now mock him and God's cruelty toward him.

JOB

Job 30:1 But now they laugh at me, those younger than I in years,
whose fathers I would have disdained
to set with the dogs of my flock.
What use to me was the strength of their hands,
men whose vigor had perished?
Gaunt with want and hunger,
they gnaw the dry ground,
in the gloom of desolation and waste.[55]

Job 30:4 They pluck saltwort among the bushes,
and the roots of the broom tree are their food.
They are driven out from human company;
people shout after them as after a thief.
They must live in the gullies of the wadis,
in holes in the ground and among the rocks.
Among the bushes they bray;
under the nettles they huddle together.
A senseless brood, a nameless brood,
they have been whipped out of the land.

Job 30:9 And now I have become their song;
I have become a byword to them.
They abhor me; they keep their distance from me;
they do not hold back from spitting in my face.
Because he has loosened my bowstring and humbled me,
they have cast off restraint in my presence.
On my right the rabble rise up;
they push my feet aside
and build their roads of ruin against me.

55 The Hebrew of 30:3 is uncertain.

Job 30:13 They break up my path;
they profit from my ruin;
they need no one to help them.
As through a wide breach they come;
amid the crash they roll on.
Terrors are turned upon me;
my dignity is chased away like the wind,
and my safety has passed away like a cloud.

Job 30:16 And now my life is poured out within me;
days of affliction have seized me.
At night my bones are pierced within me,
and the pains that gnaw me take no rest.
With great force my garment is disfigured;
it binds me like the collar of my tunic.
He has thrown me into the mud,
and I have become like dust and ashes.

Job 30:20 I cry to you, and you do not answer me;
I stand, and you merely look at me.
You have turned cruel to me;
with the might of your hand you persecute me.
You lift me up on the wind and make me ride it,
and you toss me about in the roar of the storm.
I know that you will bring me to death,
to the house appointed for all the living.

Job 30:24 Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out a hand,
and in his disaster cry for help?
Did I not weep for one whose day was hard?
Was not my soul grieved for the needy?
But when I hoped for good, evil came;
when I waited for light, darkness came.
My insides are in turmoil and never still;
days of affliction confront me.[56]

56 The Hebrew of 30:24 is uncertain.

Job 30:28
I go about blackened, but not by the sun;
I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.
I have become a brother to jackals
and a companion to ostriches.
My skin turns black and peels from me,
and my bones burn with fever.
My lyre is turned to mourning,
and my pipe to the sound of weepers.

JOB'S OATH OF INNOCENCE

Job lists wrongs he has not done, calls curses on himself if guilty, and demands God's answer.

JOB

Job 31:1
I made a covenant with my eyes;
how then could I gaze at a young woman?
What share would I have from God above,
what inheritance from Shaddai on high?
Is it not ruin for the wrongdoer,
disaster for those who do evil?
Does he not see my ways
and count my every step?

Job 31:5
If I have walked with falsehood,
if my foot has hurried toward deceit—
let him weigh me on honest scales,
and God will know my integrity!—
if my steps have turned aside from the path,
if my heart has followed my eyes,
if any stain has clung to my hands,

Job 31:8 then let me sow, and another eat,
and let my crops be uprooted.
If my heart has been lured by a woman,
and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door,
then let my wife grind grain for another man,
and let other men crouch over her.
For that would be a shameful crime,
an offense for the judges.

Job 31:12 It would be a fire that consumes all the way to Abaddon,
and it would uproot all my harvest.
If I have rejected the case of my male or female servant
when they brought a dispute against me,
what would I do when God rose up?
When he called me to account, what would I answer him?

Job 31:15 Did not the one who made me in the womb make him too?
Did not the same one form us in the womb?
If I have denied the poor what they wanted,
or let a widow's eyes grow dim with longing,
or eaten my morsel of bread alone
without the orphan eating from it—
for from my youth he grew up with me as with a father,
and from my mother's womb I guided her—[57]

Job 31:19 if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing,
or a needy person with nothing to cover him,
and his loins did not bless me,
warmed by the fleece of my sheep;
if I have raised my hand against an orphan
because I saw I had support at the gate—
then let my shoulder fall from its socket,
and my arm be broken off at the elbow.

