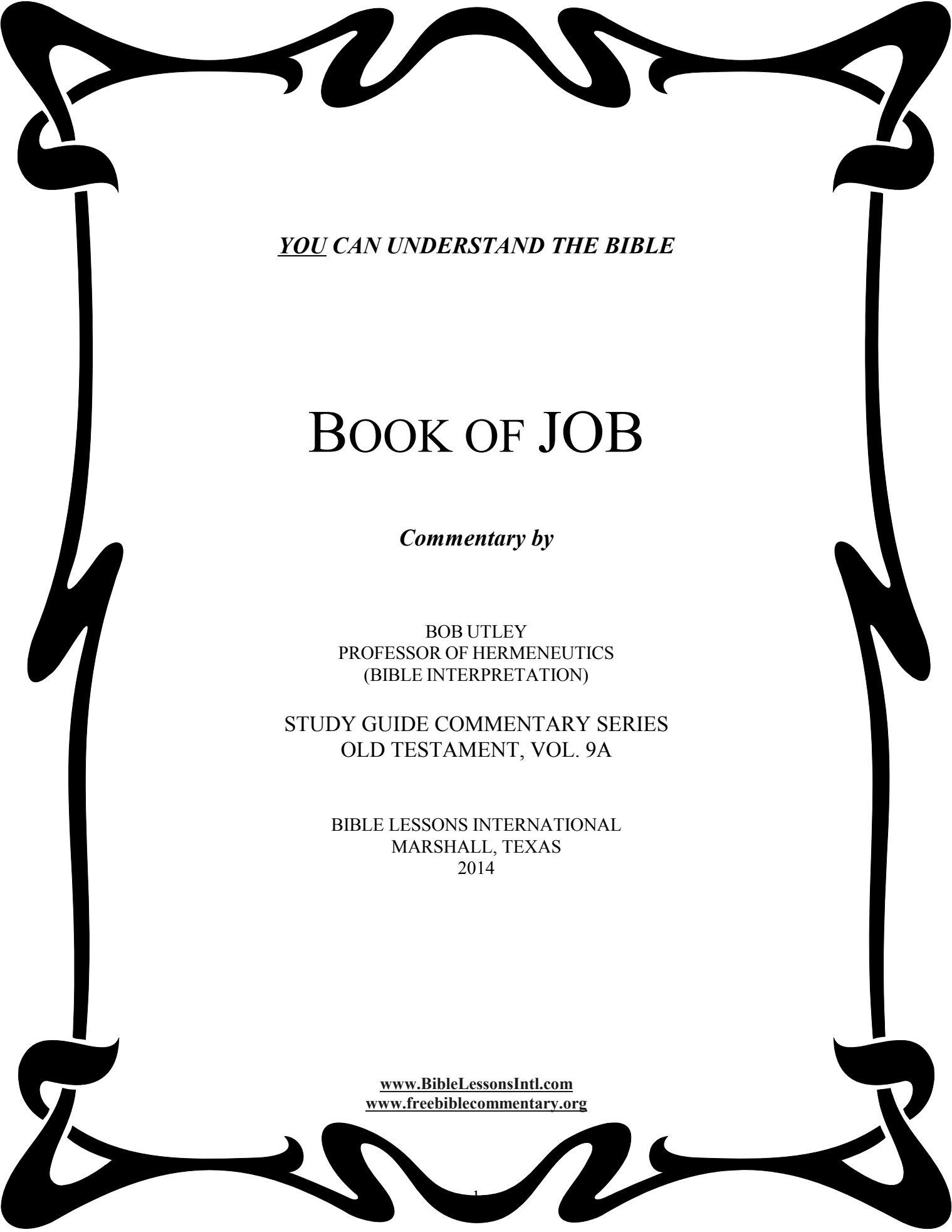




YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

BOOK OF JOB

Commentary by

BOB UTLEY
PROFESSOR OF HERMENEUTICS
(BIBLE INTERPRETATION)

STUDY GUIDE COMMENTARY SERIES
OLD TESTAMENT, VOL. 9A

BIBLE LESSONS INTERNATIONAL
MARSHALL, TEXAS
2014

www.BibleLessonsIntl.com
www.freebiblecommentary.org

*I would like to dedicate this commentary
to my friend of 40 years*

Arlano Funderburk.

He has encouraged me to write this volume.

*I pray it is a blessing to him
as he has been to me*

*and so many college students
through all these years!*

Copyright ©2014 by Bible Lessons International, Marshall, Texas
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any way or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Bible Lessons International
P. O. Box 1289
Marshall, TX 75671-1289
1-800-785-1005

ISBN 978-1-892691-37-8

The primary biblical text used in this commentary is:
New American Standard Bible (Update, 1995)
Copyright ©1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by
The Lockman Foundation
P. O. Box 2279
La Habra, CA 90632-2279

The paragraph divisions and summary captions as well as selected phrases are from:

1. The New King James Version, Copyright ©1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
2. The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Copyright ©1989 by the Division of Christian Education of National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
3. Today's English Version is used by permission of the copyright owner, The American Bible Society, ©1966, 1971. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
4. The New Jerusalem Bible, copyright ©1990 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd. and Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

www.freebiblecommentary.org

The New American Standard Bible Update — 1995

Easier to read:

- ▣ Passages with Old English “thee’s” and “thou’s” etc. have been updated to modern English.
- ▣ Words and phrases that could be misunderstood due to changes in their meaning during the past 20 years have been updated to current English.
- ▣ Sentences beginning with “And” have often been retranslated for better English, in recognition of differences in style between the ancient languages and modern English. The original Greek and Hebrew did not have punctuation as is found in English, and in many cases modern English punctuation serves as a substitute for “and” in the original. In some other cases, “and” is translated by a different word such as “then” or “but” as called for by the context, when the word in the original language allows such translation.

More accurate than ever:

- ▣ Recent research on the oldest and best Greek manuscripts of the New Testament has been reviewed, and some passages have been updated for even greater fidelity to the original manuscripts.
- ▣ Parallel passages have been compared and reviewed.
- ▣ Verbs that have a wide range of meaning have been retranslated in some passages to better account for their use in the context.

And still the NASB:

- ▣ The NASB update is not a change-for-the-sake-of-change translation. The original NASB stands the test of time, and change has been kept to a minimum in recognition of the standard that has been set by the New American Standard Bible.
- ▣ The NASB update continues the NASB’s tradition of literal translation of the original Greek and Hebrew without compromise. Changes in the text have been kept within the strict parameters set forth by the Lockman Foundation’s Fourfold Aim.
- ▣ The translators and consultants who have contributed to the NASB update are conservative Bible scholars who have doctorates in Biblical languages, theology, or other advanced degrees. They represent a variety of denominational backgrounds.

Continuing a tradition:

The original NASB has earned the reputation of being the most accurate English Bible translation. Other translations in recent years have sometimes made a claim to both accuracy and ease of reading, but any reader with an eye for detail eventually discovers that these translations are consistently inconsistent. While sometimes literal, they frequently resort to paraphrase of the original, often gaining little in readability and sacrificing much in terms of fidelity. Paraphrasing is not by nature a bad thing; it can and should clarify the meaning of a passage as the translators understand and interpret. In the end, however, a paraphrase is as much a commentary on the Bible as it is a translation. The NASB update carries on the NASB tradition of being a true Bible translation, revealing what the original manuscripts actually say—not merely what the translator believes they mean.

—The Lockman Foundation

INTRODUCTION TO JOB

I. NAME OF THE BOOK

- A. The book is named after its chief character. Job (BDB 33, KB 36) is a very common name in the ANE. Its meaning has been interpreted as
 - 1. “where is Father” (northwestern Semitic name, W. F. Albright)
 - 2. “an enemy” (Hebrew root, cf. Job 13:24; 33:10)
 - 3. “one who repents” (Arabic root, cf. Job 42:6)
- B. This book is powerful, artistic, and theologically significant.
 - 1. Luther said it is “magnificent and sublime as no other book of Scripture.”
 - 2. Tennyson said it is “the greatest poem whether ancient or modern.”
 - 3. Carlyle said, “There is nothing written in the Bible or out of it of equal merit.”

II. CANONIZATION

- A. It is in the Writings section of the Hebrew canon, which contains all Wisdom Literature (see Special Topic: The Hebrew Canon (Hebrew) and Special Topic: Wisdom Literature).
- B. It appears in some Hebrew MSS after the book of Deuteronomy because both Job and Abraham fit into the same historical period (i.e., the second millennium B.C.).
- C. The current placement of Job among the poetic books of the Bible began in the Vulgate and was fixed by the Council of Trent (i.e., the twenty-five sessions took place between A.D. 1545-1563).

III. THE TEXT OF JOB

- A. Job has more textual issues than any other OT book.
- B. There are several issues.
 - 1. The MT, compared to the oldest Septuagint (the 4th century A.D. LXX, MSS $\aleph$, A, and B have about the same number of verses), has about 400 fewer poetic lines (according to Origen and Jerome). The two Targums of Job found in the DSS are a combination of both the MT and LXX (but closer to the MT).
 - 2. The apparent structure
 - a. the threefold cycle between Job and his three friends breaks down in the last cycle (chapters 22-27)
 - b. the contextual disjointedness of chapter 28 (which may be the author/editor/compiler’s addition)
 - 3. The use of over 100 hapax legomena (i.e., words used only once in the OT) and far more rare words than any other OT book
 - 4. The use of Aramaic words, especially in Elihu’s speeches (chapters 32-37)
 - 5. The use of unusual Hebrew grammar which seems to reflect Ugarit usage (Ras Shamra Texts)

6. There are 18 places where the Talmud's rabbinical authors purposefully change the MT (i.e., the Massora notes).
7. In this commentary I will try to deal with some of the textual and lexical issues. However, it must be remembered that the overall message is more significant than the poetic details or unusual grammatical features. In this book, like Ecclesiastes, one must not turn the details into doctrines!

IV. GENRE

- A. Job is part of a literary genre very common in the Ancient Near East called "wisdom literature." See the Special Topic: Wisdom Literature and Special Topic: Hebrew Poetry in II. A. above.
- B. Because the book is primarily poetry with a prose introduction (Job 1-2) and ending (Job 42:7-17), there has been much discussion among scholars about its genre.
 1. historical narrative (see Special Topic: OT Historical Narrative)
 2. a dramatic presentation of a philosophical/theological theme (see Intro. to Jonah online)
 3. a parable (the Talmud and some rabbis)
- C. Job has some literary (but not theological) similarity to:
 1. a Babylonian writing called "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom." It is sometimes called the "Babylonian Job."
 2. a Babylonian writing called "Dialogue About Human Misery." It is sometimes called a "Babylonian Theodicy."
 3. an Egyptian writing called "Protest of the Eloquent Peasant."
 4. an Egyptian writing called "Dispute with His Soul of One Who is Tired of Life." It is also called "Dispute Over Suicide."

For a good brief discussion of the similarities and differences see John H. Walton, *NIV Application Commentary*, Job, pp. 31-38.
- D. The book contains several types of genres. It does not fit into any one category.

V. Authorship

- A. The book is anonymous, like most OT books.
- B. *Baba Bathra* 14b (Talmud) asserts that Moses wrote the book. Some Hebrew manuscripts and the Peshitta place it after Deuteronomy.
- C. It is possible that a Jewish philosopher (Judean court sage) took the historical life of Job and modified it to teach a philosophical, theological truth (the same is true of Jonah). The prose sections use the covenant name (i.e., YHWH) for God, but Job and his friends, in their speeches, always use the general names for God (i.e., *El* and *Eloah*, see Special Topic: Names for Deity). This option is my best guess.
- D. Some scholars would assert that the poetic section, Job 3:1-42:6, was written by an ancient author, while the prose prologue (Job 1-2) and epilogue (Job 42:7-17) were added by a later editor.

However, it needs to be remembered that we, in our modern, western culture, do not fully understand the writing patterns and techniques of the ANE. The Code of Hammurabi opens and closes in poetry with prose in between.

The editorial process which has produced our modern Hebrew Bible (i.e., OT) is unknown. I assume that initial authors, later editors, and compilers are equally inspired. God wants to communicate with us. The Bible is that communication!

E. Job the man

1. Job is an early historical person because
 - a. he is mentioned in Ezek. 14:14,20 and James 5:11
 - b. the name (not the man of the biblical book) appears in the Amarna texts; the Egyptian Execration texts; Mari texts; and Ugaritic texts
 - c. the monetary unit found in Job 42:11, *kesitah*, occurs elsewhere only in Gen. 33:19 and Jos. 24:32
 - d. Job's three new daughters are named in Job 42:14, which surely implies a historical person
2. Job, the man, is apparently not Jewish
 - a. use of general names for God (see Special Topic: Names for Deity) by Job and his friends in their conversations
 - (1) *Elohim*, Job 1:1 and 10 more times in chapters 1-2, but only 6 times in the rest of the book
 - (2) *El*, many times
 - (3) *Shaddai* (Almighty), many times
 - (4) *Eloah*, many times
 - (5) YHWH is found 18 times in Job 1-2, but only 1 time in the dialogues (Job 3-37)
 - b. he seems to be a wise man/sage from Edom
 - (1) Uz (Gen. 36:28; Jer. 25:20; Lam. 4:21)
 - (2) Teman (Gen 36:11)
 - (3) compared to "the men (lit. "sons") of the east" (Job 1:3; Jdgs. 6:3,33; Isa. 11:14; Ezek. 25:4,10)
3. It is surprising that Job is characterized with such faith in prose sections (Job 1-2; 42:7-17), but is so disparaging of God's justice and righteousness in the poetic section (Job 3:1-42:6).
4. Job is tested by
 - a. Satan, but unknown to him, before the heavenly council
 - b. on earth by
 - (1) his physical well being taken
 - (2) his emotional well being destroyed
 - (3) his children taken
 - (4) his wife suggesting suicide (i.e., Job 2:9)
 - (5) his friends impugning his righteousness
 - (6) Elihu condemning his theology
 - c. YHWH from the whirlwind rejects his arrogant attitude

VI. DATE

- A. The historical setting of the book fits the patriarchal period (i.e., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) of the second millennium B.C. Some examples would be
 1. Job acts as a priest for his family (Job 1:5)

2. the long life of Job, 140 years (Job 42:16)
 3. the semi-nomadic lifestyle of herding domestic animals
 4. roving bands of Sabeian and Chaldean raiders (Job 1:15,17)
 5. Job lived in a city part of the year and with his herds part of the year
- B. The genre dates the book during the period of the production of Wisdom Literature. This would be from the time of David through the Kings of Judah, particularly Hezekiah. So, Job lived long before the book by his name was organized and written. His character, life, tragedy, and restoration were a cultural proverb.

VII. HISTORICAL SETTING (the location of Uz is uncertain; there have been three major theories):

- A. In the land of Edom
1. known for its wise men/sages, Jer. 49:7
 2. one of the three friends is from Teman, a city in Edom; it was named after a descendant of Esau, Gen. 36:15
 3. Uz is mentioned as a descendant of Seir the Horite (cf. Gen. 36:20-30); these people are related to the area of Edom
 4. Uz is identified with Edom in Lam. 4:21
- B. In the area of Aram
1. Aramaic literary style and terms are prevalent in Job
 2. the presence of Chaldean raiders (Job 1:17)
 3. Gen. 10:23 ties Uz with Aram (Gen. 22:20-22)
- C. It is possible that the name Uz encompassed several tribes east of Palestine from Aram in the north to Edom in the south.

VIII. LITERARY UNITS

- A. Prose prologue (the heavenly council), Job 1-2
- B. Job's friends, Job 3-37
1. Job laments his birth, Job 3
 2. three cycles of dialogue, Job 4-31
 - a. first cycle, Job 4-14
 - (1) Eliphaz, Job 4-5
 - (2) Job, Job 6-7
 - (3) Bildad, Job 8
 - (4) Job, Job 9-10
 - (5) Zophar, Job 11
 - (6) Job, Job 12-14
 - b. second cycle, Job 15-21
 - (1) Eliphaz, Job 15
 - (2) Job, Job 16-17
 - (3) Bildad, Job 18
 - (4) Job, Job 19
 - (5) Zophar, Job 20

- (6) Job, Job 21
 - c. third cycle, Job 22-31
 - (1) Eliphaz, Job 22
 - (2) Job, Job 23-24
 - (3) Bildad, Job 25
 - (4) Job, Job 26
 - (5) Job's summary conclusion, Job 27
 - 3. the author's comment (praise of and mystery of wisdom), Job 28
 - 4. Job's monologues, Job 29-31
 - 5. Elihu's monologues, Job 32-37
 - a. prose, Job 32:1-5
 - b. poetry, Job 32:6-37:24
- C. God responds to Job, Job 38:1-42:6
 - 1. God responds as Creator, Job 38-39
 - 2. God responds as Judge, Job 40:1-2,6-41:34
 - 3. Job repents of his ignorance and arrogance, but not of sin, Job 40:3-5 and 42:1-6
- D. Prose epilogue (fellowship restored by the true wisdom of God), Job 42:7-17

IX. Why is the book of Job in the canon? What truth does it reveal or purpose does it serve? This is not an easy question to answer. The book does not have a clear and obvious purpose. The following are some suggestions.

- A. to show how a knowledge of God existed and flourished outside of the spiritual community of Israel (i.e., Edom)
- B. to reveal and explicate the justice and fairness of God in His dealings with fallen humanity
- C. to show the nature of ANE "wisdom literature"; that is, that it expresses a general truth but not always a definitive truth for every circumstance (i.e., Job's life does not fit the typical "two ways" theological pattern, cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1)
- D. as an example of and precedent for innocent suffering in the purposes of God (later developed and expanded into vicarious suffering in Isaiah 53; Psalm 22)
- E. the sovereignty and mystery of God. Job is theologically parallel to Romans 9; trust is superior to knowledge; intimacy with God is ultimate!
- F. the silence and seeming hiddenness of God does not denote rejection and displeasure; there is an unrevealed spiritual dimension (i.e., heavenly counsel) to life (i.e., both individually and nationally) and existence unknown to humanity (e.g., Job 1-2; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Daniel 10)
 - 1. the angelic accuser
 - 2. the heavenly advocate
- G. the human search for "true" wisdom; where is it found?
 - 1. the dreams and visions (Job 4:12-21; 33:14-16)
 - 2. the traditional wisdom (Job 8:8; 15:18; 20:4)

3. the experiential wisdom (Job 15:17)
4. the revelational wisdom claimed by Elihu (Job 32:8; 33:4)
5. the life of faith wisdom of Job

Personal faith is crucial and foundational. Personal relationship is more valuable than knowledge! It is better to know (Hebrew sense) Him than to know truths about Him (i.e., Job 42:1-6). All human knowledge is temporal and incomplete, but faith and faithfulness transcend time. Job is never informed about the dialogue between God and the accuser in Job 1-2.

H. mystery, cf. Eccl. 11:5.

I. See my Contextual Insights, A and B at Job 38 for my struggle with the purpose of the book of Job!

X. MAIN TRUTHS

A. This book is really about the character of God. The discussion is addressed through the mysterious nexus of

1. a good, all-powerful God
2. the consequences of a fallen world (i.e., all people sin)
3. the Mosaic performance-based covenant which is described as “the two ways” (i.e., Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1; Gal. 6:7) but the concept is also common in the ANE

The real issue is, “Can we trust YHWH in the midst of life’s crooked path (human suffering)?”

1. the three friends give the traditional answers
2. Job says they do not fit his case
3. Job 28 is the author’s (a Judean sage) answer
4. Elihu gives an answer (Job 32-37)
5. God gives His answer (Job 38:1-42:6)

B. Notice the protagonists.

1. in heaven
 - a. God
 - b. Satan
 - c. an advocate
2. on earth
 - a. Job
 - b. his friends
 - c. Elihu

Each has a significant role in the literary structure and development of the theme of the book. We must remember

1. the fall of Genesis 3 (this is not the world God intended it to be; however, this NT theme is not developed in the OT or the rabbis)
2. the contrast and progressive aspect of the performance-based Mosaic Covenant versus the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34) in Jesus (NT, i.e., Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:13; 9:15)
3. Wisdom Literature’s origin in the cultures of the ANE

C. Possible reasons this book was written.

1. three theological issues collide in Job

- a. God's goodness and fairness
 - b. Job's innocence
 - c. The Two Ways doctrine (cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1)
- The opening prose section highlights Job's exemplary life and his terrible sufferings. The best man suffered the most severe tragedies! In light of this, one of the three issues must be true and the others false or at least, half true. Which one? In light of this I think the main issue of the book is "a."
2. To clarify the traditional covenantal theology (i.e., the Two Ways, Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-29) that the righteous are blessed in this life and the wicked are punished in this life (cf. Psalm 1; Pro. 4:10-18). Traditional Jewish theology is communicated by the dialogue with Job's three friends (Job 3-27). It is also interesting to note the challenge to traditional thought in the fact that a young man like Elihu publicly refutes and corrects both Job and his three older friends.
 3. The issue of human suffering is surely an important aspect of this philosophical drama/epic. This is not the world God intended it to be. The Fall has consequences. Many moderns struggle with natural disasters, human wickedness, and the diseases of this world. How do these fit into a revelation of a good, all powerful, all knowing God? The best modern book on this issue that has helped me is John Wenham, *The Goodness of God in a World of Evil and Suffering*.
 Job deals with part of the issue from an OT perspective with hints toward a NT redeemer (i.e., a heavenly advocate). Like so many critical theological issues the OT starts the conversation, but thank God for the progressive and fuller revelation of the NT.
- D. This book asserts that God is just and will finally set things straight, either in this life (Job's restoration, Job 42:10-17) or the next (Job 14:7-17; 19:23-27).
- E. All suffering is not a result of personal sin (cf. Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3). This is what the three friends asserted (cf. Job 4:7-11; 8:3-7; 11:13-15; 15:12-16; 22:21-30). This is an unfair, fallen world. Sometimes the wicked prosper (Psalms 37; 73). Often the righteous suffer (cf. Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 1:5,7; 1 Pet. 4:12-16). Satan accused Job of faith for favors (cf. Job 1:9-10).
- F. This book gives us insight into the spiritual realm. Satan (see Special Topic: Satan) is a servant of God, a prosecuting angel in the OT (cf. A. B. Davidson, *An OT Theology*, published by T. T. Clark, pp. 300-306). Surprisingly he is not mentioned after Job 1-2.
 Satan uses the three friends' traditional theology to test Job, in a way, similar to his quoting Scripture to Jesus in Matthew 4. The isolated quotes and truths are, in reality, half-truths that must be balanced with other Scriptures. Isolating texts or doctrines often causes undue emphasis and lack of balance. Doctrine and truth are like a constellation of stars, not just one star. The message of all Scripture must be sought!
- G. God never reveals to Job the reason behind his sufferings. Life is a mystery. Trust in God is more important than information! The longer I live and study both life and the Scriptures the more I am forced to affirm "mystery" as a valid theological category. My hope and answer to questions like
1. what about those who have never heard?
 2. what about those who die young?
 3. what about those who cannot understand?
 4. what about evil and suffering in the world?

5. what about violence in nature and disease?

For me, knowing the character of the God of the Bible gives me peace that He will deal fairly and graciously with His creation!

H. The thought of M. Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," Hebrew Union College Annual, 37 (1966), pp. 73-106, is that Job can best be viewed as the tension between these assumed truths:

1. God's justice and goodness
2. Job's righteousness
3. "the Two Ways" principle of covenant blessing and cursing (i.e., Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1; Pro. 4:10-19)

He asserts all three cannot be true. Satan attacks not Job, but God's character and ways with fallen mankind. Even Job seems willing to sacrifice God's character to establish his own innocence.

While "the two ways" are true to God's larger intent (i.e., drawing and reconciling the nations through blessing His covenant people),

1. the reality of Israel's continuing disobedience
2. the reality that "the two ways" does not fit every situation (i.e., the suffering of blameless Job or the NT revelation, John 9; 1 Pet. 4:12-19)

I. The interesting foreshadowing of a special heavenly advocate. Notice the texts that seem to admit that even a blameless Job needs an advocate.

1. Job 9:30-35 – Job faces the Heavenly Judge and asks for an "umpire"
2. Job 16:19,21 – Job affirms he has a "witness" or "advocate" in heaven who pleads his case
3. Job 19:25 – Job knows he has a "redeemer" who will come to his aid in life or death (cf. Job 14:14-15)
4. Job 34:23 – possible allusion to an angelic mediator

J. I am surprised how many people are helped by Job because the suffering of a "blameless" man does not fit many people's lives.

However, the questions of "Why me?" "Why this?" "Why now?" are part of everyone's life. As Job never knew "why," so people must face an unsure life! For those who believe there is a God, a good God, who created this world and each of us for a purpose, the questions about Him and His ways with humans are central (God is the main character of every Bible book). This is the issue that calls to each of us. Job does not answer this question but fellowship is possible.

K. The mysteries of Job are clarified in the NT. Thank God for Jesus and the NT! See Special Topic: Suffering.

JOB 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job's Character and Wealth	Job and His Family in Uz	The Prologue (1:1-2:13)	Satan Tests Job	God Tests Job (1:1-2:13)
1:1-5	1:1-3 1:4-5 Satan Attacks Job's Character	1:1-5	1:1-3 1:4-5	1:1-5
1:6-12	1:6-12	1:6-12	1:6-7a 1:7b 1:8 1:9-11 1:12	1:6-12
Satan Allowed To Test Job	Job Loses His Property and Children		Job's Children and Wealth are Destroyed	
1:13-19	1:13-19	1:13-19	1:13-15 1:16 1:17 1:18-19	1:13-19
1:20-21 (21)	1:20-21 (21)	1:20-21	1:20-21	1:20-21 (21)
1:22	1:22	1:22	1:22	1:22

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 1-2 is prose, while Job 3:1-42:6 is poetic.
- B. The heavenly council of Job 1-2 is introduced as a way to understand the poetic chapters.
- C. “The” accuser (Satan, see Special Topic: Satan and Special Topic: Personal Evil) is introduced in these opening chapters but is never mentioned again, even in the prose conclusion (i.e., Job 42:7-17). This is surprising.
- D. I have come to believe that the main theological issue of Job is not “the suffering of an innocent righteous man,” but “the righteousness and justice of YHWH.” Does He deal with mankind in a fair way? Can the OT presentation of a merciful, loving God (cf. Exod. 34:6-7) be justified in an apparently unfair and violent world? Does the doctrine of divine sovereignty over all things explain the current conditions on earth?
- E. The author, in my opinion, was a sage/wise man at court during the period of the Judean monarchy who took an account of an ancient, God-fearer (Job is not from Israel) who suffered terrible trials but maintained his innocence to present his message. The theme is developed theologically and written in a dramatic literary, poetic presentation.
I think it is a literary drama of a historical event. The reasons for this are:
 - 1. a conflict between “the two ways” theology (cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1) and daily human life
 - 2. the question over how a sovereign, loving God can allow human suffering, especially undeserved, innocent suffering
 - 3. the theological issue of the true character of God in light of #1 and #2
 - 4. God allowing, yea directing, human suffering to prove a point to “the accuser”
 - 5. the death of many other innocent, godly people (i.e., Job’s sons, daughters, and their families, as well as many faithful servants)
 - 6. the appearance of Satan (i.e., the heavenly council; see a good article in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 50-53, 172) in the prologue but no mention of him again throughout the poems or the prose conclusion
 - 7. the restoration of Job based on the very ambiguous theological issue (i.e., “the two ways”) that caused the book to be written
- F. The fact that Job’s godly character is clearly established in Job 1:1 and by YHWH in 1:8, challenges the traditional theology of the “two ways.” Job is not sinless but also he is not an intentional sinner! His terrible ordeal cannot be explained by covenant disobedience.
 - 1. he was not part of the covenant but his book addresses Israel’s faith
 - 2. he was an obedient, godly person (i.e., “blameless,” lived up to his understanding of God’s will and way)

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:1-5

¹There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. ²Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³His

possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. ⁴His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all; for Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

1:1 “There was a man” Job 1 and 2 were written in prose and set the theological and historical stage for the dialogue between Job and his friends in Job 3-37.

Both AB and the UBS *Handbook* assert that this phrase is not used to introduce the genre of “historical narrative” (see Special Topic: Historical Narrative), but is common in introducing a story (i.e., 2 Sam. 12:1; Esther 2:5).

However, the *Tyndale OT Commentary*, Job, p. 78, says the phrase is used in both

1. a parable – 2 Sam. 12:1
2. a historical account – 1 Sam. 25:2

so the genre is indeterminable.

▣ **“the land of Uz”** There have been several theories related to the geographical location of this region.

1. Edom – Genesis 36; Jer. 25:20; Lam. 4:21
2. Aram – Gen. 10:23; 22:21
3. Josephus (*Antiq.* 1.6.4) says it was northeast of the Sea of Galilee

Although we do not know the exact location, a site in the trans-Jordan area is best. See Introduction VII. Historical Setting.

▣ **“Job”** There have been several theories concerning the etymology of this name.

1. from the Hebrew root for “enemy” (BDB 33)
2. from the Arabic root for “one who repents” (AB, p. 6)
3. from the Ugaritic root, “where is my father?”

Job is mentioned in Ezek. 14:14,20 along with two other well known wise men.

Notice how this non-Israelite is characterized.

1. blameless – BDB 1070
2. upright – BDB 449
3. fearing God (*Elohim*) – 431, KB 432, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE
4. turning away from evil – BDB 693, KB 747, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE

God initiated the conversation with “the” accuser in relation to this faithful follower (see YHWH’s words in Job 1:8). The goodness of Job accentuates the unfair attack on him.

The death of his children (and servants) has forced me to think of this book in literary terms. Is Job’s life more valuable to God than his children’s lives or the servants’ lives? The only books in the OT that I think are “historical dramas” are

1. Jonah
2. Job
3. the first eleven chapters of Genesis

The basic hermeneutical principle is, “take everything literally until something in the text points toward a figurative meaning.” God’s and Satan’s discussions, Job’s unfair treatment, and the death of all his children by violent means point in the direction of literary, not literal. Also the fact that most of the book is poetry is a textual marker of a literary presentation to make a theological point.

One of my favorite authors, John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary* (p. 69) says

“As a side note, we must remember that this is a thought experiment in a literary scenario. It is pointless to wring our hands over the sad fate of Job’s innocent family, for the challenge does not focus on his family and their innocence, but on God’s work in the world. The children simply represent the blessing of God, like Job’s cattle. This is not to suggest they are no better than cattle; rather, it warns us that we are losing our way if we decide to advocate their cause and press a complaint against God on their behalf. Their fate is part of the challenge to God’s policies, but not its focus.”

▣ **“blameless, upright”** These two terms are often together in the OT (cf. Ps. 25:21; 37:37). They speak of moral rectitude and compliance with the religious light of the day, see Special Topic: Blameless, Innocent, Guiltless, Without Reproach.

The ADJECTIVE “upright” (BDB 449) has the basic meaning of that which is “straight.” This is parallel to the Hebrew concept of “righteousness.” See Special Topic: Righteousness.

These two terms, used to characterize Job’s life and faith, do not imply sinlessness (cf. Job 10:6; 14:16-17), but a volitional conformance to his understanding of God’s will for his life and family.

I saw a quote online (sorry, I have forgotten where and who) that described “blameless” as

1. not sinless
2. sin refers to one’s relationship with God (vertical)
3. blameless focuses on one’s relationship with other humans (horizontal; i.e., family, friends, servants, etc.)

▣ **“fearing God and turning away from evil”** See Genesis 22:12 for the same description used of Abraham. Notice there is a reverence toward God and a lifestyle that reflects this reverence.

The term “fear” (BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) describes a person who has reverence for God. See Special Topic: Fear.

The description of Job in Job 1:1 and 8 clearly shows that non-covenant people can live lives pleasing to God (i.e., also note Noah, Gen. 6:9). To assert that all humans are so damaged in the Fall (i.e., Genesis 3) that they cannot choose to act in godly ways and form strong faith commitments is a theological overstatement!

1:2 “seven sons and three daughters” This was the ideal family in the ancient world. There were more sons than daughters and seven was the perfect number. See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture.

1:3 “His possessions” This man is presented as one of the wealthiest men of the East. This shows that material possessions are not evil in and of themselves. The list of these possessions describes a semi-nomadic existence.

One of the main theological issues of the book is the validity of the covenant “blessings and cursings” of the Mosaic covenant (i.e., Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-30). The promise of prosperity in this life for obedience and poverty/destruction for disobedience in this life, is often called “the two ways” (cf. Psalm 1). How can this be true in light of the reality of the prosperity of the wicked (cf. Psalm 73) and the poverty, sickness, and misery of the godly poor?

▣ **“thousand”** This Hebrew word can have a literal or figurative sense. See Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*).

These numbers may be a literary way of expressing Job’s great wealth and large number of servants (i.e., “the greatest of all the men of the east,” Job 1:3).

▣ **“that man was the greatest of all men of the east”** This involves both moral rectitude and physical wealth. The “men of the east” (lit. “sons of the east”) refers to the semi-nomadic peoples of the ANE. Job would have been a person of renown for his wealth and because of it, considered wise and godly.

1:4 “on his day” There has been much discussion about the phrase. Some relate it to their birthdays, the transition to manhood, while other commentators relate it to an annual feast day.

▣ **“they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them”** This does not suggest a wild riotous party but a close family relationship where the daughters are treated with equal dignity as the sons.

1:5 “consecrate them” This is the VERB (BDB 872, KB 1073, *Piel* IMPERFECT with *waw*) form of *kadosh* (see Special Topic: Holy).

▣ **“Offering burnt offerings”** This shows that the historical setting of Job is very early (i.e., second millennium B.C.). This reflects a patriarchal period before the development of a priesthood.

Also note the concept of sacrifice predates the Exodus (see Gen. 4:3-6; 8:20-21).

▣ **“Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts”** This is the basic religious purpose behind the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16). It would reflect “unintentional sin.”

The word translated “cursed” is literally “blessed” (BDB 138, KB 159, *Piel* PERFECT) used in a special sense (cf. Job 1:11; 2:5,9; 1 Kgs. 21:10,13).

For “heart” see Special Topic: Heart, which is a Hebrew idiom for the person.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:6-12

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷The LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” ⁸The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.” ⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.” ¹²Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

1:6 “the sons of God” In the OT the SINGULAR “son of God” can refer to Israel, the King of Israel, and the Messiah, while the PLURAL, “the Sons of God” always refers to the angels (cf. Gen. 6:2). The term *Elohim* by itself often refers to the “angels” (cf. Psalm 29:1-2; 82:1; 89:5,7; 97:7). See Special Topic: “Sons of God. . .” and Special Topic: The sons of God in Genesis 6.

▣ **“came to present themselves”** This (BDB 426, KB 927, *Hithpael* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) implies standing before a king ready for service.

▣ **“came to present themselves before the LORD”** This seems to be a reference to “the heavenly council” of angels who serve YHWH, and possibly “national angels” (cf. Deut. 32:8 in the LXX and Daniel 10).

This council is assumed in

1. the “us” statements of Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7
2. Micaiah’s vision of 1 Kgs. 22:19-23; 2 Chr. 18:18-22
3. Neh. 9:6
4. Ps. 82:1,6; 89:5-7 (different name for “God”)
5. the “us” of Isa. 6:8 (see #1)
6. Zech. 3:1-2; Satan appears again before YHWH

For “LORD,” see YHWH in the Special Topic: Names for Deity.

▣ **“Satan”** This is literally, “the Accuser.” This is a Hebrew term that speaks of “adversary” or “accuser” (BDB 966). See Special Topic: Satan and Special Topic: Personal Evil. The implication is that Satan was one of the sons of God who had free access to the throne of God. Although Satan, in Job 1 and 2, sets the stage for Job’s troubles (i.e., so suffering and violence is not directly attributed to YHWH), he forms a minor personage in the overall structure of the book and does not appear anywhere else in the poetic section nor in the epilogue. He is a literary foil so that Job can dialogue with Hebrew sages and God.

1:7 “The LORD said to Satan” The use of the term YHWH is limited in this book, as in other books of Wisdom Literature. Normally other, more general, terms for Deity in the ANE are used, such as *El*, *Eloah*, *Elohim*.

▣ **“From where do you come”** God is not asking the question because of lack of knowledge but as a Hebrew idiom for, “what do you want?”

▣ **“From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it”** This is an idiomatic phrase for Satan’s full knowledge of events on planet earth (cf. Zech. 1:10,11; 6:7). Earth has already become a sphere of Satan’s influence (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is an angelic being tasked by YHWH to test mankind. He is a servant in the OT, not an enemy (see A. B. Davidson, *OT Theology*, pp. 300-306).

1:8 “My servant, Job” This is an honorific title used of Moses, Joshua, David, and many of the prophets. Notice that God chose the best, most righteous, man to endure suffering—the purpose being to show the faith of fallen mankind, even in crisis. See Special Topic: My Servant.

1:9 “Then Satan answered the LORD, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing’” Satan’s accusation was that Job loved and served God only because of God’s blessings and protection. I wonder how often this is true of modern believers.

This rhetorical question expects a “no” answer. It is the heart of “the two ways.” Obedience brings God’s blessing and disobedience brings destruction.

The question is really about motives. Do faithful followers obey to receive rewards or do they obey because they love and honor God? “The two ways” does not distinguish between the two motives. It is possible to have obedience but with a self-seeking motive (i.e., some Pharisees, all legalists).

One other point, does God not know the motives of God? Is there really limited knowledge with God? The Bible clearly asserts that God knows the inner thoughts and motives of humans (cf. 1 Sam. 2:3; 16:7; 1 Kgs. 8:39; 1 Chr. 28:9; Pro. 16:2; 21:2; 24:12; Jer. 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Luke 16:15; Acts 1:24; Rom. 8:27).

1:10 “a hedge” This term (BDB 962 I, KB 1312, *Qal* PERFECT) would refer to an enclosure or boundary fence made of thorn bushes. It denoted strong protection.

1:11 “put forth Your hand now” Satan is a created being and acts only at God’s behest. There is only one ultimate cause in the OT—God, both good and evil, light and dark, come from Him (cf. Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6). See Special Topic: Monotheism.

This verse has two *Qal* IMPERATIVES, which are requests of Satan for YHWH to act against Job. Notice it is God who must give permission for Satan to act (cf. Job 1:12).

This whole encounter in the midst of the heavenly council was

1. initiated by YHWH
2. permitted by YHWH

for a purpose. The real question is, “what is that purpose?”

1. to show the limits of “the two ways” Mosaic covenant
2. to show the character of YHWH
3. to show the lasting results of the Fall, even on faithful followers

1:12 YHWH allows Satan to test Job but with limits (i.e., take his possessions but do not touch him physically).

Notice that his children are listed among his possessions (Job 1:2-3). This is surprising to moderns but was an aspect of ANE culture, especially for a rich, powerful person.

The terrible events are standardized in literary form (i.e., “a messenger came and said. . . I alone have escaped to tell you”). Notice that heaven and earth, north and south, animate and inanimate are involved in rapid succession (i.e., for literary effect). See the Genre section of the Introduction.

John H. Walton, *NIV Application Commentary*, p. 70, says that each of these disasters would have been recognized as part of the “cursing” section of Deut. 28:31-35 (which is a passage related to “the two ways,” cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:13-19

¹³Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁴a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” ¹⁶While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” ¹⁷While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” ¹⁸While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

1:13 “Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house” This would be the very day that Job offered sacrifices for them (cf. Job 1:5).

▣ **“drinking wine”** See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink.

1:15 “the Sabeans” The ABD (p. 861) suggests there are three (possibly related) groups of Arabs who are designated by this term.

1. from Nubia, cf. Isa. 45:14
2. from the same tribal group as the Queen of Sheba (i.e., Yemen), cf. Joel 3:8

3. from trans-Jordan area near Tema, mentioned as “Saba” in the Assyrian inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II; note the connection of “Dedan” with “Sheba” in Gen. 25:3.

1:16 “The fire of God” This seems to refer to lightning (cf. 2 Kgs. 1:12) or some supernatural act of judgment (cf. Gen. 19:24; Lev. 10:2; Num. 11:1-3; 1 Kgs. 18:38).

▣ **“heaven”** See Special Topic: Heaven.

1:17 “The Chaldeans” This seems to refer to a racial group from the Fertile Crescent. Later, the term can refer to wise men (cf. Dan. 2:2). See Special Topic: Chaldeans.

1:19 “a great wind” This seems to be some kind of strong desert wind (cf. Jer. 13:24). It was a targeted supernatural event.

▣ **“the four corners of the house”** This house (BDB 108) must have been more than a large tent. Some supporting structure falling is what killed the children (whether married or not is uncertain).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:20-21

²⁰**Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.**
²¹**He said,**
“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked I shall return there.
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.
Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

1:20 “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped”
These were signs of mourning amidst worship and trust in God. The shaving of the head was later condemned because of its association with pagan practices. There is no sign of condemnation here, which speaks of its early date. Notice that Job is extremely sad but not bitter.

See Special Topic: Grieving Rites.



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, JPSOA

“worshiped”

TEV

“threw himself face down on the ground”

NJB

“prostrated himself”

NET Bible

“with his face to the ground”

REB

“prostrate on the ground”

The Hebrew VERB (BDB 1005, KB 295, *Hishtaphel* [in *OT Parsing Guide*], but *Hithpael* [in *Analytical Key to the OT*] IMPERFECT). The basic meaning is to fall face down to the ground. The motive must be determined from the context.

1. was Job worshiping
2. did Job stagger and fall to the ground from shock
3. was it a sign of reverence to a superior

Job’s words imply #1.

1:21 “Naked I came from my mother’s womb

And naked I shall return there” This may relate to the concept of humans being created in the earth (cf. Ps. 139:13,15). Notice that Job did not assign blame, either to the forces of nature, his own servants, or the attackers. For Job there is one ultimate source—the God who he knew and worshiped.

▣ “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the LORD” Here the name of God, “YHWH,” and the phrase, “the name of the Lord” (*Adoni*), are synonymous. See Special Topic: “The Name” of YHWH (OT).

Notice the very thing “the accuser” suggested (i.e., that Job would “curse” God) is found to be false! The same Hebrew word, “bless” (BDB 138) is used in several senses.

1. YHWH has “blessed” Job, Job 1:10 (*Qal* PERFECT)
2. used as euphemism in Job 1:5,11 for “curse” (cf. Job 2:5,9)
3. Job, after the terrible events, “blessed” the name of YHWH, Job 1:21

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:22

²²Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

1:22 “Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God” Job did not speak evil of God at this point; however, as he reflected on these experiences, he began to question the conflict between (1) his view of God as merciful, loving, kind, protective and (2) the validity of “the two ways” (cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1).



NASB	“blame”
NKJV, NRSV	“change with wrong”
NJB, JPSOA	“reproach”
REB	“ascribe any fault”

The rare (only three occurrences in the OT) FEMININE NOUN (BDB 1074, cf. Job 24:12; Jer. 23:13) means “unsavoriness” or “unseemliness.” It was obvious that (1) the timing; (2) the different forms; and (3) geographical directions all pointed to a supernatural series of planned events. Job did not understand (i.e., and never would), but he trusted YHWH. This same type of summary statement describing Job is found in Job 2:10.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the central theological issue of the book of Job?
2. Is Job historical narrative or historical drama?
3. Is “the accuser” of Job 1-2 to be identified with Satan/the devil of the NT?
4. How do you view the death of Job’s children (and their families, assumed) and the many servants?
5. Why does YHWH initiate the conversation about Job with the accuser?
6. Why does the name YHWH appear only (with one exception) in the prose opening and close?

JOB 2

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Loses His Health	Satan Attacks Job's Health	The Prologue (1:1-2:13)	Satan Tests Job Again	
2:1-8	2:1-8	2:1-6	2:1-2b 2:2c 2:3 2:4-5 2:6	2:1-7a
		2:7-8	2:7-9	2:7b-10
2:9-10	2:9-10	2:9-10	2:10	
	Job's Three Friends		Job's Friends Come	
2:11-13	2:11-13	2:11-13	2:11-13	2:11-13

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 2 is a literary mirror image of Job 1. Job 2:1-3 is almost identical to 1:6-8.
- B. The test of Job's character turns from his possessions to himself personally.
- C. Job 1 and 2 set the historical, theological, and literary stage for the cycles of poems which follow (Job 3-27).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:1-8

¹Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. ²The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” ³The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.” ⁴Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.” ⁶So the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” ⁷Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. ⁸And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

2:2 Because of the modern theological movement called “Open Theism,” this rhetorical question by God (a repeat from Job 1:7) must not be interpreted as YHWH seeking knowledge. In my opinion Open Theism is a theological extension of “Process Thought,” which overemphasizes the human language used of Deity (see Special Topic: God Described as Human).

2:3 “And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause” Although Satan is the immediate cause of Job’s trials, it is God who is the ultimate cause (cf. 1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Kgs. 22:20-22; Isa. 45:7).

John Walton, *NIV Application Commentary*, p. 109, asserts that “without cause” (BDB 236) is a key thought.

1. in Job 1:9 it is used by “the accuser,” meaning “without cost” (cf. Num. 11:5)
2. in Job 2:3 it is used by God, meaning, “without reason/cause” (cf. Job 9:17; 22:6)

He says, “The characters concentrate on these, but the book will eventually contend that these are the wrong questions. But for now, they hold center stage and frame the coming discussions.”

▣ **“although you incited Me against him”** This anthropomorphism must not be taken literally. One hopes and prays that evil cannot influence God. Also hopefully, faithful followers’ prayers can influence God. See Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer.

It is verses such as this that make me

1. see Job as a sage at the Judean court taking an ancient story about an innocent sufferer and elaborating it into a drama to teach theological truth
2. think that the main issue of Job is the character of YHWH and the Mosaic covenant’s emphasis on “the two ways” (cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1); it almost seems that Job 1 and 2 were written to intensify the issue of YHWH’s character!



NASB, NJB,

REB “to ruin”

NKJV, NRSV,

JPSOA “to destroy”

This is literally “to swallow” (BDB 118, KB 134, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT). This VERB was used

1. in a literal sense – i.e., Exod. 7:12; Job 7:19
2. in a figurative sense of destruction – 2 Sam. 20:20; Job 8:18; 10:8; 37:20
3. in a way of referring to a personified *Sheol* swallowing people – Num. 16:30,32,34; Deut. 11:6
4. in a sense of defeat – i.e., 2 Sam. 17:16; Job 20:15,18

2:4 “Skin for skin” This is a proverb of uncertain meaning; however, the second line of this verse seems to explain it. The implication is that just taking a person’s possessions is not the real test, for a person will give anything in place of his/her own life.

▣ **“life”** This is *nephesh* (BDB 659). See full note online at Gen. 35:18.

2:8 “And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes” This may relate to the type of disease that culturally required self-exile. The exact form of Job’s physical problem is uncertain; some see leprosy, others see some other kind of infectious skin disease.

“Ashes” (BDB 68) is used in several senses.

1. literal – the LXX translates it as “dunghill,” which would denote a dumping area outside of town/village (i.e., the place lepers lived)
2. figurative
 - a. worthlessness or insignificance – Job 13:12; 30:19; Gen. 18:27; Lam. 3:16; Ezek. 28:18
 - b. part of mourning rites (i.e., put on one’s head) – 2 Sam. 13:19; Esther 4:1,3; Jer. 6:26; Ezek. 27:30
 - c. sign of mourning for sin – Job 42:6

In context #1 is best.

▣ **“to scrape”** This term (BDB 173, KB 202, *Hithpael* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) is found only here in the OT, but the same root in other Semitic cognate languages denotes a “scraping” process.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:9-10

“Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!” ¹⁰But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

2:9 “Then his wife said to him” The Septuagint has a much longer, more favorable statement. It is difficult to know when the MT or LXX should be followed. Both are ancient texts. In the Dead Sea Scrolls there are Hebrew manuscripts which reflect both textual traditions. This shows that neither is the original Hebrew text. It is a faith presupposition that the MT reflects the original. It is surely true that the scroll of Isaiah in the DSS reflects the MT family of manuscripts. The doctrine of “inspiration” (see Special Topic: Inspiration), as well as canonization, is a faith issue. However, this is not to imply that there is no empirical evidence for the trustworthiness of Scripture (see the four videos on the home page, first paragraph of www.freebiblecommentary.org). Believers have all the information they need to trust God and live for Him. For believers, the Bible is the only source for faith, doctrine, and practice.

There has been much discussion among commentators as to the motive of Job’s wife. Most Christian commentators have held her in unfavorable light (i.e., Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin).

2:10 “You speak. . .” This is an INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root (BDB 180, KB 210), which was Semitic grammatical feature denoting intensification.

▣ **“one of the foolish women”** Job’s response to his wife is not aggressive, but measured. She, too, has lost everything but her health. See Special Topic: Foolish People.

▣ **“Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity”** Job’s comment is an act of his faith/trust in YHWH. But behind it are several theological issues.

1. It ignores “the two ways” (i.e., obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings cursing).
2. It denotes a deterministic (i.e., Islamic) view of life—whatever happens is God’s will. How does the doctrine of the sovereignty of God relate to human choices, or does it? (Calvinism, see Special Topic: Calvinism).
3. Does this saying simply recognize the reality of a fallen world (i.e., evil, suffering, war, unfairness, etc.; for a good book see J. W. Wenham, *The Goodness of God*).

▣ **“In all this Job did not sin with his lips”** The rabbis say he did not sin with his lips but with his heart. This is what Job feared his children may have done in Job 1:5.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:11-13

¹¹Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. ¹²When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. ¹³Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that *his* pain was very great.

2:11-12 Not being a native Hebrew speaker, it is difficult to know when an ancient author is using sound plays purposefully. In Job 2:11-12 there is a series of words that begin with “N.”

1. sympathize, Job 2:11 – BDB 626, KB 678
2. comfort, Job 2:11 – BDB 636, KB 688
3. lifted, Job 2:12 – BDB 669, KB 724
4. recognize, Job 2:12 – BDB 647, KB 699
5. raised, Job 2:12 – same as #3

2:11 “Now when Job’s three friends heard” The Septuagint has “kings” (from a Jewish legend).

▣ **“to sympathize. . .comfort”** These two words are common.

1. sympathize – BDB 626, KB 678, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, which denotes a moving back and forth (i.e., swaying) as an outward sign of identifying with one’s grief, cf. Job 2:11; 42:11; Jer. 15:5; 16:5; 22:10
2. comfort – BDB 636, KB 688, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, which denotes an attempt to console someone’s grief, cf. Gen. 37:35; 50:21; Job 2:11; 7:13; 21:34; 29:25; of God in Ps. 23:4; 71:21; 119:76,82

▣ **“Eliphaz the Temanite”** This man seems to be a descendant of Esau because the term “Teman” (BDB 412) equals “south” (cf. Gen. 36:4,11,15; 1 Chr. 1:35-36). The nation of Edom was famous for its wisdom (cf. Jer. 49:7).

▣ **“Bildad the Shuhite”** This seems to be a descendant of Abraham who moved to the East (i.e., “*Shuah*,” BDB 1001, cf. Gen. 25:2,6; 1 Chr. 1:32).

▣ **“Zophar the Naamathite”** In the Septuagint he is mentioned in Gen. 36:11 and 1 Chr. 1:36. The Septuagint also calls him the “king of the Mineans,” which is a Semitic tribe in South Arabia.

2:12-13 These three men seem to be very sincere and caring towards Job and his trials.

See Special Topic: Grieving Rites.

2:13 “for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him” Some see this as

1. a period of mourning for the dead (cf. Gen. 50:10; 1 Sam. 31:13)
2. relating to the Talmud’s statement that no one can speak to a mourner until the mourner first speaks (cf. Job 3:1)
3. one more sign of mourning related to Lam. 2:10-11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the historical setting of the book of Job?
2. Was Satan one of the “sons of God”?
3. Why did God allow Job to suffer?
4. How is the OT understanding of evil different from that of the surrounding nations?

JOB 3

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Laments	Job Deplores His Birth	Job's Curse of the Day/Night of His Birth	Job's Complaint to God	Job Curses the Day of His Birth
3:1-10	3:1-2	3:1-10 (3-10)	3:1	3:1-2
(2-10)			3:2-10 (2-10)	
	3:3-10 (3-10)			3:3-10 (3-10)
3:11-19 (11-19)	3:11-19 (11-19)	3:11-19 (11-19)	3:11-19 (11-19)	3:11-23 (11-23)
3:20-26 (20-26)	3:20-26 (20-26)	3:20-26 (20-26)	3:20-26 (20-26)	
				3:24-26 (24-26)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 3 begins the poetic section of the book. For a chart on the three cycles of dialogues between Job and his three comforters, see Introduction, VIII. B.
- B. There is a strange relationship between the prose and poetic sections.
 1. They form a unity. The plot and its background are only in the prose sections.
 2. The patient Job of Job 1-2 has been replaced with a bitter sufferer!
 3. They seem to be answering different theological questions.

4. Surprisingly the terrible loss of his possessions and family is never directly mentioned in the poetic section nor, for that matter, is his devastating, repulsive illness.
 5. This disunity has been explained by different authors; however, this is totally unsubstantiated by any manuscript evidence or traditions.
- C. Be sure to look at
1. Special Topic: Wisdom Literature
 2. Special Topic: Hebrew Poetry
- D. Job 3 sets the literary and theological stage for the speeches of Job's three comforters. They are shocked by Job's imagery, theology, frank statements, and deep emotions.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:1-10

¹Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*. ²And Job said,
³"Let the day perish on which I was to be born,
 And the night *which* said, 'A boy is conceived.'
⁴May that day be darkness;
 Let not God above care for it,
 Nor light shine on it.
⁵Let darkness and black gloom claim it;
 Let a cloud settle on it;
 Let the blackness of the day terrify it.
⁶As *for* that night, let darkness seize it;
 Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;
 Let it not come into the number of the months.
⁷Behold, let that night be barren;
 Let no joyful shout enter it.
⁸Let those curse it who curse the day,
 Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.
⁹Let the stars of its twilight be darkened;
 Let it wait for light but have none,
 And let it not see the breaking dawn;
¹⁰Because it did not shut the opening of my *mother's* womb,
 Or hide trouble from my eyes."

3:1 "Afterward" This refers to the seven day silence of Job 2:13.

▣ **"Job opened his mouth"** There is speculation that there was a Jewish tradition (see Jewish Study Bible, p. 1508) that the mourner must speak first before others present could speak.

▣ **"cursed"** This VERB (BDB 886, KB 1103, *Piel* IMPERFECT with *waw*) is not the euphemistic use of "bless" found in the Prologue, but another word that basically means "to trivialize" or "to make insignificant."

Although Job does not mention God, he is surely calling into question his life, which he would view as from God (i.e., Job 3:20,23). This unstated implication is what caused the three comforters to speak! They feel they must defend God and His ways with humans (i.e., “the two ways”).

3:2 “And Job said” This is literally “and Job answered and said.” This is a recurrent literary marker in Job for Job’s dialogues. He is not answering a question from someone, except himself! In his speeches he talks through his feelings and thoughts out loud.

3:3-10 There is a series of 15 JUSSIVES which represent curse requests. They all relate to the day of his conception and later birth (cf. Jer. 20:14-18). Several of them relate to some kind of “darkness” metaphorical of his current situation. The ancients feared night and often personified it (i.e., imagery and myth; see *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 191-193).

Notice the different terms for darkness/lack of light. Darkness had metaphorical and demonic implications.

1. darkness, Job 3:4a – BDB 365
2. let not light shine on it, Job 3:4c
3. darkness, Job 3:5a – BDB 365
4. black gloom, Job 3:5a – BDB 385
5. let a cloud settle on it, Job 3:5b
6. the blackness (only here), Job 3:5c – BDB 485
7. night, Job 3:6a – BDB 538
8. darkness, Job 3:6a – BDB 66
9. night, Job 3:7a – BDB 538
10. stars of twilight be darkened, Job 3:9a – BDB 364, KB 361, *Qal* IMPERFECT
11. no light, Job 3:9b
12. not see dawn, Job 3:9c

Wow! The power of Hebrew parallelism and rich vocabulary (i.e., on selected subjects) shows the deep feelings.

3:3 “day” See Special Topic: Day (*yom*).

3:4 “May that day be darkness” The NET Bible (p. 760) suggests this is meant to reflect Genesis 1, but in a negative way (also NASB Study Bible, p. 696).

▣ **“God”** This is *Eloah*. See Special Topic: Names for Deity.

▣ **“light”** This NOUN (BDB 626) is found only here and is opposite of “darkness” (BDB 365).

3:5 “blackness” This NOUN (BDB 485) is found only here in the OT. The NJB translates it as “eclipse,” associating “blackness” with an eclipse (cf. Amos 8:9-10).

▣ **“claim”** The VERB (BDB 145, KB 169, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense) basically refers to a near relative buying someone back (i.e., what Boaz does for Naomi through Ruth), but this does not seem to fit the imagery of Job 3:5. Some other suggestions (i.e., but with no textual support) are

1. pollute/defile – Targum, Vulgate
2. cover – TEV, Peshitta
3. stain – KJV, NEB
4. possess

5. reclaim – JPSOA, ABPS

6. seize – LXX

The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 793, suggests “Job’s curse asks that terrible darkness lay claim to his birthday rather than Yahweh rescue it from that doom (cf. Job 3:4).”

▣ **“terrify”** This VERB (BDB 129, KB 147, *Piel* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense) occurs 16 times in the OT, eight of them in Job (3:5; 7:14; 9:34; 13:11,21; 15:24; 18:11; 33:7), describing Job’s fear. In this context (i.e., Job 3:5) it is part of Job’s wishes about the destruction of the day of his birth.

3:7 The personification of night continues. In this verse, the word “barren” (BDB 166) occurs only here and Isa. 49:21. Its basic meaning is unproductive, rocky soil. Job prays the night of his birth produce no more children! This is imagery of deep pain and hopelessness.

3:8a The Hebrew word “day,” יום (BDB 398), is changed by some scholars (i.e., Gunkel and Gordis) and REB, NAB to “sea,” ים (BDB 410), so as to link up with Leviathan (cf. Job 7:12; 9:13; 26:12-13).

3:8b “Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan” This term (BDB 531) has several senses in the OT. There is an extensive description in Job 41. See notes online at Psalm 74:14 and Isaiah 27:1.

Job 3:8 is not addressed to Leviathan but to (1) skilled (literal meaning of ADJECTIVE, BDB 800) fishermen or commercial sailors (AB, p. 26) or (2) magicians (cf. Job 3:8a, REB, NJB, NET Bible footnotes).

See usage of the VERB “rouse” (BDB 734, KB 802, *Polel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) in another magic text in Isa. 14:9.

3:9 This refers to the first star (i.e., planet, probably Venus, which is seen at early dawn or twilight). If Job 3:8 has mythological imagery (i.e., Leviathan), then, so too, Job 3:9. The stars were seen as gods that controlled human’s destiny (i.e., horoscope).

3:10 This refers to the night of Job’s conception (cf. Job 3:3b; 1 Sam. 1:6).

▣ **“from my eyes”** The Tyndale *OT Commentary on Job* by Andersen suggests that this (BDB 744) be changed to the SYNONYM of “womb” (BDB 588) used in Ruth 1:11, cf. Gen. 25:23. In this way “my womb” (BDB 105) of Job 3:10a is paralleled in Job 3:5b. This is the way the Moffatt translation deals with this verse.

The nature of Hebrew poetry (i.e., parallelism) and the similarity of Semitic roots gives moderns a possible way to interpret ancient, rare lexical forms.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:11-19

¹¹“Why did I not die at birth,

Come forth from the womb and expire?

¹²Why did the knees receive me,

And why the breasts, that I should suck?

¹³For now I would have lain down and been quiet;

I would have slept then, I would have been at rest,

¹⁴With kings and *with* counselors of the earth,

Who rebuilt ruins for themselves;

¹⁵Or with princes who had gold,
Who were filling their houses *with* silver.
¹⁶Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be,
As infants that never saw light.
¹⁷There the wicked cease from raging,
And there the weary are at rest.
¹⁸The prisoners are at ease together;
They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.
¹⁹The small and the great are there,
And the slave is free from his master.”

3:11-19 This strophe begins with two questions related to Job’s birth. He would have preferred to die at birth (cf. Job 10:18-19). This shows something of the depth of the agony he was experiencing.

He views death as a place of rest/ease for humans (i.e., *Sheol*, see Special Topic: *Sheol*). It is not viewed as a joyful place but a quiet (i.e., no conversation) place. The OT view of the afterlife is very ambiguous in light of the progressive revelation of the NT.

Job’s view of the afterlife can be seen in Job 7:8-10,21; 10:21,22; 14:10-15,20-22; 16:22; 17:13-16; 19:25-27; 21:13,23-26; 24:19,20; 26:5,6; 34:22. It was the silent land of no return.

3:13 “been quiet” *Sheol* was viewed as a place of consciousness but of silence. No one praised God. A person was a mere shadow of the earthly person.

▣ **“slept”** In the OT death is described by the euphemism of sleep (BDB 445). This is imagery and should not be turned into doctrine. OT poetry is a poor place to build doctrines. Not that it does not state truth but it is in figurative language.

Andersen, in the Tyndale *OT Commentary* series, makes a good point here (pp. 106-107).

“ . . .the doctrine of rewards and punishments in the next world is not found in Job as an answer to the moral problem of the unequal fortunes of the present life. Job does not hope that death will rectify the injustice of his undeserved sufferings. It will be enough that it ends them. In the theology of this book, judgment is not postponed to the afterlife. It is only in a negative sense that the turbulence of life abates (verse 13) and the inequalities of life become irrelevant (14-19). In spite of the vagueness with which the living conditions of Sheol are described, the continuation of conscious personal existence and identity after death is clearly believed. The book knows nothing about the heaven of bliss or the hell of torment in later eschatology, but there is never a thought that death means extinction.”

3:14-19 These verses list several groups (i.e., which denote all, cf. Job 3:19).

1. kings, Job 3:14
2. counselors, Job 3:14
3. princes, Job 3:15
4. miscarriages, Job 3:16
5. the wicked, Job 3:17a
6. the weary, Job 3:17b
7. prisoners, Job 3:18
8. the small and the great, Job 3:19

3:14 “Who rebuilt ruins for themselves” This phrase could be viewed as

1. positive, they rebuilt destroyed famous places (i.e., Isa. 58:12; 61:4)
2. negative, they rebuilt ruins (cf. NJB, “in desolate places”)
3. negative, they built great buildings for themselves but they are now in ruins

The parallel (Job 3:15) phrases imply #1. The REB translates this as “who built for themselves cities now laid waste,” which suggests #3.

3:16 Job wishes he were never born but if he were, he wishes he had been a stillbirth (cf. Job 3:11).

3:19a “there” This MASCULINE SINGULAR ADVERB (BDB 214) is usually translated “he” (i.e., Isa. 41:4; 43:10) but it can function as “the same” (cf. Ps. 102:27). In this context it denotes the commonality of all those in *Sheol*. Death is the great “leveler” of humans!

3:19b “master” This is a characteristic use of *Adon* (BDB 10).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:20-26

- ²⁰“Why is light given to him who suffers,
And life to the bitter of soul,
²¹Who long for death, but there is none,
And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,
²²Who rejoice greatly,
And exult when they find the grave?
²³Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
And whom God has hedged in?
²⁴For my groaning comes at the sight of my food,
And my cries pour out like water.
²⁵For what I fear comes upon me,
And what I dread befalls me.
²⁶I am not at ease, nor am I quiet,
And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes.”

3:20-26 This strophe also asks questions about suffering. It questions the reason for a life which knows pain (i.e., “why”). It is the rhetorical way to start the responses of his three comforters. It lists several valid accusations against God.

1. the way is hidden, Job 3:23a
2. God has hedged, Job 3:23b
3. the thing most feared, comes, Job 3:25

Job seeks the peace of death but experiences the terrible turmoil of sickness, confusion, and a sense of abandonment (i.e., the worst thing possible for a faithful follower—“why”)! He sees no way out, except death.

3:20 “light” Light is used three times in this chapter in different ways.

1. Job 3:9 – physical light (i.e., of stars)
2. Job 3:16,20 – symbol of life

See *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 509-512.

3:22a

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV “Who rejoice greatly”

NJB “They would be glad to see the grave-mound”

The difference is due to

1. גִּיל – BDB 162 I, lit. “joy” (MT)
2. גַּל – heap, pile (cf. Jos. 7:26; 8:29; 2 Sam. 18:17; NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 858); the emendation is an attempt to facilitate a parallelism

3:23 “a man whose way is hidden” Job feels that God has failed to give understanding (Job 19:6,8,12).

▣ **“whom God has hedged in”** In Satan’s accusation he uses this imagery of a “hedge” to refer to God’s protection (cf. Job 1:10; BDB 962 I, KB 1312), but here (BDB 692 II, KB 754) of God closing the path before Job (cf. Job 19:8).

3:25 “For what I fear comes upon me” This phrase is intensified by the use of the same root (BDB 808, KB 922, also note Job 4:14) in the NOUN and VERB (i.e., a COGNATE ACCUSATIVE). From the context it seems that the loss of fellowship with God (the term is often used of YHWH’s judgment, i.e., Deut. 28:66,67; Ps. 14:5; 53:5; Isa. 33:14; 44:8; Mic. 7:17) was the thing Job feared most (cf. Job 11:4-5). This is similar to Jesus on the cross quoting Psalm 22.

JOB 4

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Eliphaz: Innocent Do Not Suffer	Eliphaz: Job Has Sinned	First Discourse of Eliphaz (4:1-5:27)	The First Dialogue (4:1-14:22) Eliphaz	Confidence in God
4:1	4:1	4:1-6 (1-6)	4:1-11 (1-11)	4:1
4:2-6 (2-6)	4:2-11 (2-11)			4:2-21 (2-21)
4:7-11 (7-11)		4:7-11 (7-11)		
4:12-21 (12-21)	4:12-21 (12-21)	4:12-21 (12-21)	4:12-21 (12-21)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This is the first response to Job's lament/dirge in Job 3.
- B. Eliphaz highlights Job's help/encouragement to others (cf. Job 29:12-25).
 1. you admonished many, Job 4:3a
 2. you have strengthened weak hands, Job 4:3b
 3. you have helped the tottering to stand, Job 4:4a
 4. you have strengthened feeble knees, Job 4:4b
- C. Eliphaz makes two assertions about Job.
 1. when problems come to Job he becomes impatient (or "weary") and dismayed

2. Job's hope is
 - a. in God (his fear/reverence)
 - b. in his integrity (Job 4:6)
- D. Eliphaz denies Job's claims of integrity because the truly righteous never suffer (Job 4:7-11; this is based on "the two ways" theology of Leviticus 26; Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1).
- E. The next strophe (Job 4:12-21) suggests that all creation sins and is disciplined by God (angels and humans). The judgment on humans is their mortality and lack of understanding (i.e., wisdom, Job 4:21).
- F. As a Bible teacher, it is important for me to be reminded how little I really know. Yes, I have the Spirit and revelation, but often our theology is molded more by denominational dogma, personal experience, or personal preference. Eliphaz did not speak a false word, he spoke a half-word! We must be careful of "theological correctness." Only God knows the big picture. The three friends love Job, but love their traditional understanding of God more. People are priority! Faith and faithfulness trump "human doctrine."

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:1

¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered,

4:1-6 The first strophe sets the stage for the assertions in the next two strophes (Job 4:7-11,12-21).

4:1 "Temanite" I assume this refers to "Teman," a city in Edom (i.e., a place known for "wisdom," cf. Jer. 49:7). Neither Job nor his friends are Israelites but they know about YHWH. They reflect the theology of the covenant of Moses.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:2-6

²"If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient?

But who can refrain from speaking?

³Behold you have admonished many,

And you have strengthened weak hands.

⁴Your words have helped the tottering to stand,

And you have strengthened feeble knees.

⁵But now it has come to you, and you are impatient;

It touches you, and you are dismayed.

⁶Is not your fear of God your confidence,

And the integrity of your ways your hope?"

4:2 "ventures" This VERB (BDB 650, KB 702, *Piel* PERFECT) basically means "to test" or "to try." It is also translated "venture" in Deut. 28:56. Eliphaz's words were meant as a challenge to Job's remarks in Job 3, especially about wanting to die instead of wanting to repent and be restored.

▣ **“will you become impatient”** This VERB (BDB 521, KB 512, *Qal* IMPERFECT) denotes “a tiredness” (cf. Job 4:5a). It is

1. a polite way of asking permission to confront Job on his strong comments of Job 3 (i.e., “who can refrain from speaking,” Job 4:2b)
2. a way of asking if Job is too sick or too tired to dialogue

4:3 “you have admonished many” This VERB (BDB 415, KB 418, *Piel* PERFECT) has the connotation of

1. “discipline,” “instruct,” “admonish.” Eliphaz is using it in a negative sense. You corrected others with problems but you cannot handle your own admonishments!
2. from an Aramaic root “to strengthen” (i.e., used in a positive sense). Interpreters cannot read Eliphaz’s mind and know his motives.

Job will later give a list of who he helped (Job 29).

1. the poor, Job 29:12a
2. orphans, Job 29:12b
3. those near death, Job 29:13a
4. the widow, Job 29:13b
5. the blind, Job 29:15a
6. the lame, Job 29:15b
7. the needy, Job 29:16a
8. the falsely accused, Job 29:16b

These are the types of people Deuteronomy encourages faithful followers to help.

4:5 “it has come to you” The “it” must be hard times, social reversal, physical illness, emotional distress, etc.

▣ **“dismayed”** This VERB (BDB 96, KB 111, *Niphal* IMPERFECT with *waw*) denotes a disturbed spirit (cf. Job 21:6; 23:15). In the *Piel* it denotes “terror” (cf. Job 22:10).

4:6 “confidence” This NOUN (BDB 493) is used only twice in the OT (here and in Ps. 85:8). Eliphaz is making a true statement when he says that Job’s reverent trust in God (implied) is his confidence. Eliphaz adds to this that Job’s sense of blamelessness before God (lit. his integrity, BDB 1070, cf. Gen. 20:5,6; 1 Kgs. 9:4; Ps. 7:8; 41:12; 78:72; 101:6; Pro. 10:9; 19:1; 20:7; 28:6; integrity denotes the positive inner feeling one has about how he/she has lived out faith/trust in God and His revealed will) is his only hope (BDB 876).

This “confidence” and “hope” are based on

1. his faith in God
2. his actions in helping the poor, needy, and powerless

This verse is Job’s first assertion (i.e., through Eliphaz’s words; remember, these dialogues are literary productions) that he is an innocent sufferer.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:7-11

⁷**“Remember now, who *ever* perished being innocent?**

Or where were the upright destroyed?

⁸**According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity**

And those who sow trouble harvest it.

⁹**By the breath of God they perish,**

And by the blast of His anger they come to an end.

¹⁰**The roaring of the lion and the voice of the *fierce* lion,**

And the teeth of the young lions are broken.

¹¹The lion perishes for lack of prey,

And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.”

