

Job

¹ Once there was a man called Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was a man of integrity who did what was right. He respected* God and avoided evil. ² He had seven sons and three daughters. ³ He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred teams of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, as well as many servants. He was more wealthy than anyone else in the East.

⁴ Job's sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes on their specific day,† also inviting their sisters to come and eat and drink with them. ⁵ When the days of feasting were over, Job would send for them and purify them by getting up early in the morning to offer a burnt offering for each of them. He was concerned, thinking to himself, “Maybe my children have sinned in some way and have unintentionally offended‡ God.” This is what Job always did.

⁶ One day the angels§ came to present themselves to the Lord, and Satan* came with them.

* **1:1** The word is “fear” but is used in the sense of reverence and awe rather than being frightened or terrified. † **1:4** The “specific day” could be a set date or a birthday, for example.

‡ **1:5** The word used here is “blessed” but is usually understood as a euphemism for “cursed.” § **1:6** Literally, “the sons of God.”

* **1:6** The name means “Adversary.”

⁷ The Lord asked Satan, “What have you been doing?”

“Traveling around on earth, going here and there,” Satan replied.

⁸ “Have you paid attention to Job, my servant?”[†] asked the Lord. “There's no one like him on earth, a man of integrity who does what is right, who respects God and avoids evil.”

⁹ “Is it for nothing that Job respects God?” Satan answered. “You've placed a protective fence around him and his family—in fact around everything he has. ¹⁰ You have blessed everything he does. His flocks and herds have increased so much they fill the whole land! ¹¹ But if you reach out and take everything he has, he will definitely curse you to your face.”

¹² The Lord told Satan, “Very well, you have the power to do whatever you want to everything he has, but don't hurt him physically.” Then Satan left the Lord's presence.

¹³ The day came when while Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and told him, “As the oxen were plowing and female donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ the Sabeans attacked and took them, killing the herdsmen. Only I escaped to bring you this news.”

¹⁶ While he was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, “The fire of God fell from

[†] **1:8** The term “servant” is used here as a positive term to describe someone who admires and respects rather than someone who simply obeys commands.

heaven and set the sheep and shepherds on fire and burned them up. Only I escaped to bring you this news.”

¹⁷ While he was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, “Three armed companies of Chaldeans attacked the camels and took them, killing the herdsman. Only I escaped to bring you this news.”

¹⁸ While he was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother ¹⁹ when all of a sudden a tremendous wind came in from the desert. It hit the house on all four sides so that it collapsed on them and they died. Only I escaped to bring you this news.”

²⁰ Then Job stood up and tore his robe.‡ Then cut off his hair and fell to the ground in worship.

²¹ “I was naked when I came out of my mother's womb, and I shall be naked when I leave,” he said. “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. May the Lord's name be honored.”

²² In all of this Job did not sin, nor blame God.

2

¹ One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves to the Lord, and Satan came with them to present himself to the Lord. ² The Lord asked Satan, “What have you been doing?”

“Traveling around on earth, going here and there,” Satan replied.

‡ **1:20** An expression of intense feeling.

³ “Have you noticed my servant Job?” asked the Lord. “There’s no one like him on earth, a man of integrity who does what is right, who respects God and avoids evil. And he has kept his integrity, even though you wanted me to harm him for no reason.”

⁴ “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give up everything to save his life. ⁵ But reach out and hurt his bones and his flesh, and he will definitely curse you to your face.”

⁶ So the Lord said to Satan, “Very well, you have the power to do whatever you want to him, but don’t kill him.” ⁷ Then Satan left the Lord’s presence and inflicted Job with horrible skin sores from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. ⁸ Job picked up a piece of broken pottery to scratch himself as he sat in ashes. ⁹ His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!”

¹⁰ But he told her, “You’re talking just like any foolish woman would! Should we receive only good from God, and not evil?”* Despite all this, Job said nothing sinful.

¹¹ When three of Job’s friends heard of all the trouble that had happened to him, they each left their homes: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together and went to comfort and console him. ¹² When they saw Job from a distance they hardly recognized him. They broke out

* **2:10** Of course Job is not aware that his sufferings are the result of Satan’s actions, not God’s.

into loud wailing, tore their robes, and threw dust into the air over their heads. ¹³ They sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. None of them said anything to him because they saw how badly he was suffering.

3

¹ After this Job began speaking, cursing the day of his birth.* ² He said, ³ “Wipe out the day I was born, and the night when it was announced that a boy had been conceived. ⁴ Turn that day to darkness. God above should not remember it. Don't let light shine on it. ⁵ Take it back, darkness and death-shadow. A black cloud should overshadow it. It should be as terrifying as the darkness of an eclipse† during the day. ⁶ Blot out that night as if it never existed. Don't count it on the calendar. Don't let it have a day in any month.

⁷ Let that night be childless, with no sounds of happiness heard. ⁸ Those who place curses on certain days should curse it, those who have the power to raise Leviathan.‡ ⁹ Its early morning stars should stay dark. Looking for light, may none come, may it not see the glimmer of dawn

* **3:1** Most of Job is written in poetic form, and this should be borne in mind when reading the book. After the first two chapters of prose, the poetry begins here. † **3:5** The word “darkness” here is only used once in the Bible and is associated with bitterness. In Amos 8:10 a “bitter day” is linked with an eclipse. ‡ **3:8** Leviathan: a mythical sea-monster of great power.

¹⁰ for it did not shut my mother's womb to prevent me from seeing trouble.

¹¹ Why wasn't I stillborn? Why didn't I die at birth? ¹² Why was there a lap for me to lie on, or breasts for me to suck? ¹³ For now I would be lying down in peace. I would be sleeping and at rest, ¹⁴ along with the kings of this world and their officials whose palaces now lie in ruins, ¹⁵ or with noblemen who collected gold and filled their houses with silver. ¹⁶ Why wasn't I a miscarriage, buried in secret, a baby who never saw the light? ¹⁷ There in the grave the wicked give no more trouble, and those whose strength is gone have their rest. ¹⁸ There prisoners take it easy—they don't hear the commands of their oppressors. ¹⁹ Both small and great are there, and slaves are freed from their masters. ²⁰ Why does God give life to those who are suffering, living bitterly miserable lives, ²¹ those who are waiting for death that does not come and who are looking for death more desperately than hunting for treasure? ²² They're so incredibly happy when they reach the grave! ²³ Why is light given to someone who doesn't know where they're going, someone God has fenced in?§

²⁴ My groans are the bread I eat; my raging tears are the water I drink. ²⁵ For all that I feared has happened to me; everything that I dreaded has come upon me. ²⁶ I have no peace, no quiet,

§ 3:23 The same word used for God's protection in 1:9 is now used as a complaint.

no rest. All that comes is rage.”*

4

¹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered Job.

² “Could I say a word? I don’t want to upset you but who could keep quiet and not respond?”*

³ You’ve certainly encouraged many people and supported those who are weak. ⁴ Your advice

has helped those who are stumbling not to fall, and you have strengthened those whose knees are weak. ⁵ But now you’re the one suffering and you’re upset.

⁶ Wasn’t it your reverence for God that gave you confidence and your integrity that gave you hope? ⁷ Think about it: since when did the innocent die? Since when were good people destroyed?

⁸ From what I’ve seen it’s those who plant† evil and sow trouble who reap the same! ⁹ A breath from God destroys them; a blast of his anger wipes them out.

¹⁰ Lions may roar and growl, but their teeth still break. ¹¹ Even a lion dies from lack of food, and the lioness’ cubs are scattered.

