

Outline of the Book of Job

Note: This was originally written as a commentary in outline form, not as a study guide with questions. A few questions ("thoughts to ponder") have been added to the first section.

1. Chapters 1-3: Introduction & Job's wish for death
2. Chapters 4-14: First Round of Dialogue
3. Chapters 15-21: Second Round of Dialogue
4. Chapters 22-28: Third Round of Dialogue & Wisdom
5. Chapters 29-31: Job's Monologue
6. Chapters 32 -37: Elihu's Monologue (Use the outline & the commentary together.)
 - o Outline
 - o Commentary
7. Chapters 38-42: The LORD's Monologue & Conclusion

JOB - Chapters 1-3

Introduction and Job's wish for death

- Background Information About Job
 - The First Attack by Satan
 - The Second Attack by Satan
 - Friends Arrive to Comfort Job
 - THOUGHTS TO PONDER about Ch. 1-2
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- Job's "Curse-Lament"
 - THOUGHTS TO PONDER about Ch. 3
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INTRODUCTION: Necessary background information about Job (1:1-5)

- A. Where he lived
 - B. His character
 - C. His blessings: family and possessions
 - D. His devotion to his family and to his God
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THE FIRST ATTACK - against Job's family and possessions (1:6-22)

- A. The events in heaven
 1. Satan (the "accuser") is introduced.
 2. The Lord points out Job's character. Satan claims that Job's character originates with evil, self-serving motives.
 3. Satan challenges the Lord and the Lord accepts the challenge!

- B. The events on earth
 - 1. Job loses everything within a very short period of time.
 - 2. Job's response
 - a. What he did: grief and worship
 - b. What he did not do: sin
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THE SECOND ATTACK - against Job's person (2:1-10)

- A. The events in heaven
 - 1. Satan is introduced.
 - 2. God points out Job's continuing good character. Satan claims that Job still has evil motives underlying his character.
 - 3. Satan challenges the Lord and the Lord accepts the challenge!
 - B. The events on earth
 - 1. Job's health is destroyed in a most horrifying manner! We will see that it impacts the totality of his being (such as physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions).
 - 2. Job's integrity is tested by his wife.
 - 3. Job's response - rebukes his wife; refuses to sin.
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FRIENDS ARRIVE - to comfort Job (2:11-13)

- A. Where they lived
- B. Their desire to comfort
- C. Their shock and surprise
- D. Their sympathy and grief

Note: These friends will end up (unknowingly) testing Job much more severely than his wife did!

Thoughts to Ponder:

- Was Job actually "blameless and upright" (1:1)? Explain!
- Who did this to Job? (See also verses elsewhere, if desired.) When we experience trials, who does it to us?
- How would we have responded if all this had happened to us? Why?
- How would we have responded if all this had happened to a friend? Why? (Consider the intentions, actions, and words of Job's friends).

JOB'S INITIAL "CURSE-LAMENT" (ch. 3)

- A. (3:1-10) I wish that the day and night of my birth would cease to exist [perhaps like a day missing from the calendar!], because I was conceived and did not die prior to that day.
- B. (3:11-19) If I had died at birth (or before), I would now be at rest, equal with all who have lived and died before - both the smallest and the greatest, the best and the worst.
- C. (3:20-26) Why should life be given to a person who desires only death - who has ceased to find any value in life, and who has lost all hope of escape from continuous horror and agony?

Thoughts to Ponder:

- Things have really changed. Why has Job given-up in despair? How would you respond if you were Job?
- How do you think his friends should respond? How would you respond if Job was your friend?
- Note that even in the worst of circumstances Job doesn't take matters into his own hands and end his life. As you study this book, note that no matter what he says and does, he still has an unswerving reverence and loyalty to his God. How (or why) are "loyalty to God" and "taking matters into one's own hands" incompatible?
- At this point, Job does not know the final outcome (ch. 42). He sees only hopelessness. In contrast, we (who know his final outcome) realize that Job's trial was only temporary. How can we apply this knowledge to our own life? (You may wish to include specific examples from your life.)

JOB - Chapters 4-14

DIALOGUE: Round 1

- Eliphaz
 - Job's Reply to Eliphaz
 - Bildad
 - Job's Reply to Bildad
 - Zophar
 - Job's Reply to Zophar
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ELIPHAZ (ch. 4 - 5)

- A. (4:1-6) You should follow the advise you have given to others.
1. In the past, you helped others with encouraging words.
 2. But now, when things aren't going your way, you impatiently give up.
 3. Shouldn't the righteous lifestyle/character you had in the past be sufficient to sustain you through your trials now?
- B. (4:7-11) It is not the innocent who suffer, but rather those who deserve it.
- C. (4:12-21) No man is capable of a totally righteous relationship with God.
1. This is supported by a vision I once received.
 2. Angelic beings are impure in God's sight. How much worse off is man, with all his limitations!
- D. (5:1-7) Resentment of discipline is very unwise.
1. No holy one (heavenly being) will change your circumstances.
 2. A stubborn refusal to learn from it will result in death.
 3. I've seen it happen before: A person living in folly is prosperous for a while... then he is suddenly destroyed. [In other words, your situation is not unique.]
 4. The source of the problem is not man's environment (circumstances), but man's heart.
- E. (5:8-16) Look to God for deliverance!
1. God does wondrous things!
 2. He helps those who are hurt and oppressed, but destroys the wicked!

F. (5:17-26) Accept the Lord's discipline! Learn from it, and God will bless you in might ways.

G. (5:27) Job, please accept this faithful advice.

JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ (ch. 6 - 7)

A. (6:1-7) My complaint is justified!

1. If you could comprehend my anguish, you would understand.
2. Look at what God has done to me! That's why I complain.
3. Your speech is very inappropriate for the circumstances.

B. (6:8-10) If only God would give me death (the only hope I've got left!). Then I could at least have the consolation that I had remained faithful to God - all the way to the end!

C. (6:11-13) What other hope do I have? Why should I quietly wait for something good to happen, when all my resources have been destroyed?

D. (6:14-23) You have failed in your obligations toward me.

1. You ought to be devoted (loyal) to me... even if I were to give up expecting help from God.
2. But you have proved undependable - like desert streams that dry up when they are most needed.
3. The implications of my situation terrify you, and you have abandoned your loyalty to me.
4. I am not asking too much from you!

E. (6:24-27) Show me my errors, even if it hurts! You've accomplished nothing so far. Don't treat me like a "wind bag." That would be comparable to some of the cruelest things you could do!

F. (6:28-30) Look at my sincerity! Don't accuse me without giving a good reason for doing so!

G. (7:1-5) Men's lives are normally full of burdens, with limited joy... but I have a burden from which there is no relief.

H. (7:6-10) My days are nearly over, with nothing good remaining. [Now talking to God:] Soon I will be gone - never to return, no matter how much you may desire it.

I. (7:11-16) So, I protest! Why do you treat me like an enemy? You won't even let sleep ease my pain! I'd rather be dead. Give me a break!!!

J. (7:17-21)

1. Why so much attention on me? Won't you leave me alone even for a moment?
 2. Even if I did sin, it wouldn't hurt you. Why not, in that case, show mercy and forgive?
 3. Once I die (which will be soon!), it will be too late for you to do so.
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BILDAD (ch. 8)

A. (8:1-7)

1. Your words against God are a bunch of hot air. God doesn't distort what is right.
2. Your children died because of sin. But if you repent, God will not give you death, but blessings beyond imagination!

B. (8:8-19)

1. All the wisdom of past generations has said this!
2. The godless quickly perish, just like reeds that suddenly die when they lose their source of water. What the godless depend on is untrustworthy and frail.
3. (8:6-19 - Two views, depending on interpretation of the Hebrew)
 - VIEW A (applied to the wicked): They will be uprooted, withered, and replaced by others (they have no hope).
 - VIEW B (applied to the righteous): When uprooted, they can rejoice, for they will sprout back again (they do have hope).

C. (8:20-22) All of this illustrates my point: that you (if you repent) will be blessed, whereas evildoers will be shamed!

JOB ' S REPLY TO BILDAD (ch. 9 - 10)

A. (9:1-13)

1. I agree that God doesn't pervert justice...but HOW can I demonstrate my righteousness to Him?
2. I am no match for Him: He is too wise and too powerful to answer.
3. Look at His power in creation! See how He works in catastrophic events and in the heavens! His works are beyond comprehension!
4. And this is merely the effects of His presence. We don't even see God Himself!
5. In all, God does as He pleases. No enemy can oppose Him or even question Him!