4:7-11 This strophe basically sets the theological stage for the controversy between Job and his three comforters. They truly care for Job (see Job 2:11-13) but they are committed theologically to “the two ways” (i.e., Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1) or to put it another way, “we reap what we sow” (i.e., “plow . . . harvest” of Job 4:8; cf. Job 34:11,25; Ps. 28:4; 62:12; Pro. 24:12; Eccl. 12:14; Jer. 17:10; 32:19; Ezek. 33:20; Matt. 16:27; 25:31-46; Rom. 2:6; 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:14; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 2:23; 20:12; 22:12). There is certainly truth in this. The theological issue involves the apparent conflict between

1. the merciful, gracious character of God
2. the justice of God
3. the sovereignty of God
4. “the two ways” is always true (i.e., Ps. 37:25,28)
5. the suffering of “innocent” humans

How do these all fit together? They cannot all be true. One or more must be modified, but which one? These questions are why I think the main theological issue of Job is the character of God. Does He deal fairly with humans?

4:7-8 “Remember” This is the only IMPERATIVE in this chapter. It refers to anecdotal evidence (Job 4:8a) related to “the two ways” (i.e., Job 8:20; 36:6,7; Ps. 37:25).

4:7 “perished . . . destroyed” Since Eliphaz probably would not deny that the righteous suffer, he means that they will not die. Job has expressed his desire to die (Job 3). This is what Eliphaz challenges. If Job would repent he would be restored (i.e., Job 5:17-27).

4:8 The imagery of plowing and harvesting, referring to a life of wickedness, is also seen in Hosea 10:13. This is the essence of “the two ways.” Our choices do determine our futures!

The problem is that this general truth cannot explain each and every individual case. The wicked do prosper (cf. Psalm 73) and the innocent do suffer (cf. Gen. 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53).

4:9 “the breath of God” This phrase (BDB 675 CONSTRUCT BDB 42) picks up on the Hebrew concept of the power of God’s spoken word (i.e., Genesis 1; Isa. 55:11; John 1:1). The word of God (or His Messiah) brings guilty humanity its just dues (cf. Job 15:30; Isa. 11:4; 30:28,33; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 2:16; 19:15).

The term “breath” (BDB 675) is not the term *ruah* (BDB 924), but is a SYNONYM (cf. Job 4:9b). The word used here is used in Gen. 2:7 for God breathing the breath of life into Adam (cf. Job 33:4).

4:10-11 “roaring of the lion” This same word (BDB 980) was used of Job’s “groaning” in Job 3:24. Here (Job 4:10-11) the word denotes a powerful animal that has been defeated (i.e., “those who plow iniquity,” Job 4:8a, cf. 29:17).

Lions are often used in the OT for enemies. See Special Topic: Lions in the OT.

1. the wicked – Ps. 7:2; 10:9; 17:12; 22:13,21; 35:17; 57:4; 58:6
2. Assyria – Isa. 5:28; Nah. 2:11-13
3. Babylonia – Jer. 4:7; 5:6
4. both #2 and 3 – Jer. 50:17

Notice the number of Hebrew words used to describe a pride of lions.

1. lion – BDB 71

2. a fierce lion – BDB 1006
3. young lions – BDB 498
4. mature lion – BDB 539 I
5. lion whelps – BDB 119
6. lioness – BDB 522

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:12-21

- ¹²“Now a word was brought to me stealthily,
And my ear received a whisper of it.
¹³Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men,
¹⁴Dread came upon me, and trembling,
And made all my bones shake.
¹⁵Then a spirit passed by my face;
The hair of my flesh bristled up.
¹⁶It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance;
A form *was* before my eyes;
There was silence, then I heard a voice:
¹⁷“Can mankind be just before God?
Can a man be pure before his Maker?
¹⁸He puts no trust even in His servants;
And against His angels He charges error.
¹⁹How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before the moth!
²⁰Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces;
Unobserved, they perish forever.
²¹Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
They die, yet without wisdom.”

4:12-21 This final strophe of Eliphaz’s first speech relates to a vision/dream that terrified him.

1. a word was brought to me stealthily
2. my ear received a whisper of it (cf. Job 26:14)
3. amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night
4. dread came upon me
5. trembling made all my bones shake
6. a spirit (“*ruah*,” BDB 924, see Special Topic: Breath, Wind, Spirit) passed by my face
7. the hair of my flesh bristled up

The “voice” of Job 4:16 comes from a heavenly source but the speaker is not identified. Eliphaz is claiming a “heavenly” revelation. He is claiming superior knowledge, as does Elihu in Job 32:8.

4:12 “whisper” This NOUN appears only here and in Job 26:14. It denotes that which is inadequate or partial. NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 182, mentions that based on later Hebrew (i.e., Ecclesiasticus 18:32) it might be translated “fragment.”

So, the interpretive question, was the “word” (BDB 182)

1. spoken softly?
2. only partially understood?

Because of 1 Kgs. 19:12, possibly #1, if the revelation is from God (which I think Eliphaz is asserting). Remember, Job’s historical setting is

1. patriarchal period
2. non-Israelite

How much knowledge Job and his friends had of the Torah (i.e., Genesis – Deuteronomy) is uncertain. For sure, the later author did know the Torah and puts covenant thought and vocabulary in his poems. The dialogues are literary productions, not verbatim transcripts.

4:17-21 This is a courtroom setting. God is the Judge. The message from “a spirit” deals with the sinfulness of all conscious creatures, humans (i.e., it is uncertain how many verses this message covers, just Job 4:17 or all the way through 4:21). This sinfulness brings death, separation, and destruction.

It is this very issue that causes “the two ways” to be difficult to understand. In one sense, “all” are sinful and deserve judgment (see my notes on Romans 3:19-20,23 online). However, God deals with humans according to their choices! But this is not always the case, as in Psalm 73, the book of Job, and Jesus’ words in John 9 (see notes online).

The rabbis, for the most part, do not follow Paul’s theology of the significance of Genesis 3 (some do use Genesis 6), but assert the two “*yetzers*” (i.e., intents or human choices). Is Job suffering because of

1. the sin of Eve and Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12-21)
2. his personal choices to sin

Eliphaz assumes it must be #2.

4:17 There are two ways to view this verse (i.e., how to translate the PREPOSITION, see note at Job 32:2).

1. “more than” – NKJV, NIV
2. “before” – NRSV, TEV, NJB, JPSOA, REB, NET

At this point in the speeches, Eliphaz does not yet know that Job claims to be innocent, that he is just, but will assert that God is not just (this is the main theological issue of the book).

▣ **“just”** This is the term “righteous” (BDB 842, KB 1003, *Qal* IMPERFECT), which denotes a straightness (see Special Topic: Righteousness). All the words for “sin” in Hebrew (and Greek) show a deviation from God’s holiness.

How can a human (affected by the Fall) be right with God (cf. Job 9:2; 25:4)? If God judges angels (Job 4:18; 15:15), how can a just God forgive a sinful human (cf. Job 15:14,16)? He judges them (cf. Job 4:19-21)!

▣ **“pure”** This VERB (BDB 372, KB 369, *Qal* IMPERFECT) denotes “not guilty of moral error” or “the removal of guilt” (cf. Lev. 16:30; the Day of Atonement).

▣ **“his Maker”** This is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 793, KB 889). In one sense, His creation continues. Initial creation (Genesis 1-2) fashioned the earth, plants, and animals to reproduce and develop.

This VERB is used in several senses.

1. God as maker of this planet – Gen. 1:7,16,25; 3:1; Neh. 9:6
 - a. the sea – Ps. 95:5
 - b. the stars – Job 9:9
2. of mankind – Gen. 1:26; Job 31:15; Ps. 100:3; 119:73; Pro. 22:2
3. of Israel (i.e., special covenant people) – Deut. 32:6,15

4. all nations – Deut. 26:19

5. a title for Deity – Job 4:17; 32:22; 35:10; 36:3; Ps. 149:2; Pro. 14:31; 17:5; Isa. 17:7

Theologically this affirms “monotheism.” See Special Topic: Monotheism.

4:18b “error” This word (BDB 1012, KB 1691) occurs only here in the OT. There have been two suggestions from cognate languages.

1. Arabic – commit error

2. Ethiopian – wander about aimlessly (KB, “craziness”)

It is unclear what the angels are being accused of.

1. error (i.e., Daniel 10)

2. purposelessness

3. rebellion (cf. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude vv. 6,9)

4. some scholars make an emendation to refer to “folly” (KB 249 III, see UBS *Handbook*, p. 102, RSV).

4:19 “houses of clay” This phrase goes back to Gen. 2:7, where God forms “Adam” from the red clay (cf. Job 33:6) and breathes life into him. Because of Eve and Adam’s rebellion they will die and return to “dust” (cf. Gen. 3:19; Ps. 104:29; Eccl. 3:20; 12:7). Job mentions several times (cf. Job 8:19; 10:9; 34:15; also note Ps. 103:14) that mankind is made from “dust” (BDB 779).

▣ **“Who are crushed before the moth”** This highly figurative statement seems to relate to the frailty of moths and humans (also note the imagery in Job 8:14).

The frailness of humans is obvious but we must remember, they are a special creation by God, in His image/likeness for fellowship (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). We are broken and weak but we are important to God. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan.

4:20a “Between morning and evening” A person’s life is described as a 24 hour period, one day. This, like Job 4:19, focuses on the frailty of human life (cf. Job 14:1-6) and its limited duration (cf. Job 8:9; Ps. 90:5-6).

4:20b “Unobserved” Michael Dahood suggests an emendation based on Ugaritic grammar that makes this unusual Hebrew phrase in the MT become “nameless, they perish” (cf. AB, pp. 35,38).

4:21 “tent-cord” See Isa. 33:20; 38:12; 2 Cor. 5:1,4 for the same metaphor (anachronism).

▣ **“without wisdom”** This hints at the summary truth that life is a mystery. How the sovereign, righteous God deals with humans has no definitive answer in revelation. Humans, even “blameless” ones, are

1. without wisdom ([1] knowledge of God, Pro. 1:1-6,7; [2] how to live successfully in light of God’s revelation).

2. without knowledge, Job 36:12

Job never understands! His peace comes in trusting God, not in wisdom!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How is the Job of chapters 1-2 different from the Job of the poetic section?
2. Does Eliphaz truly care for Job?
3. Does Eliphaz support Job's godly life?
4. What is Job 4:6 asserting about Job?
5. Explain "the two ways."
6. Is Eliphaz claiming a divine revelation for his source of authority?
7. Why is Job 4:17 a crucial text?
8. How do angels commit "error"?
9. Define "wisdom" in Job 4:21.

JOB 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
God Is Just	Job Is Chastened by God	First Dialogue of Eliphaz (4:1-5:27)	The First Dialogue (4:1-14:22)	
5:1-7 (1-7)	5:1-7 (1-7)	5:1-7 (1-7)	5:1-7 (1-7)	5:1-16 (1-16)
5:8-16 (8-16)	5:8-16 (8-16)	5:8-16 (8-16)	5:8-16 (8-16)	
5:17-27 (17-27)	5:17-27 (17-27)	5:17-27 (17-27)	5:17-27 (17-27)	5:17-27 (17-27)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 4-5 forms a literary unit (i.e., Eliphaz's first speech).
- B. An important theme in Job is the possibility of a heavenly mediator at God's court (cf. Job 9:33; 16:19; 19:25-27; 33:23-24). This one is alluded to in
 1. Job 5:1b
 2. Job 5:4c
 3. Job 5:8b

At this point in the OT, this does not refer to a coming seed of David (i.e., Messiah), but it does denote a heavenly helper for humanity who comes before YHWH at the heavenly court. This is a theological precursor of the concept of Messiah; as "the accuser" is a precursor of Satan/Devil.
- C. Notice the different names for Deity (see Special Topic: Names for Deity).
 1. *El*, Job 5:8a
 2. *Elohim*, Job 5:8b (rare in Job)

3. *Eloah*, Job 5:17a
 4. *Shaddai* (the Almighty), Job 5:17b, cf. Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11
- D. Eliphaz's words are not incorrect but simply do not fit Job's situation. Eliphaz asserts that
1. all humans are sinful
 2. God judges sin in this life
 3. sometimes God uses problems to help faithful followers mature
- Job would agree with all of these assertions but his situation is not addressed by any of them!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1-7

¹“Call now, is there anyone who will answer you?

And to which of the holy ones will you turn?

²For anger slays the foolish man,
And jealousy kills the simple.

³I have seen the foolish taking root,
And I cursed his abode immediately.

⁴His sons are far from safety,
They are even oppressed in the gate,
And there is no deliverer.

⁵His harvest the hungry devour
And take it to a *place of thorns*,
And the schemer is eager for their wealth.

⁶For affliction does not come from the dust,
Nor does trouble sprout from the ground,

⁷For man is born for trouble,
As sparks fly upward.”

5:1-7 This strophe introduces a heavenly advocate. See Contextual Insights, B. He is one of the “holy ones.”

Be careful not to attribute “error” (Job 4:18; 15:15) to this holy one. This is revelatory imagery for someone close to God who defends humanity as there was one who accused humanity.

5:1 “Call” This VERB (BDB 894, KB 1128, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is used in the sense of “call for help” (cf. Job 9:16; Ps. 4:1; 20:9; Isa. 58:9; 65:24).

This verse is asserting that even if Job calls out to the heavens, there is no one (i.e., God or angels) who will respond.

▣ **“the holy ones”** See note online at Ps. 34:9. Here it refers to angelic beings (see LXX) who are before God at the heavenly court (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7a). Eliphaz is asserting that Job has no one to call on for help (cf. Job 9:33). Later this assertion will be denied by Job (cf. Job 14:19; 19:25-27).

5:2 “foolish man” See Special Topic: Foolish People (terms).

▣ **“the simple”** This PARTICIPLE (BDB 834, KB 984) can refer to the easily deceived (cf. Hos. 7:11). Here it is parallel with “foolish.” Job 5:3-4 discusses what will happen to this kind of person. Eliphaz is implying Job is a person like this! It seems he is alluding to Job’s tragedy by his comments in Job 5:4.

The *Tyndale OT Commentary* series, p. 118, #5, suggests that “gate” (שַׁעַר, BDB 1044) in Job 5:4b, be read as “storm” (שָׁעַר, BDB 973 II). The VERB form of the root (BDB 973 II) appears in Job 27:21. However, this suggestion is not followed by any English translation. It is only suggested because it may refer to how Job’s children died in Job 1:19.

5:3 This seems to imply that for a period of time evil flourishes (cf. Psalm 73; Jer. 12:2), but over time it is the faithful follower who endures and prospers (cf. Psalm 1).

The term “abode” is literally “dwelling” (BDB 627) but used in a wider sense, which is described in Job. 5:4-5 using agricultural illustrations.

5:4-5 These are IMPERFECT VERBS and may be used in a JUSSIVE sense (i.e., they are the “curse” mentioned in Job 5:3b).

5:4 “in the gate” This was the place of local government, commerce, and justice (cf. Gen. 23:10,18; Deut. 21:19-21; 22:15; Ruth 4; 1 Kgs. 22:10; 2 Kgs. 7:1; Amos 5:15).

For an alternate translation see note at Job 5:2.

5:5 “thorns” This term (BDB 856) is uncertain. It is found only here and Pro. 22:5. A similar root is found in Num. 33:55; Jos. 23:13, meaning “thorn” and another similar root in Amos 4:2 meaning “hook” or “barb.”

The NET Bible (p. 767) sees this difficult Hebrew line of poetry as referring to strangers eating the fool’s crops even though there is a thorn hedge around them. I think this is the best option to a confused MT text.



NASB	“schemer”
NKJV	“snare”
NRSV, JPSOA,	
REB	“the thirsty”
KJB	“robber”

The MT has “snare” (BDB 855) but two ancient Hebrew translations; the Syriac and the Vulgate, have “thirsty ones.”

The resources of the foolish will be consumed by others!

The Hebrew of Job 5:5 is difficult but in essence it means “the wealth of the foolish will be enjoyed by others” (i.e., Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:30-33).

5:6-7 There seems to be a play on the words “dust” (cf. Gen. 2:7; Job 4:19) and “ground” (cf. Job 5:6; Gen. 3:19; *Adamah* vs. “man,” Adam, Job 5:7). As it reads, there is a contrast between Job 5:6 and 7. But both seem to refer to the fact that problems do not come from the earth but from rebellious, sinful mankind (cf. Genesis 3; Rom. 8:19-23). Sparks from a fire fly upward, so too, sin is a problem with all conscious creation (i.e., humans and angels, cf. Job 4:17-21).

It is interesting how TEV and NRSV translate this line (Job 5:7a) differently.

1. NRSV – “but human beings are born to trouble”
2. TEV – “No indeed! We bring trouble on ourselves”

Theologically both are true. Original sin and volitional sin merge in every human life.

The AB (p. 42) asserts, “These are regularly interpreted as declarative, but it seems more likely that they were intended as rendered, negative rhetorical questions equivalent to positive observation. Man is indeed born to hardship and a hostile ground as part of his birthright, cf. Gen. 3:17-19.”

5:6

NASB, NKJV “affliction”

NRSV, NJB “misery”

TEV, JPSOA “evil”

REB “mischief”

This Hebrew NOUN (BDB 19) has several connotations. It is a general word for “evil” but surprisingly has no Semitic cognates. It may be related to the root for “power” (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 310).

1. it is used of evil speaking
2. it is used of exploitation of the poor and vulnerable
3. it is used of idolatry

but in this context, it denotes “misfortune,” “problems,” “troubles” (cf. Num. 23:21; Job 4:8; 5:6; 15:35; Ps. 10:7; 55:10; 90:10). All humans face these kinds of issues and situations as a part of daily life on the planet.

5:7 “as sparks” This is literally “sons of Resheph,” who was the Canaanite god of pestilence often associated with eagles/vultures (cf. AB, p. 43). Therefore, some scholars see this as a reference to Canaanite mythology, like Leviathan. Notice how the LXX translates this line, “whereas the vulture’s young soar on high” (cf. Peshitta, NJB, REB).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:8-16

- ⁸“But as for me, I would seek God,
And I would place my cause before God;
⁹Who does great and unsearchable things,
Wonders without number.
¹⁰He gives rain on the earth
And sends water on the fields,
¹¹So that He sets on high those who are lowly,
And those who mourn are lifted to safety.
¹²He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd,
So that their hands cannot attain success.
¹³He captures the wise by their own shrewdness,
And the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted.
¹⁴By day they meet with darkness,
And grope at noon as in the night.
¹⁵But He saves from the sword of their mouth,
And the poor from the hand of the mighty.
¹⁶So the helpless has hope,
And unrighteousness must shut its mouth.”

5:8-16 This strophe starts with a summary statement about how Eliphaz acts (ADVERB, “but” and PERSONAL PRONOUN) versus “the foolish” of Job 5:1-7. It is ironic that Eliphaz’s assertion of his faith is exactly what Job has done! Job 5:8 has legal terminology (i.e., a law case, BDB 184).

In Job 5:9-16 Eliphaz lists things God does.

1. what God does (cf. Job 9:10) as creator/redeemer/judge
 - a. great things, Job 5:9 (BDB 152)
 - b. unsearchable things, Job 5:9 (BDB 350)
 - c. wonders without number, Job 5:9, see Special Topic: Wonderful Things (OT)
2. as creator (function of *Elohim*)
 - a. gives rain on the earth, Job 5:10
 - b. sends water on the fields, Job 5:10 (YHWH, not the fertility gods)
3. as redeemer (function of YHWH)
 - a. set on high the lowly, Job 5:11
 - b. lifts to safety those who mourn, Job 5:11
 - c. saves the poor from the mouth of the sword, Job 5:15
 - d. saves the poor from the hand of the mighty, Job 5:15
 - e. gives hope to the helpless, Job 5:16a
4. as judge (function of the Almighty, Job 5:17b)
 - a. frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, Job 5:12
 - b. captures the wise by their own shrewdness, Job 5:13
 - c. caused them not to see, Job 5:14, cf. Deut. 28:28-29
 - d. causes the unrighteous to shut their mouths, Job 5:16b, cf. Ps. 107:42

5:11b “those who mourn” This is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 871, KB 1072), which basically means “to be dark” or “to be dirty.” This could refer to

1. the dress of mourners (cf. 2 Sam. 19:24; NASB footnote, “dressed in black” at Ps. 35:14; also note Ps. 38:17; 42:10; 43:2)
2. ashes put on the face in mourning (cf. Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30)
3. metaphor for one’s attitude toward life (cf. Jer. 8:21; 14:2)
4. lack of revelation or wisdom from God (cf. Micah 3:5-7)

5:12a

NASB	“shrewd”
NKJV, NRSV,	
JPSOA, REB	“crafty”
TEV	“cunning people”
NJB	“artful”

This ADJECTIVE (BDB 791) is used often in Proverbs to describe (1) scheming faithless followers (cf. Job 15:5) or (2) sensible faithful followers (NASB, “prudent,” cf. Pro. 12:23; 13:16; 14:8,15,18; 22:3; 27:12). It was even used of the serpent in Gen. 3:1.

5:13a This is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. 3:19. The foolish are caught by their own foolishness. This is a recurrent theme in the Bible, a reversal of expected outcomes.

5:13b

NASB, NKJV,	
NJB	“the cunning”
NRSV	“the wily”
JPSOA	“the crafty”
REB	“the schemers”

This VERB (BDB 836, KB 990, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE) is literally “to twist,” which is a word play on “righteous,” “just,” which means “straight” (see Special Topic: Righteousness). The twisters get twisted! Another word play is found in Job 5:16b, “unrighteousness” (i.e., the unstraight) is personified as shutting its mouth.

5:14 What powerful imagery of spiritual blindness (cf. Job 24:13-17). The shrewd, wise, who think they are so smart, will be in darkness (BDB 365; Job uses this word twenty times)!

5:15 “saves” This VERB (BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT with *waw*) denotes deliverance. See Special Topic: Salvation (OT).

Notice God “saves” “the poor” (Job 5:15b) and “the helpless (Job 5:16a). These are recurrent OT promised blessings in Deuteronomy.

▣ **“the sword of their mouth”** This is imagery for the speech of the cunning/shrewd. It is used of the power of

1. the Messiah in Isa. 11:4; 49:2
2. Jesus’ words in Rev. 1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15
3. the word of God in Heb. 4:12

Note that in the presence of God’s word the word of the unrighteous ceases (cf. Job 5:16a; 21a)!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:17-27

¹⁷“Behold, how happy is the man whom God reprove,

So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

¹⁸For He inflicts pain, and gives relief;

He wounds, and His hands *also* heal.

¹⁹From six troubles He will deliver you,

Even in seven evil will not touch you.

²⁰In famine He will redeem you from death,

And in war from the power of the sword.

²¹You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,

And you will not be afraid of violence when it comes.

²²You will laugh at violence and famine,

And you will not be afraid of wild beasts.

²³For you will be in league with the stones of the field,

And the beasts of the field will be at peace with you.

²⁴You will know that your tent is secure,

For you will visit your abode and fear no loss.

²⁵You will know also that your descendants will be many,

And your offspring as the grass of the earth.

²⁶You will come to the grave in full vigor,

Like the stacking of grain in its season.

²⁷Behold this; we have investigated it, and so it is.

Hear it, and know for yourself.”

5:17-27 This strophe asserts the central theological position of Eliphaz, although “the two ways” is surely God’s way with humans, but his “good news” is that God will freely and joyfully forgive those who repent and turn back to Him. This strophe focuses on the blessings of the discipline of God. In Hebrew thought (which these poems reflect), God is the single cause of all things (cf. Job 5:18; Deut. 32:39; Isa. 14:24-27; 30:26; 42:16; 45:7; Hos. 6:1; Amos 3:6). This is a theological assertion, not a philosophical ontological assertion. God is not the source of evil! He uses evil, suffering, and unfairness to mature His followers (see Special Topic: God Tests His People; also note Heb. 5:8, where it asserts Jesus was perfected by the things He suffered).

5:17 Notice the contrast.

1. happy is the man whom God reproves – cf. Deut. 8:5; Ps. 94:12; 119:7
 2. do not despise the discipline of the Almighty (i.e., *Shaddai*) – cf. Pro. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11
- “Almighty” is a title for God used in Genesis, possibly this is one way for the author to show the historical setting of Job (i.e., the second millennium B.C.). See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

5:18 “heal” This is a multifaceted subject. Please see Special Topic: Healing.

5:19 This use of numbers is typical of Wisdom Literature (i.e., Pro. 6:16; 30:15,18,21,24,29).

5:20 “famine” Notice that NASB has this same translation for a different root in Job 5:22.

1. Job 5:20 – BDB 944
2. Job 5:22 – BDB 495

The difference is #1 is the general word for famine, while #2 denotes a poor diet caused by poor crops.

☐ “redeem” This (BDB 804, KB 911, *Qal* PERFECT) basically means “to buy back.” See Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem.

5:22b Wild beasts were one of the curses God would send for covenant disobedience (cf. Lev. 26:22; Deut. 32:24; Ezek. 34:5,8).

5:23a This is a difficult line. Its meaning is uncertain. Some have suggested:

1. some kind of demon (emendation of “stones” to “Lords”), AB, p. 46; Rashi
2. no hail – (BDB 6, #7)
3. emendation suggested by Jewish sources (i.e., Rahsi) to “Lords” (*Adon*, NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 258, #5), but still the meaning is uncertain
4. many stones in the field which make it difficult to cultivate
5. stone markers of property boundaries moved by enemies (UBS *Handbook*, p. 120)

The LXX removes Job 5:23a. I think since “beasts” are mentioned in Job 5:22b and again in 5:23b, that somehow this line of poetry refers to “the sons of the field.”

1. “stones” – אבן (BDB 6)
2. “sons” – בן (BDB 119)

Isaiah 11:6-9 would be an eschatological example.

5:24 This is in direct contrast to Job 4:21.

5:25 This is in contrast to Job 5:4.

5:26 Death is not seen as an enemy but as the natural, expected end of a long, full life (cf. Job 42:17). There was not a fear of oblivion or loss but a transition to a new realm (unknown though it may be).

▣ **“the grave. . .the stacking of grain”** There is a word play between

1. “grave” in Job 21:32 (BDB 155 II) is a synonym of “grave” (BDB 868) here
2. “stacking of grain” (BDB 155 I)

Notice the same root (BDB 155).



NASB “full vigor”

NKJV “full age”

NRSV, TEV,

NJB, JPSOA “ripe old age”

This NOUN (BDB 480, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 652-654) occurs only twice in the OT, both in Job (i.e., Job 5:26; 30:2). It appears in context (i.e., poetic parallelism) to mean

1. ripe in Job 5:26
2. vigor in Job 30:2

5:27 Notice Eliphaz’s claim to have “investigated” (BDB 350, KB 347, *Qal* PERFECT) “it.” He bases his assertion on

1. experience, Job 4:7
2. revelation, Job 4:12-21
3. human research (used often in Eccl, cf. Eccl. 1:13; 7:25; 12:9; and Job, cf. Job 13:9; 28:3,27), Job 5:27

▣ **“hear it. . .know”** These are both *Qal* IMPERATIVES. Eliphaz implores Job to “research it” also (i.e., the results of repentance). The “it” may refer to Job 4:7 (i.e., “the two ways” or “we reap what we sow”).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is it in Eliphaz’s speech that God rejects?
2. Does Eliphaz believe in angelic mediation?
3. Explain in your own words what Job 5:6-7 is trying to say.
4. List the things God has done which Eliphaz mentions in Job 5:9-16.
5. Job 5:17-27 asserts a reason for Job’s suffering; what is it?
6. Does Eliphaz speak in general terms or does Job 5 relate directly to Job’s situation?

JOB 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job's Friends Are No Help	Job: My Complaint Is Just	Reply of Job (6:1-7:21)	Job (6:1-7:21)	Only the Sufferer Knows His Own Grief
6:1	6:1-7 (1-7)	6:1-7 (1-7)	6:1-4 (1-4)	6:1
6:2-7 (2-7)			6:5-7 (5-7)	6:2-20 (2-20)
6:8-13 (8-13)	6:8-10 (8-10)	6:8-13 (8-13)	6:8-13 (8-13)	
	6:11-13 (11-13)			
6:14-23 (14-23)	6:14-23 (14-23)	6:14-23 (14-23)	6:14-23 (14-23)	
				6:21-30 (21-30)
6:24-30 (24-30)	6:24-30 (24-30)	6:24-27 (24-27)	6:24-30 (24-30)	
		6:28-30 (28-30)		

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job addresses Eliphaz's words (Job 4-5) in Job 6-7.
- B. He acknowledges some of the things Eliphaz said (cf. Job 6:3b-4), but rejects most of his speech (cf. Job 6:24-30).
- C. The speeches of the poetic section do not logically follow each other. They are stand-alone literary units. This is not a dialogue but a recital of personal beliefs and creedal statements, used to communicate the central purpose of a later author.
- D. The friends are no help (Job 6:14-23).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1

¹Then Job answered,

6:1-7 This first strophe is Job's response to Eliphaz. He asserts his innocence in figurative imagery (i.e., "the balances," which is legal terminology).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:2-7

²"Oh that my grief were actually weighed
And laid in the balances together with my calamity!
³For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas;
Therefore my words have been rash.
⁴For the arrows of the Almighty are within me,
Their poison my spirit drinks;
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.
⁵Does the wild donkey bray over *his* grass,
Or does the ox low over his fodder?
⁶Can something tasteless be eaten without salt,
Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?
⁷My soul refuses to touch *them*;
They are like loathsome food to me."

6:2 "grief" This NOUN (BDB 495) is spelled differently in Job (cf. Job 5:2; 6:2; 17:7) than the rest of the OT, including other Wisdom books. It refers to Job's vexation/fear (i.e., that God has abandoned him for some reason which he does not know or deserve).

▣ **"were actually weighed"** This is an IMPERFECT VERB and an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root (BDB 1053, KB 1642), which was a grammatical way to express intensity.

Job longs for a fair assessment of his situation. He uses the imagery of commercial scales (BDB 24, cf. Lev. 19:36) in a legal sense (cf. Job 31:6; Isa. 40:15).

6:3b “my words have been rash” This VERB (BDB 534 II, KB 533, *Qal* PERFECT) means “talk wildly” (Arabic root). It is used only here and in Pro. 20:25 in the OT. It seems to refer to Job’s initial comments of Job 3. He attributes this to

1. God’s actions (Job 6:4)
2. his own vexation (Job 6:2-3)
3. animals make sounds when they need something, why not him (Job 6:5)
4. Eliphaz’s comments (Job 4-5) did not help but were repulsive (Job 6:6-7)

6:4 “arrows...poison” These are parallel and refer to the tragedies Job has experienced, which he attributes to God (cf. Ps. 7:12-13; 64:7).

Arrows are used as imagery for divine actions in Deut. 32:23; Ps. 7:13; 18:14; 38:2; 45:5; 64:7; 144:6. This verse is graphic warfare imagery (i.e., poison arrows). Often lightning was referred to as “fiery arrows” from God (cf. 2 Sam. 22:15; Ps. 144:6; Hab. 3:11; Zech. 9:14). We can only imagine Job’s mental confusion as he felt that the God he trusted and served all his life was now his enemy.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty.

▣ **“my spirit”** This is *ruah* (BDB 924), which can denote the Spirit of God (cf. Gen. 1:2) or an individual human (as here).

▣ **“The terrors of God are arrayed against me”** This VERB (BDB 789, KB 884, *Qal* IMPERFECT) denotes a battle field plan for employing troops (i.e., Jdgs. 20:22; 1 Sam. 17:8; 2 Sam. 10:8). The implication is that God has done this (see note at Job 5:18).

The NOUN “terrors” (BDB 130) is used only here and in Ps. 88:16.

6:5-6 These may be cultural proverbs. Animals (Job 6:5) and humans (Job 6:6) do not often complain about their food (i.e., unless they have none). Here it implies Job has a right to complain about his circumstances.

Tremper Longman III’s commentary (p. 138) has a good analysis of the four rhetorical questions of Job 6:5-6. The first two (6:5) expect a “yes” answer (i.e., animals make sounds when they want food), while the next two (6:6) expect a “no” answer (i.e., the comfort Job is receiving from His friends is unacceptable).

6:6b

NASB, NKJV,

TEV, NJB,

Targums “the white of an egg”

NRSV, JPSOA,

REB “juice of mallows”

LXX “in empty words”

The MT has “in the slime of purslane” (BDB 938 CONSTRUCT BDB 321). This plant name is used only here in the OT. BDB says it is a plant with thick, slimy juice.

The second NOUN (BDB 928) is used only twice in the OT.

1. here, of slime
2. 1 Sam. 21:13, spittle/saliva

The translation of the NASB comes from rabbinical tradition. The juice metaphor comes from the ancient versions (*Tyndale OT Commentary*, p. 128).

6:7 Eliphaz’s words are like bad food to Job. They should have been helpful (edible) but they were not (Job 6:14-23).

The MT of this verse has a PRONOUN (הֵמָּה, BDB 241, “they”), but most translations emend it to “loathsome” (אִשָּׁה, BDB 263).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:8-13

- ⁸“Oh that my request might come to pass,
And that God would grant my longing!
⁹Would that God were willing to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and cut me off!
¹⁰But it is still my consolation,
And I rejoice in unsparing pain,
That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
¹¹What is my strength, that I should wait?
And what is my end, that I should endure?
¹²Is my strength the strength of stones,
Or is my flesh bronze?
¹³Is it that my help is not within me,
And that deliverance is driven from me?”

6:8-13 This strophe returns to Job’s desire to die (cf. Job 3). He does not want the life that Eliphaz described in this strophe, which will accompany repentance of sin. Life has lost its flavor (Job 6:6) for Job.

Job 6:11-13 has another series of rhetorical questions (i.e., 5 of them). He has not denied God (Job 6:10) but it seems God is against him (Job 6:4). He sees no way out of this dilemma!

6:9 There is a series of JUSSIVES (IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense) that reflects Job’s prayers.

- 1-2. that God would be willing to crush me (two IMPERFECTS, *Hiphil* and *Piel*)
3. that God would loose His hand (*Hiphil* IMPERFECT)
4. that God would cut me off (*Piel* IMPERFECT)

6:10 This verse is difficult to understand (six footnotes in JPSOA; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 258). It is either

1. his defense that even in all his troubles he has not spoken negatively of God (or “spoke in secret” or “in partial ways”)
2. he is sorry for his “wild” words (cf. Job 6:3b) of Job 3



NASB	“rejoice”
NKJV, NRSV	“exult”
TEV, REB	“leap for joy”
NJB	“a thrill of joy”
JPSOA	“writhed”

The VERB (BDB 698, KB 756, *Piel* COHORTATIVE) basically means “to spring back” (BDB) or “to leap up” (KB). The meaning is uncertain because it is used only here. The LXX and Peshitta seem to translate a different Hebrew text or have combined it with the content of Job 6:11-12. The root, קָדַח (BDB 470), appears in both.

1. hidden (NASB, “denied”)
2. strength (cf. Job 6:11,12 [twice])



NASB, NRSV “in unsparing pain”

NKJV “in anguish”

This FEMININE NOUN (BDB 297) is found only here. The VERB is used of women in labor. Its basic meaning is “to twist” or “to writhe” in pain. This is a strong word to describe how Job feels!

▣ **“unsparing”** This term (BDB 328, KB 328, *Qal* IMPERFECT) normally means “to have compassion” (i.e., Exod. 2:6), but here in Job, it means “unceasing.”



NASB, NRSV,

REB “denied”

NKJV “concealed”

TEV “opposed”

NJB “rebelled against”

JPSOA “suppress”

LXX “belie”

Peshitta “lied against”

The VERB (BDB 470, KB 469, *Piel* PERFECT) basically means “to hide,” or “to conceal” (i.e., Job 27:11). Here it implies that what Job knows about God from the ancient traditions (cf. Job 15:18) he has not

1. denied them
2. hidden them from others (cf. Jos. 7:19; 1 Sam. 3:17-18; 2 Sam. 14:18; Jer. 38:14,25)

▣ **“the words of the Holy One”** This phrasing is unique. It may refer to God or to the traditional wisdom about God (i.e., patriarchal traditions, *NIV Application Commentary*, p. 162). See Special Topic: The Holy One.

6:11

NASB “that I should endure”

NKJV “that I should prolong my life”

NRSV “that I should be patient”

The MT has the Hebrew idiom “lengthen the spirit,” which denotes patience (NRSV, NJB). Lines a and b of Job 6:11 are parallel.

6:13 This verse may refer to Job’s negative evaluation of his comforters (cf. Job 6:14-23), two of whom have not spoken yet but Job anticipates their message (i.e., “the two ways” is always true and accurate).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:14-23

¹⁴**“For the despairing man *there should be* kindness from his friend;**

So that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty.

¹⁵**My brothers have acted deceitfully like a wadi,**

Like the torrents of wadis which vanish,

¹⁶**Which are turbid because of ice**

And into which the snow melts.

¹⁷**When they become waterless, they are silent,**

When it is hot, they vanish from their place.

¹⁸The paths of their course wind along,
They go up into nothing and perish.

¹⁹The caravans of Tema looked,
The travelers of Sheba hoped for them.

²⁰They were disappointed for they had trusted,
They came there and were confounded.

²¹Indeed, you have now become such,
You see a terror and are afraid.

²²Have I said, ‘Give me *something*,’
Or, ‘Offer a bribe for me from your wealth,’

²³Or, ‘Deliver me from the hand of the adversary,’
Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand of the tyrants?’”

6:14-23 This strophe reflects Job’s evaluation of his three friends’ comfort.

1. they should have shown kindness (*hesed*, BDB 338, see Special Topic: Lovingkindness), the first line of 6:14 is uncertain
2. they have acted deceitfully, Job 6:15
3. they are the deceitful ones, Job 6:21

6:14a

NASB, REB	“the despairing man”
NKJV	“to him who is afflicted”
NRSV, Peshitta,	
Vulgate	“those who withhold”
NJB	“refuse”
JPSOA	“to one who fasts”

The MT has the ADJECTIVE (BDB 588) “despairing,” found only here. Some scholars emend to “withhold” (BDB 549). This is followed by several ancient versions but not the Septuagint, which has “mercy has renounced me.” The UBS Text Project (p. 10) gives the MT option a “B” rating (some doubt).

6:14b “fear” This NOUN (BDB 432) means “awe” or “reverence.” It is used in Job several times with God as the object (cf. Job 1:1,8; 2:3; 4:6; 6:14; 28:28; also note Ps. 111:10; Pro. 1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 14:26-27). See Special Topic: Fear.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See note at Job 5:17.

6:15-20 These verses used the imagery of a desert stream (wadi) which is usually dry except in the rainy season.

6:15 “My brothers” This refers to

1. Job’s relatives (LXX, NET Bible)
2. Job’s neighbors
3. Job’s three comforters (TEV, JPSOA)

Number 3 fits the context best because #1 and #2 are never mentioned in this context.

▣ **“acted deceitfully”** This VERB (BDB 93, KB 108, *Qal* PERFECT) is a strong accusation of the friends’ motives (cf. Ps. 59:5; Isa. 24:16).

6:16 The Hebrew imagery is uncertain (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 426) but the overall meaning of the strophe is clear. Job 6:15b and 16 refer to a spring flood, while Job 6:17 refers to the summer dryness; both cause travelers (Job 6:18-20) trouble.

6:17

NASB	“silent”
NKJV	“cease to flow”
NRSV, TEV	“disappear”
NJB	“run dry”
JPSOA	“vanish”

This VERB (BDB 279, KB 279, *Pual* IMPERFECT) occurs only here in the OT. The Arabic cognate means “to flow away.” Lines a and b of Job 6:17 are parallel. The spring wadis completely lose their water in the dry season.

6:18 This verse can refer to

1. the windy path of caravan routes (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 810, #4)
2. the windy course of dry river beds
3. caravans leaving the normal path to try to find water but cannot

6:21a This is a difficult verse in the MT. There have been many suggestions, starting with the LXX and Masoretic scholars (*Qere*). It is best to see the verse as referring to the friends. They are no help, just like the desert wadis.

6:21b What are the friends (PLURAL “you”) afraid of? The NET Bible assumes that they recognize Job’s troubles are from God and are afraid to comment about them lest they offend God.

The NOUN “terror” (BDB 369) is used only here in the OT. It is related to another similar root (BDB 369) used in Gen. 9:2; Job 41:25.

6:22-23 Job has four questions (IMPERATIVES).

1. Have I asked them for something?
2. Has he asked them for a bribe?
3. Has he asked for them to deliver him?
4. Has he asked for them to redeem him?

He asked them for nothing yet still they were unkind, unsympathetic to him.

6:23 “redeem” See Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:24-30

²⁴“Teach me, and I will be silent;

And show me how I have erred.

²⁵How painful are honest words!

But what does your argument prove?

²⁶Do you intend to reprove my words,

When the words of one in despair belong to the wind?

²⁷You would even cast *lots* for the orphans
 And barter over your friend.
²⁸Now please look at me,
 And *see* if I lie to your face.
²⁹Desist now, let there be no injustice;
 Even desist, my righteousness is yet in it.
³⁰Is there injustice on my tongue?
 Cannot my palate discern calamities?

6:24-30 Job asks for an honest, fair evaluation from them. He is willing to listen (i.e., “I will be silent”), if they will be truthful and not charge him with false accusations of secret sins. This will be the essence of all three friends’ speeches! Job must have violated “the two ways.” There is no other option if God is just.

6:24 “Teach me” The VERB (BDB 434, KB 436, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE) normally means “to throw” or “to shoot,” but here is imagery of “instruction” (i.e., Exod. 35:34; Deut. 33:10; 1 Sam. 12:23; Job 8:10; 12:7,8; Ps. 25:8; 32:8; Isa. 28:9).

It is quite possible that Job 6:22-23 is sarcasm and, therefore, this verse is also.

6:25a	
NASB	“How painful”
NKJV, NRSV	“forceful”
TEV	“convincing”
NJB	“borne without resentment”
JPSOA	“trenchant”
REB	“harsh”
LXX	“careless”

The VERB (BDB 599, KB 637, *Niphal* PERFECT) means “to be sick” (BDB) or “to be bad/painful” (KB). The *Hiphil* in Job 16:3 means “provokes.” Scholars have suggested, based on one’s interpretation whether Job 6:25

1. is a contrast (i.e., Job’s words, line a, NASB Study Bible, p. 699)
 2. is a parallel (i.e., both lines reflect the three friends’ words, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 1107)
- Some scholars chose to emend מרץ (BDB 599) to מלץ (BDB 576), which would support #1 above.

6:25b This line of poetry uses an IMPERFECT VERB and an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root (BDB 406, KB 410) to heighten the question.

6:27 This verse is an illustration of the callousness of the three friends. They act toward Job as someone who takes advantage of an orphan (i.e., purchases him for his father’s debt). The VERBS are

1. “cast lots” (lit. “cause to fall”) – BDB 656, KB 709, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT
2. “barter” – BDB 500, KB 497, *Qal* IMPERFECT

This is metaphorical. The three friends have not done this terrible sin. Job may have used this strong hypothetical illustration to show his hurt of what they have/will accuse him of doing.

Here is the theological dilemma—something is wrong.

1. God’s character and justice
2. the basic worldview of “the two ways” (i.e., we reap what we sow)
3. Job’s character (i.e., innocence, cf. Job 6:10,29-30)

It is easiest for the three comforters to question #3.

6:28 Job, in powerful imagery, asked his comforters to take seriously what he has said (i.e., look him in the face).

Notice the two IMPERATIVES, “now please look at me” (lit. “now be willing to look at me”).

1. be willing – BDB 383, KB 381, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, in the sense of “take notice”
2. turn – BDB 815, KB 937, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, in the sense of “look me in the face.” Notice the play on the two words for “turn” (1) Job 6:28 and (2) Job 6:29 (three times).

The NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 33, suggests that Job 6:28b is a curse/oath with “this and more may God do to me (you. . .).” It supports this assertion with Gen. 14:23; Num. 14:23; 1 Sam. 3:14; 19:6; 2 Kgs. 2:2; 3:14; Ps. 132:3-4; Isa. 22:14.

6:29 This verse is a plea from Job that his comforters change their attitude toward him and admit his innocence (i.e., Eliphaz’s charges).

The VERB “turn” (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is used three times in this verse. This word is often translated “repent.” He asks of them what they asked of him!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is Job’s vexation?
2. What is Job referring to by “rash words”?
3. Does Job believe God causes all things, therefore, God must be against him?
4. To what does Job 6:10c refer?
5. Is Job 6:24 sarcasm?
6. In Job 6:25 do both lines refer to Job’s three friends?

JOB 7

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job's Life Seems Futile	Job: My Suffering Is Comfortless	Reply of Job (6:1-7:21)	Job (6:1-7:21)	(6:1-7:21)
7:1-6 (1-6)	7:1-5 (1-5)	7:1-6 (1-6)	7:1-6 (1-6)	7:1-21 (1-21)
	7:6-10 (6-10)			
7:7-10 (7-10)		7:7-10 (7-10)	7:7-11 (7-11)	
7:11-21 (11-21)	7:11-16 (11-16)	7:11-21 (11-21)		
			7:12-16 (12-16)	
	7:17-21 (17-21)		7:17-21 (17-21)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter forms a literary unit with chapter 6 (i.e., Job's first response to Eliphaz). However, Job 7 is addressed to God, while Job 6 is addressed to Eliphaz.
- B. It seems that Job 7:5 is a description of Job's disease, which may be elephantitis.

- C. Notice the number of times Job addressed God, accusing Him of acting against him in some way.
1. Job 7:3, both lines
 2. Job 7:8b
 3. Job 7:12b
 4. Job 7:14a
 5. Job 7:16a
 6. Job 7:18
 7. Job 7:19
 8. Job 7:20c
 9. Job 7:21a,c
- Job's main fear and burden is that his God has not only rejected him but purposely attacked him.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:1-6

¹**“Is not man forced to labor on earth,
And *are not* his days like the days of a hired man?**
²**As a slave who pants for the shade,
And as a hired man who eagerly waits for his wages,**
³**So am I allotted months of vanity,
And nights of trouble are appointed me.**
⁴**When I lie down I say,
‘When shall I arise?’
But the night continues,
And I am continually tossing until dawn.**
⁵**My flesh is clothed with worms and a crust of dirt,
My skin hardens and runs.**
⁶**My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle,
And come to an end without hope.”**

7:1 “man” In the first strophe (i.e., Job 7:1-6) Job characterizes himself and mankind as

1. a man – BDB 60, “*enosh*,” cf. Job 7:17
2. a slave – BDB 713, cf. Job 7:2
3. a hired man (lit. “hireling”) – BDB 969, cf. Job 7:2; 14:6

Job has no control over his life or circumstances.

▣ **“forced to labor on earth”** This phrase could have two orientations.

1. the Hebrew view of life affected by Genesis 3
2. Job's view of life as hard (cf. Job 5:7; 10:17; 14:1)

Labor is not a bad thing. Adam labored in the Garden of Eden before the Fall (i.e., Gen. 2:15). But here, the connotation is forced labor, endless labor, hard labor.

The Rotherhams' Emphasized Bible takes the first NOUN (BDB 838, KB 994), not as “serve,” but as “warfare,” which is one meaning of the root, צָבָא. AB (p. 57) asserts that it refers to military conscription (i.e., forced service). In Isa. 7:20 and Jer. 46:21 “hireling” (Job 7:1b,2b, BDB 969) refers to mercenaries (additional warfare image).

7:3 “allotted. . .appointed” The first VERB (BDB 635, KB 686, *Hophal* PERFECT) denotes the tribal allotments by God in the book of Joshua. It was used of giving one his inheritance. Job’s inheritance was months of vanity (i.e., “nothingness,” BDB 996).

The second VERB (BDB 584, KB 599, *Piel* PERFECT) is the VERB also used to describe God’s activity in the book of Jonah (cf. Jon. 1:17; 4:6,7,8).

Job feels that everything that has happened in his life is from God.

1. the blessings
2. now the problems

See Contextual Insights, C.

7:4 “tossing” This root (BDB 622) is found only here in the OT. It may be related to the VERB “to flee,” “to wander,” “to flutter.” It obviously refers to the restlessness of mind and body in sleepless nights. The “why” of Job’s life is as painful as the physical problems.

7:5 “crust of dirt” The NASB’s “crust” (BDB 159) occurs only here. NET Bible (p. 775, #19) assumes it comes from “clod.” The REB and NJB translate it as “scabs.”

7:6a The author uses the imagery of a weaver’s loom (cf. Jdgs. 16:14) to describe how quickly Job’s life is passing by (i.e., little time left, cf. Job 9:25). On one hand Job seeks death but on another he grieves that his life is passing away so quickly. This verse surely reflects his discouragement and depression.

7:6b What a sad, discouraging phrase (cf. Job 14:19; 17:15; 19:10). Job vacillates between

1. hope – Job 13:15; 19:25-27
2. no hope

It is possible to see the Hebrew root (BDB 876) as “cord” or “thread” (cf. Jos. 2:18,21), which is a better parallel to Job 7:6a (see JPSOA footnote, p. 1514).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:7-10

⁷“Remember that my life is *but* breath;

My eye will not again see good.

⁸The eye of him who sees me will behold me no longer;

Your eyes *will be* on me, but I will not be.

⁹When a cloud vanishes, it is gone,

So he who goes down to Sheol does not come up.

¹⁰He will not return again to his house,

Nor will his place know him anymore.”

7:7-10 This strophe notes the transitoriness of human life (cf. Job 4:19; 7:16; 10:9; 14:1-2; Ps. 90:5-6; 103:14-15; Isa. 40:6-8). Job is calling on God to remember (BDB 269, KB 269, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) the fragileness and fleetingness of human life. Job 7:9 is in contrast to Job 19:25-27. Job is quoting his own theology but hoping for a greater understanding.

7:8b “but I will not be” This seems to express non-being (cf. Job 7:21). However, Hebrew thought affirmed a conscious but silent existence in *Sheol* (cf. Job 7:9b, see Special Topic: *Sheol*).

7:9-10 These verses speak of the finality of death (cf. Job 10:21; 14:10,13; 16:22). This truth makes Job 14:14-15 all the more shocking and prophetic. Job felt there was something more than the grave (cf. Job 19:25-29, which for him was an advocate at the heavenly council). God created humans for fellowship and He will want that fellowship (cf. Job 14:15b). This is what the shock of Job 7:17 is all about! This thought fits the shocking conclusion of Job 7:21d (cf. 7:8).

ANE literature calls death “the land of no return” (cf. Job 7:10a).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:11-21

¹¹“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
¹²Am I the sea, or the sea monster,
That You set a guard over me?
¹³If I say, ‘My bed will comfort me,
My couch will ease my complaint,’
¹⁴Then You frighten me with dreams
And terrify me by visions;
¹⁵So that my soul would choose suffocation,
Death rather than my pains.
¹⁶I waste away; I will not live forever.
Leave me alone, for my days are *but* a breath.
¹⁷What is man that You magnify him,
And that You are concerned about him,
¹⁸That You examine him every morning
And try him every moment?
¹⁹Will You never turn Your gaze away from me,
Nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle?
²⁰Have I sinned? What have I done to You,
O watcher of men?
Why have You set me as Your target,
So that I am a burden to myself?
²¹Why then do You not pardon my transgression
And take away my iniquity?
For now I will lie down in the dust;
And You will seek me, but I will not be.”

7:11-21 This strophe expresses Job’s feeling (Job 7:11, two COHORTATIVES) of God’s actions toward him.

1. Job 7:12 – the sea and the sea monster (cf. Job 3:8; Ps. 74:13-14) were, in ANE mythology, God’s enemies who He subdued
2. Job 7:14 – God sent fearful dreams and visions (caused him to wish for death, Job 7:15-16)
3. Job 7:17 – reflects Ps. 8:4 and 144:3, but in a negative sense
4. Job 7:18 – God examines him for judgment every morning (cf. Ps. 73:14), every moment
5. Job 7:19 – God will not turn His gaze away, even for a moment (cf. Job 7:16, “leave me alone,” *Qal* IMPERATIVE; also note Job 14:6)

6. Job 7:20 – God has set him as a target (cf. Job 6:4)
7. Job 7:21 – God will not pardon his sin (i.e., undefined, cf. Job 7:20a), cf. Job 9:28; 10:14

7:11 “my spirit. . .my soul” These refer to Job’s life using imagery from Gen. 2:7.

1. spirit – *ruah* (BDB 924, cf. Job 7:7a, see Special Topic: Breath, Wind, Spirit)
2. soul – *nephesh* (BDB 659, see notes online at Gen. 35:18)

7:12b This line may refer to “muzzling” (AB, p. 60, which quotes Dahood’s translation of Ps. 68:22b as a parallel) and, therefore, would relate to Job’s speaking freely in Job 7:11. But the NET Bible (p. 776) asserts that this suggestion is untenable (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, #80, pp. 270-271). If so, the imagery is still the ANE creation imagery (see *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 562-565, 578-580).

7:15a “suffocation” This NOUN (BDB 338) occurs only here but the VERB form is used in 2 Sam. 17:23 and Nah. 2:12.

It is possible that the word translated by NASB as “soul” (*nephesh*, BDB 659, KB 711) has the basic meaning, “windpipe opened for breathing,” if so (KB 712), then “throat” would fit “suffocation/strangling” better.

The *Tyndale OT Commentaries*, *Job* (p. 137) suggest that behind several of the terms in this section is Canaanite mythological imagery; possibly the feminine goddess of death used strangling (note FEMININE VERB) or the god of death, *Mot*. The *Anchor Bible Commentaries* (AB) of Psalms and Job also make these lexical connections from Ugarit.

7:15b The MT has “death rather than my bones.” The NASB and NJB support the emendation, “rather than my bones,” מַעֲצָמוֹתִי (which the UBS Text Project [p. 13] gives an “A” rating [very high probability]) to “rather than my pain/suffering,” מַעֲצֻבוֹתִי (AB, p. 61).

7:17 “man” This is the Hebrew word *enosh*, which implies frail mankind (cf. Job 4:17; 7:1; Ps. 9:20; 103:15), from the root *anash* (BDB 60 I), “to be weak” or “to be sick.” The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 454, lists several places where *enosh* is used in Job and its apparent connotation.

1. Job 7:1 – hardships in life
2. Job 14:19 – hopelessness
3. Job 28:13 – lack of understanding
4. Job 25:6 – man described as “maggot” and “worm”
5. Job 33:12 – man is far less than God (cf. Job 4:17)

Here it seems to denote humankind as the special object of God’s love and attention (cf. Psalms 8; 144).

7:19 What irony that Job, who seeks God’s presence and fellowship, asks Him to stop looking at him (cf. Job 14:6). Here is the dilemma of fallen humanity. We desire fellowship with the God who created us in His image/likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) for fellowship (cf. Gen. 3:8) but our sin causes us to shrink back from/fear Him.

7:20a This is the question Job cannot answer. He feels himself innocent! He does not understand why “the two ways” has failed!

Some translators begin Job 7:20 with an “if” (NRSV, NJB, JPSOA, REB, LXX, Peshitta); others make it a question (NASB, NKJV, TEV, NAB). From the Hebrew text either is possible; neither is certain.

▣ **“O watcher of men”** This title for God is found only here but it does denote

1. God’s presence on the earth

2. God's watchfulness on His special creation, mankind
3. God's sovereign knowledge of human actions and motives (i.e., weighs the heart)

▣ **“target”** This Hebrew root (BDB 803) is found only here in the OT. BDB suggests a connection with the *Hiphil* PERFECT of Isa. 53:6c (BDB 803, KB 910).



NASB, NKJV,
 JPSOA **“to myself”**
 NRSV, TEV,
 NJB, REB,
 LXX **“to you”**

The MT (originally had “to you,” but the Masoretic scholars changed it) has “to myself” (BDB 752). The UBS Text Project (p. 14) suggests “to you” and gives a “B” rating (some doubt).

7:21a,b These two lines affirm that Job recognizes he is not sinless, but Job 7:20a asks God to identify the “sin” for which he has received such overwhelming judgment (cf. Job 1-2). Remember, “blameless” is not the same as “sinless.”

7:21c “I will lie down in the dust” This is an allusion to the grave (cf. Job 3:13; 17:16; 20:11; 21:25; Ps. 22:15,29; 30:9; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; as is *Sheol*, cf. Job 7:9b). Mankind is made of “dust” (cf. Gen. 2:7) and will return to “dust” (cf. Gen. 3:19).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. List the things Job accuses God of doing to him.
2. What kind of disease does Job 7:5 describe?
3. If Job 7:8 is addressed to God, then what does the last phrase mean? (cf. Job. 7:21)
4. How is Job 7:18 related to Psalm 8? Do they both expect positive answers?
5. Does Job 7:20 show that Job admits he has sinned?

JOB 8

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Bildad Says God Rewards the Good	Bildad: Job Should Repent	First Discourse of Bildad	Bildad	The Unswerving Course of God's Justice
8:1-7 (2-7)	8:1	8:1-7 (2-7)	8:1-7 (1-7)	8:1
	8:2-7 (2-7)			8:2-7 (2-7)
8:8-10 (8-10)	8:8-10 (8-10)	8:8-10 (8-10)	8:8-10 (8-10)	8:8-22 (8-22)
8:11-22 (11-22)	8:11-18 (11-18)	8:11-19 (11-19)	8:11-15 (11-15)	
			8:16-19 (16-19)	
	8:19-22 (19-22)			
		8:20-22 (20-22)	8:20-22 (20-22)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This is the first recorded speech of Bildad (which I think is a literary production, as are all the speeches, to make theological points). In Job 6-7, Job's first response to Eliphaz includes the other two comforters by the use of PLURALS.

- B. This chapter continues the emphasis on
 - 1. God’s justice – Job 8:3 (I think this is the key issue to the book of Job)
 - 2. the reality of “the two ways” – i.e., Job 8:20
- C. Notice the number of “ifs” (BDB 49, cf. Job 8:4,5,6,18) in this chapter. The key thought is “if” you repent of your sin, God will fully restore you.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:1-7

¹Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,
²“How long will you say these *things*,
 And the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?
³Does God pervert justice?
 Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?
⁴If your sons sinned against Him,
 Then He delivered them into the power of their transgression.
⁵If you would seek God
 And implore the compassion of the Almighty,
⁶If you are pure and upright,
 Surely now He would rouse Himself for you
 And restore your righteous estate.
⁷Though your beginning was insignificant,
 Yet your end will increase greatly.”

8:1 Bildad may be picking up on Job’s words in Job 6:26; also note 16:3. It is also possible the “how long” of Bildad reflects the “how long” of Job 7:19.

8:3 For me this is the key question of the book. If Job is innocent and “the two ways” is not changeable, then is God just (cf. Gen. 18:25; Job 34:12)?

▣ **“the Almighty”** This title for God is very common in Job. See Special Topic: The Almighty.

▣ **“pervert”** This VERB (BDB 736, KB 804, *Piel* IMPERFECT) is used twice, cf. Job 34:12. Its basic meaning is “to be bent” or “to be crooked.” God is viewed as “straight,” “right,” “just,” which all reflect the Hebrew word “righteousness” (see Special Topic: Righteousness). Most of the Hebrew and Greek words for “sin” are a deviation from the standard, straightedge, which is God.

8:4 “if” See Contextual Insights, C.

▣ **“your sons”** Basically, Bildad is accusing Job’s children of sinning and that is why they were killed (Eliphaz also implies this in Job 5:4)!

Notice the first two prose chapters set the literary stage for this comment, therefore, they cannot be a later addition by a second author.

▣ **“into the power (lit. hand) of their transgression”** Bildad personifies “sin” as an active agent of judgment. This phrase occurs only here.

Paul personifies sin as a king in Rom. 5:21 and a slave master in Rom. 6:20,23.

8:5 “seek God” This VERB (BDB 1007, KB 1465, *Piel* IMPERFECT) denotes a continual diligent search. Here, it is used of seeking God (cf. Ps. 63:1; 78:34; Pro. 8:17 [lit. wisdom]; Isa. 26:9; Hos. 5:15).

This basic meaning is also seen in

1. Job 7:21 – God will seek Job and not find him (cf. Job 7:8)
2. Pro. 1:28 – there will come a time when covenant people seek God but He refuses to be found

▣ **“implore the compassion”** This VERB (BDB 335, KB 334, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT) means “to seek the favor of.” It is parallel to “seek.” It is used three times in Solomon’s dedication of the temple prayer (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:33, 47,59). It is a call to repentance. This Job cannot do, for he believes he has not violated faith with God.

8:6 This is the logical result of “the two ways” (i.e., we reap what we sow, see full note online at Gal. 6:7).

▣ **“pure”** This ADJECTIVE (BDB 269) is used by Job

1. of his theology in Job 11:4
2. of his thoughts/prayers in Job 16:17
3. of himself in Job 33:9

It must be remembered, Job does not claim sinlessness (cf. Job 7:20), but he does claim that the tragedy he has experienced does not fit his life of faith and obedience to God (cf. Pro. 16:2; 20:11). He has not violated a known command from God (i.e., his cultural knowledge of God’s will).

▣ **“upright”** This is the key word (BDB 449) used to describe Job in Job 1:1,8; 2:3.

8:7 This verse is surprising in light of Job’s wealth, described in chapter 1.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:8-10

⁸**“Please inquire of past generations,
And consider the things searched out by their fathers.
⁹For we are *only* of yesterday and know nothing,
Because our days on earth are as a shadow.
¹⁰Will they not teach you *and* tell you,
And bring forth words from their minds?”**

8:8-10 This strophe focuses on the traditional wisdom of the elders (cf. Job 15:18; 20:4). The problems are

1. we do not know to whom this refers (i.e., Jewish or Edomite sources)
2. we do not know the date of the writing of Job

8:9 This is another of many verses in Job about the frailty and fleetingness of human life (i.e., Job 14:2; 1 Chr. 29:15; Ps. 102:11; 109:23; 144:4; Eccl. 6:12; 8:13).

This same term “shadow” (BDB 853) can also be used in a positive sense (i.e., God as protector, see Special Topic: Shadow as a Metaphor for Protection and Care).

8:10 Bildad is accusing Job of not listening to or receiving traditional wisdom (i.e., the two ways, i.e., Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:11-22

- ¹¹“Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh?
Can the rushes grow without water?
¹²While it is still green *and* not cut down,
Yet it withers before any *other* plant.
¹³So are the paths of all who forget God;
And the hope of the godless will perish,
¹⁴Whose confidence is fragile,
And whose trust a spider’s web.
¹⁵He trusts in his house, but it does not stand;
He holds fast to it, but it does not endure.
¹⁶He thrives before the sun,
And his shoots spread out over his garden.
¹⁷His roots wrap around a rock pile,
He grasps a house of stones.
¹⁸If he is removed from his place,
Then it will deny him, *saying*, ‘I never saw you.’
¹⁹Behold, this is the joy of His way;
And out of the dust others will spring.
²⁰Lo, God will not reject *a man* of integrity,
Nor will He support the evildoers.
²¹He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
And your lips with shouting.
²²Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,
And the tent of the wicked will be no longer.”

8:11-22 This strophe is a continuation of the theological focus on “the two ways” of ancient ANE traditional wisdom.

There seems to be a change of subject at Job 8:19. The JPSOA makes Job 8:8-22 one strophe.

8:13a This is an implied accusation of Job. He cannot be innocent. He must be guilty of some sin!

Those who “forget God” (BDB 1013, KB 1489, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) will perish (cf. Ps. 9:17; 50:22). Notice they once knew Him but for whatever reason, have forgotten. See Special Topic: Apostasy.

8:13b “the hope of the godless” Exactly what this “hope” (BDB 876) involves is not stated but it refers to things obtainable in this life, such as fame, wealth, power, position of influence, etc.

8:14 This is imagery of the false confidence (BDB 492) and trust (BDB 105) of the sinner.

8:14a

NASB, NIV “fragile”
NKJV “shall be cut off”
NRSV, NJB,
JPSOA, REB “is gossamer”
TEV -omit-

This VERB (BDB 876, KB 1083, *Qal* IMPERFECT) occurs only here in the OT. The NKJV assumes it is connected to an Arabic root, “to cut off” or “trim.” The NRSV (and others) makes it parallel to “spider’s web” (i.e., “gossamer,” which refers to spider silk). NASB assumes the thread “snaps” (BDB suggestion).

8:15-18 This reflects Job 7:10, “his place,” and implies his past life, home, friends, labor, etc. It is uncertain if all the verses are negative. It is possible that Job 8:18 is positive.

8:16-17 These verses describe the wicked as a fast growing plant (i.e., some successes in life) that does not last (cf. Psalm 73).

8:19a The NASB and NKJV translations have this referring to God, while NRSV, TEV, JPSOA, REB, and LXX have it referring to the evil person.

Job 8:20-22 surely refers to God’s activity (i.e., the two ways).

The word “joy” (שִׂמְחָה, BDB 965) is supposed by some (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 1115) to be “something rotten” (שִׂמְחָה, KB 1314). It is said to represent the same root but a different meaning (cf. NJB, NAB), possibly from an Arabic root.

8:19b This implies the wicked person is destroyed (cf. Job 20:5) and other people (i.e., plants) take their place in the garden (i.e., life). Whether these new plants (people) are righteous or wicked is not stated because they have not yet lived and made their choices.

8:20 “a man of integrity” This word (BDB 1070) is used of Job in Job 1:1,8; 2:3.

8:21a This may be in contrast to the “joy” of Job 8:19a. The joy of the wicked is brief but the laughter of the righteous is enduring. So Bildad encourages Job to repent and be happy.

8:22b “the tent of the wicked” This is an anachronistic reference (i.e., Jdgs. 7:8; 1 Sam. 13:2; 2 Sam. 20:1) to an abode, which may relate to Job 7:10; 8:15-18 (i.e., “his place”).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. If Eliphaz trusts in the authority of “mystical” revelation (cf. Job 4:12-21), what does Bildad assert as “authority”?
2. Why is Job 8:3 a key theological verse?
3. Does Job 8:6 imply Job is pure and upright or that he will be if he repents and seeks God?
4. Why is Job 8:7 so hard to explain?
5. What does “his place” refer to?

JOB 9

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says There Is No Arbitrator Between God and Man	Job: There Is No Mediation	Reply of Job (9:1-10:22)	Job (9:1-10:22)	God's Justice Is Above All Law (9:1-10:22)
9:1-12 (1-12)	9:1	9:1-12 (2-12)	9:1-10 (2-10)	9:1-13 (2-13)
	9:2-13 (2-13)		9:11-24 (11-24)	
9:13-24 (13-24)		9:13-20 (13-20)		
	9:14-20 (14-20)			9:14-35 (14-35)
	9:21-24 (21-24)	9:21-24 (21-24)		
9:25-35 (25-35)	9:25-31 (25-31)	9:25-35 (25-35)	9:25-35 (25-35)	
	9:32-35 (32-35)			

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This is Job's response (i.e., Job 9-10) to Bildad's speech in Job 8. Surprisingly, there are more literary connections to Eliphaz's speech of Job 6-7.

- B. Job feels he is innocent and wants to present his case to God (cf. Job 5:8; 9:3,14-24,32; 10:1-7; 13:15-19; 23:1-7; 40:2,3-5).
In Job 9:1-24 Job addresses his three comforters but in Job 9:25-10:22 he addresses God directly (i.e., in Job 9:30-35 he talks about God, not to Him).
- C. Job characterizes God as he did in Job 5:9-16. This list introduces the attributes of God's power by "who. . ." Job is helpless before the God of such power.
1. He is wise in heart
 2. He is mighty in strength
 3. who can "dispute" (lit. "stiffened his neck against")
 4. He removes mountains
 5. He overturns them
 6. Who shakes the earth out of its place, cf. Ps. 18:7; Isa. 13:13; Joel 2:10; 3:16
 7. Who commands the sun not to shine
 8. Who sets a seal on the stars
 9. Who stretches out the heavens
 10. Who tramples down (lit., "treads upon the heights of") the waves of the sea
 11. Who makes the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades (i.e., constellations of stars)
 12. Who makes the chambers of the south (i.e., places from which weather comes, cf. Job 37:9)
 13. Who does great things (cf. Job 5:9)
 14. Who does unfathomable things
 15. Who does wondrous works without number
 16. He is not limited to the five senses of mankind (Job 9:11)
 17. No human can stop Him (Job 9:12; 11:10; Eccl. 8:4; Dan. 4:35)
- D. In the last strophe (Job 9:25-35) Job restates the fleetingness of human life. He cannot address God, so what can he do?
1. he can forget his complaint against the
 - a. unfairness of God
 - b. inaccuracy of "the two ways"
 2. he can attempt to cleanse himself (Job 9:30)
 3. he needs an umpire (i.e., a legal advocate) in the heavenly council (Job 9:33-35); this theme reoccurs in Job 16:19; 19:25-27

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:1-12

- ¹Then Job answered,
²"In truth I know that this is so;
 But how can a man be in the right before God?
³If one wished to dispute with Him,
 He could not answer Him once in a thousand *times*.
⁴Wise in heart and mighty in strength,
 Who has defied Him without harm?
⁵It is God who removes the mountains, they know not *how*,
 When He overturns them in His anger;

⁶Who shakes the earth out of its place,
And its pillars tremble;
⁷Who commands the sun not to shine,
And sets a seal upon the stars;
⁸Who alone stretches out the heavens
And tramples down the waves of the sea;
⁹Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;
¹⁰Who does great things, unfathomable,
And wondrous works without number.
¹¹Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him;
Were He to move past *me*, I would not perceive Him.
¹²Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him?
Who could say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’”

9:2a This line of poetry implies that Job agrees with much of what Bildad has said about God and His usual/normal way with humans (i.e., the two ways). Job sees himself as a unique case. “The two ways” are true but do not apply to every situation. This assertion is true of all Wisdom Literature. It is a general statement of normal truth but does not apply to each and every situation. See Special Topic: Wisdom Literature.

9:2b This is a central question (cf. Job 4:17; 25:4). Legal terminology is recurrent in this chapter (cf. Job 9:2-4,14-24,30-35). Basically he is asking how he can present the case of his innocence (i.e., not sinlessness) before God. God is too pure, too powerful, too majestic (cf. Job 38-41).

9:3-12 In this strophe Job lists the reasons why neither he nor any human can dispute with the Great, Majestic, Creator God. See Contextual Insights, C. f. for the list of divine attributes.

9:3 “thousand” This number is used here in a symbolic sense. See Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*). Line b suggests that God would ask numerous questions that mere humans could not answer (i.e., Job 38-41).

9:4 “wise in heart” In Job’s litany of God’s power (cf. Job 9:4-12) this is the only mention of “wisdom.”



NASB	“defied”
NKJV, Peshitta	“hardened <i>himself</i> ”
NRSV	“resisted”
TEV, REB	“stand up against”
NJB	“defy”
JPSOA	“challenged”
LXX	“being unyielding”

The MT has “hardened” (BDB 904, KB 1151, *Hiphil* PERFECT). BDB calls it “a figure of obstinacy” and translates the VERB here as “show stubbornness.”