57 The Hebrew of this verse is uncertain; "he" is the orphan and "her" the widow.

Job 31:23 For disaster from God was a terror to me,
and before his majesty I could do nothing.
If I have made gold my trust,
or called fine gold my security;
if I have rejoiced that my wealth was great,
that my hand had gained so much;

Job 31:26 if I have looked at the sun as it shone,
or the moon moving in splendor,
and my heart was secretly enticed,
and my hand blew them a kiss from my mouth—
that too would be an offense for the judges,
for I would have denied God above;
if I have rejoiced at the ruin of the one who hated me,
or gloated when evil found him—[58]

Job 31:30 but I did not let my mouth sin
by asking for his life with a curse;
if the men of my tent have not said,
"Who can find anyone who has not had his fill of his meat?"—
no stranger spent the night outside;
I opened my doors to the traveler—
if I have hidden my wrongs as humans do,
burying my guilt in my bosom,[59]

Job 31:34 because I feared the great crowd, and the contempt of the clans terrified me,
so that I kept quiet and did not go out of my door—
Oh, that I had someone to hear me! Here is my signature: let Shaddai answer me!
Let my opponent write out his indictment!
Surely I would carry it on my shoulder;
I would bind it on me like a crown.[60]

58 Kissing the hand toward the sun or moon was a gesture of worship.
59 "As humans do" could also be read "as Adam did."
60 "My signature" is literally "my *taw*," the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, used as a mark.

Job 31:37 I would give him an account of my every step;
like a prince I would approach him.
If my land has cried out against me,
and its furrows have wept together;
if I have eaten its produce without paying,
or made its owners breathe their last—
then let thorns grow instead of wheat, and stinking weeds
instead of barley.

Job 31:40 The words of Job are ended.

THE SPEECHES OF ELIHU

A young bystander, angry with Job and the friends, speaks four times in defense of God.

Job 32:1 So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Job 32:2 Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became angry. He was angry with Job because he justified himself rather than God. And he was angry with his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.[61]

Job 32:4 Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job, because they were older than he was. But when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouths of the three men, he became angry.

Job 32:6 Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said:

61 An ancient scribal tradition holds that the text originally read "condemned God."

ELIHU: GOD SPEAKS THROUGH DREAMS AND PAIN

Elihu explains why he waited, then argues that God warns people through dreams and sickness.

ELIHU

I am young in years, and you are old;
so I held back, afraid to tell you what I know.
I said, "Let age speak,
and many years teach wisdom."
But it is the spirit in a person,
the breath of Shaddai, that gives them understanding.

Job 32:9 It is not the aged who are wise,
nor the old who understand what is right.
So I say, "Listen to me;
let me too tell what I know."
Look, I waited for your words; I listened for your insights
while you searched for what to say.

Job 32:12 I paid close attention to you,
and there was no one to prove Job wrong,
not one of you who answered his words.
Do not say, "We have found wisdom;
let God rout him, not a human."
He has not set out his words against me,
and I will not answer him with your arguments.

Job 32:15 They are dismayed; they answer no more;
words have deserted them.
Must I wait, because they do not speak,
because they stand there and answer no more?
I too will give my answer;
I too will tell what I know.
For I am full of words;
the spirit within me presses me.

Job 32:19 My belly is like wine with no vent;
like new wineskins it is ready to burst.
Let me speak and find relief;
let me open my lips and answer.
I will not show partiality to anyone,
or flatter any human being.
For I do not know how to flatter—
else my Maker would soon carry me off.

Job 33:1 But now, Job, hear my speech;
listen to all my words.
Look, I have opened my mouth;
my tongue is speaking in my palate.
My words come from an upright heart;
what my lips know they speak sincerely.
The spirit of God has made me;
the breath of Shaddai gives me life.

Job 33:5 Answer me if you can;
set out your case before me; take your stand.
Look, before God I am just as you are;
I too was pinched off from clay.
So no fear of me need terrify you;
my pressure will not weigh heavily on you.
But you have said in my hearing—
I heard the sound of your words—

Job 33:9 "I am pure, without transgression;
I am clean,
and there is no guilt in me.
Yet he finds pretexts against me;
he counts me as his enemy.
He puts my feet in the stocks;
he watches all my paths."
In this you are not in the right—I will answer you—
for God is greater than any mortal.