B. (9:14-20)

1. Because of His greatness, I'm helpless to defend myself.
2. In fact, if I tried, I'd probably be destroyed!
3. He is just too great...none is above Him.
4. In his sight I couldn't even utter a word without sounding guilty!

C. (9:20-24)

1. But nonetheless, I am blameless, and I want to die.
2. God, for some reason, lets blameless people suffer just like the wicked.
3. If it isn't God doing it, then who is it?

D. (9:25-31)

1. My days are ending. [Even though the agony seems to go on "forever" - see 7:3- 4]
2. Wishful thinking ("positive thinking") cannot change reality. If I tried it, I would still end up suffering and being treated as guilty.
3. In fact, anything I might do to prove myself innocent would be of no value.

E. (9:32-35)

1. I cannot approach God in a court as I would a man. (This puts me at a great disadvantage.)
2. It would take some type of arbitrator to restrain God's actions against me; only then could I defend myself.

F. (10:1-7) Why the injustice? ("Why, God, are you doing this to me?")

1. I hate my life; I'm going to protest: "Stop condemning me until you have shown me my sin!"
2. Do you somehow get enjoyment from attacking me, while at the same time favoring the wicked?
3. Do you have a faulty, human perspective on things?
4. Are you restricted by time (as men are) that you must resort to such actions, in order to "pry-out" sin that might be in my life? [Perhaps comparable to the "Inquisition" against Christians, several centuries ago. "Must you run me through an 'inquisition'?"]
5. You know that I'm innocent and you know that I'm helpless before you.

G. (10:8-12)

1. It just doesn't make sense! Why would you make me, and then turn around and destroy me!
2. Look at the commitment you once had toward me!

H. (10:13-17)

1. But it appears that you had evil motives! You would be eager to find even the tiniest sin that I might commit, so that you could punish me! [Probably not an accusation against God, but a description of how things appear.]
2. If I am guilty, it would be hopeless for me; if I am not...I still face horrible affliction and humiliation. [A no-win situation]
3. You continuously attack me.

I. (10:18-22)

1. So, why did you let me be born? I would rather be dead or non-existent!
2. But since I'm alive, leave me alone for a little while, so I can have a little joy before my impending death. (At that time, it will be forever too late.)

ZOPHAR (ch. 11)

A. (11:1-6)

1. Is it conceivable that such a wordy person (implying Job) could be in the right? [According to Proverbs, FOOLS are the ones who utter lots of words!] Can such impious speech reduce men to silence, so that you appear to have won the argument?
2. You claim that your opinions and lifestyle are flawless! I wish that God himself would show you how wrong you are!
3. If you were wise, you would gratefully realize "the other side" of your case: you are being punished for only PART of your sins!

B. (11:7-9) Can you comprehend the unfathomable aspects of God? His knowledge and power surpasses the limits of creation! How does that compare with YOU?

C. (11:10-12)

1. If He judges sin, who is capable of opposing His actions? He knows the truth about what is going on.
2. [Meaning uncertain - possibly: Job, you are hopelessly foolish!]

D. (11:13-20)

1. So, repent! Turn back to God and forsake your sins!
 2. Then you will experience wonderful blessings...the past will be totally forgotten!
 3. But the wicked (including you, if you don't repent) will have a tragic end.
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JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR (ch. 12 - 14)

A. (12:1-3) You people think you have a monopoly on intelligence; but I too, know something about these things. In fact, what you've said ANYONE can know.

B. (12:4-6)

1. Even though I am righteous and blameless, and have had fellowship with God, I am now an object of ridicule.
2. This is because men in easy circumstances have contempt for those who have misfortune.
3. And in contrast with me, wicked men are secure!

C. (12:7-12)

1. Ask any part of creation... it all is aware that this has been done by God, who is in control of everything.
2. [12:11-12 - 2 views]
 - VIEW A (a command): Test the truth of this for yourself! After all, you "aged ones" supposedly have wisdom. [OR: After all, "the Aged One," (that is, God) is the source of all wisdom.]
 - VIEW B (a caution): The aged do have wisdom, but we must carefully test what they say.

D. (12:13-25)

1. God is more wise and more powerful than men. If He destroys something in judgment, its destruction is irreversible.
2. He has power to conquer all - not only people who blindly follow their leaders, but also the leaders themselves!
3. Nothing is hidden from Him - even what is done in darkness.
4. He can exalt or destroy any and all. Even the greatest of men can be brought to nothing.

E. (13:1-12) (Job plans to confront God.)

1. (Talking to his "friends") I am equal to you all in intelligence.
2. (I plan to pursue a course of action that is totally different from what you have recommended.) Since I consider myself innocent, I plan to confront God.
3. But you, claiming that I am guilty, speak lies and worthless advise. Silence would be better!
4. Why do you distort the truth in order to promote what you claim is "God's cause"? One-sided arguments and favoritism are wrong. Don't you know that God will eventually judge you for it?
5. Your words have little value.

F. (13:13-19)

1. Let me speak without interruption, then let come what may!
2. Why do I endanger my life by daring to confront God? Admittedly, he may destroy me!
3. Yet I plan to defend myself... [Two interpretations of the Hebrew:]
 - VIEW 1 ("regardless of what happens"): ... even if my attempt proves hopeless (and I die). [What have I to lose?]
 - VIEW 2 ("I expect good to happen"): ... and I will hope that he vindicates me.
4. Perhaps the very fact that I am willing to do this might testify to my innocence and result in my deliverance. No godless person would dare to do such a thing!
5. So, pay attention; I'm ready to speak. And I am confident that I will win!
6. Can anyone find sin anywhere in my past? If so, I will willingly be silent [a sign of defeat] and die!

G. (13:20-27)

1. I request these things from you, God: stop acting against me, and don't let your greatness terrify me. [...so we can speak on equal terms].
2. Then communicate with me! (You can even decide who speaks first.)
3. Show me ANYTHING I have done to deserve such treatment. Why do you treat weak creatures this way?
4. Look at what you are doing: You are bringing bitter charges against me. You even appear to be punishing me for things I may have done as an immature child, before I even had a chance to learn wisdom!
5. You are restricting me and examining my every move, hunting for the tiniest mistake!

H. (13:28; 14:1-6) [Here, Job speaks in general terms, but implies his own specific situation.]

1. Man slowly rots away. [I obviously am!] He lives a short life - full of problems - and then dies.
2. Why do you focus so much attention on him? Do you expect him to have absolute perfection? It's not possible!
3. You have already determined that his days will be few, so why add to his suffering? Let him "do his time" until his days are ended.

I. (14:7-12) Even a tree has it better than man does.

1. When a tree dies, new shoots can sprout up. (It just takes the right conditions.)
2. But when a man dies, it's all over for him. He is like water that evaporates and is gone.
3. As long as this present system lasts, man will not come alive again.

J. (14:13-17) If only it were possible to be like the tree!

1. If only I could temporarily die and come alive again after your anger has passed!
2. Suppose it were possible... I would put up with everything, waiting in hope for my renewal to come - when communion and fellowship would be restored!
3. (v. 16-17) [Two interpretations]
 - VIEW 1 (a continuation of his wishful thinking): Then you would not hold against me all the things for which you appear to be judging me.
 - VIEW 2 ["back to reality"]: But you are attacking me - holding against me all sorts of things.

K. (14:18-22) Instead, man is like an eroding mountain.

1. You destroy man's hopes and he dies.
2. What happens to those left behind is meaningless to him. As he dies [OR: "After" he dies?] the only thing on his mind is what is happening to himself.

