**Job Commentary**

**Job Chapter 1**

Job 1:1

**“the land of Uz.”** Although the location of Uz is debated, the most likely location is east of Israel and northeast of Edom, which places it in what is now northwest Arabia. Although this is outside the Promised Land, it would be close enough to Israel that the people could easily identify with Job. Also, there is no good reason to doubt that Job was a historical person and that what happened to him was revealed to a prophet who wrote it down. There are various reasons for picking that location for Uz. One of his friends was Eliphaz, who was from Teman, which was in Edom and therefore would have been close by (Job 2:11). Uz is also connected with Edom in Lamentations 4:21, which says, “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter Edom, you who live in the land of Uz.” Also, the Septuagint places Uz on the borders of Edom and Arabia.

The NET text note says, “The term Uz occurs several times in the Bible: a son of Aram (Gen. 10:23), a son of Nahor (Gen. 22:21), and a descendant of Seir (Gen. 36:28). If these are the clues to follow, the location would be north of Syria or south near Edom. The book tells how Job’s flocks were exposed to Chaldeans, the tribes between Syria and the Euphrates (Job 1:17), and in another direction to attacks from the Sabeans (Job 1:15). The most prominent man among his friends was from Teman, which was in Edom (Job 2:11). Uz is also connected with Edom in Lamentations 4:21. The most plausible location, then, would be east of Israel and northeast of Edom, in what is now North Arabia.”

**“Job.”** The meaning of the name “Job” is debated by scholars. However, some conservative scholars believe the name is related to “afflicted”[[1]](#footnote-31864) or “persecuted.”[[2]](#footnote-26560) Thus, we might well name the book of Job “the book of the attacked one.” Some scholars have questioned whether that name applies since Job may not have been Hebrew, but the fact is that the name “Job” appears in the Hebrew Bible and that is what his name means in Hebrew. It is unlikely that Job’s father named him “attacked,” and much more likely that “Job” was a name that people gave to him after his time of trial.

**“blameless and upright.”** The two terms both point to the fact that Job did what was right in the sight of God, but they emphasize different points. “Blameless” emphasizes the fact that Job did not sin; he did not do things that were wrong in the eyes of God. In contrast, “upright” emphasizes the fact that Job obeyed God and did what was right in his sight. The two words put together like this emphasize that Job was a truly righteous person. The fact that Job could live that way before God specifically gave the law shows that anyone who wants to please God can live that way. There is no excuse for living a sinful, hateful life.

It is important to know that Job lived before the Mosaic Law. We tend to think of right and wrong in terms of what the law says. But right and wrong have always existed, ever since God created Adam and Eve, and especially after God began to communicate what to do to obey him and what not to do. After Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God clearly said that they now had the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:22). Although humankind may not have specific guidance from God about what he wants such as what the Mosaic Law gives, there are common sense moral directives that should guide every person, Such as do not lie, do not steal, do not murder, and respect the life and rights of other human beings. In fact, if a person has no knowledge at all of the way of salvation, then they can be saved by keeping the essence of the law from their heart (Rom. 2:13-16).

Job 1:2

**“seven sons and three daughters.”** Culturally this would be considered a great blessing from God. Sons added strength, protection, and stability to the house. Their natural strength provided for the production of food and protection for the household from invaders. Also, culturally, when the men married, the women that they married, moved into their household and the children those women bore became part of their husband’s family. Thus, Having a lot of sons meant having a lot of children born into the household, which strengthened the whole extended family. The girls in the household would have been in charge of household duties and stabilized the household from the inside out. Although when they married, they would leave the household, before that time they would be a wonderful blessing.

Job 1:3

**“7,000 sheep.”** The word for “sheep” can mean sheep or goats. Job owned a herd of sheep and goats numbering 7,000.

**“500 yoke of oxen.”** The oxen were mentioned in pairs because that is how they worked; there was a total of 1,000 oxen.

**“500 female donkeys.”** The females are counted because they were more valuable than the males, as they bore young which increased the herd.

**“a very large number of slaves.”** The Hebrew words indicate that Job had a very large number of slaves. Although many versions read “servants,” in the culture of the time certainly the majority of them would have been slaves (cf. CEB, CJB, CSB, ESV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV).

**“the children of the east.”** Although Israel had not yet been established as a nation, this phrase is used of those who live east of the Jordan River, and generally out into the more desert area of the Arabian peninsula, and the land of Uz was likely in western Arabia.

Job 1:4

**“banquet.”** The Hebrew word can mean “drinking bout,” and it generally refers to a meal with wine. It is possible that this is one of the reasons that Job thought that one of his children may have sinned. If they drank too much, and they may well have, they may have sinned in some way.

**“and they would send and call for their three sisters.”** Job had raised a tight family in which the children included each other and looked out for each other.

Job 1:5

**“have them ritually cleansed.”** More literally, “make them holy.” It is unclear exactly why Job would do this or see the need to do this; the laws of clean and unclean, and exactly what was considered to be sin at this time and in that culture are unclear. Job was not part of Abraham’s lineage and was not a part of Israel (there was no “Israel” when Job lived). On the other hand, wine and food were usually plentiful at such feasts, particularly if the family was rich, and sometimes situations occur in those settings when people say or do things that are not in line with good moral behavior. Job wanted to guard his children from having unforgiven sin, so Job did this as part of his obligation as the family priest and because he thought his children might have sinned.

**“he rose up early in the morning.”** This is an idiom, and refers to doing something diligently and over and over. It might well be understood as “Job diligently and regularly offered burnt offerings” for them.

**“cursed God.”** The Hebrew is literally “blessed God,” but the term “blessed” is used euphemistically for “curse,” both here, Job 1:11; 2:5 and other places in the Bible (see commentary on 1 Kings 21:10).

**“in their hearts.”** In this context, the phrase “in their hearts” can also mean “in their thoughts” (see commentary on Prov. 15:21).

**“regularly.”** The Hebrew is literally, “all the days,” that is, all the days he thought it necessary, and thus he did it regularly.

Job 1:6

**“sons of God.”** The “sons of God” are the created beings of God, including the angels, cherubim, seraphim, and “living creatures” (Rev. 4:8), and we can assume there are other beings God has created as well as those categories. The Hebrew is *bene ha-elohim* (בְּנֵ֣י הָאֱלֹהִ֔ים), literally the “sons of God.” Adam is called a “Son of God” in Luke 3:38, and Jesus Christ is also called “the Son of God,” and both of them came into being by way of a direct creation of God.

Versions such as the NIV try to make Job 1:6 and 2:1 easy to understand by translating *bene ha-elohim* (sons of God), as “angels,” but while that may help the beginner Bible student, it works against a correct understanding of the Bible because the great assembly of spirit beings in Job would have included more types of spirit beings than just angels. It helps us to understand the Bible when we understand that when God created the spirit world, He did not just create angels; He created other types of spirit beings as well, although we do not know as much about them. Ephesians 3:15 mentions “every family in heaven,” and that is a reference to all the different families of spirit beings, who all descend from the one Heavenly Father.

Here in Job 1:6, God presides over a large assembly of spirit beings. God also had an inner divine council of spirit beings with whom He worked in overseeing and administering His creation, and that inner council would have been present at the large general assemblies (see commentary on Gen. 1:26). Another example of a large assembly of spirit beings is 1 Kings 22:19 when Micaiah had a vision of God sitting on a throne with the whole army of heaven standing before Him.

Psalm 82:1 mentions God taking His place in the *edah-el* (#05712, #0410 עֵדָה־אֵ֑ל), a Hebrew phrase that means “assembly of gods,” “assembly of the mighty,” or “great assembly.” As in Job and Kings, this appears to refer to a larger assembly than God’s intimate council, as we can see from the context. Psalm 82 is important and gives us a unique view into what goes on in the heavenly realm because it shows God reproving these “gods” for their unrighteousness. All of the spirit beings were created by God, but not all of them turned out to be loving and obedient, and God calls these gods to account and confronts them for their actions. Thus, the meeting mentioned in Psalm 82 is somewhat similar to Job 1:6; both records describe a large assembly of gods, and each includes some of the gods who are adversarial to the true God. It is possible that the “great assembly” in Psalm 82 not only includes spirit beings but human rulers as well, because in John 10:34, Jesus quoted Psalm 82:6 in a way that seems clearly to refer to humans.

God rules over spirit beings of various ranks and powers who are sometimes called “gods.” Indeed, there are many “gods” (1 Cor. 8:5). That is why in both the Old and New Testaments, God is called the “Most High” God. He is far greater than all the other gods. In fact, God is called the “Most High” God more than 50 times in the Old Testament, and nine times in the New Testament.

Some commentators say that “the Adversary” in this verse is a reference to a spirit being who was in God’s court who was appointed by God to try to find faults and weaknesses with God’s plans, and so the Adversary was actually working for God. That is not correct, but is an attempt to try to show that God is in charge of, and responsible for, everything that happens on earth. Those commentators are typically Calvinist, and believe that God is in absolute control of all that happens in the universe, including choosing who will be saved and who will not be, which is not true.

In Job, “Satan,” the Adversary, is an enemy of God. Scripture teaches that people choose whether to be saved or not, and also that there is a battle between Good and Evil. God is love, and if He was in charge of what happened to Job and his family and servants then He is not loving. The Devil is an evil being, and he does not obey God, he sins and has been sinning from the beginning (1 John 3:8). If the Devil was doing the will of God, then what he did would not be sin.

[For more on the “sons of God” being spirit beings who were created by God, see commentary on Gen. 6:2. For more on the war between God and the Devil, see commentary on Luke 4:6. For more on God’s divine council of ruling spirits, see commentary on Gen. 1:26. For more on the Devil being the god of this age, see commentary on 2 Cor. 4:4. For more on the names of the Devil that describe his characteristics, see Appendix 8: “Names of the Devil.” For more on the warfare between God and His enemies, see commentary on 1 Sam. 1:3. For more on the future Kingdom of Christ on earth that will not have the Devil present, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.” For more on the future restored earth being called “Paradise,” see commentary on Luke 23:43. For more on how the future will unfold from this present age to the Millennial Kingdom to the Everlasting Kingdom, see commentary on Rev. 21:1. For more on Calvinism not being correct, see Appendix 9: “On Calvinism and Predestination.”]

**“came to present themselves before Yahweh.”** This meeting of spirit beings occurs in heaven, where Yahweh was. In contexts like this, God’s throne and Temple are in heaven (Isa. 6:1: Rev. 11:19; 14:17; 15:5). The “sons of God,” who came to present themselves before Yahweh were spirit beings who were directly created by God, in fact, some versions translate them as “angels” (cf. NIV), and the NLT translates the phrase as “members of the heavenly court” (but that is too narrow a meaning because Satan himself was no longer a member of that ruling council). That heaven is the location of this meeting can be ascertained because when Satan comes, along with other spirit beings, to present himself before Yahweh, Yahweh asks where he came from, and Satan said he came “from” the earth.

**“Satan also came among them.”** Satan had been part of God’s ruling council of spirits and was one of the spirits on “the holy mountain of God,” the “Mountain of Assembly” (Isa. 14:13; Ezek. 28:14). But he sinned and was cast off that mountain and thus excluded from God’s ruling council (Isa. 14:12, 15; Ezek. 28:16-17). That had to happen before Adam and Eve were created because when Satan came to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he is described as “the serpent,” a dangerous and crafty being who immediately lied to Eve and led the couple into sin and death. Satan was no longer part of God’s ruling council of spirits, but he was still a spirit being and so he came to present himself to God along with the other spirits.

Job 1:7

**“Where have you come from?”** God and the other spirits knew Satan came from earth, so the question implied much more than that. It was more along the lines of “What have you come from doing?” John Hartley writes: “Yahweh began by asking the Satan for an accounting of his activities and whereabouts,”[[3]](#footnote-22251) and that catches the sense well.

**“From going back and forth on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”** Satan is a liar, and that comes out here. Satan prevaricates, he tells a half-truth. He had been walking back and forth on the earth, but he does not tell the whole truth, which is given to us in 1 Peter 5:8, which says Satan walks around as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. By the time that Job lived, Satan had been doing evil on earth for some 2,000 years. Satan had been up to no good, but being a liar he would not reveal that to God and His created spirit beings (but they likely knew it anyway).

Although the fullness of Satan’s power and army of demons is not revealed in the Old Testament like it is in the New Testament, the power of Satan as the “god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4), the “ruler of the authority of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31) can be clearly seen as he works his evil against Job. He marshals evil armies (Job 1:15, 17), causes destructive storms (Job 1:16, 19), and causes sickness and disease (Job 2:7). He does these things as a free will being at war with God, and one day, he and his works will be destroyed.