Job 33:13 Why do you bring a case against him,
saying he answers none of your words?
For God speaks in one way,
and in two, though no one perceives it:
in a dream, a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people,
as they slumber on their beds.
Then he opens people's ears
and seals their warning,

Job 33:17 to turn a person from his deeds
and to cover a man's pride.
He keeps back his life from the Pit,
his very being from crossing the River.
He is also rebuked with pain on his bed,
with ceaseless strife in his bones,
so that his very being loathes bread,
and his appetite the choicest food.[62]

Job 33:21 His flesh wastes away until it can no longer be seen,
and his bones, once hidden, stick out.
His life draws near to the Pit,
his very being to those who bring death.
If there is an angel beside him, a mediator, one in a thousand,
to vouch for a person's uprightness,

Job 33:24 and he is gracious to him and says, "Spare him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransom"—
then his flesh grows fresher than a child's;
he returns to the days of his youth.
He prays to God, who accepts him; he sees God's face with a shout of joy,
and God restores to the person his righteousness.

62 "The River" renders Hebrew *shelach,* perhaps a channel of the underworld; others take it as "the spear."

Job 33:27 He sings out before others and says, “I sinned and twisted
what was right,
and it was not repaid to me.”
He has redeemed his life from passing into the Pit,
and his life will look upon the light.
Look, God does all these things,
twice, three times, with a person,

Job 33:30 to bring his life back from the Pit,
so that he may be lit with the light of life.
Pay attention, Job, listen to me;
be silent, and I will speak.
If you have anything to say, answer me;
speak, for I would like to vindicate you.
If not, then listen to me;
be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.

ELIHU: FAR BE IT FROM GOD TO DO WRONG

Elihu insists that God repays everyone justly and that Job speaks without knowledge.

Job 34:1 Then Elihu answered and said:

ELIHU

Job 34:2 Hear my words, you wise men;
give ear to me, you who know.
For the ear tests words
as the palate tastes food.
Let us choose for ourselves what is just;
let us decide among ourselves what is good.
For Job has said, “I am in the right,
and God has taken away my justice.
In my own case I am counted a liar;
the arrow in me is incurable, though I have not
transgressed.”

Job 34:7 What man is like Job,
who drinks up scorn like water,
who keeps company with evildoers
and walks with wicked men?
For he has said, “It profits a man nothing
to be in favor with God.”
So listen to me, you men of understanding:
far be it from God to do wickedness,
from Shaddai to do wrong!

Job 34:11 For he repays a person for what he has done;
he brings on each one what his ways deserve.
Truly, God does not act wickedly;
Shaddai does not pervert justice.
Who put him in charge of the earth?
Who laid on him the whole world?
If he were to set his heart on it
and gather his spirit and breath back to himself,

Job 34:15 all flesh would perish together,
and humankind would return to dust.
If you have understanding, hear this;
listen to the sound of my words.
Can one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn the Righteous and Mighty One?
Does one say to a king, “Worthless!”
or to nobles, “Wicked!”?

Job 34:19 He shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the
rich over the poor,
for they are all the work of his hands.
In a moment they die, at midnight;
people are shaken and pass away,
and the mighty are removed by no human hand.
For his eyes are on a person’s ways;
he sees all his steps.

Job 34:22 There is no darkness, no deep shadow,
where evildoers can hide.
For he need not set a time for anyone
to come before God in judgment.
He shatters the mighty without inquiry
and sets others in their place.

Job 34:25 So he knows their deeds;
he overturns them in the night, and they are crushed.
He strikes them down for their wickedness
where everyone can see,
because they turned away from following him
and paid no heed to any of his ways,
so that they brought the cry of the poor before him,
and he hears the cry of the afflicted.

Job 34:29 If he stays quiet, who can condemn him? If he hides his face, who can see him?
Yet he watches over nation and person alike,
so that the godless may not reign,
and there be no snares for the people.
For has anyone said to God, "I have borne punishment;
I will offend no more.[63]

Job 34:32 "Teach me what I cannot see;
if I have done wrong, I will not do it again"?
Should he repay you on your terms, when you have rejected him? For you must choose, and not I;
so tell us what you know.
People of understanding will say to me,
and any wise man who hears me:

63 The Hebrew of verses 29–33 is very uncertain.

Job 34:35 "Job speaks without knowledge;
his words are without insight."
Would that Job were tried to the end
for answering like evil men!
For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us
and multiplies his words against God.