JOB - Chapters 15-21

DIALOGUE: Round 2

- Eliphaz
 - Job's Reply to Eliphaz
 - Bildad
 - Job's Reply to Bildad
 - Zophar
 - Job's Reply to Zophar
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ELIPHAZ (ch. 15)

- A. (15:1-6)
1. Not only are your words utterly meaningless, but they attack the very concept of godliness.
 2. Your sin (the reason for your suffering) is the source of your words, so your words demonstrate your guilt.
- B. (15:7-13)
1. Are you wiser than the wisest of men (who all agree with us)? Do you claim to have direct revelation from God himself?
 2. Why do you refuse to accept godly counsel? (Your words are an expression of anger against God.)
- C. (15:14-16) How could ANY man be as pure as you claim to be [so that you wouldn't deserve this]? Even heavenly beings are impure. How much worse is man, who by nature is corrupt!!
- D. (15:17-26)
1. Let me tell you the truth about this matter (what all the wisest of men have said):
 2. The wicked man has a horrible existence - full of despair, and anticipating judgment (because of his defiance against God).
- E. (15:27-35) No matter how much he may seem to prosper, he will be destroyed in judgment. This will occur, no matter how much he may deceive himself [thinking that he may benefit from wickedness].
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JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ (ch. 16 - 17)

A. (16:1-5)

1. Your trite speeches only produce misery. (Are you also sick?)
2. If you were in my place, I could also speak...but what would come out of my mouth would result in comfort.

B. (16:6-14)

1. I am going to continue my complaint. (It does me no good to be silent.)
2. God has devastated me. My very body testifies to that fact (and appears to testify against me). God is like a brutal enemy attacking me.
3. He has even let men (the 3 "friends") join in the attack.
4. Once all was well; now I am destroyed by God: attacked and mortally wounded.

C. (16:15-17) All this has happened - pain and humiliation - in spite of my innocence and purity!

D. (16:18-21)

1. May my innocent blood and my tears NEVER stop crying for justice, until I am acquitted of any wrongdoings
2. [Two interpretations]
 - VIEW 1 (confidence that the very agony he experiences testifies before God about his innocence): Even now, my immortal blood is a witness in heaven.
 - VIEW 2 (confidence that someone in heaven must be defending him - perhaps an angel or God himself): Even now, there is a witness defending me in heaven.
3. [V. 20 - Two Interpretations of the Hebrew: Is the "friend" mentioned here a "defender" (= the witness, mentioned above) or a "scorner" (= his accusers)?]
 - VIEW 1 ("defender"): [This witness (mentioned above)] ...defends me as a friend.
 - VIEW 2 ("scorner"): ["This witness [in heaven] defends me" (mentioned above)] ...even though my friends [on earth] treat me with scorn.
4. As a friend, he/it pleads with God, as do my tears.

E. (16:22, 17:1-2) I will soon die. All my resources are gone. And as I wait for my grave, I have to tolerate mockers!

F. (17:3-5)

1. Defend me, God! No one else will!
2. These people are blind, unable to exalt you (OR: unable to triumph in the argument).
3. They may expect a reward...what they will get is judgment.

G. (17:6-9)

1. God has turned me into an object of ridicule. I am physically wasting away.
2. Upright men are appalled at what has happened, angered by the injustice of it all...yet in spite of what they see, they will desire to remain upright in all their ways.

H. (17:10-16)

1. You people have not demonstrated wisdom. TRY AGAIN!
2. I'm devastated and dying, yet you claim: "There is hope! Things will soon be better!"
3. If all I can expect is death and decomposition, where is my hope? Will it go along with me - hand in hand - to the grave? [Of course not!]

BILDAD (ch. 18)

A. (18:1-4)

1. How long will you continue to blurt out such words? Come to your senses, so we can communicate!
2. You act as though we are dumb animals. Yet you are the one is acting like an animal: you are your own enemy, being angry rather than repentant
3. Do you expect God to change the very order of creation [and morality] just because you demand it?

B. (18:5-21) The wicked, those who refuse to follow God, WILL be destroyed. Their horrible ending is inescapable: it CANNOT be different (not even for you).

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD (ch. 19)

A. (19:1-6)

1. Why do you continue to torture me with your words, as you have these ten times? [Figurative language for "many times."]
2. It is not your job to hunt for hidden sins in my life. [You should be comforting me!]
3. If you are trying to make yourself look good by knocking me down, then know this: I haven't done any wrong. Rather, God has wronged me. [See the NOTE in Section B (19:7-12).]

B. (19:7-12)2)

1. I protest and cry for help, but none comes.
2. Instead, God surrounds me and violently attacks me; he humiliates and destroys me.
3. NOTE: Job says these things NOT because he is angry with God, but because he is perplexed and hurt by the apparent abandonment of him by God.

C. (19:13-20)0)

1. All mankind has forsaken me.
2. All that's left is my deteriorating body.

D. (19:21-22)

1. So, please be merciful and show pity!
2. Admit that God is doing this!
3. Don't join God in the attack (by pressuring me to confess wrongs that I haven't committed, etc.).

E. (19:23-27) Sooner or later I will be vindicated.

1. I wish that an eternal monument were engraved with my words (so that all may forever know my claim of innocence, until I am vindicated).
2. In fact, I am convinced that there is someone - alive at this very moment - who will defend/redeem me.

NOTE: When will this person (defender/redeemer) do it?

- VIEW 1: while Job is alive;
- VIEW 2: after he dies (and perhaps has been resurrected).

The different ways these two views interpret v. 25b-26 will be shown in the sections below:

3. (25b) There will come a time that he himself (the defender) will stand in my defense "on the dust."
 - VIEW 1: on the ground ("dust") in front of Job
 - VIEW 2: on Job's grave (after Job has turned to "dust")
4. (26a) Even though my skin is "destroyed" ...
 - VIEW 1: it has become utterly wasted away by the disease
 - VIEW 2: Job has died
5. (26b) ...Yet "from my flesh" ...
 - VIEW 1: looking out "from" his dead/dying flesh (still alive)
 - VIEW 2: looking "apart from" his flesh (i.e. as a "spirit") OR looking out "from" the flesh of a resurrected body
6. (26c) ...I will see him (contextually: the defender-redeemer) - GOD HIMSELF!!

[NOTE: Regardless of whether one interprets vs. 25-26 as happening before or after Job's death, both views agree on this: Job was convinced that God (if he was truly God) had to sooner or later acknowledge Job's innocence...and in a manner that all would know!]

7. I myself will see him when he does this! [Whether in the flesh or not.]
8. My longing for this to happen consumes all my remaining energy!

F. (19:28-29) So, if you people continue to hound me and to accuse me, you had better start to fear. God will bring fearful judgment upon you at that time.

ZOPHAR (ch. 20)

- A. (20:1-3) OUCH! you have greatly insulted me! But I'm wise enough to give a proper response.
- B. (20:4-11)
 1. Everyone knows that the joy of the wicked is only temporary.
 2. No matter how exalted he may become, he is destined to perish - forgotten by man.
 3. His family will be left destitute.
- C. (20:12-19) The very things he enjoyed [i.e., evil] will be his downfall.
- D. (20:20-29)
 1. He will never be satisfied, but will be consumed in judgment, one way or another.
 2. In fact, all creation will oppose him.
 3. God has decreed his fate.
 4. [The implication is that all this has happened to Job.]

JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR (ch. 21)

- A. (21:1-3) Show compassion by listening to me, then mock on!
- B. (21:4-16)
1. I am complaining to God, who is responsible for this. [It didn't happen due to sins in my life.]
 2. I have a right to be impatient (waiting for an answer)... just look at what he has done to me!
 3. The very thought of this terrifies me! [Referring to: A) what he has just said, OR: B) to what he is about to say.]
 4. WHY do the wicked continue to prosper? This happens even though they despise God!
 5. (I am not like them: I still chose to remain faithful to God - the one who is in charge of their prosperity.)
- C. (21:17-21)
1. But how often does the wicked person experience judgment?
 2. Often his children experience it instead!
 3. Shouldn't the man himself be punished? He could care less about the fate of his children!
- D. (21:22-26) Yet God does things his way, not ours.
1. No one is superior to God - thus capable of teaching him a better way to do things.
 2. And this is the way God has chosen to deal with men: Even though two people may have totally opposite experiences in life, they both die equal.
 3. [Therefore what Job's friends are saying CANNOT be true.]
- E. (21:27-33)
1. I am fully aware of the scheming arguments you have planned against me. You claim that my loss of property [and health] indicates that I am wicked.
 2. But evidence everywhere proves you wrong! The WICKED live long and die honored!
- F. (21:34) This proves that your advise is worthless.