This root is used often in connection with

1. heart – Exod. 7:3; 13:15; Ps. 95:8; Pro. 28:14

2. neck – Exod. 32:9; 33:3,5; 34:9; Deut. 9:13; 10:16; 2 Kgs. 17:14; 2 Chr. 30:8; 36:13; Neh. 9:16,17,29; Pro. 29:1; Jer. 7:26; 17:23; 19:15
3. spirit – Deut. 2:30



NASB	“without harm”
NKJV	“prospered”
NRSV	“succeeded”
JPSOA	“came out whole”
REB	“unscathed”
LXX	“endured”
Peshitta	“had peace”

This VERB (BDB 1022, KB 1532, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*) in the *Qal* usually means “be complete,” “be finished,” or “ended.” Here only BDB suggests it means “be sound” or “be uninjured.” This is the VERB form of *shalom* (see Special Topic: Peace [OT]).

9:7-9 These verses reflect the emptiness of polytheism, as do Genesis 1 and Exodus 7-11. The superstition related to the heavenly lights and the superstition related to nature (i.e., natural phenomena and animals) are untrue because both are under God’s control. He is “the” one and only Creator (cf. Amos 4:13)! See Special Topic: Monotheism.

9:7b “And sets a seal upon the stars” John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary* (p. 167) and the IVP *Bible Background Commentary* (p. 500) both assert that this VERB (BDB 367, KB 364, *Qal* IMPERFECT), when used with the PREPOSITION כִּנְּךָ, BDB 126, means “to lock something in.” Therefore, this line of poetry asserts God’s proscribing the constellations’ (Job 9:9) paths through the night sky (i.e., imagery of God as the only Creator and Sustainer, cf. Isa. 45:12). The ANE mythology connected to the night lights (i.e., Gen. 1:14-19) is false. Job is a monotheist (see Special Topic: Monotheism).

9:8a “Who alone. . .” This is an affirmation of monotheism amidst a polytheistic ANE culture. This is the uniqueness of Israel’s God.

9:8b This has two possible orientations.

1. “sea” refers to ANE mythology of the waters of chaos which YHWH defeated (see note at Job 9:13b)
2. “sea” denotes YHWH’s separating the land and sea and drawing boundaries which the sea cannot pass (cf. Job 38:10-11; Gen. 1:9; Ps. 104:9; Pro. 8:29; Jer. 5:22)

Both options stress YHWH as the true Creator, Sustainer of the physical realm.

9:9 God as the creator and controller of the lights in the night sky is also seen in Job 38:31-32. To the ancients these stars were seen as gods controlling human destiny, but not so!



NASB, NKJV,	
NRSV, LXX	“the chambers of the south”
TEV, REB	“the stars of the south”
NJB	“the Mansions of the South”
JPSOA	“the chambers of the south wind”

This part of Job 9:9b refers to

1. more star constellations (cf. NET Bible)
2. the place wind/weather is kept for God's use (i.e., Job 37:9)

9:10 This is a summary statement, like Job 5:9. For a list of the great things God has done, see Job 5:8-16.

9:11 Humans do not comprehend God's actions (cf. Job 23:8-9; Eccl. 11:5). This is similar to John 3:8. God's ways are beyond our understanding (cf. Isa. 55:8-11). God is active. History and our individual lives are not without plan or purpose.

The invisibility of God is in sharp contrast with the idols of the ANE. The wonders (i.e., actions) of God (Job 9:10) are present but He is unseen. YHWH is the "unseen hand" (i.e., Esther) of this world. He is known by

1. His acts
2. His revelation
3. and by faith (cf. Job 42:5)

9:12a "snatch away" This VERB (BDB 368, KB 365, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is found only here in the OT. The root is related to the NOUN "prey animal" or "robber" (cf. Pro. 23:28). Therefore, it denotes an attack by a wild animal (cf. NJB). God is God. He will do whatever He desires and no one can stop Him (cf. Job 10:7; 11:10; Romans 9).

9:12b Basically this is what Job is doing (i.e., questioning God's ways with humans). Job is asking, "What are You doing?"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:13-24

- ¹³**"God will not turn back His anger;
Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab.**
- ¹⁴**How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words before Him?**
- ¹⁵**For though I were right, I could not answer;
I would have to implore the mercy of my judge.**
- ¹⁶**If I called and He answered me,
I could not believe that He was listening to my voice.**
- ¹⁷**For He bruises me with a tempest
And multiplies my wounds without cause.**
- ¹⁸**He will not allow me to get my breath,
But saturates me with bitterness.**
- ¹⁹**If *it is a matter* of power, behold, *He is* the strong one!
And if *it is a matter* of justice, who can summon Him?**
- ²⁰**Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me;
Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.**
- ²¹**I am guiltless;
I do not take notice of myself;
I despise my life.**

²²It is *all* one; therefore I say,
‘He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.’
²³If the scourge kills suddenly,
He mocks the despair of the innocent.
²⁴The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;
He covers the faces of its judges.
If *it* is not *He*, then who is it?”

9:13-24 The essence of this strophe is Job 9:14a. God is too powerful to resist. Job even goes so far as to accuse God of unfairness.

1. he is innocent (Job 9:15,20,21, notice the repeated refrain), but God will not hear him
2. the innocent are destroyed (Job 9:22) along with the wicked (cf. Gen. 18:23,25)
3. God mocks the despair of the innocent (cf. Job 9:23b)
4. but in some cases, the wicked still prosper (cf. Job 9:24)

This strophe has several words with “legal” connotations. This imagery reflects the heavenly court (i.e., Job 1-2).

9:13b “the helpers of Rahab” This imagery refers to the ANE mythology of creation (i.e., chaos sea monster, cf. Job 26:12-13; Ps. 89:9-10; Isa. 51:9). Later the word “Rahab” (BDB 923) came to be identified with the Nile River (i.e., Egypt, cf. Isa. 30:7).

This is further imagery of God as the Creator (cf. Job 9:3-10).

The “helper” may be ANE mythology about lesser gods serving the higher gods (i.e., *Tiamat*, see Introduction to Genesis, VI online). I have benefitted greatly from John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. The OT was written within ANE culture and uses its imagery. This does not imply the reality of that imagery!

A helpful article is G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, chapter 13, “The Language of Myth,” shows that the term “myth” has several connotations.

9:16 This verse epitomizes Job’s discouragement. He does not sense God’s presence or ways (Job 9:11-12). He feels he cannot truly stand before God to defend his integrity.

The word “believe” (BDB 52, KB 63, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is the same VERB used in Gen. 15:6, expressing Abraham’s faith. Job has faith in God but bemoans His transcendence! The traditional theology of “the two ways” (i.e., we reap what we sow) has confused him. He believes God should be for him and with him (as He was in the past), but in the fog of pain and despair, he feels he has become a victim of Divine power (i.e., “without cause,” cf. Job 9:17b).

9:17

NASB, TEV	“bruises”
NKJV, NRSV,	
NJB, JPSOA,	
LXX	“crushes”
REB	“strikes”

This VERB (BDB 1003, KB 1446, *Qal* IMPERFECT) occurs only in three passages.

1. Gen. 3:15
2. Job 9:17
3. Psalm 139:11

The two best conjectures of meanings come from cognate roots.

1. trample, crush – Akkadian
2. strike, bruise – Syrian



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV “with a tempest”

NJB, JPSOA,

Targum, Peshitta “for one hair”

REB “for a trifle”

LXX “with gloom”

The MT has “in a storm” (שָׁרַע, BDB 973). The UBS Text Project (p. 16) gives this a “C” rating (considerable doubt). By changing the vowels, the translation “for one hair” (שֵׁערָ, BDB 972) is possible.

Both possibilities fit the context. It seems to me “for a trifle” fits Job’s feelings. It is not just that God has “caused” these bad things to happen, but WHY? Job does not consider himself “sinless,” but he does assert his “innocence.” Whatever his “sin” it does not fit the level of judgment that has fallen on him!

9:18a This may relate to Job 7:19. It speaks of God’s constant holy presence (cf. Job 10:20). He gives no space for a human to recoup or renew. Job feels he is constantly under the gaze and judgment of the powerful God (cf. Job 9:4-10).

9:19 This state Job’s predicament.

1. God is the strong one!
2. Who can summon Him to court?

God is God and there is no other! What frail, weak, fleeting, imperfect human can take Him to court? Here is the tension so hard to explain.

1. God is sovereign!
2. Can He be all powerful and unfair (i.e., ethical)?
3. Can He be all powerful but allow the innocent to suffer and the wicked to prosper?

The book of Job questions God’s character and ways with His creation!

There is some textual doubt about the pronoun in Job 9:19b. The UBS Text Project (p. 16) gives this a “B” rating (some doubt). The Peshitta, NRSV, TEV, and NJB have “him.” The JPSOA and REB try to combine both.

1. JPSOA – “who will summon Him for me?”
2. REB – “who can compel him to give me a hearing?”

9:20 This is a difficult verse to see the connections between the two lines of poetry. Job 9:21 helps interpret it. Job feels innocent (cf. Job 9:15,20,21; 10:7; 12:4; 23:11-12) and helpless before God! He despises his life but questions God’s justice! This is “the” theological issue of the book. It is not answered in a logical sense but in a relational sense. Job never knows “why” but he comes to trust more and more in “Who.”

9:22 This verse contradicts “the two ways.” Job has lived the righteous life, what has happened? Is the problem the character of God? Is the problem “the two ways”? He believes that he is not the problem (Job 9:21). Of the two choices, it is “the two ways” that must be modified!

9:23b This line of poetry may refer to Eliphaz’s statement in Job 4:7. “The two ways” have gotten completely out of control. Something is wrong in the universe. Is it

1. God

2. Job or
3. the two ways?

9:24 The earth is not a fair, righteous place. The wicked often succeed (cf. Job 10:3; 12:6; 16:11). How does this fit with the biblical revelation of a good, loving, all-powerful God?

The book of Job does not answer this question. We want it to but it does not! The full revelation of the NT brings this theological issue into the full light of truth. Job does not know about the dialogue of God and the accuser in Job 1-2 and he does not have complete knowledge of “the Redeemer” or “heavenly advocate.” This will come only with the NT.

One of the best books on evil and suffering is John Wenham’s, *The Goodness of God*. It is this issue that causes doubt among modern western people more than any other.

9:24b Bribery or personal interest is what blinded the eyes of judges (cf. Exod. 23:8; Deut. 10:17; 16:19; Pro 8:8,23; Isa. 1:23; 5:23; Mic. 7:3).

In the ANE, the nations’ gods were like humans. Job struggles with this thought. Is God capricious, unfair, moody? The book of Job struggles with ANE culture and redefines the concept of causality (i.e., the one true, good God). It is not revelation (Job is not part of the covenant people) that starts his search but life experiences.

9:24c This line of poetry clearly asserts one, and only one, causality in the physical realm (i.e., Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6)—God! There is no blame placed on

1. Adam/Eve
2. the Accuser
3. social conditions
4. luck, chance, fate

The OT does not acknowledge secondary causality.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:25-35

- ²⁵“Now my days are swifter than a runner;
They flee away, they see no good.
²⁶They slip by like reed boats,
Like an eagle that swoops on its prey.
²⁷Though I say, ‘I will forget my complaint,
I will leave off my *sad* countenance and be cheerful,’
²⁸I am afraid of all my pains,
I know that You will not acquit me.
²⁹I am accounted wicked,
Why then should I toil in vain?
³⁰If I should wash myself with snow
And cleanse my hands with lye,
³¹Yet You would plunge me into the pit,
And my own clothes would abhor me.
³²For *He* is not a man as I am that I may answer Him,
That we may go to court together.
³³There is no umpire between us,

Who may lay his hand upon us both.

³⁴**Let Him remove His rod from me,**

And let not dread of Him terrify me.

³⁵**Then I would speak and not fear Him;**

But I am not like that in myself.”

9:25-35 For a discussion of this strophe see Contextual Insights, D.

9:25-26 Again, Job mentions the rapid passing of time. He does not look forward to an afterlife where justice will be done, but expects God to act in this life (the typical OT perspective)!

9:30

NASB, NKJV,

NJB, LXX,

Peshitta “snow”

NRSV, JPSOA,

REB “soap”

The MT text has “snow” (BDB 1017) but the Masoretic scholars suggested it be read (*Qere*) “with water of snow.” Notice, however, the JPSOA changes the MT “snow” to “soap” (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 117). The parallelisms of this verse demands “soap. . . lye.” Job cannot make himself clean before God.

The UBS *Handbook* (p. 195) sees the two lines of Job 9:30 as contrasting (i.e., snow water does not clean well but lye does).

9:31

NASB, NKJV,

Peshitta “the pit”

NRSV, LXX “filth”

NJB “dung”

JPSOA “muck”

REB “miry pit”

The MT has “pit” (BDB 1001) but used in the sense of “dirt” (play on cleaning of Job 9:30), not *Sheol* (i.e., Job 17:14). Again, note the second line of poetry deals with clothing. Job felt he was “blameless” (i.e., clean, white clothing) but God would not allow his clothing to remain clean (i.e., imagery of denying Job’s innocence, cf. Zech. 3:1-5).

9:32 “He is not a man” This is a truism (cf. Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Hos. 11:9). God is personal but not physical and limited.

9:33 There is some question about how to translate the MT.

1. a statement (NASB, JPSOA)

2. a conditional clause (LXX, Peshitta, REB, UBS Text Project, p. 19)

The verse is introduced by a conjunction (BDB 530) that means

1. if

2. if only

As of yet Job does not believe there is such an advocate (there is some ANE precedent, cf. IVP *Bible Background Commentary*, p.501), but he later will (i.e., Job 16:19-21; 19:23-27; 33:23-27).

9:35b This last line of Job 9 is difficult to interpret. The Tyndale *OT Commentary* series (p. 150) suggests it may go with Job 10:1, which is a good suggestion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is Job 9:2 so important?
2. List Job's accusations of God's injustice.
3. Explain the meaning of "guiltless" in Job 9:20.
4. Why is Job 9:22 so problematic?
5. Why is the concept, later developed in Job, of a heavenly "umpire" (Job 9:33) so significant?

JOB 10

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Despairs of God's Dealings	Job: I Would Plead With God	Reply of Job (9:1-10:22)	Job (9:1-10:22)	God's Justice Is Above All Law (9:1-10:22)
10:1-7 (1-7)	10:1-7 (1-7)	10:1-17 (1-17)	10:1-7 (1-7)	10:1-17 (1-17)
10:8-17 (8-17)	10:8-12 (8-12)		10:8-17 (8-17)	
	10:13-17 (13-17)			
10:18-22 (18-22)	10:18-22 (18-22)	10:18-22 (18-22)	10:18-22 (18-22)	10:18-22 (18-22)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 10 continues Job's response to Bildad, begun in Job 9.
- B. Job's response is related more to Eliphaz's speech from Job 4-5 than to Bildad. However, Job speaks directly to God in Job 10.
- C. This chapter reflects Job's discouragement. He questions God and asks Him why He has acted unfairly toward him. He wants to
 1. never have been born
 2. die quickly after birth
 This repeats Job 3.

- D. In a sense these are the questions Job would have asked God if he had his day in court (i.e., Job 10:1-7).
- E. Job 10:4-6 and 13 are very harsh accusations against God! Job's bitterness (Job 10:1) has affected his thinking. He has developed a false view of God. He feels God is attacking him (i.e., Job 16:13-14; 19:10-12) and possibly other innocent followers. Yet, still he seeks Him (cf. Job 23:8-9).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:1-7

¹"I loathe my own life;
 I will give full vent to my complaint;
 I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
²I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
 Let me know why You contend with me.
³'Is it right for You indeed to oppress,
 To reject the labor of Your hands,
 And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked?
⁴Have You eyes of flesh?
 Or do You see as a man sees?
⁵Are Your days as the days of a mortal,
 Or Your years as man's years,
⁶That You should seek for my guilt
 And search after my sin?
⁷According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty,
 Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand.'"

10:1-7 This strophe starts out with Job's loathing of his life (similar to Job 3). He wants to ask God why, if he is innocent, has He sent such terrible judgments.

10:1 "I loathe" There is some confusion about this VERB (i.e., MT puts vowels for a *Qal* stem but it is a *Niphal*).

1. uncertainty over the root
 - a. נקטא – *Qal* PERFECT (MT)
 - b. קטא – BDB 876, KB 1083, *Niphal* PERFECT
2. this VERB, "to loathe," #b is parallel to קדע (BDB 880); another VERB, "to loathe," (BDB 549) is used in Job 9:21
3. the root BDB 876 (#b) is used of
 - a. God – Ps. 95:10; 119:158
 - b. faithless Israel who will repent – Ezek. 20:43; 36:31
 - c. the author of Psalm 139 toward those who hate God – Ps. 139:21

10:1b-c Since Job already hates his life and wants to die, he will speak clearly to God.

1. I will give full vent to my complaint (BDB 736, KB 806, *Qal* COHORTATIVE)

2. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul (BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* COHORTATIVE, note Job 3:20; 7:11; 21:25)
3. I will say to God (BDB 55, KB 65, *Qal* IMPERFECT)

10:2-3 This lays out Job's case by means of a series of questions.

1. Do not condemn me, Job 10:2 – BDB 957, KB 1294, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT NEGATED, used in a JUSSIVE sense; this VERB means “to condemn as guilty,” cf. Deut. 25:1; 1 Kgs. 8:32; Job 9:20; 15:6; 32:3; this is what God is accusing Job of doing in Job 40:8
2. Let me know why You contend with me, Job 10:2
 - a. know – BDB 393, KB 390, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE; if Job knows his sin he will stop it and repent
 - b. contend – BDB 936, KB 1224, *Qal* IMPERFECT, meaning “take to court”
 - c. the word “why” is the key thought!
3. Is it right for You (lit. “does it seem good to You,” no VERB)
 - a. to oppress – BDB 798, KB 897, *Qal* IMPERFECT (BDB has “deal tyrannically”)
 - b. to reject – BDB 549, KB 540, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Job 8:20; Lam. 5:22
 - c. to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked – BDB 422, KB 424, *Hiphil* PERFECT (lit. “caused to shine forth”)

10:3 “the labor of Your hands” This can refer to

1. God's creation of humans in the womb, cf. Job 10:18a; 31:15; Ps. 139:13-16
2. God's forming humans from clay/dust, cf. Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Job 4:19; 8:19; 10:9a; 33:6; 34:15; Isa. 29:16; 64:8
3. an assertion of God's creation but without specific reference to #1 or #2, cf. Job 14:15; Ps. 119:73; 138:8
4. John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary, Job* (pp. 172-173) notes that the creation of humans out of dust was a common ANE motif (i.e., Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian)

10:4-6 This is a series of questions that address God's actions toward Job.

1. Do You see as humans see?
2. Are Your days like human days?
3. Do You
 - a. seek for my guilt – BDB 134, KB 152, *Piel* IMPERFECT
 - b. search after my sin – BDB 205, KB 233, *Qal* IMPERFECT

The Jewish Study Bible (p. 1518) makes a good observation:

“Job's sarcastic accusation here is among the most powerful in the book, demanding that God act like God, and not a human being.”

The ANE gods had all the faults of humans. Job's God was supposed to be different (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Kgs. 8:39), see Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel's God (OT).

10:5 Two different, but parallel, words for humans are used.

1. Job 10:5a – *enosh* (BDB 60)
2. Job 10:5b – *geber* (BDB 149)

The root of #1 is “weak” and the connotation of #2 is “strong,” but here they are parallel (cf. Job 4:17).

10:7 This is the climactic conclusion.

1. Job asserts that God knows that he is not guilty, Job 10:7a, cf. Job 1:1; 9:21; 13:18
2. yet He will not deliver (*Hiphil* PARTICIPLE) him

This is a charge of injustice! This may also give rise to the need for an advocate who can deliver from God's unfair wrath/justice. Job senses he does not have a hope in his quest for justice before God.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:8-17

⁸“Your hands fashioned and made me altogether,
And would You destroy me?
⁹Remember now, that You have made me as clay;
And would You turn me into dust again?
¹⁰Did You not pour me out like milk
And curdle me like cheese;
¹¹Clothe me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews?
¹²You have granted me life and lovingkindness;
And Your care has preserved my spirit.
¹³Yet these things You have concealed in Your heart;
I know that this is within You:
¹⁴If I sin, then You would take note of me,
And would not acquit me of my guilt.
¹⁵If I am wicked, woe to me!
And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head.
I *am* sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery.
¹⁶Should *my head* be lifted up, You would hunt me like a lion;
And again You would show Your power against me.
¹⁷You renew Your witnesses against me
And increase Your anger toward me;
Hardship after hardship is with me.”

10:8-17 In this strophe Job asserts

1. God's special creation of himself and all humans (Job 10:8-11). The purpose in doing this is to ask the question, “Now would You destroy me?” (Job 10:8b). The same hands that made mankind now destroys one of them, an innocent one!
2. God knows this but why has He hidden Himself from Job (Job 10:13). Humans cannot understand God's way (cf. Job 17:4; 24:1; and Isa. 55:8-11 for a theological parallel).
3. If Job is sinful he should be judged.
4. But he is innocent (God knows this) yet God still acts as if he were a sinner.

10:9 This verse asserts the frailty and transitoriness of mankind, similar to Ps. 103:14, but as Ps. 103:8-14 is a positive context; Job is negative!

10:10 Apparently ANE mythology thought humans were created when the sperm united with the mother's blood and then congealed.

The word “cheese” (BDB 148) occurs only here but there are Semitic cognates.

10:11 “knit me together” This VERB (BDB 697, KB 754, *Poel* IMPERFECT) is found only here and Ps. 139:13. Both contexts deal with the formation of a baby in the womb.

There is a spelling variant. BDB 697, כָּסַם and BDB 968 II, שָׁכַךְ; see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 253-254 and 252 #7.

10:12 This verse describes what Job believed God provided to faithful followers.

1. life (BDB 313)
2. lovingkindness (BDB 338, see Special Topic: Lovingkindness)
3. care (BDB 824, lit. “God’s visitation,” in this context, for blessing)
4. preserved my spirit (BDB 924) – BDB 1026, KB 1581, *Qal* PERFECT (see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible)

This is how Job had experienced God before the crisis of Job 1-2. This is how he will see God again at the end of the book. This is the truth; the rest is Job’s pain and bitterness talking!

10:13 Job thinks that even in the “good” days God had a secret plan to bring disaster to him! Wow! Job is bitter and confused!

▣ **“heart”** See Special Topic: Heart.

10:15 This repeats the shocking thought of Job 9:22. Bad things are sent by God to both the innocent and the guilty! “The two ways” is not true! God’s character is being questioned!

▣ **“woe to me”** This exclamation (BDB 47) is found only here and in Micah 7:1.

▣ **“lift up my head”** There are two possible connotations.

1. the action of a self-confident person or nation that aligns itself against God (cf. Jdgs. 8:28; Ps. 83:2; Zech. 1:21)
2. the opposite of what an accused person does in court before the judge

10:16 “Your power against me” This is literally, “You work wonders against me.” Job uses this word, “wonderful” (BDB 810) in Job 5:9; 9:10; 37:5,14; 42:3. God’s wonderful acts are now directed against Job! See Special Topic: Wonderful Things (OT).

10:17 “Your witnesses” This could refer to

1. a court scene where people like Job’s three friends, or neighbors, accuse him
2. imagery (i.e., Job 10:17c) for all the trials, tests, and disasters that Job experienced (i.e., Job 1-2)



NASB	“hardship after hardship”
NKJV	“changes and war”
NRSV, REB	“You bring fresh troops”
TEV	“You plan some new attack”
NJB	“Your troops assailing me, wave after wave”
LXX	“brought trials”
Peshitta	“You array one host after another”

The MT has “changes and a host with me.” The term “host” (BDB 838) has a military connotation. It is used in the description of Israel’s army in God’s name in Exod. 12:41; and of God Himself in Jos.

5:14,15. Job feels God attacks him with fresh troops again and again. This is imagery of his sense of abandonment by God. God has changed from a protector and provider to a recurrent attacker!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:18-22

¹⁸“Why then have You brought me out of the womb?

Would that I had died and no eye had seen me!

¹⁹I should have been as though I had not been,

Carried from womb to tomb.’

²⁰Would He not let my few days alone?

Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer

²¹Before I go—and I shall not return—

To the land of darkness and deep shadow,

²²The land of utter gloom as darkness *itself*,

Of deep shadow without order,

And which shines as the darkness.”

10:18a See full note at Job 10:8-17.

10:18b-19 Job wishes he had never been born or that he had lived a very short time (cf. Job 3:16).

10:20 Job wants God to just leave him alone (cf. Job 7:19; 9:18; 14:6; compare Ps. 39:13). He feels God is constantly watching him, not for peace and protection, but to count sin. What a shocking statement! Job has sought God’s presence all his life, now he wants God to leave! Life’s pain and problems cause bad theology! Thank God for inspired revelation!

The MT has the first two VERBS as *Qal* IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense (LXX), but the Masoretic scholars suggested they be read (*Qere*) as *Qal* IMPERATIVES, “cease!” (i.e., prayer requests).

10:21-22 Job speaks of death (i.e., *Sheol*) as (uses five different words for “darkness”):

1. the land of no return, Job 10:21a (cf. Job 7:8-9; 16:22; 2 Sam. 12:23)
2. the land of darkness (BDB 365, cf. Job 3:4,5; 17:12; often associated with *Sheol*, cf. Job 17:13; 18:18)
3. the land of deep shadow (BDB 853, cf. Job 3:5; 34:22; associated with *Sheol* in Job 38:17)
4. the land of utter gloom (BDB 734 I, only here and Amos 4:13)
5. darkness *itself* (BDB 66, the gloom, darkness of *Sheol*, personified in Job 3:6a)
6. deep shadow without order (BDB 853), see #3. The word “order” (BDB 690) occurs only here in the OT. *Sheol* is like the initial chaos of creation (i.e., is like ANE mythology).
7. shines as darkness (BDB 66), see #5 (this is similar imagery to Ps. 139:11-12)

The ANE characterized *Sheol* as “the house of darkness.” The fact that ancient Hebrew had five roots for “darkness” shows its theological significance!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. To whom does Job speak in Job 10?
2. List the negative things Job says about God in Job 10.
3. How is Job 10:8-12 contrasted with Job 10:13-17?
4. What does Job 10:21-22 describe?

JOB 11

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Zophar Rebukes Job	Zophar Urges Job to Repent	First Discourse of Zophar	Zophar	Job Must Acknowledge God's Wisdom
11:1-6 (2-6)	11:1 11:2-6 (2-6)	11:1-6 (2-6)	11:1-6 (1-6)	11:1 11:2-12 (2-12)
11:7-12 (7-12)	11:7-12 (7-12)	11:7-12 (7-12)	11:7-12 (7-12)	
11:13-20 (13-20)	11:13-20 (13-20)	11:13-20 (13-20)	11:13-20 (13-20)	11:13-20 (13-20)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:1-6

¹Then Zophar the Naamathite answered,

²“Shall a multitude of words go unanswered,
And a talkative man be acquitted?

³Shall your boasts silence men?
And shall you scoff and none rebuke?

⁴For you have said, ‘My teaching is pure,
And I am innocent in your eyes.’

⁵But would that God might speak,

And open His lips against you,
 ‘And show you the secrets of wisdom!’
 For sound wisdom has two sides.
 Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.

11:1 “Zophar the Naamathite” Job’s third comforter comes from

1. a town in the lowlands of Judah – Jos. 15:41
2. a place in central Arabia (i.e., Nejd, ABA, p. 968)
3. a Sabeian tribe
4. from the LXX a southern Arabian place

11:2-3 Zophar (through a series of rhetorical questions) says Job is a

1. man of lips, Job 11:2a
2. talkative man, Job 11:2b
3. boasting man (lit. “your babble,” BDB 95 III), Job 11:3a
4. scoffer (BDB 541, KB 532, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*), Job 11:3b

Zophar’s theology demands that Job is wicked! The wicked (i.e., Job) should be

1. silenced – BDB 361 II, KB 357, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT (cause one to be silent)
2. rebuked – BDB 483, KB 480, *Hiphil* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (i.e., shamed)

The question of Job 11:2b is the central question. Can Job be vindicated, declared right (BDB 842, KB 1003, *Qal* IMPERFECT)? He has claimed he is (i.e., Job 9:15,21)!

11:2-6 This introductory strophe of Zophar has three assertions.

1. Job’s speeches must be responded to (Job 11:2-3).
2. Job claims too much for his wisdom.
 - a. his teaching (BDB 544) is pure (BDB 269, possibly with the connotation of “flawless,” cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 1100)
 - b. he is innocent (cf. Job 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 13:18)
3. God’s wisdom is superior (i.e., and Zophar knows it. He is the wise one!)
 - a. it is secret (BDB 761) wisdom (BDB 315)
 - b. NASB – “sound wisdom (BDB 444) has two sides”
 NKJV – “for *they would* double *your* prudence”
 NRSV, TEV – “wisdom has many sides”
 NJB – “which puts all cleverness to shame”
 - c. line b of Job 11:6 is difficult in the MT and led to the further difficulty of the next line; here are the theories
 - (1) NJB – “Then you would realize that God is calling you to account for your sin?”
 - (2) AB (p. 82) – “Far from punishing Job unjustly, God gives him less than he deserves. This is in keeping with the attitudes of the ‘friends.’”
 - (3) the root נָשַׁן has two possibilities
 - (a) BDB 674 I – “lend,” “be a creditor” (demand payment)
 - (b) BDB 674 II – “forget,” “forgive”

11:4

NASB, JPSOA	“innocent”
NKJV, NRSV	“clean”
TEV	“pure”

NJB “free of blame”
REB “spotless”

This ADJECTIVE (BDB 141 II) means “morally clean” (cf. Ps. 19:9; 24:4; 73:1) or “clean” (Pro. 14:4).

11:5 Job wants to go to court with God; Zophar says great, let God speak! In fact Job 11:5b foreshadows exactly what God does in Job 38-41.

This is literary foreshadowing. Since I do not think these men talked in poetry, these speeches are literary compositions to communicate truth. It is not the theology of the three comforters that is incorrect but their

1. attitudes
2. dogmatism
3. inability to see the limits on “the two ways”

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:7-12

⁷Can you discover the depths of God?

Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?

⁸They are high as the heavens, what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol, what can you know?

⁹Its measure is longer than the earth

And broader than the sea.

¹⁰If He passes by or shuts up,

Or calls an assembly, who can restrain Him?

¹¹For He knows false men,

And He sees iniquity without investigating.

¹²An idiot will become intelligent

When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.

11:7-12 This strophe describes the wisdom of God (many scholars see “wisdom” as the central issue of the book of Job).

1. No one can discover the depths (BDB 350) of God.
2. No one can discover the limits (lit. “unto the end,” BDB 723 II CONSTRUCT BDB 479) of God.
3. They are as high as the heavens (similar imagery to Ps. 139:8-9).
4. They are as deep as *Sheol* (similar imagery in Isa. 7:11).
5. They are longer than the earth (#5,6 are similar imagery to Eph. 3:18).
6. They are broader than the sea.
7. Who can restrain Him? (cf. Job 9:12; 10:7)
8. He knows false men (cf. Job 34:21-30).
9. He sees iniquity without investigation (cf. Job 24:23; 28:24; 31:4).

11:7 “the Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty.

11:8 “what can you do” What can you know? This is the conclusion (i.e., two rhetorical questions) that mankind cannot understand God’s ways (cf. the book of Ecclesiastes and Isa. 55:9-11).

▣ **“Sheol”** See Special Topic: *Sheol*.

11:9 This imagery assumes a flat and expansive earth.

11:10 This is similar imagery to Job 9:11-12. It is possible to interpret this verse in two ways.

1. God's truth is hidden (NEB, REB).
2. God imprisons the wicked and takes them to trial (NKJV, NRSV, TEV).

11:11b

NASB	"without investigating"
NKJV, NRSV	"Will He not then consider it"
NJB	"and marks them well"
JPSOA	"does He not discern it"
REB	"does he not take note of it"
NAB	"will He ignore it"

The question is about the subject of this last line.

1. God (all above English translations)
2. the sinner
 - a. Young's *Literal Translation of the Bible* (p. 341), "and one doth not consider it"
 - b. one possibility of UBS *Handbook* (p. 25)

11:12 This verse states the impossible in a sarcastic way. It may be a well known proverb (AB, p. 83).



NASB, JB	"idiot"
NKJV, NJB	"empty-headed"
NRSV, TEV	"stupid"
JPSOA	"hollow"
REB	"fool"

This VERB (BDB 612, KB 659, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) is used for "hollowing out" something related to building the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 27:8; 38:7; Jer. 5:21). Only here it is used of people.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:13-20

- ¹³If you would direct your heart right
And spread out your hand to Him,
¹⁴If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away,
And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents;
¹⁵Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without *moral* defect,
And you would be steadfast and not fear.
¹⁶For you would forget *your* trouble,
As waters that have passed by, you would remember *it*.
¹⁷Your life would be brighter than noonday;
Darkness would be like the morning.
¹⁸Then you would trust, because there is hope;
And you would look around and rest securely.
¹⁹You would lie down and none would disturb *you*,
And many would entreat your favor.

²⁰**But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And there will be no escape for them;
And their hope is to breathe their last.”**

11:13-14 Zophar delineates the aspects of repentance.

1. direct your heart right (proper attitude)
2. spread out your hand to Him (i.e., prayer, cf. Exod. 9:29,33; 1 Kgs. 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 141:2; Isa. 1:15; 1 Tim. 2:8)
3. put away iniquity
4. do not let wickedness in your life (lit. “dwell in your tents”)

11:15-19 Zophar delineates the benefits of repentance (similar to Job 5:17-26; 22:21-30).

1. you could lift up your face (i.e., not ashamed; this may refer to Job 10:15-16)
2. you would be steadfast (JPSOA, “when in straits, be unafraid”)
3. you would not fear
4. you would forget your troubles
5. your life (rare, BDB 317) would be bright (the imagery in Job 11:17b is the opposite of Job 10:22)
6. you would trust because there is hope
7. you would lie down and none would disturb you (Job 11:18b, 19a; this may reflect Job 10:15-16)
8. many would entreat (lit. “make the face sweet”) your favor (lit. “face,” BDB 815)

11:17 “darkness” This VERB (BDB 734 II, KB 801, *Qal* COHORTATIVE) occurs only here but the NOUN is found in Job 10:22.

11:18b

NASB	“you would look around”
NKJV	“you would dig <i>about</i> you”
NRSV, TEV	“you will be protected”
NJB	“after your troubles”
JPSOA	“entrenched”
REB	“sure of protection”

The UBS *Handbook* (p. 227) gives three options for “look around,” which is literally “dig/search,” BDB 343 I, KB 340, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*).

1. you will be ashamed
2. you will dig
3. you will protect (protected by God is the implication, NET Bible)

11:20 Zophar delineates the fate of the unrepentant wicked.

1. their eyes will fail (i.e., loss of vitality)
2. there is no escape for them (i.e., no way out of their judgment)
3. there is no hope in their death (i.e., death and *Sheol* are coming soon and nothing can stop them)

Job 11:20c may be a sarcastic allusion to Job’s wish to die (cf. Job 3:21; 6:9; 10:21).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. If Eliphaz claimed a special revelation, and Bildad claimed traditions from the ancestors, what does Zophar claim as the source of his right to speak?
2. Why is Job 11:5 significant?
3. What is Zophar's solution for Job's problem?

JOB 12

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Chides His Accusers	Job Answers His Critics (12:1-13:19)	Reply of Job (12:1-14:22)	Job (12:1-14:22)	God's Wisdom Is Best Seen in the Awesome Works of His Omnipotence (12:1-14:22)
12:1-6 (1-6)	12:1	12:1-6 (1-6)	12:1-6 (1-6)	12:1
	12:2-3 (2-3)			12:2-25
	12:4-6 (4-6)			
12:7-12 (7-12)	12:7-12 (7-12)	12:7-12 (7-12)	12:7-11 (7-11)	
Job Speaks of the Power of God			12:12-15 (12-15)	
12:13-25 (13-25)	12:13-25 (13-25)	12:13-25 (13-25)		
			12:16-25 (16-25)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:1-6

¹Then Job responded,

²Truly then you are the people,

And with you wisdom will die!

³But I have intelligence as well as you;

**I am not inferior to you.
 And who does not know such things as these?
⁴I am a joke to my friends,
 The one who called on God and He answered him;
 The *just* and blameless *man* is a joke.
⁵He who is at ease holds calamity in contempt,
 As prepared for those whose feet slip.
⁶The tents of the destroyers prosper,
 And those who provoke God are secure,
 Whom God brings into their power.”**

12:1 Job responds to Zophar in Job 12:1-14:22.

12:2 Job’s response is sarcastic. Zophar claimed wisdom. He was so confident in his assertions (cf. Job 17:10). He thought his wisdom/truth was God’s wisdom/truth. This fallacy is something all theologians must resist!

▣ **“the people”** This may be a reference to the leadership (cf. Job 12:13-21, AB, p. 86).

12:3 Job asserts his equality (cf. Job 13:2). He agreed with most of his friends’ theology, except he felt his situation did not fit “the two ways.” They could not accept this; he could not deny this.

Job felt his understanding (lit. “heart”) of God (i.e., wisdom) was as good as his three comforters (cf. Job 13:2).

12:4 “a joke” This NOUN (BDB 966) means “laughter,” “derision,” or “sport.” It is used of

1. individuals – here and Jer. 20:7
2. nations
 - a. Moab, cf. Jer. 48:26
 - b. Israel, cf. Jer. 48:27; Lam. 3:14

Job is shocked that a “just” (BDB 843) and “blameless” (BDB 1071) person (cf. Job 9:15,20,21; 10:7; 23:11-12) could become a derision. This person who was once in relationship with God now feels abandoned by all!

12:5 This verse seems to be Job’s thoughts about his three comforters.

1. because they are experiencing no problems (cf. Job 5:17-26) they are quick to judge others
2. because of their attitudes they are in danger (i.e., “feet slipping,” an idiom for problems, cf. Ps. 73:2) of judgment themselves



NASB, JPSOA	“calamity
NKJV	“lamp”
NRSV, REB	“misfortune”

The MT has “lamp” or “torch” (לִפֶּת, BDB 542) but this does not fit the context, unless it is parallel with “thought” (hapax legomena of BDB 799). Most modern translations assume the root is יָדַם (BDB 810), which means “ruin,” “disaster” (cf. Job 30:24; 31:29; and possibly 21:20, see BDB 810).

▣ **“thought”** This FEMININE NOUN (BDB 799) occurs only here in the OT. The unusual ending may be a PLURAL.

▣ The second line of this difficult verse has been understood in two ways (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 104).

1. NASB, referring to those who are “prepared” (BDB 465 I) for those whose feet slip (a Hebrew idiom, BDB 588, KB 609 CONSTRUCT BDB 919)
2. NEB, REB, referring to those who are at ease kicking the suffering person (BDB 645)

12:6 This repeats Job’s attack on “the two ways” as the only explanation of God’s dealing with humans. It does not answer the reality of human life,

1. the prosperity of the wicked (cf. Job 9:24; 10:3; Psalm 73; Jer. 12:1)
2. Job’s innocent suffering (cf. Job 12:4)

12:6c This line of poetry is difficult to understand. Is it parallel to Ps. 12:6b (see JPSOA) or does it make an assertion about the attitude (i.e., idolatry) of the wicked (i.e., their own power/hand, see TEV, NRSV)? The NET Bible (p. 789) thinks it refers to those persons who are confident that God is on their side (i.e., like the three comforters, cf. Job 12:2).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:7-12

⁷**“But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you;
And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you.
⁸Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you;
And let the fish of the sea declare to you.
⁹Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
¹⁰In whose hand is the life of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind?
¹¹Does not the ear test words,
As the palate tastes its food?
¹²Wisdom is with aged men,
With long life is understanding.”**

12: 7-12 This strophe is a literary way of asserting that Job agrees with his comforters’ view of the sovereignty of God. This was the traditional view (Job 12:12).

Notice the literary technique of asking animals (i.e., beasts, birds, and fish) and the earth (i.e., inanimate creation, cf. Ps. 19:1-6) to show God’s sovereignty.

Some scholars see “earth” as “living creatures of the earth,” like Mic. 7:17, because animals precede the mention of “the earth” (Job 12:8a) and follow it (cf. NJB).

12:7-8 The Jewish Study Bible (p. 1520) makes a good point about the repeated SINGULAR PRONOUN “you.” They could

1. reflect Job quoting what his comforters said to him
2. show Job’s counter argument
3. refer to Zophar, as Job 12-14 is a response to his speech

However, Job always refers to his comforters in the PLURAL and they to him in the SINGULAR.

12:9 “the hand of the LORD has done this” This is a rare usage of YHWH outside of the prose introduction (Job 1-2) and conclusion (Job 42:7-17). This covenant name occurs only here and in Job 38:1; 40:1,3,6; 42:1.

Job is not a descendant of Abraham but he knows about the Covenant God of Israel.

What is it that the “hand” of YHWH has done? The “it” seems to refer to

1. Job (an innocent man) being a joke, Job 12:4
2. God prospering the wicked
3. the life of all humans being in God’s control (Job 12:10)

This directly contradicts “the two ways” (i.e., Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1). Something is wrong in God’s revelatory dealings with humans! The blessings and cursings of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27-30 have not been fulfilled!

12:10

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV “life”

NJB “soul”

This is the NOUN *nephesh* (BDB 659), which here refers to all air-breathing life (cf. Gen. 1:30) on the planet. This term describes Adam (cf. Genesis 2:7) and living creatures (cf. Genesis 1:20,21,24; 2:19; 9:10,12,15,16).

▣ **“the breath of all mankind”** This is an allusion to

1. Gen. 2:7
2. *ruah*’s semantic field (i.e., wind, breath, spirit); see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible

Life is a gift from God. He is in complete control! This is a well known truth.

1. proverb, Job 12:11
2. aged wisdom, Job 12:12

The conflict is that “the two ways” is an emphasis on the choices of humans. Which is true,

1. God is sovereign?
2. human choices have consequences?

Job chose right but still negative consequences came, therefore, they must have come mysteriously from God.

12:11 This same proverbial saying occurs in Job 34:3. Much of the dialogue, poetic sections of Job may contain ANE proverbs or wisdom sayings. This could explain some of the unusual Hebrew poetic lines.

12:12 If Job 12:12 relates to Job 12:2, then a rhetorical question form, expecting a “no” answer showing it is not true (cf. Job 32:9), is possible (cf. NRSV, JPSOA, REB, NET Bible). Wisdom is not only with human traditions (cf. Job 8:8-10) but even animals know it.

If it is a statement, maybe Job is referring to Zophar’s and Elihu’s youth.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:13-25

¹³**“With Him are wisdom and might;**

To Him belong counsel and understanding.

¹⁴**Behold, He tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt;**

He imprisons a man, and there can be no release.

¹⁵**Behold, He restrains the waters, and they dry up;**

And He sends them out, and they inundate the earth.

**¹⁶With Him are strength and sound wisdom,
The misled and the misleader belong to Him.**

**¹⁷He makes counselors walk barefoot
And makes fools of judges.**

**¹⁸He loosens the bond of kings
And binds their loins with a girdle.**

**¹⁹He makes priests walk barefoot
And overthrows the secure ones.**

**²⁰He deprives the trusted ones of speech
And takes away the discernment of the elders.**

**²¹He pours contempt on nobles
And loosens the belt of the strong.**

**²²He reveals mysteries from the darkness
And brings the deep darkness into light.**

**²³He makes the nations great, then destroys them;
He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.**

**²⁴He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth's people
And makes them wander in a pathless waste.**

**²⁵They grope in darkness with no light,
And He makes them stagger like a drunken man."**

12:13-25 In light of Job's assertion of the sovereignty of God, this strophe delineates aspects of that sovereignty.

1. with Him (and Him alone, implied) is
 - a. wisdom (BDB 315)
 - b. might (BDB 150)
 - c. counsel (BDB 420)
 - d. understanding (BDB 108)
2. He controls the destiny of humans
 - a. He tears down (cf. Isa. 6:11; Jer. 1:10)
 - b. it/they cannot rebuild (cf. Job 3:14)
 - c. He imprisons (lit. "shuts up") a man, and there can be no release (cf. Job 9:12; 23:13)
 - d. He controls the waters (i.e., physical creation)
 - (1) initial chaos/creation (play on "shuts up," cf. Gen. 1:9-10)
 - (2) waters used for covenant disobedience and obedience (i.e., Deut. 11:17; 28:12,24; 1 Kgs. 8:35-36)
 - e. Job 12:16a parallels Job 12:13a
 - f. Job 12:16b parallels Job 12:14 (i.e., God controls all humans)
 - (1) Israel's leaders
 - (a) counselors, Job 12:17a
 - (b) judges, Job 12:17b (cf. Job 9:24)
 - (c) kings, Job 12:18
 - (d) priests, Job 12:19a
 - (e) the secure ones, Job 12:19b

- (f) the trusted ones, Job 12:20a (NIV, “trusted advisors”)
- (g) the elders, Job 12:20b
- (h) the nobles, Job 12:21a
- (2) the leaders of other nations
 - (a) the nations, Job 12:23
 - (b) their chiefs, Job 12:24
 - deprives them of wisdom
 - makes them wander in a pathless waste
 - grope in darkness
 - stagger like a drunk man

Because of the list of Israel’s civil and religious leaders mentioned, the best guess for a date for the writing of Job is the “monarchial period.”

12:16b “The misled and the misleader” There is a play on

1. VERB, “misled” – a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, BDB 992, שָׁגַג
2. VERB, “misleader” – a *Hiphil* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, BDB 993, שֹׁגֵג
3. same form as in Job 12:23, NASB, “leads them away”
4. same VERB used in Job 6:24; 19:4, NASB, “erred”

Both the one initiating the deviation from God and the one misled by it are in God’s control. All things are in God’s control. Yet what about the good and bad human choices and their consequences? “The two ways” does not fully explain life.

12:17,19 “barefoot” This ADJECTIVE (BDB 1021) occurs only here (Job 12:17,19) and Micah 1:8, and refers to grieving (see Special Topic: Grieving Rites).

It could also refer to the humiliation of being “stripped” and paraded (from לָךְ, BDB 229, “walk”) naked in the streets as a symbol of defeat.

12:18 The imagery is uncertain but it is obvious God humiliates powerful kings (probably of Israel).

12:21 “strong” The MT has אֲפִיקִים (BDB 67), which means “channel of water” (cf. Job 6:15). This does not make sense here. A similar root, פָּקַח (BDB 67) means “strong.” Most translations use this root. Possibly the PLURAL form denotes “the very strong.”

12:22 This may refer to the plans of Israel’s leaders. God will bring to light all evil plans and schemes (cf. Job 5:12-14).

12:23 See Psalm 107:40; Isaiah 34:12; 40:23-24.

12:24-25 These verses describe the terrible reality of life without revelation. Humans plan (Job 12:22) but to no avail! Life without a knowledge of God is “a pathless waste.” It is the opposite of “the everlasting way” (cf. Ps. 16:11; 139:24; Matt. 7:14).

12:25a The absence of light is a judgment on the wicked (cf. Job 5:14; 18:5-6,18; 38:15). The VERB “grope” (BDB 606, KB 653, *Piel* IMPERFECT) is used of one of the covenant curses of Deut. 28:29, which possibly alludes to one of the plagues on Egypt in Exod. 10:21-23).

Light symbolizes God’s presence and truth. The idiom “under the sun” in Ecclesiastes is a similar idiom (i.e., if there were no God, this is what life would be like).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is it about the speeches of the three comforters that Job agrees with?
2. Why is Job 12:5-6 so difficult to interpret?
3. Is Job 12:12 a statement or a question?
4. Why is the description of the sovereignty of God in Job 12:13-25 all negative, referring to His judgment?
5. Is it possible Job 12:17-21 refers to Israel's leaders?

JOB 13

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says His Friends' Proverbs Are Ashes	Job Answers His Critics (12:1-13:19)	Reply of Job (12:1-14:22)	Job (12:1-14:22)	
13:1-2 (1-2)	13:1-12 (1-12)	13:1-12 (1-12)	13:1-13 (1-13)	13:1-28 (1-28)
13:3-12 (3-12)				
Job Is Sure He Will Be Vindicated				
13:13-19 (13-19)	13:13-19 (13-19)	13:13-28 (13-28)		
			13:14-18 (14-18)	
	Job's Despondent Prayer		13:19-21 (19-21)	
13:20-28 (20-28)	13:20-27 (20-27)			
			13:22-23 (22-23)	
			13:24-25 (24-25)	
			13:26-28 (26-28)	
	13:28			

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 12:1-14:22 is one long response of Job.
- B. In Job 13:1-19 Job addresses the three comforters but in Job 13:20-28 he addresses God.
- C. He has prepared his case and is ready to address God in court (cf. Job 13:18) but he still searches for an advocate at the heavenly court (cf. Job 13:19a) because he expects to lose.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:1-2

¹“Behold, my eye has seen all *this*,
My ear has heard and understood it.
²What you know I also know;
I am not inferior to you.”

13:1-2 This is referring to Job 12:3,9. The three comforters are speaking common knowledge.

- 1. God is sovereign
- 2. God works in certain ways with humans (i.e., the two ways)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:3-12

³“But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to argue with God.
⁴But you smear with lies;
You are all worthless physicians.
⁵O that you would be completely silent,
And that it would become your wisdom!
⁶Please hear my argument
And listen to the contentions of my lips.
⁷Will you speak what is unjust for God,
And speak what is deceitful for Him?
⁸Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
⁹Will it be well when He examines you?
Or will you deceive Him as one deceives a man?
¹⁰He will surely reprove you
If you secretly show partiality.
¹¹Will not His majesty terrify you,
And the dread of Him fall on you?
¹²Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay.”

13:3-12 Job addresses his three comforters but he would rather speak to God (i.e., in the heavenly court, cf. Isa. 1:18).

13:3 “I would speak to the Almighty” This refers to the heavenly council. Job wants to present (“to,” cf. Job 8:5; 15:25) his situation before the heavenly court.

This is *Shaddai* (BDB 994) with a PREPOSITION, not *El-Shaddai* of the Pentateuch.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty.

▣ **“argue”** This VERB (BDB 406, KB 410, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE) is used in a judicial sense (cf. Job 13:15; 19:5). Wow, what a strong phrase, “I desire to argue with God” (cf. Job 13:15)!

13:4 “But you. . .” Notice the two ADVERSATIVES.

1. but I. . ., Job 13:3a (cf. Job 5:8)
2. but you. . ., Job 13:4a

Job characterizes his comforters

1. you smear lies (cf. Ps. 119:69)
2. they are worthless physicians

13:5 “O that you would be completely silent” Job requests (BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERFECT, used eleven times in Job) that his comforters be quiet (an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 361, KB 357).

Job wishes (i.e., JUSSIVE VERB) they and their wisdom would be silent. This verse may be a well known proverb (cf. Job 13:12; AB, p. 94).

13:6 Job wants them to hear his legal argument (i.e., uses two IMPERATIVES). Notice Job 13:13 and 17.

13:7-9 In Job 13:7-9 all the lines begin with an INTERROGATIVE. Notice how the NASB translates these with five “will you. . .” questions. Job claims (1) their speeches are not from God and that one day they will face Him (Job 13:9). This happens in Job 42:7! Job is vindicated. And (2) they are also bad arbitrators because they use falsehood to bolster God’s case against Job (i.e., to gain God’s favor).

I am amazed how many people rationalize their bad behavior by claiming to serve God! This is where Scripture (properly and contextually interpreted) plays such an important role.

13:8 Job accuses his friends of flattering God to gain His approval. The phrase, “lift the face” (cf. Job 32:21; 34:19) was an idiom for bribery or judicial favor.

I like what the UBS *Handbook* (p. 252) says about Job 13:8b, “In other words Job is asking his friends if God has hired them to be his defense lawyer in court.”

13:10a This line also has an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root. It was a way to show intensity.

13:12 “Your defenses are defenses of clay” The NOUN translated “defenses” (BDB 146, KB 170) basically means something raised (i.e., convex). It is used only here in the sense of defensive walls. In Job 15:26 the same root is used of useless shields in battle. It is possible (KB 146 II) to see the word as coming from an Arabic or Syrian root meaning “answer” or “reply.” If so (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 448), this fits the parallelism of Job 13:12 nicely. The three comforters’ words are “useless” and “fragile.”

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:13-19

¹³“Be silent before me so that I may speak;

Then let come on me what may.

¹⁴Why should I take my flesh in my teeth

And put my life in my hands?

¹⁵Though He slay me,

I will hope in Him.

Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.

¹⁶This also will be my salvation,

For a godless man may not come before His presence.

¹⁷Listen carefully to my speech,

And let my declaration *fill* your ears.

¹⁸Behold now, I have prepared my case;

I know that I will be vindicated.

¹⁹Who will contend with me?

For then I would be silent and die.”

13:13b “Then let come on me what may” The VERB (BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense) means “pass over.” Job wants to present his case before God, no matter the consequences (cf. Job. 13:14, 15,19b).

13:15a

NASB, NKJV,

LXX, Peshitta “though”

NRSV “see”

TEV, REB,

NEB “if”

NJB “let him”

JPSOA “He may well”

Rotherham’s, Young’s

translations “Lo”

RSV “Behold”

The Hebrew starts out with לֵךְ (BDB 243), which is either

1. a DEMONSTRATIVE ADVERB
2. an INTERJECTION
3. a HYPOTHETICAL PARTICLE

BDB lists several translation options, “behold,” “if,” “whether.” Unfortunately context is the only guide. Those scholars who see a negative context have “if” or “behold,” while those who see a positive context have “though.” I agree with the last option (i.e., “Lo”) but I want it to be the first option!

13:15b There are two ways to translate this verse.

1. “I will hope/wait in Him” – NASB, NRSV footnote, NKJV, Peshitta
2. “I have no other hope” – NJB, TEV, NRSV, JPSOA

The 2nd is the MT and the 1st is the Masoretic scholars’ suggestion (*Qere*). They are exact opposites! Is this verse asserting Job’s faith in God (i.e., Job 13:16,18) or that he has no hope in Him (i.e., Job. 13:14)?

The context supports option #2 (the MT text). Job is not afraid to die (he longs for death); however, he wants to be vindicated. He wants to address God directly in the heavenly court. His innocence is more important than anything!

John H Walton, *NIV Application Commentary*, p. 178, translates this verse as “Even though he may slay me, I will not wait (in silence).” This fits the larger context well.

The reason this discussion is so emotional is the fact that this verse is famous for expressing Israel’s faith. The KJV is so powerful and encouraging (see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, p. 258).

13:16 This verse asserts that the very fact that Job wants to appear before God and that God will allow this, proves he is innocent because no wicked person (lit. “godless,” cf. BDB 338, used 8 times in Job) can appear before God (cf. Job 23:7).

▣ **“salvation”** See Special Topic: Salvation (OT).

13:17 “Listen carefully” This is an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERATIVE of the same root (BDB 1033, KB 1570), which would denote intensity.

▣ **“declaration”** This NOUN (BDB 296) occurs only here in the OT. It is an Aramaic form. The VERB does occur several times in Job (cf. Job 15:17; 32:6,10,17; 36:2).

13:18 Job again asserts his innocence (cf. Job 9:21; 10:7; 12:4). Remember this is not a claim to sinlessness but the assertion that he has done nothing (Job 13:23) to deserve the terrible things that God has caused to happen to him.

▣ **“prepared my case”** This VERB (BDB 789, KB 884, *Qal* PERFECT) basically means “to set something in order” (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 535, 536). Only in Job is it used of a well crafted legal argument. It may have a military connotation. Job was ready for the battle at the heavenly court (cf. Job 23:4; 32:14; 33:5; 37:19)!

The NOUN “case” (BDB 1048) is normally translated “judgment,” but here “legal case” fits best.

▣ **“I will be vindicated”** This is parallel in meaning to “this also will be my salvation” of Job 13:16a. Job is innocent (cf. Job 9:15,20,21; 12:4).

13:19a This may refer to

1. the three friends, Job 13:8
2. God Himself
3. a prosecuting attorney (the place Satan plays in Job 1-2, of which Job does not know)
4. possibly the word denotes presenting a legal case, and if so, may be another reference to an advocate at the heavenly court who helps present Job’s case

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:20-28

²⁰“Only two things do not do to me,

Then I will not hide from Your face:

²¹Remove Your hand from me,

And let not the dread of You terrify me.

²²Then call, and I will answer;

Or let me speak, then reply to me.

²³How many are my iniquities and sins?
 Make known to me my rebellion and my sin.
²⁴Why do You hide Your face
 And consider me Your enemy?
²⁵Will You cause a driven leaf to tremble?
 Or will You pursue the dry chaff?
²⁶For You write bitter things against me
 And make me to inherit the iniquities of my youth.
²⁷You put my feet in the stocks
 And watch all my paths;
 You set a limit for the soles of my feet,
²⁸While I am decaying like a rotten thing,
 Like a garment that is moth-eaten.”

13:20-28 In this strophe Job addresses God. He makes two requests related to how God treats him. If God grants these requests Job will face God openly. If not, who can but try to hide from the Majestic Judge?

13:20b “Then I will not hide from Your face” This VERB (BDB 711, KB 771, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) can be translated as a PASSIVE or a REFLEXIVE. The context demands not that Job is threatening God that he will hide from Him, but that he wants to meet God. The issue is God’s hiding His face from Job!

13:20-21 “Only two things do not do to me” The VERB (BDB 793, KB 889) is a *Qal* JUSSIVE (prayer request).

1. remove Your hand from me (*Hiphil* IMPERATIVE), cf. Job 9:34
2. do not let Your dread terrify me (*Piel* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense), cf. Job 3:5; 9:34; 13:11,21; 15:24; 18:11

There are two valid ways to view these requests.

1. They both deal with the personal faith relationship Job has with God. This was priority to him (even more than healing or restoration of property). This interpretation is confirmed by Job 13:22 (two IMPERATIVES dealing with the communication between Job and God). The “hiding of Your face,” in Job 13:24a was ultimate terror!
2. Job is asking God to act in a fair manner in the trial and not to overpower him (cf. Job 9:34, NET Bible, p. 792).

13:22 This is a court setting. This refers to judicial dialogue (cf. Job 9:16). Job is offering to speak first or let God speak first in the trial. God will respond to Job in Job 40:1-5.

13:23 Job asks God to make known (*Hiphil* IMPERATIVE) his sins (i.e., Job wants God to present His case against him). What has he done to deserve what has happened to him (cf. Job 7:20; 35:6)? In Job 13:26 he wonders about “the sins of youth” (cf. Ps. 25:7). In Jewish life a young person is not responsible to the law until *Bar Mitzvah* at age 13, after he has studied the Law of Moses and committed himself to it (cf. Ps. 71:17). Job is not Jewish but the same ANE traditions apply.

Notice the three words for human rebellion used in Job 13:23.

1. iniquities (BDB 730)
2. sins (BDB 308, twice)
3. rebellion (BDB 833)

Hebrew has many terms for sin which shows the significance of the concept in Hebrew thought. For a good brief summary see Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the OT*, pp. 76-86.

It is interesting to note that these three words also occur together in Exod. 34:7; Lev. 16:21; Ps. 32:5; Isa. 59:12; Ezek. 21:24; Dan. 9:24. They form a summary of all human disobedience to God.

13:24-28 Job describes in figurative imagery what God has done to him.

1. God hid His face
2. God considered him an enemy
3. God caused him to fear like a driving leaf
4. he felt like dry chaff before a strong wind
5. God wrote bitter things against him
6. God put his feet in stocks
7. God watched all his paths (i.e., life)
8. God set a limit on his movements
9. he felt like a ruined garment

13:24 “enemy” This is *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 33, KB 38, Job 33:10) spelled אֹיֵב. The name “Job” is spelled אִיּוֹב. There may be a purposeful sound play. The meaning of Job’s name is uncertain.

13:26 “write” The Bible mentions two books that represent God’s memory. See Special Topic: The Two Books of God. However, here it seems to refer to a legal bill of indictment.

13:27 The imagery of Job 13:27 is uncertain, possibly

1. a prisoner
2. a slave

But it refers to the limiting or monitoring of a person’s movements (cf. Job 14:16; 31:4; 34:21; Ps. 139:2-3).

13:28 This sentence starts with a PRONOUN (BDB 214) that can mean “he” or “it” (#6, BDB 216). Therefore, it could refer to

1. Job
2. the bitter words written by God (i.e., a legal indictment)

The NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1194, #2, suggests a textual emendation of “rotten thing” (BDB 955) to “wineskin,” from an Aramaic root found in Sir. 43:20

It is possible Job 13:28 was meant to introduce Job 14. If so, “he” refers to “man” (Adam) in Job 14:1.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. To what is Job claiming to have knowledge of?
2. How does Job 13:3 summarize Job's desire?
3. Explain Job 13:7 and 8 in your own words.
4. Is Job 13:15 related to 13:14 or 13:16,18? Notice the different ways to translate it, why?
5. What two things does Job ask of God in Job 13:20-22?
6. How are "the sins of youth" related to the modern rite of passage called *Bar Mitzvah*?

JOB 14

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Speaks of the Finality of Death		Reply of Job (12:1-14:22)	Job (12:1-14:22)	
14:1-6 (1-6)	14:1-6 (1-6)	14:1-6 (1-6)	14:1-6 (1-6)	14:1-12 (1-12)
14:7-12 (7-12)	14:7-12 (7-12)	14:7-17 (7-17)	14:7-10 (7-10)	
			14:11-12 (11-12)	
14:13-17 (13-17)	14:13-17 (13-17)		14:13-17 (13-17)	14:13-17 (13-17)
14:18-22 (18-22)	14:18-22 (18-22)	14:18-22 (18-22)	14:18-22 (18-22)	14:18-22 (18-22)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 14 starts out with a strophe on the omnipotence of God (Job 14:3,5) and the frailty of mankind. Both of these being true, it is surprising how much time and effort God spends on mankind!
- B. The second strophe asserts there is no hope for a dead person. Trees can regenerate but not humans.

This chapter vacillates between hope and despair. Job wants to have hope but current reality mitigates against it!

- C. The third strophe has often been quoted as a text on the hope of resurrection but the fourth strophe (Job 14:18-22, esp. 19c) shows the “if” is wishful thinking here. However, Job continues to hope and believe, cf. Job 19:23-27. Job is trusting in God’s “longing” (Job 14:15b) for fellowship with His human creation! There is no sinless human (Job 14:3-4) but there is hope in a merciful Creator!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:1-6

- ¹“Man, who is born of woman,
Is short-lived and full of turmoil.
²Like a flower he comes forth and withers.
He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.
³You also open Your eyes on him
And bring him into judgment with Yourself.
⁴Who can make the clean out of the unclean?
No one!
⁵Since his days are determined,
The number of his months is with You;
And his limits You have set so that he cannot pass.
⁶Turn Your gaze from him that he may rest,
Until he fulfills his day like a hired man.”**

14:1 This describes our human condition in the world (cf. Job 5:7; 7:1-6). Job does not theologically develop the consequences of human sin (Genesis 3) as the NT does (Rom. 1:18-3:18,23). He just knows by experience the unfairness of this life.

1. the innocent suffer
2. the wicked prosper
3. family and friends do not understand

▣ **“turmoil”** The Hebrew NOUN (BDB 919) is used mostly in Job.

1. Job 3:17 – the wicked cease raging
2. Job 3:26 – Job is in turmoil
3. Job 14:1 – all humans are in turmoil
4. Job 37:2 – description of God’s voice
5. Job 39:24 – the raging of a war horse ready for battle

14:2 Human life in the physical realm is frail and fleeting. The author uses the imagery of

1. a flower, cf. Ps. 90:5,6; 102:11; 103:15; Isa. 40:6,7; 1 Pet. 1:24
2. a shadow, cf. Job 8:9; Ps. 102:11; 109:23; 144:4; Eccl. 6:12

Number 1 is used several times for the fate of “the wicked” (cf. Job 18:16; 24:24; Ps. 37:2) but here of all humans.

14:3 God watches Job relentlessly and brings him (and all humans) into judgment (cf. Job 7:19; 9:18; 10:20; 14:6).

Job wants a hearing with the God of fairness and blessing that he had previously known, but now he feels this God is against him/after him. Job has become disillusioned about the character of God. He is now still drawn to Him but afraid of Him!



**NASB, REV,
LXX, Peshitta**

Vulgate **“him”**

NKJV, NRSV,

TEV, JPSOA **“me”**

The UBS Text Project (p. 32) gives “me” a “C” rating (considerable doubt). The difference is
“me” – ואני

“him” – אותו

14:4 This is an affirmation of the sinfulness of all humans (see the summary texts in Gen. 6:5,11-12; Rom. 3:9-23). No human can stand before a holy God (cf. Job 4:17; 14:16-17; 15:14; 25:4).

The point is, if all are sinful, how can anyone be blessed? They cannot (cf. Job 9:2)!

Job 14:4 begins with the INTERROGATIVE “who” (BDB 566), which is common in Job, denoting a wish/desire (cf. Job 6:8; 11:5; 13:5; 14:4,13; 19:23 [twice]; 23:3; 29:2; 31:31,35).

▣ **“No one!”** The Aramaic Targums add, “but God” and the Vulgate has, “Is it not you, the only one?” Only God can deal with human sinfulness. And according to Job (cf. Job 14:6) God has chosen not to forgive him!

14:5 This emphasizes the sovereignty of God. Humans are completely under His direction (cf. Psalm 139). Job fully and completely believes in God’s control (cf. Job 14:16-17).

The term “bounds” (BDB 349-350) is used often in Job. God sets the bounds (limits) of

1. a person’s days – Job 14:5,13
2. a person’s life – Job 23:14
3. the waters – Job 26:10; 38:10
4. the seasons – Job 28:26
5. the heavenly lights – Job 38:33

14:6 See note above at Job 14:3. The *Qal* IMPERATIVE, “turn away your gaze,” denotes an act of judgment (cf. Job 7:19; Isa. 22:4), not a gaze of fellowship nor for gaining information.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:7-12

⁷**“For there is hope for a tree,
When it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And its shoots will not fail.**

⁸**Though its roots grow old in the ground
And its stump dies in the dry soil,**

⁹**At the scent of water it will flourish
And put forth sprigs like a plant.**

¹⁰**But man dies and lies prostrate.
Man expires, and where is he?**

¹¹As water evaporates from the sea,
And a river becomes parched and dried up,
¹²So man lies down and does not rise.
Until the heavens are no longer,
He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep.”

14:7-12 See note in Contextual Insights, B. This discouraging strophe sets the theological stage for Job 14:14-17.

Once a person goes to *Sheol* (cf. Job 14:13)

1. he/she cannot return
2. there is no sound, no voices
3. there is consciousness but no joy, praise, hope

See Special Topic: Where Are the Dead?

14:12 “Until the heavens are no longer” This is referring to this planet. See Special Topic: Heaven. Death is as permanent as creation!

▣ **“awake. . .sleep”** In the OT sleep is a euphemism for death. This is imagery not theology!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:13-17

¹³“Oh that You would hide me in Sheol,
That You would conceal me until Your wrath returns to You,
That You would set a limit for me and remember me!
¹⁴If a man dies, will he live *again*?
All the days of my struggle I will wait
Until my change comes.
¹⁵You will call, and I will answer You;
You will long for the work of Your hands.
¹⁶For now You number my steps,
You do not observe my sin.
¹⁷My transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And You wrap up my iniquity.”

14:13-17 This is a famous passage, especially Job 14:14. See note in Contextual Insights, C.

14:13 Job longs for death (cf. Job 3 and the last paragraph below). Here he wishes that he could hide in *Sheol* until God’s wrath/displeasure runs its course (cf. Ps. 30:5; 103:9; Isa. 26:20; 57:16; Jer. 3:5,12; Mic. 7:18).

It is uncertain exactly what Job is asking for. Does he expect a new life in this world or the next (cf. Job 19:23-27)? There are hints at a meaningful afterlife in the Psalms (i.e., Ps. 16:10-11; 23:6; 27:4-6; 49:15; 86:13) and a specific reference in Dan. 12:1-3.

The word “change” (BDB 322, Job 14:14c) could refer to death (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 156, #5).

14:14-15 This text holds out hope

1. of an afterlife or healing

2. of the patient waiting of faithful followers
3. of a “change” (lit. “the coming of my release”)
4. that God will call to His faithful followers and they will respond
5. that God longs for fellowship with humans made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 3:8)

But we must remember that this is the OT, not the NT! There is only a little hope here (cf. Job 14:19c-20). The rhetorical question of Job 14:14 in the MT expects a “no” answer!

14:14

NASB	“struggle”
NKJV	“hard service”
NRSV, NJB,	
JPSOA, REB	“service”
TEV	“time of trouble”
LXX	“the days of his life”
Peshitta	“days of his youth”
NAB	“days of my drudgery”

The NOUN (BDB 838) usually means a war or warfare but in a few places it denotes service.

1. of Levites – Num. 4:3,23,30,35,39,43; 8:24,25
2. the hard service of a troubled life – Job 7:1; 14:14; Isa. 40:2

14:15 “longs for” This VERB (BDB 493, KB 490, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is found only twice in the *Qal* stem, here and Ps. 17:12. The *Niphal* stem is used once for a strong longing for God (cf. Ps. 84:2). In this passage in Job it seems the word is used of the desire that God will long for Job after he dies and is in *Sheol*.

14:17 Is this verse

1. an affirmation that God will forgive sin (parallel to Job 14:17, literally, “plaster over”; NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 324, #4) or
2. an assertion that all human sin will one day be adjudicated?

It is hard to answer this because the author swings back and forth between hope and despair in this chapter! However, the parallelism of Job 14:17 strongly suggests option #1.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:18-22

- ¹⁸“But the falling mountain crumbles away,
And the rock moves from its place;
¹⁹Water wears away stones,
Its torrents wash away the dust of the earth;
So You destroy man’s hope.
²⁰You forever overpower him and he departs;
You change his appearance and send him away.
²¹His sons achieve honor, but he does not know *it*;
Or they become insignificant, but he does not perceive it.
²²But his body pains him,
And he mourns only for himself.”

14:18-22 This is a pessimistic strophe, epitomized by Job 14:19c! Death is coming for all. There is no return from *Sheol*.

14:19 “torrents” This NOUN (BDB 705 I) occurs only here and refers to a violent rainstorm. Many scholars emend it to BDB 695, which also denotes a hard rain (cf. Pro. 28:3). For more lexical information see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 280.

14:22 This verse seems out of place. It possibly is an initial response by the three friends to Job’s speech in Job 12-14.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Read the whole chapter and outline how Job moves between hope and despair.
2. How would you describe God’s actions in Job 14:1-6?
3. Is Job 14:7-12 hope or despair?
4. Does Job 14:14 hope for a resurrection?
5. How does Job 14:19c affect Job 14:14?
6. Is Job 14:22 referring to Job? Who wrote it?