¹² A word quietly crept up on me; a whisper reached my ear. ¹³ Troubling thoughts came to me in nightmares when you fall into a deep sleep.

¹⁴ I became terrified and trembled; all my bones were shaking. ¹⁵ Then a breath‡ brushed my face and gave me goose-pimples.

* **3:26** This is a different word to “trouble” that is mentioned for example in 3:10 and is associated with turmoil and anger.

* **4:2** In other words, the situation demanded a response. † **4:8** Literally, “plough.” ‡ **4:15** Or “spirit”—the word is the same for both.

16 Something stopped, but I couldn't see its face. My eyes could only make out a shape. It was totally quiet, and then I heard a voice: 17 'Can anyone be right before God? Can anyone be pure before their Maker? 18 If he doesn't even trust his servants, and he says his angels make mistakes, 19 how much more does this apply to those who live in these houses made of clay, § whose foundations are based on dust, who fall apart like clothing to a moth? 20 Alive in the morning, they are dead by evening. They die, unnoticed. 21 They are like tent ropes that are pulled up, and they collapse in death. They die without wisdom.'

5

1 Call if you want, but who is going to answer you? Which angel are you going to turn to? 2 Surely anger slays the fool and jealousy kills the simple. 3 I have seen a fool growing strong,* but I immediately cursed his house. 4 His sons are never safe; † they are crushed in court ‡ with no one to defend them. 5 The hungry eat everything he has harvested, taking even that protected by a thorn hedge, § while others look to steal his wealth. 6 For evil doesn't come from the dust; neither does trouble grow from the earth.

§ 4:19 Referring to human beings and their creation by God from the dust of the ground. * 5:3 Literally, "taking root."

† 5:4 Eliphaz may even have Job in mind here since Job has lost all his children. ‡ 5:4 Literally, "in the gate"—the town gate where justice was dispensed.

§ 5:5 The meaning of the Hebrew is unclear.

⁷ But human beings are born for trouble just as certainly as sparks from a fire fly upwards.

⁸ If it were me, I would go to God and put my case before him. ⁹ He is the one who does amazing, incredible things; miracles that can't be counted! ¹⁰ He gives rain to the earth and sends water to the fields. ¹¹ He exalts the humble, and rescues those who mourn. ¹² He frustrates the plans of the cunning so that they are unsuccessful. ¹³ He traps the wise in their own clever thinking, and the schemes of twisted people are cut short. ¹⁴ In the daytime they're in the dark, and they stumble around at noon like it's night. ¹⁵ But God is the one who saves from their cutting remarks,* and the poor from the actions of the powerful. ¹⁶ As a result those who are helpless have hope, and the wicked have to shut their mouths! ¹⁷ See how happy is the person God corrects—so don't despise the Almighty's discipline. ¹⁸ For he causes pain but he provides relief; he wounds but his hands heal. ¹⁹ He will save you from many disasters; a multitude of evils will not affect you.† ²⁰ In times of famine he will rescue you from death, and in times of war he will save you from the power of the sword. ²¹ You will be protected from sharp-tongued slander; and when violence comes you will not be afraid. ²² You will laugh at violence and famine; you won't be afraid of wild animals

* **5:15** Literally, “the sword of their mouth.” † **5:19** The numbers 6 and 7 are used, but are an example of number parallelism which simply indicate an increasing amount.

— ²³ for you will be at peace with the stones of the field[†] and the wild animals will be at peace with you. ²⁴ You will be certain that your home is safe, for you will go to where you live and find nothing missing. ²⁵ You will also be sure that you will have many children; your descendants will be like the grass[§] of the earth. ²⁶ You will live to a ripe old age like a sheaf of grain when it is harvested. ²⁷ Look, we've examined it, and it's true! Listen to what I'm saying and apply it to yourself!”

6

¹ Then Job responded: ² “If my grief could be weighed and my troubles placed on the scales ³ they would be heavier than the sand of the sea. That's why I spoke so rashly. ⁴ For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; their poison saps my spirit. God's terrors are lined* up against me. ⁵ Don't wild donkeys bray when their grass is gone? Don't cattle groan when they don't have food!† ⁶ Can something that's tasteless be eaten without salt? Is there any taste in the white of an egg? ⁷ I just can't touch any food—even the thought makes me feel sick! ⁸ Oh, if only I could have what I really want, that God would give me what I most desire— ⁹ that God would be willing

† **5:23** The meaning of the Hebrew is unclear. Some suggest that stones in a field cause difficulties for farming and that this will not be a problem. § **5:25** In other words as numerous as countless blades of grass. * **6:4** As in battle lines. † **6:5** In other words, “I have a right to complain!”

to crush me to death, that he would just let me die! ¹⁰ But it still comforts me to know, making me happy through the never-ending pain, that I have never rejected the words of God.†

¹¹ Why should I go on waiting when I don't have the strength? Why should I keep going when I don't know what is going to happen to me? ¹² Am I as strong as rock? Am I made out of bronze? ¹³ How can I help myself now that any chance of success is ripped§ away from me? ¹⁴ Anyone who isn't kind to a friend has given up respecting the Almighty. ¹⁵ My brothers* have acted as deceptively as a desert stream, rushing waters in the desert that vanish. ¹⁶ The stream floods when it is full of dark ice and melting snow, ¹⁷ but in the heat it dries up and disappears, vanishing from where it once was. ¹⁸ Camel caravans turn aside to look for water, but don't find any and they die. ¹⁹ Caravans from Tema looked, travelers from Sheba were confident, ²⁰ but their hopes were dashed—they came and found nothing.

²¹ Now you are no help, just like that†—you see my trouble and you're afraid. ²² Have I asked you for anything? Have I told you to bribe‡ anyone for me from your wealth? ²³ Have I asked you to rescue me from an enemy? Have I told you to save me from my oppressors? ²⁴ Explain this to

‡ **6:10** Literally, “Holy One.” § **6:13** Literally, “driven.”

* **6:15** Referring to Job's friends. † **6:21** Job is saying that Eliphaz is as helpful as a dried up stream that provides no water.

‡ **6:22** Or “pay a ransom.”

me, and I'll be quiet. Show me where I'm wrong.
 25 Honest words are painful,[§] but what do your arguments prove? 26 Are you going to argue over what I said, when the words of someone in despair should be left to blow away in the wind?
 27 You would play dice to win an orphan; you would bargain away your friend! 28 Look me in the eye and see if I'm lying to your face! 29 Don't talk like this!* Don't be unjust! What I'm saying is right. 30 I'm not telling lies—don't you think I wouldn't know if I was wrong?†

7

1 “Isn't life for human beings like serving a sentence of hard labor? Don't their days pass like those of a hired laborer? 2 Like some slave longing for a bit of shade, like a hired hand anxiously waiting for pay day, 3 I've been given months of emptiness and nights of misery. 4 When I go to bed I ask, ‘When shall I get up?’ But the night goes on and on, and I toss and turn until dawn. 5 My body is covered with maggots and caked in dirt; my skin is cracked, with oozing sores. 6 My days pass quicker than a weaver's shuttle* and they come to an end without hope. 7 Remember that my life is just a breath; I will not see happiness again. 8 Those watching me won't see me anymore; your eyes will be looking

§ 6:25 Or “forceful.” * 6:29 Literally, “turn.” Job is asking Eliphaz to turn away from this line of argument. † 6:30 Literally, “Can't my palate discern calamity?” * 7:6 The image is of a weaver working on a loom, whipping the shuttle from side to side.

for me, but I will be gone.† 9 When a cloud disappears, it's gone, just as anyone who goes down to Sheol‡ does not come back up. 10 They will never return home, and the people they knew will forget them.§

11 So, no, I won't hold my tongue—I will speak in the agony of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. 12 Am I the sea or a sea monster that you have to guard me? 13 If I tell myself, 'I'll feel better if I lie down in my bed,' or 'it will help me to lie down on my couch,' 14 then you scare me so much with dreams and terrify me with visions 15 that I would rather be strangled—I would rather die than become just a bag of bones.