JOB - Chapters 22-28

DIALOGUE: Round 3 & Job's Concluding Remarks and Wisdom Discourse

- Eliphaz
 - Job's Reply to Eliphaz
 - Bildad
 - Job's Reply to Bildad
 - (No Response by Zophar; no Reply to Him by Job.)
 - Conclusion by Job
 - Chapter 28: WISDOM
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ELIPHAZ (ch. 22)

- A. (22:1-3) Nothing a man does can fulfill some "need" in God, and thus obligate him to pay back the man with special favors. Even the best ways of men cannot affect God's actions. [God is impartial in his judgments.]
- B. (22:4-11)
1. You did not reap God's judgment because of righteousness, but because of wickedness.
 2. What you now experience is evidence that you have committed many wicked deeds. (Your riches surely came from exploitation of your fellow man...so God has placed you under severe judgment.)
- C. (22:12-18)
1. God IS exalted above the stars. And you think that because of his distance, his understanding of what happens on earth is obscured.
 2. If you insist on following the ways of evil men - who were openly defiant against God - you should remember that they were destroyed in judgment (= "by a flood") by God. (It will happen to you also, if you don't repent.) [Note: Perhaps Eliphaz is referring to those who were destroyed by the flood in Noah's day.]
 3. They followed after wickedness, even though God was the source of their blessings.
 4. I am the one who is not like them (the wicked). I chose to remain faithful to God. [He echoes Job's claim (in 21:16), perhaps implying that he, rather than Job, is avoiding the ways of the wicked.]

D. (22:19-20) The righteous live to see the destruction of the wicked, and they rejoice!

E. (22:21-30)

1. So, please repent! Then you will reap the benefits of repentance!
 2. Get rid of your wickedness and the things you treasure (ill-gotten gain).
 3. You will once again have intimate fellowship with God. He will hear and answer your requests even when you are interceding in behalf of other men! [It seems implied that, although man's deeds cannot benefit (or influence) God, God will "benefit" man (in a good sense) if man repents.]
-

JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ (ch. 23 - 24)

[Job seems to agree that God can "benefit" man (in a good sense), but believes that in his case it will be due to his purity, rather than through repentance.]

A. (23:1-7)

1. My words have been heavily influenced by my agony.
2. If I could find God, I could defend myself, and would expect a favorable decision.

B. (23:8-12)

1. I've looked for him and cannot find him anywhere.
2. But he knows my ways. Sooner or later I will be shown to be pure (because I am pure).

C. (23:13-17) [Job agrees with Eliphaz that God is not influenced by man's actions.]

1. God is one, and complete in himself.
2. He does as he pleases, and nothing external to him influences his decisions.
3. My troubles are a good illustration of this fact (that he does as he pleases), and it terrifies me.
4. Yet in all my darkness - though I am dying - I am not silenced [by your false reasoning].

D. (24:1-12) Something I don't understand...

1. Why doesn't the God of judgment appoint (on a regular basis) special times of judgment, so that the "wrongs" in the world could be judged and made "right"? (...and so that those who know him could see it happen now!)
2. Look at the horrible things that the oppressed must endure! (v.2+) They suffer without relief.. and nothing happens to the evildoer.

E. (24:13-17) On the other hand, those who do this wickedness love their darkness, and expect no retribution.

F. (24:18-24)

1. God lets them go on...
2. But in the end (although they presently get away with much) they will be destroyed. [Alternate view: oh that they would be judged now, rather than waiting for later.]

G. (24:25) Who can disprove this - the fact that the way things presently are (filled with much injustice) is not the way they will be in the future (when all is made right)?

BILDAD (ch. 25)

- A. Can't you understand that even now God is in sovereign control, that even now man should fear his judgments? [Perhaps suggesting that we don't have to wait until the future arrives, in order to get "justice" - contrary to what Job has just said.]
 - B. Can't you understand that it just isn't possible for a man to be perfect in God's sight?
-

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD (ch. 26)

- A. (26:1-4) What help you are! Where did you get such intelligence? [sarcasm]
- B. (26:5-14) God indeed is great.
 - 1. On one extreme, He fully knows what is going on in Sheol - with the dead who are in a wretched state of existence.
 - 2. On the other extreme - for the living - He has created the heavens and has displayed His amazing wonders in them.
 - 3. And He is so great that we can comprehend only the fringes of his power!

(No Response by Zophar; Hence, no reply by Job.)

CONCLUSION BY JOB (ch. 27)

- A. (27:1-6)
 - 1. As surely as God lives (who is both the source of my life and the source of my bitterness)...
 - 2. I will never deny my integrity. I plan to ALWAYS remain righteous, regardless of what may happen.
- B. (27:7-10)
 - 1. May my enemies [Job's friends with their bad counsel?] get what the wicked deserve.
 - 2. The wicked man will have no hope when God takes his life...God won't even hear his cry for help. (After all, he has no interest in God at other times.)
- C. (27:11-12) I will explain to you the way God does things. (You yourself know this his true, so you should not have given me such worthless advice.)
- D. (27:13-23) This is what will eventually happen to the wicked [even though it does not happen now]:
 - 1. His offspring will suffer in many ways, and no one will care.
 - 2. His possessions will eventually be owned by the righteous. [He probably stole them from the righteous, in the first place!]
 - 3. Where he lives will become uninhabited ruins.
 - 4. The hour of death will overtake him and he will suddenly lose all.
- E. [(Ch.28) The wisdom of God's ways is difficult or impossible for man to comprehend. It can be developed only in a proper relationship with God.] See next section:

WISDOM (ch. 28 - a continuation of Job's concluding remarks)

- A. (28:1-11) Man is able, by human ingenuity, to probe the deepest recesses of the earth, in areas far beyond the reach of all other living creatures. There he is able to discover all kinds of treasures.
- B. (28:12-19) But man cannot comprehend the value of wisdom. It is more elusive than any of the rarest, most valuable treasures he can find; it cannot be purchased with the greatest of his treasures; and nothing he has attained can even compare to it.
- C. (28:20-28)
1. It evades man's search for it in every direction - both in the land of the living and in the place of the dead.
 2. God alone knows the way to wisdom, for it resides with Him alone. Even at the very beginning of creation, He knew and understood it. He could fully appraise and comprehend its value. It was with Him at creation and permeates all of it. (See Job 38-41.)
 3. Yet man cannot find it through investigation of the unknown elements of creation; but only through the development of a relationship with God - through fearing Him and (as a result) turning away from evil.

JOB - Chapters 29-31

MONOLOGUE: Job

- The Past
 - The Present
 - Oath of Innocence
-
-

THE PAST (ch. 29)

- A. (29:1-6) I long for the past - for the days in which I had intimate fellowship with God and was continually blessed by him.
- B. (29:7-17) I was held in honor and respect above all other men, because:
1. I helped the helpless
 2. I was righteous and just
 3. I opposed the wicked
- C. (29:18-20) I expected prosperity and blessing all the days of my life.
- D. (29:21-25) All men waited for my counsel and favor; I was their leader.
-

THE PRESENT (ch. 30)

- A. (30:1-8)
1. Although I was once the most respected of men, now I am mocked by all - even by those who belong to the lowest, most degraded form of humanity: the children of the "human trash of society."
 2. Even their parents, who had opportunity to "grow up" (become wiser with age), were totally unreliable, irresponsible, unpredictable - worse than wild animals. [Implication: the children - who hadn't yet had such an opportunity - were even worse than their parents.]

- B. (30:9-15)
1. And now, even this "human trash" of society considers itself better than me and wants no association with me.
 2. They eagerly attack me without restraint, and - because God has afflicted me - they easily succeed in destroying me.
- C. (30:16-19) And now, all I have left is my few remaining days of pain. God has "surrounded" me in his attack, so that I am left helpless.
- D. (30:20-23) I beg for mercy, O God, but you ruthlessly attack me with the intention of totally destroying me.
- E. (30:24-31)
1. Surely it is unreasonable to destroy a person who is already beat and broken!
 2. Did I not do good to others when they were hurt? Shouldn't I also be helped?
 3. Yet though I beg for help, all I receive is misery and horror.
-

OATH OF INNOCENCE (ch. 31)

- A. (31:1-4) I have not looked lustfully at a woman; for God - who sees all I do - punishes those who sin.
- B. (31:5-8) I have never been deceitful...let God himself judge me and see!
- C. (31:9-12) I have never committed sexual sin; such an action would deserve great judgment.
- D. (31:13-15) I have never been unjust to my servants, for I know that I myself will be judged by the God who made us both.
- E. (31:16-23) I have never turned away those who were in need. Had I done so, I would deserve great judgment.
- F. (31:24-28) I have never loved money or any other form of idolatry. This also would deserve judgment.
- G. (31:29-34) I have never failed to demonstrate love and compassion - even to enemies and strangers. I have never been hypocritical in any of my actions (as people sometimes are, because of peer-pressure).