ELIHU: WHAT DO YOU GIVE TO GOD?

Elihu argues that human sin and righteousness affect only other humans, not God.

Job 35:1 Then Elihu answered and said:

ELIHU

Job 35:2 Do you think this is just,
when you say, "My righteousness is greater than God's"?
For you ask, "What use is it to you?
What do I gain by not sinning?"
I will answer you,
and your friends with you.
Look up at the heavens and see;
gaze at the clouds, high above you.

Job 35:6 If you sin, what do you do to him?
If your transgressions are many, what do you do to him?
If you are in the right, what do you give him?
Or what does he receive from your hand?
Your wickedness affects someone like yourself,
and your righteousness a fellow human.
Under the weight of oppression people cry out;
they call for help against the arm of the mighty.

Job 35:10 But no one says, “Where is God my Maker,
who gives songs in the night,
who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth
and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky?”
There they cry out, but he does not answer,
because of the pride of the wicked.
Surely God does not hear an empty cry;
Shaddai does not regard it.

Job 35:14 How much less when you say you do not see him,
that the case is before him, and you are waiting for him!
And now, because his anger does not punish,
and he takes little note of folly,
Job opens his mouth in empty talk
and multiplies words without knowledge.[64]

ELIHU: GOD’S GREATNESS IN THE STORM

Elihu says God disciplines in order to teach, and describes his power in rain and thunder.

Job 36:1 Elihu continued and said:

ELIHU

Job 36:2 Bear with me a little, and I will show you,
for there is still more to say on God’s behalf.
I will bring my knowledge from far away
and ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
For truly my words are no lie;
one perfect in knowledge is with you.
Look, God is mighty and does not reject anyone;
he is mighty in strength of understanding.

64 The Hebrew word translated “folly” is uncertain.

Job 36:6 He does not keep the wicked alive,
but gives the afflicted their justice.
He does not take his eyes off the righteous;
with kings on the throne
he seats them forever, and they are exalted.
And if they are bound in chains,
caught in the cords of affliction,
he declares to them what they have done,
their transgressions, that they have acted arrogantly.

Job 36:10 He opens their ears to discipline
and tells them to turn back from evil.
If they listen and serve him,
they will complete their days in prosperity
and their years in delight.
But if they do not listen, they will cross the River
and die for lack of knowledge.
The godless in heart harbor anger;
they do not cry for help when he binds them.

Job 36:14 They die in their youth;
their life ends among the *qedeshim*.
He rescues the afflicted through their affliction
and opens their ears through distress.
He also lured you out of the jaws of distress into a broad
place with no constraint beneath it,
and what was set on your table was full of rich food.
But you are full of the judgment due the wicked;
judgment and justice take hold of you.[65]

65 Hebrew *qedeshim*, men attached to shrines, traditionally understood as cult prostitutes; the line pictures a dishonored death.

Job 36:18 Beware that anger does not lure you into mockery,
and do not let a large bribe turn you aside.
Will your cry for help keep you out of distress,
or all your exertions of strength?
Do not long for the night,
when peoples vanish from their place.
Take care not to turn to evil,
for this you have chosen rather than affliction.[66]

Job 36:22 Look, God is exalted in his power;
who is a teacher like him?
Who has prescribed his way for him,
or who can say, "You have done wrong"?
Remember to extol his work,
of which people have sung.
All humankind has looked on it;
mortals gaze at it from afar.

Job 36:26 Look, God is great beyond our knowing;
the number of his years is past searching out.
For he draws up the drops of water;
they distill rain from his mist,
which the clouds pour down
and shower on humankind in abundance.
Can anyone understand how the clouds spread out,
the thunderings of his pavilion?

Job 36:30 Look, he spreads his light around him
and covers the roots of the sea.
For by these he governs peoples;
he gives food in abundance.
He covers his hands with lightning
and commands it to strike the mark.
Its crash tells of him;
even the cattle tell of what is rising.[67]

66 The Hebrew of verses 16–20 is uncertain.
67 The Hebrew of verse 33 is uncertain.

Job 37:1 At this too my heart trembles
and leaps from its place.
Listen, listen to the roar of his voice,
the rumbling that comes from his mouth.
Under the whole sky he lets it loose,
and his lightning to the corners of the earth.
After it a voice roars; he thunders with his majestic voice,
and he does not hold back the bolts when his voice is heard.