Job 1:8

**“Have you considered my servant, Job?”** Yahweh points to Job as proof that people can live righteous lives in fear of God, something that Satan denied and likely could not even understand. Evil and narcissistic people are so self-absorbed and so twisted in their minds that they cannot grasp that someone would live righteously and fear God unless there was some kind of reward for it, and Satan expresses that belief in the next verses. God could likely have pointed out many people, because many people live righteous lives, but in this case, God pointed out Job. Also, although God knew Satan’s heart was corrupt, God may have been trying to make a point to the other spirits assembled there, that a person (or spirit!) can be righteous just because it is the right thing to do.

Job 1:9

**“Does Job fear God for no reason?”** Satan is so evil that he cannot believe that anyone would serve God unless they got something out of it. Satan was not able to grasp that a person could simply be thankful to God for the gift of life itself, or for the fact that there are a huge number of blessings that God has woven into the fabric of life, such as the gift of family and friends.

Job 1:10

**“a hedge.”** The Hebrew word generally refers to a protective fence or a protective hedge made of thornbushes. Shepherds would often protect their sheepfolds from predators by making a hedge from thornbushes around them. In this case, Satan states that the reason Job worships God is that God has been protecting him and blessing him. But Satan was the one who said that God made a hedge around Job; God never acknowledges that fact. There may never have been the hedge that Satan spoke of. We can be sure that Job, who was blameless and upright, prayed earnestly for God to bless him and also that he and his family worked hard and were wise in their dealings. It seems that God answered Job’s prayers and Job was blessed, but that did not mean that God had singled him out for special treatment and special blessings. When Satan decided to move against Job, he lost all that he had very quickly.

When people obey God, God works to protect them (e.g., Deut. 28:1-8; Ps. 146:7-9; Rev. 3:10). When they are disobedient, God cannot protect them (Deut. 28:15-44).

**“You have blessed the work of his hands.”** Satan implies that if God had not blessed Job, Job would not love and worship God. What is being overlooked here is that there were likely other people living on earth who worshiped God but were not so abundantly blessed. We see that all over the world today—poor people and sick people and mistreated people who love and worship God and look to the fulfillment of His promises for a nice future. But Satan, who loves to “steal, kill, and destroy,” ignores that fact and pushes forward with his intention to destroy Job. Anyone who thinks that Satan, or his followers, will see their errors and admit their mistakes and misjudgments is deceived. There is no evidence anywhere in the Bible that Satan admits when he is wrong.

Job 1:11

**“touch.”** This means “touch” in a harmful sense; the Hebrew word can also mean “strike.”

**“curse.”** The Hebrew is literally “bless,” but the term “bless” is used euphemistically for “curse,” both here, Job 1:5, and other places in the Bible (see commentary on 1 Kings 21:10).

**“he will curse you to your face.”** The meaning is that Job would openly and directly curse God. Satan makes this prediction in front of God and all the other spirits who were assembled at that meeting. All the other spirits got to see that it was possible to hold onto one’s integrity in spite of terrible loss. They also got to see how suspicious Satan was, and how narrow-minded he was, that he could not imagine that someone could worship God and be thankful even if they lost their earthly goods. The other spirits also got to see how ugly and unrepentant Satan was when it turned out that he was wrong, and how he just pushed for worse things to happen to Job. We see how evil Satan is; Jesus said Satan’s followers are just like Satan (John 8:44).

Job 1:12

**“So Yahweh said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your hand.’”** Saying, “all that he has is in your hand” is an idiomatic way of saying that he is in your power (cf. Job 2:6). This is not God giving permission to Satan to afflict Job. It is a statement of fact. Satan is the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4), the ruler of the world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), the ruler of the authority of the air (Eph. 2:2), and the world is under his control (1 John 5:19). The Devil does not need God’s permission to harm people, he has the ability to do that on his own. By the time Job lived, the Devil had been the “ruler of the world” for some 2,000 years and had caused trouble all that time, so that he could and did afflict innocent people was not news to him. So here in Job 1:12, when God said, “all that he has is in your hand,” that was a statement of fact, not permission.

Job 1:12 has been used to teach that Satan cannot harm anyone unless he has God’s permission, but that cannot be right for a number of reasons. For one thing, it would mean that God is actively granting permission to the Devil to harm people. Given the fact that there are billions of people on earth, and every one of them has troubles and sickness, it would mean that God desires to make people suffer—some of them horribly—while at the same time claiming to love them. You cannot love people and cause them to suffer at the same time, and “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16). Also, if God blesses people and makes them suffer that would mean making a lie out of verses such as Proverbs 10:22, “The blessing from Yahweh is what makes one rich, and he does not combine pain with the blessing.” If God had to give His permission for the Devil to act, then the simple way for God to stop all the evil in the world would be to just say “No” to the Devil.

Also, if God is actively giving Satan permission to do what he is doing, then Satan is not sinning in what he does. But the Bible says Satan is a sinner. In fact, 1 John 3:8 says, “the Devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose: to destroy the works of the Devil.” By definition, “sinning” is breaking the will of God. But if God is allowing Satan to do the evil that he is doing, then Satan is not going against the will of God, he is fulfilling the work of God! This is problematic for a number of reasons. As we saw above, it would mean God does not love people according to the normal definition of love. Also, it would mean that Satan is not a “sinner” after all, in spite of what the Bible says. Also, it would mean that “Satan,” the Hebrew word for “adversary,” is not an “adversary” after all, but actually a servant and agent of God. In fact, it would mean that the “names” of the Devil are wrong. He would not be a slanderer, or an opposer, or a serpent, or the ruler of this world, etc. Also, it would mean that Jesus was wrong when he said that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:34). If the Devil is doing God’s will, and Jesus came “to destroy the works of the Devil,” then Jesus came to destroy what God allowed the Devil to do, which would be pitting Jesus against God.

Also, if Satan had to ask for God’s permission to hurt people, that would mean that we humans are much more powerful than Satan. We humans sin all the time. Many times without meaning to, but many times on purpose for various reasons. Yet no one asks God, “Can I have permission to lie?” Or, “Can I have permission to get drunk?” We have free will and we sin when we want to. The Devil has free will also, and he sins when he wants to, which is why the Bible says he has been sinning from the beginning.

The conclusion of all this is that the heart of the “conversation” between God and Satan that is portrayed in Job 1:12 is partly allegorical. God never gives Satan permission to hurt people, and Satan does not need that permission. Satan gained control over the world due to the sin of Adam and Eve. God had given dominion over the world to Adam (Gen. 1:26-28), and when he sinned by believing Satan and disobeying God, the dominion over the earth was transferred to Satan (Luke 4:6). Satan became the ruler of the world and god of this evil age.

With the background information given above, we are now in a position to understand what God said. He opened by saying, “Behold, all that he has is in your power.” That is a true statement. As the ruler of the world, Satan controls much of what happens on earth (1 John 5:19), and Hebrews 2:14 says he has the power of death. We regularly see the power of Satan as he kills millions with volcanoes, tsunamis, plagues, earthquakes, and famines, and as he kills on a much smaller scale by his followers who openly murder others or kill them in other ways. But God has power too, and there is a genuine war going on between Good and Evil, between God and the Devil. So in some circumstances, God can limit what the Devil can do, and we see that when God says, “Only do not stretch out your hand against him” (see commentary on Job 2:6).

That Satan has a lot of control over what happens in the world explains why righteous people suffer. Satan afflicts everyone, the righteous and unrighteous alike. However, when righteous people suffer, we humans are more likely to be confused and outraged about it than when unrighteous people suffer. We can be sure that at the same time Satan was afflicting Job, there were other righteous people on earth he was afflicting, and no doubt there are righteous people on earth right now who are being afflicted by Satan. The answer to the question, “Why do the righteous suffer,” is that we have an enemy who hates us, and he makes people suffer when and where he can.

**“Only do not stretch out your hand against him.”** There are times when God can and does step in to protect people. God has to be righteous, and so there are limits to what he can do. In this case, God is notifying Satan that He will step into the fight and protect Job’s health, something He steps back on later, as we see in Job Chapter 2. The reasons for the back-and-forth in the spiritual battle are not clearly known to us. We see glimpses of it in the Bible, but there is not enough information for us to really understand it. Sometimes Satan’s demons are stronger, sometimes God’s angels are stronger.

One good example of the war between angels and demons is in Daniel 10. God showed Daniel a vision, and Daniel prayed to understand it. He mourned and prayed for three weeks (Dan. 10:1-2). Finally, an angel, described in Daniel 10:5-6, arrives to answer Daniel’s prayer, and he says he could not get through to Daniel because he was held up by “the leader of the kingdom of Persia,” a ruling demon, for 21 days. Then Michael, a ruling angel, showed up and helped him get through to Daniel (Dan. 10:12-14). The angel delivers his message to Daniel and then says he needs to return to fight with the leader of Persia (Dan. 10:20). In that case in Daniel, the ruling demon of Persia was stronger than the angel who was sent to deliver the message to Daniel.

Revelation 12 has an example where Michael and his angels engage in battle with the “Dragon” (another name for Satan; Rev. 12:9) and his demons. In that situation, the Dragon and. his angels were not strong enough to win the battle and were defeated by Michael (Rev. 12:7-9).

So there are times when God can and will set boundaries in the spiritual war, and Job 1:12 is one of them.

Job 1:15

**“the Sabeans.”** A Semitic people who lived in the southwest of the Arabian peninsula, present-day Yemen.

**“the mouth of the sword.”** Used to show great destruction, as if the sword was devouring its victims (see commentary on Josh. 6:21).

Job 1:16

**“the fire of God.”** Interestingly, the Septuagint omits “of God.” The genitive “of God” is also sometimes used to express a superlative degree, thus the phrase would mean “a great fire.” That would be consistent with what the servant saw; a great fire from heaven. This could also be lightning. Here, Satan uses fire to destroy God’s people; in the future, God will use fire to destroy Satan.

Job 1:17

**“The Chaldeans formed three bands.”** Apparently, it was an ancient tactic of warfare to break your army into three parts to attack an enemy, and this shows up in several places in the Bible (e.g., Judg. 7:16; 9:43; 1 Sam. 11:11; 13:17). The reason for that tactic is not well-known, but it worked well enough that it showed up in different countries. In the verses just pointed out, we see the tactic being used by the Chaldeans, the Philistines, and the Israelites.

Job 1:19

**“suddenly.”** The Hebrew word that is normally translated as “behold” has a temporal sense here and means “suddenly.” That is one reason the people could not escape the house.

**“a great wind came across the desert.”** In the spring of the year there is commonly a hot desert wind, the sirocco, that blows from east to west across the Middle East and can occasionally be very dangerous. However, this does not seem to be an expected seasonal wind but a sudden, destructive wind, more like what Christ and the apostles experienced when crossing the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:37). Satan is called “ruler of the authority of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and he has great authority over the weather.

One of the great lessons of the Bible is that the behavior of people affects the weather and the land that they live on. The land that we humans live on is not “neutral territory,” unaffected by what the people do. The land and weather are affected by God and by demons. When people disobey God, the Creator, then demons come in and make the weather destructive and the land unproductive. Many verses in the Bible show that the weather is affected by the godliness of the people who live on it (e.g., Lev. 18:25; Deut. 11:13-17; 28:1, 12, 15, 22-25, 38-40; Lev. 18:24-25; Ps. 107:33-34; Jer. 3:2-3; 9:10-14; 12:4; 23:10; Amos 4:6-10. See commentary on Lev. 18:25). Sadly, when people are ungodly and the weather is affected, that bad weather affects the godly people too. In this case, the Devil used his control over the weather to afflict Job.

Job 1:20

**“tore his cloak.”** This was a sign of distress and grief. Here we see Job tearing his cloak, and some 2,000 years later, when Jesus said he was the Christ, the High Priest tore his cloak out of supposed shock and distress (Matt. 26:65).

**“shaved his head.”** A man’s hair and beard were important to him and could even be a source of pride. Shaving one’s head (which often included the beard) was a form of self-abasement and humility, and was also done in mourning (e.g., Jer. 7:29; 16:6; 41:5; 48:37; Ezek. 7:18; Mic. 1:16). In this case, Job is mourning, but he is also humbling himself before God.

**“worshiped.”** The Hebrew word translated “worship,” *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is the same Hebrew word as “bow down.” Job bowed down in worship of God, showing that the act of bowing down to the ground as an act of worship was very early, because Job lived sometime around 2,000 BC, roughly the same time as Abraham (cf. Gen. 24:48).

[For more on bowing down, see Word Study: “Worship.”]