- H. (31:35-37)
1. Oh that I would be heard! I officially (that is, legally) confirm my oath of innocence! I challenge God to prove me wrong!
 2. Would I not gladly show the world everything he might have to say about me? Am I not ready to openly give account for everything I have ever done? (I've got absolutely nothing to hide!)
- I. (31:38-40a) If I have EVER committed ANY sin against either land or tenant... then may my land - for a testimony against me - be utterly cursed.
- J. (31:40b) I rest my case.
-

**The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?
There is no one on earth like him;
he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." (Job 1:8)**

JOB - Chapters 32-37

MONOLOGUE: Elihu

- Introduction
 - First Speech
 - Second Speech
 - Third Speech
 - Fourth Speech
-
-

INTRODUCTION (32:1-5)

- A. (32:1) JOB'S FRIENDS - why they stopped answering him: Job was righteous in his own eyes.
- B. (32:2-5) ELIHU
1. Who he was...
 2. His reaction to the debate: anger
 - Because of what Job had done: He JUSTIFIED himself rather than God
 - Because of what the 3 friends had done: They could not refute Job, yet they condemned him. [OR - according to ancient Hebrew scribal writings: their inability to refute Job implied condemnation of God.]
 3. Why he had been silent: he was younger than the others.
 4. Why he now spoke:
 - the three now run out of arguments
 - the end result had angered him
-

FIRST SPEECH (32:6 - ch. 33)

- A. (32:6-9)
1. Up to now, I - a young man - have kept silent, out of deep respect for the wisdom that comes with age.
 2. Yet age is not the only factor involved in obtaining wisdom; for the spirit of wisdom has its ultimate origin in God, not in mere age.

B. (32:10-14)

1. So, please kindly listen to me!
2. I gave you my fullest attention while you were carefully presenting your views. And I have seen that none of you has successfully refuted Job.
3. Don't rely on the claim that you have learned in your wisdom that God (not man) should refute Job. [A probable excuse for their silence.]
4. I have a different point of view to present... one that Job has not refuted.

C. (32:15-22) (Speaking as though to an audience)

1. They have failed to answer Job; they have given up! So why should I remain silent, when I have an answer!
2. I am excited about the answer I am about to give! (If I keep silent, I feel as though I might explode!)
3. And when I answer, I will answer fairly. I would not dare to use flattery or show favoritism, lest I be judged by the God who made me.

D. (33:1-7)

1. So, listen to me, Job, as I speak.
2. My words will be true and upright. I am dependent upon God for my very existence (as well as for what I am going to say).
3. If you can, then please refute what I say, for I am not superior to you. We are equal before God; you have no reason to be apprehensive.

E. (33:8-11)

1. Yet I myself have heard you criticize God's actions.
2. You have claimed to be innocent and pure, and that God has - for no legitimate reason - attacked and constantly harassed you.
3. [And you are angry that God doesn't answer your charges. (See v.13.)]

F. (33:12-22)

1. The very fact that God is greater than you shows that your complaining is just not right. [You have things backwards!]
2. How do you dare to complain that the Sovereign God refuses to answer man's complaints; that when man speaks, God doesn't listen?
3. The truth is that God has spoken and man hasn't listened!
4. For example, God has spoken through dreams, warning any who might be ready to listen, so that they will avoid wrongdoing and pride - so that they might be kept from destruction. (v.15-18)
5. He also speaks through great suffering - bringing the individual to the very point of death. (v.19+)

G. (33:23-28)

1. And at this point of sickness God may allow a mediating angel/messenger to communicate to the suffering individual: to teach him the right ways, so that he might be spared from death .
2. If this happens [and if he listens], the man will be restored to a righteous life before God. He will willingly acknowledge his sins... and God's graciousness.

- H. (33:29-30) God often communicates in these ways in order to Protect a man - to spare him from destruction (not to kill him!) and to enable him to enjoy a fruitful life!
- I. (33:31-33)
1. So please, pay attention to what I say.
 2. If you wish to reply to what I say, then please do so. But remember: my goal is have you acquitted (of wrongdoing) and restored [in contrast with the 3 friend's goal].
-

SECOND SPEECH (ch. 34)

- A. (34:1-4) Pay attention, you men of wisdom. Let us together determine which viewpoint is correct [Job's or Elihu's].
- B. (34:5-9)
1. Job has claimed that although he is innocent and in the right, God is treating him like a liar, denying him justice and punishing him beyond recovery.
 2. Is not this a scornful attitude? Is not this what WICKED men do? What an evil association Job has!!
 3. He goes as far as to say that upright behavior is of little value!
 4. [In other words, Job is claiming that God is in the wrong when he fails to reward Job's righteous behavior with blessings. In doing this Job has associated himself with the wicked...even though he might not fully realize the implications of his attitude . (But he will!)]
- C. (34:10-15)
1. Listen to this carefully, men of wisdom:
 2. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR GOD TO DO WRONG. He is only capable of judging men correctly for what they have done. Indeed, such an accusation is contradictory to the very nature of God!
 3. God [not man] is supreme, and he defines what is right and what is wrong. His decisions are influenced by NO ONE - neither by human authority nor by any other corrupting influence. [God's rule over the earth was not a task given him by man. Rather than MAN being over God (and telling him what to do), GOD is over man.]
 4. All men are utterly dependent upon God for their existence. This being the case, it is God's right to destroy any (or all) of them as he wishes [in judgment].
- D. (34:16-20)
1. Listen carefully to this, Job:
 2. How can you condemn one is by nature "the Just and Mighty One"? How is it possible for him to hate justice and yet govern the world for good (which he by nature does)?
 3. [Job has claimed that God is unjust in Job's situation, yet he wants God to do good to him. How could God be capable of doing BOTH good and evil?!!]
 4. Look at God's impartiality to wicked rulers: he is influenced by neither power nor wealth, when he judges them.
 5. He has made all...he can judge (and destroy) all.

E. (34:21-30)

1. God has full comprehension of every man's ways. He has no need for further investigations because he sees it all.
2. God destroys the wicked in the sight of all, because of the greatness of their sins and the cries of those whom they oppressed.
3. But suppose he chooses to wait and to delay exercising his justice for a while...Who has a right to question him about it?
4. And if he chooses to not show his presence for a while [as Job claims he is], WHO has a right to force him to appear [such as to personally vindicate Job]?
5. Yet he is still in control over all. The godless man does not ultimately triumph.

F. (34:31-33)

1. Now a person can have an attitude of repentance and humility, and can be willing to submit to God on God's terms.
2. But look at you! You are unrepentant! You demand that God submit to YOU on YOUR terms!
3. Tell me which alternative is right and proper! [Apparently no reply.]

G. (34:34-37)

1. Attention wise men, this is the verdict we must reach: Job is speaking very foolishly.
2. Furthermore, Job ought to be tested to the utmost for his impious words, for his attitude [whether he realizes it or not] fosters rebellion.
 - View 1 (rebellion in others): In addition to his own sin, his attitude encourages others to sin.
 - View 2 (rebellion in Job): In addition to his other sins (such as his foolish speech and whatever else has been previously mentioned), he is adding the sin of rebellion, by refusing to repent.

THIRD SPEECH (ch. 35)

A. (35:1-3) Can you claim to be right and fair when...

1. On the one hand you expect God to vindicate you (that is, to acknowledge you as "righteous," and undeserving of the trouble He has given you).
2. Yet on the other hand you claim that there is little benefit to you (OR: in God's sight) if you avoid sinning.

B. (35:4-8) I want all of you to understand this:

1. God, who is greater than the universe above you, is not influenced by the actions of mere man. Man cannot manipulate God's sovereign decisions by means of his own moral conduct, whether good or bad.
2. Your moral conduct, however, does influence yourself and the people around you. Therefore it does have value, but not in manipulating God.