JOB 15

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Eliphaz Says Job Presumes Much	Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly	Second Discourse of Eliphaz	The Second Dialogue (15:1-21:34) Eliphaz	Job's Own Words Condemn Him
15:1-6 (1-6)	15:1-6 (2-6)	15:1-6 (2-6)	15:1-6 (1-6)	15:1-6 (2-6)
15:7-16 (7-16)	15:7-13 (7-13)	15:7-16 (7-16)	15:7-10 (7-10) 15:11-16 (11-16)	15:7-35 (7-35)
What Eliphaz Has Seen of Life	15:14-16 (14-16)			
15:17-35 (17-35)	15:17-26 (17-26) 15:27-35 (27-35)	15:17-35 (17-35)	15:17-27 (17-27) 15:28-35 (28-35)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter is Eliphaz's second response to Job.
- B. Eliphaz was very gentle with Job in his first response but not so here (cf. Job 15:1-6,7-16).

- C. Eliphaz delineates the terrible consequence in store for the wicked person (Job 15:17-35). He strongly implies this kind of treatment is what Job has and will experience! “The two ways” (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-30, esp. 30:15,19; Psalm 1) is God’s unalterable plan of working with humans.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:1-6

¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded,
²“Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge
And fill himself with the east wind?
³Should he argue with useless talk,
Or with words which are not profitable?
⁴Indeed, you do away with reverence
And hinder meditation before God.
⁵For your guilt teaches your mouth,
And you choose the language of the crafty.
⁶Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;
And your own lips testify against you.”

15:1-6 this strophe uses imagery accusing Job of speaking falsely.

1. wind knowledge, Job 15:2a
2. filled with the east wind (i.e., destructive wind), Job 15:2b
3. useless talk, Job 15:3a
4. unprofitable words, Job 15:3b
5. guilt teaches your mouth, Job 15:5a
6. the language of the crafty, Job 15:5b
7. your own mouth condemns you, Job 16:6a (the summary statement)
8. your own lips testify against you, Job 15:6b (parallel to Job 15:6a); this may be an allusion to Job’s accusation directed toward God in Job 9:20,24; 10:3

This may be an allusion to Job 5:12-13 (cf. 1 Cor. 3:19).

The theological issue is “who is the true ‘wise man’ (cf. Job 15:2a), Job or Eliphaz?” Both believed they knew God and His ways (cf. Job 15:9).

15:4 This verse asserts the results of Job’s words.

1. do away with the fear of God
2. hinder meditation with God (possible “wise discourse about God,” NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1236)

Eliphaz is accusing Job of destroying faith in God by his harsh words questioning God’s character and justice in His ways with humans.

15:5 “the crafty” This adjective (BDB 791) is used in Gen. 3:1 to describe the serpent. In Job it denotes someone opposed to God’s will (cf. Job 5:12). This is a serious charge against Job’s innocence and godliness!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:7-16

- ⁷“Were you the first man to be born,
Or were you brought forth before the hills?
⁸Do you hear the secret counsel of God,
And limit wisdom to yourself?
⁹What do you know that we do not know?
What do you understand that we do not?
¹⁰Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us,
Older than your father.
¹¹Are the consolations of God too small for you,
Even the word *spoken* gently with you?
¹²Why does your heart carry you away?
And why do your eyes flash,
¹³That you should turn your spirit against God
And allow *such* words to go out of your mouth?
¹⁴What is man, that he should be pure,
Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
¹⁵Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones,
And the heavens are not pure in His sight;
¹⁶How much less one who is detestable and corrupt,
Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

15:7-16 Notice the number of questions in this strophe.

1. formed by π , Job 15:7,8,11
2. formed by $\pi\mu$, Job 15:9,12,14

These are all sarcastic questions, like Job 15:2,3. See *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* by Walke and O'Connor, pp. 315-329.

15:7-8 This may refer to

1. God Himself, cf. Ps. 90:2
2. an ancient Jewish myth about the first created person, something similar to Pro. 8:22-31; Job 15:7b is very similar to Pro. 8:25b
3. to Adam after he ate of the Tree of Knowledge (i.e., Genesis 3)
4. an ANE myth about Adapa, the teacher of humans and counselor to Sumerian pre-flood kings

15:9 This may be an allusion to Job's words in Job 12:3; 13:2. Job and the three comforters all shared the same ANE theology and worldview.

15:10 Eliphaz is claiming that traditional theology was on the side of the three comforters (cf. Job 12:12; 32:7). There are three different words used to denote age.

1. gray-haired (BDB 966, KB 1318)
2. the aged (BDB 450)
3. older (BDB 460)

Age alone does not guarantee wisdom or truth (i.e., Job 32:9).

15:11 “the consolation of God” This NOUN (BDB 637) is rare and found only in the PLURAL in Job 15:11; 21:2; Ps. 94:19; Isa. 66:11; Jer. 16:7. It is related to the root “comfort” (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 81-82). It is used of God in Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2 (i.e., “compassionate God”), but not in Exod. 34:6. It seems to refer to the positive aspect of “the two ways” theology.

1. if one repents God will forgive
2. if one repents God will restore blessings

The Jewish Study Bible (p. 1524) asserts that “God” (*El*) is not the name for Deity but an abbreviation of *Eleh*, meaning “these” (cf. Gen. 19:8,25; 26:3,4; Lev. 18:27, etc.). Rashi’s (a Jewish commentator of the Middle Ages) interpretation, followed by the JPSOA, has “God.”

15:12 Eliphaz is accusing Job of reacting to the three comforters’ words in a negative way. Job 15:12 may refer to the empty words and self deception of Job 15:1-6.



NASB, NRSV,

REB “your eyes flash”

NKJV, Peshitta “your eyes wink at”

TEV “glare”

NJB “you roll your eyes”

JPSOA “your eyes have failed you”

LXX “your eyes set themselves upon”

This VERB (BDB 931, KB 1210, *Qal* IMPERFECT) occurs only here in the OT. It is difficult to know the reason for the “winking,” “flashing.” Some commentators suggest Pro. 6:17 and 30:13 as parallels meaning arrogant eyes, but AB (p. 110) links the root to the Arabic root, “dwindle away,” here meaning a loss of perspective on the true meaning of life (i.e. validity of the three comforters’ theology).

15:13 Eliphaz cannot believe or condone what Job has said about God, His character, and His ways with humans.

15:14-15 This alludes to the question of Job 4:17-21 or 14:4 (cf. Job 25:4). God’s creation, both physical and spiritual (i.e., holy ones, Job 15:15a), has been negatively affected by rebellion.

1. How can Job claim to be innocent?
2. How can Job hope for a heavenly advocate?

15:14 “righteous” Job’s righteousness is not conformity to the Mosaic covenant but more like the cultural norms of Rom. 2:14-16. See Special Topic: Righteousness.

15:15 “holy ones” This (BDB 871, 872, PLURAL; see Special Topic: Holy) is used in two senses.

1. a godly person – Deut. 33:3; Ps. 34:9; Dan. 8:24 (Aramaic, BDB 1110, Dan. 7:18)
2. angels – Job 5:1; 15:15; Ps. 89:5,7; Dan. 8:13; Zech. 14:5

15:16 Eliphaz is speaking of Job!

1. detestable – BDB 1073, KB 1765, *Niphal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, cf. Ps. 14:1
2. corrupt – BDB 47, KB 54, *Niphal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (synonym, BDB 1007 in Ps. 14:1)
3. drinks iniquity – BDB 1059, KB 1667, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:17-35

¹⁷**“I will tell you, listen to me;**

And what I have seen I will also declare;

¹⁸**What wise men have told,**

And have not concealed from their fathers,

¹⁹**To whom alone the land was given,**

And no alien passed among them.

²⁰**The wicked man writhes in pain all *his* days,**

And numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless.

²¹**Sounds of terror are in his ears;**

While at peace the destroyer comes upon him.

²²**He does not believe that he will return from darkness,**

And he is destined for the sword.

²³**He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’**

He knows that a day of darkness is at hand.

²⁴**Distress and anguish terrify him,**

They overpower him like a king ready for the attack,

²⁵**Because he has stretched out his hand against God**

And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty.

²⁶**He rushes headlong at Him**

With his massive shield.

²⁷**For he has covered his face with his fat**

And made his thighs heavy with flesh.

²⁸**He has lived in desolate cities,**

In houses no one would inhabit,

Which are destined to become ruins.

²⁹**He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure;**

And his grain will not bend down to the ground.

³⁰**He will not escape from darkness;**

The flame will wither his shoots,

And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.

³¹**Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself;**

For emptiness will be his reward.

³²**It will be accomplished before his time,**

And his palm branch will not be green.

³³**He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine,**

And will cast off his flower like the olive tree.

³⁴**For the company of the godless is barren,**

And fire consumes the tents of the corrupt.

³⁵**They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity,**

And their mind prepares deception.”

15:17-35 Eliphaz lists the consequences for wicked behavior.

1. writhes in pain all his days, Job 15:20a
2. years are numbered (i.e., limited), Job 15:20b (possibly meant to be combined with #1)
3. sounds of terror in his ears, Job 15:21a
4. is destroyed while thinking he is safe, Job 15:21b
5. no hope of recovery of previous prosperity (possibly no hope in/from *Sheol*), Job 15:22a
6. destined for a violent death (i.e., sword), Job 15:22b
7. wanders about looking for food (NASB, see technical issues in note below), Job 15:23a
8. death comes suddenly, Job 15:23b
9. distress and anguish terrify him, Job 15:24a
10. distress and anguish overpower him, Job 15:24b
11. lives in desolate cities (possibly cities under curses), Job 15:28
12. not have wealth, Job 15:29a
13. wealth will not endure, Job 15:29a
14. crops will fail, Job 15:29b
15. he will die (by the breath of God's mouth, cf. Job 4:9), Job 15:30
16. his reward is emptiness, Job 15:31
17. life or crops will fail, Job 15:32-33
18. the godless are barren Job 15:34a
19. fire consumes the tents of the corrupt, Job 15:34b
20. mind dwells on iniquity, Job 15:35

Some of these actions mimic the very things that happened to Job's family and possessions in Job 1:16-

19. Surely Job recognized these allusions! His words hurt Eliphaz, now Eliphaz tries to hurt Job.

15:17 Eliphaz bases his assertions on

1. experience, Job 15:17b
2. tradition, Job 15:18

Job 15:17 has two COHORTATIVES and an IMPERATIVE to create emphasis. Eliphaz wants Job's attention to his words. This may refer to Job 6:24 or 13:6.

15:19 This may be an allusion to

1. promises to the Patriarchs (Job 15:19a)
2. the conquest of Canaan (Job 15:19b)
3. Net Bible (P. 797) assumes it refers to the security of Edom (i.e., her wisdom traditions are undefiled by foreign influence)
4. ICC (p. 137) suggests it refers to Eliphaz's tribe from Teman

If the historical Job is speaking, it must refer to Edom, but if the Judean sage is speaking, then #1 and #2 could refer to Canaan.

15:23

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, JPSOA,

MT

"He wanders about for food, saying, 'where is it?'"

TEV

"and vultures are waiting to eat their corpses"

NJB, LXX

"marked down as meat for the vulture"

Peshitta

"He flees because of the threat of judgment"

REB

"he is flung out as food for vultures"

The UBS Text Project (p. 34) translates the Hebrew “as bread for vultures” and gives it a “C” rating (considerable doubt). This would follow the LXX, not the MT, but it is only a change of vocalization.

15:24 Notice the personification of

1. distress – BDB 865 II
2. anguish – BDB 848



NASB	“for the attack”
NKJV, NRSV	“ready for battle”
TEV	“waiting to attack”
NJB	“poised for an assault”

This NOUN (BDB 461) occurs only here in the OT. BDB translates it “onset” (i.e., the beginning of a conflict), following the Arabic root for the attack of a hawk (AB, p. 111).

15:25-27 These verses reflect the actions of the wicked ones toward God.

1. stretched out their hands against God, Job 15:25a
2. acted arrogantly against the Almighty, Job 15:25b
3. rushed with a stiff neck (NASB margin) at God, Job 15:26a
4. Job 15:27 is difficult to interpret. The issue is, what does “fat” denote?
 - a. wealth, luxury
 - b. an overweight, prosperous person unable to fight
 - c. oil for war shields
 - d. allusion to ANE mythology
 - e. linked to rebellion in Deut. 32:15; Ps. 73:7; Jer. 5:28

It should be noted that according to “the two ways” prosperity was a sign of God’s pleasure, but here it is a deceptive brief aspect of a wicked person’s life. He is prosperous by ill-gotten gain but Eliphaz emphasizes it will not last.

15:25 “The Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

15:28 The person described

1. lived in cursed places (i.e., no fear of God), cf. Job 3:14
2. rebuilt destroyed (i.e., cursed) houses/cities to show their power and wealth, cf. Isa. 5:8-9

Whatever this building activity refers to, it will not last (i.e., Job 15:28c). God’s judgment will find them!

15:29-35 This imagery could refer to

1. the wicked themselves
2. the agricultural harvest of the wicked

15:29b This line of Hebrew poetry is uncertain. It is parallel with Job 15:29a.

1. The LXX has “He shall not cast a shadow upon the ground” (TEV, NJB).
2. The Peshitta has “nor shall his words be established upon the earth.”
3. The JPSOA has “His produce shall not bend to the earth.”

15:30 “darkness” This NOUN (BDB 361) is used three times in Job 15 (cf. Job 15:22,23,30). The interpretive question is, does it always refer to the same thing? Is it

1. the days of problems and reversals that will be followed (at least for the repentant) by a return to prosperity or
2. a euphemism for *Sheol* (the holding place of the departed, cf. Nah. 1:8)?

It seems the first two usages may reflect option #1, while the third usage reflects option #2.

Remember that Job 3:1-10 has many SYNONYMS for the lack of light. Obviously the ancient Hebrews used this concept of the lack of light in several senses.

▣ **“blame”** This was a metaphor of God’s judgment. See Special Topic: Fire.

15:31 This verse has the ring of truth. The focus is not on the “faith” or “belief” (BDB 52, KB 63, *Hiphil* JUSSIVE) of a person but the credibility and truthfulness of its object. “Deceiving himself” (BDB 1073, KB 1766, *Niphal* PERFECT) denotes intentional self-blindness! This is what the Gospel of John, chapter 9 accentuates.

15:32 “before his time” In the OT a faithful follower’s life is described as being “full in years” (i.e., 2 Sam. 7:12; 1 Chr. 17:11; Lam. 4:18). For the wicked their lives are cut short (cf. Job 21:13; 22:16). Death is viewed as a natural occurrence but one’s early death was viewed as a tragedy.

15:34 “barren” This ADJECTIVE (BDB 166) is used three times in Job.

1. Job’s desire that he had never been born, Job 3:7
2. the total destruction of the godless and their children, Job 15:34
3. translated “gaunt” in Job 30:3
4. the only other occurrence of this word is Isa. 49:21, where it describes the feelings of the Babylonian exiles

15:35 “they conceive mischief” This is the opposite of “barren” in Job 15:34. But here the conception is not a blessing but a disaster (cf. Isa. 59:4). This is poetic contrast! Wickedness produces only more wickedness!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How is Eliphaz’s speech of Job 15 different from his in Job 4-5?
2. Who is the “first man” of Job 15:7-8?
3. What are “the consolations of God” in Job 15:11?
4. Explain Job 15:14-15 in light of ANE thought and early chapters of Job.
5. How do you explain the difference between Job 15:17-25 and Ps. 73:1-14? Also note their similarity to Ps. 73:15-28.

JOB 16

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says Friends Are Sorry Comforters	Job Reproaches His Pitiless Friends	Reply of Job (16:1-17:16)	Job (16:1-17:16)	Human Injustice and Divine Justice
16:1-5 (2-5)	16:1-5 (2-5)	16:1-5 (1-5)	16:1-5 (1-5)	16:1-11 (2-11)
Job Says God Shattered Him				
16:6-17 (6-17)	16:6-14 (6-14)	16:6-17 (6-17)	16:6-8 (6-8) 16:9-14 (9-14)	16:12-22 (12-22)
	16:15-17 (15-17)		16:15-17 (15-17)	
16:18-22 (18-22)	16:18-22 (18-22)	16:18-17:2 (16:18-17:2)	16:18-22 (18-22)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section) FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job's response to Eliphaz's second speech is recorded in Job 16-17.
- B. The first strophe (Job 16:1-5) responds to Job's three comforters. He asserts that he would have been a better comforter (Job 16:4-5) in contrast to them.

- C. In the second strophe (Job 16:6-17) Job directly accuses God of attacking him. This is hyperbolic, emotional imagery!
- D. The third strophe (Job 16:18-22) has Job returning to his legal imagery. He wants to take God to trial before the heavenly council, for the unfair and undeserved treatment he has experienced. In this he seeks the help of a heavenly advocate (cf. Job 16:19 and possibly 16:20; NJB).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:1-5

¹Then Job answered,
²“I have heard many such things;
 Sorry comforters are you all.
³Is there *no* limit to windy words?
 Or what plagues you that you answer?
⁴I too could speak like you,
 If I were in your place.
 I could compose words against you
 And shake my head at you.
⁵I could strengthen you with my mouth,
 And the solace of my lips could lessen *your pain*.”

16:2b “Sorry” This (BDB 765) is a common term in Job for “trouble” (cf. Job 3:10; 5:6,7; 7:3; 11:16). It was used of the godless in Job 15:35.

Now Job asserts that his three comforters are “trouble” or “mischief” (cf. Job 4:8), not help.

16:3 “windy words” This is what Bildad accused Job of in Job 8:2 and Eliphaz accused him of in Job 15:1-6.

▣ **“plagues”** This is the only use of the *Hiphil* (BDB 599, KB 637). The *Niphal* is used in Job 6:25 in the sense of “vex”; it does not fit the basic meaning of the root, which is “sick” or “sickness.” Job is asking his comforters why they are so upset and angry.

16:4-5 These verses contain several COHORTATIVE forms which assert that if Job had been their comforter, he could have done a much better job.

The UBS *Handbook*, p. 308, suggests that the entire context is negative (i.e., sarcastic), “I could make great speeches criticizing you. . . I would mockingly shake my head at you” (see note below).

16:4 “shake my head at you” This (BDB 631) was a visible sign of mockery (cf. Ps. 22:7; 109:25; Isa. 37:22; Lam. 2:15; Zeph. 2:15; as a similar phrase using BDB 626 is found in Jer. 18:16; 48:27).

This negative meaning to the term seems to be in contrast Job 16:5, where the words are positive. Perhaps the two verses contrast the three comforters’ approach (Job 16:4) and Job’s hypothetical one (Job 16:5).

However, it is also possible that the synonym (BDB 626) has a positive meaning, as in Job 2:11; 42:11 (i.e., shake the head as a gesture of sympathy).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:6-17

**⁶“If I speak, my pain is not lessened,
And if I hold back, what has left me?
⁷But now He has exhausted me;
You have laid waste all my company.
⁸You have shriveled me up,
It has become a witness;
And my leanness rises up against me,
It testifies to my face.
⁹His anger has torn me and hunted me down,
He has gnashed at me with His teeth;
My adversary glares at me.
¹⁰They have gaped at me with their mouth,
They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt;
They have massed themselves against me.
¹¹God hands me over to ruffians
And tosses me into the hands of the wicked.
¹²I was at ease, but He shattered me,
And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces;
He has also set me up as His target.
¹³His arrows surround me.
Without mercy He splits my kidneys open;
He pours out my gall on the ground.
¹⁴He breaks through me with breach after breach;
He runs at me like a warrior.
¹⁵I have sewed sackcloth over my skin
And thrust my horn in the dust.
¹⁶My face is flushed from weeping,
And deep darkness is on my eyelids,
¹⁷Although there is no violence in my hands,
And my prayer is pure.**

16:6-17 In verse 6 Job asserts that his silence has done no good, so he will speak of how he truly feels (i.e., attacked by God). Notice the PERSONAL PRONOUNS in these verses! Job believes that God is sovereign and causes all things (i.e., Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6). There are no secondary causes! Remember this is hyperbolic poetic imagery!

1. God exhausted him, Job 16:7a
2. God laid waste all his “company” (i.e., his family, TEV), Job 16:7b
3. God shriveled him (i.e., physical disease), Job 16:8a
4. God’s anger tore him (i.e., like a wild animal, cf. Job 10:16), Job 16:9a
5. God’s anger bore a grudge against him Job 16:9a, cf. Job 30:21
6. God gnashed His teeth at him (i.e., to grind teeth in rage), Job 16:9b
7. God glared at him (i.e., to give someone the evil look of a curse), Job 16:9c

8. God hands him over to suffering and the and the wicked, Job 16:11
 9. God shattered him, Job 16:12a
 10. God grasped him by the neck and shook him to pieces, Job 16:12b
 11. God made Job His target, Job 16:12c, cf Job 7:20
 12. God surrounded him with His arrows, Job 16:13a, cf. Job 6:4
 13. God split his kidneys open (i.e., the seat of one's emotional and mental life), Job 16:13b
 14. God poured out Job's gall on the ground (i.e., parallel to #13, related to one's inner life), Job 16:13c
 15. God attacks Job like a city breached again and again, Job 16:14a
 16. God attacks Job like a warrior, Job 16:14b
- The thrust of this litany of violent attacks may be
1. Eliphaz had accused Job of attacking God (cf. Job 15:25-26)
 2. Job asserts it is God who has attacked him though he has not retaliated (Job 16:17)

16:7 “company” This word has been defined in several ways.

1. his family (i.e., children and servants) who were killed in Job 1 and 2
2. his acquaintances who turned to scoffers, Job 16:20, cf. Job 19:13-22
3. just part of the hyperbolic imagery of Job 16:6-17

This word (BDB 417) is emended by AB (p. 116) to the word for “calamity/woe,” but this is followed by no English translation. The MT makes sense though exactly where to divide the lines of poetry remains uncertain.

16:8a “shriveled me up” This VERB (BDB 888, KB 1108, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*) occurs only twice in the OT (cf. Job 22:16) and is from an Aramaic root, “to seize” (cf. TEV). The NASB gets “shriveled” from the parallel in Job 16:8c, “leanness” (BDB 471, cf. Ps. 109:24).

Job's emaciated body was a witness (i.e., “the two ways”) that Job had sinner and not repented.

16:8b *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 521, says this line of poetry is “corrupt” and the author emends it to “and utters calumnies to my face” (NJB, “accusing me face to face”).

It is always uncertain whether to emend the MT or not because of

1. a use of rare words
2. a use of poetic license
3. our lack of knowledge of ancient Hebrew
4. assumptions about Hebrew parallelism
5. limited examples of Semitic cognates

16:9c-10 Job 16:9c has the SINGULAR “My adversary” or “My enemy,” which in the context of Job 9, refers to God. However, Job 16:10 has PLURALS and describes

1. Job's enemies (possibly those of Job 16:20) who saw him suffering or
2. his three comforters

Since Elihu was apparently present during the speeches, there may have been others present.

Job 16:11 describes God as handing Job over to “ruffians” (BDB 732) and to “the wicked” (BDB 957). These may be the ones addressed in Job 16:10.

As Job calls God “my enemy” (BDB 865), he feels God has made him “an enemy” (Job 19:11; a SYNONYM, BDB 33, is used in Job 13:24). What a change of relationship this is from Job 1-2!

16:10b “slapped me on the cheek with contempt” This was an ANE gesture of reproach (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:24; Lam. 3:30; Mic. 5:1 and a similar gesture in Isa. 50:6).

16:11**NASB, NKJV,****NRSV****“ruffians”****NJB****“godless”****JPSOA****“an evil man”****LXX****“the unjust”**

The MT (BDB 732) has “young boy,” found in Job 19:18 and 21:11. Most English translations change it to “one who acts unjustly” (BDB 732).

1. young boy – עוֹלָל
2. to act unjustly – עוֹל

NASB is trying to retain the essence of #1 in “ruffians.”

16:12 “I was at ease” This must refer to Job’s life before Job 1-2.

16:13**NASB****“without mercy****NKJV, TEV****“does not pity”****NRSV, JPSOA****“shows no mercy”****NJB****“pitilessly”****REB****“pitiless”****LXX****“without sparing”**

The MT has the VERB “spare” (BDB 328, KB 328, *Qal* IMPERFECT, NEGATED, cf. Job 27:22). It is also used in Job 6:10 and 20:13. This VERB is mostly used of human compassion but in Lamentations (i.e., Lam. 2:17,21; 3:43) it is used of YHWH. In this text Job feels that God has no pity on him and continues to attack. His life is a wreck!

16:15-17 God violently and repeatedly attacked Job but he claims he remained innocent and prayerful. The unexpressed question is “Why!”

16:15 This is unique imagery. The sewing of sackcloth is not mentioned elsewhere (possibly Ps. 69:11). It was worn as a sign of mourning (see Special Topic: Grieving Rites).

The “horn in the dust” imagery refers to a person’s life in a time of distress or defeat.

16:17 “pure” This adjective (BDB 269) is used to express Job’s righteousness in Job 8:6 and 33:9. Job continues to claim he is innocent (i.e., Job 6:10; 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 13:18; 16:17; 33:9).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:18-22

¹⁸“O earth, do not cover my blood,

And let there be no *resting* place for my cry.

¹⁹Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,

And my advocate is on high.

²⁰My friends are my scoffers;

My eye weeps to God.

²¹O that a man might plead with God

As a man with his neighbor!

**²²For when a few years are past,
I shall go the way of no return.”**

16:18-22 This is legal imagery.

1. the earth is personified as a witness (like to Cain’s murder in Gen. 4:10) that should not be silent (cf. Isa. 26:21; Ezek. 24:7-8)
2. Job still longs for an advocate at the heavenly court to plead his case (cf. Job 5:1; 9:33; 19:25-27; 33:23)
3. because of the mention of false witnesses in Job 16:20, some commentators see the “advocate” in Job 16:19 as the witness of Job’s godly life
4. Job still wants his day in court (Job 16:21b) before his death (16:22). He is not looking for vindication in the afterlife but in this life.

16:19 Because Job 16:18-22 forms one strophe, it is possible for the advocate of 16:19 to refer to “heaven and earth” (cf. Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2), which may be the eternal witness that Job is referring to. However, other texts in Job (i.e., Job 5:1; 9:33; 19:25-27; 33:23) point toward an angelic mediator at the heavenly court. This mediator would be the counterpoint of the heavenly adversary in Job 1-2.

16:20

NASB “My friends are my scoffers”

NJB “Interpreter of my thoughts”

Net Bible “My intercessor is my friend”

JPSOA “O my advocate, my fellows”

The VERB scorn me” (BDB 539, KB 529, *Hiphil* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) has several usages.

1. to scorn, Ps. 119:51
2. to mediate, Job 33:23
3. to interpret, Gen. 42:23
4. in 2 Chr. 32:31 the root is translated
 - a. envoys
 - b. ambassadors

Therefore, the verse could refer to the “advocate on high” of Job 16:19b. The VERB in 16:21, “plead,” has legal connotations.

16:22 “the way of no return” Death (*Sheol*) was called “the land of no return” in the ANE (cf. Job 7:9; 10:21).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Is Job 16:4-5 an extension of 16:1-3 or a contrast?
2. Explain the change from “God” (cf. Job 16:6-7, 11-17, and 16:10) to “they.”
3. Does Job reassert his innocence in Job 16:17?
4. How is Job 16:18 related to Gen. 4:10?
5. Who is the heavenly advocate of Job 16:19?

JOB 17

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says He Has Become a Byword	Job Prays for Relief	Job's Reply (16:1-17:16) 16:18-17:2 (16:18-17:2)	Job (16:1-17:16) 16:18-17:10 (16:18-17:10)	
17:1-2 (1-2)	17:1-2 (1-2)			17:1-5 (1-5)
17:3-5 (3-5)	17:3-5 (3-5)	17:3-5 (3-5)		
17:6-16 (6-16)	17:6-9 (6-9) 17:10-16 (10-16)	17:6-16 (6-16)		17:6-9 (6-9) 17:10 (10)
			17:11-16 (11-16)	17:11-16 (11-16)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job expresses his feelings about his current condition (Job 17:1-2,6-7,11).
- B. He describes his three comforters in Job 17:2a,4,5,10,12.

- C. Job still calls out to God even though he questions His care (Job 17:3-4,15-16). The main questions are
1. God, will You be my pledge and guarantor?
 2. Where is my hope? (Job 17:15, cf. 7:6)
- D. Remember, Job 16 and 17 form a literary unit.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:1-2

¹“My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished,
The grave is *ready* for me.
²Surely mockers are with me,
And my eye gazes on their provocation.”

17:1-2 Job expresses his feelings in several poetic lines in Job 17:1-11.

1. my spirit is broken, Job 17:1a
2. my days are extinguished, Job. 17:1a
3. the grave is ready for me, Job 17:1b
4. mockers are with me, Job 17:2a
5. his eyes gaze (lit. lodges) on their provocation, Job 17:2b
6. he is a byword of the people, Job 17:6a
7. he is one on whom people spit, Job 17:6b
8. his eyes have grown dim from grief, Job 17:7a
9. all his members are as a shadow, Job 17:7b
10. his days are past, Job 17:11a
11. his plans are torn, Job 17:11a
12. the wishes of his heart are torn, Job 17:11b

17:1 “spirit” This is *ruah* (BDB 924). See Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible.

▣ **“broken”** There are many meanings connected to this root. The VERB (BDB 287 II, KB 285, *Pual* PERFECT) normally means, “act corruptly,” but in the *Pual* it can mean “broken” (cf. Isa. 10:27).



NASB “extinguished”

JPSOA “run out”

REB “numbered”

NJB “grave-diggers assemble for me”

The MT has זָעַךְ (BDB 276, KB 276, *Niphal* PERFECT). This is the only use of the *Niphal* stem of this root in the OT. Most usages of the root are in *Qal*.

Some emend it to דָּעַךְ (BDB 200), which also means “go out” or “be extinguished” (cf. Job 18:5,6).

The NJB makes two emendations to this line of poetry, but UBS Text Project supports the MT (B rating, meaning some doubt).

▣ **“the grave”** The MT has the PLURAL, which is where NJB gets “grave diggers.” Job is expecting to die (cf. Job 17:13-16).

17:2 “mockers” This refers to Job’s comforters.

▣ **“their provocation”** The VERBAL is a *Hiphal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT (BDB 598, KB 632). Job accuses his comforters of being “disobedient to God,” “rebellious toward God.”

▣ **“dwells”** This VERB (BDB 533, KB 529, *Qal* JUSSIVE) means “to lodge with,” “pass the night with.” The other English translations, excluding the NKJV and NRSV, translate it idiomatically. The comments and accusations of Job’s comforters (cf. Job 16:2a) are ever before him. They haunt his mind and heart, but he thinks their words are an attack on God, as well as himself!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:3-5

³**Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself;**

Who is there that will be my guarantor?

⁴**For You have kept their heart from understanding,
Therefore You will not exalt *them*.**

⁵**He who informs against friends for a share *of the spoil*,
The eyes of his children also will languish.**

17:3-4 Job addresses God in prayer (i.e., two *Qal* IMPERATIVES). He is

1. asking God to be his assurance (pledge, guarantor)
2. he is still seeking the aid of a heavenly advocate (cf. Job 16:19; 19:25-27)
3. AB (p. 120) suggests a revocalization that turns this into Job’s offer to make a pledge to God hoping He will offer His pledge back

17:3b

NASB “be my guarantor”

NKJV “will shake hands with me”

NRSV “will give surety for me”

NJB “cares to slap his hand on mine”

JPSOA “will give his hand on my behalf”

REB “will pledge himself for me”

The MT has “who will strike himself into my hand” (BDB 1075, KB 1785, *Niphal* IMPERFECT). This physical gesture denoted the ratification of a pledge (cf. Pro. 6:1; 17:18; in a negative sense in Pro. 11:15; 22:26).

17:4 The sovereignty of God, which has often been affirmed by the three friends, is used to assure the divine judgment of the friends.

1. God has “hidden” (BDB 860, KB 1049, *Qal* PERFECT) their hearts/minds/ from understanding (cf. Job 12:20)
2. God will not exalt them (nor their children, Job 17:5b) because they attacked a friend for personal gain, Job 17:5 (cf. Job 13:7-11)

The last line of Job 17:4 can be a prayer for God to

1. not let the three friends be exalted (cf. Exod. 15:1; Ps. 37:34; Pro. 4:8)
2. not let the three friends triumph (BDB 926, KB 1202, *Polel* IMPERFECT, cf. Ps. 41:11)
3. this VERB stem is used of raising children (cf. Isa. 1:2; 23:4) and children are mentioned in Job 17:5b. If so, this would be an idiom for their descendants to be cut off (i.e., no posterity).

17:5 “for a share” This NOUN (BDB 324 I) means “portion.” It can refer

1. positively – Job 31:2
2. negatively – Job 27:13

Here it refers to the three friends attacking Job to promote their sense of acceptance with God (cf. Job 13:8,10).

The NASB Study Bible (p. 709) and *The Jerome Bible Commentary* (p. 521) both think it is a proverb that Job quoted “to counter the false accusations of his friends.”

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:6-16

- 6**“But He has made me a byword of the people,
And I am one at whom men spit.
7My eye has also grown dim because of grief,
And all my members are as a shadow.
8The upright will be appalled at this,
And the innocent will stir up himself against the godless.
9Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way,
And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger.
10But come again all of you now,
For I do not find a wise man among you.
11My days are past, my plans are torn apart,
Even the wishes of my heart.
12They make night into day, saying,
‘The light is near,’ in the presence of darkness.
13If I look for Sheol as my home,
I make my bed in the darkness;
14If I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’;
To the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’;
15Where now is my hope?
And who regards my hope?
16Will it go down with me to Sheol?
Shall we together go down into the dust?”

17:6 The sovereign God not only acted toward the three friends but also toward Job. There is some doubt who this verse refers to.

1. the SINGULAR of Job 17:5a
2. God

▣ **“a byword”** The NOUN (BDB 605) usually means “a proverb” or “a parable,” but here it is parallel with “one at whom men spit,” so it must have a negative connotation (cf. Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9; Job 30:10; Isa. 50:6). Apparently Job was being used as an example of how “the two ways” worked! This was very painful for a righteous man (cf. Job. 17:8-9).

17:7b This is an ambiguous line of poetry. It could relate to Job 16:8, where Job describes his body as “shriveled up.”

However, the word “shadow” (BDB 853) can have the connotation of death. This imagery is surely referred to in Job 17:12-16.

1. the presence of darkness (BDB 365)
2. *Sheol* (BDB 982, see Special Topic: *Sheol*)
3. in the darkness (BDB 365, cf. Job 3:4,5; 10:21; 15:22,23)
4. the pit (BDB 1001)
5. to the worm (cf. Job 7:5; 21:26)
6. go down with me to *Sheol*
7. go down into the dust (BDB 779)

Job is contemplating the imminence of his own death.



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, Vulgate “members”

TEV “arms and legs”

NJB, REB “limbs”

JPSOA (Targums) “all shapes”

NET Bible “frame”

The MT has יצרים (BDB 428), which is found only here in the OT. BDB gives two options.

1. “members” or “limbs”
2. “forms” or “shapes”

17:8-9 These verses use several phrases/words to describe faithful followers, of which Job considers himself to be, but the three friends now do not.

1. the upright (BDB 449)
2. the innocent (BDB 667)
3. the righteous (BDB 843)
4. he who has clean hands (BDB 373 CONSTRUCT 388)

It is possible to view Job 17:8-9 as a sarcastic reference as to how the three comforters view themselves.

It is also possible that it is a general statement that righteous people would be appalled at the unfounded accusations and innuendoes of the three friends against Job.

17:10 Job encourages his attackers to try again (lit. “come on again,” *Qal* IMPERFECT and *Qal* IMPERATIVE), but he is sure there is no wise man (BDB 314) among them!

Job characterizes their words in Job 17:12. They promise Job good things/times if he would acknowledge his sin and repent, but they only taunt a good, innocent, blameless man!

17:11 “plans” The NOUN (BDB 273) is usually used of the plans of evil people. Only here does it denote a godly plan. It is paralleled to “the wishes of my heart.”

17:12 The “they” refers to the three comforters. Their accusations have exacerbated Job’s pain, doubt, and confusion.

17:16

NASB “will it go down with me to Sheol”

NKJV “*will* they go down to the gates of Sheol”

NRSV “will it go down to the bars of Sheol”

JPSOA “will it descend to Sheol”

REB “I cannot take them with me down to Sheol”

The MT has “the bars of Sheol will they do down together?” There are several questions.

1. The UBS Text Project (p. 43) suggests that the first phrase, “the bars of Sheol” should be “with me (into) Sheol” (“C” rating), which is a revocalization. This change is supported by Targums.
2. The other question is to what or whom does “it” refer?
 - a. in the MT it is PLURAL and may refer to the three comforters of Job 17:12
 - b. the imagery of “father” and “mother” of Job 17:14
 - c. the “hope” of Job 17:15
3. The last word of the last line of poetry in Job 17:16 in the MT is “rest” (BDB 629, cf. Eccl. 6:5), but a revocalization makes it “descend,” which fits the parallelism better. The UBS Text Project (p. 44) gives “descend” a C rating (considerable doubt).

▣ **“into the dust”** This (BDB 779) is an idiom for death (cf. Job 7:21; 20:11; 21:26; Ps. 22:15,29; 30:9; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Explain Job 17:3 in your own words.
2. To whom does Job 17:4 refer?
3. How does Job 17:5 apply to Job’s three comforters?
4. How does Job 17:8-9 fit into the literary flow of the chapter?
5. Who is the “they” of Job 17:12?
6. To what does “hope” in Job 17:15 refer?
7. What/who does “it” of Job 17:16 refer?

JOB 18

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Bildad Speaks of the Wicked	Bildad: The Wicked Are Punished	Second Discourse of Bildad	Bildad	The Inevitable Fate of the Wicked
18:1-4 (1-4)	18:1-4 (2-4)	18:1-4 (2-4)	18:1-4 (1-4)	18:1-21 (2-21)
18:5-21 (5-21)	18:5-21 (5-21)	18:5-21 (5-21)	18:5-10 (5-10)	
			18:11-21 (11-21)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third Paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This is Bildad's second response.
- B. He is perplexed that the suffering Job is claiming innocence and wisdom, while experiencing such sickness and suffering. Bildad cannot accept
 1. Job's innocence
 2. an obvious violation of "the two ways" theology
- C. Bildad describes, in vivid poetic imagery and parallelism, the fate of the wicked (i.e., in this life). He thinks the poetry refers to Job but Job asserts it refers to him!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:1-4

¹Then Bildad the Shuhite responded,
²“How long will you hunt for words?
Show understanding and then we can talk.
³Why are we regarded as beasts,
As stupid in your eyes?
⁴O you who tear yourself in your anger—
For your sake is the earth to be abandoned,
Or the rock to be moved from its place?”

18:2 This verse is ambiguous in Hebrew (i.e., notice the PLURAL when the SINGULAR would be expected, see LXX and DSS), but the general sense is found in the TEV.

“Job, can’t people like you ever be quiet?

If you stopped to listen, we could talk to you.”

The MT, “set snares (BDB 890) for words,” implies Job is trying to express himself cleverly and ignore his situation. This word is found only here in the OT. Jewish commentators took it as “end” (AB, p. 124; NET Bible, p. 802, #27), which follows DSS (11Q^g Job) and the LXX.

18:3 Bildad felt the sting of Job’s words (i.e., Job 16:2; 17:10). Words can be like knives! Either Job is wrong or his three friends are wrong! Who is truly “wise”? Who truly knows God and His ways with humans?

▣ **“stupid”** This VERB (BDB 380, KB 376, *Niphal* PERFECT) is found only here. KB suggests it should be translated “unclean.” The LXX translates it as “silent” (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 376). This is followed by the NJB, which has “animals” in Job 18:3a and “brutes” in 18:3b.

18:4 Job’s case is so disturbing because he does not fit the normal theology of “the two ways.” Bildad asks Job if he is willing to destroy traditional thinking.

Wisdom Literature states general principles (see Special Topic: Wisdom Literature) but Job’s case is not covered. It is hard for humans to recognize that they do not fully understand the mysteries of fallen human existence. When we begin to think that our theology is God’s theology, all humility and teachability is gone, only arrogance and dogmatism remain!

Job is living out his theology but they are simply mouthing theirs (i.e., the unalterable nature of “the two ways”).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:5-21

⁵“Indeed, the light of the wicked goes out,
And the flame of his fire gives no light.
⁶The light in his tent is darkened,
And his lamp goes out above him.
⁷His vigorous stride is shortened,
And his own scheme brings him down.
⁸For he is thrown into the net by his own feet,
And he steps on the webbing.
⁹A snare seizes *him* by the heel,

And a trap snaps shut on him.
¹⁰*A noose for him is hidden in the ground,*
And a trap for him on the path.
¹¹*All around terrors frighten him,*
And harry him at every step.
¹²*His strength is famished,*
And calamity is ready at his side.
¹³*His skin is devoured by disease,*
The firstborn of death devours his limbs.
¹⁴*He is torn from the security of his tent,*
And they march him before the king of terrors.
¹⁵*There dwells in his tent nothing of his;*
Brimstone is scattered on his habitation.
¹⁶*His roots are dried below,*
And his branch is cut off above.
¹⁷*Memory of him perishes from the earth,*
And he has no name abroad.
¹⁸*He is driven from light into darkness,*
And chased from the inhabited world.
¹⁹*He has no offspring or posterity among his people,*
Nor any survivor where he sojourned.
²⁰*Those in the west are appalled at his fate,*
And those in the east are seized with horror.
²¹*Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked,*
And this is the place of him who does not know God.”

18:5-21 This extended strophe characterizes the plight of the godless, faithless person. Remember, Job is not part of the covenant people, but the later sage who wrote these dialogues assumed the covenant of Moses as the frame around the theology of the Edomites.

I will list the consequences of wickedness (cf. Job 18:21; 8:11-19; 15:20-35) in outline forms, but remember this tends to remove the powerful Semitic parallelism.

1. their light goes out, Job 18:5 (cf. Job 21:17; Pro. 13:9; 20:20; 24:20)
 - a. their understanding
 - b. their life (b. is more probable)
2. their tent is dark, Job 18:6 (possibly refers to descendants, cf. Job 18:16-17)
3. their vigor is reduced, Job 18:7a
4. their own schemes against others come back on them (i.e., OT reversals), Job 18:7b
5. Job 18:8 repeats the thought of #4
6. the imagery of Job 18:9 repeats that of #4
7. the hunting imagery of Job 18:8-10 continues
8. they are surrounded by fear and trembling, Job 18:11 (cf. Job 18:12b; 15:21,24)
9. their strength is gone, Job 18:12a (cf. contrast in 17:9)
10. they are diseased by “the King of Terrors” (a Ugaritic mythological allusion to *Mot*, AB, p. 126), Job 18:13-14
11. all their possessions are gone, Job 18:15
12. they are described as a dead plant, Job 18:16 (cf. Job 15:30; Ezek. 17:9; Hos. 9:16)

13. their memory perishes from the earth, Job. 18:17
14. they are driven from the land of the living to the land of the dead, Job 18:18
15. they have no posterity, Job 18:19 (same as #12)
16. they become a proverb of horror for all peoples, Job 18:20

18:7

NASB, NRSV,

JPSOA “schemes”

NKJV “council”

TEV “advice”

NJB “designs”

The MT has “schemes” (BDB 420 I), but KB (KB 867) suggests there is another root which means “disobedience” or “rebellion” (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 485). The verses used as evidence are Job 10:3; 12:13; 18:7; Ps. 13:2; 14:6; 106:43; Isa. 16:3; Hos. 10:6.

18:13a This is an obvious allusion to Job’s condition. For the three friends, Job’s disease and disasters clearly reveal that he is a wicked person! These kinds of things happen only to wicked people.

18:13b “the firstborn of death” This personification possibly refers to a demon. See Special Topic: The Demonic in the OT.

18:14 “king of terrors” Hebrew imagery has been affected by Ugaritic poetry (i.e., Ras Shamra Texts). This does not assert the validity of this mythology, just its powerful and well known imagery (cf. TEB). There are some hints of a king of the underworld in Job 15:21; 20:21; Ps. 49:14 (shepherd as a royal metaphor).

Death is often personified in the OT (cf. 2 Sam. 22:5,6; Ps. 7:13; 18:4; 116:3; Pro. 13:14; 14:27; Jer. 9:21; 18:21). This is imagery not mythology.

18:15a This line of poetry is ambiguous. There are three options.

1. It is imagery for the Mosaic curse that foreigners will occupy one’s home and land.
2. ANE imagery of wild animals living in human ruins (they often denoted the demonic, cf. Isa. 13:21; 34:11-15).
3. Similar wording from Ugaritic may make Job 18:15a parallel to 18:15b by translating it as “fire resides in his tent” (UBS *Handbook*, p. 343, quoting Dahood’s suggestion).

18:20 “in the west. . .in the east” This imagery could refer to

1. people who lived in different parts of the ANE (i.e., geography)
2. people who lived before and those who came after (i.e., time, cf. JPSOA, Peshitta)

18:21 This is a summary verse. Bildad means for it to apply to Job!

This general statement may explain the PLURAL of Job 18:2a. Job is seen as part of a group (i.e., the wicked).

▣ **“him who does not know God”** See Special Topic: Know.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. To what saying of Job is Bildad reacting in Job 18:3?
2. Explain Job 18:4 in your own words.
3. Who is “the firstborn of death” in Job 18:13?
4. Who is “the king of terrors” in Job 18:14?
5. To whom is Job 18:20 referring?

JOB 19

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Feels Insulted	Job Trusts in His Redeemer	Reply of Job	Job	Faith At Its Height in Total Destruction
19:1-6 (2-6)	19:1-6 (2-6)	19:1-12 (1-12)	19:1-12 (1-12)	19:1-12 (2-12)
Everything Is Against Him				
19:7-12 (7-12)	19:7-12 (7-12)			
19:13-22 (13-22)	19:13-20 (13-20)	19:13-22 (13-22)	19:13-22 (13-22)	19:13-22 (13-22)
Job says, "My Redeemer Lives"	19:21-22 (21-22)			
19:23-29 (23-29)	19:23-29 (23-29)	19:23-29 (23-29)	19:23-27a (23-27a)	19:23-29 (23-29)
			19:27b-29 (27b-29)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 18 repeats the traditional theology (the two ways) that Job is obviously a sinner and this must be the basis for his predicament. Bildad made the accusation, "Job, why are you rocking the boat?" (cf. Job 18:4)
- B. Job 19 is similar to Job 16 (i.e., Job 16:19; 15:25-27). Job believes in a heavenly advocate (i.e., also Elihu in Job 33:23-28).

- C. Note the four pressures that relate to Job's circumstances.
1. the response of his three friends, Job 19:2-5
 2. God's silence, Job 19:7-12
 3. rejection by family and friends, Job 19:13-19
 4. his physical disease (Job 19:20-22)
- D. For Job there are several things that cause him suffering (see C) but the two that hurt the most are
1. God's silence, Job 19:7
 2. God's treating him as an enemy, Job 19:11b

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:1-6

¹Then Job responded,

²"How long will you torment me
And crush me with words?

³These ten times you have insulted me;
You are not ashamed to wrong me.

⁴Even if I have truly erred,
My error lodges with me.

⁵If indeed you vaunt yourselves against me
And prove my disgrace to me,

⁶Know then that God has wronged me
And has closed His net around me."

19:2 "How long will you torment me" Job reacts to the continuing railing accusations of his three friends.

▣ **"me"** This is the Hebrew word *nephesh* (BDB 659). See full note at Gen. 35:18 online.

▣ **"crush"** This VERB (BDB 193, KB 221, *Piel* IMPERFECT) denotes a violent activity (cf. Ps. 72:4; 89:10; Pro. 22:22) and is parallel to "torment" (BDB 387, KB 385, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT). Both IMPERFECT VERBS denote continuing verbal hostility.

19:3 "ten times" This is not literal. It is an idiom for a full number of times (cf. Gen. 31:7; Num. 14:22). See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture.

▣ **"insulted. . . wrong"** These are two strong terms.

1. The first, BDB 483, KB 480, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT, means to put to shame, insult, humiliate (cf. Job 11:3).
2. The second word is more doubtful, BDB 229, KB 245, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT, and is found only here. From the parallelism it must refer to the insulting words of the three friends. TEV has "abuse me."

19:4-6 The point of these verses is that Job's friends have been playing God. They have accused him of wrong doing without any evidence, just their traditional "two ways" theology.

Job warns them that God will deal with them by the standard of their own theology. To falsely accuse someone in the Mosaic covenant meant you took on yourself the punishment you accused another person of falsely.

19:4 “if I have truly erred” This is a condition contrary to reality (BDB 64, “even if. . .”) but conceded to for the sake of argument. Job has asserted his innocence several times (i.e., Job 9:21; 10:7; 16:17).

19:5b “And prove my disgrace to me” The RSV has “and make my humiliation an argument against me”; TEV has “and regard my troubles as proof of my guilt.” These fit the context better than the NASB. The argument of the three friends is that Job must have sinned because look at what happened to him. God does not afflict the innocent, only the guilty (i.e., the two ways, Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1).

19:6 “Know then that God has wronged me” “Know” is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE. This wrong is described in Job 19:7-12. Bildad asserted in 18:8 that the wicked are caught in their own nets. Job asserts emphatically that it is not because of his sin but because of the actions (“net”) of God (cf. Job. 19:7-12).

Job clearly and repeatedly accuses God of treating him unfairly, unjustly. This is a shocking and serious charge. I think this is the main subject of the entire book! Is God unjust in how He treats His human creatures? The Pauline focus on Genesis 3 nor the rabbinical focus on Genesis 6 can form an answer to Job’s question. If God causes all things (i.e., sovereignty) and evil, bad, unfair things occur, what is the source of these things? Although the book of Job brings up the question, it gives no answer, except God is sovereign!

▣ **“And has closed His net around me”** This military/hunting term (BDB 844 II) may allude to Bildad’s usage in Job 18:8-10.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:7-12

⁷“Behold, I cry, ‘Violence!’ but I get no answer;
I shout for help, but there is no justice.
⁸He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass,
And He has put darkness on my paths.
⁹He has stripped my honor from me
And removed the crown from my head.
¹⁰He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone;
And He has uprooted my hope like a tree.
¹¹He has also kindled His anger against me
And considered me as His enemy.
¹²His troops come together,
And build up their way against me
And camp around my tent.”

19:7-12 This strophe documents Job’s accusations of God’s activity in his life.

1. Job prays but God does not answer, Job 19:7a
2. Job shouts for justice but there is no response, Job 19:7b
3. God has “walled up” his way, Job 19:8a
4. God has darkened his path, Job 19:8b
5. God has stripped him of honor, Job 19:9a
6. God has removed his crown (i.e., good life), Job 19:9b

7. God “breaks him down on every side,” Job 19:10a
8. God has “uprooted” his hope, Job 19:10b (cf. Job 7:6; 17:15)
9. God “has kindled His anger” against him, Job 19:11a
10. God “has considered” him an enemy, Job 19:11b
11. God’s troops
 - a. came together
 - b. built a siege work
 - c. made camp against him, Job 19:12

19:9 “He has stripped my honor from me” Honor is from the Hebrew word *kabod* (BDB 458). This is the normal word for “glory.” Its basic etymology is “to be heavy,” therefore, it can mean “wealth” (see Special Topic: Glory [OT]). The meaning in Job 19:9 seems to be (1) his good name or (2) children.

19:12 “His troops” This refers to a military company (cf. 2 Chr. 26:11). In poetic passages it is hard to know if the imagery is literal or figurative.

1. God’s angelic army (i.e., Lord of Hosts, cf. Jos. 5:15)
2. imagery of opposition but no specificity

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:13-22

- ¹³**He has removed my brothers far from me,
And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.**
- ¹⁴**My relatives have failed,
And my intimate friends have forgotten me.**
- ¹⁵**Those who live in my house and my maids consider me a stranger.
I am a foreigner in their sight.**
- ¹⁶**I call to my servant, but he does not answer;
I have to implore him with my mouth.**
- ¹⁷**My breath is offensive to my wife,
And I am loathsome to my own brothers.**
- ¹⁸**Even young children despise me;
I rise up and they speak against me.**
- ¹⁹**All my associates abhor me,
And those I love have turned against me.**
- ²⁰**My bone clings to my skin and my flesh,
And I have escaped *only* by the skin of my teeth.**
- ²¹**Pity me, pity me, O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me.**
- ²²**Why do you persecute me as God *does*,
And are not satisfied with my flesh?”**

19:13 “brothers” This describes the pain of rejection Job experienced from the significant persons in his life.

1. brothers, Job 19:13,17b
2. acquaintances, Job 19:13 (cf. Job 16:20)
3. relatives, Job 19:14
4. intimate friends, Job 19:14 (cf. Job 12:4)
5. those who live in my house, Job 19:15-17

6. young children, Job 19:18
7. all my associates, Job 19:19
8. my friends, Job 19:21

This long list of Job's family and associates is purposeful to show that his *go'el* (i.e., kinsman redeemer) must come from

1. later posterity (but all of Job's children are dead)
2. heaven (i.e., either God Himself or an advocate at the heavenly council)

19:18b

NASB, NKJV "I rise"

NRSV, JPSOA,

REB "when I rise"

NJB "whenever I stand up"

The implication is that when Job tries to speak or defend himself the children speak negatively of him.

19:20 "I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth" This is a proverbial saying. It may mean he is on the verge of death.

19:21 "Pity me, pity me" These are *Qal* IMPERATIVES repeated for emphasis. Job seeks pity (BDB 335, KB 334) from his three comforters.

▣ **"the hand of God has struck me"** The "hand of God" is a Semitic idiom for the "activity of" or "power of" God (cf. Job 1:11; 2:5,6). See Special Topic: Hand.

The imagery of God with a physical human body is called anthropomorphism. The only vocabulary humans have is an earthbound, time bound, physical bound language. See Special Topic: God Described As Human (anthropomorphic language).

Job's affirmation that his problems come from God is both true and false.

1. The Bible asserts in very clear and recurrent places the full sovereignty of God. In this sense there is only one causality in human existence (cf. Isa. 45:7; Lam. 3:32-38; Amos 3:6b).
2. It was God who allowed "the accuser" to strike Job (cf. Job 2:6). Job's plight was in the will of God (for a larger purpose).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:23-29

²³**"Oh that my words were written!**

Oh that they were inscribed in a book!

²⁴**That with an iron stylus and lead**

They were engraved in the rock forever!

²⁵**As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,**

And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

²⁶**Even after my skin is destroyed,**

Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

²⁷**Whom I myself shall behold,**

And whom my eyes will see and not another.

My heart faints within me!

²⁸**If you say, ‘How shall we persecute him?’
And ‘What pretext for a case against him can we find?’**
²⁹**Then be afraid of the sword for yourselves,
For wrath *brings* the punishment of the sword,
So that you may know there is judgment.”**

19:23 “Oh that my words were written!

Oh that they were inscribed in a book” This may be a reaction to Bildad’s words in Job 18:17. Job wants a permanent record of God’s injustice (cf. Job 19:23-24)! Job has asserted this several times (i.e., Job 9:23-24; 10:6-7; 16:11-13). This assertion would be shocking to Bildad but that is what he thinks Job is doing (cf. Job 8:3).

The “Oh that” of Job 19:23a and b is characteristic of a wish. It is used eleven times in Job (cf. Job 6:8; 11:5; 13:5; 14:4,13; 23:3; 29:2; 31:35).

19:25-27 Again, the question comes up as to whom Job is referring.

1. God (cf. Ps. 19:14; Isa. 44:6)
2. a heavenly advocate (cf. Job 9:33; 16:19,21)

For those of us influenced by the NT, this heavenly advocate fits the role of Jesus. This same type of legal terminology is found in Rom 8:31-39. The problems in this text are

1. the difficulties of the MT of this passage in Job (UBS Text Project, pp. 51-52)
2. the sudden theology of an afterlife acquittal
3. the physicalness of both a dead Job and God/Vindicator

We must be careful not to read full blown NT theology into OT texts. Job has been seeking vindication in this life. He now feels he will die but still wants his name cleared and his reputation restored. It seems this text is addressing these issues and not resurrection (cf. Job 14:10-14) and afterlife in a NT sense. No NT author uses this passage in connection with the resurrection of the Messiah (i.e., Ps. 16:10) nor believers. Surely Daniel 12 asserts a resurrection and the NT asserts the resurrection of Jesus and of all believers (cf. I Corinthians 15).

19:25 “As for me, I” Notice the number of PERSONAL PRONOUNS in Job. 19:25-27.

▣ **“I know”** This is the PERFECT TENSE. The OT word “know” speaks primarily of relationship, not concrete knowledge (cf. Gen. 4:1). See Special Topic: Know.

▣ **“Redeemer”** This is from the Hebrew word *go’el* (BDB 145, KB 169). It stands for the kinsman redeemer who can act either as a deliverer (cf. Ruth) or blood avenger (cf. Num. 35:19; Deut. 19:6). Here is another example of a possible title for God drawn from close kinship relationships.

▣ **“lives”** This is an ADJECTIVE (BDB 311) not a VERB. It is interesting that both the “Redeemer” of Job 19:25 and YHWH are characterized by the same concept. See Special Topic: Names for Deity.

▣ **“at last He will take His stand on the earth”** Job believed in God’s ultimate justice. If it does not occur in this age, it will occur in the next. Someone will defend Job’s innocence.

1. a relative (i.e., *go’el*, cf. Job 19:25a)
2. a heavenly advocate

▣

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV “earth”

NJB “on the dust of the earth”

REB “in the court”

The MT has “dust” (BDB 779). This may denote someone standing over Job’s grave (i.e., dust used of the grave, cf. Job 7:21; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26) and defending him (i.e., giving a testimony, cf. REB).

19:26 “Even after my skin is destroyed” This is literally “they consumed.” This seems to refer to the corruption of the body by worms or bacteria. Job expects to die soon (cf. Job 16:22; 17:1).

▣ **“Yet from my flesh I shall see God”** There are several alternate translations for the term.

1. “from my flesh,” NRSV
2. “in my flesh,” KJV, NIV
3. “from my flesh,” RSV, JB
4. “without my flesh,” ASV and NASB
5. the Hebrew term *min* seems to mean “from the vantage point of” not “without” (cf. Song of Songs 2:9)

See Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 240-241 and NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 57-58.

▣ **“see. . . behold. . . my eyes will see”** Notice the emphasis on physical sight. Job believes he will face God one day. The OT believed the life beyond was similar to this life.

Job has stated that only the innocent can stand before God, so maybe this is an allusion to that.

19:27a

NASB “Whom I myself shall behold”

NRSV “Whom I shall see on my side”

NJB “He whom I shall see will take my part”

REB “standing at my side”

L.B. “Then he will be on my side!”

The difference is how to translate ַי (BDB 511-518). For me the NRSV makes more sense of the context.

1. Job expects to one day have his face-to-face meeting with God.
2. Job desires to be friends with God again, as in Job 1, and not as an enemy.
3. Job believes he is innocent and one day God will acknowledge this also.

19:27b

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV “and not another”

TEV “he will not be a stranger”

NJB “no stranger”

The MT has the *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE of ַי (BDB 266 I), which is the VERB for “to be a stranger.” The context seems to denote that a time will come, before or after Job’s death, when the friendship between himself and God (Job 1) will be fully and completely restored. God will no longer be an enemy (i.e., Job 19:7-12).

▣ **“heart”** This is literally “kidneys.” The ancients used the lower viscera to represent the seat of the emotions.

19:28-29 As Job expects to stand before God in justice, he warns his three friends that they will also stand before God and will be judged for their false accusations and harsh words.

19:29 “there is judgment” Some ancient versions (Syriac, Vulgate) see this as a spelling variant of “the Almighty” (BDB 994) instead of the NOUN “Judgment” or “a Judge” (BDB 192, which is the standard way to interpret the Hebrew [Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotian]).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why does Job accuse God and not some other source for his predicament?
2. List the family relationships involved in Job 19:13-22. Why are they mentioned?
3. Who is the Redeemer?
4. Does the famous passage in Job 19:25-27 predict a resurrection?

JOB 20

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Zophar Says, "The Triumph of the Wicked Is Short"	Zophar's Sermon on the Wicked Man	Second Discourse of Zophar	Zophar	The Course Of Justice Admits of No Exceptions
20:1-11 (2-11)	20:1	20:1-11 (2-11)	20:1-3 (1-3)	20:1-29 (2-29)
	20:2-3 (2-3)			
	20:4-11 (4-11)		20:4-11 (4-11)	
20:12-19 (12-19)	20:12-19 (12-19)	20:12-19 (12-19)	20:12-28 (12-28)	
20:20-29 (20-29)	20:20-29 (20-29)	20:20-29 (20-29)		
			20:29 (29)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. An outline of the three cycles of Job's discussion with his friends (Andersen, Tyndale, *OT Commentaries*, p. 22).

		<u>Cycle 1</u>	<u>Cycle 2</u>	<u>Cycle 3</u>
Eliphaz	(chapters)	4-5	15	22
Job		6-7	16-17	23-24
Bildad		8	18	25
Job		9-10	19	26
Zophar		11	20	?
Job		12-14	21	27

- B. Zophar, like the other comforters, repeats the same thoughts (i.e., the two ways) regarding the wicked.
- C. Zophar bases his reasoning on
 - 1. ancient traditions
 - 2. experiences, Job 20:4
- D. Zophar accuses Job of hidden sin (cf. Job 20:12,27).
- E. There are several lists of the calamities that will come upon the wicked in the speeches of the three comforters (i.e., Job 8:11-19; 15:20-35; 18:5-21). Here is Zophar's.
 - 1. the triumph of the wicked (BDB 957) is short, Job 20:5a
 - 2. the joy of the godless (BDB 338) is momentary, Job 20:5b
 - 3. he perishes forever like his refuse, Job 20:7a
 - 4. he is no more, Job 20:7b-9
 - 5. Job 20:10 is uncertain in the MT but addresses the fact that the wicked's lack of compassion and devious gathering of wealth will be lost to both him and his family
 - 6. though he was once active and healthy, he will die, Job 20:11
 - 7. Job 20:12-18 uses the imagery of good food turned bad. Evil is sweet at first but it brings misery and death.
 - 8. he does not enjoy his desires, Job 20:20
 - 9. he and his family do not retain his ill gotten gain, Job 20:21 (possible 20:26c)
 - 10. he will face problem after problem, Job 20:22
 - 11. he will be attacked by God, Job 20:23b,28b,29 (also 20:15c)
 - 12. terror will come upon him, Job 20:24-25
 - 13. darkness is held in reserve for his treasures, Job 20:26
 - 14. both heaven and earth know his sin and will confront him, Job 20:27

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:1-11

¹Then Zophar the Naamathite answered,
²“Therefore my disquieting thoughts make me respond,
 Even because of my inward agitation.
³I listened to the reproof which insults me,
 And the spirit of my understanding makes me answer.
⁴Do you know this from of old,
 From the establishment of man on earth,
⁵That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
 And the joy of the godless momentary?
⁶Though his loftiness reaches the heavens,
 And his head touches the clouds,
⁷He perishes forever like his refuse;
 Those who have seen him will say, ‘Where is he?’
⁸He flies away like a dream, and they cannot find him;
 Even like a vision of the night he is chased away.
⁹The eye which saw him sees him no longer,
 And his place no longer beholds him.

¹⁰His sons favor the poor,
 And his hands give back his wealth.
¹¹His bones are full of his youthful vigor,
 But it lies down with him in the dust.”

20:1 “Zophar” See notes at Job 11:1. This man is listed in the Septuagint of Gen. 30:11 and 1 Chr. 1:36. The Septuagint also calls him “the King of Mineans,” which is a Semitic tribe in South Arabia.

20:2-3 “my disquieting thoughts...inward agitation...reproof which insults me” Job has really angered Zophar! Because

1. he feels attacked
2. his theology is attacked

20:3

NASB, NKJV,

Peshitta “the spirit of my understanding”

NRSV, REB “a spirit beyond my understanding”

NJB “my mind inspires me”

NIV “my understanding inspires me”

Is Zophar affirming

1. the help of revelation (cf. Job 4:12-21; 32:8; NRSV)
2. his own theological acumen (NASB)?

20:4 “Do you know this from of old,

From the establishment of man on earth” This is an argument from traditional wisdom (cf. Job 8:8; 15:18). The whole purpose of the Book of Job is to react against the traditional wisdom (i.e., the two ways, Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1) that God prospers those He loves and punishes those He hates (cf. Psalm 73).

▣ **“earth”** See Special Topic: Land, Country, Earth.

20:5 “That the triumphing of the wicked is short” This is also the assertion of Psalm 37. This is the major theological tenant of Job’s three friends. In Job 20:5-11 this theme is developed; joy is brief for the wicked.

By innuendo Zophar is accusing Job of being

1. arrogant, Job 20:6
2. exploitative of the poor, Job 20:19
3. greedy (cf. NRSV of Job 20:20b)

20:6 “his loftiness reaches the heavens,

And his head touches the clouds” This may just be a Hebrew idiom of a powerful man, as in the book of Daniel to speak of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Dan. 4:11,22), or may be a reference related to the King of Tyre and the King of Babylon (cf. Isa. 14:13-14; Ezek. 28:2,17).

▣ **“heavens”** See Special Topic: Heaven.

20:7 The OT presents the afterlife in several ways.

1. all humans go to *Sheol* (see Special Topic: *Sheol*)

2. wicked humans are destroyed (Job 20:7a; 4:20)
 - a. premature death (Job 20:11; 15:32; 21:13; 22:16)
 - b. no children (Job 20:21a; 26c)
3. all humans, both the righteous and wicked, will be raised from the dead but to radically different futures (cf. Dan. 12:1-4)

The afterlife is one of several doctrines that begin in the OT but are developed in the NT. Theologians call this “Progressive Revelation.” “The two ways” focuses on this life, not an afterlife.

20:10 “His sons favor the poor,

And his hands give back his wealth” This is either a statement of fact or irony. Some see this as a rich man’s sons, themselves being poor now, or that they feed the poor to try to make amends for their father’s wicked behavior.

20:11 “in the dust” Dust is a euphemism for the grave (cf. Job 7:21; 17:16; 21:26).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:12-19

¹²“**Though evil is sweet in his mouth**
And he hides it under his tongue,
¹³**Though he desires it and will not let it go,**
But holds it in his mouth,
¹⁴**Yet his food in his stomach is changed**
To the venom of cobras within him.
¹⁵**He swallows riches,**
But will vomit them up;
God will expel them from his belly.
¹⁶**He sucks the poison of cobras;**
The viper’s tongue slays him.
¹⁷**He does not look at the streams,**
The rivers flowing with honey and curds.
¹⁸**He returns what he has attained**
And cannot swallow *it*;
As to the riches of his trading,
He cannot even enjoy *them*.
¹⁹**For he has oppressed *and* forsaken the poor;**
He has seized a house which he has not built.”

20:12-19 This expresses the traditional position that sin bears the seeds of its own destruction.

20:17 This verse has three words which refer to the same thing.

1. rivers (BDB 811)
2. streams (BDB 625)
3. torrents (BDB 636)

Commentators suggest that to #2 should be added “of oil,” and thereby make a parallel with “honey and curds” (cf. Job 20:17b).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 20:20-29

- ²⁰“Because he knew no quiet within him,
He does not retain anything he desires.
²¹Nothing remains for him to devour,
Therefore his prosperity does not endure.
²²In the fullness of his plenty he will be cramped;
The hand of everyone who suffers will come *against* him.
²³When he fills his belly,
God will send His fierce anger on him
And will rain *it* on him while he is eating.
²⁴He may flee from the iron weapon,
But the bronze bow will pierce him.
²⁵It is drawn forth and comes out of his back,
Even the glittering point from his gall.
Terrors come upon him,
²⁶Complete darkness is held in reserve for his treasures,
And unfanned fire will devour him;
It will consume the survivor in his tent.
²⁷The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
And the earth will rise up against him.
²⁸The increase of his house will depart;
His possessions will flow away in the day of His anger.
²⁹This is the wicked man’s portion from God,
Even the heritage decreed to him by God.”

20:23-28 The VERBS in this section express a “curse formula” (three JUSSIVE forms).

20:23

NASB, NKJV	“while he is eating”
NRSV	“as their food”
NJB	omits
JPSOA	“His weapons upon him”
REB	“cruel blows”

The MT has “into his bowels” (BDB 535). The UBS *Handbook*, p. 382, suggests that the emendation which changes the last word (BDB 905) to “bread” is preferable.

The MT has בלחמו; this could involve three roots.

1. לחם (BDB 535) – “fight” or “do battle”
2. לחום – “bowels,” “intestines”
3. לחם (BDB 536) – “use as food,” “eat bread”

20:25b “the glittering point” This imagery could be

1. related to the weapons of Job 20:24 (i.e., metal arrow point)
2. a reference to “lightning” (cf. Job 20:26b)

Maybe Zophar is using Job’s imagery from Job 6:4 to infer he is a sinner receiving his just dues.

20:27 “The heavens. . .the earth” This seems to refer to the legal need for two witnesses (cf. Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2).

▣ **“reveal”** This verse and Job 20:12b imply hidden sin. This is what the three comforters claim about Job. He must be hiding sin!

20:28b “the day of His anger” The Bible clearly and repeatedly asserts that all humans will stand before God to give an account of the gift of life! The question in Job: is this divine confrontation in this life or the afterlife? In context it must refer to this life!

20:29 Zophar’s summary statement related to “the two ways.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How did Job insult Zophar?
2. What is Zophar claiming in Job 20:3 about his right to speak? (i.e., the source of his authority)
3. What is he claiming in Job 20:4 about his right to speak?
4. Explain in your own words what you think Job 20:10 is saying. (i.e., check various translations)
5. What does Zophar refer to in “the day of His anger”? Is this a divine encounter in this life or the next?

JOB 21

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says God Will Deal With the Wicked	Job's Discourse On the Wicked	Reply of Job	Job	Facts Give The Lie
21:1-16 (1-16)	21:1-3 (1-3)	21:1-16 (2-16)	21:1-3 (1-3)	21:1-16 (2-16)
	21:4-16 (4-16)		21:4-13 (4-13)	
			21:14-16 (14-16)	
21:17-26 (17-26)	21:17-21 (17-21)	21:17-26 (17-26)	21:17-18 (17-18)	21:17-26 (17-26)
			21:19-22 (19-22)	
	21:22-26 (22-26)			
			21:23-28 (23-28)	
21:27-34 (27-34)	21:27-34 (27-34)	21:27-34 (27-34)		21:27-34 (27-34)
			21:29-33 (29-33)	
			21:34 (34)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:1-16

¹Then Job answered,
²“Listen carefully to my speech,
And let this be your *way of* consolation.
³Bear with me that I may speak;
Then after I have spoken, you may mock.
⁴As for me, is my complaint to man?
And why should I not be impatient?
⁵Look at me, and be astonished,
And put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
⁶Even when I remember, I am disturbed,
And horror takes hold of my flesh.
⁷Why do the wicked *still* live,
Continue on, also become very powerful?
⁸Their descendants are established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes,
⁹Their houses are safe from fear,
And the rod of God is not on them.
¹⁰His ox mates without fail;
His cow calves and does not abort.
¹¹They send forth their little ones like the flock,
And their children skip about.
¹²They sing to the timbrel and harp
And rejoice at the sound of the flute.
¹³They spend their days in prosperity,
And suddenly they go down to Sheol.
¹⁴They say to God, ‘Depart from us!
We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways.
¹⁵Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him,
And what would we gain if we entreat Him?’
¹⁶Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand;
The counsel of the wicked is far from me.”