Job 1:21

**“Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I will return there.”** This is an interesting phrase and is likely linked to some customary beliefs of the Semitic people. The woman’s womb was sometimes thought to be somehow an extension of the provision of the earth, and occasionally people were buried in a fetal position as if they were returning to the womb.[[4]](#footnote-24573)

**“Yahweh gave, and Yahweh has taken away.”** This is an expression of what Job believed at the time. God had not revealed differently at that time, some 2,000 years before Christ. We today, with the information in the New Testament, know that God gives and Satan takes away (John 10:10, Acts 10:38; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 John 5:19; etc.). Every good gift is from God (James 1:17). Jesus Christ first revealed God and Satan, and their true colors, to his disciples (John 1:18; Luke 10:17-24).

Job 1:22

**“In all this Job did not sin.”** It is very important that we read this in the context of the Old Testament. Job had just said that Yahweh gave and Yahweh took away (Job 1:21), and in the next trial, which concerned his health, Job makes the statement about accepting both good and evil at the hand of God (Job 2:10). That Job expressed his situation that way fit what people generally knew about God in the Old Testament times—what God had revealed to them. However, the New Testament reveals much more truth, and more accurate truth, about God and the Devil.

Jesus Christ exposed the Devil and his works, and showed that God was good and the Devil was bad. Colossians 2:15 says that Jesus “stripped the rulers and the authorities, *and* He made a public spectacle of them.” The New Testament has many verses about how evil the devil is. The Four Gospels have much to say about the harm that evil spirits cause. And Acts 10:38 says that Jesus “went around doing good and healing all those who were being oppressed by the Devil.” 1 Peter 5:8 says, “the Devil walks around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.” The Devil is the source of evil, not God.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out the 72 to heal the sick, cast out demons, and preach about the kingdom of God. When the 72 returned to Jesus, they were very excited and exclaimed, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!” (Luke 10:17). Nothing like that had ever been seen before on earth. Humans did not generally have the power or knowledge to cast out demons before Jesus came. Jesus spoke to the disciples in private and said, “Blessed *are* the eyes that see the things that you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things that you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things that you hear, and did not hear them” (Luke 10:23-24). So, before Jesus came and the New Testament was written, what Job said was all God had revealed, so in saying what he said, Job did not sin. But now, after Jesus Christ has revealed the Devil and his evil and also made known the Father in a way He had not been known before (John 1:18), it would be wrong for us to say what Job did. God gives, the Devil takes away; and we receive good from the hand of God and evil from the hand of the Devil.

**“wrongdoing.”** The meaning of the Hebrew word is obscure, and the translations vary (e.g. “blame” (CJB), “wrong” (ESV); “moral impropriety” (NET); “fault” (REB)). The NET text note reads, “It has the sense of something unsavory or unseemly, an impropriety. Used in regard to Yahweh it means accusing him of an action that is contrary to his holy nature.” In that sense, “wrongdoing” seems to catch the meaning.

**Job Chapter 2**

Job 2:1

**“And again there was a day.”** It is likely that there is not too much time between Job’s last trial and this one, but how long is not known.

Job 2:3

**“Have you considered my servant Job?”** In this case, God specifically points out Job to Satan even though Job is going through a terrible time in life. God is obviously delighted in Job, as He is delighted in us when we maintain our integrity and love for God in spite of what we are going through.

**“integrity.”** In this context, “integrity” is related to the way God described Job, that he was blameless and upright; he had and held on to his strong moral principles. He did not allow his discomfort to cause him to reject God.

**“although you incited me against him to ruin him without cause.”** This is more evidence that the way God is being portrayed here in Job is more metaphorical and like an extended idiom of permission. God commands us not to be enticed to sin by other sinners. Proverbs says, “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent” (Prov. 1:10). God would never tell us not to be incited to sin by others but then let Himself be incited to harm an innocent man, an act of obvious sin.

Job 2:4

**“Satan answered Yahweh and said.”** We should note here that Satan never admits to being wrong about Job. Satan will never admit to being wrong, and his followers do not either. They just push forward with their evil and destructive ideas.

**“all that a man has he will give for his life.”** This is what Satan believes but it is not true.

While it is true that people are willing to let go of many earthly things like their possessions to save their life, there are many things people are willing to die for, including their values and their family. That is especially true when people have a clear Hope of the future. Jesus is a great example of someone being willing to give up his life for the betterment of others. Furthermore, Jesus taught, “If anyone wants to come after me, he must deny himself and must take up his cross, and *then* follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it” (Matt. 16:24-25). Hebrews 11:35 also mentions people who were willing to die for what they believed in.

Job 2:5

**“curse.”** The Hebrew is literally “bless,” but the term “bless” is used euphemistically for “curse,” both here and in Job 1:5, 11; 2:9, and other places in the Bible (see commentary on 1 Kings 21:10).

**“touch his bone and flesh.”** In English we say “flesh and bone,” but in the ancient Semitic world, that was reversed. Many scholars believe that “bone and flesh” refers to a debilitating and sometimes deadly disease. This was not just a cold or fever that was gotten over easily.

**“and he will curse you to your face.”** Satan had said this earlier, in Job 1:11, and he was wrong then. He will be wrong again.

Job 2:6

**“he is in your hand.”** This is idiomatic for “he is under your power” (cf. Job 1:12). Job 2:6, like Job 1:12, is somewhat allegorical. God does not literally give Satan permission to afflict Job. Satan has that power already. However, God can act to save Job’s life, although in this case, it would defeat Satan’s purpose to kill Job because then Job would die a righteous man. Satan wanted Job to be alive and thus be able to curse God, which would prove Satan right. Only after Job’s health was restored would Satan possibly want to kill him, and then only out of pure hate for God’s people.

Job 2:7

**“painful sores.”** More literally, “evil sores” or “evil boils,” but here “evil” likely means “painful.”

Job 2:8

**“a piece of broken pottery.”** Since clay pots were constantly used in the ancient world, there are countless thousands of potsherds, pieces of broken pottery, all over the Middle East.

**“he sat among the ashes.”** There were piles of ashes everywhere in the ancient world because cooking and heating were all done with wood or weeds, and sitting on ashes was a customary sign of mourning and an outward show of humility.

Job 2:9

**“Then his wife said.”** This is the only time Job’s wife is mentioned in the book of Job. Her appearance here highlights at least two things in the record: Job’s illness caused a hardship in the extended family members who had not been killed by invaders or by the storm, which is why she spoke so harshly to him. Also, secondly, she must have sensed that he was very close to dying rather than getting better, and so she said, “Curse God and die,” which would end the active suffering for both Job and others who hurt so badly for him.

**“curse.”** The Hebrew is literally “bless,” but the term “bless” is used euphemistically for “curse,” both here and in Job 1:5, 11; 21:5, and other places in the Bible (see commentary on 1 Kings 21:10).

Job 2:10

**“godless women.”** The Hebrew noun translated “godless women” is *nabal* (#05036 נָבָל), the term for the godless person (see commentary on Prov. 17:7).

[See Word Study: “Fool.”]

**“Should we accept good at the hand of God but not accept evil?”** The Hebrew word translated “accept” can mean “accept” or “receive.” In this case, the primary meaning seems to be “accept,” because Job is talking to his wife about her attitude because he and she both have been afflicted, ostensibly by God. She lost her wealth and family, he lost those and his health also. They did think they “received” those things from God, but they “accepted” good when it came to them, and here Job seems to be saying to his wife, “Should we not accept evil as well?” Both “accept” and “receive” apply here, but “accept” seems to be the primary meaning in this context when Job is speaking of her attitude and not her theology.

**“In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”** See commentary on Job 1:22.

Job 2:11

**“Eliphaz the Temanite.”** Eliphaz was from Teman, in northern Edom.

**“Bildad the Shuhite.”** Bildad, likely “the son of Hadad,” came from Shuah, whose location is unknown.

**“Zophar the Naamathite.”** Solomon married an Ammonite princess by the name “Naamah,” and so although it is possible that Zophar came from north of Israel between Damascus in Syria and Beirut, Lebanon, the location is not known.

**“they made an appointment together.”** The distance between them shows that travel and communication were well established even by about 2,000 BC, the approximate time of Abraham. It is likely that all three men were wealthy and powerful, and thus were very likely connected to the caravan trade. The caravans made it easier to get news from one place to another because they traveled vast distances from one city to another and could carry news about what was happening to friends and family who were far away. In this case, the three men heard about what was going on with Job and made plans to get together and visit him.

Job 2:12

**“and did not recognize him.”** The Bible does not say exactly why. It may be they had never seen him covered in sores and ashes, or it is possible that the disease had decimated his body, or both things may be true.

**“air.”** This is the Hebrew word for “heaven,” “sky” or “air,” and here “air” fits the context best.

Job 2:13

**“seven days and seven nights.”** The Bible does not say they fasted through that time, but they may have, or they may have been served food.

**Job Chapter 3**

Job 3:1

**“cursed the day of his birth.”** When a person is in terrible and prolonged pain, it often happens that the person wishes they had never been born (e.g., Jer. 20:14-15).

Job 3:3

**“Let the day perish in which I was born.”** Job is understandably emotional and expresses that he wishes he had never been born. Jeremiah said the same thing (Jer. 15:10).

Job 3:4

**“care for it.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “search for it,” with the idea that what God searches for He finds and cares for. However if God did not find it and care for it, it would perish. Without care and without light, it would perish.

Job 3:5

**“Let all that makes the day black terrify it.”** This seems to be saying that blackness would terrify the day so that it would not come out of hiding.

Job 3:7

**“Let no joyful shout be heard in it.”** When a baby boy was born there was a party and joyful shouting (cf. Luke 2:7).

Job 3:8

**“Let those who curse the day curse it.”** There were magicians and sorcerers in the ancient world such as those who served Pharaoh and contested with Moses, who were known for being able to curse certain things. For example, Balak, king of Moab, hired Baalim to curse Israel (Num. 22:1-6).

**“Leviathan.”** Leviathan was the name of a mythical sea serpent that swam about in the mythical waters that surrounded the earth above the atmosphere. Leviathan was supposed to be able to gobble up the sun and moon and thus bring darkness on earth. What Job seems to be saying is that he wishes that monster had gobbled up the day he was born.

Job 3:9

**“nor let it see the eyelids of the morning.”** The “eyelids of the morning” is an idiom for the first rays of dawn. Job speaks as if he does not want the day of his birth to exist at all, not even the first rays of dawn.

Job 3:11

**“Why did I not die from the womb?”** Job was in great mental and physical pain after he lost his children, his workers, his wealth, and his health, and so he made a rhetorical question and asked why he did not die “from the womb,” that is, at birth.

**“expire.”** The Hebrew verb is *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) and it refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), in the first stanza of the verse, although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

Job 3:13

**“For now I would have been lying down and been at peace.”** The context shows us that Job is referring to lying down in death. The text could also be translated something like, “For now I would have *already* laid down and be at peace.” The Hebrew verb translated “at peace” is *shaqat* (#08252 שָׁקַט), and it means “to be at peace, tranquil, at rest, still, undisturbed.” Job says that if he had died at birth then now, instead of being in mental anguish and physical pain, he would be lying down in the ground, i.e., dead, and would have been at peace. It is important to note that Job sees himself as being dead in the ground if he had died at birth, not alive in heaven or “hell.”

Job 3:13-19 is one of the many sections of Scripture that shows that when people die they are dead, lifeless. They are not in heaven or any other place. They are “in Sheol,” the state of being dead. Everyone who dies is dead and is awaiting a resurrection, at which time they will be made alive. Everyone who has died is dead in the grave and so they are together and at peace, sleeping, and at rest (Job 3:13), and there is no turmoil (Job 3:17); people are at ease (Job 3:18). Job has said in a number of places that he, and everyone else, will die and be dead (cf. Job 3:11-13; 7:7-10; 14:12; 19:25-26; 30:23).

Job gives us quite a list of the people who are at peace together, sleeping the sleep of death: “kings and counselors of the earth” (Job 3:14), “leaders who had gold” (Job 3:15), “infants who never saw light” (Job 3:16), “the wicked” and “the weary” (Job 3:17), “prisoners” (Job 3:18), “the small and the great” and “slaves” (Job 3:19). It is obvious from this extensive list that that at the resurrection and judgment, some people will receive everlasting life while others will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and be consumed. After all, Job’s list is inclusive of all people. Besides specific categories such as kings and slaves, the list mentions “the small and the great,” that is, everyone. Job is pointing out what is stated in other ways in other verses of Scripture: everyone dies and then is dead, lifeless, not alive in any form or place.

**“I would be asleep.”** The word “sleep” is used as a euphemism for death. Job is saying he would be dead and thus “at rest.”