C. (35:9-16)

1. Those who are oppressed often cry to God for relief, but their focus is on themselves, not on God! They want to use God as a means of escape from their circumstances.
 2. They are not interested in looking to God with an attitude of trust. He would provide encouragement (example - through songs, to calm their anxieties at night) and wisdom (example - the wisdom that can be learned from observing what he has created).
 3. [The emphasis seems to be that God would take them victoriously THROUGH the trials, not necessarily OUT OF them. Men are generally unwilling to accept such an alternative for they think they inherently deserve better than what God has given them.]
 4. Therefore God does not listen to such people's meaningless prayers and empty cries.
 5. Consider Job, how much less you deserve to have God listen to your arrogant and impatient complaints!
 6. This is especially true because you claim that God is nowhere in sight and that He has delayed in dealing justly with your situation or in answering your charges. This also is true because you accuse Him of ignoring wickedness and not punishing it! (Perhaps suggesting that God is preoccupied with Himself?)
 7. In the final analysis Job's complaints are meaningless, empty words. Thus God has no reason to listen (compare with vs. 12-13).
-

FOURTH SPEECH (ch. 36 - 37)

A. (36:1-4) Please remain patient. I have more to say in defense of God's justice. What I'm about to say is true and accurate!

B. (36:5-12)

1. Even though God is mighty and uninfluenced by man's moral conduct, He still takes an interest in mankind.
2. First, He is unchanging in his purpose: He eventually does punish the wicked and bless the righteous.
3. Second, He teaches those who are afflicted concerning their arrogant sins and their prideful, self-centered attitudes. These are the reasons that He placed them in affliction!
4. If they listen, repent, and submit to Him, then they are blessed. If not, then they perish without even knowing why it happened.

C. (36:13-15)

1. Those who are godless will remain unresponsive, resentful, and unrepentant to death.
2. The righteous, however, are delivered from (OR: by means of) their suffering. They also learn through it and are better off for it.
3. Note: There are obviously many arrogant people in the world who do not suffer affliction at the present time. The affliction described here probably refers to affliction placed upon those who CLAIM to be followers of God, whether or not their claims are true. Through such trials the true followers of God are strengthened (cf. 1 Peter 1:7; James 1:3, 12). In contrast, the "faith" of those who are not true followers is destroyed or shown to be false (cf. Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21; 1 John 2:19).

D. (36:16-21) What all this means to Job

1. God is desiring to deliver you from a much greater sorrow to come, from a much greater distress, and to a blessing that you could not otherwise experience! God wants to provide an escape from the "obstructions" that presently lie hidden in your heart.
2. To accomplish this you presently are experiencing discipline. This is a judgment justly given and is comparable to what the wicked should receive. (Remember that they WILL be judged sooner or later!)
3. Be careful that you keep your eyes on God!
4. For example, do not focus your attention on wealth or blessings for they cannot deliver you.
5. In vs. 19-20 the original text is difficult to translate. One possible meaning might be: Do not look to anything as a means of escape from God's discipline (that is, as a substitute for repentance and submission to Him; compare with vs. 15). Another possible meaning might be: Do not look to death as a means of escape.
6. Do not turn to evil as a means of escape. Based on the evil implications of your complaints (see chapter 34), this appears to be a tempting alternative to you!

E. (36:22-26) Rather, look to God!

1. Focus your attention on God and on His great power!
2. Look at His great and awesome skill by which He teaches men! He even instructs man about his hidden sins! (Compare with vs. 8-10.) Who is capable of doing better? Who is capable of legitimately questioning His ways?
3. Praise God for what He does! Don't question and challenge Him!
4. Look at God's greatness! Even the tiny amount of His greatness that we can comprehend is overwhelming!

F. (36:27-33) Apparently a thunderstorm is beginning to form on the horizon.

1. Look at the greatness of God's power! Observe what He teaches us from creation!
2. Look at the thunderstorm! He is in total control of it, but we can hardly comprehend it.
3. Through it He teaches us about His gracious care for mankind as well as His wrath and judgment. We benefit from His efforts if we are willing to learn.

G. (37:1-13)

1. Look at such marvelous power! It leaves me in awe!
2. Pay attention to the way God communicates through the storm. He does so in wondrous ways that elude our full comprehension. God's ways are so great!
3. God's display of His power is so mighty that it stops the activity of man and beast alike!
4. With the storm God accomplishes His desires, whether they involve mercy or judgment.

H. (37:14-18)

1. So listen! Stop your complaining! Shift your attention from yourself to God!
2. Do you have the knowledge it takes to bring the rain? No! God, however, is perfect in knowledge!
3. Do you have the power it takes to prevent the rain from coming and instead to bring burning heat? No! All you can do is weakly swelter in the heat!

I. (37:19-24)

1. If you cannot understand things like these, how could you ever have enough understanding to be prepared to argue about your own circumstances before God? You would have nothing to say!
2. How could a mere man dare to approach God?? Would not such a man be utterly consumed or "swallowed up" by the greatness of God's power? (NOTE: When God does appear, the cloud that shows God's greatness also partially conceals Him. Therefore those who witness the event survive.)
3. We can't even gaze at the sun's brightness. How much less could we survive the presence of God?!
4. But look! Here comes God! He comes in golden splendor and awesome majesty!
5. God in His greatness is beyond our reach! He is powerful and just! He does not oppress men in spite of your accusations.
6. Therefore fear God and don't dispute with Him! Remember that He will have regard only for those who are truly wise. [An alternative view might be: Remember that He will have no regard for those who are wise in their own eyes.]

**"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (1 Peter 3:12)**

"The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." (Job 28:28)

JOB 32-37

Notes / Commentary: The Message of Elihu

- Introduction (ch. 32)
 - Man Should Listen to God (ch. 33)
 - Man Has No Right to Complain (ch. 34)
 - Man Cannot Manipulate God to Accomplish His Own Selfish Desires (ch. 35)
 - Man Must Focus on God's Wisdom and Power (ch. 36-37)
-

INTRODUCTION (ch. 32)

Evaluation of Job & 3 friends (by compiler of book)

- A. JOB: righteous in his own eyes; justified himself rather than God.
- B. THREE FRIENDS: couldn't refute Job yet condemned him [OR (according to some) implied condemnation of God].

Defense of Elihu's speeches (by Elihu)

- A. Though I'm younger, I have wisdom. (32:6-9)
 - 1. source is Spirit of God [OR: spirit from God]
 - 2. (yet he showed respect for the aged)
 - B. I've carefully listened to both sides; I've prepared my case. (32:10-14)
 - C. They have failed... now it's my turn... I'll be unbiased. (32:15-22)
-

MAN SHOULD LISTEN TO GOD (ch. 33)

Initial evaluation of Job's complaint

- A. Listen Job, and test my words. Respond to them if you can. (33:1-7)

- B. You criticize/complain about God, for not answering your charges. (33:8-11)
- C. THIS IS BACKWARDS. Rather than GOD listening (and responding) to you, you should listen (and respond) to God. (v. 12-14)

God Has Communicated

These two examples do not imply that God speaks to all people in this manner. Nor does it imply that God even HAS to speak - Elihu later reminds Job that God has a right to remain silent, if he wishes.

- A. DREAMS (example: Eliphaz) (v. 15-18)
 - B. PAIN (example: Job) (v. 19-21) IF the purpose of the pain is for communication by God, he will use it to teach the individual. IF the person listens, restoration will come. (v. 23-28)
 - C. God does these things to spare a person from an even worse fate - the "pit." (v. 29-30)
 - D. Listen to my words; respond to them, if you can. (v. 31-33)
-

Additional comments about dreams.

Elihu is not referring to the "fortune telling" dreams that people often claim to have, today. The world is filled with people who claim to have "visions" and "dreams" - people trying to get mystical insights about "God's will," but who are unwilling to follow God's clearly revealed will, in the Bible. Elihu's comments do not endorse this attitude.

1. We must remember that God did sometimes use dreams in the Bible, to reveal his will to the prophets. This would include interpreting the dreams of others (mostly rulers and people in authority), when the dream had special significance. (This did not occur very often.) [The false teachers were also convinced that they had dreams and visions from God, so the mere presence of a dream or vision didn't prove it was from God.]
2. The book of Hebrews tells us that the way God communicates to us today is different from the way he communicated "in the past" (Hebrews 1:1). This fact should influence the way we understand statements, such as Elihu's comments about dreams. (Note also that in Elihu's day, the Bible had not yet been written.)
3. In this context, Elihu gives the same specific purpose for BOTH of these forms of communication (the dream and the pain). They were specifically given as warnings, to spare the recipient from going to the down to the "pit." This focus has little in common with many of the "dreams" and "visions" that people claim to have, today.