21:1 “Then Job answered” Job 21 is Job’s major rebuttal in the second cycle of dialogue with his friends.

21:2 “Listen carefully” Job has used the IMPERATIVE of “listen” (BDB 1033, KB 1570) with the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root before (i.e., it denotes intensity, cf. Job 13:27). He feels his three comforters are not listening to him! But they also think he is not listening to them (cf. Job 15:17). Sounds like a theological debate, doesn’t it?



NASB “let this be your *way of* consolation”
NKJV, NRSV,
JPSOA “let this be your consolation”
TEV “that is all the comfort I ask from you”
NJB “let this be the consolation you allow me”

The word “consolation” (BDB 637) is a rare word found only in the PLURAL. The issue is, “whose consolation” does this refer to:

1. the three comforters (NASB)
2. Job (TEV, NJB)?

I think #2 fits the context best.

Also notice that the *Qal* IMPERFECT of “to be” is translated as a JUSSIVE (i.e., “let. . .”).

21:3 “Bear with me” This strophe starts off with several IMPERATIVES directed at the three comforters.

1. listen carefully, Job 21:2
2. bear, Job 21:3 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 669, KB 724); a common VERB meaning “to lift a load”
3. look, Job 21:5 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 815, KB 937); literally “to turn”
4. be astonished, Job 21:5 – *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (BDB 1030, KB 1563); this root is used often in Job in several senses
5. put your hand over your mouth, Job 21:5 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 962, KB 1321); another very common VERB

Job is expressing (in poetic imagery) his horror and surprise that God (Job 21:4) allows the wicked to prosper (Job 21:7) when “the two ways” demands their punishment in this world!

▣ **“you may mock”** The “you” is SINGULAR, which many commentators have taken to refer to Zophar’s angry speech in Job 20.

21:4 “be impatient” This is literally “my spirit is short.” This idiom is used twice.

1. here in the sense of impatience (NJB, “perturbed”)
2. Pro. 14:29, meaning quick tempered

For “spirit” (BDB 924) see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible.

21:5 “put *your* hand over *your* mouth” This is an ANE idiom of shock resulting in silence (cf. Job 29:9; 40:4; Mic. 7:16). The shocking statement in Job 21:4 has Job accusing God of allowing the wicked to prosper (cf. Job 21:7-16,17-26,27-34).

21:6

NASB, REB	“horror”
NKJV	“trembling”
NRSV, JPSOA	“shuddering”
NJB	“creeps”

This rare FEMININE Hebrew root (BDB 814, KB 935) has three senses (NASB).

1. shudder, tremble – Job 21:6 (VERB in Job 9:6)
2. horror – Ps. 55:5; Isa. 21:4; Jer. 49:16; Ezek. 7:18
3. pagan image – 1 Kgs. 15:13; 2 Chr. 15:16

21:7 “Why do the wicked *still* live,

Continue on, also become very powerful?” This is the theological question! This is a rebuttal to the theology of Job 18:5-21 and 20:5-11. The wicked do prosper! This has been a source of great conflict in the OT (cf. Ps. 58:1-5; Psalm 73; Jer. 12:1-2; Mal. 3:15).

21:8 “Their descendants are established with them in their sight,

And their offspring before their eyes” This is opposite of Job 18:19. Job is implying, in his own experience, his little ones (i.e., children) have not been protected but destroyed, but the wicked’s children remain with them (Job 21:8).

21:9 “the rod of God” This is imagery of God’s punishing power (cf. Job 9:34; 37:13).

21:10-13 The wicked have extraordinary fertility and prosperity in their possessions.

Job 21:10 has several words used with new meanings. Remember, this is ancient ANE poetry and parallelism. There is often imagery or connotations that do not fit our modern lexicons that are limited in the amount of ancient Semitic writings (or carvings).

1. “ox mates” – BDB 716, KB 778, *Piel* PERFECT, which usually means “pass over,” “pass by,” or “pass through”
2. “without fail” – BDB 171, KB 199, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT, which usually means “abhor,” “be loathsome”
3. “cow calves” – BDB 812, KB 930, *Piel* IMPERFECT, which usually means “bring into security,” “cause to escape”

Word meaning in Semitic poetry is determined by

1. context
2. parallelism
3. other cognate roots

21:13 “And suddenly they go down to Sheol” This seems to refer to a sudden death instead of a long, lingering, agonizing death (like Job’s).

For “*Sheol*” see Special Topic: *Sheol*.

21:14-15 This expresses the arrogance of the wicked.

Notice how they talk to God in arrogance. They trivialize His presence! They even deny His existence!

The key thought is Job 21:15b. What advantage is there in knowing, serving, obeying God? “The two ways” theology is obviously ineffective!

21:15 “the Almighty” This is a common title for Deity in Job, *Shaddai*. See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **“And what would we gain if we entreat Him”** Knowing and serving God brought true peace, happiness, and prosperity (i.e., profit, BDB 418, KB 420, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT). This phrase can be a question (NJB) or it is the very charge that Satan made of Job (Job. 1:9-12).

21:16 This is a very difficult verse in the Hebrew text.

1. there is a God who is active in this world (Job 21:17-26)
2. keep these kinds of men far away from me (cf. Job 22:18)

It is a summary of Job’s theology.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:17-26

- ¹⁷“How often is the lamp of the wicked put out,
Or does their calamity fall on them?
Does God apportion destruction in His anger?
¹⁸Are they as straw before the wind,
And like chaff which the storm carries away?
¹⁹You say, ‘God stores away a man’s iniquity for his sons.’
Let God repay him so that he may know *it*.”

²⁰Let his own eyes see his decay,
 And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
²¹For what does he care for his household after him,
 When the number of his months is cut off?
²²Can anyone teach God knowledge,
 In that He judges those on high?
²³One dies in his full strength,
 Being wholly at ease and satisfied;
²⁴His sides are filled out with fat,
 And the marrow of his bones is moist,
²⁵While another dies with a bitter soul,
 Never even tasting *anything* good.
²⁶Together they lie down in the dust,
 And worms cover them.”

21:17-26 This strophe may be Job’s affirmation that “the two ways” does work! It may be an expansion of Job 21:16a!

The problem comes when

1. “the two ways” does not affect Job’s situation (suffering in innocence)
2. “the two ways” does not affect all of the wicked; some do prosper throughout life, as well as their families

It is possible that the “how often” (BDB 553, i.e., a hypothetical structure) is meant to be understood with each line of poetry. Job is stating the mystery of life and the error of the one explanation of life that “the two ways” offers!

**21:17 “How often is the lamp of the wicked put out,
 Or does their calamity fall on them”** This is another rebuttal to Job 18:5-6 and 20:5.

21:17c This line could refer to God’s scattering (i.e., destruction) of the wicked’s seed (children, i.e., in contrast to Job 21:8 and link to 21:19).

1. “pain” (BDB 286) can refer to child birth
2. “apportion” (BDB 323, KB 322) in the *Piel* can mean “scatter”

21:18 This verse does not seem to fit with the question (i.e., potential action: “how often,” BDB 553) of Job 21:17. Job 21:18 is not introduced as a question in the MT but many translations make it one (NASB, NRSV, TEV, NJB, REB). The JPSOA makes both Job 21:17 and 18 statements, not questions.

This strophe (Job 21:17-26) seems to affirm the prosperity of the wicked, not their destruction.

21:19 Notice the little phrase “you say” is added by the NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV, JPSOA to the Hebrew text. This is because it seems to be a quote from one of the three friends that is not recorded (or a summary of their theological thought). The theological statement that God punishes the children of a wicked man is based on Exod. 20:5-6; 34:7; Deut. 5:9. However, other parts of the Scripture react to this (cf. Deut. 24:16; Jer. 31:29-34; Ezekiel 18).

Most translations see Job 21:19b-20 as a series of JUSSIVES (let. . .). However, the form is IMPERFECT. If Job is addressing a quote from the three comforters, these lines become prayers/curses.

21:20a The MT has a NOUN (BDB 475), used only here. The parallelism demands a word for “ruin” or “destruction.” This involves the changing of one consonant.

1. MT – פִּדּוֹ
2. emendation – פִּדּוֹ
3. possibly similar Arabic root to #1, meaning “warfare” (NET Bible, p. 811, #26)

21:20b “The Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

21:21b

NASB, NRSV,

NJB “cut off”

NKJV “is cut in half”

JPSOA “runs out”

REB “are numbered”

The MT has a VERB (BDB 346, KB 344, *Pual* PERFECT) that means “cut in half” (NKJV). The NET Bible (p. 811, #29) mentions that this Hebrew root may be related to

1. Akkadian root – “to cut in two”
2. Arabic root – “to cut off”

It is surely imagery of the end of a long, prosperous life, not one that is cut short (cf. Job 21:7-16,23-24).

21:22 This verse seems so unconnected to the previous context that NKJV starts a new paragraph. Several translations make it the concluding statement of Job 21:17-22.

The central thought is “who can teach God that His actions toward humans is not consistent. He is the One who controls and guides the heavenly council.” Neither Job, nor his three friends, can speak for, or explain, God’s actions toward humans. There are some obvious “generalities” (i.e., the two ways), but there are also glaring exceptions.

1. the wicked prosper
2. the innocent suffer
3. some live long and happy lives, while others live short and miserable lives (Job. 21:21-26)

There is mystery with God. The book of Job comes to this conclusion!

21:23b The MT has a NOUN (BDB 1016), found only here. Most translations assume an emendation to “at ease” (BDB 983).

1. נְשִׁינָה – only here
2. נְשִׁינָה – “at ease,” “secure”

21:24a

NASB “His sides are filled with fat”

NKJV, JPSOA,

ASV “His pails are full of milk”

NRSV “His loins full of fat”

NJB “thighs padded with fat”

REB “loins full of vigor”

The NKJV reflects the MT, while NASB reflects the LXX. Job 21:24 is an explanation and extension of 21:23 (cf. REB).

1. in strength (i.e., vigor)
2. wholly at ease
3. satisfied with life

Note that Job 21:23-24 is in contrast to the person described in 21:25. But one fate/outcome waits for both—the grave!

The word “sides” (NASB), “pails” (MT) occurs only here. The ancient versions assumed it refers to some part of the body (AB, p. 146). In context, possibly “breasts” (i.e., imagery of a full life), because of the use of “milk” (BDB 316, NKJV). The same consonants for “milk” also mean “fat” with different vowels (NASB, NRSV, NJB).

21:24b “the marrow of his bones is moist” This is a biblical metaphor for health and prosperity (cf. Pro. 3:8).

21:25 Job is making the assertion that some people have good lives and some bad lives, but this seems unrelated to “the two ways.” There is mystery in the destinies of different individuals, unrelated to their faith or godliness. This is what causes theological problems for Job’s three friends (Job 21:27)! Job’s life has experienced both options without divine explanation.

21:26 “they lie down in the dust

And worms cover them” Life is unexplainable; death is the great certainty and leveler for all humans (cf. Eccl. 2:14-16; 3:19-20; 8:14; 9:2,11).

The term “dust” (BDB 779) is often used as a euphemism of the grave (cf. Job 7:21; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26; Ps. 22:15,29; 30:9; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2). This follows the imagery of the dead being in the ground.

1. Gen. 3:19 – from dust back to dust
2. Exod. 15:12; Num. 16:30,32,34; 26:10; Deut. 11:6; Ps. 106:17 – people swallowed up
3. Pro. 1:12 – imagery for *Sheol*

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 21:27-34

- ²⁷**“Behold, I know your thoughts,
And the plans by which you would wrong me.**
- ²⁸**For you say, ‘Where is the house of the nobleman,
And where is the tent, the dwelling places of the wicked?’**
- ²⁹**Have you not asked wayfaring men,
And do you not recognize their witness?**
- ³⁰**For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity;
They will be led forth at the day of fury.**
- ³¹**Who will confront him with his actions,
And who will repay him for what he has done?**
- ³²**While he is carried to the grave,
Men will keep watch over *his* tomb.**
- ³³**The clods of the valley will gently cover him;
Moreover, all men will follow after him,
While countless ones *go* before him.**
- ³⁴**How then will you vainly comfort me,
For your answers remain *full of falsehood?*”**

21:27-31 Job addresses his three comforters. They have described how God treats the righteous and the wicked. He claims to be innocent but look where he lives (i.e., ash heap). He must be a sinner. Everyone knows about “the two ways” (i.e., “the wayfaring men,” those who have been many places and seen life, i.e., “common knowledge”). God punishes the wicked, not the righteous!

21:31 This verse is hard to interpret. Andersen, in the OT Tyndale *Commentary* (p. 201), suggests that the INTERROGATIVE (BDB 566) be interpreted as “no one,” instead of “who.” This follows the NEB, TEV, LB.

21:32-34 But wait! Look what often happens to the wicked.

1. fancy funeral
2. guarded tomb
3. beautiful burial
4. big, long funeral procession

If this is so, the three friends’ theology is bad (i.e., vain, BDB 210)! They cannot offer any faithful (BDB 591, lit. “faithlessness”; see Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the OT*, p. 82) counsel. They have no word from God.

21:32 Another good example of a word being used in an unusual sense is the word (BDB 155) translated “grave,” which usually means “a stack of grain” in Job 5:26, where it is parallel to “grave” (BDB 868). Words have meaning only in context! Job has so many unique and rare words used in surprising parallel lines of poetry.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is Job 21:4 significant?
2. Is Job 21:6 what disturbs and horrifies Job?
3. Is Job 21:13 a positive or negative statement?
4. Why is Job 21:14-15 so shocking?
5. Does the Bible teach that the sin of parents affects the children or not?
6. Who does God judge in Job 21:22b?
7. How does Job 21:23-26 relate to “the two ways”?
8. How is the theology of the three comforters “falsehood”?

JOB 22

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Eliphaz Accuses and Exhorts Job	Eliphaz Accuses Job of Wickedness	Third Discourse of Eliphaz	Eliphaz	Admission of Guilt Leads to Reconciliation With God
22:1-11 (1-11)	22:1 22:2-3 (2-3) 22:4-11 (4-11)	22:1-11 (2-11)	22:1-11 (1-11)	22:1-11 (2-11)
22:12-20 (12-20)	22:12-18 (12-18) 22:19-20 (19-20)	22:12-20 (12-20)	22:12-14 (12-14) 22:15-20 (15-20)	22:12-20 (12-20)
22:21-30 (21-30)	22:21-30 (21-30)	22:21-30 (21-30)	22:21-30 (21-30)	22:21-30 (21-30)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:1-11

¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded,

²“Can a vigorous man be of use to God,
Or a wise man be useful to himself?

³Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous,
Or profit if you make your ways perfect?

⁴Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you,
That He enters into judgment against you?
⁵Is not your wickedness great,
And your iniquities without end?
⁶For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause,
And stripped men naked.
⁷To the weary you have given no water to drink,
And from the hungry you have withheld bread.
⁸But the earth belongs to the mighty man,
And the honorable man dwells in it.
⁹You have sent widows away empty,
And the strength of the orphans has been crushed.
¹⁰Therefore snares surround you,
And sudden dread terrifies you,
¹¹Or darkness, so that you cannot see,
And an abundance of water covers you.”

22:1 “Eliphaz” Eliphaz has spoken previously in Job 4:1-5:27 and 15:1-35. Apparently he is reacting to Job’s response, which is recorded in Job 21. These three comforters of Job continue to assert the traditional theology that the righteous will be blessed and the wicked will be punished in this life (i.e., the two ways).

22:2-4 This contains a series of questions which expect a “no” answer. In effect, Eliphaz is accusing Job of sin. The theological irony is that every one of them is really an affirmation (*Jerome Bible Commentary*, p. 524), not only of God, but also of Job.

The Hebrew of Job 22:2-4 is difficult. John H. Walton suggests that Job 22:2 is another allusion to a “mediator” (cf. *The NIV Application Commentary, Job*, pp. 450-453). If this is true, Eliphaz is suggesting to Job that his law case (cf. Job 22:4b) against God cannot be helped by any intermediary (cf. Job 16:19; 19:25-27) and not asserting that God is not affected by human innocence.

22:3 “Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous” This is exactly what Job 1:8-9 and 2:3-4 assert. The author is alluding to the dialogue between YHWH and the accuser.

The term “Almighty” is the ancient name for God, *Shaddai*, which shows the patriarchal setting (i.e., Abraham’s time, the second millennium B.C.) for the book of Job. See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

For “righteous” see Special Topic: Righteousness.

**22:4 “Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you,
That He enters into judgment against you”** Again, this verse, along with Job 22:8, asserts the traditional theology. In their understanding, Job’s problem had to be one of unconfessed sin. Their theology was so tightly encapsulated that no other options were available.

The term “reverence” (BDB 432) is literally “fear.” See Special Topic: Fear (OT).

22:5-9 This is an extended list of supposed sins that Job has secretly committed but which he will not confess. It is interesting that all of these sins (i.e., “great wickedness,” and “iniquities without end,” Job 22:5) are those which the rich commit against the poor. Job defends himself against these charges in Job 31:16-23.

1. taken pledges of your brothers without cause (cf. Job 24:3,9; Exod. 22:26-27; Deut. 24:6,10-13,17; Ezek. 18:7,12,16)
2. stripped clothing from the poor (cf. Job 31:19,20; Deut. 24:17)
3. given no water to the weary
4. withheld bread (food) from the hungry (cf. Job 31:16,17,31; Isa. 58:7,10)
5. sent widows away empty (cf. Job 24:3,21; 29:13; 31:16,18; Deut. 24:17)
6. crushed the strength of the orphans (cf. Job 6:27)
7. Job 22:8 is another charge; Job has used his wealth, position to defraud the poor and helpless (cf. TEV, NJB)

This list of social atrocities is from

1. ANE culture in general
2. a knowledge of the Mosaic Law

I continue to think that Job was written by a sage at the Judean court, using the history of a long dead, famous person from Edom. These dialogues were never spoken by real persons (people in the ANE did not speak to each other in poetic imagery and parallelism). These dialogues reveal truth much like the Gospel of John (but in it real people are speaking) uses dialogues (i.e., 27 of them) to reveal truth about the person and work of Christ. Be careful of linking a view of history with a view of inspiration. God has chosen many literary forms to truly reveal Himself!

22:8 “the earth” This Hebrew word (BDB 75) has a wide semantic field. Here it should be “land” (JPSOA) or “family fields.” See Special Topic: Land, Country, Earth (OT).

The Jewish Study Bible (p. 1533) mentions that the DSS MS of Job, from Cave 11, sees this verse as an allusion by Eliphaz to Job’s comments in Job 9:24.

22:10-11 These verses show the result (i.e., “therefore,” BDB 485) of such actions toward the socially disadvantaged. They express a wish for God’s justice!

1. snares surround you
2. sudden dread terrifies you (cf. Job 18:8-11)
3. darkness comes upon you, so dark you cannot see (i.e., like the Egyptian plague of Exod. 10:21-23; also note Job 5:14; 12:25; 15:30; 18:18; 20:26, some of which is imagery of problems and confusion or death)
4. drown in much water

Actions of the elite, powerful, and wealthy toward the socially ostracized or disempowered have consequences in time and eternity (cf. Matt. 25:31-46).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:12-20

¹²“Is not God *in* the height of heaven?

Look also at the distant stars, how high they are!

¹³You say, ‘What does God know?

Can He judge through the thick darkness?

¹⁴Clouds are a hiding place for Him, so that He cannot see;

And He walks on the vault of heaven.’

¹⁵Will you keep to the ancient path

Which wicked men have trod,

¹⁶Who were snatched away before their time,

Whose foundations were washed away by a river?

¹⁷They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’

And ‘What can the Almighty do to them?’

¹⁸Yet He filled their houses with good *things*;
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

¹⁹The righteous see and are glad,
And the innocent mock them,

²⁰Saying, ‘Truly our adversaries are cut off,
And their abundance the fire has consumed.’”

22:12-14 This seems to be the claim of Eliphaz that Job has misunderstood the transcendent and all-knowing power of God.

22:12b

NASB “Look”

NKJV, NRSV,

JPSOA “See”

LXX, TEV “God. . .look down”

NJB “does he not see”

The MT has “see” (BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE), which implies that humans look at the “highest stars,” but without changing the consonants it is possible for the line of poetry to refer to God looking down on the highest star (TEV, NJB), thereby forming a better parallel with Job 22:12b (see notes in UBS Text Project, p. 63).

22:13 “the thick darkness” This NOUN (BDB 791) is associated with theophanies. When God appears to humans, His holiness is overpowering and even deadly, so He hides Himself in thick clouds (cf. Exod. 19:9; 20:21; Deut. 4:11; 5:22; 1 Kgs. 8:12; Ps. 18:11; 97:2).

22:14b

NASB “the vault of heaven”

NKJV “the circle of heaven”

NRSV “the dome of heaven”

NJB “the rim of the heavens”

JPSOA “the circuit of heaven”

This is the ancient imagery of the atmosphere above the earth (i.e., flat earth) as a dome (hammered metal) or stretched skin (cf. Isa. 40:22). See Special Topic: Heaven.

In this context, the full imagery is God walking on the clouds of heaven and observing all that happens on earth.

22:15 “Will you keep the ancient path” This phrase is usually used for God’s path (cf. Job 23:11; Ps. 139:24; and Jer. 6:16). However, there is a possible Ugaritic root, *glm*, that could mean “dark path,” which would refer to the path of the wicked (AB, p. 151). This seems to be more contextually appropriate.

22:16 Notice the stated divine action against those who walk the path of wickedness.

1. They die before their time.

2. Their legacy and memory are destroyed (i.e., by a great flood of judgment).

Eliphaz is alluding to Job’s current condition.

▣ **“snatched away”** This VERB (BDB 888, KB 1108, *Pual* PERFECT) is found only in Job (twice).

1. Job 16:8
2. Job 22:16

It implies a personal act of God (see Special Topic: God Described as Human [anthropomorphic language]). It denotes a premature death (cf. Job 20:11; 22:16; Ps. 102:23-24; Isa. 38:10), which showed God’s displeasure.

22:17-18 These verses are almost letter for letter a quote from Job 21:14-16, but the exact purpose of Eliphaz quoting Job is uncertain, unless he is mocking his words.

22:17b

NASB, NKJV,

TEV “do to them”

NRSV, NJB,

REB “do to us”

JPSOA “do about it”

The NASB follows the MT. The NRSV follows the LXX, Syriac, Qumran Targum. The DSS Targum suggests that “to us” means “for us,” which would link the thought to Job 22:3b. This would reflect the accuser’s charges in Job 1 and 2 of faith for favors.

22:19-20 These two verses describe the feelings of righteous people at the just judgment that befalls the wicked. Eliphaz considered himself righteous and Job wicked.

22:20a

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV “adversaries”

LXX, JPSOA,

KJV “substance”

NJB “enemies”

REB “riches”

The MT has “adversaries” (קִיָּם, BDB 879, KB 1096), but this root is found only here. The parallelism with Job 22:20b suggests “substance” (possibly, יָקוֹם, BDB 879; an Arabic root, or קִנְיָן, BDB 889).

▣ **“fire”** The mention of “fire” and “flood” (Job 22:16) are

1. the Jewish sages’ knowledge of the Flood of Genesis 6-9 and Sodom and Gomorrah of Genesis 18-19
2. general metaphors for judgment in the ANE

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:21-30

²¹“Yield now and be at peace with Him;

Thereby good will come to you.

²²Please receive instruction from His mouth

And establish His words in your heart.

²³If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored;

If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent,

²⁴And place *your* gold in the dust,

And *the gold of* Ophir among the stones of the brooks,

²⁵Then the Almighty will be your gold
And choice silver to you.
²⁶For then you will delight in the Almighty
And lift up your face to God.
²⁷You will pray to Him, and He will hear you;
And you will pay your vows.
²⁸You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you;
And light will shine on your ways.
²⁹When you are cast down, you will speak with confidence,
And the humble person He will save.
³⁰He will deliver one who is not innocent,
And he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.”

22:21-22 Eliphaz, with seeming compassion (Job 4-5) and half truths, calls on Job to repent. He cares for Job! His affirmations of God’s grace are absolutely accurate but he insists that Job is under judgment, when in reality he is not.

Note the IMPERATIVES used as wishes (i.e., BDB 609, a mark of entreaty or exhortation) for Job to act in a certain way.

1. “yield now” – BDB 698, KB 755, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE which denotes an action that is clearly demonstrated, cf. Num. 22:30; Ps. 139:3
2. “be at peace with Him” – BDB 1023, KB 1532, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, see Special Topic: Peace (OT)
3. receive God’s teachings – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. establish His words in your heart – BDB 962, KB 1321, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
5. there is one more action (i.e., IMPERATIVE) in Job 22:24 which asks Job to renounce all his wealth

The result of confession and repentance will be “good” (BDB 375), Job 22:21b,23,28b,29,30. This has been the message of the three comforters from the beginning.

22:22 “Please receive instructions from His mouth” It is interesting to note that this is the only use of the Hebrew word *Torah* (BDB 435) in all the book of Job. This also seems to imply that Eliphaz is claiming to speak for God. This is a pitfall that all of us face from time to time.

Job claims to have received God’s word/teaching in Job 23:12. It is the words of his three comforters he rejects as irrelevant to his situation (i.e., an innocent man suffering under God’s direction or approval).

22:23-30 In these verses Job is offered rewards for his confession and repentance (“If . . . if . . .” BDB 609). This is exactly the charge that Satan makes to God in the Prologue of Job. It again sees God’s relationship to us on the basis of “the two ways.”

22:23 “return” This is the VERB (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERFECT) that denotes “turning” (i.e., turning from sin and to God). See Special Topic: Repentance in the Old Testament.

▣ **“you will be restored”** This is literally “built up” or “be made prosperous” (בָּנֶה, BDB 124, KB 139, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) but the LXX makes it a similar root, “humble” (עֲנֶה, BDB 776, KB 851, *Pual* IMPERFECT).

22:24-25 The Hebrew text is in disarray. It is uncertain if Job 22:24 and 25 follow the literary context of 22:23 or if these verses show that Eliphaz is encouraging Job (1) to trust in God not in riches or (2) promising the restoration of wealth (Syriac).

Ophir, mentioned in Job 22:23, is an unknown geographical locality, but proverbial for its fine gold.

22:25b

NASB	“choice”
NKJV, NRSV,	
JPSOA	“precious”
TEV	“piled high”
NJB	“piled in heaps”
REB	“in double measure”
LXX	“pure as silver tried by fire”
Peshitta, KJV	“plenty”

This FEMININE PLURAL NOUN (BDB 419) is used of things “high” or “towering.”

1. horns – Num. 23:22; 24:8
2. peaks – Ps. 95:4
3. here, of silver ore possibly in heaps, or stacked up refined bars

22:29-30 This has proven to be a very controversial passage because the rabbis and Roman Catholicism have taken the uncertainty of the Hebrew text and have asserted the doctrine of the “merit of the saints.” This is in direct contradiction to the message of the book of Job, although Job himself prays for his three friends at the end of the book, as God instructs him (also note Abraham’s intercession for Sodom/Lot in Gen. 18:21-33; and possibly Ezek. 14:14,20). This idea that the prayers of a righteous person affect God is surely true (cf. James 5:16; see Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer), but this involves no transfer of merit (cf. Ezekiel 18).

Notice how Job 22:2-4 contradicts the understanding of Job 22:30 related to “merits” of righteous people!

22:29 This is a good example of the theological half-truths found in the three comforters’ messages. Much of what they say is accurate.

1. God opposes the proud but exalts the humble (OT reversal motif)
2. confession and repentance bring restoration and peace with God (Job 22:23-28)

22:29b

NASB, NKJV	“humble person”
NRSV, TEV,	
JPSOA, REB	“humble”
NJB	“those of downcast eyes”
LXX	“one bent forward with the eyes”
Peshitta	“meek”

The MT has an ADJECTIVE (BDB 1006) in CONSTRUCT with a NOUN (BDB 744), “eyes.” The ADJECTIVE appears only here but seems to be related

1. to the root “be bowed down” (VERB in BDB 1005)
2. parallelism with “abused” (BDB 1050, KB 1631, *Hiphil* PERFECT) of Job 22:29a; the problem is that this line of poetry uses another rare NOUN for “pride,” which is not parallel to “humble”

22:30

NASB, NKJV	“one who is not innocent”
NRSV	“those who are guilty”

RSV	“the innocent man”
TEV	“you are innocent”
NJB	“who is innocent”
JPSOA	“guilty”
LXX, REV,	
Peshitta	“the innocent”

The textual issue is obvious when you compare RSV with NRSV. The “innocent” man (RSV, TEV, NJB, REB) follows the ancient versions (i.e., Targums, LXX, Peshitta). The MT has “not” (BDB 22 IV) with “innocent” (cf. Job 4:7; 9:23; 17:8; 22:19,30; 27:17). However, it is a form of negation found only in later Hebrew and found nowhere else in the OT (it is found in Phoenician and Ethiopian, cf. John Walton, *NIV Application Commentary*, *Job*, p. 246). The parallelism of Job 22:30a and 30b fits best without the negative. The UBS Text Project (p. 66) gives it a “C” rating (considerable doubt). The committee suggested several possible translations for נֹכַח (BDB 33 IV).

1. no/not
2. whoever (Arabic root)
3. man (add one consonant to “not,” RSV)
4. God
5. island (Ibn Ezra, KJV)
6. country (implication of #5)

Notice the word “innocent” is used in a negative sense in Job 22:19b-20.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Is Eliphaz asserting that God is unaffected by human actions in Job 22:2-4?
2. Can Eliphaz prove or demonstrate his charges against Job (Job 22:5-9)?
3. Is Eliphaz accusing Job of believing God is uninvolved in the affairs of humans (Job 22:12-14)?
4. What is the “ancient path” or “old path”? How is it different from “everlasting way” of Ps. 139:24?
5. What does Job 22:24 mean?
6. Why is Job 22:30 so hard to interpret?

JOB 23

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says He Longs for God	Job Proclaims God's Righteous Judgments	Reply of Job (23:1-24:17)	Job (23:1-24:17)	God Is Far Off, and Evil Triumphant (23:1-24:25)
23:1-7 (2-7)	23:1 23:2-7 (2-7)	23:1-7 (2-7)	23:1-7 (1-7)	23:1-7 (2-7)
23:8-17 (8-17)	23:8-12 (8-12) 23:13-17 (13-17)	23:8-17	23:8-12 (8-12) 23:13-17 (13-17)	23:8-17 (8-17)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job responds (Job 23-24) in a general way, not specifically to Eliphaz's words in Job 22. This is true of the dialogues in general. The three comforters' perspective is so different from Job's that they talk past each other.
- B. The UBS *Handbook* (p. 429) has a good outline of Job's mood swings.
 1. Job complains of God's hiddenness, Job 23:2-5 (negative).
 2. Job feels if he could just present his case before God, he would be vindicated, Job 23:6-7 (positive).
 3. Job does not feel God's presence or actions, Job 23:8-9 (negative).
 4. Job expresses a degree of confidence in Job 23:10-12 (positive).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:1-7

¹Then Job replied,

²“Even today my complaint is rebellion;
His hand is heavy despite my groaning.

³Oh that I knew where I might find Him,
That I might come to His seat!

⁴I would present *my* case before Him
And fill my mouth with arguments.

⁵I would learn the words *which* He would answer,
And perceive what He would say to me.

⁶Would He contend with me by the greatness of *His* power?
No, surely He would pay attention to me.

⁷There the upright would reason with Him;
And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.

23:1 “Then Job replied” Job does not even respond (i.e., Job 23-24) to the attack of Eliphaz in Job 22 or his admonitions. Some commentators think Eliphaz’s response helped Job to clarify his own position in his mind.

23:2 “Even today my complaint is rebellion” The Hebrew words, “rebellion” (מַרִּי, BDB 598) and “bitter” (מָר, BDB 600), sound almost exactly alike. The translator of the RSV, following the Targums, Syrian, and Vulgate, assumes a word play here and translates it “bitter,” for they see Job admitting rebellion as being an admittance of sin. UBS Text Project (p. 67) gives “rebellion” an “A” rating.

For “my complaint” see Job 7:11.

▣ **“His hand is heavy despite my groaning”** The Hebrew has “my hand,” but we learn from a Phoenician parallel that it is possible the consonants mean “his” instead of “my” (see LXX, Syriac), thereby saying that God forced Job to be silent. “Heavy” (BDB 457, KB 455, *Qal* PERFECT) is used of God in 1 Sam. 5:6, 11; Ps. 32:4.

▣ **“hand”** This (BDB 388) is an idiom for God’s actions (cf. Job 13:21; 19:21). See Special Topic: Hand.

23:3 “Oh that I knew where I might find Him” This is what Job has been asking for all along (cf. Job 13:3, 18). He wants to present his case to God but he asserts that he cannot find God (cf. Job 9 and 10).

23:4 “I would present my case before Him” Job is not looking for mercy in the hands of a gracious God, but justice at the hands of the Creator and Controller of the world (cf. Job 13:15c).

Notice the number of COHORTATIVES.

1. I would present, Job 23:4 – BDB 789, KB 884, *Qal* COHORTATIVE
2. I would fill, Job 23:4 – BDB 569, KB 583, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a COHORTATIVE sense
3. I would learn, Job 23:5 (lit. “know”) – BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* COHORTATIVE
4. I would perceive (lit. “discern”) – BDB 106, KB 122, *Qal* COHORTATIVE
5. I would deliver, Job 23:7 – BDB 812, KB 930, *Piel* COHORTATIVE

Notice the legal terms (cf. Job 9:2-4,14-24,30-35; 13:3,13-28; 16:17-21; 19:23-27; 31:1-40).

1. His seat (i.e., Judgment Seat; BDB 467, word meaning is uncertain), Job 23:3b
2. case, Job 23:4a (cf. Job 13:18)
3. arguments, Job 23:4b
4. contend, Job 23:6a
5. reason, Job 23:7a (cf. Isa. 1:18)
6. delivered (i.e., acquitted), Job 23:7b
7. my Judge, Job 23:7b

23:6 This verse is an affirmation that God would not take unfair advantage of him by His power and greatness (cf. Job 13:21). However, this is exactly what happens in Job 38:1-40:6.

23:7 “There the upright might reason with Him” This has been Job’s claim all along of his innocence and uprightness (cf. Job 23:7,12). Only the innocent can appear before a righteous God (cf. Job 19:26).

▣ **“delivered forever from my Judge”** Job wants justice from God who he thinks has been unfair to him. The word “forever” (BDB 664) is an idiom for “once-and-for-all” acquittal (TEV).



NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, JPSOA,

REB

“my Judge”

NJB, LXX,

NET Bible

“my case”

These words are very similar. The UBS Text Project gives “Judge” (BDB 1047) a “B” rating (some doubt). Job calls God Judge in Job 9:15. The word “case” (BDB 1048) is used in Job 23:4a.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:8-17

⁸“Behold, I go forward but He is not *there*,

And backward, but I cannot perceive Him;

⁹When He acts on the left, I cannot behold *Him*;

He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.

¹⁰But He knows the way I take;

When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

¹¹My foot has held fast to His path;

I have kept His way and not turned aside.

¹²I have not departed from the command of His lips;

I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

¹³But He is unique and who can turn Him?

And *what* His soul desires, that He does.

¹⁴For He performs what is appointed for me,

And many such *decrees* are with Him.

¹⁵Therefore, I would be dismayed at His presence;

When I consider, I am terrified of Him.

¹⁶*It is* God *who* has made my heart faint,

And the Almighty *who* has dismayed me,

¹⁷**But I am not silenced by the darkness,
Nor deep gloom *which covers me.***

23:8-9 Job grieves over the hiddenness of God (cf. Job 9:11). In all of Job's physical problems he laments more over the loss of fellowship with God (cf. Ps. 42:1-2). He believes God is present but for whatever reason, he cannot see (i.e., understand) His presence and actions. This is terrible darkness and gloom (cf. Job 23:17). Humans were created in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) to have fellowship with Him. Augustine characterized this as a God-shaped hole that only He can fill. Humans are empty and lost without Him. He is the goal of our existence.

Two Jewish commentators, Rashi and Ibn Ezra, say that these four directions (i.e., "forward," "backward," "left," "right") refer to the four points of the compass.

23:10 "But He knows the way that I take,

When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" This may be a reaction to Eliphaz's statement in Job 22:24-25, or it may be a positive affirmation of Job's understanding that even in the midst of pain, sorrow, and unfairness of life, God has a purpose.

The term "tried" (BDB 103, KB 119, *Qal* PERFECT) denotes a purposeful, positive examination/testing by God to purify and strengthen (cf. Job 7:18; Ps. 11:4-5; 139:23). See Special Topic: God Tests His People (OT).

23:11-12 Job lists the reasons for his acquittal by God.

1. My foot has held fast to His path, Job 23:11a.
2. I have kept His way, Job 23:11b.
3. I have not turned aside, Job 23:11b.
4. I have not departed from the command of His lips, Job 23:12a.
5. I have treasured (lit. "hidden," cf. Ps. 119:11; Pro. 2:1; 7:1) the words of His mouth, Job 23:12b.

Job is asserting he has obeyed all of the commands and guidelines from God that he was aware of. He has committed no known violation.

23:11 "His path. . . His way" This is an example of Hebrew synonymous parallelism. See Special Topic: Hebrew Poetry. The idea of His path or way speaks of God's well-known will for our lives in which we must walk (cf. Ps. 16:11; 17:5; 139:23).

23:12b There is some disagreement between English translations on how this line of poetry should be understood.

1. "from my statute," MT
2. "in my heart/bosom," LXX, Vulgate, NRSV, NJB, REB

The Hebrew consonants are the same for both readings (see UBS Text Project, p. 88).

This line of poetry is parallel to Ps. 119:11. Job has acted on what he understood of God's will.

23:13-17 "But He is unique and who can turn Him" In Job 23:13-17 Job returns to his awareness of the transcendence, otherness, holiness, and eternity of God. All of these thoughts caused Job to fear when he asked to stand before the Almighty (Job 23:15-16).

23:13

**NASB, NKJV
NRSV**

**"He is unique"
"He stands alone"**

TEV,	(RSV “unchangeable”) “He never changes”
NJB	“once He made up His mind”
JPSOA	“He is one”
REB	“when he decides”
KJV	“he is in one mind”

The MT has a PREPOSITION (BDB 88) with a wide semantic usage and the ADJECTIVE or numeral “one” (BDB 25). The UBS Text Project (p. 72) suggests it means “unique” or “alone” (i.e., an “A” rating). The TEV, NJB, REB translate the phrase based on the next line of poetry.

Is Job asserting

1. God’s uniqueness (i.e., monotheism, see Special Topic: Monotheism)
2. God’s sovereignty
3. God’s unchanging character once His mind is made up

Remember, the dialogues are literary composition written by a Judean sage years later, not the very words of the historical Job of Edom. If this is true, then #1 would fit best.

23:16 Job continues to assert the full and complete sovereignty of God.

Notice *El* (i.e., God) and *Shaddai* (Almighty) are parallel. See Special Topic: Names for Deity.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

23:17 “darkness” This word (BDB 365) is also found in Job 3:4,5; 5:14; 10:21,22; 15:22,23,30; 17:12,13; 18:18; 19:8; 20:26; 22:11; 28:3; 29:3; 34:22; 37:19; 38:19. It is one of two words translated “darkness” (see BDB 66 also in this verse, cf. Job 3:6; 10:22; 28:3; 30:26). “Darkness” and “deep gloom” refer to God’s actions (or inaction, i.e., hardness) towards Job. Yet still Job wants to speak and present his legal case to God! He is afraid but he still speaks (cf. Job 23:2-7).

Job 23:17 is very difficult in the MT.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What does Job want in Job 23:2-7?
2. Did Job believe he would be vindicated?
3. List the things Job states that he has done with God’s truth (Job 23:11-12).
4. What does the first phrase of Job 23:13a mean?
5. Is Job 23 an expression of Job’s confidence or fear?

JOB 24

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Says God Seems to Ignore Wrongs	Job Complains Of Violence on the Earth	Reply of Job (23:1-24:17)	Job (23:1-24:28)	God Is Far Off, and Evil Triumphant (23:1-24:25)
24:1-12 (1-12)	24:1 (1) 24:2-8 (2-8)	24:1-8 (1-8)	24:1-7 (1-7) 24:8-12 (8-12)	24:1-12 (1-12)
	24:9-12 (9-12)	24:9-12 (9-12)		
24:13-17 (13-17)	24:13-17 (13-17)	24:13-17 (13-17)	24:13-17 [Zophar]	24:13-17 (13-17)
24:18-25 (18-25)	24:18-21 (18-21)	24:18-20 (18-20) 24:21-25 (21-25)	24:18-25 (18-25)	(puts vv. 18-24 after 27:24)
	24:22-24 (22-24)			
	24:25 (25)			24:25 (25)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. In Job 23, Job again asks to go to court and lay out his case for vindication before God.
- B. In Job 24, Job accuses God of failing to hold court (i.e., "times," Job 24:1a).

- C. Many scholars (see notes in Oxford Annotation Bible, NRSV, p. 651) have questioned if Job 24:18-25 reflects Job's thoughts.
1. Some attribute them to one of the three comforters. The RSV and NET Bible add "you say" to Job 24:18.
 2. NJB completely reorders several chapters in Job to try to fix the broken cycle of the three comforters and Job's response to each.
 3. Some think it was added by a traditional Jewish scribe to make Job more orthodox (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 239; vol. 2, p. 629).
 4. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 629, suggests Job 24:18-24 is a series of imprecations spoken by Job against the wicked.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:1-12

- ¹"Why are times not stored up by the Almighty,
And why do those who know Him not see His days?"
- ²Some remove the landmarks;
They seize and devour flocks.
- ³They drive away the donkeys of the orphans;
They take the widow's ox for a pledge.
- ⁴They push the needy aside from the road;
The poor of the land are made to hide themselves altogether.
- ⁵Behold, as wild donkeys in the wilderness
They go forth seeking food in their activity,
As bread for *their* children in the desert.
- ⁶They harvest their fodder in the field
And glean the vineyard of the wicked.
- ⁷They spend the night naked, without clothing,
And have no covering against the cold.
- ⁸They are wet with the mountain rains
And hug the rock for want of a shelter.
- ⁹Others snatch the orphan from the breast,
And against the poor they take a pledge.
- ¹⁰They cause *the poor* to go about naked without clothing,
And the take away the sheaves from the hungry.
- ¹¹Within the walls they produce oil;
They tread wine presses but thirst.
- ¹²From the city men groan,
And the souls of the wounded cry out;
Yet God does not pay attention to folly."

24:1 "Why. . ." The NEB removes the Hebrew term "why." This seems to put Job 24 in line with 23:14. There are three cycles of speeches by the three comforters of Job and his response to them. However, in the third cycle, Zophar's speech is missing. Many commentators believe that Job 24 is not the words of Job but

the words of Zophar. If not the whole chapter, some believe that at least Job 24:18-21 contain words from Zophar (cf. Jerusalem Bible is one example of this).

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: *Shaddai*.

▣ **“And why do those who know Him not see his days”** Job is asking why God doesn’t have regular court days to deal with evil people. The ancient belief was that God would have to set things straight in his life (i.e., “the two ways”). When that is not the case, the afterlife becomes a necessity for the moral justice of God (cf. Psalm 63), but this concept is not part of Job’s theology.

The Hebrew word “know” (see Special Topic: Know) has several connotations but here it refers to innocent, righteous followers of God who know Him and His ways.

24:2-12 This is a series of violent crimes against the poor that God has not dealt with. Job 24:13-19 contains another list of violent crimes that God has not dealt with. Job wants to know where the justice of God is. Why does He not regularly hold court?

Here is a list of the violations of God’s ways related to the poor and powerless in society.

1. steal land by changing the boundary stones, Job 24:2a (cf. Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Pro. 22:28; 23:10)
2. steal livestock, Job 24:2b (specific examples in 24:3b)
 - a. steal the donkeys of orphans
 - b. steal the oxen from widows (cf. Exod. 22:22; Deut. 24:17)
3. exploit the poor, Job 24:4-8,10-11
 - a. drive them out
 - b. steal their crops
 - c. cause them to beg
 - d. make them homeless and in need
4. steal the children as slaves for money due, Job 24:9 (cf. Deut. 24:7,10-13,17)

24:3 “donkey. . .ox” These are imagery for possessions in general. The wicked take everything from the powerless and weak of society.

24:4 “They pushed the needy aside from the road” This is a Hebrew idiom (cf. Amos 2:7). The poor and powerless are robbed of their rights as citizens. No justice for them!

24:4b “made to hide themselves” The figures of speech are difficult to understand, but Job 24:4b-8,10-11 describes the plight of the displaced poor who are seeking food, shelter, and warmth.

24:6b

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, JPSOA “glean”

TEV, Peshitta “gather”

NJB “pilfering”

REB “filch”

Moffatt “rob”

This is a rare word (BDB 545, KB 536), which may mean “to despoil” or “to gather late growth.” The poor and powerless have been driven from their land and homes. Now they must find their meager food wherever they can.

The LXX translates this verse as “They reaped a field not their own before its time.”

24:7 This is powerful imagery. It is not meant to denote a total “nakedness” but ill equipped clothing.

24:9 This verse seems to be out of place. RSV puts it in parenthesis.

24:11

NASB	“within the walls”
NKJV	“within their walls”
NRSV	“between their terraces”
NJB	“two little walls”
JPSOA	“between rows (of olive trees)”
REB	“where two walls meet”

The term (BDB 1004) is an Arabic root (found only here and possibly in Jer. 5:10) which is best translated something like JPSOA. This is the suggestion of the UBS Text Project (p. 76). The poor work hard for others but are themselves hungry and thirsty. This is the continuing exploitation of the poor and powerless!

▣ **“they produce oil”** This VERB (BDB 844, KB 1008, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) has two possible origins.

1. to press out oil
2. from a NOUN for “midday” or “noon”

The NJB translates it as “their shelter at high noon,” but most English translations relate it to “winepress.”

24:12 “the souls of the wounded cry out” This is the Hebrew term *nephesh* (BDB 659), which denotes a person. The poor cry out as a person wounded in battle!

▣ **“Yet God does not pay attention to folly”** This is the key thought of Job’s argument, that a just God is simply not paying attention to His business (cf. Job 9:13-24; Ps. 73:2-14; Mal. 3:15)! There is no justice! How can “the two ways” be the only explanation of God’s ways with humans?

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:13-17

- ¹³**“Others have been with those who rebel against the light;
They do not want to know its ways
Nor abide in its paths.**
- ¹⁴**The murderer arises at dawn;
He kills the poor and the needy,
And at night he is as a thief.**
- ¹⁵**The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight,
Saying, ‘No eye will see me.’
And he disguises his face.**
- ¹⁶**In the dark they dig into houses,
They shut themselves up by day;
They do not know the light.**
- ¹⁷**For the morning is the same to him as thick darkness,
For he is familiar with the terrors of thick darkness.”**

24:13-17 This is another list of the acts of evil people who God apparently ignores.

1. they rebel against God’s way, Job 24:13
2. they murder and steal from the poor and helpless, Job 24:14
3. they commit adultery, Job 24:15 (they think God does not or will not see and respond!)

4. they break into homes and businesses by night and flee the light of day, Job 24:16 (again, God does not respond, Job 24:17)

Where is the God of Justice? Where is the reality of “the two ways” (cf. Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1). God’s inactivity mocks God’s word and promises!

24:13 “those who rebel” This is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 597, KB 632). It denotes those who openly and flagrantly flaunt God’s ways (cf. Num. 14:9; Jos. 22:16,18,19; Ezek. 2:3; 20:38; Dan. 9:5,9). Only here in Job is it used of rebellion against “light” (which is an idiom for Deity). This is open-eyed disregard for God and His ways (cf. Job 24:13b,c)!

▣ **“ways. . . paths”** These are in a synonymous parallel relationship. A godly life was viewed as a clear, straight, unobstructed path. There are numerous allusions to this imagery in the OT (i.e., Ps. 25:4; 27:11; 86:11; 119:35,105; Isa. 40:14).

God’s way is not hidden from His people but is clearly revealed (i.e., Mosaic covenant). Our daily task is to walk in it and bring honor to Him. How much of God’s revelation was available to Edomites (or for that matter, Salemites, cf. Genesis 14; Ninevites, cf. Jonah) is uncertain.

24:14-15 These two verses could be literal or figurative. They address the problem of humans treating other humans as objects for personal gratification or aggrandizement! God loves people! People are the only permanent aspect of this creation. God’s ways are meant to benefit all humans!

24:16 “They do not know the light” This is imagery. Evil people act in secrecy/darkness to conceal their selfish acts (cf. John 3:19-21). The word “light” (BDB 21) is used three times in this paragraph (Job 24:13,14,16). Obviously in 24:13 it refers to God, which is the thrust of Job 24:16c.

It is used literally in Job 24:14 for “the dawn” (another word for the same time period is used in Job 24:17a).

24:17 “For the morning is the same to him as thick darkness” This verse seems to refer to God’s complete knowledge of all things. It is connected to Job 24:13,16c, which is a reference to God as “the light.” Evil seeks darkness, Job 24:14,15,16a,b, but God knows (cf. Ps. 139:11-12).

The implication is that the God who knows (opposite of Job 24:14a,b) will eventually bring the evil ones to justice (i.e., Job 24:18-20).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:18-25

¹⁸“They are insignificant on the surface of the water;

Their portion is cursed on the earth.

They do not turn toward the vineyards.

¹⁹Drought and heat consume the snow waters,

So does Sheol *those who* have sinned.

²⁰A mother will forget him;

The worm feeds sweetly till he is no longer remembered.

And wickedness will be broken like a tree.

²¹He wrongs the barren woman

And does no good for the widow.

²²But He drags off the valiant by His power;

He rises, but no one has assurance of life.

²³He provides them with security, and they are supported;

And His eyes are on their ways.

²⁴They are exalted a little while, then they are gone;

Moreover, they are brought low and like everything gathered up;

Even like the heads of grain they are cut off.

²⁵Now if it is not so, who can prove me a liar,

And make my speech worthless?”

24:18-25 The last cycle of Job’s three comforters’ speeches and Job’s response is not complete. The reasons for this are uncertain.

1. they give up because they cannot get Job to admit his sin
2. the MT has been damaged in transmission

Many scholars see Job 24:18-25 as part of #2. These verses seem more appropriate for Job’s three comforters than Job himself. It is not that Job denies “the two ways,” he just asserts it does not fit his situation.

It is difficult to follow the imagery of this paragraph. It is also difficult to identify the acts of the evil humans and the acts of God.

1. “they,” “their,” “them” – Job 24:18,23,24
2. “he” (i.e., God) – Job 24:21-23

The JPSOA has a footnote at Job 24:18-25 which says, “From here to the end of the chapter the translation is largely conjectural.” This paragraph is difficult to translate and comprehend.

24:19 “Sheol” See Special Topic: *Sheol*.

As heat takes away snow, so *Sheol* takes away sinners. Job 24:19 implies they die quickly; Job 24:20 implies they are forgotten in death.

24:20 “worm feeds sweetly” Worms (BDB 942) are a euphemism for death and decay (cf. Job 17:14; 21:26).

24:21-22 The interpretive question is, “does the ‘he’ refer to God or ‘the affluent sinner’?”

1. God – NASB (hard to tell with capitalized “He’s”), NKJV, RSV, TEV
2. wealthy, powerful sinner – LXX, Peshitta, Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible
3. mixed – JPSOA (mostly sinner), REB, NET Bible

Is Job claiming not only God’s indifference (Job 24:12c) but also His active help for the wicked (Job 24:23)? It seems so. The unfairness of life is a major theological issue for Job. Is God the God of justice?

It seems to me that Job 24:21 and 22 refer to the powerful, wealthy sinner (“he” does not refer to God) but 24:23 refers to God (“he” does refer to Deity, cf. Job 12:6).

24:24 The wicked may prosper for a season but in time they will reap what they have sown! This is a statement of the rigid validity of “the two ways” that Job has several times rejected!

The OT often uses agricultural imagery. Here of the destruction of God’s judgment (i.e., Job 14:2; 18:16; Ps. 37:2; 92:7).

24:25 Job emphatically says “show me if I am incorrect”! Life is unfair. The wicked do prosper. The righteous do suffer. Where is the God of promise and justice? He seems not to care (cf. Job 24:12c). This is the theological issue of the book of Job!

JOB 25

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Bildad Says Man Is Inferior	Bildad: How Can Man Be Righteous	Third Discourse of Bildad	Bildad	A Hymn to God's Omnipotence (25:1-6; 26:5-14)
25:1-6 (1-6)	25:1 25:2-6 (2-6)	25:1-6 (1-6)	25:1-6 (1-6)	25:1-6 (2-6) (NJB moves part of 26) 26:5-14 (5-14)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This third cycle of speeches is incomplete and truncated. There have been many suggestions on textual rearrangement and the assigning of certain passages to the comforter whose section is short (Bildad) or missing (Zophar). Also notice the unusually long length of Job's response (i.e., Job 26-31).
- B. The theme of the evil of mankind has been addressed several times.
 1. Eliphaz – Job 4:17-21; 15:14-16
 2. Zophar – Job 11:5-12
 3. Job – Job 9:2-12; 14:4
- C. In context this brief chapter is another attempt by the three comforters to address Job's claim of innocence.

- D. It is possible that UBS *Handbook* (p. 464), TEV, and NJB are correct in seeing
1. Bildad's speech going from Job 25:1-6 and continuing at 26:5-14
 2. this would make Job 26:1-4 a brief response from Job (or as the Jewish Study Bible says, a part of Bildad's speech)
 3. my problem with all of the textual division and rearrangement is
 - a. there is not agreement among scholars
 - b. the cosmological passage of Job 26:5-14 is artistic and powerful poetry, which does not fit the other speeches of Bildad

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:1-6

¹Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,

²“Dominion and awe belong to Him

Who establishes peace in His heights.

³Is there any number to His troops?

And upon whom does His light not rise?

⁴How then can a man be just with God?

Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?

⁵If even the moon has no brightness

And the stars are not pure in His sight,

⁶How much less man, *that* maggot,

And the son of man, *that* worm!”

25:2-3 This is a series of descriptive phrases of who God is (i.e., His attributes).

1. dominion (BDB 605, KB 647, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE. This is a royal affirmation (cf. Ps. 8:6). God is king. The rabbis address Deity as “the King of the Universe.”
2. awe (BDB 808 I), which denotes an appropriate respect for Deity (cf. Job 13:11; 23:15; Ps. 14:5; 36:1; 119:120). It is often translated “fear” or “dread.”
3. establishes peace (between angels, cf. Isa. 24:21) in His heights (BDB 928), which refers to God's dwelling place in the heights (cf. Job 31:2). This could refer to
 - a. a high mountain (i.e., Mt. Seir, Mt. Sinai, mountain in the far north; cf. Ezek. 20:40)
 - b. in highest heaven (cf. Isa. 57:15, see Special Topic: The Heavens and the Third Heaven)
 - c. highest rank
4. captain of the innumerable armies (angels) of God (i.e., God as Lord Sabaoth, Lord of Hosts, cf. Jos. 5:13-15)a
5. God of creation (i.e., light) or revelation (i.e., light). The NJB sees this as reference to “lightning” as a metaphorical weapon of God

Light (BDB 21) has several connotations in the OT.

1. special provision by God during the exodus and wilderness wandering period to express His presence, care, protection, and guidance (cf. Exod. 10:23; 13:21-22; 14:20; Ps. 78:14)
2. metaphor of revealing truth (cf. Ezra 9:8; Ps. 112:4; Job 28:11; expressed negatively in Job 12:25; also note Job 5:14)
3. special revelation of His will (cf. Job 29:3; Ps. 43:3; 119:105; Pro. 6:23; Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 51:4)
4. imagery for God Himself (cf. Job 22:28; 24:13; 33:28; Ps. 27:1; 90:8; Isa. 10:17; 60:1-2, 19-20)

There is an obvious semantic overlap in these verses.

25:3a There are several places in the Bible that speak about a large number of angels (cf. Deut. 33:2; 2 Kgs. 6:17; Ps. 68:17; Dan. 7:10; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11).

25:4 This is a crucial theological question in Job (cf. Job 4:17; 15:14). It addresses the condition of fallen humanity (see litany of OT texts in Rom. 3:10-18; and summary in 3:23 and Gal. 3:22). How can Job claim to be innocent? Eliphaz also asserts the sinfulness of all humans in Job 4:17-19. However, Job claims that his youthful sins were not so great as to deserve the awful judgments of Job 1-2. His three comforters' commitment to "the two ways" demands Job's sinfulness in order to maintain their theological worldview.

25:5 Both Eliphaz (Job 4:18; 15:15) and Bildad assert that the fall of mankind (i.e., Genesis 3) has affected the heavens (i.e., even angels are not completely pure). I am assuming the creation imagery of Job 25:5 refers to angels. In the ANE, particularly Babylon, the lights of the day and night sky were viewed as spiritual beings (cf. Isa. 40:26).

25:6 "maggot. . . worm" These are in a synonymous parallel relationship (as are "man" and "son of man"). Both of these are hyperboles for

1. frailty (disease) of mankind, cf. Job 7:5; Isa. 41:14
2. death of mankind, cf. Job 17:14; 21:26; 24:20; Isa. 14:11
3. rottenness of mankind (KB 1241, #1), cf. Exod. 16:24; in this context this connotation fits best
4. insignificance of a worm in Ps. 22:6

In one sense Bildad is correct about the corruption of humanity, but this is only the result of the rebellion of Genesis 3. Originally mankind was

1. personally created by God (Gen. 2:7)
2. created in the image and likeness of God Himself (Gen. 1:26-27)
3. created for fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8) in a special place created for them (i.e., the Garden of Eden)
4. God plans for the restoration of fellowship damaged in Gen. 3:1-7. This is clearly seen in Gen. 3:15 (see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan).

▣ **"the son of man"** This is simply a Hebrew idiom for humanity (cf. Job 7:17; Ps. 8:4; see Special Topic: Son of Man).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is Bildad's speech so short? Along the same lines, why is there no speech of Zophar recorded?
2. Does Job 25:2b refer to conflict in heaven among angels?
3. What does "His light" refer to?
4. Why is Job 25:4 such an important verse? Is Bildad referring directly to Job's claim of innocence?
5. Does Job 25:5 refer to impurity or rebellion among the angels?
6. Explain Job 25:6 in your own words.

JOB 26

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Rebukes Bildad	Job: Mans' Frailty and God's Majesty	Reply of Job	Job	A Hymn to God's Omnipotence (25:1-6; 26:5-14)
26:1-4 (2-4)	26:1 26:2-4 (2-4)	26:1-14 (1-14)	26:1-4 (1-4)	
The Greatness of God			[Bildad]	
26:5-14 (5-14)	26:5-14 (5-14)		26:5-14 (5-14)	26:5-14 (5-14) Bildad's Rhetoric Is Beside the Point 26:1-4 (2-4)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. See note at Contextual Insights of Job 25.
- B. Job's response to Bildad is very sarcastic. Job feels that his three comforters have not only not brought comfort but have attacked him unfairly.

The Jewish Study Bible (p. 1537) thinks Job 26:2-4 is from Bildad because of the use of the SINGULAR "you." Everywhere else Job uses the PLURAL "you," but the three comforters always use the SINGULAR.

- C. Job 26:5-14 “may” be part of Bildad’s speech. This section of the dialogues does not match the other cycles. Why is uncertain.

They seem to continue the thought of God’s greatness begun in Job 25:1-6. However, 26:5-14 is a wonderful poem of God’s greatness and could surely be from Job. This type of cosmic imagery does not fit Bildad’s previously recorded words.

- D. This cosmology reflects the thought of ANE cultures (see Introduction to Genesis online). It was a three storied worldview.

1. The atmosphere was a dome with several levels (see Special Topic: The Heavens and the Third Heaven).
2. The dry ground was a flat disk floating on water.
3. The dead were beneath the dry ground in a prison house (see Special Topic: *Sheol*).

For a good discussion of Semitic cosmology see John H. Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One* and *ANE Thought and the OT: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*.

- E. There are several places where ANE creation mythology (i.e., conflict with watery chaos) is alluded to.

1. Job 9:13 – Rahab
2. Job 20:12-13 – Rahab; the fleeing serpent
3. Ps. 74:12-17 – sea monsters; Leviathan
4. Ps. 89:9-10 – Rahab
5. Ps. 104:25-26 – Leviathan
6. Isa. 51:9-10 – Rahab; dragon

See G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, chapter 13, “The Language of Myth.”

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:1-4

¹Then Job responded,

²“What a help you are to the weak!

How you have saved the arm without strength!

³What counsel you have given to *one* without wisdom!

What helpful insight you have abundantly provided!

⁴To whom have you uttered words?

And whose spirit was expressed through you?”

26:2-3 Notice the parallelism.

1. VERBS
 - a. help (BDB 740, KB 810), Job 26:2a
 - b. saved (BDB 446, KB 448), Job 26:2b
 - c. given counsel (BDB 419, KB 421), Job 26:3a
 - d. provided (lit. “caused to know,” BDB 393, KB 390), Job 26:3b
2. NOUN PHRASES
 - a. “the weak” (lit. “him who has no power), Job 26:2a
 - b. “the arm without strength,” Job 26:2b
 - c. “to one without wisdom,” Job 26:3a

This is all sarcasm! The subject “you” is SINGULAR, addressing Bildad specifically.

26:4 This verse has two questions. I think the NRSV catches the intended meaning.

“With whose help have you uttered words,
And whose spirit has come forth from you?”

Job is questioning the true source of Bildad’s speech. The implication is that it is an evil, mistaken spiritual source. This may be the only place outside Job 1-2 where “the adversary” is alluded to.

It is also possible that Job recognized that Bildad was alluding to Eliphaz’s previous speech (Job 4).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:5-14

⁵“The departed spirits tremble
Under the waters and their inhabitants.
⁶Naked is Sheol before Him,
And Abaddon has no covering.
⁷He stretches out the north over empty space
And hangs the earth on nothing.
⁸He wraps up the waters in His clouds,
And the cloud does not burst under them.
⁹He obscures the face of the full moon
And spreads His cloud over it.
¹⁰He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters
At the boundary of light and darkness.
¹¹The pillars of heaven tremble
And are amazed at His rebuke.
¹²He quieted the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He shattered Rahab.
¹³By His breath the heavens are cleared;
His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.
¹⁴Behold, these are the fringes of His ways;
And how faint a word we hear of Him!
But His mighty thunder, who can understand?”

26:5-14 This is an extended passage on the omnipotent God. I think it refers to the monotheistic Deity of Israel. Monotheism is rare outside of Israel (i.e., Melchizedek, Gen. 14:17-24; and Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, Exod. 2:16-22; 3:1; 18:1-2, apparently knew of YHWH). Remember, I think a Judean sage composed the book of Job based on oral traditions about a historical person. Often, Israelite theology appears in the dialogues.

The attributes of God show

1. His control over the dead, Job 26:5-6
2. His control over creation, Job 26:7-13
3. His hiddenness, Job 26:14

26:5

NASB “departed spirits”

NKJV “the dead”

NRSV, JPSOA,

REB “the shades”

TEV “the spirits of the dead”

NJB “the shadows”

LXX “giants”

Peshitta “mighty men”
Moffatt “primaeval giants”

The MT has “shades” (lit. *Repha'im*, BDB 952). This Hebrew root has two distinct meanings.

1. race of giants (see Special Topic: Terms Used for Tall/Powerful Warriors or People Groups) – Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Deut. 2:20; 3:11; Jos. 17:15; 1 Chr. 20:4
2. the departed/the conscious dead – Job 26:5-6; Pro. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Isa. 14:9; 26:11-19; this usage is common in Wisdom Literature (see Special Topic: Wisdom Literature)

Because of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 it is possible to see these as departed kings and powerful humans, now in *Sheol*, their power and prestige gone. There is a detailed discussion of this term in NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 1173-1180.

▣ **“under the waters”** Creation was thought to be established on the “cosmic waters” (cf. Ps. 24:2; 104:2-3; 136:6).

26:6 This verse asserts that God knows what occurs in *Sheol* (BDB 982, i.e., holding place of the dead, see Special Topic: *Sheol*) and *Abaddon* (BDB 2, cf. Job 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:10-11; Pro. 15:11; 27:20; see Special Topic: *Abaddon*. . . *Apollyon*). Psalm 139:7-12, especially 139:8 asserts YHWH is present in *Sheol*.

26:7 It is possible that “the north” (BDB 860) is a reference to “the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north” (cf. Isa. 14:13; Ps. 48:2), which reflects Canaanite mythology of Mount Zaphon (other mythology referred to in Job 26:12-13).

However, Job 26:7 may be an alternate way of referring to the creation of the earth.

1. earth as a stretched tent (cf. Job 9:8; Ps. 104:2; Isa. 40:22; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; Jer. 10:12; 51:15) stretched over a void; hung on nothing (i.e., possibly primordial ocean; i.e., Hebrew “Tohu,” BDB 1062, cf. Gen. 1:2)
2. earth built on subterranean pillars (1 Sam. 2:8; Job 9:6; Ps. 75:3)
3. John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary*, *Job*, p. 253, #35, suggests the word “earth” (BDB 75), which in this context, means the netherworld (i.e., *Sheol*). He lists the other places where the Hebrew word has this connotation (cf. Exod. 15:12; 1 Sam. 28:13; Job 10:21-22; Eccl. 3:21; Isa. 26:19; Jonah 2:6).

26:8-9 The two words for “cloud” (BDB 728 and 777) are used in two senses.

1. clouds that hold rain, so important for the agricultural societies of the ANE, Job 26:8
2. clouds that cover God’s glory lest mankind sees God and dies (i.e., *Shekinah* cloud of glory), Job 26:9 (cf. Gen. 16:13; Exod. 33:20; Jdgs. 13:22; Hab. 3:4c; Isa. 6:5)

26:9

NASB “He obscures the face of the full moon”

NKJV “He covers the face of His throne”

NRSV, NJB,

REB “He covers the face of the full moon”

TEV “He hides the full moon”

JPSOA “He shuts off the view of His throne”

LXX “He who holds firmly the face of the throne”

Peshitta “He holds fast the covering of the firmament”

The UBS Text Project (p. 83) gives the NKJV an “A” rating. The other option (NASB) has the same consonants but different vowels.

The basic meaning of the VERB (BDB 28, KB 31) is to “seize,” “lay hold of,” or “settle” (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 354-358). The *Piel* stem is used of “hiding” or “covering.” This covering involves “the clouds” (cf. Job 26:8). See Special Topic: Coming On the Clouds.

▣ **“spreads”** This VERB (BDB 831, KB 975, *Piel* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE) occurs only here. It apparently comes from the VERB “spread” (BDB 831, KB 975).

26:10 This verse refers to God’s separating the waters (i.e., salt and fresh in Gen. 1:9-10). God set a boundary beyond which the waters may not pass (cf. Job 38:8-11; Ps. 104:9; Pro. 8:29). This shows God’s power in creation.

26:11-13 These verses describe the power of God’s spoken word (cf. Genesis 1). The “Rahab” (BDB 923, meaning “pride” or “arrogance”) of Job 26:12 is Babylonian creation mythology (for a good discussion of the different ways the word “mythology” is used see G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, chapter 13, “The Language of Myth”) of God’s destruction of watery chaos (cf. Ps. 74:12-17; notice it is parallel with *Yam* [sea], a god of ancient mythology). This same theme may be carried over into Job 26:13. The basic meaning of the word in 26:13a is “fair” (BDB 1051, KB 1636) but that does not fit the parallel of 26:13b, “pierced the fleeing serpent.” Perhaps the NASB, “cleared,” TEV, “clear,” could reflect the context of Isa. 27:1.

26:11 “tremble” This VERB (BDB 952, KB 1279, *Poal* IMPERFECT) occurs only here in the OT. Most English translations translate it as “tremble.” Some other options/guesses are

1. swayed
2. fluttered
3. tottered
4. quaked

but all convey the same basic thought.

26:12

NASB, NRSV	“quieted”
NKJV	“stirs up”
TEV	“conquered”
NJB	“whipped up”
JPSOA	“stilled”
LXX	“calmed”
Peshitta	“rebuked”

The MT has the VERB (BDB 920 I, KB 1188, *Qal* PERFECT). It can mean

1. disturb, cf. Isa. 51:15; Jer. 31:35
2. quiet, cf. Jer. 31:2; 47:6; 50:34

The *Qal* form usually denotes #1. If so, Job 26:12a is parallel to 26:12b, which denotes the ANE mythology of the defeat (TEV) of watery chaos (Ps. 74:12-17).

▣ **“understands”** This Hebrew NOUN (BDB 108) is personified in Pro. 2:9; 7:4; and 8:14. In Pro. 8:22-31 it is the first creation of YHWH (i.e., Wisdom) whereby He created everything else. This is a powerful word in Hebrew thought.

26:13

NASB, TEV,	
NJB	“His breath”

NKJV, Peshitta **“His Spirit”**

NRSV, JPSOA **“his wind”**

This is the Hebrew word *ruah* (BDB 924). See Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible. As the Spirit was active in Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30; Isa. 40:12-13, so too, in this cosmological text.

Because of Job 41:21, where Leviathan (another way to refer to Rahab) is said to breathe out fire, some scholars (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 764) think Job 26:13a refers to God defeating the ancient sea monster (i.e., watery chaos). I think, in context, Job 26:11 and 13 all speak of the power of the spoken word.

1. His rebuke, Job 26:11
2. He quieted the sea, Job 26:12
3. His breath, Job 26:13

Notice the mention of “word” and “thunder” (a metaphor of God’s voice) is used in Job 26:14.

▣ **“His hand”** See Special Topic: God Described As Human (anthropomorphic language) and Special Topic: Hand.

26:14 Of all the powerful acts of God mentioned, they are only a mere fraction of His power and wonders. He is beyond human comprehension (cf. Job 11:7-9).



NASB **“faint a word”**

NKJV, NRSV **“small a whisper”**

NJB **“feeblest echo”**

JPSOA **“mere whisper”**

REB **“faint the whisper”**

LXX **“a droplet”**

This NOUN CONSTRUCT (BDB 1036 and 182) denotes a fraction or fragment of something (cf. Job 4:12). This word (BDB 1036) occurs only twice in the OT, both in Job. The parallelism with “fringes” (or “outskirts of,” BDB 892) drives the translation options.

▣ **“His mighty thunder”** God uses sound to communicate His presence and power. This verse relates to Job 26:11, “His rebuke.”

Notice the ways God shows His presence (using different synonymous roots).