[For more on “sleep” being used for death, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

Job 3:14

**“rebuilt ruins for themselves.”** The word translated as “built” can also mean “rebuilt,” and which one it refers to is not clear, although actually it may refer to both building and rebuilding. Great men built tombs and buildings for their glory, and for the most part, those tombs decayed away and became ruins. Their distant descendants usually had no interest in spending the time and money to keep up a tomb for someone who had been dead for years. Sometimes men built from scratch, and sometimes men rebuilt and refurbished an ancient site, hoping to also claim some of the glory of the previous builder. In any case, what people built for themselves here on earth became ruins over time.

Job 3:16

**“why was I not.”** The question is distributed and carried forward from the start of Job’s talk in Job 3:11-12. Job is continuing his complaint and stating he wished he was never born.

**“I would not have been.”** Job is not making a theological statement about when human life begins. He is making the simple point that if he had been stillborn then he would not be living in the misery he was currently experiencing.

**“buried.”** The Hebrew word is “hidden,” but it refers to being hidden out of sight, which would ordinarily have been by burying the stillborn child.

Job 3:17

**“turmoil.”** The Hebrew noun translated “turmoil” is *rogez* (#07267 רֹגֶז), and it refers to agitation, nervousness, anger, excitement, raging, turmoil, etc. Translations in the English versions include “troubling, rage, raging, tumult, turmoil, bustle.” The wicked are in turmoil in life and they cause turmoil for others, and both of those meanings are included here in Job. But when the wicked die and are dead, they cease from their turmoil and agitation.

Job 3:17 is one of the verses that shows that when a person dies, they are dead, lifeless, and not alive in any form. If dead people went to “hell” when they died, then their turmoil, agitation, and anger would not stop. When a person dies they are totally dead; lifeless. They are not in heaven or “hell,” they are in the ground dead and will stay dead until Christ raises them at a resurrection. At that time, they will be judged and either receive everlasting life or be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

[For more on dead people being lifeless, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

Job 3:20

**“those who are bitter.”** In the Hebrew text, in the first stanza the subject is singular, “him,” while in the second stanza the subject changes to plural, thus the REV translation “those” (cf. NET). It is possible that Job was first thinking of himself and his misery but then spoke about all the other people who are in misery as well.

Job 3:21

**“dig for it.”** An idiom meaning to search for it. We see the same idiom in Proverbs 16:27 (see commentary on Prov. 16:27).

Job 3:22

**“find the grave.”** In this context Job is using “find the grave” idiomatically for “die.”

Job 3:25

**“fear I feared.”** The Hebrew text uses both the noun and verb for “fear,” thus the reading, “the fear I feared.” Job emphasized his point by using the noun and verb in conjunction. Most English versions say “the thing that I feared.” Young’s Literal Translation uses “fear” and reads, “a fear I feared” which better represents the text than “the thing I feared.” A different word for “fear” is at the end of the verse, so this is very typical Hebrew poetry: the same basic message is stated twice in the verse, the two stanzas say it in different ways.

Like many prosperous and blessed people, Job had some level of fear that he would lose what he had. Life in ancient times was very uncertain for exactly the reasons we see in Job. An enemy could suddenly and unexpectedly attack and kill or capture the people and/or livestock and even destroy the crops. There are many examples of that in Scripture. Or, a person could become suddenly sick and disabled or even die. The things that happened to Job are magnified because they happened all at once and God said Job was blameless, but those kinds of things. happened to one degree or another to people throughout the Scripture and indeed, throughout history.

Job 3:26

**“turmoil.”** In this context, the Hebrew word describes an agitated state of mind, which no doubt had to do with the pain he was in and the pain of his circumstances. Also, likely added to that is wondering and not understanding why the things that happened to him happened. He knew he was righteous and innocent.

**Job Chapter 4**

Job 4:2

**“offended.”** The more literal meaning of the Hebrew is “weary,” but here it would refer to being tired from being challenged or even attacked, and thus “offended” seems to be the better translation (cf. NRSV).

Job 4:6

**“Isn’t your fear *of God* your confidence?”** This statement begins the essence of what Eliphaz is accusing Job of. We have to be be very discerning when we read what Job’s three friends said, because they mix truth with error, and have a lot of error. In fact, God accused the three of them of saying things that were not correct (Job 42:7). But God does not sort out for us what is right and what is wrong, we have to rely on our knowledge of God and the Bible to do that for ourselves.

**“Isn’t the integrity of your ways your hope?”** Eliphaz is accusing Job of putting his confidence and hope in the wrong things. He is saying that Job is relying on his own fear of God and not on God Himself in His grace and mercy. And furthermore that Job is relying on his own integrity as his hope for the future. However, there is no reason to believe what Eliphaz is saying is correct, and in fact God says it is wrong (Job 42:7). Besides, it is important for believers to have enough self-awareness that they know whether or not they fear God and whether or not they are living a life of integrity. It is harmful to live one’s life with a constant doubt of one’s salvation. Although it is fairly common to hear people say, “I don’t know if I am saved or not,” we do not hear those words on the lips of believers in the Bible unless, like David, they had sinned some huge purposeful sin (cf. Ps. 51:12). People in biblical times generally knew what God wanted from them and they either did it or were deceived about God and His commands (cf. Ps. 73:11).

Job 4:7

**“Consider now: who, being innocent, has ever perished?”** This sounds like a good question, but in light of historical facts, it is a stupid question. The Bible is full of innocent people who perished, including the first person to die in the Bible: Abel (Gen. 4:8). Although Job and Eliphaz lived before most of the innocent people in the Bible who died, there would have been other innocent people besides Abel to die. Other innocent people that died included the Israelite babies that Pharaoh had thrown in the Nile; Naboth and his family (1 Kings 21:13).

Job 4:8

**“According to what I have seen.”** Eliphaz must not have “seen” much, and he is in error. There is testimony in the Bible that the wicked often prosper and die prosperous. Job makes a big point of it (Job 21:7-21; cf. Ps. 73:3-12; Jer. 12:1-2).

Job 4:10

**“*Even* the roaring of the lion.”** In this context, the “lion” refers to the leaders. Powerful animals like lions or bulls are often used to refer to powerful people, especially wicked leaders and officials; people with power in society. They are often referred to as powerful animals by the figure of speech hypocatastasis (a comparison by implication, see commentary on Rev. 20:2).

The point that Eliphaz is making is that the wicked perish, even the powerful leaders of society, the “lions” of the nation, are destroyed by God if they are wicked, and their “cubs,” the ones they are bringing up after them, become scattered when the old lions perish. Sadly, as with what Eliphaz had said earlier, what he is saying now does not always turn out to be true. Sometimes the dynasties of wicked leaders continue for generations, oppressing people and destroying lives.

Eliphaz is trying to prove that because Job has been ruined, he must be wicked in some way, even if he denies it. Eliphaz then reveals why he believes much of what he believes, a spirit revealed it to him (Job 4:12-21, esp. v. 15). But this “spirit” was a demon, and what it revealed was a lie and misinformation (see commentary on Job 4:15).

**“are broken.”** The verb “broken” refers directly to the “teeth,” but also grammatically refers to the “roaring” and the “voice” of the lions. This is the figure of speech zeugma, where one verb grammatically applies to more than one noun even though the nouns do not exactly fit. In this case, the “roaring” and “voice” are not technically “broken,” but the verb gets the meaning across sufficiently for the verse to be understood. Zeugma is used to catch the reader's attention and emphasize the noun with which the verb fits.

Job 4:13

**“disquieting thoughts.”** The Hebrew text has only one word, but it is not just the word that means “thoughts,” but generally refers to thoughts in an anxious or unsettled mind. So “disquieting thoughts” or a similar translation seems better than just “thoughts” (cf. “unsettling thoughts” (CSB); “disturbing thoughts” (GW); “bad dream” (ERV); “nightmare” (NCV)).

Job 4:14

**“which made all my bones shake.”** This was a way of saying that he was shaken to the core; shaken very deeply, not just temporarily startled.

Job 4:15

**“A spirit passed before my face.”** This “spirit” is a demon, not an angel from God. God always tries to make sure that people are not frightened by His actions. God is love, and 1 John 4:8 says, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” God works hard to rid people of fear. Almost always, when God or an angel appears to someone and the person is startled or afraid, they are told not to be afraid. This occurs many times in the Bible (e.g. Gen. 15:1; 26:24; Judg. 6:23; Dan. 10:12, 19; Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10; Rev. 1:17). In contrast to that, the “spirit” that appeared to Eliphaz acted in a way that caused him to be greatly afraid. He trembled, the hair on his body stood up and he reported that the experience “made all my bones shake,” meaning he was greatly afraid (Job 4:14-15). God’s angels alleviate fear; demons cause fear. What Eliphaz saw was a demon. There is more evidence that what appeared to Eliphaz was a demon, including what it said and what it knew.

Eliphaz’s experience teaches us quite a bit about demons. They can come into concretion so people can see them, and in that state, they are often referred to as “ghosts.” Also, they purposely cause fear and they also give false information that misleads people. The Devil and demons lie, and this demon in Job 4 lied. Also, he mixed truth with error, a tactic that the Devil and his demons use all the time to confuse people and get their support. The Devil did that with Eve in Genesis 3:4-5, and people get deceived by that trick and fall into error.

Mixing truth with error deceived Eliphaz. If we closely examine what the demon said to him, we can see the lies. When the demon said, “Behold, he puts no trust in his servants” (Job 4:18), that was a lie. God puts great trust and responsibility in both His spirit servants and His human servants, and He deals with the consequences when they let Him down, which they sometimes do. However, in the context of Job 4:18, the “servants” of God are His spirit servants, specifically His top spirit rulers and officials, for example, His archangels (see commentary on “servants” in 2 Sam. 11:1).

Then, when the demon said, “He charges his angels with error,” that was true, because God is a just judge and a caring father to His spirit world, and He coaches, trains, and corrects them as is appropriate. It is even possible that He had charged this particular demon spirit, this fallen angel, with error. But in the context in which the spirit said what he did, he made it sound like God was distrusting of His spirits and was always looking for error in what they were doing, which is not true at all. God is love and He is very supportive of His whole family, both His flesh and spirit family.

Then the demon continued with his lies in Job 4:19. He had just said in Job 4:18 that God did not trust even His ruling spirit beings, and he enlarged upon that, and in Job 4:19 he implied that human beings were of little value to God. He opened by implying that if God did not trust His leading spirits, then He certainly does not trust people who are just clay and dust. Then it went on to speak about how weak humans were and that God cared little about them, by saying that people are crushed as easily as a moth.

Then, in Job 4:20 the demon lied and said, “They [humans] perish forever without anyone paying attention to it.” That demonic statement removes both the hope of everlasting life and the existence and value of human love. Saved people don’t “perish forever,” they live forever, which is why it is so important for people to get saved and be sure of their salvation. Furthermore, humans care very deeply for one another and grieve deeply when a loved one dies.

The demon continued his demoralizing speech and said in Job 4:21 that people died without wisdom. Many verses in the Bible speak about how wise people live, and many people live that way. While it is always possible for a person to gain more wisdom in life, it is wrong to make the general statement that people die without wisdom.

Sadly, Eliphaz took what the demon said to him as truth, and it became part of his theology and belief system. Thankfully, God stepped in at the end of Job’s ordeal to help Eliphaz and his friends. Job 42:7 says, “Yahweh said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.” If Eliphaz built upon what God said, and also learned from what Job said, he could correct his theology.

Job 4:17

**“‘Can mortal man be more just than God?”** Exactly how long the demon spoke is not stated in the Bible, but it seems from the information given in Job 4:17-21 that those five verses cover what the demon said. Robert Alden writes, “Not surprisingly it [the demon’s message] agreed with what Eliphaz and his friends said throughout the debate cycle. For that reason, Eliphaz’s testimony is not entirely trustworthy. The essence of the message is that humankind is inherently displeasing to God and very frail and transitory.”[[5]](#footnote-10153)

Actually, it is not that the message of the demon agreed with what Job’s three friends said, but rather that demonic influence was the reason they held the theology that they did. Sadly, this has been true throughout Christianity. In ancient times, and continuing through today, the devil and demons give revelation to theologians that they believe is the truth of God’s word, and so they teach it and lead people astray. Many false doctrines such as the immortal soul, people burning in hell forever, and God being an absolute control of what happens on earth, have infiltrated the Christian church for centuries, and likely started and have been maintained by demonic influences.

Alden is absolutely correct. One of the main messages of demons is that people are inherently displeasing to God. Through the centuries, the Christian church has overemphasized sin, and the sin nature that people have, while underemphasizing the fact that in Christ, people are holy in God’s sight.