4. To Elihu, God had an active role in ALL of reality. He could use "natural" means to accomplish his will, as easily as he could use "supernatural" means. Elihu did not hold to the modern-day view, which splits reality into two "compartments" - the "supernatural" realm, where God is active, and the "natural" realm, where he isn't. To him, God often used naturally-occurring events (including dreams and pain) to remind or teach people the types of things mentioned in this passage. [God's use of naturally-occurring events to accomplish his purposes is called "Providence" - a concept that was strongly emphasized in the Old Testament and by many Christians in the past, but which is largely ignored today. God uses nature and circumstances to accomplish his purposes, to reveal his will, and to show his wisdom, power and glory.]
-

MAN HAS NO RIGHT TO COMPLAIN (ch. 34)

Job's Claim and Evaluation of It

- A. Listen, all of you, and let's determine together what is right. (v. 1-4) [See the verdict in v. 34-37.)
- B. CLAIM: Job is Innocent YET he is being unjustly treated by God (v. 5-6). This means (according to Job) that godliness has no value (v. 9) (Job implies: "If I am godly... then God should reward me.")
- C. EVALUATION: This is a scornful attitude. This is the type of thing a wicked person would do. (v. 7-8) [Job might not have realized what he was doing.]

Elihu's Reply

- A. DEFINITION (34:10-15; also some of the verses later in the chapter): relationship of God to man:
1. GOD is by nature:
 - ONLY just and impartial; unable to do wrong (v. 10,12,17)
 - supreme; unable to be influenced or corrupted by outside forces (v. 13,19)
 - with full comprehension of man; unable to make mistakes (v. 21-24)
 2. MAN by nature: 100% dependent upon God for his existence (v. 14-15) [Therefore God has a right to do as he wishes with man. (See the APPLICATION, below.)]
- B. APPLICATION: God's judgment of man (34:16-33):
1. GOD:
 - he destroys the wicked (v. 11, 25, etc.)
 - impartially; without mistakes
 - he has a right to do so
 - he also has a right to wait, to delay this judgment (v. 29-30)
 - in either situation, he is in complete control - nothing has gotten "out of hand."

2. MAN:

- he has no right to complain about the way God chooses to deal with man (whether judgment is immediate or delayed) (v. 29-30)
- he has two alternatives (v. 31-33):
 - a. submit to God's ways in repentance and humility (v. 31-32)
 - b. demand his own way in stubbornness and pride (v. 33)

VERDICT AGAINST JOB (who has chosen the second alternative). (34:34-37):

1. His speech is foolish. (v. 35) [NOTE : The Bible's concepts of "wisdom" and "folly" includes the correct application of one's knowledge. They also have moral and spiritual dimensions to them. (The issue is not merely the presence or absence of intelligence.)]
2. He needs and deserves this testing (because what he has done has encouraged and promoted sin) (v. 36-37).

MAN CANNOT MANIPULATE GOD TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OWN SELFISH DESIRES (ch. 35)

Job's Demands

- A. He wants God to admit that HE (Job) is right (v. 2) [This is ARROGANCE.]
- B. (Since God has not yet admitted that Job is right...) Job is complaining that being righteous has little value or benefit. (v. 3) "It didn't help me." "He could care less about me." [This is IMPATIENCE.]
- C. NOTE Sometimes our consciences whisper, "Are you sure you should be saying this?" But what we want to say seems to often speak louder than our conscience, and we listen to that instead.

Elihu's Response

- A. What does moral conduct (such as righteousness) influence? (35:4-8)
 1. NOT God's actions (vs.5-7) [We cannot manipulate God's sovereignty to our own ends.]]
 2. BUT mankind (v. 8) [Moral conduct has value, but not for manipulation.]
- B. Many people try to use God as a means of escape from undesirable circumstances (v. 9). (35:9-13)
 1. They have self-centered reasons: they try to get God to change the circumstances, rather than accepting the circumstances and trusting God (who would encourage and teach them). (v. 10-11))
 2. So God ignores them (because they are arrogant and self-centered). [They are saying that THEIR desires are first in importance. They are being self-centered, but are accusing God of being self-centered!] v. 12-13

- C. Job - being arrogant and impatient - deserves even less attention by God. (35:14-16)
 - 1. This is especially true because of his complaining accusations against God. (v. 14-15))
 - 2. God has no reason to listen to empty words. (v. 16)
-

MAN MUST FOCUS ON GOD'S WISDOM AND POWER (ch. 36 - 37)

God's Interest in Mankind

- A. Pay attention to what I am about to say...
- B. About God's judgment:
 - 1. It is consistent and unchanging.
 - 2. God punishes the wicked and blesses the righteous (v. 6-7) [EMPHASIS: God's power and justice]
- C. God teaches the afflicted (v. 8-10) [EMPHASIS: God's wisdom and teaching skills]

Application to Job

- A. Without repentance, a greater sorrow will come. God is using trials (in a just manner) for the purpose of greater blessings (v. 16-17)
- B. SO, KEEP YOUR EYES ON GOD!
 - 1. Don't look for an escape from what he is doing (attention on self, rather than on God) (v. 18-21)
 - 2. (v. 22-26)
 - Look to God and his awesome power
 - Look at his wisdom: the amazing way in which he teaches man! (None can do better!)
 - 3. PRAISE GOD, DON'T CRITICIZE HIM! He is totally overwhelming! (v. 24-26)

An Example: The LORD Teaches Us by the Storm

[If we are willing to pay attention!]

- A. It shows the greatness of his power. (He is in 100% control) (v. 27-30)
- B. It shows his wisdom. (He teaches us, IF we will listen) (v. 31+)
- C. A LOOK AT GOD'S GREAT POWER AND WISDOM (37:1-13)

D. SIGNIFICANCE (37:14-18):

1. His wisdom and power is beyond our comprehension! (37:14-18)
2. SINCE THIS IS SO... (37:19-21)
 - SINCE we are unable to comprehend God's greatness in creation...HOW MUCH LESS are we able to confront God himself!! (we would be CONSUMED!) (v. 19-20)
 - We cannot look at the SUN...HOW MUCH LESS can we look at GOD! v. 21

Preparing to Meet God (partially veiled by the cloud)

A. HERE COMES GOD...majestic and just! (v. 22-23)

B. OUR ONLY PROPER RESPONSE: (v. 24)

1. NOT confrontation and dispute (we would be ignored, not regarded by God)
2. BUT FEAR (see 28:28) (we would be regarded by God)

JOB - Chapters 38-42

MONOLOGUE: The LORD & Job's Reply and Conclusion to the Book

- First Speech

PART 1 - God's Wisdom and Power Seen in Non-Living Things
PART 2 - God's Wisdom and Power Seen in Living Things

- The LORD Questions; Job Responds
 - Second Speech
 - Job's Reply & The Conclusion of the Book
-
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FIRST SPEECH (ch. 38 - 39)

Introduction

In spite of the effects of man's sin in the world, God's majestic wisdom and power are visible everywhere in creation. A willingness to look and to accept what is plainly visible (Romans 1:20) will result in reverence and awe for the great Creator. Even if we choose to ignore it, it still reveals his glory! (Romans 1:18-20+; Psalm 19:1-3)

God's works demonstrate that he is in perfect control over all creation. Over both inanimate (Job 38:1-38) and animate (38:39-39:30) realms, he displays his wisdom and power. Furthermore, seeing all this, we can rest assured that he knows what he is doing in our lives as well.

What follows is just a tiniest selection of God's works, which illustrate his wisdom and power.