Job 37:5 God thunders wondrously with his voice;
he does great things beyond our knowing.
For to the snow he says, "Fall on the earth,"
and so to the shower of rain,
the showers of his mighty rain.
He seals up the hand of every person,
so that all whom he has made may know it.
Then the beasts go into their lairs
and stay in their dens.

Job 37:9 From its chamber comes the storm,
and cold from the scattering winds.
By the breath of God ice is given,
and the broad waters are frozen hard.
He loads the clouds with moisture;
the clouds scatter his lightning.
They turn round and round by his guidance to do
all that he commands them over the face of the inhabited
earth.

Job 37:13 Whether as a rod, or for his land,
or for steadfast love, he brings it about.
Listen to this, Job;
stand still and consider the wonders of God.
Do you know how God lays his command on them
and makes the lightning of his cloud shine?
Do you know how the clouds are balanced,
the wonders of the one perfect in knowledge?

Job 37:17 You whose clothes grow hot
when the earth lies still under the south wind,
can you, with him, spread out the skies,
hard as a mirror of cast metal?
Teach us what we should say to him;
we cannot set out our case because of darkness.
Should he be told that I want to speak?
Would anyone ask to be swallowed up?

Job 37:21 And now no one can look at the light when it is bright in the skies,
when the wind has passed and swept them clean.
Out of the north comes golden splendor;
around God is awesome majesty.
Shaddai—we cannot find him; he is great in power,
and in justice and abundant righteousness he does not oppress.
Therefore people fear him;
he does not regard any who are wise in their own heart.

THE WHIRLWIND SPEECHES

The LORD answers Job out of the storm with a torrent of questions about creation.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:[68]

68 The whirlwind (Hebrew *se'arah*) is a violent storm; in the Hebrew Bible storms often accompany the appearance of God.

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I FOUNDED THE EARTH?

God questions Job about the earth, the sea, the dawn, the snow and the stars.

GOD

Job 38:2 Who is this who darkens counsel with words
without knowledge?
Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you will inform me.
Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
Who fixed its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched a measuring line over it?

Job 38:6 On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone,
when the morning stars sang together
and all the members of the divine court shouted for joy?
Who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out, coming from the womb,
when I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling band,

Job 38:10 when I fixed my limit for it
and set bars and doors,
and said, “This far you may come, and no farther;
here your proud waves must stop”?
Have you ever in your life commanded the morning,
or shown the dawn its place,
so that it might seize the edges of the earth
and shake the wicked out of it?

Job 38:14 It is changed like clay under a seal,
and its features stand out like a garment.
The wicked are denied their light,
and the arm raised high is broken.
Have you gone down to the springs of the sea,
or walked in the recesses of the deep?
Have the gates of death been revealed to you?
Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

Job 38:18 Have you grasped the breadth of the earth?
Tell me, if you know all this.
Where is the way to where light dwells,
and darkness—where is its place,
that you might take it to its territory
and know the paths to its home?
You know, for you were born then,
and the number of your days is great!

Job 38:22 Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,
or seen the storehouses of the hail,
which I have kept for a time of trouble,
for a day of battle and war?
What is the way to where the light is divided,
where the east wind is scattered over the earth?
Who has cut a channel for the downpour,
and a way for the thunderbolt,

Job 38:26 to bring rain on a land where no one lives,
on a wilderness with no human in it,
to satisfy the desolate wasteland
and make the ground sprout with grass?
Does the rain have a father?
Or who fathered the drops of dew?
From whose womb did the ice come forth?
And the frost of the heavens—who gave birth to it?

Job 38:30
The waters harden like stone,
and the face of the deep is frozen.
Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades,
or loosen the cords of Orion?
Can you lead out the Mazzaroth in their season,
or guide the Bear with her children?
Do you know the laws of the heavens?
Can you establish their rule on the earth?[69]

Job 38:34
Can you raise your voice to the clouds,
so that a flood of water covers you?
Can you send out lightning bolts so that they go
and say to you, "Here we are"?
Who has put wisdom in the ibis,
or given understanding to the rooster?
Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
And who can tip over the water jars of the heavens,[70]

THE WILD ANIMALS

God asks Job about lions, ravens, goats, the wild donkey and ox, the ostrich, the horse and the eagle.