**“mortal man…mighty man.”** The Hebrew text is clearer than the English text here. The Bible uses two different words for “man.” The first is *ʾenosh* (#0582 אֱנוֹשׁ), which is a word for humans that emphasizes their weakness and mortality (and sometimes evil nature). The second word for “man” is *geber* (#01397 גֶּבֶר), which generally refers to a strong young man.

Job 4:18

**“servants.”** In this context, and especially in light of Job 4:19 which is about human beings, “servants” in Job 4:18 refers to the high-ranking officials and rulers in God’s spirit world. For example, some angels are “archangels,” ruling angels.

[For more on “servants” referring to high-ranking civil officials and military officers, see commentary on 2 Sam. 11:1.]

Job 4:19

**“How much more *is this true of* those who dwell in houses of clay.”** The demon spirit is now referring to human beings, whose bodies are “dust,” just “houses of clay.” The demon had just said that God does not trust his ruling spirit beings (Job 4:18), and now here in Job 4:19 he says that is even more true of human beings, thus stating that God does not trust humans at all. This is a lie! God puts great trust in the people who love Him. Not only did He give Adam dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:28), but He entrusted His born-again followers with the message and ministry of reconciling people to Himself, appointing us as ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-20). God puts His trust in the people who follow Him, but of course the demon does not see that. He is blind to God’s goodness.

**“whose foundation is in the dust.”** The “foundation” of humankind, our fundamental makeup, is based in the dust, the dirt of the ground and all the elements that it has (Gen. 2:7). It makes perfect sense that the demon speaking to Eliphaz would know this fact even though he was likely speaking it to Eliphaz some 500 years or so before Moses penned Genesis and the truth about how humankind was formed was generally known. This demon had been around when Adam was formed from the dust. That the speaker knew humankind came from dust is more evidence that the speaker is the demon and not Eliphaz.

**“who are crushed more easily than a moth!”** This is a hyperbolic statement; obviously people are not “crushed” (killed) more easily than a moth, but more to the point is that what the demon said is misplaced and implies a gross error. The demon spirit is trying to communicate that God cares very little about people (which is what he thinks) and so he says that they are crushed more easily than a moth, implying both that people are fragile, but also that they are really worthless—who cares when a moth gets killed? The truth is that God cares very much about people and wants them to have a good life here on earth now, and everlasting life later. In fact, God cares so much for people that He sent His son to die in our place so we could live forever. But here again in Job, the demon actually believes that God does not care for people, and so he is speaking what he believes. One thing that makes the Devil and his demon, and his followers so convincing is that they really believe the mistruths that they are speaking.

Job 4:20

**“Between morning and evening they are destroyed.”** The demon implied that humans perish quickly, as if in a day, in other words, human life is very short. We can imagine the demon saying this, because by the time that Job lived the demon had been alive for thousands of years, so even if a person lived for a couple of hundred years, to the demon that seemed like a very short time.

**“They perish forever without anyone paying attention to it.”** This lie of the demon sought to demoralize people and also remove their hope of a wonderful everlasting future. First, only unsaved people “perish forever.” Saved people live forever, but the demon would never admit that to people. Secondly, it is a lie to say that people die without anyone paying attention to it. There is usually great sadness and a great feeling of loss when someone dies, and friends and family come together and support the people who have lost loved ones. At that time the most comforting hope is that we will see each other again in the resurrection, and it is that very hope that the demon tried to take away.

Interestingly, it is likely that the demon was projecting his own reality onto others through what he said. Demons are full of selfishness and hate, and likely don’t care at all if something bad happens to another demon, and furthermore, one day they too will “perish forever,” eventually coming to an end in the Lake of Fire.

Job 4:21

**“Isn’t their tent cord plucked up from within them?”** This verse needs to be understood in light of the common customs of that time period that involved living in tents. The human body is referred to as a “tent” in Scripture because it was temporary and it was frequently moved (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1). The tents were held up by cords attached to firm pegs that were driven into the ground, and they generally had a long cord that supported the top of the tent so that it was tent-shaped, with a peak at the top. If the cords of the tent were pulled up, then the tent collapsed. That is the metaphor that the demon is using in Job 4:21. The sustaining “cord” inside the human “tent” of the human body is the soul, the life force of the body. If the soul gets “plucked up,” i.e., is taken away, then the body dies. People do not have the power to retain the soul (Ecc. 8:8).

**“and that without wisdom.”** Here again, the demon says demeaning and demoralizing things about people. While it is true that many people die without wisdom, and no one has so much wisdom that they could not use more of it, lots of people have the wisdom to do very well in life. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10) and Proverbs has many verses about how wise men and women conduct themselves and many people follow that advice.

**Job Chapter 5**

Job 5:3

**“I cursed his home.”** Eliphaz gives an example from his own life about cursing the foolish.

Job 5:13

**“wise.”** In this context, “wise” refers to those who are wise in their own eyes, not wise before God. That's why here in Job 5:3, these “wise” people are the crafty ones. It is true that many evil people are intelligent, shrewd, and cunning, but they are not truly wise because their end will be death in the lake of fire instead of everlasting life in Paradise.

Job 5:25

**“grass.”** The Hebrew word *eseb* (#06212 עֵשֶׂב), translated “grass” is hard to bring into English. It was the general word for the weeds that naturally grew in any field. The biblical world did not have “grass” as we know it today. It just had areas of weeds. Sometimes those weeds were long and thick, like a weedy field today, while in other areas people’s sheep, goats, and cows, kept the weeds eaten down, but they were still just weeds.

[For more on “grass” see commentary on Prov. 19:12.]

**Job Chapter 6**

Job 6:4

“**spirit.”** This is the use of “spirit” that refers to the activities of the mind: the thoughts, attitudes, and emotions. Job’s situation caused him angry and bitter thoughts and emotions.

[For more on the uses of “spirit,” see Word Study: “Pneuma.” Usage #13 concerns thoughts and emotions.]

Job 6:15

**“deceitfully as a brook.”** Almost all the brooks and streams in Israel only run in the rainy season, which means they dry up when the summer starts. But it is hard to be sure when any given stream will run dry, so a person goes to a stream expecting to find water but the stream is “deceitful” and is dry.

Job 6:25

**“honest words.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “words of uprightness,” but here it refers to upright or honest words, which can be painful. But the “reproof” of Job’s friends was not “upright;” Job’s friends were in error about him. Job was innocent.

**“But your reproof, what does it reprove?”** Since the “reproof” of Job’s friends was based on error it reproved nothing. It was misplaced.

Job 6:26

**“Do you consider *your* words as reproof.”** The exact translation of the Hebrew is debated. One way the text has been taken to mean is that Job’s friends take their words to be legitimate reproof but Job’s words to be only like empty wind. Another way the text has been understood is that Job is saying, “Do you intend to reprove my words,” and thus consider Job’s words to be only like the wind, of no real substance or meaning. The former translation seems more likely.

**Job Chapter 7**

Job 7:1

**“the days of a hired hand.”** A “hired hand” would work for a time and then usually quit or leave for some reason, so the idea is that the days that a person lives are very short.

Job 7:2

**“a hireling who looks for his wages.”** The hireling looked for his wages at the end of the day. In the ancient world, daily workers were paid at the end of each day, and since most of them lived very hand-to-mouth, after being paid they usually went and bought food with the money.

Job 7:7

**“is *but* a breath.”** In Job 7:7, the Hebrew word *ruach* (#07307 רוּחַ), which is often translated “spirit,” refers to breath (although some scholars think it refers to the wind here). Job is making the point that his life is short, like a breath it comes and goes quickly.

[For more on the uses of “spirit,” see Word Study: “Pneuma.”]

Job 7:8

**“I will not be.”** When Job dies, he will be dead in every sense of the word. He will not be alive in any form or in any place. Job has said in a number of places that he, and everyone else, will die and be dead (cf. Job 3:11-13; 7:7-10; 14:12; 19:25-26; 30:23).

[For more on the dead being truly dead, lifeless, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

Job 7:11

**“spirit.”** This is the use of “spirit” that refers to the activities of the mind: the thoughts, attitudes, and emotions.

[For more on the uses of “spirit,” see Word Study: “Pneuma,” usage #13.]

Job 7:12

**“Am I a sea.”** To the majority of the people of the ancient Near East who lived in drier areas and away from any large body of water, the sea was a dangerous thing and had to be carefully watched.

**“sea monster.”** The Hebrew word can refer to a snake or serpent, albeit a powerful and dangerous one, given what the ancients believed about the sea, “sea monster” is a good translation in this context.

Job 7:19

**“Will you not leave me alone long enough to swallow my spit?”** Job was exhausted from the constant attack. John Hartley references the Arabic expression “let me swallow my spittle” which means “wait a minute.”[[6]](#footnote-26534)

**Job Chapter 8**

**Job Chapter 9**

Job 9:8

**“treads on the waves of the sea.”** Some Trinitarians suggest that since Job says that God alone “treads on the waves” and Jesus walked on water (Matt. 14:25), that therefore, Jesus is God.

The most glaring problem with this argument is that Peter also walked on water in the same New Testament story (Matt. 14:29). Thus, by this logic, Peter would also become God if one is arguing that only God can walk on water. Therefore, the logic simply does not work.

Secondly, the messiah is consistently differentiated from Yahweh throughout the Old Testament (Psa. 110:1; 2 Sam. 7:12-14; Mic. 5:2). So, to conclude that Jesus is Yahweh from this logical argument would be ignoring the consistent usage of Yahweh throughout the Old Testament. For instance, in Psalm 2:7-8 we read, “I will proclaim the decree of Yahweh. He said to me, ‘You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask of me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance.’” Clearly, the son who receives the inheritance from Yahweh is not Yahweh himself. This provides even more evidence as to why one should not use a passage such as Job 9:8 to conclude that Jesus literally is Yahweh.

So, what does Job 9:8 mean? The phrase “treads on the waves” denotes, “undisputed possession of, or uncontrolled sovereignty over: cf. (of Israel in Canaan) Dt. 32:13, 33:29, Isa. 58:14; also Ps. 18:34 (33), Hab. 3:19.”[[7]](#footnote-11411) In other words, the uses of similar phrases throughout the Old Testament emphasize the authority of the one who “treads” over whatever they are treading upon. Therefore, Job 9:8 is not teaching that there is only one being who can literally walk on water, but rather there is one being who has ultimate authority and control over the waters, i.e., the creation. Remember, Jesus himself performed miracles by the power of God, not his own power (Acts 2:22; 10:38). So, Job 9:8 rings true even in the miracles of Jesus who relied on God’s authority and power.

Job 9:31

**“plunge me in a ditch.”** After Job did all he could to be clean, God would make his efforts useless.

**Job Chapter 10**

Job 10:18

**“died.”** The Hebrew verb is *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) and it refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

**Job Chapter 11**

**Job Chapter 12**

Job 12:6

**“enrage.”** To bring to the point of trembling. Shaking from anger.

**Job Chapter 13**

Job 13:19

**“breathe my last.”** The Hebrew verb translated “breathe my last” is *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע), and it refers to dying, although it can have the connotation of a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

**Job Chapter 14**

Job 14:3

**“Do you open your eyes on such a one.”** Although this verse is in Job’s address to Eliphaz, Job is speaking to God, as the context of the address shows. For God to “open his eyes” on a person means to focus on them. Job is commenting to God as to whether He has focused on Job such that he dies and then stands at the Judgment before God. The word “eyes” is singular in the Hebrew text likely indicating God’s eye, which sees everything.

Job 14:4

**“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?”** Job 14:4 has been much discussed. The basic idea seems to be that even when a person is born they are not “clean” in God’s eyes, but are sinful (this may give some support for the idea of original sin; the sin nature in humans). The parents of a human are unclean, so can the child be clean? No. There is also some discussion that the woman who gives birth is unclean in the process and there is blood (Lev. 12:2-7), so the baby cannot be born clean. Although those are good possibilities, the fact is that the actual meaning of what Job said is not explained.

Job 14:5

**“Seeing his days are determined.”** This is a general statement about the brevity of human life, and fits with Job 14:1 that “man is of few days.” The Hebrew word translated as “determined” is more literally “cut off,” but in this case “determined” catches the sense. God “determined” the bounds of human life (cf. Gen. 6:3). God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden so they would not live forever, and in doing that He limited how long human life is.

Some people believe that Job 14:5 is saying that God limits the days of an individual’s life such that he or she has just so long to live and no more. Thus, they believe that God determines when each person dies. There is no indication that is what the text is saying. In fact, that belief contradicts the New Testament, because the Bible says the Devil is the ruler of the world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and holds the power of death (Heb. 2:14). God wants people to live a long time and prosper, but the Devil comes to kill (contrast Ps. 116:15 with John 10:10).