16 I hate my life! I know I won't live long. Leave me alone because my life is just a breath.* 17 Why are human beings so important to you; why are you so concerned about them 18 that you inspect them every morning and test them every moment? Won't you ever stop staring at me? 19 Won't you ever leave me alone long enough to catch my breath?† 20 What have I done wrong? What have I done to you, Watcher of Humanity? Why have you made me your target, so that I'm a burden even to myself? 21 If so why don't you pardon my sins, and take away my guilt? Right

† 7:8 “Will be gone”: in other words, he will be dead; also in verse 21. ‡ 7:9 “Sheol”: the place of the dead. § 7:10 Literally, “His place will not know him anymore.” * 7:16 “Just a breath”: in other words, it has no purpose or meaning. † 7:19 “Catch my breath”: literally, “swallow my spittle.”

now I'm going to lie down in the dust, and though you will look for me, I will be gone.”

8

¹ Then Bildad the Shuhite spoke up and said,
² “How much longer will you go on talking like this? The words coming out of your mouth are a lot of hot air!”* ³ Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? ⁴ Your children must have sinned against him, and so they deserved the punishment he inflicted on them. ⁵ But if you pray to God and ask for his help, ⁶ if you live a clean life and do what is right, then he would act to make things right for you in your home.† ⁷ Though you began with next to nothing, you will end up with so much!

⁸ Why don't you ask what previous generations discovered, examine what our ancestors found out? We were born yesterday and don't know anything! ⁹ Our days on earth fade as quickly as a passing shadow. ¹⁰ Won't they‡ teach you and explain what they know? ¹¹ Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds grow without water? ¹² Even without being cut, while they are still flowering, they wither faster than grass. ¹³ This is what happens to everyone who forgets God. The hopes of those who live without God come to nothing. ¹⁴ Their confidence is like

* **8:2** “A lot of hot air”: literally, “a strong wind.” † **8:6** Literally, “restore your rightful habitation.” ‡ **8:10** “They—referring to the ancestors mentioned in verse 8.”

holding on[§] to a flimsy spider's web. ¹⁵ They look to their home to provide security, but it provides no support. They try to hang onto it, but it doesn't last. ¹⁶ Those who live without God are like a luxuriant plant growing in the sun, spreading its shoots all over the garden. ¹⁷ It twists its roots down through the stones, and holds on to rock. ¹⁸ But when it's cut down, the place where it was disowns it, saying, 'I never even saw you.' ¹⁹ Its life is over, and others spring up from the earth to take its place.

²⁰ Look, God doesn't reject someone who is innocent, and he doesn't support those who are guilty. ²¹ He can make you laugh with happiness again and shout for joy. ²² Those who hate you will be put to shame, and the place where the wicked live* will be destroyed.”

9

¹ Job replied, ² “Yes, I know all that! But how can anyone be right before God? ³ If you wanted to argue with God, God could ask a thousand questions that no-one could answer. ⁴ God is so wise and so powerful that no-one could challenge him and win.

⁵ God moves the mountains suddenly; he overturns them in his anger.* ⁶ He shakes the earth, making its foundations quake. ⁷ He is the one who can command the sun not to rise and the stars not to shine. ⁸ He alone

§ **8:14** In the sense of “for support.” * **8:22** “Place where the wicked live”: literally, “tent of the wicked.” * **9:5** Referring to earthquakes.

is the one who stretches out the heavens and walks on the waves of the sea. ⁹ He made the constellations of the Bear, Orion, the Pleiades, and the stars of the southern sky. ¹⁰ He is the one who does incredible things that are beyond our understanding, marvelous things that are uncountable.

¹¹ But when he passes by me, I don't see him; when he moves on, he is invisible to me. ¹² If he takes away,[†] who can prevent him? Who is going to ask him, 'What are you doing?' ¹³ God does not restrain his anger; he crushes Rahab's helpers[‡] underfoot.

¹⁴ So how much less could I answer God, or choose my words to argue with him! ¹⁵ Even though I'm right,[§] I can't answer him. I must plead for mercy from my judge. ¹⁶ Even if I called him to come and he responded, I don't believe he would listen to me.

¹⁷ He pounds me with the winds of a storm; he wounds me time and again, without giving a reason. ¹⁸ He doesn't give me a chance even to catch my breath; instead he fills my life with bitter suffering. ¹⁹ If it's a question of strength, then God is the strongest. If it's a question of justice, then who will set a time for my case? ²⁰ Even though I am right, my own mouth would

[†] **9:12** "Takes away." This may refer to "taking away" through death. The verb here means "snatches" and occurs nowhere else in the Bible. [‡] **9:13** Rahab is thought to refer to a mythical sea monster, and its helpers those who assist in destruction and causing chaos. [§] **9:15** Or "innocent." ^{*} **9:19** Or "who will take him to court?"

condemn me; even though I am innocent, he would prove me wrong. ²¹ I am innocent! I don't care what happens to me. I hate my life! ²² That's why I say, 'It makes no difference to God. He destroys both the innocent and the wicked.' ²³ When disaster[†] strikes suddenly he mocks the despair of the innocent. ²⁴ The earth has been handed over to the wicked; he blinds the eyes of the judges[‡]—if it's not him who does this, then who is it? ²⁵ The days of my life race by like a runner, rushing past without me seeing any happiness. ²⁶ They pass by like fast sailing ships, like an eagle swooping down on its prey.

²⁷ If I said to myself, 'I will forget my complaints; I will stop crying and be happy,' ²⁸ I would still be terrified at all my suffering because you, God, will not say I'm innocent. ²⁹ Since I'm condemned, what's the point in arguing? ³⁰ Even if I wash myself with pure mountain water and clean my hands with soap, ³¹ you would toss me into a slime pit so that even my own clothes would hate me! ³² For God is not a mortal being like me, I can't defend myself or take him to court. ³³ If only there was an arbitrator[§] who could bring us both together! ³⁴ I wish God would stop beating me with his rod and terrifying me! ³⁵ Then I could speak up without being afraid—but since I am, I can't!"*

[†] **9:23** Literally, "scourge." [‡] **9:24** Meaning that there is no justice. [§] **9:33** Literally, "judge." * **9:35** Literally, "for I am not so in myself."

10

¹ I hate my life! Let me speak freely about my complaints—I can't keep my bitterness to myself.

² I will tell God, “Don't just condemn me—tell me what you have against me. ³ Do you enjoy

accusing me? Why do you reject me, someone you made with your own hands, and yet smile

on the scheming of the wicked? ⁴ Do you have human eyes? Do you see like human beings do?

⁵ Is your life as short as mortal beings? Are your years as brief as those of humanity, ⁶ that you

have to examine my wrongs and investigate my sins? ⁷ Even though you know I'm not guilty, no

one can save me from you. ⁸ You made me and shaped me with your own hands, and yet you

destroy me. ⁹ Remember that you shaped me like a piece of clay—are you now going to turn me

back into dust? ¹⁰ You poured me out like milk, you curdled me like cheese.* ¹¹ You clothed me

with skin and flesh; you wove my body together with bones and muscles. ¹² You granted me life

and showed me your kindness; you have taken great care of me.