GOD

Job 38:38
when the dust runs into a mass
and the clods stick together?
Can you hunt prey for the lioness,
or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
when they crouch in their dens
and lie in wait in the thicket?
Who provides the raven its prey
when its young cry out to God
and wander about without food?

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69 The identification of these constellations is uncertain; *Mazzaroth* may be the signs of the zodiac.

70 The Hebrew words for "ibis" and "rooster" are uncertain; some take them as "inward parts" and "mind."

Job 39:1 Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?
Do you watch the does in labor?
Can you count the months they must complete,
and do you know the time they give birth?
They crouch, they bring forth their young;
they are rid of their labor pains.
Their young grow strong and grow up in the open;
they go off and do not return to them.

Job 39:5 Who let the wild donkey go free?
Who untied the ropes of the onager,
to whom I gave the steppe as his home,
the salt flats as his dwelling?
He laughs at the commotion of the city;
he does not hear the shouts of the driver.

Job 39:8 He ranges the mountains as his pasture
and searches after every green thing.
Is the wild ox willing to serve you?
Will he spend the night at your manger?
Can you tie the wild ox in the furrow with a rope?
Will he harrow the valleys behind you?
Will you rely on him because his strength is great,
and leave your labor to him?

Job 39:12 Can you trust him to bring your grain home
and gather it to your threshing floor?
The ostrich's wings flap joyfully,
but are they the pinions and plumage of the stork?
For she leaves her eggs on the ground
and lets them warm in the dust,
forgetting that a foot may crush them,
or a wild animal trample them.[71]

71 The Hebrew of verse 13 is uncertain; the bird is probably the ostrich, and "stork" (*hasidah*) may play on *hasid*, "loyal."

Job 39:16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers;
she has no fear that her labor may be in vain,
for God has made her forget wisdom
and given her no share in understanding.
But when she rouses herself to run,
she laughs at the horse and its rider.
Do you give the horse its might?
Do you clothe its neck with a quivering mane?

Job 39:20 Do you make it leap like a locust?
Its majestic snorting is terrifying.
It paws in the valley and exults in its strength;
it goes out to meet the weapons.
It laughs at fear and is not dismayed;
it does not turn back from the sword.
The quiver rattles against it,
the flashing spear and javelin.

Job 39:24 With trembling and rage it swallows the ground;
it cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds.
At every blast of the trumpet it says, "Aha!" From far off it
smells the battle,
the thunder of the commanders and the war cry.
Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars
and spreads its wings toward the south?

Job 39:27 Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up
and builds its nest on high?
It dwells on the cliff and lodges there,
on a jagged crag, a stronghold.
From there it searches out food;
its eyes see it from far away.
Its young gulp down blood,
and where the slain are, there it is.

JOB LAYS HIS HAND ON HIS MOUTH

God challenges Job to answer, and Job says he will speak no more.

Job 40:1 Then the LORD answered Job and said:

GOD

Job 40:2 Will a faultfinder contend with Shaddai?
Let the one who argues against God answer!

Job 40:3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

JOB

Job 40:4 Look, I am of small account; what can I answer you?
I lay my hand over my mouth.
I have spoken once, and I will not answer;
twice, and I will say no more.

BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN

God challenges Job to rule the world as God does, then describes the two great beasts he made.

Job 40:6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

GOD

Job 40:7 Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you will inform me.
Would you really annul my justice?
Would you condemn me so that you may be in the right?
Do you have an arm like God's?
Can you thunder with a voice like his?
Then adorn yourself with majesty and dignity;
clothe yourself with splendor and glory.
Let loose the fury of your anger;
look at everyone who is proud and bring him low.

Job 40:12 Look at everyone who is proud and humble him;
tread down the wicked where they stand.
Hide them all together in the dust;
bind their faces in the hidden place.
Then I myself will praise you,
for your own right hand can save you.
Look now at Behemoth, which I made just as I made you;
it eats grass like an ox.[72]

Job 40:16 Look at the strength in its loins,
the power in the muscles of its belly.
It stiffens its tail like a cedar;
the sinews of its thighs are knit together.
Its bones are tubes of bronze,
its limbs like bars of iron.
It is the first of God's works;
only its Maker can approach it with his sword.