1. thunder – Exod. 9:23,28,29,33,34; 19:16; 20:18; 1 Sam. 7:10; 12:17,18; Job 26:14; 28:26; 38:25; Ps. 29:3; 77:18; 81:7; 104:7; Isa. 29:6
2. lightning – Exod. 19:16; 20:18; 2 Sam. 22:15; Job 28:26; 37:3; 38:25; Ps. 18:14; 77:18; 97:4
3. flames of fire – Exod. 3:2; Jdgs. 13:20; Ps. 18:8; 50:3; Isa. 29:6; 30:30; 66:15; Joel 2:5
4. wind – Gen. 8:1; Exod. 10:13,19; 14:21; Num. 11:31; 2 Sam. 22:11; 1 Kgs. 19:11; Job 1:19; 38:1; Ps. 18:15; 48:7; 104:3; 135:7; 147:18; Isa. 29:6; 66:15; Jonah 1:4; 4:8

Just a closing thought on this cosmological poem, God, the one true God, is powerful! However, in all this power (i.e., creation), Job is still sick and rejected. He affirms God’s power and sovereignty but questions His fairness and justice. God reveals Himself to Job in power at the end of the book (Job 38:1-40:6), but never answers the questions about His justice! It remains the mystery of evil in a world created by, controlled by, guided by an all-powerful and loving God. The mystery remains!! See Contextual Insights A and B at Job 38.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. To whom does “spirit” in Job 26:4 refer?
2. In your own words describe the common cosmology of the ANE. How is the Bible the same/different?
3. Does the Bible present creation as a gradual unfolding (Genesis 1) or a battle (Psalm 74; 89; Isa. 27)?
4. Explain the word “mythology.”
5. Why is Job 26:9 so difficult to translate?
6. Who is Job 26:13 talking about?
7. Explain in your own words the implication of Job 26:14.

JOB 27

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Affirms His Righteousness	Job Maintains His Integrity	Job's Reply	Job	Job Reaffirms His Innocence While Acknowledging God's Power
27:1-6 (2-6)	27:1	27:1-6 (1-6)	27:1-6 (1-6)	27:1-12 (2-12)
The State of the Godless	27:2-6 (2-6)			
27:7-12 (7-12)	27:7-10 (7-10)	27:7-12 (7-12)	27:7-10 (7-10)	
	27:11-12 (11-12)		27:11-12 (11-12) [Zophar]	Discourse of Zophar, the Fate of the Wicked
27:13-23 (13-23)	27:13-23 (13-23)	27:13-23 (13-23)	27:13-23 (13-23)	27:13-23; 24:18-24 (13-23) (24:18-24)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. As there were scholarly suggestions about who spoke Job 26:5-14, there is the same issue with 27:13-23 (see TEV and NJB outline). AB sees Zophar as speaking from Job 27:8-23 (p. 168).
- B. The third cycle of speeches is incomplete. Bildad's speech is very short (Job 25) and Zophar's third speech is not listed. Why is uncertain.
 1. they had nothing else to say, nothing new to add
 2. the text has been damaged in transmission (i.e., copying)

- C. Job 27:13-23 is another affirmation of “the two ways.” This has been a recurrent theme of Job and his three comforters.

<u>Job</u>	<u>Eliphaz</u>	<u>Bildad</u>	<u>Zophar</u>
	4:7-9,17		
	5:8-27		
12:5-6		8:3-7	
	15:17-35		
		18:5-21	
			20:20-29
	22:4-30		
27:13-23 (?)			

To this chart I would add

1. Job 28 (someone’s discourse on wisdom)
2. Elihu in Job 33:23-28; 34:10-12
3. also note “the two ways” is affirmed by God’s actions in Job 42:10-17

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:1-6

¹Then Job continued his discourse and said,

²“As God lives, who has taken away my right,
And the Almighty, who has embittered my soul,

³For as long as life is in me,
And the breath of God is in my nostrils,

⁴My lips certainly will not speak unjustly,
Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.

⁵Far be it from me that I should declare you right;
Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

⁶I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go.
My heart does not reproach any of my days.”

27:1 The UBS *Handbook* (p. 481) makes a good comment about the presence of “Job” again in Job 27:1, when he is named in 26:1 (i.e., Job 26 and 27 comprise one literary unit). Usually the speaker is not named until a new one starts. The presence of a second mentioning of Job (only here) seems to imply a disruption in the text.

▣ **“discourse”** This NOUN (BDB 605) normally refers to a proverb or parable but in this context it refers to an expression of wisdom teaching (cf. Job 13:12; 27:1; 29:1). NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 1135, lists several possible meanings in prophetic contexts,

1. oracle
2. prophecy
3. discourse
4. parable
5. taunt

but I think “the teaching of the sages” (p. 1134) fits better (cf. 1 Kgs. 4:32; Pro. 1:6; 26:7,9; Eccl. 12:9).

27:2 “God. . .Almighty” Notice *El* (BDB 42, see Special Topic: Names for Deity) and *Shaddai* (BDB 994) are parallel. Also note Job 27:9-10,11,13. See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*). These are the titles/names Job uses for Deity.

▣ **“As God lives”** This is a curse/oath formula of later Israel. It is a play on YHWH’s name from the VERB “to be.” This is another textual evidence that the author was a later Judean scribe/sage. See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D. (YHWH).

▣ Notice how Job characterizes God.

1. who has taken away my right (i.e., legal right of defense, BDB 1048)
2. who has embittered my soul (cf. Job 7:11; 10:1)

It is surprising that Job swears by the God whom he feels has wronged him!

27:3 “life. . .breath” These are two different words but they convey the same thought.

1. life – BDB 675
 - a. used of God in Job 4:9; 32:8
 - b. used of man in Gen. 2:7
 - c. parallel in Job 33:4; 34:14
2. breath – BDB 924, *ruah* can mean “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit,” cf. Job 15:30; see Special Topic: Breath, Wind, Spirit (OT)

Notice it is the “spirit of *Eloah*,” a different name from Job 27:2, *El*, but a form of it (BDB 42).

The concept that the breath of God, given in Gen. 2:7, is the life-giving force that sustains life is common in Job (cf. Job 27:3; 33:4; 34:14-15; also note Ps. 104:29-30).

27:4-6 Job compares his integrity to his three comforters’.

1. his lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Job 27:4a
2. his tongue will not mutter deceit, Job 27:4b
3. far be it from me to declare them right, Job 27:5a
4. he will not put away his integrity, Job 27:5b
5. he will hold fast his righteousness, Job 27:6a
6. he does not regret any part of his life, Job 27:6b (i.e., no knowledge of sin)

The implication is that his three comforters (PLURAL “you,” Job 27:5) have acted and spoken unjustly.

Job’s integrity is based on his adult lifestyle (not his youth). There is ambiguity in the book as to the question of Job’s sin.

Job admits	Job asserts	Job asserts
<u>some sin</u>	<u>all sin</u>	<u>he did not sin</u>
6:2-3	5:7	6:10
7:20-21	Eliphaz in	7:20
12:4	4:17-20	9:20-21
13:14-15,23	15:14-15	10:6-7,14
14:17		27:1-6
19:4		29:11-20
		32:1
		33:8-12
		34:5

Job does not claim to be completely innocent, but that the severity of God’s judgment does not fit his life!

27:4 The interpretive issue about Job 27:4 is, “Is this verse is a positive statement or negative?” Is it an affirmation of Job’s trust in God, even though he feels wronged or is it a rejection of his three comforters’ words?

If Job 27 is Job’s conclusion to the dialogues then it probably is an expression of trust. Job claims he has not spoken negatively about God. However, this does not fit his statements accusing God of unfairness and injustice. I think it refers to the three friends trying to get him to admit to secret sins which caused (i.e., the theology of “the two ways”) his current situation. Beginning in Job 27:5 he surely addresses his three comforters (i.e., Job 27:5-12).

27:5 “right” This same root (BDB 842) is used in Job 27:6, “righteousness” (NOUN). See Special Topic: Righteousness.

27:6 “heart” See Special Topic: Heart.

▣ **“reproach”** This VERB (BDB 357, KB 355, *Qal* IMPERFECT) has a wide semantical field. JPSOA, in a footnote, says, “meaning of Hebrew uncertain.” NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 280, lists possible translations of the *Qal* as

1. taunt
2. mock
3. scorn
4. scoff
5. spurn
6. revile

Job does not look back on his life of faith with any regrets.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:7-12

- ⁷“May my enemy be as the wicked
And my opponent as the unjust.
⁸For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off,
When God requires his life?
⁹Will God hear his cry
When distress comes upon him?
¹⁰Will he take delight in the Almighty?
Will he call on God at all times?
¹¹“I will instruct you in the power of God;
What is with the Almighty I will not conceal.
¹²Behold, all of you have seen *it*;
Why then do you act foolishly?”

27:7-12 Job addresses (“Let. . .,” a JUSSIVE denoting a curse), all three of his comforters (cf. “you,” PLURAL, Job 27:5,11,12). He feels they have attacked him unfairly. If they want “the two ways” to work with no exceptions, Job hopes they receive what they deserve for their treatment of him.

He calls his comforters

1. my enemy, Job 27:7a
2. he who rises against me, Job 27:7b (MT)
3. the godless, Job 27:8a
4. you who speak vanity, Job 27:12b (MT)

Notice the questions

1. what is the hope of the godless when God requires his life, Job 27:8
2. will God hear the cry of the godless when distress comes upon him, Job 27:9
3. will the ungodly take delight in God at all times, Job 27:10
4. why do you speak emptiness in light of Job's words, Job 27:12

Curses were common literary hyperbole in the ANE. Modern western readers, who are often literalists, misunderstand this genre. Overstatements are part of the flamboyance. The book that has helped me to see this is D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*.

27:8

NASB, REB	“when he is cut off”
NKJV	“though he may gain much”
NRSV	“when God cuts them off”
TEV, Peshitta	“when God demands their life”
NJB	“when he prays”
JPSOA	“when he is cut down”
LXX	“that he hangs on”

This VERB (BDB 1017 II, KB 1503, *Qal* JUSSIVE) is found only here in the entire OT. Its meaning is uncertain, as you can tell from the variety of translations. BDB has “draw out,” “extract.” KB lists several different roots (i.e., 5), all with different meanings. The best way to deal with this variety is to see Job 27:8a as a parallel to 27:8b (NRSV, TEV).

27:11 “power of God” This is literally “hand of God.” See Special Topic: Hand.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **“I will not conceal”** This VERB (BDB 470, KB 469, *Piel* IMPERFECT) means “to hide.” It is ironic that Job will not hide/conceal the truth of a God who has “hidden” Himself from Job. Job speaks truly about God but his three comforters speak falsely (i.e., in vain) about God (cf. Job 27:12b).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:13-23

- ¹³“This is the portion of a wicked man from God,
And the inheritance *which* tyrants receive from the Almighty.
¹⁴Though his sons are many, they are destined for the sword;
And his descendants will not be satisfied with bread.
¹⁵His survivors will be buried because of the plague,
And their widows will not be able to weep.
¹⁶Though he piles up silver like dust
And prepares garments as *plentiful as* the clay,
¹⁷He may prepare *it*, but the just will wear *it*
And the innocent will divide the silver.
¹⁸He has built his house like the spider's web,
Or as a hut *which* the watchman has made.
¹⁹He lies down rich, but never again;
He opens his eyes, and it is no longer.
²⁰Terrors overtake him like a flood;

A tempest steals him away in the night.

²¹**The east wind carries him away, and he is gone,**

For it whirls him away from his place.

²²**For it will hurl at him without sparing;**

He will surely try to flee from its power.

²³**Men will clap their hands at him**

And will hiss him from his place.”

27:13-23 This is one of many graphic descriptions of the plight of the sinner. See Contextual Insights, C. Notice the names used to describe the sinner.

1. wicked – BDB 957
2. tyrant – BDB 792, lit. “oppressors”

Note the list of the consequences of wickedness (remember that this is Edom and historically prior to the writings of Moses, so how God’s will was communicated to them is uncertain).

1. children will die a violent death, Job 27:14a
2. descendants will be poor, Job 27:14b
3. survivors will die of the plague, Job 27:15a (i.e., death is personified)
4. his widows (or the widows of his descendants) will be so grieved they cannot weep, Job 27:15b (i.e., improper burial)
5. others will take his wealth, Job 27:16-17
6. his “house” is built poorly and weakly (i.e., “watchman’s hut” was a lean-to type, flimsy structure used during the fall harvest), Job 27:18
7. his wealth does not help his family (see separate note for this uncertain verse), Job 27:19
8. terrors overtake him like a flood, Job 27:20a
9. tempest steals him away in the night (i.e., wadi floods and washes away the camp site), Job 27:20b
10. he is destroyed by the east wind, Job 27:21-22 (this is the personified subject of Job 27:21-23)
11. the wind will clap its hands at his demise, Job 27:23a (Tremper Longman III, *Job* [p. 320] thinks Job 27:23 describes God’s actions)
12. the wind will hiss at him, Job 27:23b; AB (p. 173) thinks the subject of Job 27:23 should not be “men” (italics) but the “east wind” of Job 27:21. If so, the imagery personifies the “east wind” (i.e., God’s act of judgment, cf. Job 1:19). JPSOA, REB, and TEV all translate the verses as if they refer to the “wind.”

27:13 “the Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

27:15 One of my favorite books on Israelite culture and ritual is by Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*. On pages 58 and 287 he mentions a text from Qumran of Isa. 53:9, which may affect the translation of Job 27:15 by changing the vowels only. It would change “death” (BDB 560) into “high place” (BDB 119) as a place of burial. The new translation would be “those who survive them will be buried in ‘*bamoth*,’ and their widows will shed no tears for them.” This helps Job 27:15 to parallel 27:14.

27:17 “the just” This ADJECTIVE (BDB 843) is used several times to describe faithful followers.

1. Job 9:15 – right (NASB)
2. Job 9:20; 22:19; 34:5 – righteous (NASB)

It is parallel to “innocent” (BDB 667). Job claimed to be one of this group.

27:18

NASB, TEV,

NJB “like the spider’s web”

NKJV “like a moth”

NRSV “like nests”

JPSOA, REB “like a bird’s nest”

The MT has “moth” (BDB 799 II). It was used earlier in Job 4:19 to describe the frailty of humanity. The LXX combines NKJV and NASB but omits the phrase about “a watchman’s hut.” NASB, TEV, and NJB get “spider’s web” from the phrase in the LXX.

It was interesting to me that *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 973, mentions that the words for “moth” and Arabic “night watchman” are very similar. Maybe this is where the LXX got “watchman’s hut.”

27:19 The Hebrew is ambiguous. The JPSOA translates the two lines of poetry as

“He lies down, a rich man, with [his wealth] intact;

When he opens his eyes it is gone.”

The MT has “he shall not be gathered,” which may refer to being properly buried in his family tomb. But this does not fit this verse well, though it could fit Job 27:15.

27:22b “He will surely try to flee” This is an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root (BDB 137, KB 156), which was a Hebrew grammatical form to denote intensity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How can Job swear by the God who has (in his estimation) treated him unfairly?
2. How does the phrase “God lives” reflect authorship?
3. Who is Job addressing in Job 27:5?
4. Who is “the enemy” in Job 27:7?
5. Who or what is the subject of Job 27:22-23?
6. Why do the TEV and NJB assign part of this chapter to Zophar?

JOB 28

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Tells of Earth's Treasures	Job's Discourse on Wisdom	Hymn On the Inaccessibility of Wisdom	In Praise of Wisdom	Wisdom is Beyond Human Reach
28:1-11 (1-11)	28:1-19 (1-19)	28:1-6 (1-6)	28:1-8 (1-8)	28:1-12 (1-12)
		28:7-8 (7-8)		
The Search for Wisdom Is Harder		28:9-11 (9-11)	28:9-12 (9-12)	
28:12-22 (12-22)		28:12-19 (12-19)		
			28:13-19 (13-19)	28:13-20 (13-20)
	28:20-28 (20-28)	28:20-22 (20-22)	28:20-22 (20-22)	
				28:21-28 (21-28)
28:23-28 (23-28)		28:23-28 (23-28)	28:23-27 (23-27)	
			28:28 (28)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Notice there is no identification of the speaker (and no allusions to the three comforters). It does not seem logically to connect to Job 27 (i.e., it uses a CONJUNCTION [BDB 471] that does not make a logical or grammatical connection with Job 27). It seems to foreshadow God's response to Job that occurs in Job 38:1-41:3a.

- B. This is often called
1. an interlude
 2. a transition
 3. a bridge
- C. I assume the author of the book of Job is a Judean sage (i.e., the vocabulary and imagery are similar to the speeches of Job 3-27. If so, this would be perhaps an editorial comment on a main theme (i.e., #3 below) of the entire book. I think the themes are
1. the fairness or justice of God in His dealings with humans
 2. the reality of the innocent suffering, which is surprising in light of “the two ways”
 3. where is true wisdom found; how does one attain it
- D. Notice the “precious” (Job 28:10b) things listed in this chapter.
1. silver (BDB 494)
 2. gold (BDB 262)
 3. iron (BDB 137)
 4. copper (BDB 639)
 5. rock (lit., “ore,” BDB 6)
 6. “as fire” (gem stone)
 7. sapphires (BDB 705)
 8. gold of Ophir (BDB 508 CONSTRUCT BDB 20)
 9. precious onyx (BDB 995 I)
 10. glass (BDB 269)
 11. coral (BDB 910)
 12. crystal (BDB 150)
 13. pearls (BDB 819)
 14. topaz (BDB 809)
 15. pure gold (BDB 508 and BDB 373)
- This is like a summary of all valuable metals and jewels of the ANE. The things humans treasure most are worthless in buying or obtaining wisdom. Human effort cannot find it, buy it, or obtain it (cf. Job 28:18b)!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:1-11

- ¹“Surely there is a mine for silver
And a place where they refine gold.
- ²Iron is taken from the dust,
And copper is smelted from rock.
- ³*Man* puts an end to darkness,
And to the farthest limit he searches out
The rock in gloom and deep shadow.
- ⁴He sinks a shaft far from habitation,
Forgotten by the foot;
They hang and swing to and fro far from men.
- ⁵The earth, from it comes food,
And underneath it is turned up as fire.

⁶Its rocks are the source of sapphires,
And its dust *contains* gold.
⁷The path no bird of prey knows,
Nor has the falcon's eye caught sight of it.
⁸The proud beasts have not trodden it,
Nor has the *fierce* lion passed over it.
⁹He puts his hand on the flint;
He overturns the mountains at the base.
¹⁰He hews out channels through the rocks,
And his eye sees anything precious.
¹¹He dams up the streams from flowing,
And what is hidden he brings out to the light."

28:1-11 This paragraph answers the question stated in Job 28:12,20, "where can wisdom be found?"

The first point is "it cannot be found with the 'precious' things (jewels, metals) in the earth." Men mine the earth, even in difficult and remote places, but wisdom is not found here.

The second point is that no animals (i.e., birds, beasts) know where it is either (cf. Job 28:7-8,21).

This outline could be continued

1. in Job 28:13,21a, where mankind does not know
2. in Job 28:14a, where "the deep" (personified) does not know
3. in Job 28:14b, where the Sea (*Yam*) does not know
4. in Job 28:22, where neither "*Abaddon*" nor "death" (personified) knows where wisdom is to be found

Job does not know nor do his three friends, though they all think they do!

Only God (Job 28:23-27) knows!

28:3 This verse refers to manmade lighting in mines.

28:4 This must refer to the valuable jewels or ore high up on the sides of the gorge or cliff side. Line 4c is very hard to interpret. Its imagery has been lost unless it refers to human miners being suspended by ropes, ladders, platforms, baskets so as to take jewels and ore from the side of deep gorges or cliffs (AB, p. 179).

It is surely possible that this refers to lowering people into the mine shaft (NET Bible, p. 821).

28:5 The mention of fire could have several meanings.

1. it refers to a bright, shiny jewel
2. it refers to a method of cracking the rock layers
3. it is some allusion to volcanic activity as the source of gems and ore

28:7-8 I think the UBS *Handbook* (p. 497) is correct in seeing these verses as referring to the secret path to the mines. Secret so no other humans can find the mine. This may parallel Job 28:4.

It is possible that it refers to the fact that people/animals walking on the surface of the earth have no idea of what is occurring underground in a mine.

It is also possible that Job 28:7-8 highlights the fact that humans explore beneath the earth's surface but animals do not. So, God's most cerebral creatures have some advantages but, like animals, can still not know/find wisdom..

28:10

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, JPSOA “channels”

TEV “tunnels”

NJB “canals”

REV “galleries”

LXX “whirlpools”

Peshitta “divides the rivers”

This NOUN (BDB 384) basically means “stream” or “a channel cut by a river” (i.e., the Nile, cf. Exod. 1:22; 2:3 or Tigris, cf. Dan. 12:5). It can be used of

1. wells
2. mining shafts (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 48)

28:11a This could refer not to rivers but mythologically to “the watery deeps” (i.e., the abode of the gods), another allusion to inaccessible places.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:12-22

¹²**“But where can wisdom be found?**

And where is the place of understanding?

¹³**Man does not know its value,**

Nor is it found in the land of the living.

¹⁴**The deep says, ‘It is not in me’;**

And the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’

¹⁵**Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it,**

Nor can silver be weighed as its price.

¹⁶**It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,**

In precious onyx, or sapphire.

¹⁷**Gold or glass cannot equal it,**

Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold.

¹⁸**Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned;**

And the acquisition of wisdom is above *that of* pearls.

¹⁹**The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,**

Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

²⁰**Where then does wisdom come from?**

And where is the place of understanding?

²¹**Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living**

And concealed from the birds of the sky.

²²**Abaddon and Death say,**

‘With our ears we have heard a report of it.’”

28:12 This question (which is the key to Job 28) is repeated in Job 28:20.

28:13a This line of poetry has been translated two ways.

1. ערכה, BDB 789 – its value or price (MT, JPSOA)
2. דרכה, BDB 202 – its way or place (NRSV, NJB, REB, following the LXX)

The UBS Text Project (p. 89) gives four suggestions.

1. its price or value
2. its equal
3. its residence or home (Ugaritic)
4. its level or station

It gives the MT “price” a “C” (considerable doubt) rating. Dahood’s studies in Ugaritic have demonstrated that the Semitic root, ערך, can mean “house” or “abode” (see [1] Mitchell Dahood, *Hebrew Ugaritic Lexicography VII*, p. 255 and [2] NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 535). This forms a much better parallelism in Job 28:12-14.

28:13b The point is that wisdom cannot be found

1. by living humans, even with all their ingenuity and energy (i.e., Job 28:1-11)
2. by the primeval mythological powers (i.e., the Deep, the Sea, cf. Job 28:14)
3. by Abaddon and Death, Job 28:22

This is poetry, not prose. Do not push a contradiction between Job 28:13b and 28:28. They are addressing two different kinds of wisdom.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:23-28

²³“God understands its way,

And He knows its place.

²⁴For He looks to the ends of the earth

And sees everything under the heavens.

²⁵When He imparted weight to the wind

And meted out the waters by measure,

²⁶When He set a limit for the rain

And a course for the thunderbolt,

²⁷Then He saw it and declared it;

He established it and also searched it out.

²⁸And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;

And to depart from evil is understanding.’”

28:23-27 Only God “understands” (BDB 106, KB 122, *Hiphil* PERFECT) and “knows” (BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* PERFECT) wisdom. He is the God of creation (Job 28:24-26). He and He alone

1. saw it (i.e., wisdom)
2. declared it
3. established it
4. searched it out

This reflects the poetic truth of the creation of wisdom in Pro. 8:22-31.

28:24 This verse speaks of the omniscience of God (cf. Ps. 33:13-14; 66:7; 102:19; 104:32; Pro. 15:3; Heb. 4:13). The Creator knows

1. His physical creation
2. His human creation

28:28 Although wisdom cannot be found or purchased by humans, God has revealed Himself. Therefore,

1. the fear of the Lord (*Adon*) is wisdom (Ps. 111:10; Pro. 1:7; 9:10); the title *Adon* is used only here in the book; it is another textual hint of a Judean sage

2. the reception of wisdom results in a moral transformation; truth and life are joined inseparably (cf. Job 1:1,8; 2:3)

It should be noted that a knowledge of God in all His creative power and purpose (i.e., “the wisdom,” Job 28:12,20) cannot be known by human creatures (cf. Deut. 29:29), but we were created for fellowship (cf. Gen. 1:26; 3:8) and we can know something of God (“wisdom” but with no ARTICLE), enough to trust Him and obey Him!

▣ **“fear”** See Special Topic: Fear.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Who is the author of Job 28?
2. What is the purpose of Job 28:1-11?
3. Define OT “wisdom.”
4. Why are Job 28:12 and 20 the theological key to the chapter?
5. How is Job 28:28 different from the other verses of this chapter?
6. Define OT “fear.”

JOB 29

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job's Past Was Glorious	Job's Summary Defense (29:1-31:40)	The Final Defense of Job (29:1-31:40)	Job's Final Statement of His Case (29:1-31:40)	Job's Complaints and Apologia; His former Happiness
29:1-20 (1-20)	29:1	29:1-20 (2-20)	29:1-10 (2-10)	29:1
	29:2-6 (2-6)			29:2-10; 29:21-25 (2-10; 21-25)
	29:7-17 (7-17)			
			29:11-17 (11-17)	29:11-20 (11-20)
	29:18-20 (18-20)		29:18-25 (18-25)	
29:21-25 (21-25)	29:21-25 (21-25)	29:21-25 (21-25)		text moved up

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. A brief outline of this section of Job.
 1. Job 27 is Job's last reply of the third cycle of speeches by his three comforters (Job 3-27).
 2. Job 28 is a separate monologue on wisdom (possibly by the author/editor).
 3. Job 29-31 form a literary unit (i.e., a soliloquy of Job).
 - a. Job 29 deals with Job's happy past
 - b. Job 30 deals with the discouraging present
 - c. Job 31 is the concluding legal claim of innocence

- B. Job 29-31 is an amplification of Job 28:28. It is one of our best examples of ANE ethics in Job's day (faith and life must not be separated).
- C. Job describes how God was with him.
1. God watched over me, Job 29:2b
 2. God's lamp shone over my head, Job 29:3a
 3. God's light was with him, Job 29:3b
 4. he had God's counsel, Job 28:4b
 5. the Almighty was with me, Job 29:5a
- Remember, in the ANE, honor was an important aspect of happiness. Shame was the most feared condition. Job knew both well!
- D. Job remembers the good things of his past life.
1. God was with him (see C)
 2. his children were around him, Job 29:5b
 3. he was prosperous, Job 29:6
 4. he was a well respected leader of his community, Job 29:7-11,18-20,21-25
- E. Job lists the people he helped.
1. delivered the poor, Job 29:12a
 2. delivered the orphan, Job 29:12b
 3. blessed the one about to perish, Job 29:13a
 4. blessed the widow, Job 29:13b
 5. helped the blind, Job 29:15a
 6. helped the lame, Job 29:15b
 7. helped the needy, Job 29:16a
 8. was a legal advocate for the stranger, Job 29:16b
 9. defended against the attacks of the wicked, Job 29:17
 10. comforted mourners, Job 29:25c

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:1-20

¹And Job again took up his discourse and said,

²“Oh that I were as in months gone by,

As in the days when God watched over me;

³When His lamp shone over my head,

And by His light I walked through darkness;

⁴As I was in the prime of my days,

When the friendship of God *was* over my tent;

⁵When the Almighty was yet with me,

And my children were around me;

⁶When my steps were bathed in butter,

And the rock poured out for me streams of oil!

⁷When I went out to the gate of the city,

When I took my seat in the square,

⁸The young men saw me and hid themselves,

And the old men arose *and* stood.
⁹The princes stopped talking
 And put *their* hands on their mouths;
¹⁰The voice of the nobles was hushed,
 And their tongue stuck to their palate.
¹¹For when the ear heard, it called me blessed,
 And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me,
¹²Because I delivered the poor who cried for help,
 And the orphan who had no helper.
¹³The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me,
 And I made the widow's heart sing for joy.
¹⁴I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
 My justice was like a robe and a turban.
¹⁵I was eyes to the blind
 And feet to the lame.
¹⁶I was a father to the needy,
 And I investigated the case which I did not know.
¹⁷I broke the jaws of the wicked
 And snatched the prey from his teeth.
¹⁸Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest,
 And I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.
¹⁹'My root is spread out to the waters,
 And dew lies all night on my branch.
²⁰My glory is *ever* new with me,
 And my bow is renewed in my hand.'"

29:2 "Oh that I were as in months gone by" Job 29 describes the "good old days" when Job lived in righteousness and prosperity. This is contrasted with Job 30:1,9,16, where the phrase "but now" is used to describe Job's current condition.

▣ **"As in the days when God watched over me"** Job 29:2b through 17 describes God's blessing and protection over Job.

29:3 "His lamp shone over my head" See Ps. 18:28; 36:9; 97:11; 112:4.

▣ **"by His light I walked through darkness"** There were days of problems but God was with him (cf. Job 22:28; Ps. 23:4; 119:105; Isa. 50:10; Micah 7:8).

29:4 "As I was in the prime of my days" This is literally "days of autumn" (BDB 398 CONSTRUCT BDB 358). This refers to the days of youthful activity (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 279,285).

▣
 NASB, NRSV,
 TEV "friendship of God"
 NKJV "counsel of God"

NJB, REB “God protected”
Peshitta “in favor”
JPSOA “God’s company”
Emphasized Bible “the intimacy of God”

The MT has BDB 691 CONSTRUCT BDB 42, which meant

1. close friends, Job 19:15
2. secret counsel of God, Job 15:8; Jer. 23:18,22
3. assembly, Ps. 55:14; 111:1
4. intimacy, Pro. 3:32b (this connotation is BDB’s suggestion)

The idea of protection comes from the LXX, which involves a change in one consonant. UBS Text Project, p. 91, gives “counsel” a “B” rating (some doubt).

▣ **“over my tent”** Job lived in a house but this is an ancient idiom for God’s protection during times of nomadic life (i.e., 2000 B.C. Job had large flocks and herds, like Abraham). The tent was fragile but God’s presence was strong!

29:5 “the Almighty” This is from the Hebrew name *Shaddai* (BDB 994). See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **“was yet with me”** There is no greater blessing. Job keenly felt the loss of this fellowship. For him now, God was hidden and unavailable!

29:6 “steps” This NOUN (BDB 237) occurs only here. The translation comes from a similar NOUN root, “traveler” or the common VERB, “to walk” (BDB 229).

▣ **“bathed in butter . . . streams of oil”** These are metaphors of prosperity, the positive aspects of “the two ways.”

▣ **“butter”** The MT has “wrath” (BDB 328), a form found only here. It does not fit the context so most translations (and a few Hebrew MSS) emend it to “curds” (BDB 326).

1. בחמה – wrath
2. בחמאה – curds

29:7 “the gate of the city. . . took my seat in the square” This was the place of justice and social life (cf. Gen. 23:10; Ruth 4:1-12; Pro. 24:7; 31:23). Apparently Job was one of the elders of his city and possibly the chief administrator of justice (cf. Job 29:16b).

29:8 This speaks of the respect the people of all ages had for Job. The NASB’s “hid” is best understood as RSV’s “withdrew” or TEV’s “stepped aside.”

29:11 “blessed” See note on BDB 80 at Ps. 1:1, which is a classic passage on “the two ways.”

The other common term for “blessings” (BDB 139) occurs in Job 29:13. See Special Topic: Blessing (OT).

29:12-17 This is a list by Job of the evidences of his righteousness.

1. delivered the poor
2. helped the orphan
3. helped the one ready to perish (Job 29:13)
4. helped the widow

5. helped the blind (Job 29:15)
6. helped the crippled
7. helped the needy (Job 29:16)
8. gave justice to the stranger (Job 29:16,17)

This list of good deeds is probably related to Eliphaz's charges in Job 22:6-9. Job makes this claim of righteous actions and motives again in Job 30:25.

29:14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” This is literally “righteousness clothed me” (as did justice). Clothing was often used as a metaphor for spiritual characteristics (cf. Job 19:9; Ps. 132:9,16,18; Isa. 59:17; Eph. 4:22,24,25,31; Col. 3:8,10,12,14).

29:15 “the blind. . .the lame” These needy citizens were often linked in Moses' writings (cf. Lev. 21:18; Deut. 15:21). Their link here is another textual hint that the author/editor is a Judean court sage.

29:17 Those who attack and take advantage of the needy and powerless of society are characterized as “wild animals.”

29:18 “I shall die in my nest” Job expected the blessings of God because of his righteous life (i.e., “the two ways”). And herein lies the problem of the suffering of the righteous.

The term “nest” can be interpreted three ways: (1) his home (UBS Text Project); (2) his children (Moffatt translation); or (3) old age (LXX).



NASB, NKJV,

NJB, REB,

Peshitta “as the sand”

NRSV, JPSOA “like the phoenix”

TEV “live a long life”

LXX “a palm tree (phoenix)”

The MT has “sand” but nowhere else in the OT does it refer to a long life. It could refer to many descendants (Job 29:5b,18a). The LXX translated the word by the name of a palm tree (possibly because of the tree imagery in Job 29:19), which is similar to the name of the famous bird (phoenix) that rose from the ashes to live a long life (a rabbinical suggestion, cf. NRSV, JPSOA). However, it is uncertain if this Greek or Egyptian myth was known to the author of Job. The myth has been found (by Albright, see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 48) in the Ras Shamra texts (Ugarit, poetic legends/mythology of *Ba'al*).

29:20 These are symbols of strength and energy.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:21-25

²¹**“To me they listened and waited,**

And kept silent for my counsel.

²²**After my words they did not speak again,**

And my speech dropped on them.

²³**They waited for me as for the rain,**

And opened their mouth as for the spring rain.

²⁴**I smiled on them when they did not believe,**

And the light of my face they did not cast down.

²⁵**I chose a way for them and sat as chief,
And dwelt as a king among the troops,
As one who comforted the mourners.”**

29:22b-23 This imagery is also seen in Deut. 32:2. For Job 29:23b see Ps. 119:131.

29:24 The Hebrew is uncertain (see footnote in JPSOA). JPSOA is a good guess:

“When I smiled at them, they would not believe it;
They never expected a sign of my favor.”

29:25a,b “I chose a way for them” This phrase could possibly be translated, “I was chosen as their governor” (cf. Andersen, *OT Tyndale Series*, published by InterVarsity Press, p. 234). It could also be taken as a summary of Job’s respect expressed in royal imagery. As the King in the ANE was to preserve justice, so too, local leaders.

29:25c This is irony, in light of the actions of Job’s three comforters! Their good intentions quickly changed to accusations of hidden sins.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How is Job 29 related to Job 30 and 31?
2. Was Job a city leader?
3. How was “righteousness” defined in the ANE?
4. Explain the sadness of Job 29:4.

JOB 30

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job's Present State Is Humiliating	Job's Summary Defense (29:1-31:40)	The Final Defense of Job (29:1-31:40)	Job's Final Statement of His Case (29:2-31:40)	Job's Complaints and Apologia: His Present Misery
30:1-8 (1-8)	30:1-8 (1-8)	30:1-8 (1-8)	30:1-8 (1-8)	30:1-15 (1-15)
30:9-15 (9-15)	30:9-15 (9-15)	30:9-15 (9-15)	30:9-15 (9-15)	
30:16-23 (16-23)	30:16-19 (16-19)	30:16-23 (16-23)	30:16-19 (16-19)	30:16-19 (16-19)
	30:20-23 (20-23)		30:20-31 (20-31)	30:20-23 (20-23)
30:24-31 (24-31)	30:24-31 (24-31)	30:24-31 (24-31)		30:24-31 (24-31)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. In Job 29, Job describes his blessed past.
- B. In Job 30, Job laments his current conditions (note, "but now," in Job 30:1,9,16).
 1. disdained by the poor, ostracized, and needy, Job 30:1-8, \9-16 (DSS of Job has PLURALS in Job 30:16-23)
 2. attacked by God, Job 30:11a,16-23
 3. abandoned by all (without cause, Job 30:25-26) in his time of need, Job 30:24-31
 Please remember this is hyperbolic, rare, Semitic poetry. Moderns do not fully understand the words nor the imagery.

- C. There are several difficult and uncertain textual aspects to this chapter. For more information see *Preliminary and Interim Report On the Hebrew Old Testament Text*, vol. 3, pp. 92-101.

There are also many *hapax legomena* and rare Hebrew roots. I have tried to discuss several of these lexical difficulties in my notes.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:1-8

- ¹**“But now those younger than I mock me,
Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.**
- ²**Indeed, what *good* was the strength of their hands to me?
Vigor had perished from them.**
- ³**From want and famine they are gaunt
Who gnaw the dry ground by night in waste and desolation,**
- ⁴**Who pluck mallow by the bushes,
And whose food is the root of the broom shrub.**
- ⁵**They are driven from the community;
They shout against them as *against* a thief,**
- ⁶**So that they dwell in dreadful valleys,
In holes of the earth and of the rocks.**
- ⁷**Among the bushes they cry out;
Under the nettles they are gathered together.**
- ⁸**Fools, even those without a name,
They were scourged from the land.”**

30:1-8 Job describes his mockers.

1. the young, Job 30:1a (opposite of 29:8)
2. the weak, Job 30:1b-2
3. the hungry, Job 30:3-7
4. the nameless and rejected, Job 30:8

Notice the number of plants listed in this strophe.

1. mallow, Job 30:4 – BDB 572, found only here in the OT; the UBS’ *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, pp. 136-137 thinks the root is related to “salt” (BDB 571) and refers to a saltwort that grows in the Dead Sea region in the land of Uz, Job’s home area. The buds and leaves were food for the poor.
2. broom shrub, Job 30:4 – BDB 958, found three times in the OT. The UBS’ *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, pp. 100-101, says it also goes by the name “rothem” (from Arabic root). It is a desert plant usually used to make charcoal, not eaten.
3. nettles, Job 30:7 – BDB 355 calls it a “chick-pea.” The UBS’ *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, p. 152, calls it a desert shrub, possibly a thorn bush.

The purpose of listing these desert plants is to show the alienation (Job 30:8b) and desperate poverty (30:3) of Job’s assailants.

30:1b This may be a proverbial saying of contempt or lack of respect. Dogs were considered dirty, undesirable animals. However, sheep dogs were valued helpers. They taunt Job; he taunts them!

30:2 “vigor” This NOUN (BDB 480) occurs only here and in Job 5:26. The usage in 5:26 and the parallelism here suggest “life force strength” (i.e., Moses in Deut. 31:2, but not the same word).

30:3 The desperation of their hunger is shown by their eating the roots of desert plants that are normally not consumed by humans (NEB, REB).

The Aramaic Targum translates the VERB “gnaw” (BDB 792, KB 888, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE). It is found only in this chapter, twice, in all the OT, as a similar root “to go” or “to flee” (i.e., they fled to the waste land, i.e., NRSV).

It is also possible, along with NRSV, to see the broom shrub as the fuel for their cooking fires. Desert people used the root of these kinds of desert plants for this purpose. Job 30:7b may be another allusion to their attempt to keep warm.



NASB, NKJV,

REB “gaunt”

NRSV “hard hunger”

NJB “worn out”

JPSOA “wasted”

LXX “he was childless”

The MT has the ADJECTIVE (BDB 166) which means “hard” (cf. NRSV) or “barren” (cf. LXX). It usually refers to a barren land. Possibly it is a play on “they are barren in a barren land.”



NASB, TEV “by night”

NKJV “fleeing late”

NRSV, REB,
Peshitta -----

NJB “place of gloom”

JPSOA “to the gloom”

MT, LXX “yesterday”

The Hebrew has “yesterday” (BDB 57), but the lexicons admit they do not know the meaning of this term, especially in this context (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 449-450).

1. BDB 57 –
 - a. yesterday
 - b. evening
 - c. night
 - d. last night
 - e. darkness, gloom
2. KB 68 –
 - a. twilight
 - b. yesterday
 - c. evening
 - d. tomorrow
 - e. last night

It is always good to remember that the uncertain meaning of these rare Semitic roots is clarified by the parallel line of poetry.

30:5 The people who mock Job are themselves the object of ridicule and rejection. The imagery is similar to how modern gypsies are treated (i.e., Job 30:8b) in Europe, North Africa, and South America today.



NASB, NET Bible	“the community”
NKJV	“among <i>men</i> ”
NRSV, JPSOA	“society”
NJB	“human company”
REB	“human society”
LXX, Peshitta	-----

The NOUN (BDB 156 II) is found only here. It seems to come from an Aramaic root meaning “middle” or “midst,” so “they are driven out from the midst of men.”

The NET Bible mentions (p. 825) that the same root means “community” in Phoenician (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 853).

30:8

NASB, NKJV	“scourged from the land”
NRSV	“whipped out of the land”
TEV	“driven out of the land”
NJB	“the very outcasts of society”
JPSOA	“stricken from the earth”
REB	“outcasts from the haunts of men”
LXX	“a reputation quenched from the earth”
Peshitta	“brought lower than the earth”

This VERB (BB 644, KB 697, *Niphal* PERFECT) occurs only here. The ADJECTIVE meaning “stricken” occurs four times. These “sons of fools” and “disreputable ones” were expelled from society. That is exactly how Job felt. He describes his mockers in such despicable and hyperbolic ways. This is how he felt!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:9-15

- ⁹“And now I have become their taunt,
I have even become a byword to them.
- ¹⁰They abhor me *and* stand aloof from me,
And they do not refrain from spitting at my face.
- ¹¹Because He has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me,
They have cast off the bridle before me.
- ¹²On the right hand their brood arises;
They thrust aside my feet and build up against me their ways of destruction.
- ¹³They break up my path,
They profit from my destruction;
No one restrains them.
- ¹⁴As *through* a wide breach they come,
Amid the tempest they roll on.
- ¹⁵Terrors are turned against me;
They pursue my honor as the wind,
And my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.”

30:9-15 The interpretive question is who Job is referring to in this strophe.

1. his tormentors, Job 30:9-10, 11b-15

2. his tormentors (MT, Peshitta, ASV, REB) and God, Job 30:11a, *Qere* reading, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB, JPSOA

Job is being attacked by men (Job 30:1-8) and God (30:18-23). The emotional and physical gyrations are extreme!

30:9 “taunt” The NOUN (BDB 618) is parallel to “byword” (BDB 576). Therefore, though it means “music” or “song,” in this context it means “mocking song” (cf. Ps. 69:12; Lam. 3:14; and a related root in Lam. 3:63).

30:10 Their attitude toward Job can be seen in these words.

1. they abhor me – BDB 1073, KB 1765, *Piel* PERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:26; Job 15:16; 19:19; Isa. 14:19
2. they stand aloof – BDB 934, KB 1221, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Pro. 19:7; Job feared and grieved over God’s apparent absence (Job 30:10). This VERB is used in this sense in Ps. 22:11,19; 35:22; 38:21; 71:12 (also note Ps. 10:1).
3. they do not hesitate to spit in his face – BDB 362, KB 359, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9; Job 17:6; Isa. 50:6; Matt. 26:67 (i.e., visible gesture of contempt and rejection)

Notice even those who experience rejection themselves (i.e., know the unfairness and pain of it) still reject Job!

30:11 This line of poetry has several textual issues (see UBS Text Project, pp. 93-95). I think the NRSV and TEV catch the thought well.

NRSV – “Because God has loosed my bowstring and humbled me,
They have cast off restraint in my presence”

TEV – “Because God has made me weak and helpless,
They turn against me with all their fury”

▣ **“bowstring”** The MT has “cord” (BDB 452 II, KB 452). It can refer to a

1. bow-string (i.e., metaphor for ineffectiveness or defenselessness, KB 452 II)
2. tent-cord (i.e., a metaphor of Job’s terminal disease, cf. Job 4:21; 2 Cor. 5:1)
3. lute-cord (i.e., life force with no rest, KB 452 I); note there is another stringed musical instrument mentioned in Job 30:31

30:12a

NASB	“brood”
NKJV, NRSV	“rabble”
TEV, REB	“mob”
NJB	“their brats”
JPSOA	“striplings”

This NOUN (BDB 827) occurs only here in the OT. BDB translates it “the wretched crowd.” However, the root seems to be linked to “young ones” (BDB 827), so thereby, referring to the children of Job 30:1a.

30:12b This line of poetry is very difficult to understand in this context.

1. The JPSOA has “They put me to flight,
They build their roads for my ruin”
2. NJB has “To see when I have a little peace,
And advance on me with threatening strides”
3. the NET Bible has “They drive me from place to place,
And build up siege ramps against me”

30:13c

NASB, NRSV	“No one restrains them”
NKJV, Peshitta	“They have no helper”
TEV	“There is none to stop them”
NJB	“No one stops them”
JPSOA	“Although it does them no good”

The MT has a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 704, KB 810). The UBS Text Project (p. 96) suggests two translations.

1. “They who have no help at all”
2. “They who have no need of help”

The NASB, NRSV are based on an emendation, “no helper” (לֹא עֹזֵר). UBS Text Project (p. 96) rates “A” (very high probability) to “no restrainer” (לֹא עֹצֵר). This imagery may go back to Job 30:11, “they have cast off the bridle” (BDB 943 I, NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1132).

30:14 This is imagery of a city’s wall being breeched in a battle. The VERBS imply the invaders enter the city as the wall crumbles down around them (i.e., a violent, aggressive, fast-moving attack).

It is possible to see allusions to military campaigns in Job 30:12, 13, and 14. The Hebrew of all three verses is difficult.

30:15a “Terrors” The FEMININE PLURAL NOUN (BDB 117) is personified (cf. Job 18:11,14; 27:20). Here they refer to those who mock Job (i.e., Job 30:1-8,9,10,12,13,14).

30:15b

NASB, NKJV,	
NRSV	“honor”
TEV, JPSOA	“dignity”
NJB	“confidence”
REB	“noble designs”
LXX	“hope”
Peshitta	“paths”

The FEMININE NOUN (BDB 622) is found only thrice in the OT.

1. Job 30:15 – noble standing
2. Isa. 32:8 (twice)
 - a. noble things
 - b. noble plans

The MASCULINE NOUN (BDB 622) is also found in Isa. 32:8 (i.e., “the noble man”). It is also used often of a noble rank in society (cf. 1 Sam. 2:8; Job 12:21; 21:28; 34:18; Ps. 47:9; 83:11; 107:40; 113:8; 118:9; 146:3; Pro. 8:16).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:16-23

¹⁶“And now my soul is poured out within me;

Days of affliction have seized me.

¹⁷At night it pierces my bones within me,

And my gnawing *pains* take no rest.

¹⁸By a great force my garment is distorted;

It binds me about as the collar of my coat.

¹⁹He has cast me into the mire,

And I have become like dust and ashes.

**²⁰I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me;
I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me.**

**²¹You have become cruel to me;
With the might of Your hand You persecute me.**

**²²You lift me up to the wind *and* cause me to ride;
And You dissolve me in a storm.**

**²³For I know that You will bring me to death
And to the house of meeting for all living.”**

30:16-23 This strophe describes how Job feels.

1. His life is poured out (cf. Ps. 42:4).
2. Days of sickness and disease seize him (cf. Job. 30:27).
3. He feels pain at night (i.e., personified).
4. He has no rest from the pain.
5. His skin (lit. “garment,” cf. Job 30:30) is distorted.

All of this has occurred because of the actions of God (cf. Job 19:7-12).

1. the NASB “it” of Job 30:17 could refer to God (MT has no obvious SUBJECT).
2. Job 30:18 also does not have an expressed SUBJECT and may refer to God.
3. God casts him into the mire, Job 30:19.
4. he cries out to God but He does not respond, Job 30:20 (i.e., legal connotations).
5. God is cruel to him, Job 30:21a (cf. Job 16:9).
6. God’s hand persecutes him, Job 30:21b.
7. God casts him to the storm winds, Job 30:22.
8. God will take his life soon, Job 30:23.

30:16 “soul” This is the Hebrew *nephesh* (BDB 659). See full note on the line at Gen. 35:18.

30:17b This line of poetry could refer to

1. the actions of his mockers
2. the action of the worms in his sores (cf. Job 7:5)
3. the terrible feelings he has about his life (i.e., the pain is personified)

30:18 The JPSOA translation has a footnote with this verse that reads, “Meaning of Hebrew is uncertain.” I think it is imagery for Job’s disease (which he saw as sent from God). A possible paraphrase of Job 30:18b is “God has seized me by the neck” (supported by DSS, Qtg Job).

30:19 “mire” This NOUN (BDB 330 I) usually means “cement,” “mortar,” or “clay.” Here it is paralleled with “dust” (BDB 779) and “ashes” (BDB 68). The context implies it means “mud” (TEV, NJB, REB). The JPSOA, following the LXX, has “clay,” which would refer to a place of humiliation.

Because of Job 30:23 and a similar term in Ps. 69:2,14, this may be a euphemism of *Sheol*.

30:20 This verse catches the essence of Job’s spiritual turmoil.

1. God is hidden (see note at Job 30:10, #2)
2. God will not allow Job to present his legal defense of his innocence (cf. Job 19:7)

30:21 “cruel” The rare ADJECTIVE (BDB 470, used four times in the OT) basically means “cruel,” “fierce,” or “deadly poison” (cf. Deut. 32:33). It is surprising that this term would be used of God, but Job has become embittered (cf. Job 13:24; 16:6-9; 19:7-12).

▣ **“hand”** See Special Topic: Hand.

30:22 The imagery is God as

1. a tempest – Job 9:17
2. an east wind – Job 27:21

both metaphors of divine judgment.



NASB	“in a storm”
NKJV	“my success”
NRSV	“in the roar of a storm”
TEV	“in a raging storm”
NJB, REB	“in a tempest”
JPSOA	“my courage melts”

The MT has a FEMININE NOUN (BDB 444), which means the noise of a storm. This root is related to the FEMININE NOUNS in Job 30:3,14.

Some scholars suggest another root (BDB 996), which also means “noise.”

JPSOA takes its translation from the VERB (BDB 556, KB 555, *Polel* IMPERFECT), which means “to soften.” But most English translations see the Arabic root, “to toss about,” as in a storm.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:24-31

²⁴“Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out *his* hand,

Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help?

²⁵Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard?

Was not my soul grieved for the needy?

²⁶When I expected good, then evil came;

When I waited for light, then darkness came.

²⁷I am seething within and cannot relax;

Days of affliction confront me.

²⁸I go about mourning without comfort;

I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out for help.

²⁹I have become a brother to jackals

And a companion of ostriches.

³⁰My skin turns black on me,

And my bones burn with fever.

³¹Therefore my harp is turned to mourning,

And my flute to the sound of those who weep.”

30:24-31 This strophe describes how Job views his own actions and motives and is surprised at the judgment of God.

1. Job wept for the people having a hard life (“him whose day was hard”).
2. Job grieved for the needy.

3. He expected good (i.e., the promised result of “the two ways” for the innocent) but evil (i.e., from God, cf. Deuteronomy 7-30) came.
4. He waited for light (from God) but darkness came.
5. He is seething in mind and body (i.e., “inward parts,” BDB 588).
6. He cannot relax.
7. He mourns (lit. “blackened”) all day.
8. He cries for help to the assembly (i.e., civil or religious) but no help comes (from God nor mankind).
9. He feels ostracized and deserted, like animals in the desert (often these animals refer to the demonic in the OT, cf. Isa. 13:21-22; see Special Topic: The Demonic in the OT). Because of Micah 1:8, this may refer to Job crying out.
10. He experiences the terrible pain of his (God-given) disease.
11. He laments continually.

30:24 This line of poetry is uncertain. It is very hard to translate. It seems to have no meaning in this context.

1. Does it refer to what Job did (i.e., help the poor, NJB, REB)?
2. No one helped Job in his need (NRSV, TEV)
3. Does it refer to an act of God (JPSOA, NKJV, TEV, Peshitta)?
4. Job helping himself (LXX)

30:25 “grieved” This VERB (BDB 723, KB 785, *Qal* PERFECT) occurs only here in the OT. Job claims he has always had pity on the poor and needy (cf. Job 29:12-17; 31:16-23).

30:30

NASB, NJB	“on me”
NKJV, NRSV	“falls from me”
JPSOA	“is peeling off me”
REB	“peels off”
Peshitta	“shrunk upon me”

The MT has “from me,” which some translations take as “peeling off” or “falling off.” Since we do not know what kind of skin disease Job had, it is hard to make these specific conclusions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Job 30 relate to Job 29?
2. What is the literary purpose of Job 30:1-8?
3. Explain why “they” and “he” has caused so much interpretive trouble in Job 30:10-11.
4. Does Job still blame God for his plight?
5. To whom does Job 30:24 refer?
6. How does Job 30:26 relate to “the two ways”?

JOB 31

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job Asserts His Integrity	Job's Summary Statement (29:1-31:40)	The Final Defense of Job (29:1-31:40)	Job's Final Statement of His Case (29:1-31:40)	Job's Apologia
31:1-4 (1-4)	31:1-4 (1-4)	31:1-4 (1-4)	31:1-4 (1-4)	31:1-15,38-40b (1-15)
31:5-8 (5-8)	31:5-8 (5-8)	31:5-8 (5-8)	31:5-8 (5-8)	
31:9-12 (9-12)	31:9-12 (9-12)	31:9-12 (9-12)	31:9-12 (9-12)	
31:13-15 (13-15)	31:13-15 (13-15)	31:13-15 (13-15)	31:13-15 (13-15)	
31:16-23 (16-23)	31:16-23 (16-23)	31:16-23 (16-23)	31:16-18 (16-18)	31:16-23 (16-23)
			31:19-20 (19-20)	
			31:21-23 (21-23)	
31:24-28 (24-28)	31:24-28 (24-28)	31:24-28 (24-28)	31:24-28 (24-28)	31:24-33,34-37 (24-33)
31:29-37 (29-37)	31:29-37 (29-37)	31:29-37 (29-37)	31:29-32 (29-32)	
			31:33-34 (33-34)	(34-37)
			31:35a-c (35a-c)	
			31:35d-37 (35d-37)	
31:38-40b (38-40b)	31:38-40b (38-40b)	31:38-40b (38-40b)	31:38-40b (38-40b)	(38-40b)
31:40c	31:40c	31:40c	31:40c	31:40c

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This chapter is Job's defense against the accusations of secret sins (i.e., a negative oath of innocence). Many of the items may have been specific charges of his family, friends, neighbors, or the three comforters (some spoken, some just imagined).
- B. Job restates "the two ways" theology (i.e., Job. 31:2-3,8,12). If Job has sinned he should be punished. But he has not (i.e., he should be blessed, as before [Job 29]).
- C. The ethics mentioned were aspects of ANE culture (but the care for the poor and powerless are uniquely Mosaic) and may reflect the Mosaic covenant (i.e., social responsibility). I believe that a Judean court sage took the oral historical account of the historical Edomite, Job, and crafted the poetic dialogues and prose introduction and conclusions to encourage and inform the people of God. From time to time (as here) his theological orientation (i.e., Mosaic covenant) shows through.
- D. Here is a list of the things Job denies he ever did. Some of the things are stated negatively and some positively.
 - 1. gaze at a "virgin," Job 31:1b
 - 2. walked with falsehood, Job 31:5a
 - 3. walked after deceit, Job 31:5b
 - 4. walked in God's ways, Job 31:7
 - 5. no "spot" (BDB 548) has stuck to my hands, Job 31:7c
 - 6. another allusion to extramarital sexual sin, Job 31:9
 - 7. treated servants unfairly, Job 31:13
 - 8-10. mistreated or failed to help
 - a. the poor, Job 31:16a
 - b. the widow, Job 31:16b
 - c. the orphan, Job 31:17,21
 - d. the naked, Job 31:19-20
 - 11. put confidence or trust in wealth, Job 31:24-25
 - 12. idolatry, Job 31:26-27
 - 13. rejoiced over the fall of an enemy, Job 31:29-30
 - 14. failed to adequately help his family, Job 31:31
 - 15. failed to help the alien or traveler, Job 31:32
 - 16. mistreated share croppers, Job 31:38-40
- E. Job's curse statements (JUSSIVES, "Let. . ." There are 11 IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense).
 - 1-2. let God weigh me,
let God know my integrity, Job 31:6
 - 3-4. let me sow but another eat,
let my crops be uprooted, Job 31:8
 - 5-6. let my wife grind for another,
let others kneel over her, Job 31:10

- 7-8. let my shoulder be out of joint,
let my arms be broken, Job 31:22
- 9. let the Almighty answer me, Job 31:35
- 10-11. let briars grow,
let stinkweed grow, Job 31:40

F. The writings of John H. Walton have blessed me with insight into the mindset of the ANE. His evaluation of this chapter in *The NIV Application Commentary*, Job, pp. 330-337, is convincing and helpful.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:1-4

¹**“I have made a covenant with my eyes;
How then could I gaze at a virgin?
²And what is the portion of God from above
Or the heritage of the Almighty from on high?
³Is it not calamity to the unjust
And disaster to those who work iniquity?
⁴Does He not see my ways
And number all my steps?”**

31:1 “made a covenant” The VERB (BDB 503, KB 500, *Qal* PERFECT) is literally “to cut,” which probably refers to the animal sacrifice that usually accompanied covenants. It may reflect a curse that if one party breaks the obligation, may they be like the animal. See Special Topic: Covenant.

Here the VERB is used as imagery for a self-willed commitment to moral conduct (i.e., marital fidelity, cf. Job 31:9-12).

Job is using “covenant” as a curse formula (i.e., “If. . .”) to forcibly assert his innocence!

▣ **“with my eyes. . .gaze”** The “eyes” are a window to the soul. The later rabbis asserted that the mind is like a plowed garden, ready for seed. What a person lets in through the eyes and ears, if dwelt on, becomes who they are and will result in actions (cf. Matt. 5:28). Guard your mind!

▣ **“gaze at a virgin”** John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary*, Job, pp. 321-323, makes the case that

1. this VERB in the *Hiphael* never refers to lust
2. “virgin” could refer to another marriage, or more likely, a way of referring to a harem (i.e., wealth, as in Job 31:24-25)

Even if this is correct, Job 31:1 does not seem to fit. If it refers to lust, then you would expect it with the strophe, Job 31:9-12.

Elmer B. Smick, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 992-993, takes “virgin” as a reference to a female fertility goddess.

1. *Maiden Anat* (Ugaritic)
2. *Ashtoreth* (Canaanite, cf. Jdgs. 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 1 Kgs. 11:5,33)
3. “Queen of Heaven” in Jer. 7:18; 44:16-19

4. *Ishtar* (Babylonian)
5. *Venus* (Greek)

But if this is true, why is this reference separated from the idolatry verses of Job 31:26-28?

31:2 “the portion. . .the heritage” These two NOUNS (BDB 324 and BDB 635) also appear together in Job 20:29; 27:13. They imply something as a gift or reward from God. Job 31:3 describes the gift as calamity and disaster for the wicked.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **“from above. . .from on high”** These are parallel and refer to God’s abode (cf. Job 16:19). See Special Topic: The Heavens and the Third Heaven.

31:3 “disaster” This NOUN (BDB 648) occurs only here in the OT. It has the same consonants as the NOUN “foreignness.” JPSOA translates it as “misfortune.” KJV tries to keep the root meaning by “strange (i.e., foreign) punishment.”

31:4 This verse asserts the sovereignty and omniscience of God.

1. He sees my ways – Job 11:11; 24:23; 28:24; 34:21; Ps. 11:4; 33:13-14; 66:7b; 119:168; Pro. 5:21; 15:3; Jer. 16:17; 23:24; 32:19; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13
2. He numbers all my steps – Job 14:16; 31:37; 34:21

There is no hiding from God (cf. Luke 12:2)!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:5-8

⁵**“If I have walked with falsehood,
And my foot has hastened after deceit,
⁶Let Him weigh me with accurate scales,
And let God know my integrity.
⁷If my step has turned from the way,
Or my heart followed my eyes,
Or if any spot has stuck to my hands,
⁸Let me sow and another eat,
And let my crops be uprooted.”**

31:6 There is an evaluation day coming when every human will give an account to his/her Creator for the stewardship of the gift of life (cf. Job 7:18; 23:10). The question is “when.”

1. in time
2. afterlife (at death)
3. at eschatological judgment

“The two ways” theology assumes the evaluation is within time! However, look at Job 31:14. Job wanted to be vindicated in time, but if not, he wanted his name vindicated after his death.

▣ **“accurate scales”** One wonders if this is a comment directed toward

1. Job’s three comforters, who falsely accused him
2. God, who seemed to have become his accuser (i.e., the two ways)

31:7a “step. . .path” These are metaphors for a life, positive or negative (i.e., Ps. 119:105; Eph. 4:1,17; 5:2,15). For the righteous (i.e., the two ways) God makes the path straight, smooth, with no obstacles. However, the faithful follower must stay on the path/way (i.e., a conditional covenant).

31:7c “spot” This NOUN (BDB 548) is used only twice in the OT.

1. here as a moral defect or stain (cf. Job 9:30)
2. in Dan. 1:4 as a physical or mental defect/blemish

Some scholars and versions (i.e., Peshitta) see this not as #1 but as #2 below

1. מאורם – stain
2. מארה (BDB 548) – anything

31:8 This verse reflects the “cursing and blessing” passages in Lev. 26:16 and Deut. 28:38-40. This same curse is expressed in Amos 5:11; Mic. 6:15; Zeph. 1:13. Another hint at a Mosaic link to Edomite theology is the Judean sage author of the book.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:9-12

- ⁹**“If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
Or I have lurked at my neighbor’s doorway,**
¹⁰**May my wife grind for another,
And let others kneel down over her.**
¹¹**For that would be a lustful crime;
Moreover, it would be an iniquity *punishable* by judges.**
¹²**For it would be fire that consumes to Abaddon,
And would uproot all my increase.”**

31:9 The reason adultery was so serious to Israel had to do with inheritance rights. God gave the land to tribes and families (i.e., Joshua). Therefore, who one’s father was became a very significant issue. This is another link to Israelite life.

The second line of this verse implies seducing a neighbor’s wife (TEV). This is condemned in Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21. This type of violation of a covenant/tribal, societal neighbor would cause havoc in a community, much less a revelatory community like Israel.

31:10a “grind” This implies servitude (i.e., working to support the family). The grinding of grain was woman’s work in the ANE.

31:10b “kneel down over her” This was a euphemism for sexual relations. It is possible that both lines of this verse have this connotation (see Targums and Vulgate).

31:12 At first this seems to imply an afterlife setting but the second line and Job 15:30 show it does not.

▣ **“fire”** This is often associated with judgment (i.e., Deut. 32:22). See Special Topic: Fire.

▣ **“Abaddon”** See note at Job 26:6. See Special Topic: *Abaddon*. . . *Apollyon*.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:13-15

- ¹³**“If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves
When they filed a complaint against me,**

¹⁴What then could I do when God arises?

And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him?

¹⁵Did not He who made me in the womb make him,

And the same one fashion us in the womb?"

31:13 This reflects Deut. 24:14-15. The Mosaic law was unique in the ANE for its concern for the poor, women, and aliens. Even a slave had rights and limited legal recourse. The Israelite laws are spelled out in Exod. 21:2-11. Here again is another link to Mosaic legislation.

31:14a The phrase "when God arises" can be understood in two ways.

1. arise from His throne to act
2. becomes aware after a period of time (i.e., pay attention, cf. Ps. 35:23; 44:23)

31:14b "when He calls me to account" See note at Job 31:6.

31:15 This verse asserts the unity of mankind, both slave and free, rich and poor, has one Creator (cf. Job 10:3,8; 14:15; Ps. 100:3; 138:8; Isa. 64:8). This theological concept was rare in the ANE.

▣ "one" It is possible this (BDB 25) is a name for God (cf. NKJV, JPSOA, cf. Zech. 14:9).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:16-23

¹⁶"If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,

Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,

¹⁷Or have eaten my morsel alone,

And the orphan has not shared it

¹⁸(But from my youth he grew up with me as with a father,

And from infancy I guided her),

¹⁹If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,

Or that the needy had no covering,

²⁰If his loins have not thanked me,

And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep,

²¹If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan,

Because I saw I had support in the gate,

²²Let my shoulder fall from the socket,

And my arm be broken off at the elbow.

²³For calamity from God is a terror to me,

And because of His majesty I can do nothing."

31:16-23 This may be Job's response to Eliphaz's charges of Job 22:7-9.

The NIDOTTE, vol 1, p. 228, has a good reminder about the concept of the poor and needy.

"Where western thinking stresses the economic aspect of poverty, the ANE understood poverty in the context of shame and honor."

Job was poor because he lost all his possessions (Job 1-2) as well as his social standing and honor/dignity (Job 30).

31:20 “loins” This NOUN (BDB 323) refers to the area of the human body between the lower ribs and where the legs start. It is used in several senses in the Bible.

1. fruit of the loins – children
2. symbol of virility – Gen. 35:11; 1 Kgs. 8:19
3. used of a woman’s birth pains, cf. Jer. 30:6
4. gird up your loins – imagery to get ready for strenuous labor, battle, or metaphorical for thinking – Job 38:3; 40:7
5. here it is personified as blessing the one who gives them clothing

31:21 “in the gate” This was the place of justice in the ANE (cf. Job 29:7).

31:22 The NET Bible (p. 828, #22,25) relates “lifted my hand” (BDB 631, KB 682, *Hiphil* PERFECT) of Job 31:21 as the consequence of a lying vote or oath in court (i.e., arm damaged).

The problem is that the meaning of the VERB is uncertain (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 63-67). In context it must refer to some kind of help, not an attack.

31:23 There are consequences for disobedience and/or lack of compassion toward other humans. Job’s actions were a combination of

1. concern for the needs of fellow humans
2. a fear/awe/respect for God

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:24-28

²⁴“If I have put my confidence *in* gold,
And called fine gold my trust,
²⁵If I have gloated because my wealth was great,
And because my hand had secured *so* much;
²⁶If I have looked at the sun when it shone
Or the moon going in splendor,
²⁷And my heart became secretly enticed,
And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth,
²⁸That too would have been an iniquity *calling for judgment*,
For I would have denied God above.”

31:24-28 This may be Job’s response to Eliphaz’s charges in Job 22:24-25. Wealth was not a “god” for him. It is possible to see Job 31:24-28 as all referring to the god of wealth. However, Job 30:26 surely looks like astral worship of the sun and moon, so common in the ANE.

31:24 “confidence. . .trust” These are powerful religious terms.

1. BDB 492
2. BDB 105

Job’s orientation in life was not the physical but the spiritual (i.e., God).

It is interesting that the NOUN (BDB 105) has three connotations.

1. loins (but different word than Job 31:20)
2. stupidity, folly
3. confidence

This root is used in Job 8:13-14, where it speaks of those who do not follow God; they have a false, frail confidence. Humans putting their confidence in anything but God and His will for their lives (i.e., wisdom) is stupid and will result in judgment (Job 31:28).

31:26-28 These verses may refer to astral worship (i.e., idolatry). Even though Job is from Edom, he is a monotheist.

See Special Topic: Moon Worship.

31:27b This line of poetry has been interpreted in various ways.

1. kissing an idol (or blowing a kiss to an idol), cf. 1 Kgs. 19:18; Hos. 13:2
2. putting one's hand over his/her mouth (i.e., kissing the hand) as a gesture of reverence in the presence of a deity

31:28b “I would have denied God above” The VERB (BDB 471, KB 469, *Piel* PERFECT) basically means “to deceive.” Job has often admitted that God knows all (i.e., Job 31:4). It would be foolish to try to deceive the God “above” (cf. Job 31:2).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:29-37

²⁹“Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy,
Or exulted when evil befell him?
³⁰No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for his life in a curse.
³¹Have the men of my tent not said,
‘Who can find one who has not been satisfied with his meat’?
³²The alien has not lodged outside,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler.
³³Have I covered my transgressions like Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,
³⁴Because I feared the great multitude,
And the contempt of families terrified me,
And kept silent and did not go out of doors?
³⁵Oh that I had one to hear me!
Behold, here is my signature;
Let the Almighty answer me!
And the indictment which my adversary has written,
³⁶Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,
I would bind it to myself like a crown.
³⁷I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him.”

31:33 In rather cryptic imagery, this verse asserts that Job never tried to hide or conceal his sin/guilt (if a reference to “Adam” see Gen. 3:10; if humans in general, see Pro. 28:13). Option #2 fits the context best.

If this is Adam it shows the author’s knowledge of Genesis or the Patriarchal oral traditions behind it. However, the second line of poetry supports the more general reference to the sinfulness of all mankind.

▣ **“bosom”** This NOUN (BDB 285) occurs only here in the OT. It is from an Aramaic root. The normal Hebrew root for this word is found in BDB 300.

31:34 This verse seems to address the reason and consequences of hiding one’s sin.

1. fear of condemnation of others (i.e., his own community or extended family)
2. because of fear of remaining secluded and isolated
3. also fear of God in Job 31:23

31:35-37 These verses relate to Job’s desire to have his day in court with God (cf. Job 13:22-23; 19:23-24; 23:4).

Job has formalized his defense document. He has signed it. Now he waits to present it before God. Job’s adversary (i.e., God) also has a written judicial document (i.e., Job’s indictment scroll, cf. Job 31:35d). Job is employing legal terminology and procedures. If God has a list of charges, let Him bring it forth. This may be Job’s attempt to force God to court. If God does not present an indictment, Job would be considered innocent, as he has always claimed. Job’s oath of innocence must be true if God did not immediately judge him (cf. Job 13:14-16). If this happens he will publicly display and announce his innocence (Job 31:36-37).

31:35 “the Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

31:36 This imagery may reflect Hebrew imagery for “wisdom” as an ornament to be worn (cf. Pro. 1:9; 3:22).

This VERB (BDB 772, KB 851, *Qal* IMPERFECT) occurs only here and Pro. 6:21, where a father’s teaching (i.e., wisdom) is tied around the son’s neck as an ornament.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:38-40b

- ³⁸“If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
³⁹If I have eaten its fruit without money,
Or have caused its owners to lose their lives,
⁴⁰Let briars grow instead of wheat,
And stinkweed instead of barley.”

31:39 “its owners to lose their lives” The MT has “the soul/life of its owners to breathe out.” This is an idiom for death (i.e., the physical body’s last exhale, which is opposite of Gen. 2:7 (cf. Job 11:20; Jer. 15:9).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:40c

- ^{40c}“The words of Job are ended.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How is Job 31 related to Job 29 and 30?
2. Why do the subjects of Job's negative curses seem out of order?
3. How is Job 31:4 related to the theology of Psalm 139?
4. Does Job 31:6 imply God had judged him with unfair scales?
5. How is Job 31:13-15 so unusual in the ANE?
6. Does Job 31:24-28 refer to idolatry? If so, what kind?
7. What is the significance of Job 31:35?
8. Why does Job 31:38-40b seem anticlimactic?