¹³ But you kept these things hidden in your heart. I know your purpose was ¹⁴ to watch me,

and if I sinned, then you would not forgive my wrongs. ¹⁵ If I'm guilty I'm in trouble, if I'm

innocent I can't hold my head high because I'm totally disgraced as I look at my sufferings. ¹⁶ If

I do hold my head high you hunt me down like

* **10:10** These poetic references refer to procreation. The intent is to say God formed Job in his mother's womb.

a lion, showing how powerful you are in hurting me. ¹⁷ You repeat your arguments against me, you pour out more and more of your anger against me, you send fresh armies against me.

¹⁸ So why did you allow me to be born?† I wish that I had died, and nobody had ever seen me! ¹⁹ It would have been better if I had never existed, taken straight from the womb to the grave. ²⁰ I only have a few days left, so why don't you leave me alone so I can have a little peace ²¹ before I go to where I shall never return from, the land of darkness and the shadow of death — ²² the land of total darkness where death's shadow lies, a place of chaos where light itself is darkness.”

11

¹ Then Zophar the Naamathite began speaking and said, ² “So many words be answered, shouldn't they? Or is a person proved right by doing a lot of talking? ³ Should all your babbling force people to keep quiet? When you mock, shouldn't someone make you feel ashamed? ⁴ You said, ‘What I teach is the pure truth,’ and ‘in God's eyes I am clean.’ ⁵ If only God would speak up and tell you directly, ⁶ because then he would explain to you the secrets of wisdom. True wisdom has many sides to it. God's treatment of you is far better than your guilt deserves.

† **10:18** Literally, “bring me forth from the womb.”

7 Can you find out the mysteries of God? Can you discover all the wisdom of the Almighty?*

8 It is greater than the heavens—what can you do? It is deeper than Sheol†—what can you know? 9 It extends farther than the earth, and wider than the sea. 10 If God comes and imprisons someone, or assembles the court for judgment, who can stop him? 11 For God knows who are deceivers—when he sees someone sin, he pays attention to it. 12 Stupid people will become wise when wild donkeys are born tame!‡

13 But if you repent§ and spread out your hands to pray to him, 14 if you get rid of your sins and don't let wickedness continue in your life,* 15 then you would be able to hold your head high in innocence, you will be firm and unafraid. 16 You will forget your misery, remembering it only as water under the bridge. 17 Your life will shine brighter than the noonday sun; even darkness will be like the morning. 18 You will have confidence because there is hope; you will be protected and rest in safety. 19 You will lie down to sleep with no one to frighten you, and many will come asking for your favor. 20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail, they will not be able to escape, and their only hope is in death.”

* 11:7 Literally, “Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?”

† 11:8 Sheol: the underworld, the place of the dead. ‡ 11:12 Wild donkeys, like horses, are not naturally born tame, so the statement is saying that stupid people becoming wise is very unlikely. § 11:13 Literally, “set right your heart.” * 11:14 Literally, “do not let unrighteousness reside in your tents.”

12

¹ Job replied, ² “You really think you're special people, don't you?”* Obviously when you die, wisdom will die with you! ³ But I too have insights, and you're no better than me. Doesn't everyone know the things you've said? ⁴ But my friends laugh at me because I called on God and he answered me: the innocent man who does right has become an object of derision. ⁵ People who are comfortable have contempt for those who are in trouble, ready to push over those who are already slipping. ⁶ Robbers live in peace, and those who make God angry live in safety, trusting their own strength as their ‘god.’

⁷ But if you ask the animals they will teach you, the birds in the sky will tell you; ⁸ ask the earth and it will teach you, and the fishes in the sea will tell you. ⁹ Which of all these doesn't know that the Lord has done this? ¹⁰ He gives life to every living thing, life to all humankind. ¹¹ The ear distinguishes† words just like the palate distinguishes foods. ¹² Wisdom to distinguish belongs to the old, and the ability to rightly discriminate belongs to those with long experience.‡ ¹³ God has wisdom and power, counsel and understanding belong to him. ¹⁴ If he tears something down, nobody can rebuild it. If he imprisons someone, nobody can free them. ¹⁵ If God holds back the waters, everything

* **12:2** Literally, “No doubt you are the people.” † **12:11** Literally, “tests.” ‡ **12:12** Could also be a question: “Is wisdom with the old, and understanding in length of days?”

dries up; if he releases the waters, the earth floods. ¹⁶ He is mighty and victorious;[§] both deceivers and those deceived are subject to him. ¹⁷ He leads counselors away stripped of their wisdom, he makes judges into fools. ¹⁸ He removes the chains of office from kings and makes them wear loincloths.* ¹⁹ He leads priests away stripped of their religious garments, he overthrows the powerful. ²⁰ He takes away the advice of trusted advisors, he removes the discernment of the elders. ²¹ He pours scorn upon princes and takes away power[†] from the strong. ²² He reveals what is hidden in darkness, and brings into the light the shadow of death. ²³ He makes nations great and he destroys them; he expands nations and ruins them. ²⁴ He removes the understanding of rulers[‡] and makes them wander in the wilderness. ²⁵ They grope around in the dark without a light. He makes them stagger like drunk people.

13

¹ Look, I've seen all this with my own eyes, and heard it with my own ears, and I understand it. ² I know what you know. You're no better than me. ³ But I would still like to speak to the Almighty: I want to prove myself to God! ⁴ As for

§ 12:16 Or "He has power and sound wisdom." * 12:18 In other words he turns kings into manual workers. † 12:21 Literally, "loosens the belt." ‡ 12:24 Literally, "He strips the hearts of the heads of the people of the earth."

you, you cover things up* by telling lies! You are all like doctors who can't heal anyone! ⁵ I wish you would all be quiet! That would be the wisest thing for you to do. ⁶ Listen to my argument and pay attention to what I have to say.

⁷ Do you think you can tell lies to defend God? Are you talking deceitfully on his behalf? ⁸ Or are you wanting to show God favoritism? Are you going to argue God's case for him? ⁹ Will you be found to be doing good when God examines you? Can you fool him as if he's a human being? ¹⁰ No, he will definitely rebuke you if you secretly show him favoritism! ¹¹ Isn't his majesty terrifying to you? Aren't you so afraid of him you're paralyzed? ¹² Your sayings are as helpful as ashes; your arguments as weak as clay.

¹³ Be quiet. Don't talk to me. Let me speak, come what may. ¹⁴ I take responsibility for myself; I am ready to risk my life. ¹⁵ Even though he kills me, I will hope in him.† I am still going to defend my ways before him. ¹⁶ By doing this I will be saved since no godless person could come before him. ¹⁷ Listen carefully to what I say, pay attention to my explanation. ¹⁸ Look, I've prepared my case—I know I will be proved right. ¹⁹ Who wants to argue with me? If I'm proved wrong, I'm prepared to be quiet and die. ²⁰ God, I have two requests, then I can face you. ²¹ Stop beating me,‡ and stop terrifying me. ²² Then call,

* **13:4** Literally, “you are plasterers of lies.” † **13:15** Or “I have no hope.” ‡ **13:21** Literally, “withdraw your hand far from me.”

and I will answer. Or let me speak, and then answer me. ²³ What are my sins and iniquities? Show me what have I done wrong; how have I rebelled against you? ²⁴ Why are you unfriendly towards me? [§] Why do you treat me as your enemy? ²⁵ Would you frighten a leaf blown by the wind or hunt down a piece of straw? ²⁶ For you write down bitter things against me and pay me back for the sins of my youth. ²⁷ You put my feet in the stocks. You keep an eye on every step I take. You even inspect my footprints! ²⁸ I'm falling apart like something rotten, like moth-eaten clothes.