Adam Clarke writes: “The general *term* of human life is fixed by God himself; in vain are all attempts to prolong it beyond this term. Several attempts have been made in all nations to find an elixir that would expel all the seeds of disease, and keep men in continual health; but all these attempts have failed. …Man may endeavour to pass the *bound*; and God may, here and there, produce a *Thomas Parr*, who died in 1635, aged *one hundred* and *fifty-two*; and a *Henry Jenkins*, who died in 1670, aged *one hundred* and *sixty-nine*; but these are rare instances, and do not affect the general *term*. Nor can death be avoided. *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, is the *law*, and that will ever render nugatory all such pretended *tinctures* and *elixirs*. …We are not to understand the *bounds* as applying to *individuals*, but to the *race* in general.” Perhaps there is no case in which God has determined absolutely that man’s age shall be so long, and shall neither be more nor less. The contrary supposition involves innumerable absurdities.”[[8]](#footnote-12013)

David Clines writes, “The three cola of v. 5 are best taken as the threefold reason for the demand of v. 6. …The emphasis in this triple description of the prescribed length of human life is not that it has been fixed at a particular span, nor that God himself has fixed it, but that God well knows how brief a span it is; this is so evidently the general reference that it is not expressly stated. Instead, what is stated is the impossibility of the assigned span being exceeded. The number of human days is ‘determined’ (ַַהרןץ), the accent being on the irrevocability of the divine decree. …Likewise the months of human life are ‘known’ to God…in your knowledge or memory. …Days and months together add to a total which is humankind’s ‘limit’…There is no thought here of the lifespan of any individual being predetermined, but simply that humankind’s allotted span (at whatever number of years it may be set) is a trifling period.”[[9]](#footnote-17245)

Job 14:6

**“Look away from him.”** Job acknowledges that life is short and difficult (Job 14:1), but requests that God “look away from him,” that is, not focus on him such that he has extra problems and suffering. Life, in and of itself, is short and full of “normal troubles;” please let there not be extra troubles and hardships.

**“like a hired *man*.”** The hired man was generally happy to work for his pay, and after a hard day’s work, he rested well at night.

Job 14:10

**“breathes his last.”** The Hebrew verb translated “breathes his last” is *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע), and it refers to dying (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

Job 14:12

**“so a man lies down.”** That is, lies down in death. Although Job uses the masculine singular, “a man,” what he said refers to men and women. In the second stanza of the verse Job shifts from the singular to the plural, “they will not awake.” What Job says applies to every person; everyone dies, and no one will awake until God raises them up on their Day of Judgment.

**“Until the heavens are no more they will not awake.”** Job speaks with great wisdom and knowledge. Job knows that dead people are truly dead, lifeless. They are not alive in any form or place. Furthermore, he knows that people will stay dead until “the heavens are no more,” that is that this evil age has come to an end and there is a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Isa. 65:17). Job has said in a number of places that he, and everyone else, will die and be dead (cf. Job 3:11-13; 7:7-10; 14:12; 19:25-26; 30:23). It is worth noting that Job 14:12 starts out with a singular person, “a man” (which generically refers to a woman as well) but in the second part of the verse the verbs are plural, “they will not awake nor be roused.” Every human, both as individuals and as a collective community, dies and stays dead until the resurrection.

Job was likely born only a few hundred years after the Flood and so could possibly have known Noah personally (Noah lived for 350 years after the Flood; Gen. 9:28-29). Job would have known about Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the Fall of Man, and the promise that there would be a redeemer who would crush the head of God’s enemy (Gen. 3:15) and end what the Bible calls “this present evil age” (Gal. 1:4). Job knew that he had a redeemer, and that “in the end” he would stand upon the earth and that at that time Job, in his flesh again so obviously raised from the dead, would see God (Job 19:25-26).

[For more on the dead being truly dead, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

**Job Chapter 15**

Job 15:8

**“Do you listen in on the secret council of God?”** The “secret council” is translated from the Hebrew word *sōd* (#05475 סוֹד), and it refers to a “council, secret council, intimate council, circle of familiar friends, assembly.” In this context, it refers specifically to God’s intimate inner divine council in contrast to large general assemblies of spirit beings such as we see in Job 1:6 and 1 Kings 22:19.

Job’s “friend” Eliphaz did not believe Job was innocent; he thought Job was hiding a secret sin, and yet Job was speaking as if he had wisdom and knew he was innocent. So Eliphaz asked Job if he sat in on the divine council meetings God had with his intimate council. Jeremiah 23:16-22, especially verses 16 and 18, speak of the prophets who have knowledge from these divine council meetings in contrast with false prophets who speak from their own minds (Jer. 23:16). Clearly Eliphaz believed there was a divine council of God where the truth was spoken, and he sarcastically asked Job if he had listened in on those council meetings.

[For more on God’s divine council, see commentary on Gen. 1:26. For more on God’s holding general assemblies for all His spirit beings, see commentary on Job 1:6.]

Job 15:13

**“spirit.”** This is the use of “spirit” (Hebrew: *ruach* #07307 רוּחַ) that refers to the activities of the mind: the thoughts, attitudes, and emotions. From what Job was saying, and the way he was saying it, the men with him could see he was upset with God.

[For more on the uses of “spirit,” see Word Study: “Pneuma,” usage #13.]

Job 15:15

**“Behold, he puts no trust in his holy ones.”** This is an arrogant and untrue assumption. Who is Eliphaz to say that God does not trust His angels or that those in heaven are not pure? But if that is his attitude about angels, no wonder he can make false accusations against Job.

**Job Chapter 16**

Job 16:3

**“empty words.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “words of wind,” which is a reference to empty words, words with no substance.

Job 16:14

**“He runs at me like a warrior.”** A warrior would often run at his enemy in order to have momentum for the first strike, which might then well be the first and only strike.

**Job Chapter 17**

Job 17:1

**“spirit is broken.”** If this is speaking of Job’s “spirit,” as most scholars maintain, then this is the use of “spirit” that refers to the activities of the mind: the thoughts, attitudes, and emotions. It is possible, however, that Job is saying “my breath is corrupt,” referring to the sickness that he has which produces bad breath and portents of possible death in the near future.[[10]](#footnote-24566)

[For more on the uses of “spirit” as breath or as activities of the mind, see Word Study: “Pneuma.”]

Job 17:10

**“come on again.”** That is, “try again” (cf. HCSB).

Job 17:11

**“My days are over.”** More literally, “My days are past.” Job sees his life as behind him now.

Job 17:12

**“They change the night into day.”** They are in darkness, but they make it sound like being in the light by saying the light is near.

Job 17:13

**“If I look for Sheol to be my house.”** Job is saying, “If I wait for Sheol to be the home where I am….” Sheol is the state of being dead. Job knows that if he dies he will be truly dead, not alive in any form or place. Job does not mention that if he dies, he will live in heaven, “hell,” or any other place; he knows he will be dead, lifeless.

[For more information on the dead being truly dead, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

**“spread out my bed in the darkness.”** In biblical times, the “bed” was thick blankets that were rolled up during the day and spread out at night. Job speaks as if he spread out his bed “in the darkness,” that is, in the darkness of death.

Job 17:14

**“the pit.”** This is idiomatic for death and the grave.

Job 17:15

**“hope for me.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “my hope,” but that makes the meaning unclear in English.

Job 17:16

**“the gates of Sheol.”** Sheol is the state of being dead, and there is no escape from it except by being raised from the dead by God. Because of that, Sheol is compared to a prison that has “gates” from which no one can escape without God’s help. These “gates” are referred to as the “gates of Sheol” (Job 17:16; Isa. 38:10) and “the gates of death” (Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18). Jesus Christ referred to the gates in Matthew 16:18 where in many versions they are translated as “the gates of hell.”

[For more on these gates, see commentary on Matt. 16:18. For more on Sheol, see Word Study: “Hades.” For more on dead people being dead, lifeless in every way, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

**Job Chapter 18**

Job 18:15

**“In his tent will live those which are not his.”** The meaning of this would be that there would be people (or animals) living in his tent that he will have left empty. A slight emendation to the Hebrew text would make the text read, “Fire lives in his tent; sulfur is scattered over his habitation” (cf. NAB, NET, NIV), but there is no need for the emendation. The judgment of fire (sulfur) will come on the habitation of the evil person.

**Job Chapter 19**

Job 19:1

**“Then Job answered.”** Job replied to Bildad, who had just spoken to him.

Job 19:25

**“Redeemer.”** The Hebrew text often refers to a kinsman-redeemer (see commentary on Ruth 2:20, “kinsman-redeemers”), but it can also refer to Yahweh the redeemer (Exod. 6:6; Ps. 19:15; 78:35).

**“In the end, he will rise up over the dust.”** Job 19:25 is difficult because of its unusual wording, for example, the Hebrew word translated as “stand” in most versions is more properly “rise” or “rise up,” and the word translated in most English versions as “earth” is actually “dust.”

It seems the best explanation of Job 19:25 is that Job is declaring his confidence that the living God, his Redeemer (e.g., Exod. 6:6, Psa. 19:15, 78:35, where God is Redeemer), will testify to his righteousness. While Job acknowledges that yes, God has brought difficulties and that others persecute him (Job 19:5-19), he believes in the end he will be vindicated by God (Job 19:25).

The Hebrew word that many versions translate as “stand” is *qum* (#06965 קוּם *quwm*), and it is not the typical word for “stand,” it has more the meaning of “rise,” “rise up,” or “stand up.” For example, the CEB reads, “But I know that my redeemer is alive and afterward he’ll rise upon the dust” (cf. CJB). However, the preferred understanding in the *HALOT*[[11]](#footnote-32229) is that “rise,” i.e., “stand up,” refers to standing up as a witness. *HALOT* gives its meaning as “to get up, stand up,” and it is used of witnesses (Deut. 19:15ff; Ps. 27:12; 35:11; Zeph. 3:8) and *HALOT* even points out that in Job 19:25 God would be the witness, even saying “stand up for” (as a defense witness) (cf. Ps. 94:16; cf. Job 19:25). In other words, Job is stating that God will rise up as a defense witness that Job—who is just dust—is innocent and one day God will testify to that fact.

It is also possible, but seems less likely, that Job 19:25 could be a resurrection verse with the sense of “In the end he will rise up over the dust.” It is also possible that the phrase “rise up over” could be understood to have the meaning “conquer” in the sense of conquering over the dust. We see the basic meaning of stand in battle, or conquer, in Psalm 89:43, where *qum* refers to “standing” in the battle, that is, being the victor.

The Septuagint also takes the “Redeemer” in the verse to be God, but goes in a different direction with the rest of the verse: “I know that He who is about to undo me on earth is everlasting.

Job 19:26

**“in my flesh I will see God.”** Job knew that he would be resurrected from the dead and granted everlasting life, which was promised to Old Testament people who lived righteous lives. The Old Testament has a number of verses about God raising the dead in the future (cf. Deut. 32:39; Job. 19:25-27; Ps. 71:20; Isa. 26:19; 66:14; Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:2, 13; and Hos. 13:14). Job has said in a number of places that he, and everyone else, will die and be dead (cf. Job 3:11-13; 7:7-10; 14:12; 19:25-26; 30:23).

**Job Chapter 20**

Job 20:7

**“perish forever.”** As this verse correctly states, unsaved people burn up in the Lake of Fire and are annihilated. They do not burn forever.

[For more information on annihilation in the Lake of Fire, see Appendix 4: “Annihilation in the Lake of Fire.”]

**Job Chapter 21**

Job 21:2

**“Listen, yes, listen.”** Job repeats the word “listen” twice for emphasis, but the verb is in different conjugations, which is the figure of speech polyptoton (see commentary on Gen. 2:16).

**“the consolation you give me.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “your consolation,” but that translation makes it seem like Job is consoling his comforters, when what he is asking is that they console him by listening.

Job 21:5

**“Look at me.”** This could also be understood as “turn your attention to me.” The Hebrew text is a verb that is related to the word for “face” and means “to turn;” it is not a standard word for “look” or “see.” So while it is possible that the “comforters” are not paying close attention to Job and he is asking them to turn to him and take a good look at him and his situation, it is also possible that he is in effect saying, “turn your attention to me; pay attention to me.”