JOB 32

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Elihu In Anger Rebukes Job	Elihu Contradicts Job's Friends	Discourses of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	Speeches of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	Elihu Joins the Discussion
32:1-5	32:1-3	32:1-5	32:1-6a	32:1-6a
	32:4-6a (4-6a)		Elihu	Prologue
32:6-10 (6b-10)	32:6b-9 (6b-9)	32:6-10 (6b-10)	32:6b-10 (6b-10)	32:6b-14 (6b-14)
	32:10-14 (10-14)			
32:11-14 (11-14)		32:11-14 (11-14)	32:11-14 (11-14)	
32:15-22 (15-22)	32:15-22 (15-22)	32:15-22 (15-22)	32:15-22 (15-22)	32:15-22 (15-22)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section) FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. This begins a literary context (Job 32:1-37:24) where a young bystander, hearing the conversation between Job and his three comforters, finally speaks because the three comforters have no more to say.
- B. Some scholars suggest this was not an original part of the book (though there are no Hebrew MSS where it is missing or located in a different place).
 1. use of new roots (i.e., Arabic and Aramaic)
 2. use of a different literary style
 3. part prose, not all poetry

4. Elihu not mentioned in the close of the book (Job 42:7-17)
 5. Elihu seems to allude to things said in the previous cycles of dialogues
 6. Job does not respond to Elihu and God never mentions him or affirms his words
- C. It may be that Elihu's speeches are a way to highlight Job's theological error (i.e., willing to depreciate God's goodness and justice, cf. Job 9:20-21; 27:2; 31:6) to maintain his innocence (cf. Job 32:2; 10:7; 13:18)

However, it is also possible that Elihu is depicted purposefully by the author of Job (a Judean sage) as another attempt by a "know-it-all" religionist (cf. Job 33:1-7) to refute Job's integrity. Elihu appears suddenly and is not mentioned again. He is not addressed by Job or God! His words are almost as long as the dialogues but nothing new is added. What may be "new" is his claim to special revelation (although Eliphaz also claimed revelation in a dream). The three friends highlight "traditional wisdom" and "aged wisdom," while Elihu seems to highlight a "spiritual" dimension (see Tremper Longman III, *Job*, p. 368).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:1-10

¹Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ²But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God. ³And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. ⁴Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he. ⁵And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned.

⁶So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said,

"I am young in years and you are old;

Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think.

⁷I thought age should speak,

And increased years should teach wisdom.

⁸But it is a spirit in man,

And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

⁹The abundant *in years* may not be wise,

Nor may elders understand justice.

¹⁰So I say, 'Listen to me,

I too will tell what I think.'"

32:1-5 Job 32:1-6a is in prose, like 31:40c.

32:1 "answering" The VERB (BDB 772 I, KB 851) is the standard way in the book to introduce a response by another person. Notice it appears in Job 32:1,6,12,15,16,17,20.

▣ **"because he was righteous in his own eyes"** See note in Contextual Insights, C.

This is the major theological problem in Job's speeches. He truly felt he was innocent and did not deserve the terrible things that happened to him. He saw the problems:

1. "the two ways" do not apply to all suffering and problems
2. God was unjust and cruel

- a. He sent these problems (i.e., God in control of all things, no secondary causes, cf. Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6)
- b. He did not respond to Job's repeated prayers

32:2 “the anger” This term (BDB 354, KB 351, in *Qal*) is used several times.

1. Elihu is angry (lit. “burned”) at Job, Job 32:2 (twice)
2. Elihu is angry at Job's three comforters, Job 32:3,5

Elihu's anger is based on his deep theological disagreement with Job and his three comforters. Elihu defends God and His ways with humans.

▣ **“the Buzite”** The root *buz* (BDB 100) may refer to Abraham's brother's (Nahor) son (cf. Gen. 22:21), if Job relates historically to Abraham's day.

The basic Hebrew root means

1. contempt – BDB 100 II
2. despise – BDB 100 I

The *New Oxford Annotated Bible* suggests he was an Aramean, living near Edom (p. 660). This seems to be confirmed in Jer. 25:23.

▣ **“Ram”** This name (BDB 928) is found several times in the OT.

1. ancestor of David – Ruth 4:19; 1 Chr. 2:9-10
2. a family mentioned in 1 Chr. 2:25,27
3. here

▣ **“he justified himself”** This root (NOUN, BDB 481, KB 1002; VERB, BDB 842, KB 1003, here a *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) is the important theological term translated:

1. right
2. righteous
3. righteousness
4. just
5. justified

See Special Topic: Righteousness. Elihu is especially interested in being “right” with a “righteous” God. He uses the root 13 times in his speeches (Job 32-37). But notice it is not related to the Mosaic covenant (i.e., setting is Edom, not Israel, although I think the author is a Judean court sage) but to the fair treatment of other humans.



NASB, LXX,

Vulgate

“before God”

NKJV, NRSV

“rather than God”

TEV

“blaming God”

NJB

“God was wrong”

JPSOA

“against God”

Peshitta

“more than God”

The MT has a PREPOSITION, either

1. מִן (BDB 552)
2. מִלְּפָנֶיךָ (BDB 577), which is more probable and has a wide semantic field

The context seems to denote a contrast but the same PREPOSITION means “before” or “in the presence of” in Job 4:17. So the interpretive question is, “Does the phrase denote

1. Job in court before God

2. Job justifying himself at God's expense?"

Both fit the book.

32:3 The last line of Job 32:3 has "God" instead of "Job." This is one of the eighteen changes in the MT made by sopherim (Jewish scholars) because they thought the original reading was blasphemous. The TEV, NJB, REB retain "God."

If the last line should have "Job," then Elihu is accusing the three comforters of falsely accusing Job of sin with no evidence.

If the last line should have "God," then it refers to Job's accusations of God's unfairness and injustices.

This lists two reasons why Elihu was angry at the three comforters.

1. they could not answer Job (cf. Job 32:5,7)
2. still they accused Job of hidden sin (lit. "condemned him of evil," BDB 957, KB 1294, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT with *waw*)

32:4-6 Elihu lists several reasons why he waited to give his comments.

1. he thought the older (i.e., wiser) comforters would handle this issue, Job 32:4,9
2. he was young and in the ANE age had honor and deference (cf. Job 29:8), Job 32:4,6,7
3. he was shy and afraid, Job 32:6

32:4 Elihu had waited patiently to respond to Job because

1. he hoped the three friends could convince him of his errors, Job 32:5
2. he was younger than they, Job 32:4

32:6

NASB, NJB	"shy"
NKJV, Peshitta	"afraid"
NRSV	"timid"
JPSOA	"awestruck"

This VERB (BDB 267 II, KB 267, *Qal* PERFECT from an Aramaic root) occurs only here in the OT. It is parallel with "afraid" (BDB 431, KB 432).

32:7 The NRSV translates this verse as two IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense ("lest. . .").

32:8 "a spirit in man" This is the Hebrew term *ruah* (BDB 924). See Special Topic: Breath, Wind, Spirit (OT).

The term "man" is *enosh* (BDB 60), cf. Job 32:1,5,8; 33:12,15,16,26,27, etc.). The term "Adam" (BDB 9) is used in Job 32:13. It is always a question if these terms are synonymous or are meant to draw a distinction. I think here they denote their semantic overlap. If so, it denotes frail, fallen humanity.

See Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible.

▣ **"the breath of the Almighty"** Some commentators refer this specifically to Gen. 2:7, but I think it is parallel with "a spirit in man" and refers to the life of a person energized by God's Spirit. In a sense Elihu is claiming divine inspiration (cf. Job 33:4).

For "Almighty" see Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **"understanding"** The Hebrew VERB (BDB 106, KB 122, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) means "give understanding." Elihu is claiming a special wisdom from God (cf. Job 38:26). Remember, one of the issues of the book is "who has God's wisdom?"

1. Job

2. three comforters
3. Elihu
4. no one but God Himself

32:9

NASB	“the abundant <i>in years</i> ”
NKJV	“great men”
NRSV, LXX,	
Peshitta, Vulgate	“the old”
NJB	“great age”
JPSOA	“the aged”

The MT has “it is not the many.” The ADJECTIVE (BDB 912 I) can mean “many” or “great.” It is the LXX that has “aged,” probably because of the intended parallelism with “elders” in Job 32:9b.

32:10 “Listen to me” This is a literary IMPERATIVE (BDB 1033, KB 1570), used so often

1. by Job to his three comforters
 - a. Job 13:6 – *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
 - b. Job 13:17 – INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and *Qal* IMPERATIVE of the same root
 - c. Job 21:2 (same form as b. above)
2. by Eliphaz – Job 15:17; *Qal* IMPERATIVE
3. by Elihu
 - a. Job 32:10; 33:1,31,33 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE
 - b. Job 33:1,31 – *Hiphil* IMPERATIVES (synonyms, BDB 24, KB 27 and BDB 904, KB 1151)
 - c. Job 34:2,10 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE
 - d. Job 37:2 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE
4. Job to God (entreaty) – Job 42:4, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

Probably it connotes the idea that the recipients were not listening carefully.

▣ **“what I think”** This is literally the MASCULINE NOUN (BDB 395, KB 228) meaning “knowledge” or “opinion,” cf. Job 32:6,10,17. The root is used again in Job 36:3 and 37:16, but it is found in only five places in Job and nowhere else in the OT. The FEMININE form is common in Job and used often in the OT.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:11-14

- ¹¹“Behold, I waited for your words,
I listened to your reasonings,
While you pondered what to say.
¹²I even paid close attention to you;
Indeed, there was no one who refuted Job,
Not one of you who answered his words.
¹³Do not say,
‘We have found wisdom;
God will rout him, not man.’
¹⁴For he has not arranged *his* words against me,
Nor will I reply to him with your arguments.”

32:11-14 Elihu addresses the three comforters.

Their final answer was to say, “God (*El*), not any human being, will deal with Job” (Job 32:13). Some grammarians see the VERB (BDB 623, KB 674, *Qal* IMPERFECT), “drive him away,” used in a JUSSIVE sense (i.e., “Let God drive him away”).

They were trying to make excuses for their failure to convince Job of his sin.

Elihu, in Job 32:14, asserts he will not address Job with the same argument as the three friends.

32:13

NASB	“do not say”
NKJV, LXX	“lest you say”
NRSV	“yet do not say”
TEV	“how can you claim”
NJB	“so do not say”
JPSOA	“I fear you will say”
REB	“see then that you do not claim”
Peshitta	“so that you could not say”

The MT has a CONJUNCTION (BDB 814) and a *Qal* IMPERFECT VERB (BDB 55, KB 65). The combination suggests a warning (i.e., “beware”). Elihu warns the three comforters not to try to explain away their failed efforts by asserting God will deal with an unrepentant Job.



NASB	“God will rout him, not man”
NKJV, NRSV	“God will vanquish him, not man”
NJB, TEV	“our teaching is divine and not human”

The UBS Text Project (p. 106) gives the MT reading (NASB, NKJV, NRSV) a “C” rating (considerable doubt). It mentions an emendation of one consonant that is followed by TEV, NJB.

1. יִדְפְּנוּ – BDB 623, KB 674, *Qal* IMPERFECT (יָדַף)
2. יִלְפְּנוּ – BDB 48 I, KB 59 I, *Piel* IMPERFECT (יָלַף); the root is also found in Job 15:5; 32:33; 35:11

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:15-22

¹⁵“They are dismayed, they no longer answer;
Words have failed them.

¹⁶Shall I wait, because they do not speak,
Because they stop *and* no longer answer?

¹⁷I too will answer my share,
I also will tell my opinion.

¹⁸For I am full of words;
The spirit within me constrains me.

¹⁹Behold, my belly is like unvented wine,
Like new wineskins it is about to burst.

²⁰Let me speak that I may get relief;
Let me open my lips and answer.

²¹Let me now be partial to no one,
Nor flatter *any* man.

²²For I do not know how to flatter,
Else my Maker would soon take me away.”

32:15-16 These verses describe the three friends' speeches to Job. They failed to convince him or convict him, so the three friends fell silent. But now Elihu must speak (Job 32:18-20a).

32:19

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, REB "new wineskins"

LXX, NEB "bellows of a blacksmith"

Most English translations follow the MT but UBS Text Project (p. 108) gives the LXX option a "C" rating (considerable doubt).

Job 32:19 is a hyperbolic example. Usually new wineskins (normally sheep stomachs or sheep skins) were used to store new wine because they were elastic and could stand the rapid/violent fermentation process. Jesus used similar imagery but spoke of "old wineskins" (i.e. Matt. 9:17).

32:20-21 The VERBS are all IMPERFECT. The NASB translates them as JUSSIVES ("let. . ."). The MT's first VERB (BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel*) is a COHORTATIVE, which may influence the other VERBS in this context (i.e., *Qal* IMPERFECTS used in a COHORTATIVE sense).

32:21 "be partial" This is literally "lift the face," which was a judicial idiom for fairness and impartiality. Plaintiffs before judges always kept their heads bowed in court. The judge should not lift the chin up so as to recognize the person he was judging lest he knew him and became biased.

32:22 This verse also reflects the "two ways" theology. It used hyperbolic Semitic imagery to make a point (the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1002, sees Job 13:8-9 as similar hyperbolic imagery).

▣ **"my Maker"** This (BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) refers to the Creator God (cf. Job 10:3,8; 14:15; 31:15; 35:10; Ps. 95:6; 100:3; 149:2).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why do many scholars think Job 32-37, Elihu's speech, was a later editorial addition?
2. How is Elihu different and/or similar to the three comforters?
3. Is he a Hebrew or an Edomite?
4. Is Job 32:8 a claim to special revelation? (cf. Job 33:4)
5. What was Elihu's major complaint against Job?

JOB 33

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Elihu Claims to Speak for God	Elihu Contradicts Job	Discourse of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	The Speeches of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	Job's Presumption
33:1-7 (1-7)	33:1-7 (1-7)	33:1-7 (1-7)	33:1-4 (1-4)	33:1-30 (1-30)
			33:5-7 (5-7)	
33:8-12 (8-12)	33:8-11 (8-11)	33:8-11 (8-11)	33:8-11 (8-11)	
	33:12-18 (12-18)	33:12-28 (12-28)	33:12-22 (12-22)	
33:13-18 (13-18)				
33:19-22 (19-22)	33:19-22 (19-22)			
33:23-28 (23-28)	33:23-28 (23-28)		33:23-30 (23-30)	
33:29-33 (29-33)	33:29-30 (29-30)	33:29-33 (29-33)		
	33:31-33 (31-33)		33:31-33 (31-33)	33:31-33 (31-33)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. I think Tremper Longman III, *Job* (p. 384), captures the literary hints at the personality of Elihu, “an excitable, overconfident, and self-centered young man.” The reason his speeches are included in Job is uncertain. Many see it as
1. the central theological point (i.e., defends God’s justice, John H. Walton)
 2. totally irrelevant (Tremper Longman III)
 3. one more example of ANE overconfidence in “the two ways” and, therefore, incomplete/faulty wisdom
 4. an introduction to God’s personal address to Job (Job 38:1-41:34), where God addresses Job’s self-righteous attitude as improper
- B. Elihu, like the three comforters, believes Job has sinned and this is the problem. He alludes to Job’s claims to innocence and the unfair treatment of God in Job 33:9-11. For Elihu, Job, not God, must be the problem.
- C. Elihu lists two ways God communicates with humans. Job claimed God did not answer him (Job 33:13), but Elihu says He did.
1. in dreams (Job 33:14-16)
 2. by pain (Job 33:19-21)
- D. If Job would only repent (Job 33:26-27), God would
1. accept angelic mediation, Job 33:23
 2. save and renew his life, Job 33:24-25
 3. restore his integrity/righteousness, Job 33:26
 4. restore his body, Job 33:28
- Apparently #2-4 happened in the prose conclusion. Number 1 is still a mystery.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:1-7

- ¹“However now, Job, please hear my speech,
And listen to all my words.
²Behold now, I open my mouth,
My tongue in my mouth speaks.
³My words are *from* the uprightness of my heart,
And my lips speak knowledge sincerely.
⁴The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
⁵Refute me if you can;
Array yourselves before me, take your stand.
⁶Behold, I belong to God like you;
I too have been formed out of the clay.
⁷Behold, no fear of me should terrify you,
Nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.”

33:1 “Job” Elihu addresses Job directly for the first time (cf. Job 33:31). The three comforters never addressed him directly by name.

▣ **“please”** This is the NASB’s translation of *na* (BDB 609, KB 730), which is a PARTICLE of entreaty or exhortation.

1. please – NASB, NKJV, NJB
2. but now – NRSV, JPSOA, REB, NET Bible
3. listen carefully – TEV
4. nonetheless – LXX
5. wherefore – Peshitta

▣ **“hear. . .listen”** These are parallel IMPERATIVES. The speakers in Job often address their hearer in this fashion.

33:2 This is a good example of the wordiness of Elihu, as well as his arrogance.

33:3 Notice how Elihu characterizes his message.

1. the uprightness of my heart
2. speak knowledge sincerely (i.e., pure)

The implication is clear, he speaks truth but Job speaks falsehood.

Throughout the book one of the theological themes has been—who speaks the truth; who has true wisdom? (cf. Job 33:3).

1. ancient traditions (Job 8:8; 15:18; 20:4)
2. learned over time (age; Job 15:17)
3. revealed in a dream (Eliphaz, Job 4:12-16; Elihu, 33:14-16)
4. special revelation – Elihu (Job 32:8; 33:4)

33:4,6 There is a connection between these verses. In one sense (Job 33:4) Elihu is claiming a special relationship with God, but in another sense he is like Job (Job 33:6). Both are creatures created by God.

The mention of “clay” in Job 33:6 reveals a knowledge of Hebrew creation texts (i.e., Gen. 2:7). This can be explained by

1. all of the speakers knew Hebrew traditions
2. the author of Job was a Hebrew who inadvertently included uniquely Jewish elements in the mouths of these Edomites

33:4 “Spirit of God” Because of the semantical field of *ruah* (BDB 924, KB 1197, cf. Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 27:3; Ps. 104:29-30), it can mean “breath,” “wind,” “spirit” (see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible). The NOUN used here (“breath,” BDB 675, cf. Job 32:8) is a SYNONYM which denotes the creating aspect of God (i.e., Gen. 1:2; 2:7).

▣ **“Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

33:5 This verse has three IMPERATIVES which all relate to Elihu’s challenge to Job. He will present his case and challenge Job to answer him.

1. refute me if you can – BDB 996, KB 1427, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE; the basic meaning is to “turn back”
2. array yourself before me – BDB 789, KB 884, *Qal* IMPERATIVE; this denotes Job defending himself by setting his thoughts in order, cf. Job 32:14; 37:19; Ps. 5:3

3. take your stand – BDB 426, KB 427, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE; meaning defend yourself and your words (i.e., Job 33:8-12)

33:6-7 It is possible that these verses are Elihu's answer to Job's plea for someone to listen to him (Job 31:35).

Job has sought God's answer (cf. Job 19:7; 30:20,24,28) but there has been no seeming response. Elihu may think he speaks for God (cf. Job 32:8; 33:4).

33:6

NASB	"I belong to God like you"
NKJV	"I am as your spokesmen before God"
NRSV	"before God I am as you are"
NJB	"I am your equal, not some god"
JPSOA	"you and I are the same before God"
REB	"In God's sight I am just what you are"

The textual question comes with "toward God," לֵאלֹהִים. The UBS Text Project (p. 109) gives this form a "B" rating (some doubt). The NJB is based on an emendation, אֵלֵּי, which turns the PREPOSITION into a negative. I think JB and NJB made this change to try to explain Job 33:7, which is a strange statement. Why should Job fear Elihu?



NASB, NKJV,	
NRSV, TEV,	
Peshitta	"formed"
NJB	"molded"
JPSOA	"nipped"
LXX	"fashioned"

The Hebrew VERB (BDB 902, KB 1147, *Pual* PERFECT) basically means "to nip" or "to pinch." The *Pual* occurs only here and refers to a lump of clay being nipped off the potter's wheel. This same imagery of humans made from clay occurs in Job 4:19 and 10:9. See John H. Walton, *ANE Thought and the OT*, pp. 205-206. This author has been very helpful to me in trying to understand ANE imagery and worldview.

33:7 This verse may be an allusion to Job's earlier words about being terrified of God (cf. Job 9:34; 13:21; 23:16). If so, Elihu is saying

1. do not be afraid of me or my words; I am trying to help you not frighten you
2. Job, you cannot use the same excuse you used earlier that fear of God causes you not to respond (cf. Job 9:32)



NASB, NRSV,	
JPSOA, REB	"pressure"
NKJV, NJB,	
LXX	"hand"
Peshitta	"rebuke"

The MT has אָכַף (BDB 38), a rare term found only twice in the OT.

1. the VERB in Pro. 16:26
2. the NOUN here

It probably comes from an Aramaic root, "to be urgent." The NKJV translation comes from a similar root used in Job 13:21, "hand" (כָּף, BDB 496).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:8-12

- ⁸“Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
And I have heard the sound of *your* words:
⁹‘I am pure, without transgression;
I am innocent and there is no guilt in me.
¹⁰Behold, He invents pretexts against me;
He counts me as His enemy.
¹¹He puts my feet in the stocks;
He watches all my paths.’
¹²Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this,
For God is greater than man.”

33:8-12 This strophe demonstrates that Elihu has been listening intently to the dialogue. He quotes Job’s statement

1. of his innocence
2. of God’s cruel and unfair treatment

This is more of a summary (cf. Job 9:21; 10:7; 11:4; 12:4; 13:18; 16:17; 23:10; 27:5-6) than a direct quote.

1. the claims of Job
 - a. I am pure – BDB 269, KB 269, cf. Job 8:6
 - b. without (BDB 115) transgression – BDB 833, KB 981
 - c. I am innocent – BDB 342, KB 339 (found only here in the OT)
 - d. no guilt – BDB 730, KB 800
2. Job’s accusations about God
 - a. He invents pretexts against me
 - b. He counts me as an enemy (cf. Job 13:24; 19:11)
 - c. He puts my feet in stocks (cf. Job 13:27a)
 - d. He watches (so as to accuse all my paths, cf. Job 13:27b)

33:9b “innocent” This ADJECTIVE (BDB 342, KB 339) occurs only here in the OT. The supposed translation comes from the synonymous parallelism of Job 33:9a.

33:12 The point of Elihu’s recounting Job’s statements is to assert that he is wrong on both accounts.

1. he is not innocent
2. God is not unfair

However, his only stated reason is that God is greater than humans. This is surely a theological truth that Job would affirm.

Some commentators see this as referring to

1. God is greater in knowledge and power
2. God’s transcendence makes Him removed from human problems

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:13-18

- ¹³“Why do you complain against Him
That He does not give an account of all His doings?
¹⁴Indeed God speaks once,
Or twice, *yet* no one notices it.
¹⁵In a dream, a vision of the night,

When sound sleep falls on men,
 While they slumber in their beds,
¹⁶Then He opens the ears of men,
 And seals their instruction,
¹⁷That He may turn man aside *from his* conduct,
 And keep man from pride;
¹⁸He keeps back his soul from the pit,
 And his life from passing over into Sheol.”

33:13-22 These are two strophes that list how God answers humans (cf. Job 33:29). Job has claimed that God is hidden from him; Elihu says God reveals Himself

1. in dreams, Job 33:14-16
2. through pain and suffering, Job 33:19-21 (cf. Heb. 12:5-13)

Job mentioned in Job 7:14 that God had terrified him in dreams. Therefore, this may be another of Elihu’s comments on Job’s previous statements.

33:13b The NASB translation of this line is the theological conclusion of the whole book (Job 38-42:6)! God is God! He will do as He pleases and needs to explain His acts to no one (an OT parallel to Romans 9).

33:14 This idiom means that God speaks in many ways (cf. Job 33:29) to humans. Elihu will mention only two.

33:16b

NASB, NKJV	“seals their instruction”
NRSV	“terrifies them with warnings”
TEV	“they are frightened at his warnings”
NJB	“frightens him with apparitions”
REB	“as a warning strikes them with terror”

The MT has “seals” (יִחַתֵּם, BDB 367, KB 364, *Qal* IMPERFECT) but with a change of vocalization, “terrifies” (BDB 369, cf. Job 7:14).

UBS Text Project (p. 111) gives “seals” a “C” rating (considerable doubt).

33:18 This is a repeated phrase (cf. Job 33:22,24,28,30) which asserts that God will restore the earthly life of a repentant (see Special Topic: Repentance [OT]) person. This was a way to express the mercy and grace of the God of “the two ways”!

33:18b

NASB,	“his life from passing over into Sheol”
NKJV, JPSOA	“his life from perishing by the sword”
NRSV	“their lives from traversing the River”
NJB	“his life from passing down the canal”
REB	“stops him from crossing the river of death”
LXX	“falling in battle”

The MT has the NOUN (BDB 1019 I) which means “missile,” “spear,” or “weapon” (i.e., sword, cf. Job 36:12). Scholars have proposed an Akkadian root which denoted a water channel (*shelah*, BDB 1019 III, cf. Neh. 3:15). They assert it was imagery for the river of death (i.e., *Hubur* or *Styx* [AB, p. 218] or the river crossed by the Egyptians at death).

▣ “the pit. . .Sheol” See Special Topic: *Sheol*.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:19-22

¹⁹“Man is also chastened with pain on his bed,
And with unceasing complaint in his bones;
²⁰So that his life loathes bread,
And his soul favorite food.
²¹His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones which were not seen stick out.
²²Then his soul draws near to the pit,
And his life to those who bring death.”

33:19-21 God using problems and pain to bring His people back to Himself is the purpose of the “cursing and blessing” sections of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27-29. “The two ways” is clearly stated in Deut. 30:15,19.

33:19b “with unceasing complaint in his bones” The MT has “strive” or “contend” (BDB 936, KB 1224) but the Masoretic scholars suggested “multitude” (*Qere*, BDB 914, KB 1175).

The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 922 relates this NOUN to Lev. 26:16, which is the “cursing and blessing” section (i.e., “the two ways,” cf. Deuteronomy 27-29; 30:15,19).

33:22b “those who bring death” This may refer to angels.

1. the death angel (SINGULAR) – Exod. 12:23; 2 Sam. 24:16; 2 Kgs. 19:35; 1 Chr. 21:15
2. band of destroying angels (PLURAL, as here) – Ps. 78:49
3. possible mythological imagery common in the ANE of demons (see Special Topic: Demonic in the OT) that cause death
4. AB attempts to use Ugaritic roots to translate this phrase (p. 251) as “the waters of death,” which is common imagery used of *Sheol*

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:23-28

²³“If there is an angel *as* mediator for him,
One out of a thousand,
To remind a man what is right for him,
²⁴Then let him be gracious to him, and say,
‘Deliver him from going down to the pit,
I have found a ransom’;
²⁵Let his flesh become fresher than in youth,
Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor;
²⁶Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him,
That he may see His face with joy,
And He may restore His righteousness to man.
²⁷He will sing to men and say,
‘I have sinned and perverted what is right,
And it is not proper for me.

²⁸He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit,
And my life shall see the light.”

33:23-28 This is another allusion to a heavenly, angelic advocate (cf. Job 9:33; 16:19; 19:25-27; NIDOTTE, vol. 4, #2. D, pp. 786-787). The imagery is taken from a legal case brought before the heavenly council (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 1 Kgs. 22:19; Dan. 7:10). The “accuser” is the prosecuting agent (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:21-22) and the “my witness of heaven” is the defense agent. Job 33:24-25 contains the supposed words of the angel.

The NASB translates Job 33:24a,25a,b as JUSSIVES (but not in form).

33:23a “mediator” This Hebrew root (BDB 539, KB 529, *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE) normally means “to scorn,” but in the *Hiphil* stem it has another connotation of

1. interpreter (cf. Gen. 42:23)
2. ambassador (cf. 2 Chr. 32:21)
3. mediator (cf. Isa. 43:27)

Even in the *Hiphil* the negative aspect often continues.

1. deride – Ps. 119:51
2. scoffers – Job 16:20

33:23b “One out of a thousand” This implies

1. that God employs angels to help/instruct humans (see Heb. 1:14; Ps. 103:20-21; in Jewish apocalyptic literature angels became the interpreters of dreams and visions)
2. that angels who are willing to help are few and far between; this may reflect Eliphaz’s words in Job 4:18; 5:1 and 15:15

However, Job 33:29 clearly states God is the impetus behind all the angelic mediation. This is why many commentators think all references to the heavenly advocate refers to God.

33:24c NASB, NKJV, NRSV have “a ransom.” This NOUN (BDB 497 I, KB 493) denotes “a price of a life” (cf. Job 36:18). It does not say what/who that price involved.

The UBS Text Project (p. 112) lists several possible ways to view this.

1. protect him/ransom him (פדעהו, RSV) and gives it a “C” rating (considerable doubt)
2. release him (פרעהו, NEB)
3. redeem him (פדהו)

The VERB in Job 33:24b, “deliver him” (פדע, BDB 804, KB 914, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, MASCULINE, SINGULAR [this root is found only here and it may be a variant spelling of “ransom,” פדה, BDB 804, KB 911]) is the voice of the heavenly advocate. He claims that a ransom price has been paid. It does not specify “to whom,” “what was paid,” or “who paid it.” It is easy to read Isaiah 53 into this text but I think that would not fit an Abrahamic period in Edom. Now if the author is a Judean court sage, then maybe so (i.e., the Servant Songs of Isaiah).

There is a Psalm that uses the same imagery (cf. Psalm 49:7-9,15). Humans cannot provide a ransom!

33:25a

NASB	“become fresher”
NRSV	“fresh”
NJB	“recover”
JPSOA	“healthier”
REB	“sturdier”
LXX	“soft”

This VERB (BDB 936, KB 1223, *Qal* PASSIVE PERFECT), meaning “moist,” occurs only here. It may be related to a similar root:

1. “be moist” – BDB 936
2. “plump up with moisture” – BDB 382, cf. Ps. 119:70

33:26 Notice the connotations related to the advocacy of the angelic mediator.

1. prayer (a repentant prayer, cf. Job 33:27)
2. only then will “He” (apparently God, but possibly the angel, cf. Job 33:28)

▣ **“he may see His face with joy”** This is the imagery of the righteous being able to stand in God’s presence (cf. Matt. 5:8).

This seems to parallel Job 8:21, which is the non-military use of “shout.” A prayer of confession and repentance will restore one’s joy and one’s health, cf. Job 33:28. It also puts one in God’s presence!

33:27

NASB, NRSV,

NJB

“he will sing”

NKJV

“he looks”

TEV

“say”

JPSOA

“he declares”

REB

“he affirms”

Peshitta

“will bear”

The MT has the VERB (שׁוּר, BDB 1003 II, KB 1449, *Qal* JUSSIVE), which means “behold” or “see” (NKJV) but other roots have been suggested.

1. שׁוּר – BDB 1010, sing (NASB)
2. שׁוּר – BDB 448, the uprightness (Peshitta)
3. the NET Bible footnote (p. 834) mentions two more options
 - a. to repeat
 - b. to confess (Arabic root)

▣

NASB

“it is not proper for me”

NKJV, Peshitta

“it did not profit me”

NRSV

“it was not paid back to me”

TEV

“but God spared me”

NJB, NET Bible

“but I was not paid back for it”

The MT has the VERB (BDB 1000 I, KB 1436, *Qal* PERFECT), which basically means “to be appropriate” (KB 1437). Here it is negated (NJB). But this is something Job would never say. He believed he was innocent and that God had punished him beyond measure for the sins of his youth (cf. Job 13:26) or the common sins of all humanity (Job 14:4; 15:14; 25:4).

Remember, Elihu sees his task as defending God and His justice (cf. Job 33:8-12).

33:28

NASB, NRSV,

TEV, NJB

JPSOA, LXX “my soul”

NKJV

“his soul”

The MT has “my” but the Masoretic scholars suggested reading (*Qere*) “his.”

▣ “soul” This is the Hebrew *nephesh* (BDB 659, KB 711, cf. Gen. 2:7). See full note online at Gen. 35:18.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:29-33

²⁹“Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men,

³⁰To bring back his soul from the pit,

That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

³¹Pay attention, O Job, listen to me;

Keep silent, and let me speak.

³²Then if you have anything to say, answer me;

Speak, for I desire to justify you.

³³If not, listen to me;

Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

33:30 God’s desire in sending

1. dreams
2. visions
3. pain/problems

is also redemptive. These are His ways of helping fallen humans to realize they are deviating from His path (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-29; 30:15,19). All of God’s judgments are redemptive in purpose, except eschatological, eternal separation from God!

33:31-33 There is a series of IMPERATIVES.

1. pay attention, Job 33:31a – BDB 904, KB 1151, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
2. listen, Job 33:31a – BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
3. keep silent, Job 33:31b – BDB 361, KB 357, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
4. answer me, Job 33:32a – BDB 996, KB 1427, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (cf. Job 33:5a)
5. speak, Job 33:32b – BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* IMPERATIVE
6. listen, Job 33:33a – BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
7. keep silent, Job 33:33b – BDB 361, KB 357, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (same as #3)

All of these are a literary way of saying, “Job, shut up and listen to my wisdom!” I am the one who speaks truth. Job never answers Elihu!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Elihu claim his words are true?
2. Why does Elihu allude to Job’s previous statements?
3. How does God reveal His will and/or warnings to humanity?
4. Who is the angelic mediator? How does he relate to the angelic accuser of Job 1-2?
5. Does Job 33:23 affirm there are many angelic mediators or few?
6. Explain Job 33:24 in your own words.

JOB 34

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Elihu Vindicates God's Justice	Elihu Proclaims God's Justice	Discourses of Elihu (32:1-37:4)	The Speeches of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	The Three Sages Have Failed to Justify God
34:1-9 (1-9)	34:1-4 (2-4)	34:1-7 (1-7)	34:1-4 (1-4)	34:1-9 (1-9)
	34:5-9 (5-9)		34:5-7 (5-7)	
		34:8-28 (8-28)	34:8-11 (8-11)	
34:10-15 (10-15)	34:10-15 (10-15)			34:10-28 (10-28)
			34:12-22 (12-22)	
34:16-20 (16-20)	34:16-20 (16-20)			
34:21-30 (21-30)	34:21-30 (21-30)			
			34:23-28 (23-28)	
		34:29-33 (29-33)	34:29-33 (29-33)	34:29-37 (29-37)
34:31-37 (31-37)	34:31-33 (31-33)			
	34:34-37 (34-37)			

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. There are many textual issues in this chapter (especially Job 34:29-33). See UBS Text Project, pp. 114-122. The rare words, poetic imagery, and the shortening of phrases, which a contemporary speaker would understand, are the things that cause confusion.
- B. Elihu, like the three comforters, calls on Job to hear, listen (IMPERATIVES, cf. Job 32:10; 33:1,31,33; 34:2,10,16).
- C. Elihu defends the righteousness of God by disallowing the righteousness of Job. “The two ways” must be true!
- D. Elihu presents his message by a series of rhetorical questions.
 - 1. Job 34:13 (twice), 17,18-19,33 expect a “no” answer’
 - 2. Job 34:19 expects a “yes” answer

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:1-9

¹“Then Elihu continued and said,
²“Hear my words, you wise men,
And listen to me, you who know.
³For the ear tests words
As the palate tastes food.
⁴Let us choose for ourselves what is right;
Let us know among ourselves what is good.
⁵For Job has said, ‘I am righteous,
But God has taken away my right;
⁶Should I lie concerning my right?
My wound is incurable, *though I am* without transgression.’
⁷What man is like Job,
Who drinks up derision like water,
⁸Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walks with wicked men?
⁹For he has said, ‘It profits a man nothing
When he is pleased with God.’”

34:2 “wise men. . .you who know” These phrases and (1) “you men of understanding” in Job 34:10,34a and (2) “a wise man” in Job 34:34b are hard to assign to a group. Elihu has condemned the three comforters in Job 32:5-6,9,12,15; therefore, it may refer to

- 1. the three friends (sarcasm)
 - 2. the sages of Edomite culture
 - 3. simply a rhetorical device not meant to address anyone specifically
- Remember, one major theme of Job is “who has true wisdom?”!

34:3 This is a quote from Job 12:11. Elihu has been listening carefully and taking notes!

34:4 The two VERBS are *Qal* COHORTATIVES. They are related to “you wise men” of Job 34:2. They set the literary stage for Elihu’s quoting/alluding to Job’s previous statements. He asserts that all truly wise men must be rejecting Job’s words!

34:5-6 “For Job has said. . .” Elihu alludes to/quotes several statements of Job.

1. “I am righteous” – Job 6:29; 9:20-21; 10:7; 12:4; 13:18; 27:5-6
2. “God has taken away my rights” – Job 16:7-9, 11-14; 27:2
3. “My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression” – see #1 (cf. Job 6:4)
4. “It profits a man nothing when he is pleased with God” – Job 21:14-15; 22:17

34:6

NASB, NKJV	“Should I lie concerning my right”
NRSV	“in spite of being right, I am counted a liar”
TEV	“He asks, ‘How could I lie and say I am wrong’”
NJB	“My Judge is treating me cruelly”
JPSOA	“I declare the judgment against me false”
REB	“he has falsified my case”
LXX	“the Lord. . .played false in my judgment”

The interpretive question is who is the subject, Job (MT) or God (LXX, TEV, NJB, REB)? Is Job the liar or is God? The issue is Job’s defense of being innocent. Is he innocent and God unfair? The UBS Text Project (p. 114) and the UBS *Handbook* (p. 620) suggest that the verse is speaking of God’s falsification of Job’s legal case. Maybe God has accepted the false accusations of the three comforters (cf. Job 13:4-10) over Job’s affirmation of innocence.

▣ **“wound”** This is literally “arrow” (BDB 346, KB 343 I) but used in the sense of “wound” (i.e., God’s arrow, cf. Job 6:4; Ps. 7:13; 18:14; 38:2; etc.).

34:7-8 Elihu accuses Job.

1. drinks up derision like water
 - a. a man who drinks iniquity, Job 15:16
 - b. a man who says false things about God, Job 34:7
2. goes in company with workers of iniquity (of “the two ways” of Psalm 1)
3. walks with wicked men (Zophar, Job 11:11; Eliphaz, Job 22:15; Job, Job 31:5-8)
4. speaks lies (i.e., Job 34:9)

34:8

NASB, NKJV,	
NRSV, TEV	“in company”
NJB	“consorts”
JPSOA	“common cause”
REB	“bad company”
LXX	“lawless acts”
Peshitta	“companion and friend”

This FEMININE NOUN (BDB 288, KB 288) occurs only here but is obviously related to two MASCULINE NOUNS (BDB 288) meaning “company,” “association,” “companion.”

34:9 This may be an allusion to Job’s words in Job 9:22-24 or 21:7-13. In these texts Job asserts that “the two ways” does not always reflect life. The wicked do prosper and the innocent do suffer! Something must be wrong with traditional theology. See note #2 at Job 34:10-15.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:10-15

¹⁰“Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding.

Far be it from God to do wickedness,

And from the Almighty to do wrong.

¹¹For He pays a man according to his work,

And makes him find it according to his way.

¹²Surely, God will not act wickedly,

And the Almighty will not pervert justice.

¹³Who gave Him authority over the earth?

And who has laid *on Him* the whole world?

¹⁴If He should determine to do so,

If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,

¹⁵All flesh would perish together,

And man would return to dust.”

34:10-15 Elihu defends God’s power and justice.

1. far be it from God to do wickedness, Job 34:10,12 (cf. Job 8:3; 36:23; 37:23; Deut. 32:4)
2. He pays a man according to his work (cf. Job 4:8; 34:25; Ps. 28:4; 62:12; Pro. 12:14; 24:12; Eccl. 12:14; Jer. 17:10; 32:19; Ezek. 33:20; Matt. 16:27; 25:31-46; Rom. 2:6; 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:14; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 2:23; 20:12; 22:12)
3. He is the sovereign creator, Job 34:13
4. He is the sustainer of all life, Job 34:14-15

34:10 “men of understanding” This is literally “men (BDB 35, KB 43) of heart (BDB 523, KB 516).” See Special Topic: Heart.

▣ **“far be it”** This idiomatic expression (like Paul’s “God forbid,” “may it never be”) is also found in Job 27:5.

34:12 This is the issue of the book! Is God fair/just with His human creatures (cf. Job 8:3)? Elihu says “yes”; Job says “no.”

The book never really answers the question. It simply asserts God as sovereign (i.e., Job 38:1-42:6)! The mystery remains but “the two ways” does not fit all suffering and pain (i.e., Gen. 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53).



NASB, NKJV,

JPSOA “surely”

NRSV “of a truth”

NJB “be sure of it”

REB “the truth is”

LXX “now, do you think”

Peshitta “truly”

This is a Hebrew idiom (a CONJUNCTION, BDB 64 II and an ADVERB, BDB 53). The same form is found in Job 19:4. It denotes a true statement.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

34:14 The question of this verse is “whose heart, spirit, and breath” are being addressed:

1. God’s heart (JPSOA, Peshitta)
2. humankind’s spirit and breath (JPSOA, Peshitta)

The NKJV translates the three (i.e., heart, spirit, and breath) as belonging to God.

Job 34:14-15 is contextually part of a hypothetical (“if”) sentence. In whatever way Job 34:14 is translated, Job 34:15 shows the terrible result. Life would cease (cf. Job 12:10)!

34:15 “man would return to dust” This is an allusion to Gen. 2:7 and 3:19. This imagery is used earlier by Job in Job 10:9.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:16-20

- ¹⁶“But if *you have* understanding, hear this;
Listen to the sound of my words.
¹⁷Shall one who hates justice rule?
And will you condemn the righteous mighty One,
¹⁸Who says to a king, ‘Worthless one,’
To nobles, ‘Wicked ones’;
¹⁹Who shows no partiality to princes
Nor regards the rich above the poor,
For they all are the work of His hands?
²⁰In a moment they die, and at midnight
People are shaken and pass away,
And the mighty are taken away without a hand.”

34:16-20 This strophe is directed to Job (another hypothetical, BDB 49, Job 34:14,16). It mentions the leaders who are rejected by God if they are not righteous (cf. Job 34:30).

1. a king
2. a judge (implied by use of “partiality”)
3. nobles (king’s wealthy, powerful supporters)
4. princes (king’s family)

If they show partiality they will be removed. This may reflect Job’s claims/imagery in Job 29:25 or 31:37. Job may have been a regional chief, surely a local elder.

34:17a “rule” This VERB (BDB 289, KB 289, *Qal* IMPERFECT) normally means “to bind,” but it is used in several senses in Job.

1. to bind up wounds, Job 5:18 (cf. Ps. 147:3)
2. to dam up (i.e., bind) a stream, Job 28:11
3. to govern/rule (i.e., bind up or control social life), Job 34:17
4. to bind a covering on a dead body in the grave

In Gen. 22:3; 40:13; Num. 22:21; Jdgs. 19:10; 2 Sam. 16:1; 17:23; 19:26, it means “to saddle” (several times in Kings). Only in this context does it mean “to rule.” NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 19, suggests it may mean “to imprison,” which seems to follow the basic meaning of the Hebrew root better.

34:17b

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| NASB | “will you condemn a righteous mighty one” |
| NKJV | “will you condemn <i>Him who is most just</i>” |
| NRSV | “will you condemn one who is righteous and mighty” |

TEV “are you condemning the righteous God”
 NJB “would you dare condemn the Upright One, the Almighty”
 JPSOA “would you condemn the Just Mighty One”

The NASB implies it refers to a righteous judge who acts fairly to all without partiality, but the other translations think it refers to God. He is the just and impartial One, therefore, Job must be a liar.

The ADJECTIVES “righteous” (BDB 843) and “mighty” (BDB 460) can be a hendiadys. The NET Bible translates them as “the supremely righteous One,” following Dhorme (516).

34:19a “shows no partiality” This VERB (BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* PERFECT) is literally “does not lift the face.” It is regularly used of impartial judges (cf. Deut. 1:17; 16:19; 24:17; Lev. 19:15) and of God (cf. Deut. 10:17; 2 Chr. 19:7; and probably here).

34:19c This line of poetry obviously refers to God’s creation of humankind (Genesis 1-2).

34:20 Those in power who act unjustly in partiality are quickly removed by the God of justice!
 “People” (BDB 766 I) may refer to the rich leaders mentioned in Job 34:18-19.

▣ “hand” See Special Topic: Hand.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:21-30

- ²¹“For His eyes are upon the ways of a man,
 And He sees all his steps.
²²There is no darkness or deep shadow
 Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
²³For He does not *need* to consider a man further,
 That he should go before God in judgment.
²⁴He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry,
 And sets others in their place.
²⁵Therefore He knows their works,
 And He overthrows *them* in the night,
 And they are crushed.
²⁶He strikes them like the wicked
 In a public place,
²⁷Because they turned aside from following Him,
 And had no regard for any of His ways;
²⁸So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him,
 And that He might hear the cry of the afflicted—
²⁹When He keeps quiet, who then can condemn?
 And when He hides His face, who then can behold Him,
 That is, in regard to both nation and man?—
³⁰So that godless men would not rule
 Nor be snares of the people.”

34:21-30 This strophe is parallel to Job 34:16-20. The God of justice is characterized and the wicked are judged.

God is described as

1. His eyes are upon the ways of human beings (cf. Job 34:11,25; 24:23b; 31:4)
2. there is no darkness or deep shadow that can hide sinners from Him (cf. Ps. 139:11-12; Jer. 23:24; Amos 9:2-3)
3. His justice is fair and sure the first time (Job 34:23 may be an allusion to Job's question in Job 24:1)
4. He removes the wicked and establishes the righteous (notice the dashes after Job 34:28 and before 34:30; RSV, NASB, NRSV use them to show that 34:30 relates to 34:28)

The wicked described.

1. they are judged publicly (this surely fits Job's life)
2. because they have turned from His path
3. because they have taken advantage of the poor
4. they shall not rule (Job 34:30)

34:23 There is a textual question with the ADVERB "yet" (BDB 728). Many scholars emend it to "appointed time" (BDB 588, NRSV) but NASB and NKJV see "yet" used in the sense of "further" (i.e., more time to examine). The UBS Text Project (p. 116) gives "yet" an "A" rating (very high probability).

34:28 God hears the cry of the poor and afflicted but Elihu assumes Job has abused the poor and powerless. The question for Job is "Why has He not heard my cries?"

34:29 This verse addresses Job's complaint that God is hiding from him, will not answer him. Sometime God does

1. keep quiet (i.e., He is at rest and needs to be aroused)
2. hide His face (cf. Job 13:24; Ps. 13:1; 44:24; 88:14; Isa. 45:15)

For both individuals (Job) and nations (i.e., I think the author is a Judean sage), this verse hints at the corporate purpose of the book of Job.



NASB, NRSV,

JPSOA, REB,

LXX, Peshitta

"who then can condemn"

NKJV

"who then can make trouble"

NJB

"no one can move him"

The UBS Text Project (p. 118) supports the first option following the MT (BDB 957, KB 1294, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) with an "A" rating.

The NJB is an emendation which reverses the last two Hebrew consonants, "and who will shake" (BDB 950, KB 1271).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:31-37

³¹**"For has anyone said to God,**

'I have borne chastisement;

I will not offend anymore;

³²**Teach me what I do not see;**

If I have done iniquity,

I will not do it again'?"

³³**Shall He recompense on your terms, because you have rejected it?**

For you must choose, and not I;
 Therefore declare what you know.
³⁴Men of understanding will say to me,
 And a wise man who hears me,
³⁵Job speaks without knowledge,
 And his words are without wisdom.
³⁶Job ought to be tried to the limit,
 Because he answers like wicked men.
³⁷For he adds rebellion to his sin;
 He claps his hands among us,
 And multiplies his words against God.”

34:31-37 In this strophe Elihu asserts Job’s guilt by his previous words. Job has accused God of injustice. If God is just, then Job must be unjust!

Notice the number of “I’s” which Elihu attributes to Job’s false statements.

1. I have borne chastisement, Job 34:31
2. I will not offend anymore, Job 34:31
3. I do not see (i.e., understand God), Job 34:32
4. if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more, Job 34:32

34:33

NASB

“it

NJB

“His decisions”

There is no stated OBJECT of the VERB. It could refer to

1. Job’s legal case (NKJV, “your terms”)
2. God’s ways with humans (TEV, NJB, i.e.; “the two ways”)
3. Elihu’s argument (NET Bible, see the remainder of Job 34:33)

34:36

NASB

“ought”

NKJV

“Oh, that”

NRSV, JPSOA

“would that”

REB

“if only”

LXX

“nonetheless”

Peshitta

“truly”

NET Bible

“but”

The MT has “my father.” It is possible to take it as “I entreat” (BDB 106), from an Arabic root. Note how the ancient versions take it as an affirmation that Job will be put on trial by God (or by his peers).

34:37b There have been many suggestions about what this line of poetry in context means.

1. Job’s arrogant condemnation of God (Job 34:37c)
2. Job causes spiritual doubt among those who hear him (Dhorme)
3. Job attacks the very foundation of Edomite law and legal precedent (NJB)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Who are the wise men of Job 34:2,10,34?
2. Why does Elihu quote/allude to Job's previous statements?
3. Explain Job 34:9 in your own words.
4. How does Job 34:11 characterize "the two ways"?
5. Who is referred to in Job 34:17b?
6. What does "God hides His face" mean (Job 34:29)?
7. Does Job 34:31-32 describe Job's previous claims?
8. To what does Job 34:37b refer?

JOB 35

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Elihu Sharply Reproves Job	Elihu condemns Self-Righteousness	Discourses of Elihu (32:1-37:24) Third Discourse of Elihu	The Speeches of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	God's Transcendence
35:1-8 (2-8)	35:1 35:2-3 (2-3) 35:4-8 (4-8)	35:1-8 (2-8)	35:1-8 (1-8)	35:1 35:2-16 (2-16)
35:9-16 (9-16)	35:9-16 (9-16)	35:9-16 (9-16)	35:9-13 (9-13) 35:14-16 (14-16)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section) FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Elihu has listened well to Job's words and throws them back at him.
 1. do you think. . ., Job 35:2 (twice)
 2. for you say. . ., Job 35:3
 3. summary statement in Job 35:16
- B. Elihu's remarks in Job 35:5-8 denote a transcendent God who is unaffected by human activity (positive or negative). This may be his mocking of Job's claims (UBS *Handbook*, p. 645).
- C. Elihu accuses Job by implication.
 1. you have sinned, Job 35:6a
 2. your transgressions, Job 35:6b

3. your wickedness is for a man like yourself, Job 35:8a
4. the multitude of oppressions, Job 35:9a
5. the pride of evil men, Job 35:12b
6. an empty cry, Job 35:13a
7. transgression (or “arrogance,” NASB margin), Job 35:15b
8. Job opens his mouth emptily (or “vainly,” NASB margin)

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:1-8

¹Then Elihu continued and said,

²“Do you think this is according to justice?

Do you say, ‘My righteousness is more than God’s’?

³For you say, ‘What advantage will it be to You?

What profit will I have, more than if I had sinned?’

⁴I will answer you,

And your friends with you.

⁵Look at the heavens and see;

And behold the clouds—they are higher than you.

⁶If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against Him?

And if your transgressions are many, what do you do to Him?

⁷If you are righteous, what do you give to Him,

Or what does He receive from your hand?

⁸Your wickedness is for a man like yourself,

And your righteousness is for a son of man.”

35:2b This is the main problem with Job’s attitude. He is so convinced of the rightness of his case (cf. Job 6:29; 9:20; 12:4; 13:18; 27:5-6; 29:14), that he is willing to make himself look good at God’s expense.

The NASB translation, “more than,” takes the COMPARATIVE PREPOSITION as “min” (BDB 577, cf. Job 35:5b; 4:17).

35:3 These questions relate to Job’s words in either Job 7:20 or 21:15, which Elihu alludes to in Job 34:9. It is the question of “the two ways.” Does obedience bring rewards?

Notice the first “you” refers to Job and the second “you” at the close of the verse refers to *El* (God).

34:4 Elihu directs his answer to Job and the three comforters (cf. Job 32:3).

35:5-8 Elihu asserts that no activity of mankind affects God (cf. Job 22:2-4). This is the essence of transcendence!

Notice the NASB’s threefold use of “if” (only twice in the MT, but implied a third time, BDB 49). Elihu seems to be addressing Job’s charge that God will not answer him (cf. Job 25:12-15).

Several times in Job, God’s transcendence is stated (cf. Job 11:7-9; 22:12) by the imagery of the height and width of His creation.

35:5 Notice the three IMPERATIVES.

1. look – BDB 613, KB 661, *Hiphil*

2. see – BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal*
3. behold – BDB 1003, KB 1449, *Qal*

They are a literary device for emphasis (i.e., Job, listen up!).

35:7 This may be an allusion to Eliphaz’s words in Job 22:3.

35:8 Notice the parallel of “man” (BDB 35) and “son of man” (BDB 119 CONSTRUCT BDB 9). This is similar to Ps. 8:4; however, it is a different word for “man” (i.e., BDB 60, cf. Job 25:6) but the same concept. The phrase “son of man” is a Hebrew idiom for a human person. See Special Topic: Son of Man.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:9-16

- ⁹**“Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out;
They cry for help because of the arm of the mighty.**
- ¹⁰**But no one says, ‘Where is God my Maker,
Who gives songs in the night,**
- ¹¹**Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth
And makes us wiser than the birds of the heavens?’**
- ¹²**There they cry out, but He does not answer
Because of the pride of evil men.**
- ¹³**Surely God will not listen to an empty cry,
Nor will the Almighty regard it.**
- ¹⁴**How much less when you say you do not behold Him,
The case is before Him, and you must wait for Him!**
- ¹⁵**And now, because He has not visited *in* His anger,
Nor has He acknowledged transgression well,**
- ¹⁶**So Job opens his mouth emptily;
He multiplies words without knowledge.”**

35:9 This verse may be an allusion to the charges made by the three comforters that Job had acted against the poor and needy. If so, Elihu characterizes Job as “the arm of the mighty.”

There is a word play in this verse between

1. the NOUN, “multitude” (BDB 913)
2. the ADJECTIVE, “mighty” (BDB 912 I)

35:10-11 Job 35:10-11 contains rhetorical questions. Notice how God is characterized.

1. God my Maker.
2. Who gives songs in the night?
3. Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth?
4. Who makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?

The LXX translates Job 35:11 as “he it is that sets me apart from earth’s four-footed animals, and from the birds of the air.” The meaning of this verse is ambiguous and uncertain.

35:10b

NASB, NKJV,

NJB “songs”

NRSV, JPSOA “strength”

TEV	“hope”
REB	“protection”
Peshitta	“counsel”

The MT has “songs” (BDB 274 I). The translation of NRSV, JPSOA emend מרז to an Arabic root, דמר, which means “violent,” courageous,” “mighty” (AB, pp. 228-229). It is possible that Exod. 15:2 is another place where the term “song” may mean “strength.”

35:11 This verse may refer to Job’s words in Job 12:7.

35:12 The “they” seems to refer to the birds and animals. Their cry is unheard because of the fall of mankind (i.e., Genesis 3; Rom. 8:18-22).

However, it is surely possible to see this verse referring to

1. “the oppressed who cry out” (Job 35:9a)
2. “the oppressors” (Job 35:9b) who are “evil men” with prideful hearts (Job 35:12b)

God does not hear sinful people when, in time of need, they cry out to Him. The implication is that this refers to Job. Job’s hidden sin is why God will not answer him (cf. Job 35:14-16).

35:13 “the Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

35:14a This may relate to Job’s words in Job 9:11; 13:24; 23:8,9; 30:20.

35:14b This may relate to Job’s words in Job 19:7; 30:20,24,28.

35:15a This may refer to Job’s words in Job 21:14-26

35:15b

NASB, NRSV	“transgression”
NKJV, REB	“folly”
TEV	“sin”
NJB	“human rebellion”
JPSOA	“that it may be long drawn out”
Peshitta	“and he does not harm my soul”

The UBS Text Project (p. 122) gives “folly” (פֶּשַׁע, BDB 832) a “B” rating (some doubt). It is read by Theodotion and Symmachus as פֶּשַׁע (BDB 833), “transgression,” in their translations of the OT. JPSOA says the Hebrew is uncertain.

The NJB translates the ADVERB “greatly” (מְאֹד, BDB 547) as “human” (אָדָם, BDB 9), but the UBS Text Project (p. 123) gives “greatly” an “A” rating (very high probability).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is Job 35:2 critical to Elihu’s overall argument against Job?
2. Explain the difference between a “transcendent” view of God and an “immanent” view of God.
3. Elihu seems to give two reasons why Job’s prayers were not answered. What are they?
4. Legal terminology is often used in Job, why?

JOB 36

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Elihu Speaks of God's Dealings With Men	Elihu Proclaims God's Goodness	Discourses of Elihu (32:1-37:24) Fourth Discourse of Elihu (36:1-37:24)	The Speeches of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	The Real Meaning of Job's Suffering
36:1-16 (1-16)	36:1 36:2-4 (2-4) 36:5-12 (5-12) 36:13-21 (13-21)	36:1-4 (1-4) 36:5-12 (5-12) 36:13-16 (13-16)	36:1-4 (1-4) 36:5-12 (5-12) 36:13-15 (13-15) 36:16-21 (16-21)	36:1 36:2-21 (2-21) Hymns to God's Omnipotence (36:22-37:24)
36:17-23 (17-23)	36:22-23 (22-23) Elihu Proclaims God's Majesty (36:24-37:24)	36:17-23 (17-23)	36:22-26 (22-26)	36:22-37:24 (36:22-37:24)
36:24-33 (24-33)	36:24-25 (24-25) 36:26-33 (26-33)	36:24-33 (24-33)	36:27-33 (27-33)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:1-16

¹Then Elihu continued and said,
²“Wait for me a little, and I will show you
That there is yet more to be said in God’s behalf.
³I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
And I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
⁴For truly my words are not false;
One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.
⁵Behold, God is mighty but does not despise *any*;
He is mighty in strength of understanding.
⁶He does not keep the wicked alive,
But gives justice to the afflicted.
⁷He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous;
But with kings on the throne
He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.
⁸And if they are bound in fetters,
And are caught in the cords of affliction,
⁹Then He declares to them their work
And their transgressions, that they have magnified themselves.
¹⁰He opens their ear to instruction,
And commands that they return from evil.
¹¹If they hear and *serve Him*,
They will end their days in prosperity
And their years in pleasures.
¹²But if they do not hear, they shall perish by the sword
And they will die without knowledge.
¹³But the godless in heart lay up anger;
They do not cry for help when He binds them.
¹⁴They die in youth,
And their life *perishes* among the cult prostitutes.
¹⁵He delivers the afflicted in their affliction,
And opens their ear in *time of* oppression.
¹⁶Then indeed, He enticed you from the mouth of distress,
Instead of it, a broad place with no constraint;
And that which was set on your table was full of fatness.”

36:2 “Wait for me a little while” This is a *Piel* IMPERATIVE (BDB 509, KB 506). The Hebrew root normally means “to surround” but in Syrian it means “to wait.”

▣ **“I will show you”** This is a *Piel* IMPERFECT (BDB 296, KB 295) used in a COHORTATIVE sense.

This verse is a literary way Elihu expresses his desire that Job hear him (cf. Job 33:1b; 34:2,10,16; 37:14). Elihu is arrogantly asserting he, and he alone, really has true wisdom (cf. Job 36:4b; 33:3-4) and is speaking for God!

36:3a This may be idiomatic for Elihu gathering information about God from

1. a variety of places
2. God Himself (see same word used in Ps. 139:2)

Therefore, it becomes an assertion of his complete and full knowledge of God.

36:3b Elihu asserts that he can substantiate that God is just and fair, which Job has denied.

▣ **“my Maker”** The MT (BDB 821, KB 950, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) asserts God as creator of human beings. A synonymous title was used in Job 35:10 (BDB 793 I, KB 889, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE).

36:4a This implies that Job’s words, also as well as his three comforters’ words, are false! Only Elihu has true and complete knowledge of God (Job 36:4b). He claims a unique illumination in Job 33:3.

36:5-16 Here is a list of the actions of God.

1. God is mighty, Job 36:5a
2. God despises no one, Job 36:5a
3. God is mighty in understanding (lit. heart), Job 36:5b
4. God destroys the wicked, Job 36:6a; kings also, Job 36:12-16
5. God gives justice to the afflicted, Job 36:6b
6. God does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous, Job 36:7a
7. God places kings on their thrones, Job 36:7b
8. God instructs kings, Job 36:10a
9. God commands they repent of evil, Job 36:8-10
10. God blesses obedient, repentant kings, Job 36:11

Though Elihu uses “kings,” he is obviously referring to Job as a tribal elder or community leader (cf. Job 36:17-23).

36:5b “understanding” This is literally “heart.” NJB accepts an emendation and reads, “whose heart is pure.” The UBS Text Project (p. 123) gives the NASB translation of the MT a “B” rating (some doubt). See Special Topic: Heart.

The theological essence of this line of poetry is that God acts on His purposes and is resolute in accomplishing them.

36:6a This is the theology of “the two ways.” Job has disagreed with this (cf. Job 9:24; 21:7). As Job is an exception, so too, the prosperous wicked!

36:7 The interpretive issue becomes, “Are there two groups in Job 36:7 or just one?”

1. the righteous
2. kings

“Kings” seems out of place unless it is an allusion to

1. Job’s tribal/area leadership
2. imagery of the righteous being treated as a king

36:8-11 Elihu asserts that the purpose of suffering may be to help turn back to God a faithful follower who has sinned (Job 36:15). This is the stated purpose of the “cursing” passages in the Mosaic Covenant (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-30).

36:8 The concept of being bound by God (cf. Job 36:13) is a Hebrew idiom for judgment (i.e., Ps. 107:10; 149:8). The opposite idiom is “to set free” (cf. Ps. 146:7; Isa. 42:7; 49:9; 61:1).

36:10 “He opens their ear to instruction” This is a Hebrew idiom. God initiates revelation (cf. Job 33:16; 36:15); mankind can only respond to God’s initiation. This is covenant (see Special Topic: Covenant).

Literally, the VERB is “uncovers” (BDB 162, KB 191, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Zech. 7:11). This is similar to the idiom of “circumcise your ears” (i.e., Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51).

▣ **“return from evil”** This VERB (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is one of several Hebrew terms which denotes a change of spiritual direction. See Special Topic: Repentance (OT).

Notice in Job 36:10 how the sovereign God reveals His will but calls on a human person to respond. This is the intersection of election and free will. Both are biblical; both are true; both are necessary. See Special Topic: Election/Predestination and the Need for a Theological Balance.

36:11-12 “If they hear and serve” This is the essence of the VERB *shema* (cf. Deut. 6:4-6), “to hear, so as to do” (cf. James 1:22-25).

Notice the traditional “two ways” emphasis—repent and be prosperous and live a long life.

36:12a

NASB, NKJV,

NRSV, JPSOA

“perish by the sword”

TEV

“cross the stream”

NJB

“go down the canal”

REB

“cross the river of death”

NET Bible

“pass over the river of death”

The Hebrew VERB (BDB 716, KB 778) means “to pass over” or “to pass through.” It has a wide semantic field. However, it is often used in connection with

1. death involving water – Ps. 88:16-17; 124:3-4; Jonah 2:4; Isa. 54:9
2. death – Job 33:18; 34:20; Ps. 37:36

However, the word “sword” (BDB 1019, cf. Job 15:22) gives the NASB, NKJV, NRSV, JPSOA textual support for their translation, “perish.”

36:13 The godless do not call out to God, but the faithful do (cf. Job 36:15). The VERB “delivers” (BDB 322 I, KB 321, *Piel* IMPERFECT) in Job 36:15 denotes God saving/delivering

1. from affliction, Job 36:15; Ps. 119:153
2. from calamity, Ps. 18:18-19
3. from trouble, Ps. 34:6-7; 50:15; 81:7; 91:15
4. from death, Ps. 56:13; 116:8

36:14b

NASB

“among cult prostitutes”

NKJV

“among the perverted persons”

NRSV

“in shame”

TEV

“disgrace”

NJB

“among the male prostitutes of the temple”

JPSOA “the depraved”
 REB “male prostitutes”
 LXX “by messengers” (angels)
 Peshitta “snatched by famine”

The MT has “temple prostitute” (man, cf. Deut. 23:17; 1 Kgs. 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs. 23:7). The FEMININE form is used in Deut. 23:17; Hos. 4:14. It is used of harlotry in general in Gen. 38:21-22.

Temple prostitutes are associated with fertility worship (i.e., imitation magic). Exactly how Job would have known of this is uncertain. See Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the ANE.

36:15-16 This is the key thought in the dialogues (Job 4-37). God delivers the afflicted who turn to Him. The new thought is that “affliction” itself is a tool to help sinners turn back to God (cf. Heb. 12:5-13).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:17-23

¹⁷**“But you were full of judgment on the wicked;
 Judgment and justice take hold of you.**
¹⁸***Beware* that wrath does not entice you to scoffing;
 And do not let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside.**
¹⁹**Will your riches keep you from distress,
 Or all the forces of your strength?**
²⁰**Do not long for the night,
 When people vanish in their place.**
²¹**Be careful, do not turn to evil,
 For you have preferred this to affliction.**
²²**Behold, God is exalted in His power;
 Who is a teacher like Him?**
²³**Who has appointed Him His way,
 And who has said, ‘You have done wrong’?”**

36:16-20 Notice the statements of scholars.

1. The AB (p. 233) says, “These verses are so difficult that many critics omit them in despair.”
2. The UBS *Handbook* (p. 665) says “Job 36:16-21 are extremely difficult to interpret and as Rowley says, ‘scarcely any two interpreters are agreed as to their meanings.’”
3. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 786, says, “It is uncertain whether Job is being accused, warned, or encouraged. It is also unclear by what means the sufferer is being (NIV), or was (RSV), or will be (Dhorme, 544-45) enticed. . .”

36:16a “from the mouth of distress” What powerful personification imagery!

36:16b,c These two lines of poetry draw on two Hebrew idioms.

1. “a broad place” – this is the opposite of a tight, restricted place (i.e., trouble, pain, doubt, fear, etc); it comes from penned up animals being released into pasture (i.e., freedom from restrictions). The NOUN (BDB 931) occurs only here.
2. “table full of fatness” – this is imagery for wonderful, boundless food (opposite of hunger and need)

36:17 I am not sure the NASB paragraphing is accurate here. It seems the fullness of plenty in Job 36:16 is contrasted with the fullness of judgment. Elihu is accusing Job of improper use of his wealth, influence, and position (i.e., Job 36:19).

The other option is a warning not to think too highly of your case (i.e., Job's legal case, cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 305) against God or the "ransom" (Job 33:24, which refers to the work of the angelic advocate).

36:18 Job 36:18 could be

1. an IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense (NASB, "let. . .")
2. just another IMPERFECT (this chapter has many)

The word NASB translates as "ransom" (BDB 49) can also mean "bribe" (i.e., 1 Sam. 12:3; Pro. 6:35; Amos 5:12).

36:19 The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 441, says the phrase, "the forces of *your* strength," is impossible to translate. There have been numerous suggestions. They assert Job 36:10 is a "virtually unintelligible text."

36:20 This is another difficult verse; possibly evil doers seek the night for their evil acts.

36:21a This is a *Niphal* IMPERATIVE ("take heed," BDB 1036, KB 1581) followed by a negated *Qal* JUSSIVE ("do not turn," BDB 815, KB 937).

36:22-23 Again, Elihu lists God's characteristics (cf. Job 36:5-16).

1. God is exalted in His power (i.e., men see it in creation, Job 36:25a)
2. God is an unmatched teacher (i.e., true wisdom)
3. God is sovereign, Job 36:23

This emphasis on the sovereign power of the creator God foreshadows God's response to Job in Job 38-41.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:24-33

- ²⁴**"Remember that you should exalt His work,
Of which men have sung.**
- ²⁵**All men have seen it;
Man beholds from afar.**
- ²⁶**Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know *Him*;
The number of His years is unsearchable.**
- ²⁷**For He draws up the drops of water,
They distill rain from the mist,**
- ²⁸**Which the clouds pour down,
They drip upon man abundantly.**
- ²⁹**Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds,
The thundering of His pavilion?**
- ³⁰**Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him,
And He covers the depths of the sea.**
- ³¹**For by these He judges peoples;
He gives food in abundance.**
- ³²**He covers *His* hands with the lightning,
And commands it to strike the mark.**

³³Its noise declares His presence;
The cattle also, concerning what is coming up.”

36:24-33 These verses describe God as creator with imagery from nature (esp. water; see Special Topic: Waters). Water was seen as a blessing from God. The regular cycles of nature were seen in a divine activity.

The context of this strophe continues into the next chapter and introduces the words of God in Job 38-41. God is the sovereign Lord of all created things (animate and inanimate).

36:26a This is not an affirmation of the unknowability of God (i.e., Ecclesiastes) but a Hebrew idiom expressing that humans cannot fully comprehend the greatness of God (cf. Job 5:9; 11:7).

36:27b

NASB, NKJV,

NJB, JPSOA “the mist”

TEV “drops of rain”

REB “the flood”

LXX “into a cloud”

The MT has the NOUN “mist” (BDB 15, KB 11) that occurs only twice in the OT, Gen. 2:6 and here. KB suggests several options.

1. sea-foam (Targums)
2. inundation of floods (Akkadian)
3. subterranean stream of fresh water (i.e., Sumerian, cf. Gen. 2:6)
4. celestial stream (Arabic)

The word here seems to refer to atmospheric water (rain). The three sources of agricultural water were

1. irrigation/annual flooding
2. rain (mostly in storms)
3. dew

36:28 “They drip upon man” There are several places where “adam” (“mankind,” BDB 9 IV) can be parallel to “*erets*” (i.e., land, ground, cf. Pro. 30:14; Jer. 32:20; Zech. 13:5). This translation makes Job 36:28 make more sense (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 263, 267).

36:30b

NASB, NKJV,

TEV “depths of the sea”

NRSV, LXX “roots of the sea”

NJB “the tops of the mountains”

JPSOA, Peshitta “the bed of the sea”

REB “the sea”

The MT has the NOUN CONSTRUCT, “the roots (BDB 1057) of the sea” (BDB 410). The NJB fits the parallelism best, but “roots” may be another allusion to the ancient subterranean pillars (cf. Job 9:6; 28:9; 38:4,6; 1 Sam. 2:8; Ps. 75:3; 104:5) that support the earth amidst the cosmic chaotic waters (cf. Gen. 1:2; Ps. 24:2; 104:3).

36:31 “He judges peoples” This phrase reflects God’s universal control (cf. Job 37:12c; Ps. 9:8; 96:10). The use of “*El*,” the general name for deity in the ANE, reflects this connotation. He is God of all!

The NJB, NAB, and REB translations emend “to judge” (BDB 192, KB 220, *Qal* IMPERFECT) to “to nourish/supply” in order to make lines a and b more parallel (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 1089; NET Bible, p. 839)

36:33 “noises” This (BDB 929) refers to the thunder of a rain storm (cf. Job 37:2).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Does Job 36:3-4 imply Elihu is claiming a special knowledge from God?
2. How does Job 36:6-11 express the traditional theology of “the two ways”?
3. How is the word “kings” used in Job 36:7?
4. How does Job 36:10 relate to both God’s sovereignty and human free will?
5. Why does the word “cult prostitutes” appear in Job 36:14?
6. What “ransom” does Job 36:18 refer to?
7. What does “we do not know *Him*” in Job 36:26 mean?