14

¹ Life* is short and full of trouble, ² like a flower that blooms and withers, like a passing shadow that soon disappears. ³ Do you even notice me, God, and why do you have to drag me to court? ⁴ Who can bring something clean of what is unclean? No one. ⁵ You have determined how long we shall live—the number of months, a time limit on our lives. ⁶ So leave us alone and give us some peace—so like a laborer we could enjoy a few hours of rest at the end of the day.

⁷ Even a tree that's cut down has the hope of sprouting again, of sending up shoots and continuing to live. ⁸ Even though its roots grow old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground, ⁹ just a trickle of water† will make it bud and

§ 13:24 Literally, “hide your face from me.” * 14:1 Literally, “man that is born of woman,” so this is referring to human life generally. † 14:9 Literally, “scent of water.”

grow branches like a young plant.

¹⁰ But human beings die, their strength dwindles away; they perish, and where are they then?

¹¹ Like water evaporating from a lake and a river that dries up and disappears, ¹² so human beings lie down and don't get up again. Until the heavens cease to exist they will not awake from their sleep.

¹³ I wish you would hide me in Sheol;[‡] conceal me there until your anger is gone. Set a definite time for me there, and remember me! ¹⁴ Will the dead live again? Then I would have hope through all my time of trouble until my release comes. ¹⁵ You would call and I would answer you; you would long for me, the being that you made. ¹⁶ Then you would look after me[§] and wouldn't be watching me to see if I sinned. ¹⁷ My sins would be sealed up in a bag and you would cover my guilt.

¹⁸ But just as the mountains crumble and fall, and the rocks tumble down; ¹⁹ as water wears away the stones, as floods wash away the soil, so you destroy the hope people have. ²⁰ You continually overpower them and they pass away; you distort their faces in death and send them away. ²¹ Their children may become important or fall from their positions, but they don't know or see any of this. ²² As people die they only know their own pain and are sad for themselves.”

[‡] **14:13** Sheol: the place of the dead. **§ 14:16** Literally, “count my steps.”

15

¹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, ² “Would a wise man answer with such empty ‘knowledge’ that is just a lot of hot air?*

³ He wouldn’t argue with unprofitable speeches using words that do no good. ⁴ But you are doing away with the fear of God, and destroying communion with him. ⁵ It’s your sins that are doing the talking, and you are choosing deceptive words. ⁶ Your own mouth is condemning you, not me; your own lips are testifying against you.

⁷ Were you the very first person to be born? Were you born before the hills were created?†

⁸ Were you there listening in God’s council?‡ Does wisdom only belong to you? ⁹ What do you know that we don’t? What do you understand that we don’t? ¹⁰ We have among us old, gray-haired people much older than your father!

¹¹ Are the comforts God provides too little for you? Are God’s gentle words not enough for you?

¹² Why do you let yourself be carried away by your emotions?§ ¹³ Why do your eyes flash in anger that you turn against God and let yourself

speak this way? ¹⁴ Who can say they are clean? Which human being can say that they do what is right? ¹⁵ Look, God doesn’t even trust his angels—even the heavenly beings are not pure in his

* **15:2** “Hot air”: literally, “fill his belly with the east,” the direction of a hot wind blowing in the desert. † **15:7** Note the parallel to Proverbs 8:25. ‡ **15:8** Referring to the council in heaven, 1:6; 2:1. § **15:12** Literally, “Why does your heart take you?”

sight! ¹⁶ How much less pure are those who are unclean and corrupt, drinking in sin like water!

¹⁷ If you are ready to listen to me, I will show you. I will explain my insights. ¹⁸ This is what wise men have said, confirmed by their ancestors, ¹⁹ those who to whom alone the land was given before foreigners ever were there.*

²⁰ The wicked writhe in pain all their lives, through all the years these oppressors survive.

²¹ Terrifying sounds fill their ears; even when they think they're safe, the destroyer will attack them. ²² They don't believe they will escape the darkness—they know a sword is waiting for them.†

²³ They wander around looking for food, asking 'Where is it?' They know that their day of darkness is close at hand. ²⁴ Misery and torment overwhelm them like a king preparing for battle.

²⁵ They shake their fists in God's face, defiantly challenging the Almighty, ²⁶ insolently attacking him with their shields.

²⁷ They have become fat in their rebellion, their bellies bloated with fat. ²⁸ But their cities will become desolate; they will live in abandoned houses that are crumbling into ruins. ²⁹ They will lose their riches, their wealth will not endure, their possessions will not spread over the earth.

³⁰ They will not escape from the darkness. Like a tree whose shoots are burned up in a forest fire, the breath of God will blow him away. ³¹ They should not trust in things that are worthless, for

* **15:19** Implying that the influence of foreigners might have impacted traditional wisdom. † **15:22** Meaning that they expect to be murdered.

their reward will be worthless.† 32 This will be paid in full before their time has come. They are like tree branches that wither, 33 like vines that lose their unripe grapes, or olive trees that lose their flowers.§ 34 For those who reject God are barren,* and fire will burn up the homes of those who love bribes. 35 They plan trouble and produce evil, giving birth to deception.”

16

1 Job replied, 2 “I've heard all this before. You are comforters who just cause trouble!”* 3 Will your windy speeches never cease?† What's bothering you that you have to answer me? 4 I could talk like you do if you were in my place, stringing words together to criticize you, ridiculing you with a toss of my head. 5 I could build you up by my mouth speaking words; the movement of my lips would ease your pain.† 6 For me, if I speak it doesn't ease my pain, and if I don't speak the pain is still there.

7 God,§ you have worn me out. You have destroyed my whole family. 8 You have made

† 15:31 “Worthless,” or “vanity.” § 15:33 In other words fruit trees that fail to produce a good harvest. * 15:34 Or “unproductive.” * 16:2 Job uses the same word “trouble” to describe his counselors as Eliphaz has just done in concluding his speech in 15:35. It's as if Job is saying to his friends, “You are these evil people who cause trouble!” † 16:3 Job is referring back to the beginning of Eliphaz's speech where he accuses Job of the same thing. † 16:5 Whether Job is being sincere or sarcastic is debated. § 16:7 “God” or “he” or “it”—the Hebrew is unclear.

me shrivel up, which is a witness against me; my thin body testifies against me.* ⁹ He has torn me apart in his anger; in his hostility he has gnashed his teeth at me; my enemy pierces me with his fierce look. ¹⁰ People stare at me with their mouths wide open, they slap me on my cheeks to mock me, they crowd around me to attack me. ¹¹ God has handed me over to evil people; he has thrown me into their hands.

¹² I was living in peace and he smashed me to pieces. He grabbed me by the neck and dashed me to pieces. He set me up as his target.

¹³ His archers surround me. His arrows pierce my kidneys without mercy. He pours out my gall on the ground. ¹⁴ Like a wall he breaks me down, breach upon breach, rushing at me like a warrior. ¹⁵ I have sown sackcloth[†] to cover my skin; my strength lies broken in the dust.[‡] ¹⁶ My face is red from crying and dark shadows surround my eyes, ¹⁷ although I have done nothing wrong[§] and my prayer is pure.