Job 21:7

**“Why do the wicked keep on living.”** Many extremely wicked people live long and prosperous lives and become wealthy and powerful on earth. But why do the wicked get to defy God and live at all? Why do they not die quickly and thus are removed from the earth? The answer to that question is multifaceted. It has to do with God’s allowing people to make the free will choice to be against him; it also has to do with what God promised Cain (Gen. 4:13-15; see commentary on Gen. 4:15). Also, that so many wicked people grow powerful has to do with the fact that the Devil is a major powerbroker in the world today and works immorally and illicitly behind the scenes to elevate his people. The Devil is in control of much of what goes on in the world and gives power to people he wants to elevate. He offered power and glory to Christ, who turned him down, and the wise Christian follows the example of Christ (cf. Luke 4:5-7; 1 John 5:19).

In large part due to the Devil’s help and also acting illegally and immorally, wicked people have risen to power and been harmful to others and the earth itself since the Fall of Adam and Eve. Also, however, because they are “of this world,” wicked people tend to pay closer attention to how to get ahead in life than godly people do because godly people are more interested in pleasing God and helping others than in building any kind of personal kingdom on earth.

Wickedness has been widespread on earth since the Fall. Cain murdered Abel out of pure envy, showing that evil people are selfish and do not care about the rights or health and well-being of others (Gen. 4:3-9). God had to destroy humankind in Noah’s Flood because of wickedness on earth (Gen. 6:5-8). In the time of Job (c. 2000 BC), Job complained that wicked people lived long lives and were wealthy and powerful (Job 21:7-21). Some 1,000 years after Job that situation continued, and Asaph the psalmist complains of the same thing that Job did (Ps. 73:2-14). Then, hundreds of years later, around 600 BC, Jeremiah makes the same complaint, that the wicked live long and are prosperous (Jer. 12:1-2). Then, hundreds of years after Jeremiah, at the time of Christ, the rulers of the Jews were wealthy, powerful, and very wicked, and that included both Sadducees and Pharisees (cf. John 8:37-44). The pervasiveness of evil in all societies around the world throughout all time is the reason that the Bible tells us that every person who lives a godly life—which includes being public about one’s Christian Faith; not just trying to “be godly in private at home”—will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12). However, godly people must not give up hope or stop speaking about Jesus Christ. In spite of all difficulties, God and His people continue to do God’s work and spread God’s message and the Christian Faith continues to win converts. There is a glorious Hope laid up in the future for Christians, and many wonderful rewards for those Christians who stand strong and steadfast in the Faith.

[For more on rewards in the future, see commentary on 2 Cor. 5:10, “good or evil.” For more on the coming Kingdom of Christ, see Appendix 5: “Christ’s Future Kingdom on Earth.” For more on how the future will unfold from this present age to the Millennial Kingdom to the Everlasting Kingdom, see commentary on Rev. 21:1.]

Job 21:13

**“Sheol.”** Sheol is the state of being dead. Contrary to what most people believe, when a person dies, they do not go to heaven or “hell,” they are “in Sheol,” that is, in the state of being dead and they are awaiting the resurrection of the dead.

[For more on Sheol, see Word Study: “Hades.” For more on dead people being dead and not alive in any form, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

**“in peace.”** The Hebrew verb has the meaning “in a moment” (quickly; in an instant) and also the meaning “in peace” (in tranquility). It is likely that both meanings apply here; that Job is complaining that the wicked die in peace and quickly, without any suffering. Many people die slowly and painfully after days, months, or even years of suffering. For the REV translation, “in peace” seems the better choice because a person who is healthy and then dies quickly dies in peace without suffering.

Job 21:14

**“we have no desire to know your ways.”** The evil people said that they do not want to know God’s ways, the true and right way. That has been the case since Cain rejected God and turned to follow the ways of the Devil and murdered his brother Abel. Evil people do not want to know God, and harden their hearts against Him (cf. Job. 21:14; 22:17; Isa. 30:11; Mic. 2:6. See commentary on Matt. 13:13).

Job 21:15

**“*El* Shaddai.”** The meaning of El Shaddai is “the One of the Mountain” (see commentary on Gen. 17:1).

Job 21:16

**“*But* behold, their prosperity is not in their hand.”** This is idiomatic for their prosperity—their life, wealth, and power—is not in their control, even though in their arrogance they act as if it is.

**“The counsel of the wicked is far from me.”** Job knows that the wicked do not actually control their life and certainly do not control their destiny, which is destruction, so he does not listen to what they have to say.

Job 21:17

**“How often is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out.”** Job now responds to Bildad’s and Zophar’s assertion that wicked people do not last long. Bildad said, “the light of the wicked will be put out…The steps of his strength will be shortened” (Job 18:5, 7). Zophar asserted, “the triumphing of the wicked is short, the joy of the godless is but for a moment” (Job 20:5). Job denies their assertions and points out via rhetorical question that the lamp—the life—of the wicked is not often quickly put out, instead, as he had just said, the wicked live long and then die in peace (Job 21:7, 13). Then Job goes on to answer the assertion of people such as Bildad and Zophar who say that even if God does not kill the wicked, He will bring consequences upon the children of the wicked (Job 21:19). Job answers that assertion by pointing out that if a person sins, then God should repay the sinner, not punish his children (Job 21:19).

Job 21:18

**“How often is it that they are as stubble before the wind?”** Job continues to assert via a rhetorical question that the wicked do not disappear quickly from the earth like stubble or chaff, but instead live a long time and prosper. Stubble and chaff, by-products of threshing grain, do not last on the threshing floor but are blown away by very light winds.

Job 21:19

**“Let him repay the sinner so that he will know it.”** The Hebrew text is unclear because of its use of pronouns. It is more literally, “Let him repay him so he knows it.” The REV substitutes “the sinner” for “him” for clarity. Job is challenging his “comforters” who say that sometimes God does not punish sinners but punishes the children of sinners, but Job says that if a person sins, then God should repay that person, not his children.

Job 21:21

**“what does he care.”** The wicked cannot care for their households after they die because they are dead, but more than that, often wicked people do not care enough about their families and descendants to do what it takes to best provide for them when they die. Proverbs 13:22 says, “A good person will provide an inheritance for his children’s children,” which in today’s world means having a will and perhaps life insurance or some other way to provide for final expenses. And furthermore, to do what it takes to make sure any inheritance passes down without encumbrances or being tied up in court for years, or being so unclear that the family gets torn apart in fighting over who gets what.

**“his house.”** That is, his household, his descendants.

Job 21:22

**“those who are on high.”** This seems to refer to angels or other spirit beings.

Job 21:24

**“moistened.”** The Hebrew word is a verb, to be made wet or to be thoroughly watered. See commentary on Proverbs 3:8 for the value of wet bones.

**Job Chapter 22**

Job 22:17

**“Depart from us.”** Evil people do not want to know God or His ways (cf. Job. 21:14; 22:17; Isa. 30:11; Mic. 2:6. See commentary on Matt. 13:13).

**Job Chapter 23**

**Job Chapter 24**

Job 24:20

**“The womb will forget him.”** Some versions read like “A mother will forget him” (LSB, cf. NASB, NLT), taking the “womb” as a metonymy for the mother.

**“worm.”** In the Bible, the word “worm” sometimes refers to maggots, which is likely the case here.

**Job Chapter 25**

Job 25:5

**“and in his eyes the stars are not pure.”** Bildad shows himself to be as wrong and arrogant as Eliphaz (Job 15:15). The “truth” they are spouting is a lie. God says humans are a little lower than angels, but Bildad says they are worms (Job 25:6). Job has the truth in this discourse, not those around him.

**Job Chapter 26**

**Job Chapter 27**

Job 27:5

**“die.”** The Hebrew verb *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

Job 27:18

**“like a booth that the watchman makes.”** People built temporary booths to watch their crops and keep them safe, especially as harvest approached, but those temporary shelters soon fell down and fell apart (see commentary on Isa. 1:8).

**Job Chapter 28**

Job 28:1

**“source.”** The Hebrew is more like “source” or “place of going out,” but it can refer to a mine, which is where the silver “goes out,” and many translations use “mine.” However, “source” fits better with Job’s argument about the source of wisdom and understanding (Job 28:12). Also, “place” is used in Job 28 five times: Job 28:1, 6, 12, 20, and 28:23. Jobs argument is in part that there is a “source” and “place” for things, so where is the source and place of wisdom. It is in God.

It may help the reader understand what Job is referring to in Job 28 if it is known that the Middle East is not a huge mining area. Metal was usually found on the surface and then veins were followed into the earth. The equipment to dig into the earth in those days, 4,000 years ago, was very primitive, so extensive mining was not often done. But if the vein was valuable enough, the effort was put forth to dig a mine.

Job begins speaking about wisdom by first speaking about precious metals in the ground (Job 28:1-11). This is a fitting introduction to what he has to say about wisdom. Like gold and silver, wisdom is usually hidden from open view, and like gold and silver, one has to do some work to get it. One has to be disciplined enough to get up and dig for it, and one has to be persistent enough to keep at it until one has it. Many years after Job lived, Solomon compared working to attain wisdom with searching for silver and buried treasure (Prov. 2:3-4).

Job 28:2

**“Iron is taken out of the dust.”** The “mines” were not deep.

Job 28:3

**“Men put an end to the darkness.”** By digging down into the earth, men introduce light where it had never shined before, and they dig as far as they can in the gloom and darkness to find the rock that contains the ore.

Job 28:4

**“far from where people live.”** Generally, the mines in Israel were far from the cities, down by the Dead Sea or in the south of the Negev, or down by the Gulf of Aqaba.

**“forgotten by the foot.”** The poetry makes this clause obscure, but it means that human feet have “forgotten,” or more accurately to fact, “do not know about” the mines below where people are working.

**“Far from other people, they hang and they swing back and forth.”** As the miners go down into the mines they sometimes have to hang and climb on ropes.

Job 28:5

**“food.”** The Hebrew is more literally “bread,” but the word is used for food in general.

**“but underneath it is overturned as by fire.”** A major way that the mining was done was to build a fire in the mine and get the rocks very hot and then splash them with cold water to cause them to break. Then the pieces of ore could be taken out and the rubble could be removed.

Job 28:6

**“lapis lazuli.”** The deep blue color of lapis lazuli—a stone that was well-known in the ancient Near East—was often associated with God and his throne (Exod. 24:10; Job. 28:16; Isa. 54:11; Ezek. 1:26; 10:1). The majority English translation, “sapphire,” is almost certainly wrong (see commentary on Ezek. 1:26).

Job 28:9

**“man.”** The Hebrew is “he,” but that could be confusing because the subject is changing from animals to humans.

Job 28:13

**“nor is it found in the land of the living.”** This is a general statement that means that since true wisdom is found with God, it is not found among people. The exception, of course, is with those people who have learned from God, but that is not the context here.

Job 28:16

**“onyx.”** The exact stone referred to as onyx is unknown.

**“lapis lazuli.”** The blue color of lapis lazuli was often associated with God and his throne (Exod. 24:10; Job. 28:16; Isa. 54:11; Ezek. 1:26; 10:1). Lapis lazuli was a deep blue stone that was well-known in the ancient Near East.

[For more on the translation “lapis lazuli,” see commentary on Ezek. 1:26.]

Job 28:18

**“Coral.”** Coral seems cheap to us today, but only because we have the means to go into the depths of the ocean and get it. The reddish-orange coral that grows deep in the Mediterranean Sea only occasionally washed up on the shore and was highly valuable.

**“jewels.”** The jewel or stone is not known. Suggestions including pearls and rubies are in the various English translations, but actually, neither is likely. The Hebrew word seems to be related to red (cp Lam. 4:7), but rubies have not been discovered in excavations in Israel and were apparently unknown to the people there.

Job 28:19

**“weighed *in a balance* with pure gold.”** When a person wanted to buy grain, precious metals, etc., they were weighed in a balance. No amount of gold could be weighed and used to purchase wisdom. It comes from God and is given to those who please Him.

Job 28:21

**“She is hidden from the eyes of all living.”** It seems at this point in Job’s narrative (or perhaps a few verses earlier or later), wisdom becomes personified and is presented as if she were a person, and God is acquainted with her. This is very poetic and not out of character with the book of Job itself, which is Hebrew poetry. Wisdom is presented as a woman here in Job and in Proverbs, and the Hebrew word for “wisdom” is feminine (see commentary on Prov. 1:20).

**“the birds of the air.”** The Hebrew is literally, “the birds of the heavens,” but the Hebrew word “heavens” is always plural, there is no singular word “heaven” in Hebrew. In Job 28:7, the falcons of the air cannot see the riches buried beneath the earth, and here they cannot see wisdom, which is hidden in God.

Job 28:22

**“Destruction and Death say.”** Here in Job 28:22, Destruction (the Hebrew is “Abaddon”), and Death are personified as people who have heard about wisdom but never personally met or experienced her. That makes perfect sense, because the ungodly and fools go to Destruction, and they don’t know wisdom either (cf. Prov. 1:32; 10:21; 18:7).