JOB 37

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Elihu says God Is Back of the Storm	Elihu Proclaims God's Majesty (36:24-37:24)	Discourses of Elihu (32:1-37:24) Fourth Discourse of Elihu (36:1-37:24)	The Speeches of Elihu (32:1-37:24)	Hymn to God's Omnipotence (36:22-37:24)
37:1-13 (1-13)	37:1-13 (1-13)	37:1-13 (1-13)	37:1-13 (1-13)	37:1-13 (1-13)
37:14-20 (14-20)	37:14-18 (14-18) 37:19-24 (19-24)	37:14-20 (14-20)	37:14-20 (14-20)	37:14-24 (14-24)
37:21-24 (21-24)		37:21-24 (21-24)	37:21-24 (21-24)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. xvi). Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 37 continues an emphasis on God's exalted power in the natural realm (cf. Job 36:22-23, 24-37:24).
- B. It is even possible to denote the seasons.
 1. autumn (the rainy season, cf. Job 36:37-33; 37:1-5)
 2. winter (snow and ice, cf. Job 37:6-13)
 3. summer (hot, south wind, cf. Job 37:14-22)
- C. Much of Elihu's nature imagery is a foreshadowing of God's response to Job in Job 38:1-42:6.

- D. Neither Job nor God responded to Elihu's speeches! Is this a sign that
1. he won the argument
 2. God accepted his words because He does not mention him in His rejection of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar
 3. he is simply ignored
 4. he was a literary way of introducing God's words to Job

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 37:1-13

- ¹"At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.
- ²Listen closely to the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth.
- ³Under the whole heaven He lets it loose,
And His lightning to the ends of the earth.
- ⁴After it, a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain *the lightnings* when His voice is heard.
- ⁵God thunders with His voice wondrously,
Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.
- ⁶For to the snow He says, 'Fall on the earth,'
And to the downpour and the rain, 'Be strong.'
- ⁷He seals the hand of every man,
That all men may know His work.
- ⁸Then the beast goes into its lair
And remains in its den.
- ⁹Out of the south comes the storm,
And out of the north the cold.
- ¹⁰From the breath of God ice is made,
And the expanse of the waters is frozen.
- ¹¹Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud;
He disperses the cloud of His lightning.
- ¹²It changes direction, turning around by His guidance,
That it may do whatever He commands it
On the face of the inhabited earth.
- ¹³Whether for correction, or for His world,
Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen."

37:1 This verse may be connected to Job 37:33, "noise" of His presence.

1. "trembles" – BDB 353, KB 350, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Exod. 19:16; 1 Sam. 14:15; Dan. 10:7
2. "leaps" – BDB 684 I, KB 736, *Qal* IMPERFECT, rare word found only here in *Qal*; note *Hiphil* in Hab. 3:6

This verse is obviously connected to Job 36:33. Job 36 and 37 comprise one literary unit.

▣ **“heart”** See Special Topic: Heart.

The MT has “my heart,” referring to Elihu but the LXX has “your,” referring to Job. The thunderstorm described in the last strophe of Job 36 was awesome and illustrated God’s power. Often thunder is used to describe God’s voice (i.e., Job 37:4-5; Ps. 29:3-9). Elihu mixes metaphors when he describes the thunder as “roaring” (i.e., lion), but it is powerful imagery.

37:2 “listen closely” This is the translation of a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (PLURAL) and the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root (BDB 1033, KB 1570). The book of Job does not use this grammatical feature of intensification often.

Notice the synonymous parallelism of Job 37:2 (cf. Job 36:29,30,32,33; 38:4,5,15,21).

1. thunder. . .His voice
2. rumbling. . .His mouth

The PLURAL points toward Job and his three comforters, cf. Job 32:3,5; 34:2,10; 35:4.

37:3 “the ends of the earth” This is an expression of God’s sovereign power over all creation (cf. Job 28:24; 38:13). It is literally “the wings (BDB 489) of the earth,” meaning “corners” or “extremities.”

37:5b This is the same thought as Job 36:26b. Humans cannot comprehend God’s power in the natural realm (cf. Job 5:9; 11:7; 26:14), and much less in the spiritual realm (i.e., justice, fairness, mercy).

37:6 “Fall on the earth” This is God’s voice speaking (cf. Job 37:4-5) to a snow storm (i.e., personification, BDB 216, KB 241, *Qal* IMPERATIVE). This is beautiful imagery of the God of creation intimately involved in His creation.

Both NASB (“be strong”) and NJB (“now rain hard”) see the last line as also an IMPERATIVAL use (lit. a NOUN, “his strength,” BDB 738). They get this translation by changing the vowels.

37:7a The VERB “seals” (BDB 367, KB 364, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used in a unique sense of “knowing God’s ways in weather.” Job 37:7-8 expresses the natural revelation (i.e., Ps. 19:1-6) that both humans and animals understand natural cycles of weather and how to prepare (i.e., shut themselves inside).

The LXX translates this line as “so that every human being may know his own weakness,” but the Peshitta is much like the NASB, “all humans recognize God’s power in the natural order.”

It is possible to see the root, “know,” as being “rest.” This would form a better parallelism. At the approach of a powerful storm front, both humans and animals take shelter until it passes by.

37:9

NASB, TEV	“south”
NKJV	“the chamber <i>of the south</i> ”
NRSV, JPSOA,	
LXX	“the Mansion of the South”
REB	“its prison”
Peshitta	“the inner chambers”

The MT has “from its chamber” (BDB 293, KB 293). This word can denote a type of storeroom (Pro. 24:4).

1. in Job 9:9 it stored the constellations (cf. Job 38:32a)
2. here it stores the cold wind (cf. Job 38:22; Ps. 135:7c)

▣

NASB	“the north the cold”
NKJV, NRSV	“cold from the scattering winds <i>of the north</i> ”

TEV	“the biting cold from the north”
NJB	“the north winds usher in the cold”
JPSOA	“the cold from the constellations”
REB	“the rain winds bring bitter cold”
LXX	“cold from the peaks”
Peshitta	“cold out of the downpour”

The MT has “from scattering winds cold.” The VERB “scatter” (BDB 279, KB 280, *Piel* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) in *Piel* normally means “to scatter people.” In Job 18:15 the *Pual* is used of destruction, but here in a nature context, “strong, cold, northern winds” seems best (KB 567, cf. I Enoch 76:10).

37:10 This is anthropomorphic language about God’s creation of ice (cf. Job 38:29). See Special Topic: God Described as Human (anthropomorphic language).

37:11 “moisture” This term (BDB 924, KB 1223) occurs only here and is assumed to be related to “watered,” but AB (p. 243) thinks it is parallel to “light” or “lightning” (BDB 21). This is possible by taking the PREPOSITION “b” as the first letter of another root (i.e., “hail” or “lightning”).



NASB, NRSV,	
JPSOA	“loads”
NKJV	“saturates”
NJB	“weighs”
REB	“hurls lightning”
Peshitta	“stretched”

This VERB (BDB 382, KB 379, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is found only here. BDB says it means “to toil” or “to be burdened” from an Aramaic root, “to toil,” and/or an Arabic root, “to cast” or “to throw” (i.e., lightning, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 384). The same root was used in later Hebrew for “burden” or “load” (i.e., Deut. 1:12; Isa. 1:14).

37:12-13 God controls nature for His purposes (i.e., “He causes it to happen,” Job 37:13b).

1. judgment (“the rod,” BDB 986, cf. Job 21:9)
2. promised blessing (*hesed*, BDB 338, see Special Topic: Lovingkindness)

37:12c “on the face of the inhabited earth” The MT has “on the face of the world of the earth.” This unusual phrase occurs only here and Pro. 8:31.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 37:14-20

- ¹⁴“Listen to this, O Job,
Stand and consider the wonders of God.
¹⁵Do you know how God establishes them,
And makes the lightning of His cloud to shine?
¹⁶Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds,
The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,
¹⁷You whose garments are hot,
When the land is still because of the south wind?
¹⁸Can you, with Him, spread out the skies,
Strong as a molten mirror?

¹⁹Teach us what we shall say to Him;

We cannot arrange *our case* because of darkness.

²⁰Shall it be told Him that I would speak?

Or should a man say that he would be swallowed up?"

37:14 This verse, which starts a new strophe, Job 37:14-20, has three IMPERATIVES.

1. listen – BDB 24, KB 27, *Hiphil*
2. stand – BDB 763, KB 840, *Qal*
3. consider – BDB 106, KB 122, *Hithpoel*

Elihu has often used IMPERATIVES to begin his monologs (cf. Job 32:10; 33:1,31,33; 34:2,10,16; 36:2; 37:2; JUSSIVE in 32:20). In this strophe Elihu is addressing Job directly.

Notice, here the subject of Elihu's comments will be "the wonders of God" (BDB 810 CONSTRUCT BDB 42, for "wondrous" see Special Topic: Wonderful Things).

37:15 "Do you know" This phrase is repeated twice (Job 37:15,16). These rhetorical questions are similar to God's questioning of Job in Job 38:1-42:6. This is literary foreshadowing (see *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 530). Job does not know, no human knows! God is above mankind (cf. Isa. 55:9-11). Without revelation mankind remains ignorant.

37:16a

NASB "layers"

NKJV, NRSV,

NJB, Peshitta "balance"

TEV "float"

JPSOA "expanse"

REB "hang poised"

LXX "the division"

The MT has "swaying," "poising" (BDB 814, KB 618), which is found only here in the OT but possibly a similar root in Job 36:29 is the key to understanding.

1. מפלט – BDB 814
2. מפרש – BDB 831, "to spread out"

▣ **"of one perfect in knowledge"** In Job 36:4 this descriptive phrase referred to Elihu but here obviously of God.

37:17 "You whose garments are hot" The "you" is SINGULAR and may refer to Job's agitation at God's lack of response to his court case against Him (cf. Job 37:19; 13:18; 23:4; 31:35; 32:14; 33:5).

In Job 37:18 the question to Job is sarcastic, as is the *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, "teach us" in Job 37:19.

Job has accused God of overpowering him, terrifying him so that he cannot, or will not, bring his case of innocence before Him.

37:18 "spread out the skies" It is possible to see this verse as referring to

1. God's creation of the atmosphere (see note below)
2. God sending the south wind (Job 37:17) to clear the sky of clouds (i.e., no shade)

▣ **"a molten mirror"** Mirrors in the ANE were made from polished bronze (i.e., Exod. 38:8). The parallel between lines a and b is related to the ancient view that the sky was also a dome of bronze (or animal skin,

cf. Job 9:8; Isa. 40:22; 45:12; Zech. 12:1). Deuteronomy 28:23 uses this same imagery for God's judgment of Israel (i.e., no rain).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 37:21-24

²¹“Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies;
But the wind has passed and cleared them.
²²Out of the north comes golden *splendor*;
Around God is awesome majesty.
²³The Almighty—we cannot find Him;
He is exalted in power
And He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness.
²⁴Therefore men fear Him;
He does not regard any who are wise of heart.”

37:21-24 The nature imagery of a powerful storm continues. Humans are awed at God's power. Not only in the created order (Job 37:21-22) but also in justice (Job 37:23-24). Job should be ashamed of questioning God's power and justice. Job is not “wise of heart” (implied in Job 37:24).

37:22 AB (pp. 245-246) links this text to the Ugaritic *Ba'al* poems, which describe a golden palace on top of Mt. Zaphon (the mountain in the north, cf. Ps. 48:1-3; Isa. 14:13; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 836; Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2, pp. 279-281).

37:23 “The Almighty” See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **“we cannot find Him”** Elihu is reacting to Job's previous words about God being hidden from him (possibly Job 11:7-8; 13:24).

▣ **“He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness”** This is also a reaction to Job's words in Job 9:20-24; 10:3; 12:6.

37:24 “fear” See Special Topic: Fear (OT).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of Elihu's nature imagery?
2. Why is Job 37:7 so hard to interpret?
3. Job 37:13 lists two purposes of God's control of nature. What are they? How do they relate to Job?
4. Is Job 37:17a literal (i.e., hot weather) or figurative (i.e., Job's anger at God)?
5. Does Job 37:19 refer to Job's legal case? Why or why not?
6. What does "out of the north comes golden splendor" in Job 37:22a mean?
7. Explain "we cannot find Him" in Job 37:23a.
8. Is Job 37:24 a typical wisdom close or a direct reference to Job?

JOB 38

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
God Speaks Now to Job	The LORD Reveals His Omnipotence to Job (38:1-40:2)	First Speech of the LORD (38:1-40:2)	The LORD Answers Job (38:1-40:1)	YHWH's First Discourse (38:1-40:5)
38:1-7 (1-7)	38:1	38:1	38:1	38:1-21 (1-21)
	38:2-3 (2-3)	38:2-7 (2-7)	38:2-7 (2-7)	
	38:4-7 (4-7)			
38:8-11 (8-11)	38:8-11 (8-11)	38:8-11 (8-11)	38:8-15 (8-15)	
God's Mighty Power				
38:12-15 (12-15)	38:12-18 (12-18)	38:12-15 (12-15)		
38:16-18 (16-18)		38:16-18 (16-18)	38:16-21 (16-21)	
38:19-24 (19-24)	38:19-21 (19-21)	38:19-21 (19-21)		
	38:22-24 (22-24)	38:22-24 (22-24)	38:22-24 (22-24)	38:22-30 (22-30)
38:25-30 (25-30)	38:25-30 (25-30)	38:25-27 (25-27)	38:25-33 (25-33)	
		38:28-30 (28-30)		
38:31-33 (31-33)	38:31-33 (31-33)	38:31-33 (31-33)		38:31-41 (31-41)
38:34-38 (34-38)	38:34-38 (34-38)	38:34-38 (34-38)	38:34-38 (34-38)	
38:39-41 (39-41)	38:39-41 (39-41)	38:39-41 (39-41)	38:39-41 (39-41)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 38:1-40:2 is God's first personal response to Job.
 1. It does not inform Job of the dialogue of Job 1-2.
 2. It does not address the problem of the deaths of Job's children and servants.
 3. It does not answer Job's legal case (i.e., the unfairness of his situation).
 4. It does not address the problem of human suffering.
 5. It does not explain the hiddenness of God.
 6. It does not reframe "the two ways" (i.e., it even seems to reinforce it, cf. Job 42:10-17).
- B. I must admit how disappointed I am at the Judean sage's (i.e., my view of authorship) composition of God's response to Job. As "A" above shows, it does not answer any of the questions; it simply states the inappropriateness of all human questions! The fact of the sovereignty and power of God has been affirmed by all the speakers in the book of Job (i.e., Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu). They all have this theology at the center of their worldview.

Commentators differ widely on the purpose of these last chapters (and for the book itself, for that matter; see Introduction to Job, IX.). I want to be positive but I cannot! The unfairness of Job's life and the hiddenness of God drives me to want an answer but none is given! "Why" screams out in my mind!

The main truth of Job seems to be that trust is superior to knowledge (i.e., another example would be the salvation of Nineveh in the book of Jonah with so little knowledge of God). Mystery is a valid theological category. Thank God for

 1. His revelation to Israel
 2. His revelation in His Son

The best modern book for me on evil and suffering has been John William Wenham's *The Goodness of God*. I have found that the issue of evil and suffering is a major stumbling block to modern people. Job does not help! It does not answer the questions.

I thought I understood Job, but the more I do a detailed verse-by-verse exposition, the more I do not understand! Job has become, for me, the most emotionally and theologically difficult biblical book I have tried to explicate! I fear my thoughts and pen have offended God! That is not my intent.
- C. God's answer to Job is His greatness and sovereignty, expressed by using rhetorical questions about nature themes.
- D. In some ways God's response is foreshadowed in Elihu's speeches, especially Job 37.
- E. There are two key texts in the first response from YHWH.
 1. Job 38:3b, "I will ask you, and you instruct Me!" (sarcasm)
 2. Job 40:2, "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it."

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:1-7

¹Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,
²“Who is this that darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
³Now gird up your loins like a man,
And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!
⁴Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding,
⁵Who set its measurements? Since you know.
Or who stretched the line on it?
⁶On what were its bases sunk?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
⁷When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

38:1-7 This initial strophe identifies the speaker (i.e., YHWH, not *El*, same as in Job 1-2) and the recipient (i.e., Job).

1. who darkens counsel (cf. Job 42:3)
2. by words without knowledge

This begins an extended series of questions aimed to show the inability of Job, or any human, to understand God’s creative and sustaining power and presence.

On a positive point, earlier in Job’s dialogues, he mentioned that God would never speak to wicked people, so if God spoke to him it would be a way of asserting his innocence!

Job’s desire to speak to God personally is answered (cf. Job 13:23; 23:3-7; 30:20; 31:35; 35:14), but not in the way he expected!

Job’s words in Job 9:14-19 foreshadow this experience.

1. How can I answer Him? – Job 38:14
2. He answers in a storm. – Job 38:19
3. He is overpowering. – Job 38:19

38:1 “YHWH” This is the special covenant name of Deity. It is first mentioned in Genesis 2; also note Gen. 4:26 (but compare Exod. 6:3). See the Special Topic: Names for Deity.

It is uncertain why this special name given to Israel appears in the prose prologue and epilogue, but only once in the dialogues (cf. Job 12:9; some Hebrew MSS have “*Eloah*”).

▣ **“the whirlwind”** Contextually this seems to relate to the powerful storm front and thunderstorm of Job 36:24-37:13, but the word used here (BDB 704, KB 762) does not appear.

The word is often used of an appearance of God (i.e., theophany) in Ezek. 1:4; Job 38:1; 40:6; Zech. 9:14; YHWH comes in a storm when giving the Law on Mt. Sinai but a different Hebrew word is used. It was what transported Elijah to heaven (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:1,11). In the later Psalms it is simply used for a powerful storm (cf. Ps. 107:29; 148:8).

38:2 “darkens counsel” The first word is a *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE (BDB 364, KB 361), which denotes

1. “hiding” or “concealing” in Ps. 139:12
2. “obscure” or “confuse” in Job 38:2

The word “counsel” (BDB 420, KB 558) can refer to “wisdom,” “advice” (i.e., Pro. 12:15). It is used in an evil sense in Job 10:3; 18:7 (i.e., “schemes”) and in Job 21:16; 22:18; Ps. 1:1 (i.e., “the counsel of the wicked”).

Job is not “wicked,” but he does speak out of partial knowledge. God is not totally pleased with Job. Job has implied and stated negative things about God. Job’s attitude in chapters 1-2 has degenerated! He has become a bitter person, caught between his faith in God and fear of God.

38:3 “gird up” This (BDB 25, KB 28, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is a Hebrew idiom referring to turning a robe into a garment for activity or labor by taking the back of the robe and pulling it through the legs to the front, where it is tucked into the waistband, thereby making trousers (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:46; Job 40:7; Jer. 1:17).

This idiom is often used by Paul (Eph. 4:14) and Peter (1 Pet. 1:13) in the NT for mental activity, so too, here. YHWH is calling on Job (as He did Ezekiel, cf. Ezek. 2:1, and many other places) to stand up, take courage, and speak to Him.

▣ **“I will ask you, and you will instruct Me”** Grammatically, the first VERB (BDB 981, KB 1371, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a COHORTATIVE sense) sets the literary stage for YHWH to address Job with a series of questions.

The second (BDB 393, KB 390, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, cf. Job 38:4,18) is a sarcastic way of showing the ridiculousness of a human answering questions about creation (cf. Job 38:21). Although Genesis 1-2 records God’s actions as if a human observer were recording the events, there was no human observer!

The command about knowledge is continued in the chapter by the use of a SYNONYM (BDB 393, KB 390, “know,” cf. Job 38:4,5,12,18,21,33). The issue is one of “knowledge” (i.e., true wisdom). It is with God, not mankind (cf. Job 38:4b,5a).

Job has used this very VERB, in the same grammatical form, in calling on God to answer him (cf. Job 10:2; 13:23).

38:4-6 One of my favorite authors for ANE culture is John H. Walton. He covers ANE cosmology in Job 7, “Cosmic Geography,” in his book *ANE Thought and the OT: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (see pp. 174-175).

38:4 “the foundation of the earth” ANE imagery describes the earth as firmly set on pillars that reach to the sea floor (cf. 1 Sam. 2:8; 1 Chr. 16:30; Ps. 24:2; 75:3; 104:3a,5).

38:5 “its measurements” This is a MASCULINE NOUN (BDB 551, KB 595), found only here in the OT. There is a FEMININE form which is found often (i.e., in Job 11:9; 28:25).

▣ **“Since you know”** This is sarcasm, as are Job 38:17,18,21,33b,34,35. Of course, Job cannot know these things or control them!

▣ **“stretched the line on it”** This (i.e., “line,” BDB 876, KB 1081) refers to the ANE way of measuring (cf. Jer. 31:39; Zech. 1:16) construction projects.

38:6 “On what were its bases sunk” See note at Job 38:4a.

▣ **“cornerstone”** See Special Topic: Cornerstone.

38:7 This verse speaks of the angels. “The morning stars” is parallel to “the sons of God” in Job 1:6; 2:1. See Special Topic: “The Sons of God” in Genesis 6, “C.”

Apparently, angels were not involved in the initial creation (i.e., by the spoken word of God, Genesis 1), but they rejoiced in it. Although Genesis 1-2 does not mention angels, Psalm 103-104 (Psalm 104 is about creation) form a literary unit, and Ps. 103:20 does, along with Ps. 148:2 (cf. Job 38:106).

They were apparently part of the “heavenly council” (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 5:1; 15:15; Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Exod. 15:11; 2 Kgs. 22:19; Ps. 29:1; 82:1; 86:6-8; Isa. 6:8).

▣ **“shouted for joy”** Many parts of God’s created order shout for joy (initially and at its restoration; Rom. 8:18-25 expresses the sorrow of creation at the Fall).

1. dawn and sunset – Ps. 65:8
2. meadows and flocks – Ps. 65:13
3. mountains – Ps. 89:12; 98:8; Isa. 44:23; 55:12
4. fields and trees – Ps. 90:12; Isa. 55:12
5. rivers – Ps. 98:8
6. wilderness and desert – Isa. 35:1-2
7. heavens and lower parts of the earth – Isa. 44:23

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:8-11

⁸**“Or *who* enclosed the sea with doors
When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;
⁹When I made a cloud its garment
And thick darkness its swaddling band,
¹⁰And I placed boundaries on it
And set a bolt and doors,
¹¹And I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther;
And here shall your proud waves stop’?”**

38:8-11 This strophe deals with the boundaries God set on salt water (cf. Ps. 104:9; Pro. 8:29; Jer. 5:22, see Special Topic: Waters). Job 38:25-30 deals with fresh water, so important for agriculture in the ANE.

The imagery of “doors” (BDB 195, KB 223) on the sea is found only here.

It is interesting that all things (except Adam by special, personal forming, Gen. 2:7) are spoken into existence, but not water (cf. Gen. 1:2). This text (Job 38:8) implies the creation of salt water by the imagery of “birth” (i.e., “from the womb”) and baby clothing (Job 38:9).

38:9 This verse seems to relate to Gen. 1:2, the initial fog on the waters that covered the earth.

38:10 “I placed boundaries” This VERB (BDB 990, KB 1402, *Qal* IMPERFECT) means “to break.” Only here does it have the sense of “set boundaries.” The UBS *Handbook* (p. 700) asserts it refers to sea waves breaking on the shoreline. The LXX and Vulgate have “prescribed bounds for it.” Both of these suggestions fit the parallelism of Job 38:10b and 11.

God sets limits or boundaries on the created order. It is a symbol/sign of His sovereignty.

1. water – Job 26:10; 38:10; Pro. 8:27-29
2. light/dark – Job 26:10; 38:19-20,24
3. rain/seasons – Job 28:26; 37:6,11-12; Ps. 147:8; Jer. 3:3; 5:24

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:12-15

¹²**“Have you ever in your life commanded the morning,
And caused the dawn to know its place,**

¹³That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
¹⁴It is changed like clay *under* the seal;
And they stand forth like a garment.
¹⁵From the wicked their light is withheld,
And the uplifted arm is broken.”

38:12-15 This strophe addresses the creation of the heavenly lights (i.e., sun, cf. Gen. 1:14-19; Ps. 19:1-6). These verses seem to speak of light in two senses.

1. sunlight, Job 38:12-13a (i.e., it runs its course, as in Ps. 19:5-6)
2. light as imagery for God’s truth or ways. The wicked are revealed by it (Job 38:13b-14) and destroyed by it (Job 38:15). The wicked flee from the light (cf. Job 24:13-17; John 3:19-21).

38:14 This cryptic verse seems to refer to how light brings better vision. The perception of things changes as the light of day increases.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:16-18

¹⁶“Have you entered into the springs of the sea
Or walked in the recesses of the deep?
¹⁷Have the gates of death been revealed to you,
Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
¹⁸Have you understood the expanse of the earth?
Tell *Me*, if you know all this.”

38:16-18 This strophe seems to deal with *Sheol* (i.e., the holding place of the dead in the OT, see Special Topic: *Sheol*).

Often *Sheol* is connected with underground water, either in the sea bed or below the springs of water. *Sheol* is called “the land of darkness and deep shadow” in Job 10:21-22.

38:17 “the gates” This NOUN (BDB 1044, KB 1614) is used figuratively for

1. gate of heaven – Gen. 28:17
2. gate of *Sheol* – Isa. 38:10
3. gate of death (parallel to #2) – Ps. 9:13; 107:18

Sheol was viewed as a prison with gates from which no one could return (i.e., Job 16:22; 10:21).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:19-24

¹⁹“Where is the way to the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where is its place,
²⁰That you may take it to its territory
And that you may discern the paths to its home?
²¹You know, for you were born then,
And the number of your days is great!
²²Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,
Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
²³Which I have reserved for the time of distress,

For the day of war and battle?

**²⁴Where is the way that the light is divided,
Or the east wind scattered on the earth?"**

38:19-24 This strophe deals with things related to weather (i.e., snow, hail). Often, weather can be directed at YHWH's bidding to cause defeat in battle (cf. Exodus 9-10; Jos. 10:11; Ps. 18:11-15; Isa. 28:2,17; 30:30) or to discern God's will (cf. 2 Kgs. 20:8-15; Isaiah 38).

God uses weather (i.e., rain, dew) as a way of blessing and (i.e., hail, floods, snow) as a way of judgment (cf. Job 38:23).

38:21 This is biting sarcasm (cf. Job 38:3b). This may reflect Eliphaz's words against Job in Job 15:7-9.

38:22 "the storehouses of. . ." This (BDB 69, KB 23) may be parallel to "chambers" of Job 37:9 (BDB 293, KB 293).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:25-30

**²⁵"Who has cleft a channel for the flood,
Or a way for the thunderbolt,
²⁶To bring rain on a land without people,
On a desert without a man in it,
²⁷To satisfy the waste and desolate land
And to make the seeds of grass to sprout?
²⁸Has the rain a father?
Or who has begotten the drops of dew?
²⁹From whose womb has come the ice?
And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth?
³⁰Water becomes hard like stone,
And the surface of the deep is imprisoned."**

38:25-30 This strophe deals with God's regular (i.e., seasonal) gift of fresh water for agriculture (i.e., rain or winter precipitation).

38:25 God provides channels for the water (i.e., river beds, creeks, etc., cf. Ps. 65:9-10). This implies He gives the rain and limits its damaging affects (i.e., floods).

38:28 This powerful anthropomorphic imagery is found here only. See Special Topic: God Described as Human (anthropomorphic language).

▣ **"the drops of dew"** The word "drops" (BDB 8, KB 10) is found only here in the OT, but is parallel to "rain" of line 1.

38:29 "heaven" See Special Topic: Heaven.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:31-33

³¹"Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades,

Or loose the cords of Orion?

³²**Can you lead forth a constellation in its season,
And guide the Bear with her satellites?**

³³**Do you know the ordinances of the heavens,
Or fix their rule over the earth?"**

38:31-33 This strophe deals with the constellations. In the ANE, astral worship was common. As the plagues of Egypt depreciated the idols of Egypt, so too, Genesis 2 depreciates the astrology of Babylon. This strophe asserts God's control over stars (cf. Gen. 1:16; Job 9:9; Ps. 8:3; 136:9; 148:3,6; Jer. 31:35-36).

The exact constellations referred to are uncertain (see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 611-612).

38:32

NASB, NET Bible (PLURAL) "constellation"

NKJV, NRSV,

JPSOA, Peshitta "Mazzaroth

NJB "the Crown"

REB, amplified "the signs of the zodiac"

The MT has "constellations" (BDB 561, cf. 2 Kgs. 23:5). KB 565 suggests the REB translation comes from another Hebrew root.

38:33 "ordinances" Does Job know the operating rules of the heavens? Can we apply them to the earth? See Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation.

▣ **"rule"** The NOUN (BDB 1009, KB 1475) occurs only here. The same root in Akkadian means "writing." Another allusion to astrology.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:34-38

³⁴**"Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
So that an abundance of water will cover you?**

³⁵**Can you send forth lightnings that they may go
And say to you, 'Here we are'?**

³⁶**Who has put wisdom in the innermost being
Or given understanding to the mind?**

³⁷**Who can count the clouds by wisdom,
Or tip the water jars of the heavens,**

³⁸**When the dust hardens into a mass
And the clods stick together?"**

38:34-38 This strophe deals with God's control of nature (personified).

1. clouds
2. rain
3. lightning
4. dust (affected by rain)

38:34 The LXX helps the parallelism of line 1 by translating "answer you" for the MT's "cover you" in line 2 (BDB 491, KB 487, *Piel* IMPERFECT). The UBS Text Project cannot decide between the two options.

38:35b The lightning is personified. It answers God with a Hebrew idiom of availability (i.e., Exod. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:4-6; Isa. 6:8).

38:36 There are two unusual words in Job 38:36. One in line a and one in line b.

1. line a
NASB "the innermost being"
NKJV "mind"
NRSV, JPSOA,
Peshitta "inward parts"
TEV, NJB "ibis"
REB "darkness"
LXX "weaving"
RSV "clouds"
For a fuller discussion, see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 358.

2. line b
NASB, NRSV,
JPSOA "the mind"
NKJV "the heart"
TEV, JPSOA (footnote) "rooster"
NJB "cock"
REB "in secrecy"
LXX "embroidery"
Peshitta "understanding"
RSV "mists"

The MT has BDB 967, but the meaning of the word is greatly disputed, as seen from the different translations. The UBS Text Project (p. 143) gives "to the cock/rooster" a "B" rating (some doubt). The parallel "inward parts" (BDB 376) does not seem to fit here. BDB suggests "cloud-layers," and for its parallel (line b) or "celestial appearance," possibly referring to "clouds" or "meteors."

The UBS *Handbook* (p. 715) suggests that there are four lines of interpretation.

1. psychological terms (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, JPSOA)
2. meteorological terms (RSV)
3. mythological terms (AB, Thoth. . . Sekui)
4. zoological terms (TEV, NJB, some ANE people believed that birds predicted weather)

The LXX would form another line of interpretation (sowing skills).

The strophe has several weather related terms which support the RSV.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:39-41

- ³⁹"Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
⁴⁰When they crouch in *their* dens
And lie in wait in *their* lair?
⁴¹Who prepares for the raven its nourishment
When its young cry to God
And wander about without food?"

38:39-41 This strophe goes with Job 39:1-12. The exegesis will be included in Job 39.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of God's response to Job?
2. Why does God not mention Elihu?
3. Is God pleased or irritated with Job?
4. Explain the sarcasm of Job 38:3b,4b,18b.
5. List the elements of this chapter that have
 - a. mythological imagery
 - b. idolatry connotations
6. Why is Job 38:36 so hard to interpret?

JOB 39

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
God Speaks of Nature and Its Beings	The LORD Reveals His Omnipotence to Job (38:1-40:2)	First Speech of the LORD (38:1-40:2)	The LORD Answers Job (38:1-42:1)	YHWH's First Discourse (38:1-40:5)
39:1-4 (1-4)	39:1-4 (1-4)	39:1-4 (1-4)	39:1-4 (1-4)	39:1-12 (1-12)
39:5-12 (5-12)	39:5-8 (5-8)	39:5-8 (5-8)	39:5-8 (5-8)	
	39:9-12 (9-12)	39:9-12 (9-12)	39:9-12 (9-12)	
39:13-18 (13-18)	39:13-18 (13-18)	39:13-18 (13-18)	39:13-18 (13-18)	39:13-18 (13-18)
39:19-25 (19-25)	39:19-25 (19-25)	39:19-25 (19-25)	39:19-25 (19-25)	39:19-25 (19-25)
39:26-30 (26-30)	39:26-30 (26-30)	39:26-30 (26-30)	39:26-30 (26-30)	39:26-30 (26-30)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. As Job 38:1-38 dealt with questions about the creation of the physical planet, Job 38:39-40:30 deals with questions about the earth's animal life.
- B. In the list of animals in this chapter, there is an implied contrast (NASB Study Bible, p. 731) between
 1. domesticated donkeys and wild donkeys
 2. domesticated oxen and wild oxen

- C. The strophe about the ostrich (i.e., Job 38:13-18) is unique in that God does not ask Job a question about its actions. Also, its actions seem strange, therefore God does not give this animal natural wisdom, as He does the other animals mentioned.

It is missing in the LXX, which has caused some scholars (Jerome *Biblical Commentary*) to suggest it is a later addition to the text of Job. However, the LXX often omits lines of difficult Hebrew texts (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1039,1043).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 38:39-41

³⁹“Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
⁴⁰When they crouch in *their* dens
And lie in wait in *their* lair?
⁴¹Who prepares for the raven its nourishment
When its young cry to God
And wander about without food?”

38:39-41 This strophe continues the series of questions related to animals. It asks questions about how predators and birds obtain their food. Both lions and ravens eat meat.

38:41 “raven” The example of the raven often stands for God’s care of all birds (cf. Luke 12:24; Matt. 6:26).

▣ **“wander about”** This (BDB 1073, KB 1766, *Qal* IMPERFECT) may denote

1. staggering around in their nest looking for food or
2. staggering about in weakness from hunger

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 39:1-4

¹Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the deer?
²Can you count the months they fulfill,
Or do you know the time they give birth?
³They kneel down, they bring forth their young,
They get rid of their labor pains.
⁴Their offspring become strong, they grow up in the open field;
They leave and do not return to them.”

39:1-4 This strophe relates to questions about how and when animals give birth to their young.

1. ibex (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 488)
2. deer

39:3 “labor pains” AB (p. 259) suggests that the root is not MT (BDB 286, KB 286), which denotes pain in birth, but an Arabic root that denotes rapid birth.

39:4 “the open field” The MT has “in the open field” (BDB 141, KB 153 IV), which is found only here in the OT. The root is either from Arabic or Aramaic (this verse has possibly three Aramaic roots). It denotes uninhabited, uncultivated land.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 39:5-12

- ⁵“Who sent out the wild donkey free?
And who loosed the bonds of the swift donkey,
⁶To whom I gave the wilderness for a home
And the salt land for his dwelling place?
⁷He scorns the tumult of the city,
The shoutings of the driver he does not hear.
⁸He explores the mountains for his pasture
And searches after every green thing.
⁹Will the wild ox consent to serve you,
Or will he spend the night at your manger?
¹⁰Can you bind the wild ox in a furrow with ropes,
Or will he harrow the valleys after you?
¹¹Will you trust him because his strength is great
And leave your labor to him?
¹²Will you have faith in him that he will return your grain
And gather *it from* your threshing floor?”

39:5-12 This strophe deals with questions about animals which are hard to domesticate.

1. wild donkey
2. wild ox (cf. Num. 23:22; 24:8; Deut. 33:17; Ps. 22:21; 29:6)
 - a. LXX, “unicorn”
 - b. Vulgate, “rhinoceros”
 - c. AB, “buffalo” (avroch)

39:5 “swift donkey” This NOUN (BDB 789, KB 882) is found only here in the OT. It is possibly an Aramaic root (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 531).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 39:13-18

- ¹³“The ostriches’ wings flap joyously
With the pinion and plumage of love,
¹⁴For she abandons her eggs to the earth
And warms them in the dust,
¹⁵And she forgets that a foot may crush them,
Or that a wild beast may trample them.
¹⁶She treats her young cruelly, as if *they* were not hers;
Though her labor be in vain, *she* is unconcerned;
¹⁷Because God has made her forget wisdom,
And has not given her a share of understanding.

¹⁸When she lifts herself on high,
She laughs at the horse and his rider.”

38:13-18 This strophe is about the stupidity of the ostrich. Notice God does not ask Job a question in this strophe. This strophe is absent in the LXX.

39:13b

NASB, RSV “love”
NKJV “like the kindly storks”
NRSV “lack plumage”
TEV “fly like a stork”
NJB “of stork or falcon”
JPSOA “like the storks”
REB “scanty”

The MT has “kind, pious” (BDB 339, KB 337) or “stork” (BDB 339, KB 337). The stork was known for it’s kind treatment of it’s young (NKJV), but the ostrich is just the opposite. The UBS Text Project (p. 14) gives a “B” rating (some doubt) to NRSV, REB, denoting a lack of plumage (which involves an emendation, “d” to “r,” which are Hebrew consonants often confused). I think NKJV fits the antithetical parallelism better.

39:14a “she abandons her eggs” The AB (p. 260) suggests a change to a Ugaritic root which means “place” or “put.” This fits the actions of ostriches better and forms a better parallelism with line b. However, it does not fit the larger context of Job 39:13-18 (cf. Lam. 4:3).

39:18 This verse denotes the birds’ ability to rapidly rise and flee hunters. The VERB in Job 39:18a is found only here in the OT; possibly “flap the wings” or “beat the air” (BDB 597, KB 630).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 39:19-25

¹⁹“Do you give the horse *his* might?
Do you clothe his neck with a mane?
²⁰Do you make him leap like the locust?
His majestic snorting is terrible.
²¹He paws in the valley, and rejoices in *his* strength;
He goes out to meet the weapons.
²²He laughs at fear and is not dismayed;
And he does not turn back from the sword.
²³The quiver rattles against him,
The flashing spear and javelin.
²⁴With shaking and rage he races over the ground,
And he does not stand still at the voice of the trumpet.
²⁵As often as the trumpet *sounds* he says, ‘Aha!’
And he scents the battle from afar,
And the thunder of the captains and the war cry.”

39:19-25 This strophe is about the war horse. It is the only domesticated animal in the list. It was used for hunting, war, and as a regal mount for leaders.

39:19

NASB, NRSV,

TEV, NJB,

JPSOA, REB “mane”

NKJV “thunder”

LXX “terror”

Peshitta “armour”

Targum “power”

Vulgate “neighing”

The root (BDB 947) can be “vibrating” or “quivering,” which might be imagery for a flowing mane (NJB). KB (901) sees a possible Arabic root related to a hyena, meaning “mother of the mane” (AB, p. 263). “Mane” is obviously the best informed guess.

39:20 Locusts and horses are often compared (cf. Jer. 51:27; Joel 2:4; Rev. 9:7).

39:21a

NASB, NKJV,

NJB “paws in the valley”

NRSV “paws violently”

JPSOA “paws with force”

LXX, Peshitta “paws in the plain”

The MT has “valley” (BDB 770, KB 847 I), but several scholars think the basic root is parallel to “strength” (BDB 470) in line b (NRSV, JPSOA). This fits the parallelism best.

39:23 “rattles” This VERB (BDB 943, KB 1246, *Qal* IMPERFECT) occurs only here. It denotes the sound of battle implements that were hung on the warhorses, making a clanking sound as the horse runs.

39:24

NASB “he races over the ground”

NRSV “shallows the ground”

This verse follows the MT (BDB 167, KB 196, *Piel* IMPERFECT), but Andersen, in *The Tyndale OT Commentaries* (p. 283, #4), suggests that the same root can mean “willfully,” and this fits the parallelism with the next line better (if the term used translated “faithful,” “trust,” BDB 52) is used in a unique sense of “cannot stand still” or “stand firm.”

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 39:26-30²⁶“Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars,

Stretching his wings toward the south?

²⁷Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up

And makes his nest on high?

²⁸On the cliff he dwells and lodges,

Upon the rocky crag, an inaccessible place.

²⁹From there he spies out food;His eyes see *it* from afar.³⁰His young ones also suck up blood;

And where the slain are, there is he.”

39:26-30 This strophe is about the hawk (Job 39:26) and eagle/vulture (Job 39:27-30).

39:26 “the south” This could refer to

1. soaring on the south wind
2. an annual migration to the south

39:30b This imagery is used in NT prophecy (cf. Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37).

JOB 40

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job: What Can I Say?	The LORD Reveals His Omnipotence to Job (38:1-40:2)	First Speech of the LORD (38:1-40:2)	The LORD Answers Job (38:1-42:1)	YHWH's First Discourse (38:1-40:5)
40:1-2 (2)	40:1 40:2 (2) Job's Response to God	40:1-2 (1-2)	40:1-5 (1-5)	40:1-2 (2)
40:3-5 (3-5)	40:3 40:4-5 (4-5)	40:3-5 (3-5)		40:3-5 (3-5) Second Discourse (40:6-41:34)
God Questions Job	God's Challenge to Job (40:6-41:34)	Second Speech of the LORD (40:6-41:34)		God Is Master of the Forces of Evil
40:6-9 (8-9)	40:6 40:7 (7) 40:8-14 (8-14)	40:6-9 (8-9)	40:6 40:7-14 (7-14)	40:6-14 (6-14)
40:10-14 (10-14)		40:10-14 (10-14)		
God's Power Shown in Creatures				Behemoth
40:15-18 (15-18)	40:15-24 (15-24)	40:15-24 (15-24)	40:15-18 (15-18)	40:15-24 (15-24)
40:19-24 (19-24)			40:19-24 (19-24)	Leviathan (40:25-41:34) LXX versing

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. The Hebrew text (MT) of Job 40 has 32 verses. Job 41:1-8, in English, is Job 40:25-31 in Hebrew.
- B. YHWH's first response to Job runs from Job 38:1–40:2.
- C. Job answers YHWH in Job 40:3-5.
- D. YHWH continues His questioning of Job in Job 40:6-41:34.
- E. My best guess is that both Behemoth and Leviathan are mythical animals that demonstrate YHWH's control of rebellious forces in physical creation (see notes).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 40:1-2

¹Then the LORD said to Job,
²“Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty?
 Let him who reproves God answer it.”

40:1 The repeated introductory formula (i.e., the VERB “answer,” BDB 772, KB 851, cf. Job 38:1; omitted in LXX) highlights this last question of YHWH, which characterizes Job as a “faultfinder” (BDB 416, KB 417), found only here in the OT.

Job is a “faultfinder” because of his accusations against God’s character and justice throughout the dialogues.

▣ **“the Almighty”** See Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*).

▣ **“Let him who reproves God answer it”** This is an IMPERFECT of “answer” used in a JUSSIVE sense and a *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE of a legal term (BDB 406, KB 410), meaning “to decide,” “to adjudge,” or “to prove.” This refers to Job’s legal case against God’s justice (esp. Job 9 and 16).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 40:3-5

³Then Job answered the LORD and said,
⁴“Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You?
 I lay my hand on my mouth.
⁵Once I have spoken, and I will not answer;
 Even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

40:3-5 This is Job's brief reply to God's questions of Job 38:1-40:2. Job said he wanted to question God (Job 31:35-37), but now in His presence he has nothing to say!

Commentators take this strophe in different senses.

1. positive, Job is humbled
2. negative, Job refuses to let go of his legal case (NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 787-788)

40:4a "I am insignificant" This is the VERB (BDB 886, KB 1103, *Qal* PERFECT) that denotes "smallness" or "lightness," which, in Hebrew thought, would be the opposite of "honorable" or "glorious" (i.e., that which is heavy).

40:4b "I lay my hand on my mouth" See note at Job 21:5.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 40:6-9

⁶Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm and said,

⁷Now gird up your loins like a man;

I will ask you, and you instruct Me.

⁸Will you really annul My judgment?

Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?

⁹Or do you have an arm like God,

And can you thunder with a voice like His?"

40:6-9 This strophe is similar to Job 38:3, and especially Job 40:7. Is Job so bold as to "instruct" (BDB 393, KB 390, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE, like Job 38:3) YHWH? Job has overstepped the bounds of "creature." He has brought a legal charge against "The Judge" of the universe. He has been willing to make himself look righteous (cf. Job 13:18; 27:6) at YHWH's expense (cf. Job 10:3,7; 16:11; 19:6; 27:2)!

What shocks me is that Job is approved by YHWH (cf. Job 42:1)! His charges against God are never answered.

40:8 "condemn" This VERB (BDB 957, KB 1294, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) means "condemn as guilty." It is used often in Job (cf. Job 9:20; 10:2; 15:6; 32:3; 34:29; 40:8) because the issue of the book is "justice." Who is guilty—Job or God?

40:9 Again, these questions show Job's ignorance and powerlessness.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 40:10-14

¹⁰Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity,

And clothe yourself with honor and majesty.

¹¹Pour out the overflowings of your anger,

And look on everyone who is proud, and make him low.

¹²Look on everyone who is proud, *and* humble him,

And tread down the wicked where they stand.

¹³Hide them in the dust together;

Bind them in the hidden *place*.

¹⁴Then I will also confess to you,

That your own right hand can save you."

40:10-14 God asks Job to act against wickedness (i.e., act in God's stead) and when he does, then he will be affirmed (lit. "confess" or "give thanks" in *Hiphil*). This is sarcasm (or satire)!

Notice the series of IMPERATIVES on how Job should act.

1. "adorn yourself," Job 40:10 – BDB 725, KB 798, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
 - a. with eminence (BDB 144)
 - b. with dignity (BDB 147)
 - c. with honor (BDB 217 I)
 - d. with majesty (BDB 214)
2. "pour out the overflowings of your anger," Job 40:11 – BDB 806, KB 918, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
- 3-4. "look on everyone who is proud," Job 40:11,12 (twice) – BDB 906, KB 1157, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
5. "make him low," Job 40:11 – BDB 1050, KB 1631, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
6. "humble him," Job 40:12 – BDB 488, KB 484, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
7. "tread down the wicked," Job 40:12 – BDB 213, KB 239, *Qal* IMPERATIVE (found only here in the OT)
8. "hide them in the dust together," Job 40:13 – BDB 380, KB 377, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
9. "bind them in the hidden *place*," Job 40:14 – BDB 289, KB 289, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

40:13 "dust" This was a Hebrew idiom for death or the grave (cf. Gen. 3:19; Job 10:9; 34:15). Line a is parallel to line b, both referring to *Sheol*.

40:14 "save" See Special Topic: Salvation (OT).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 40:15-18

¹⁵"Behold now, Behemoth, which I made as well as you;

He eats grass like an ox.

¹⁶Behold now, his strength in his loins

And his power in the muscles of his belly.

¹⁷He bends his tail like a cedar;

The sinews of his thighs are knit together.

¹⁸His bones are tubes of bronze;

His limbs are like bars of iron."

40:15-24 These two strophes deal with "Behemoth" (BDB 97, KB 112; PLURAL form of the word for "beast"). There have been several ways to view this creation of God.

1. a reference to a large animal that lives in the marsh and river areas, usually associated with the hippopotamus (i.e., eats grass)
2. both Behemoth and Leviathan are the "great sea monsters" of Gen. 1:21 (cf. Ps. 104:25-26; II Bar. 29:4); Job 40:19 may be a hint for this option
3. in some Jewish lore (i.e., IV Ezra 6:49-52) it is viewed as the water counterpart of the female Leviathan (i.e., thereby denoting a fertility couple)
4. a mythical creature (i.e., chaos monster) that opposes God, like Leviathan (i.e., Interbiblical Apocalyptic Writings); the rabbis say that after an end-time rebellion by them, God will barbeque them for the eschatological banquet (B.B. 75a)
5. possibly linked to Egyptian "water ox" that was seen as the enemy of immortality in Egyptian lore
6. the AB (pp. 268-271) also suggests a possible connection with
 - a. Sumerian "bull of heaven," associated with the Gilgamesh Epic (i.e., had a large tail, Job 40:17, or possibly "penis"; other sexual terms found in Job 40:16)

b. *Ba'al* buffalo associated with Ugarit poems

There is little in Job 40 suggesting that Behemoth is anything more than a large mammal (it is surprising it is separated from the earlier texts on YHWH's creation of animals). The mythological associations come from the biblical usages of "Leviathan." It is possible that Job 40:19-20 hints at a mythological association.

John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary*, *Job*, p. 406, shows how God's mentioning forces of cosmic disorder fits into earlier comments by Job.

1. accuses God of treating him like a chaos monster (cf. Job 7:12)
2. Job's accusation that God is beating him like a chaos monster (Job 30)
3. here in Job 40:15-41:34, God mentions His creation (Job 40:19a) and control (Job 40:19b) of the watery chaos, with its mythological imagery (see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 261-262)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 40:19-24

- ¹⁹**"He is the first of the ways of God;
Let his maker bring near his sword.**
- ²⁰**Surely the mountains bring him food,
And all the beasts of the field play there.**
- ²¹**Under the lotus plants he lies down,
In the covert of the reeds and the marsh.**
- ²²**The lotus plants cover him with shade;
The willows of the brook surround him.**
- ²³**If a river rages, he is not alarmed;
He is confident, though the Jordan rushes to his mouth.**
- ²⁴**Can anyone capture him when he is on watch,
With barbs can anyone pierce *his* nose?"**

40:19a This same phrasing is used of "wisdom" in Pro. 8:22. It may imply that "Behemoth" was a special creation of God. This is stated in Enoch 60:7-9; Apoc. of Baruch 29:4; and IV Ezra 6:49-52.

40:19b This verse seems to allude to conflict between God the creator and the created. This verse introduces a "conflict" theme.

40:20 This is an unusual verse.

1. NJB translates it as "forbidding him the mountain regions and all the wild animals that play there"
2. REB has "for he takes the cattle of the hills for his prey and in his jaws he crushes all beasts of the wild."
3. The Peshitta has "He roams about the mountains and all the wild beasts of the field lie down under his protection."

40:21-24 Although Behemoth is often identified as a "land" animal, these verses show it is a fresh water animal. Therefore, both creatures of this last section could be seen as the water monsters of creation, one fresh water and one salt water (cf. Gen. 1:21).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why does YHWH give a second speech?
2. Why is Job 40:8 so important?
3. Does Job 40:10-14 represent YHWH saying to Job, “Here, you run the universe”?
4. Are Behemoth and Leviathan animals or cosmic chaos monsters? Why or why not.
5. Why is Job 40:19 crucial in interpreting this chapter?

JOB 41

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
God's Power Shown in Creatures	God's Challenge to Job (40:6-41:34)	Second Speech of the LORD (40:6-41:34)	The LORD Answers Job (38:1-42:1)	Leviathan (40:25-41:26)
41:1-11 (1-11)	41:1-11 (1-11)	41:1-11 (1-11)	41:1-8 (1-8)	41:1-26 (1-26)
			41:9-11 (9-11)	
41:12-34 (12-34)	41:12-34 (12-34)	41:12-34 (12-34)	41:12-34 (12-34)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. The questions continue.
 1. NASB – 16 questions, Job 41:1-11
 2. NKJV – 13 questions, Job 41:1-11
 3. NRSV – 12 questions, Job 41:1-11
 4. NJB – 4 questions, Job 41:1-11
 5. JPSOA – 4 questions, Job 41:1-11

The MT has the INTERROGATIVE (BDB 566) in Job 41:11 and INTERROGATIVE PARTICLE in Job 41:2,3,4,5,7. The English translations differ on how to place them (i.e., end of verses, end of each line of poetry). The NASB and NKJV assume the questions begin in Job 41:1.

- B. For Leviathan see Special Topic: Leviathan.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 41:1-11

¹“Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?

Or press down his tongue with a cord?

²Can you put a rope in his nose

Or pierce his jaw with a hook?

³Will he make many supplications to you,

Or will he speak to you soft words?

⁴Will he make a covenant with you?

Will you take him for a servant forever?

⁵Will you play with him as with a bird,

Or will you bind him for your maidens?

⁶Will the traders bargain over him?

Will they divide him among the merchants?

⁷Can you fill his skin with harpoons,

Or his head with fishing spears?

⁸Lay your hand on him;

Remember the battle; you will not do it again!

⁹Behold, your expectation is false;

Will you be laid low even at the sight of him?

¹⁰No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him;

Who then is he that can stand before Me?

¹¹Who has given to Me that I should repay *him*?

Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.”

41:1 (MT 40:25) “Leviathan” See Special Topic: Leviathan.

41:4 (MT 40:28) “forever” See Special Topic: Forever (‘*olam*).

41:5 (MT 40:29) This verse is imagery comparing Leviathan to a pet.

The term “maidens” (BDB 655, KB 707 I) has been interpreted as

1. daughter – NRSV, NJB
2. servant women – TEV, UBS *Handbook* suggestion, p. 753; KB 708 I, #3 or #4
3. child – LXX
4. children – Peshitta

Job has no children left alive.

41:6 (MT 40:30)

NASB, NRSV,

JPSOA

“traders”

NKJV

“companions”

TEV, Peshitta

“fishermen”

NJB

“fishing guild”

LXX

“nations”

The MT has “partner in trade” or “guildsman” (BDB 289, KB 288 II), found only here. I think NJB is the best guess, being parallel to “the merchants” (lit. “Canaanites,” i.e., traders; cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 669).

41:8 (MT 40:32) This verse has two IMPERATIVES.

1. lay your hand on him – BDB 962, KB 1321, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. remember the battle – BDB 269, KB 269, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

The third VERBAL is JUSSIVE, SINGULAR. The TEV seems to catch the thrust of the passage: “Touch him once and you’ll never try it again; you’ll never forget the fight!”

41:9 (MT 41:1) This difficult verse is related to Job 41:8. There is no hope of capturing Leviathan, neither from mankind or “the gods” (Symmachus, Syriac, NRSV). Both LXX and Peshitta are very different from the MT.

AB (p. 282) suggests the editors of the MT purposely altered a name for “god” because the mythological implications bothered them.

41:10b-11 (MT 41:2-3) These last three poetic lines of the strophe (Job 41:1-11) are the crucial theological issue. The implication of all the questions is, “Job cannot, but YHWH can!” If YHWH has that kind of power, who can stand before Him? He is the creator of all, subject to none! (cf. 1 Cor. 10:26, quoted from LXX).

The AB (p. 280) suggests this verse also refers to Leviathan’s fearful presence (TEV), not God, and is, thereby related to Job 41:9 (i.e., gods). The lesser gods are fearful of arousing Leviathan.

41:11

NASB	“who has given to Me”
NKJV	“who has preceded Me”
NRSV	“who can confront it”
TEV, REB	“who can attack him”
JPSOA	“whoever confronts Me”
Peshitta	“who has preeminence over me”

The VERB (BDB 869, KB 1068, *Hiphil* PERFECT) means

1. BDB 870, *Hiphil* – anticipate
2. BDB 869 suggests a meaning to the root (but no examples given) – be before, former time, in front (KB 1069; NKJV)

Also, some translations see the object as

1. God – NASB, NKJV, Peshitta, JPSOA; also NRSV footnote
2. Leviathan – NRSV, TEV, REB

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 41:12-34

¹²**“I will not keep silence concerning his limbs,**

Or his mighty strength, or his orderly frame.

¹³**Who can strip off his outer armor?**

Who can come within his double mail?

¹⁴**Who can open the doors of his face?**

Around his teeth there is terror.

¹⁵**His strong scales are his pride,**

Shut up *as with* a tight seal.

¹⁶One is so near to another
That no air can come between them.

¹⁷They are joined one to another;
They clasp each other and cannot be separated.

¹⁸His sneezes flash forth light,
And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

¹⁹Out of his mouth go burning torches;
Sparks of fire leap forth.

²⁰Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth
As *from* a boiling pot and *burning* rushes.

²¹His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes forth from his mouth.

²²In his neck lodges strength,
And dismay leaps before him.

²³The folds of his flesh are joined together,
Firm on him and immovable.

²⁴His heart is as hard as a stone,
Even as hard as a lower millstone.

²⁵When he raises himself up, the mighty fear;
Because of the crashing they are bewildered.

²⁶The sword that reaches him cannot avail,
Nor the spear, the dart or the javelin.

²⁷He regards iron as straw,
Bronze as rotten wood.

²⁸The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones are turned into stubble for him.

²⁹Clubs are regarded as stubble;
He laughs at the rattling of the javelin.

³⁰His underparts are *like* sharp potsherds;
He spreads out *like* a threshing sledge on the mire.

³¹He makes the depths boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a jar of ointment.

³²Behind him he makes a wake to shine;
One would think the deep to be gray-haired.

³³Nothing on earth is like him,
One made without fear.

³⁴He looks on everything that is high;
He is king over all the sons of pride.”

41:12-34 This strophe continues the discussion of Leviathan. He is a powerful, fearful creation that no human can tame, but YHWH can!

41:19-21 This cannot describe a crocodile!

41:22b

NASB, REB	“dismay”
NKJV	“sorrow”
NRSV	“terror”
NJB	“violence”
JPSOA	“power”
LXX	“destruction”

The MT has a FEMININE NOUN (BDB 178, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 331,332), found only here in the OT, which could mean

1. faintness
2. dismay

“Sorrow” comes from another Hebrew root (NKJV, NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 906,909, cf. Deut. 33:25).

Another theory is related to a Ugaritic root, “strength,” which is supported by KB 207, the DSS Targum of Job, and JPSOA. This fits the parallelism of “strength” (BDB 738) best in Job 41:22a and b.

41:25a

NASB, NKJV	“the mighty”
NRSV, Targums, Symmachus	“the gods”
TEV	“the strongest”
NJB, REB	“he” (i.e., Leviathan)
JPSOA	“divine beings”
Vulgate	“angels”
UBS Text	

(alternating) “the waves” (emendation)

The MT has “gods” (i.e., *‘elim*, PLURAL of *El*, BDB 42). The UBS Text Project (p. 159) gives this a “B” rating (some doubt).

Leviathan brings fear to heaven (if “gods”) and earth (if “powerful humans”).

41:30-32 Andersen, in *The Tyndale OT Commentary Series* (p. 291), asserts that Job 41:30-32 speaks of how Leviathan moves through the water. See my notes next on Job 41:31-32.

41:31-32 These verses have several terms related to the sea.

1. the depths, Job 41:31 – BDB 846, KB 623, cf. Exod. 15:5; Jonah 2:4
2. the sea, Job 41:31 – BDB 410, KB 413, cf. Exod. 13:18; 15:4; Jonah 1:4
3. the deep, Job 41:32 – BDB 1062, KB 1690, cf. Gen. 1:2; Job 28:14; 38:16; Ps. 71:20; Jonah 2:6

The terms “sea,” “watery chaos,” “chaos creatures” all held important mythological connections in the ANE. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 277-278.

41:33-34 Should these verses be seen as

1. confirmation of the extra-natural nature of Leviathan
2. confirmation that it is just another powerful animal of this planet

I think overall, #1 fits the date and context of Job best.

41:3 “dust” This term (BDB 779) denotes

1. that from which humans were made – Gen. 2:7; Job 4:19; 8:19; 10:9; 34:15
2. that to which human bodies at death will return – Gen. 3:19
3. soil – Job 14:19; 28:6; 39:14
4. food of the serpent – Gen. 3:14; Isa. 65:25

Because of the proximity of Job 41:31-32 (i.e., several names for the underworld), this term may refer to death or *Sheol* here. There is nothing in the underworld/defeated world like Leviathan. He is still without fear, though merely a plaything for YHWH.

The phrase, “sons of pride,” however, is used in Job 28:8 for animals. It is difficult to decide if this chapter refers to

1. an animal
2. ANE mythology
3. or both

I have come to see #2 as probable. See John H. Walton, *ANE Thought and the OT: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* and *Genesis 1 As Ancient Cosmology*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Is Leviathan an animal or a symbol of chaos?
2. To whom does Job 41:10 refer?
3. Why is Job 41:11 so hard to interpret?
4. How can Job 41:19-21 refer to an animal?
5. Does Job 41:31-32 have Canaanite mythology?

JOB 42

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Job's Confession	Job's Repentance and Restoration	Job's Reply	The LORD'S Answer to Job (38:1-42:1)	Job's Final Answer
42:1-6 (2-6)	42:1	42:1-6 (2-6)	42:1	42:1
	42:2-4 (2-4)		42:2-6 (2-6)	42:2-6 (2-6)
God Displeased with Job's Friends	42:5-6 (5-6)	The Epilogue	Conclusion	Yahweh Rebukes the Three Sages
42:7-9	42:7-17	42:7-9	42:7-8	42:7-9
God Restores Job's Fortunes			42:9	Yahweh Restores Job's Fortunes
42:10-17		42:10-17	42:10-11	42:10-15
			42:12-15	
			42:16-17	42:16-17

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. xvi in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

- A. Job 42:1-6 is Job's second response to YHWH. If his answer was not adequate the first time (i.e., Job 40:3-5), his second response clearly shows spiritual insight has come. He is not just silent, he is overwhelmed!
- B. The book of Job is characterized by dialogues and responses. The pattern holds throughout the book (except for Elihu's speeches).
Worldviews and traditional wisdom are conveyed in this literary structure.

C. One would expect a clear conclusion to the issue of

1. innocent suffering
2. the modification of “the two ways”
3. where “true” wisdom is found

but in vain, one looks for answers to these questions (see Introduction to Job, IX and Contextual Insights to Job 38, A and B).

The conclusion is surprising.

1. Job is affirmed (i.e., Job 42:9), even though he has attacked the character and justice of God/YHWH.
2. The three comforters, whose theology is certainly as good as Job’s, are condemned (i.e., Job 42:7-9).
3. Elihu and his speeches are ignored. Why, is uncertain.
4. “The two ways” is affirmed by God’s actions of restoring Job’s family and fortune (i.e., Job 42:10-17).
5. The accuser is not mentioned at all!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 42:1-6

¹Then Job answered the LORD and said,

²“I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

³“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?”
Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

⁴Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me.’

⁵I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;

⁶Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes.”

42:1-6 This is Job’s second response to YHWH’s questioning. It produces a verbal and spiritual response from Job, as the first speeches of YHWH (Job 38:1-40:2) did not. This second speech of YHWH (Job 40:6-41:34) obviously had an affect on Job.

42:2 This verse is an affirmation of YHWH’s sovereignty, power, and purpose.

1. He can do all things.
2. His purpose(s) cannot be thwarted (i.e., Jer. 23:20; Lam. 2:17; Zech. 1:6).

Number 2 is an affirmation that YHWH has a “plan” for His world. See Special Topic: YHWH’s Eternal Redemptive Plan.

▣ **“know”** This VERB (BDB 393, KB 390) is used often in Job. In Job 42, it is used in 42:2,3,11. It has several connotations. See Special Topic: Know.

42:3 Job repeats God’s characterization of him from Job 38:2. See notes there.

Job clearly admits his presumption in attacking God’s character and justice. He spoke out of limited knowledge and personal pain. His wonderful faith (i.e., Job 1-2) and blamelessness was evident but his knowledge of God and His ways was limited. If Job is from Edom and if he lived during the Patriarchal Period, he did not have the inspired revelation given to Moses. It is uncertain where his knowledge of the one true God came from.

▣ **“too wonderful for me”** See Special Topic: Wonderful Things.

42:4 Job uses two IMPERATIVES as requests to YHWH.

1. hear – BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. instruct – BDB 393, KB 390, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE

Job recognizes he needs more information about YHWH. He is now ready to hear. This is the exact opposite of Job 38:3, where it is stated (in YHWH’s words) that initially Job wanted to question God.

Job 42:4 seems to be a reference to YHWH’s words in Job 38:3; 40:7.

42:5 One wonders what this verse is intending to assert.

1. Job did not “know” God before
2. Job had not personally visited with God (theophany) before

Obviously, Job had a powerful, personal, faith relationship with YHWH (i.e., Job 1-2). However, how he knew Him and how much he knew is uncertain.

1. ANE general revelation (Ps. 19:1-6; Romans 1-2)
2. some contact with YHWH’s covenant people
3. oral traditions of the Patriarchs

This same question could be asked of Melchizedek, King of Salem (Gen. 14:17-24); Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law (Exodus 2); Balaam (Numbers 22); or the Ninevites of Jonah’s day.

▣ **“But now my eyes see You”** Job has been wanting to meet with God. This phrase may be seen to refer to Job 19:24-27. Job’s faith-desire has been met! His greatest pain had been that God had become his enemy (cf. Job 13:24; 33:10)! Not so now!

42:6

NASB	“I retract”
NKJV	“I abhor <i>myself</i> ”
NRSV	“I despise myself”
TEV	“I am ashamed of all I have said”
NJB	“I retract what I have said”
JPSOA	“I recant”
REB	“I yield”
LXX	“I disparaged myself”
Peshitta	“I will keep silent”

The MT has the VERB (BDB 549, KB 540, *Qal* IMPERFECT, with no OBJECT), which can mean

1. reject, refuse
2. despise
3. withdraw (UBS Text Project, p. 162)
4. melt (NEB, an emendation)

Several translations have tried to supply an OBJECT

1. myself – NKJV, NRSV, LXX
2. what he had said – TEV, NJB

The UBS Text Project gives #1,2 a “C” rating (considerable doubt). It suggests two translations.

1. I am overwhelmed
2. I withdraw (charges)

I like #2 best in this context.

▣ **“I repent”** This is parallel to “I retract” (see notes above). This is not the most common VERB for repentance (BDB 996, KB 1427), but it (BDB 636, KB 688, *Niphal* PERFECT with *waw*) is used often for the deep emotion felt by humans in rebellion against God (see Special Topic: Repentance in the OT).

In light of the rest of the book of Job, Job admits all humans sin (cf. Job 5:7). Job admits he is not sinless (cf. Job 6:2-3; 7:20-21; 12:4; 13:14-15,23; 14:17; 19:4), but he asserts again and again that he did not sin in such a way as to bring the terrible punishment that he has experienced (cf. Job 6:10; 7:20; 9:20-21; 10:6-7,14; 27:1-6; 29:11-20; 32:1; 33:8-12; 34:5). Therefore, this must refer, not to his admittance of sin, but to his arrogant statements against God. Job wanted his day in court (cf. Job 9:32; 13:2,3; 14:13; 24:1; 31:35-37), now he sees how wrong-headed this approach was. The problem was his attitude and limited knowledge.

▣ **“in dust and ashes”** This could be

1. the place Job was sitting (cf. Job 2:8)
2. an idiom for the grieving rites of the ANE (see Special Topic: Grieving Rites)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 42:7-9

⁷It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. ⁸Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you *according to your* folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.” ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job.

42:7-9 This strophe (returns to prose, like Job 1-2) is YHWH’s response to Job’s three comforters. I must confess that I am surprised by YHWH’s rejection of them. Their theology was no less informed than Job’s. Their attitudes were no more wrong than Job’s. Job 42:7 is a strong rejection.

1. My wrath (BDB 60 I) is kindled against you all
2. you have not spoken of Me what is right (i.e., Job 13:8)

Notice the divine affirmation of Job (cf. Job 42:8)

1. called “My servant” (i.e., honorific title used four times in two verses; see Special Topic: My Servant)
2. what he spoke about God is “right” (BDB 465 I, KB 464, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE), which means “be established” or “steadfast” or “properly affixed”

This is so surprising! How has Job been “right”; not in his unfair statements about God or his bad attitudes. It must refer to his steadfast trust and faith in God.

42:8 God tells the three what they must do to be restored to right standing.

1. take blood offerings – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, PLURAL
2. go to Job – BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, PLURAL

3. offer up a burnt offering (burnt sacrifices predate Moses, cf. Gen. 8:20-21; see Special Topic: Sacrifices in Mesopotamia and Israel and Their Significance)
4. ask Job to pray for them

▣ “seven” See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture.



NASB, NKJV	“accept him”
NRSV	“I will accept his prayers”
TEV	“I will answer his prayer”
NJB, REB	“I shall show him favour”
JPSOA	“I will show favor”
Peshitta	“I will accept”

The MT has “for his face I will lift up,” which is a legal idiom for acceptance by a judge at the end of litigation. It is used several times in Job (i.e., at the beginning of litigation, cf. Job 13:8; 32:21; 34:19).

▣ “folly” This NOUN (BDB 615) is often used of disregard for moral guidelines, but that sense does not fit here. The KB (664 II) suggests “insulting behavior.”

For a full discussion of the semantic field of this word see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 11-13.

42:9 When the three comforters were obedient, it does not say YHWH “accepted” them but that He “accepted” Job! Here is Job’s judicial (i.e., “lift the face”) declaration of innocence. His reputation is restored (and soon all else will be also, Job 42:10-17).

Surprisingly, it is never stated that his physical problems are healed/resolved. This is assumed because fellowship with his family, friends, and community is again possible (cf. Job 42:11).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 42:10-17

¹⁰“The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. ¹¹Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one *gave* him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold. ¹²The LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. ¹³He had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. ¹⁵In all the land no women were found so fair as Job’s daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. ¹⁶After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. ¹⁷And Job died, an old man and full of days.”

42:10-17 This describes the restoration of Job’s possessions, as Job 42:9 described the restoration of his reputation. Job had never asked for this. He was more concerned about his good name (Job 42:11).

42:10 “The LORD restored” This VERB (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* PERFECT) is the common root for “repentance” (lit. “to turn back”). Job “repents” in Job 42:6, now YHWH reciprocates (i.e., different root, see Special Topic: Repentance in the OT; also see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 58). YHWH “restores” (i.e., “restores the fortunes of”) Job. Often this word is translated “return from captivity,” but here and Jer. 30:3, it denotes restoration of a previous condition.

42:11 “for all the evil that the LORD had brought on him” Notice there is no mention of “the accuser” of Job 1-2. Notice, too, the theological emphasis on one, and only one, causality (i.e., no secondary causes, cf. Job 2:10; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 45:7; 55:16; Jer. 32:42; Lam 3:33-38; Amos 3:6).

▣ **“one piece of money”** This name of the amount is “*gesitah*” (BDB 903, KB 1150), which comes from an Arabic root, “to divide,” and referred to a weight of something valuable. It occurs only in an early period (cf. Gen. 33:19; Jos. 24:32) and here.

42:13 As far as we know, Job had only one wife! Oh my!

▣ **“sons. . .daughters”** One of my problems with the historicity of the book is the death of the sons, daughters, and servants in Job 1-2. These were unique persons made in God’s image and likeness. Just to restore a given number does not reduce the pain I feel! I know I am a North American who has grown up in a culture that glorifies the individual, but still, I think every individual is precious to God. For me, Job is a literary production by a Judean sage using a past, famous person who suffered terrible tragedy!

Note that Job has the same number of “sons” and “daughters” as before (cf. Job 1:2).

42:14 The naming of daughters is unusual in the ANE, especially when the sons are not named.

42:15 It was also unusual for daughters to inherit in the ANE (cf. Numbers 27).

42:16 The age of Job is another hint of the historical setting of the book (i.e., second millennium B.C.).

42:7 This is a typical Patriarchal idiom (cf. Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 1 Chr. 29:28).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of the Book of Job in the canon?
2. Did God ever explain to Job the reason for his personal suffering? Why or why not?
3. What is Satan’s place in the scheme?
4. Why is Elihu not mentioned in the last chapter?
5. How is God’s answer to Job also significant to us?