¹⁸ Earth, do not cover up my blood. May my cry find no place to hide. ¹⁹ Look, right now my witness is in heaven; the one who speaks for me is on high. ²⁰ My friends scorn me, but my eyes pour out tears to God. ²¹ I want my witness to speak for me with God as someone does for their

* **16:8** Some understand this as Job saying his “shriveling up” and “thinness” are proof by God that he is a sinner. † **16:15** Putting on sackcloth was a sign of mourning. ‡ **16:15** Literally, “I have thrust my horn in the dust.” § **16:17** Literally, “there is no violence in my hands.”

friend. ²² For in a few short years I shall go down that road from which I shall not return.

17

¹ My spirit is crushed; my life is extinguished; the grave is ready for me. ² Mockers surround me. I see how bitterly they ridicule me. ³ God, you need to put down a pledge for me with yourself, for who else will be my guarantor? ⁴ You have closed their minds to understanding,* so do not let them win! ⁵ They betray friends to gain benefit for themselves and their children suffer for it.† ⁶ He has made me a proverb of ridicule‡ among the people; they spit in my face. ⁷ My eyes are worn out from crying and my body is a shadow of its former self. ⁸ People who think they are good are shocked to see me. Those who are innocent are troubled by the godless.§ ⁹ Those who are right keep going, and those whose hands are clean grow stronger and stronger.

¹⁰ Why don't you come back and repeat again what you've been saying?—yet I still won't find a wise man among you! ¹¹ My life is over. My plans are gone. My heart is broken. ¹² They turn night into day, and say that daylight is close

* **17:4** As often in the OT God is credited with actions he has not necessarily committed. † **17:5** Literally, “the eyes of his children will fail.” ‡ **17:6** “Proverb of ridicule”—in other words

Job has become a byword for someone who is mocked. § **17:8** Some commentators believe Job is being sarcastic here and in the following verse, commenting on his friends' attitude towards him.

to darkness.* 13 What am I looking for? To make my home in Sheol,† to make my bed in darkness? 14 Should I call the grave‡ my father, and the maggot my mother or my sister? 15 So then where is my hope? Can anyone see any hope for me? 16 Will hope go down with me to the gates of Sheol? Will we go down together into the dust?”

18

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite spoke up and said, 2 “How long will you go on talking, hunting for the right words to say?* Talk sense if you want us to reply! 3 Do you think we're dumb animals?† Do we look stupid to you? 4 You tear yourself apart with your anger.‡ Do you think the earth has to be abandoned, or the mountains moved, just because of you?§

5 It's certain that the life of the wicked will end like a lamp that is snuffed out—their flame will shine no more. 6 The light in their home goes out, the lamp hanging above is extinguished. 7 Instead of taking strong strides they stumble, and their own plans cause them to fall. 8 Their

* **17:12** Referring to Job's friends, indicating that Job thinks they have everything the wrong way round. † **17:13** Sheol: the place of the dead. ‡ **17:14** Literally, “pit.” * **18:2** In the Hebrew the sense is that Job is hunting for words, trying to trap them in a snare. † **18:3** In 12:7 Job had told his friends to ask the animals. ‡ **18:4** In 16:9 Job said that God had torn him apart in his anger. Bildad says it's all self-inflicted. § **18:4** In other words, “Do you expect the world to be changed just to suit you?”

own feet trip them up and they are caught in a net; as they walk along they fall into a pit.*
 9 A trap grabs them by the heel; a snare tightens around them. 10 A noose is hidden on the ground for them; a rope is stretched across the path to trip them. 11 Terrors scare the wicked, coming at them from every side, chasing them, biting at their heels. 12 Hunger robs them of strength; disaster waits for them when they fall. 13 Disease devours their skin; deadly disease† consumes their limbs. 14 They are torn from the homes they trusted in and taken to the king of terrors.‡ 15 People they don't know will live in their homes; sulfur will be scattered where they used to live.§ 16 They wither away, roots below and branches above; 17 the memory of them fades from the earth; nobody remembers their names any more.* 18 They are thrown out of light into darkness, driven from the world. 19 They have no children or descendants among their people, and no survivors where they used to live. 20 People of the west are appalled at what happens to them. People of the east are shocked. 21 This is what happens to the homes of the wicked, to the places of those who reject God.”

* **18:8** The pit is a trap set by laying branches over a deep hole.

† **18:13** Literally, “the first-born of death.” ‡ **18:14** This term occurs nowhere else in the Bible. In the context it is probably a synonym for death. § **18:15** Sulfur was used as a disinfectant, especially after a death.

* **18:17** Literally, “he has no name in the street.”

19

¹ Job replied, ² “How long will you go on tormenting me? How long will you go on crushing me with words? ³ Ten times already you have humiliated me. Aren't you ashamed for treating me so badly? ⁴ Even if I did sin, that's my problem, and has nothing to do with you. ⁵ You think you're so much better than me, and you use my degradation against me. ⁶ But you should realize that it's God who has wronged me,* he has trapped me in his net. ⁷ Even though I cry for help, I get no answer; even though I shout my objections, I get no justice. ⁸ God has walled me in so I can't escape; he has plunged my path into darkness. ⁹ He has stripped my honor[†] from me; he has taken away my reputation.[‡] ¹⁰ He tears me down from all sides until I am finished; he has destroyed my hope like a tree that is uprooted. ¹¹ His anger burns against me; he treats me as one of his enemies. ¹² God's troops assemble to attack me. They build ramparts against me. They encircle and besiege my home. ¹³ He has driven my brothers far away from me; all my former friends are estranged from me. ¹⁴ My relatives have abandoned me; my close friends have forgotten me. ¹⁵ My house guests and my maidservants treat me as a stranger—to them I have become a foreigner.

* **19:6** In 8:3 Bildad asked “Does God pervert justice?” Job uses the same verb for “perverts” here to say God has done him wrong.

† **19:9** Or “wealth.” ‡ **19:9** Literally, “removed the crown from my head.”

16 I call my servant, but he doesn't reply. I have to beg him! 17 I § am repulsive to my wife, and I am loathsome to my own brothers.* 18 Even young children despise me; when I stand up they ridicule me. 19 All my closest friends despise me, and those I loved have turned on me. 20 I've been reduced to skin and bones and I survive by the skin of my teeth.

21 Have pity on me, my friends, have pity on me, because God has struck me down! 22 Why are you persecuting me like God does? Aren't you satisfied with getting your pound of flesh?

23 I wish my words could be written down, recorded in a book, 24 or engraved with an iron pen and molten lead in the rock forever.

25 I know my Redeemer is alive, and that he shall finally take the stand† for me on the earth. 26 Even though my skin is destroyed, in my body‡ I shall see God. 27 I myself will see him—with my own eyes, and not those of someone else! The thought overcomes me!§ 28 You say to yourselves, 'How can we make him suffer so he can see he is the source of his problems?' 29 You yourselves should fear being punished by God,

§ 19:17 Or "My breath." * 19:17 "My own brothers": literally, "the sons of my own mother." This also could be interpreted to mean "my own children." † 19:25 The concept here is to take the stand as a witness. ‡ 19:26 Literally, "flesh." § 19:27 Literally, "my kidneys are exhausted in my chest"—the kidneys being seen as the source of emotions in the body.

for you know anger brings God's punishment* that accompanies judgment.”