Job 40:20 For the mountains bring it their produce,
where all the wild animals play.
Under the lotus plants it lies,
hidden among the reeds and the marsh.
The lotus plants cover it with their shade;
the willows of the stream surround it.
If the river rages, it is not alarmed;
it is confident, though a Jordan should surge against its mouth.

72 Hebrew *behemot*, "the Beast" par excellence; often identified with the hippopotamus, but drawn on a mythic scale.

Job 40:24 Can anyone take it by its eyes,
or pierce its nose with snares?
Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook,
or press down its tongue with a cord?
Can you put a rope through its nose,
or pierce its jaw with a hook?
Will it plead with you at length?
Will it speak to you gently?[73]

Job 40:28 Will it make a covenant with you,
so that you take it as your slave for life?
Will you play with it as with a bird,
or put it on a leash for your girls?
Will traders bargain over it?
Will they divide it up among the merchants?
Can you fill its hide with harpoons,
or its head with fishing spears?
Lay your hand on it—
remember the battle; you will not do it again![74]

Job 41:1 Look, any hope of capturing it is false;
one is laid low even at the sight of it.
No one is fierce enough to rouse it;
who then can stand before me?
Who has confronted me first, that I should repay him?
Everything under the whole heaven is mine.
I will not keep silent about its limbs,
its mighty strength, and the grace of its frame.[75]

73 Here Leviathan is described partly in terms of the crocodile.
74 "Merchants" is literally "Canaanites," a word that also meant traders.
75 The Hebrew of verses 1–4 is uncertain; some manuscripts read "before it" instead of "before me."

Job 41:5 Who can strip off its outer garment?
Who can come at it with a double bridle?
Who can open the doors of its face?
All around its teeth is terror.
Its pride is its rows of shields,
shut up tight as with a seal.
One is so close to the next
that no air can come between them.

Job 41:9 They are joined each to the other;
they cling together and cannot be parted.
Its sneezes flash out light,
and its eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
From its mouth go flaming torches;
sparks of fire leap out.
Smoke pours from its nostrils,
as from a boiling pot over burning rushes.
Its breath sets coals ablaze,
and a flame comes out of its mouth.

Job 41:14 Strength lodges in its neck,
and dismay dances before it.
The folds of its flesh cling together,
firmly cast on it, immovable.
Its heart is as hard as stone,
hard as the lower millstone.
When it rises up, the mighty are afraid;
at the crashing they are beside themselves.[76]

76 "The mighty" may also be read "the gods"; the Hebrew of this verse is uncertain.

Job 41:18 Though the sword reaches it, it does not prevail,
nor the spear, the dart, or the lance.
It counts iron as straw,
bronze as rotten wood.
The arrow cannot make it flee;
slingstones turn to stubble for it.
Clubs are counted as stubble;
it laughs at the rattle of the javelin.

Job 41:22 Its underside is jagged potsherds;
it spreads itself like a threshing sledge on the mud.
It makes the depths boil like a pot;
it makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
Behind it, it leaves a shining wake;
one would think the deep had white hair.
On earth there is nothing like it,
a creature made without fear.
It looks down on everything that is lofty;
it is king over all the proud beasts.

JOB: NOW MY EYE HAS SEEN YOU

Job admits he spoke of things too wonderful for him, and retracts.

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

JOB

Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things,
and no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
"Who is this
that hides counsel without knowledge?"
Therefore I have spoken, but I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Job 42:4 "Listen, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you will inform me."
I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye has seen you.
Therefore I retract, and I repent
in dust and ashes.[77]

EPILOGUE: JOB RESTORED

God rebukes the friends, accepts Job's prayer for them, and restores Job's fortunes twice over.

Job 42:7 After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My anger burns against you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

Job 42:8 "So now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, for I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer. And the LORD restored Job's fortunes when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Job 42:11 Then all his brothers and all his sisters and everyone who had known him before came to him and ate bread with him in his house. They showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought on him, and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring.[78]

77 The Hebrew is uncertain: "retract" may be "despise myself," and the line may mean "I am comforted concerning dust and ashes," that is, mortal existence.
78 "A piece of money" renders Hebrew *qesitah*, a unit of value now unknown.

Job 42:12 The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters.

Job 42:14 He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land no women were found as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers.[79]

Job 42:16 After this Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his children and his children's children, four generations. And Job died, old and full of days.

79 The names mean roughly "Dove," "Cassia" (a fragrant spice), and "Horn of eye-paint."