PART 1 - God's Wisdom and Power Seen in Non-Living Things

- A. (38:1-3) The LORD, speaking to Job, out of the storm...
 - 1. [Speaking, as though to himself.] Who is this man (Job)? He darkens counsel. He speaks words that lack knowledge.
 - 2. [To Job:] Prepare yourself (like a man of valor) to answer God!
 - B. (38:4-7) What do you know about the formation of the earth's foundation? Tell me! Heavenly creatures rejoiced when they saw the works that I performed.
 - C. (38:8-11) Do you know how I formed the oceans, and how I control them (restraining them from covering the earth)?
 - D. (38:12-15) Have you ever caused morning to arrive and, by doing so, restricted the actions of the wicked (who prefer darkness to light)?
 - E. (38:16-18) Do you understand the lower regions of the earth as I do: the depths of the seas, and the gates of death and darkness? Tell me!
 - F. (38:19-21)
 - 1. Can you control light and darkness, so that each arrive at its proper time?
 - 2. (Sarcasm:) Surely you must have lived "zillions" of years, in order to get such great knowledge and power!
 - G. (38:22-30)
 - 1. And what do you know about the origin of the snow and hail, the wind, the rain and the ice?
 - 2. I providentially accomplish my purposes (including control over man's activities) by these. What do you do?
 - H. (38:31-33) Can you control the stars? Do you understand how they work?
 - I. (38:34-38) Can you command the clouds to bring forth rain? Do you have any control over them?
-

PART 2 - God's Wisdom and Power Seen in Living Things

- A. (38:39-41) Do you provide for both lion (strong, powerful) and raven (small, comparatively weak)?
- B. (39:1-4) Do you keep watch over the mountain goat and the deer when they bear their offspring?

- C. (39:5-8) Who gave the wild donkey its freedom to roam the barren lands, remaining uncontrolled by man?
- D. (39 9-12) And the wild ox...are you capable of controlling him, to use his strength for accomplishing your purposes?
- E. (39:13-18)
1. The ostrich is a strange and unusual animal, and in many ways it appears to be unwise, for I did not give it the wisdom that I gave many of the animals.
 2. Yet in spite of all this, I have provided for the ostrich by giving it a superiority over many of the other animals: its ability to run with great speed!
- F. (39:19-25)
1. In contrast, look at the great strength and skill of the war horse! Look at his great abilities! (evidence of wisdom + skill) Did he get them from you?
 2. [In other words, God has wisely created and cared for everything, from the most foolish and unusual, to the most majestic and powerful. In contrast, what can man (including Job) do?]
- G. (39:26-30)
1. Do you control the actions of the hawk and the eagle?
 2. Do you provide the eagle its food? I provide it life even in the midst of death!

THE LORD QUESTIONS... JOB RESPONDS (40:1-5)

- A. (40:1-2) The LORD to Job:
1. You who contend with me...correct me (i.e., the way I do things), if you can.
 2. You who want to instruct me...go ahead and try! Teach me a better way!
- B. (40:3-5) Job to the LORD:
1. Compared to you, I am insignificant. I cannot answer.
 2. I have nothing to add to what I said before.

NOTE: Although Job is quite humbled and silenced by the greatness of God, he does not renounce his former position. He acknowledges his inability to argue his case, but as he does so, he does not renounce the charges he originally made against God. Rather, he leaves things as they are, and lets God proceed.

SECOND SPEECH (40:6 - ch. 41)

If we are going to question the way God does things, we had better have the wisdom and might to do better than he. When we question God's wisdom and power, we are, in essence, claiming equality with (or superiority over) God.

If we are not God's equals, we have no right to speak in such a manner. It becomes an issue of pride: exalting one's self over God - in spite of the fact that he is infinitely wiser than we and infinitely more powerful, and fully able (unlike us) to accomplish what he knows is most wise.

- A. (40:6-7) Prepare yourself (like a man of valor) to answer me!
- B. (40:8-14)
1. Are you so proud of your "blamelessness" that you are willing to discredit my justice - to exalt your goodness above my justice? In order to remain "justified," are you willing to condemn me as wicked?
 2. Can you do things better than I? Then go ahead and try! Prove that you are qualified to criticize! Take over my position and destroy the proud and the wicked! Accomplish what you claim I have neglected!
 3. If you can do this... I myself will consider YOU to be the victor and myself to be in the wrong. (More than that, you will no longer need to rely on me, or need the help of a vindicator!)
- C. (40:15-24) THE BEHEMOTH is popularly called either an "exaggerated hippopotamus," or a mythical creature which symbolized the powers of evil. It is probable that this animal would have been given some symbolic significance by men, just as both plants and animals are sometimes given symbolic significance today. (For example, in politics a hawk symbolizes "war" and a dove symbolizes "peace.") But nevertheless, it is described by God as a factual animal that could be "looked at" (v.15) by Job, just like all the animals mentioned in the LORD's first speech. If we accept it as a factual, unexaggerated animal (with symbolic significance also), and compare its description with all known animals (whether presently living or extinct) we are left with only one type of animal that qualifies: one of the plant-eating dinosaurs - the largest and most massive of animals to have been created.

[NOTE: A dinosaur? Though this idea is fully compatible with the Bible's account of creation, it goes against certain man-made "theories" about how the earth began. Some will not accept this possibility, *not* because it goes against Scripture, but because it goes against those man-made assumptions - and they consider those viewpoints to be more authoritative than Scripture, on this matter. On the other hand, there are commentators who *do* accept what Scripture says, but who do not describe these creatures as dinosaurs, simply because they haven't considered the possibility - especially those who follow the reasoning of commentators who were alive *before* dinosaurs were "rediscovered" a few centuries ago!]

1. Look at Behemoth! (I created both you and he.) Look at his massive strength! He is one of the greatest of my works. Yet I have complete mastery over him; with him I do as I please.
 2. He lives secure and undisturbed. For what man (including you, Job) is capable of conquering and enslaving him?
- D. (41:1-11) THE LEVIATHAN is popularly called either an "exaggerated crocodile," or a mythical creature which, like Behemoth, symbolized the power of evil. As with the Behemoth, Scripture describes it as a factual animal - although in some passages, the symbolic element is probably more prominent - example: Psalm 74:14. The description given here - if accepted as true and factual, and compared with all known animals (living or extinct) - best matches what perhaps could have been one of the most terrifying and ferocious of all: one of the aquatic (perhaps semi-aquatic) dinosaurs. [See the note about dinosaurs, under the topic of "Behemoth," above.]
1. Can you capture the Leviathan and make it serve you? Can you tame it as a pet, or butcher it like a domesticated animal?
 2. If you dared to try, you would lose out...the very sight of him would overpower you!
 3. And since this is true, how could you dare to confront me (God) - one who is greater than Leviathan - and expect to win?
- E. (41:12-34) (Let me continue describing him, as you think about what I have just said!)
1. Look how terrifying and mighty he is! [description of Leviathan]
 2. Look at how helpless men are in his presence! No one can dare to approach him! (And even if they could, no weapon would have any effect on him! He is invincible.)
 3. He is the greatest of ALL creatures [and God is greater than him]. He is a totally fearless creature - superior to all who are proud and haughty (even Job!).

JOB'S REPLY & THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK (ch. 42)

[Job has realized that it is not a good idea to challenge God. To fight God is to lose. Our only legitimate option is to submit to him as Lord and to trust him to do what is right. (He always does what is right!)]

- A. (42:1-6) "I'm ready to withdraw my challenge!"
1. I know that what you have said about your power is true. You are in total control.
 2. Yes, I have obscured counsel without knowledge, just as you said (see 38:2). I have spoken about things which were beyond my comprehension [...and I did not realize the danger of doing so].

3. You wanted me to answer? (38:3; 40:7) Here it is: In the past I learned about you from others. But now I have come "face to face" with you (though protected by the cloud). And I now realize how awesome you are and how insignificant I am.
4. So I repent. (In other words, I acknowledge that what I previously said was wrong and improper. Nobody has the right to challenge you. I withdraw my charges against you.)

B. CONCLUSION - Concerning Job's 3 friends (v.7-9)

1. The LORD was angry with them because they had spoken falsely about God.
2. The LORD provided a way of forgiveness:
 - THEY - take burnt offerings to Job.
 - JOB - offers their sacrifices to the LORD and prays for them.
3. They obeyed; Job's prayer was accepted.
4. NOTE: The friends were humbled before Job. (Previously they had exalted themselves over him.) Job also had to demonstrate his own forgiveness, by praying for them. And by answering Job's prayer, God demonstrated that fellowship between him and Job was completely restored.

C. CONCLUSION - Concerning Job (v.10-17)

1. SUMMARY: He was made twice as prosperous as before. [This was a gracious blessing from God, not a "payment" for all his suffering.]
2. DETAILS:
 - His friends and relatives (who had previously abandoned him - 19:13-20) provided fellowship and encouragement, and gave him gifts of gold and silver.
 - His wealth doubled.
 - His family...10 more children.
 - His age...140 more years, to the fourth generation of his children.

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (James 4:10)