20

¹ Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said, ² “I'm forced to reply because I'm really upset! ³ What I hear you say insults me, but I know how to reply to you!

⁴ Don't you know that since ancient times, since human beings were put on this earth, ⁵ that the triumph of the wicked doesn't last long, that those who reject God are only happy for a short time? ⁶ Even though they are so tall* they reach the heavens, even though their heads reach the clouds, ⁷ they will vanish forever like their own excrement. People who knew† them will ask, “Where have they gone?” ⁸ They will vanish like a dream, never to be found, fleeing like a vision of the night. ⁹ Those who once saw them will not see them anymore; their families will never set eyes on them again. ¹⁰ Their children will have to pay back the poor; they will have to return their wealth.‡ ¹¹ Though the wicked have bodies that are young and strong, they will die and be buried.§

¹² Though evil tastes sweet in their mouths and they hide it under their tongues, ¹³ not letting

* **19:29** “Punished/punishment” literally, “sword.” * **20:6** Or “their pride.” † **20:7** Literally, “have seen him.” ‡ **20:10** Implying that the wicked parents had improperly taken money from the poor. § **20:11** Literally, “it will lie down with him in the dust.”

it go but keeping it in their mouths, ¹⁴ in their stomachs it turns bitter, becoming like snake venom inside them. ¹⁵ They swallow wealth and vomit it up again; God forces it from their stomachs. ¹⁶ They suck in snake venom; the bite of the viper will kill them. ¹⁷ They will not live to enjoy the streams, the rivers of milk and honey. ¹⁸ They will have to give back what they have gained and will not have any benefit;* they will not enjoy any of their profits. ¹⁹ For they have oppressed and abandoned the poor; they have seized houses they did not build. ²⁰ Because their greed was never satisfied,† nothing they liked is left that they didn't consume. ²¹ Nothing escapes their ravenous appetites, so their happiness doesn't last long.

²² Even when the wicked have all that they want they run into trouble; all kinds of misery will fall upon them. ²³ While they are busy filling their bellies, God's hostility will burn against them, raining down on them. ²⁴ As they flee to escape an iron weapon, a bronze arrow will strike them down. ²⁵ The arrow is pulled out of their gall bladder, glistening with blood. They are absolutely terrified! ²⁶ All they value will disappear into the darkness; divine fire‡ will destroy them; all they have left will go up in smoke. ²⁷ The heavens reveal what they have

* **20:18** Literally, “will not swallow it down.” † **20:20** Literally, “knew no quietness in the belly.” ‡ **20:26** Literally, “a fire that is not fanned”—in other words a fire not started by human hand.

done wrong; the earth will rise up against them. ²⁸ All their possessions will be carried from their homes; they will be dragged off on the day of God's judgment. ²⁹ This is the share the wicked receive from God, the inheritance God says they should have.”

21

¹ Job replied, ² “Please listen carefully to what I say—that would be one comfort you could give me.* ³ Bear with me; let me speak. After I've spoken you can resume mocking me. ⁴ Am I complaining against people? Of course not.† Why shouldn't I be impatient? ⁵ Just take a look at me. Aren't you appalled? Cover your mouth with your hand in shock! ⁶ Every time I think of what's happened to me I am horrified and I shake all over with fear.

⁷ Why do the wicked continue to live, to grow old and increasingly powerful?‡ ⁸ Their children are with them; they watch their grandchildren grow up. ⁹ They live in their homes in safety—they are not afraid. God does not use his rod to beat them.§ ¹⁰ Their bulls always breed successfully; their cows give birth to calves and do not miscarry. ¹¹ They send out their little ones like lambs to play; their children dance around.

* **21:2** In 15:11 Eliphaz asks if God's comforts are too little for Job. Job here turns it around and asks for some comfort from his friends. † **21:4** Implied. ‡ **21:7** Zophar has just said that the triumph of wicked doesn't last long (20:5). § **21:9** In 9:34 Job complains about being beaten by God's rod.

12 They sing accompanied by the tambourine and lyre; they celebrate with the music of the flute.

13 They live out their lives contentedly, and go down to Sheol in peace.* 14 Yet they tell God,

‘Get lost! We don't want anything to do with you.

15 Who does the Almighty think he is for us to serve him as slaves? What benefit is there for us if we pray to him?’ 16 Such people believe they make their own fortune, but I don't accept their

way of thinking.†

17 How often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out?‡ How often does disaster come upon

them?§ How often does God punish the wicked in his anger? 18 Are they blown along like straw

in the wind? Does a tornado come in and carry them away? 19 Some say, ‘God saves up people's

punishment for their children.’ But I say, ‘God should punish those people themselves so that

they can learn from it.’ 20 Let them see their destruction themselves, and drink deeply from

God's anger. 21 For they don't care what happens to their families once they're dead.

22 Can anyone teach God anything he doesn't already know, since he is the one who judges

even heavenly beings? * 23 One person dies in good health, totally comfortable and secure.

24 Their body is fat from eating well; their bones

* 21:13 Sheol: the place of the dead. † 21:16 Literally,

“the plans of the wicked are repugnant to me.” ‡ 21:17 In 18:5 Bildad stated that the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.

§ 21:17 In 18:12 Bildad mentioned that the wicked suffer disaster. * 21:22 Literally, “the exalted ones.”

still strong.† 25 Another dies after a miserable life without every experiencing happiness. 26 Yet they are both buried in the same dust; they are treated alike in death, eaten by maggots.

27 Look, I know what you're thinking, and your schemes to do me wrong. 28 You may ask me, 'Where is the home of the great man? Where is the place where the wicked live?' 29 Haven't you asked people who travel? Don't you pay attention to what they tell you? 30 Wicked people are spared in times of disaster; they are rescued from the day of judgment. 31 Who confronts them with their actions? Who pays them back for what they have done? 32 When they eventually die and are carried to the graveyard, their tomb is guarded. The earth of the grave softly covers them. 33 Everyone attends their funeral service; a huge procession of people comes to pay their last respects.‡ 34 Why do you try to comfort me with worthless nonsense?§ Your answers are just a pack of lies!"

22

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded and said, 2 "How can anyone be of help to God? Even wise people are only helpful to themselves. 3 Is it any benefit to the Almighty if you're a good person?* What does he gain if you do what's right? 4 Does he correct you and bring charges

† 21:24 Literally, "the marrow of their bones is moist." ‡ 21:33 Literally, "those who go before him are innumerable." § 21:34 Literally, "vapor." * 22:3 "Good person": or "righteous."

against you because of your reverence?† 5 No: it's because you're so wicked! Your sins are never-ending!

6 For no reason at all you took your brother's clothing as a security for a debt, and left them stripped naked. 7 You refused water to the thirsty; you denied food to the hungry. 8 Is it because the land belongs to the powerful, and only the privileged have a right to live there?‡ 9 You have sent widows away empty-handed; you have crushed the outstretched arms of orphans, begging for help.§ 10 That's why you're surrounded by traps to catch you, and why you suddenly panic in terror. 11 That's why it's so dark you cannot see, and why you feel like you're drowning.*

12 Doesn't God live in highest heaven and looks down on even the highest stars? 13 But you ask, 'What does God know? How can he see and judge what happens in down here in darkness? 14 Thick clouds cover him so he can't see anything as he walks around in heaven.'†

15 Why do you insist on following the traditional thinking of the wicked?‡ 16 They were taken before their time; all they had built was

† 22:4 Eliphaz is saying that if Job was truly innocent he wouldn't be suffering God's punishment. ‡ 22:8 Suggesting that this is Job's attitude. § 22:9 "Begging for help"

implied. * 22:11 Literally, "the abundance of water covers you." † 22:14 Eliphaz accuses Job of believing in a distant, uninterested God who is immune to what happens on earth.