Job 28:23

**“it is he who knows her place.”** That is, God knows where to find wisdom. This is the fifth and last time in Job 28 that “place” is used; it was first used in Job 28:1.

Job 28:24

**“and sees everything under the heavens.”** God, the creator, sees everything on earth and everything under the heavens. Nothing is hidden from Him, and so He knows where wisdom lives.

Job 28:27

“wisdom...her.” In Hebrew, “wisdom” is a feminine noun, and here she is being personified (cf. Job 28:20-23, 27).

**Job Chapter 29**

Job 29:16

**“father.”** Here meaning mentor and guide, but also Job helped the poor in other ways as well.

[For more information on the uses of “father” in the Bible, see commentary on Gen. 4:20. For information on the disciples of a Rabbi being called his “sons,” see commentary on Matt. 12:27. For information on the disciples of a Rabbi being called “orphans” if the Rabbi died or left the area, see commentary on John 14:18, “orphans.”]

Job 29:18

**“die.”** The Hebrew verb *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

Job 29:23

**“they opened their mouths.”** Like a farmer would be hopeful and thirsty for the spring rains that would bring his crops to maturity, Job says people waited for him to speak and drank in what he said.

**“the spring rain.”** This is the “latter rain” that falls in the spring and allows the crops to come to maturity.

[For more information on the “former” and “latter” rain, see commentary on James 5:7.]

**Job Chapter 30**

Job 30:9

**“I have become their *mocking* song.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “I have become their song.” However, the word “song” in this context refers to a mocking song. Job’s enemies were mocking him and cruelly even making up “songs” (rhymes, sayings, and such) about him, so he was the object of their mocking songs. We see the same thing being done to Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:63.

Job 30:23

**“the meeting house.”** The Hebrew words most likely refer to a meeting house. Although many English versions read the “appointed” house, when the Hebrew word is used to refer to something “appointed,” it is usually an appointed time. Since the context is a “house,” it refers to a house or appointed place where people meet. Thus, the translation “meeting house” makes sense (cf. BBE, DBY, LSB, NASB, NET, NJB, Rotherham).

This is one of several verses in Job where Job speaks of death being the place where everyone meets and remains. Job speaks about death being a “house,” that is, a place where people are and stay. He does not speak of death being an “experience” or a “portal” of some sort, where death takes you to life in another place. The state of death is the “meeting house” for everyone, and in that sense Job 30:23 is quite similar to Job 3:11-19 where everyone, the great and the small, is together in death. Job has said in a number of places that he, and everyone else, will die and be dead (cf. Job 3:11-13; 7:7-10; 14:12; 19:25-26; 30:23).

It is important to note that Job never speaks of dying and going to heaven, “hell,” or any other place. He speaks of being in Sheol, which is the state of being dead, and Job is exactly correct. People die and are dead in every sense of the word until God raises them from the dead in a resurrection.

[For more on the dead being truly dead, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.” For more on the resurrections coming in the future, see commentary on Acts 24:15.]

Job 30:28

**“I go about blackened, but not by the sun.”** The translation is debated, but it likely means that Job was sick and his skin black with scabs from his sores and disease, but it was not darkened by the sun.

Job 30:29

**“I am a brother to jackals.”** Job is saying that like the jackals and ostriches howl and screech, so does he, crying out in pain and sorrow.

**Job Chapter 31**

Job 31:6

**“an honest balance.”** Job makes an allusion to a merchant weighing something, as if someone could weigh him in a balance before the judgment seat of God, putting his faults on one side of the balance and his virtues on the other side. Job is confident that his virtues would weigh more than his faults and thus prove him to be innocent. Job feels like he has been treated unfairly, and thus asks for an “honest balance.” Unscrupulous merchants often kept stones of different weight in their bag only they could easily tell apart so that they bought a lot and sold a little and so could cheat in business (Lev. 19:35; Deut. 25:13-16). Job wants a fair measurement of his life.

[For more on trading using honest balances, see commentary on Prov. 11:1.]

Job 31:10

**“grind for another.”** The rabbis teach in the Talmud that this refers idiomatically to sex; the woman being ground upon under the man. That would make sense because the context is the retribution Job would receive for having committed adultery with another man’s wife (Job 31:9) and because it fits with the last stanza in the verse, which is clearly about another man having sex with Job’s wife. However, it is also possible that the verse refers to the normal practice of the woman of the house grinding grain, but for Job’s wife to do that in another man’s house would require Job to suffer great misfortune or death.

The kind of grinding that would most fit the sexual context in this verse is where there is a flat stone on the bottom on which the grain is placed, and the person grinding uses a cylindrical stone with narrow ends (much like a rolling pin is shaped) and rubs the grinding stone back and forth over the grain to grind it.

[For more on grinding grain, see commentary on Deut. 24:6.]

**Job Chapter 32**

**Job Chapter 33**

Job 33:13

**“a person’s words.”** The Hebrew is “his words,” but it refers to the words spoken by people, which gets misunderstood if translated literally has “his words.” The context is God not answering people.

Job 33:18

**“the pit.”** The word translated “pit” is *shachath* (#07845 שַׁחַת), and it means “pit,” which was used for the grave; thus the “pit” is an idiom for death (e.g., Job 17:14; 33:18; Ps. 30:9; 103:4; Isa. 51:14; Ezek. 28:8; Jon. 2:6).

**Job Chapter 34**

Job 34:10

**“*El* Shaddai.”** For more on El Shaddai, see commentary on Genesis 17:1.

Job 34:11

**“for he will repay a person according to his work.”** The teaching that on Judgment Day people will get what they deserve, good or bad, based on what they have done in their life is taught many times in Scripture (cf. Job. 34:11; Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 32:19; Ezek. 33:20; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 3:8). See commentary on Psalm 62:12.

**“to have consequences.”** The Hebrew is poetry and much more brief, and just reads “find it.” On Judgment Day, what people deserve will find them, and that is what they will get.

Job 34:15

**“die.”** The Hebrew verb *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

**Job Chapter 35**

Job 35:12

**“he does not answer.”** God does not hear prayers simply because people pray. Everyone sins, but some people are prideful and unrepentant about their sin, and God will not listen to the prayers of those people. It is the prayer of a righteous person that accomplishes much (James 5:16).

[For more information about the sacrifices and prayers of wicked people being of no value, see commentary on Amos 5:22.]

**Job Chapter 36**

Job 36:12

**“die.”** The Hebrew verb *gava* (#01478 גָּוַע) refers to dying and is fundamentally synonymous with the verb “die,” *muth* (#04191 מָוֹת), although *gava* can imply a violent death (see commentary on Gen. 25:8, “breathed his last”).

**Job Chapter 37**

**Job Chapter 38**

Job 38:3

**“Tuck your cloak under your belt.”** The literal Hebrew is “belt up your loins.” This refers to the custom of a man tying up his long clothing so he could move more quickly. In this context, it is equivalent to “prepare for battle” like a man. See commentary on 2 Kings 4:29.

Job 38:10

**“bars.”** The “bars” were strong wooden beams that were placed behind the doors so they could not be opened and could withstand pounding from the outside without giving way. Those bars were the origin of the shout “Bar the doors!” when an enemy would approach.

Job 38:14

**“It is changed like clay under the seal.”** The “seal” was a signet ring, cylinder seal, or scarab seal. The seal was engraved with special letters and/or characters that identified the owner of the ring. A person would seal something with his personal seal like we would sign our name today. Often the material that was sealed was clay, and the seal would change the clay by flattening it and making an impression on it, which was used to identify the one who sealed the clay.

[For more on signet rings and cylinder seals, see commentary on Gen. 41:42.]

Job 38:17

**“the gates of death.”** There is no escape from death except by being raised from the dead by God, and because of that, death is compared to a prison that has “gates” from which no one can escape without God’s help. These “gates” are referred to as the “gates of Sheol” (Job 17:16; Isa. 38:10) and “the gates of death” (Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18). Jesus Christ referred to the gates in Matthew 16:18 where in many versions they are translated as “the gates of hell.”

[For more on these gates, see commentary on Matt. 16:18. For more on Sheol, see Word Study: “Hades.” For more on dead people being dead, lifeless in every way, see Appendix 3: “The Dead are Dead.”]

**Job Chapter 39**

Job 39:16

**“She deals harshly with her young ones as if they were not hers.”** After the ostrich eggs hatch, the female ostrich generally leaves and the male ostrich assumes watching over the young (see commentary on Lam. 4:3).

Job 39:24

**“shofar.”** The ram’s horn trumpet, not the metal trumpet.

**Job Chapter 40**

Job 40:7

**“tuck your cloak under your belt.”** The literal Hebrew is “belt up your loins.” This refers to the custom of a man tying up his long clothing so he could move more quickly. In this context it is equivalent to “prepare for battle” like a man. See commentary on 2 Kings 4:29.

**Job Chapter 41**

**Job Chapter 42**

Job 42:6

**“take back *what I said*.”** The Hebrew is *maas* (#03988 מָאַס), and it means to reject, refuse, despise. In this case, the verb has no object, so some translators think Job was rejecting himself or despising himself, but given the context it is much more likely that Job rejected what he said and took back his words. That certainly seems to be the case from the last half of the verse. Similar translations can be found in the HCSB, NAB, NASB, and NLT.

Job 42:9

**“accepted Job’s prayer.”** The Hebrew reads, “accepted the face of Job,” which in this case and context is idiomatic for accepting his prayer.

Job 42:11

**“a ring of gold.”** The custom was that rings were worn by women in the nose, or by both men and women in their ears. It was not usual for a common person to wear a ring on his or her finger.

Job 42:12

**“1,000 yoke.”** A yoke consisted of two oxen, so Job had 2,000 oxen.

Job 42:13

**“seven sons and three daughters.”** Job’s flocks and herds were doubled from what he had in chapter 1 (Job 1:3), but he had the same number of children that he had in chapter 1 (Job 1:2). His children will be doubled at the resurrection, when all 14 sons and six daughters will be raised.

Job 42:14

**“Jemimah.”** “Dove.”

**“Keziah.”** Keziah means “cassia,” which was used as a perfume.

**“Keren-happuch.”** “Keren-happuch” refers to a container for holding the black powder that women used to paint their eyes, and those containers were often made of animal horn. Based on that, some scholars have suggested that the name basically means “horn of eye paint” (for more on eye makeup in the Bible, see commentary on 2 Kings 9:30). Job was basically a contemporary of Abraham, which shows us the use of eye makeup by women going back to only a few hundred years after Noah’s flood, although it likely goes back much further.

Job 42:16

**“After this Job lived 140 years.”** On its own, the grammar of the Hebrew text is unclear as to whether Job lived a total of 140 years, or whether he lived 140 years after his sickness, and the commentaries are divided or ambiguous about it. In any case, since Job lived after Noah’s Flood, which was the time when human lives were much shorter than they were before the Flood, if Job even lived for 140 years, that would have been a long and full life.

However, when we do the math, the numbers indicate that the 140 years refers to the span of Job’s natural life. According to Job 42:16, Job lived to see four generations after him, which would mean that he would see his great-great-grandchildren. In biblical times it was common for a girl to be married by 15, so she would be a grandmother at 32, and a great-grandmother at 48. So Job could have great-great-grandchildren some 64 years (or perhaps even a little less) after his tragic sickness. So if Job got sick in his early-to-mid seventies, which is very possible, he could see his great-great-grandchildren by age 140. On the other hand, if Job live 140 years after his sickness, he should have been alive to see six generations of children born even if none of the daughters gave birth until they were 20. So in 140 years under normal circumstances, Job would have seen his great-great-great-great grandchildren, two generations longer than the text says he was alive to see. So the evidence is that 140 years was the total lifespan of Job.

1. E. W. Bullinger, The Companion Bible, 667. [↑](#footnote-ref-31864)
2. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, gen eds., Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, “Job, Book of,” 924; Henry Morris, The Remarkable Record of Job, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-26560)
3. John Hartley, The Book of Job [NICOT], 72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-22251)
4. See John Hartley, The Book of Job [NICOT]. [↑](#footnote-ref-24573)
5. Robert Alden, Job: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture [NAC], 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-10153)
6. John Hartley, The Book of Job [NICOT]. [↑](#footnote-ref-26534)
7. Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-11411)
8. Adam Clarke, Clarke’s Commentary: A New Edition, with the Author’s Final Corrections, 3:71-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-12013)
9. David J. A. Clines, Job 1-20 [WBC], 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-17245)
10. Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament: Job, 292, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-24566)
11. Koehler and Baumgartner, Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-32229)