‡ 22:15 Literally, "the old paths on which evil people walked."

washed away. ¹⁷ They had told God, ‘Get lost! What can the Almighty do to us?’ ¹⁸ And yet he was the one who had filled their homes with good things—but I don’t accept their way of thinking. §

¹⁹ Those who do right rejoice when they see the destruction of the wicked,* and the innocent mock them, ²⁰ saying, ‘Our enemies are destroyed, and fire has burned up all that’s left of them.’

²¹ Come back to God and be reconciled to him, and you’ll be prosperous again. ²² Listen to what he tells you and keep his words in mind. ²³ If you return to God you will be restored. If you renounce your sinful life† ²⁴ and give up your love of money and desire for possessions,‡ ²⁵ then the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver.

²⁶ Then you will find delight in the Almighty, and be able to face him without feeling ashamed. ²⁷ You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will keep your promises to him. ²⁸ Whatever you decide to do will be successful, and wherever you go, light will shine on you. ²⁹ When others are humbled, and you say, ‘please help them,’ God will save them. ³⁰ God saves those who are

§ **22:18** Eliphaz uses exactly the same words as Job does in 21:16. * **22:19** Literally, “it,” referring back to verse 16.

† **22:23** Literally, “remove wickedness from your tent.” ‡ **22:24** Literally, “throw your gold in the dust, the gold of Ophir in the riverbed.” Since Job has lost everything already, this needs to be seen figuratively.

innocent, and you will be saved if you do what is right.”§

23

¹ Job replied, ² “Just the same, my complaints today remain bitter. In spite of my groaning he is still punishing me.* ³ If only I knew where I could find him so I could go to where he sits in judgment. ⁴ There I would lay out my case before him and present all my arguments in full. ⁵ I would discover how he would answer me and learn what he has to say to me. ⁶ Would he fight against me using his mighty power? No, he would pay attention to what I have to say. ⁷ There a good† person could reason with him, and I would be acquitted forever by my judge. ⁸ If I go to the east, he's not there; if I go the west, I don't find him. ⁹ If he's working in the north, I don't perceive him; if he's moving south, I don't see him.

¹⁰ Yet he always knows where I'm going. When he has proved me, I will come out shining like gold.‡ ¹¹ I have kept in step with him; I have followed his way without turning aside. ¹² I have not neglected his commands, for I value what he has told me to do more than the food I eat every day.

§ **22:30** Literally, “if your hands are clean.” * **23:2** Literally, “his hand is heavy on me.” † **23:7** Or “upright.” ‡ **23:10** The image here is of testing gold in a crucible: once the impurities are burned away, the liquid gold has a brilliant surface.

13 But God is unchangeable—who can turn him from his purposes? He does whatever he wants to do. 14 So he will finish whatever he has planned for me—and he has many plans for me. 15 That's why I'm terrified at meeting him;§ when I think of him I tremble with fear. 16 God has made me faint-hearted; the Almighty has scared me to death. 17 Yet I'm still here despite the dark—even though I can't see through the utter darkness.*

24

1 Why doesn't the Almighty set a definite time to punish the wicked?* Why don't those who follow him never see him act in judgment? 2 The wicked move boundary stones;† they seize other people's flocks and move them to their own pastures. 3 They steal the orphan's donkey; they take the widow's ox as security for a debt. 4 They push the poor out of their way; the destitute are forced to hide from them. 5 Like wild donkeys in the desert, the poor have to scavenge for their food, looking for anything to feed their children in the wasteland. 6 They are forced to find what they can in other people's fields, to glean among the vineyards of the wicked. 7 They spend the night naked because they have no clothes; they have nothing to cover themselves

§ 23:15 Literally, “his presence.” * 23:17 The Hebrew here is difficult: “Because I am not cut off by reason of darkness and from my face which thick darkness covers.” * 24:1 “Wicked” implied. † 24:2 Thus stealing land.

against the cold. ⁸ They are soaked by the cold mountain storms, and huddle beside the rocks for shelter. ⁹ Fatherless children are snatched from their mother's breasts, taking the babies of the poor as security for a debt. ¹⁰ Because they have no clothes to wear they have to go naked, harvesting sheaves of grain while they themselves are hungry. ¹¹ In the olive groves they work to produce oil, but do not taste it; they tread the winepress, but are thirsty. ¹² In the city the dying groan, and the wounded cry for help, but God ignores their prayers.†

¹³ These are people who rebel against the light. They do not want to know its ways, or to stay on its paths. ¹⁴ The murderer gets up at dawn to kill the poor and needy, and when night falls he becomes a thief. ¹⁵ The adulterer waits for dusk, saying to himself, 'No one will see me now,' and he covers his face. ¹⁶ Thieves break into houses during the night and they sleep during the day. They don't even know what the light is like! ¹⁷ Total darkness is like light to them, for they are familiar with the night.

¹⁸ Like bubbles§ on the surface of a river they are quickly carried away. The land they own is cursed by God. They don't enter their own vineyards. ¹⁹ Just as heat and drought dry up snowmelt, so Sheol takes away those who have sinned. ²⁰ Even their mothers forget them, maggots feast on them, they are no longer remembered, and their wickedness becomes like

† **24:12** Or "But God does not charge anyone with wrongdoing."

§ **24:18** Implied.

a tree that is broken into pieces. ²¹ They mistreat childless women and are mean to widows. ²² God prolongs the life of the wicked by his power; but when they arise, they have no assurance of life.* ²³ He supports them and gives them security, but he is always watching what they're doing. ²⁴ Though they may be illustrious for a while, soon they are gone. They are brought down like all others, cut off like the heads of grain. ²⁵ If this isn't so, who can prove I'm a liar and there's nothing to what I say?"

25

¹ Then Bildad the Shuhite spoke up and said, ² "Dominion and awe belong to God. He brings peace* to his heavens. ³ Who can count his armies? Is there anywhere his light doesn't shine? ⁴ How can a human being be right before God? Can anyone born of woman be pure? ⁵ If in God's eyes even the moon does not shine brightly, and the stars are not pure, ⁶ how much less a human being—who by comparison is like a maggot or a worm!"

26

¹ Job replied, ² "How helpful you have been to this feeble man that I am. How supportive you have been to the weak. ³ What good advice you have given to this ignorant man, demonstrating

* **24:22** Alternatively: "God drags off the mighty through his power. God rises up and they despair of life." * **25:2** The term used here is to bring peace where there is strife.

you have so much wisdom. ⁴ Who helped you speak these words? Who inspired you to say such things?*

⁵ The dead tremble, those beneath the waters. ⁶ Sheol lies naked before God, Abaddon is uncovered.† ⁷ He stretches the northern sky over empty space; he hangs the world on nothing. ⁸ He gathers the rain in his storm clouds which do not break under the weight. ⁹ He veils his throne; covering it with his clouds. ¹⁰ On the surface of the waters he set a boundary; he set a limit dividing light from darkness.‡ ¹¹ The pillars of heaven tremble; they shake with fear at his rebuke.§ ¹² He calmed the sea with his power; because he knew what to do he crushed Rahab.* ¹³ The breath of his voice made the heavens beautiful; with his hand he pierced the gliding serpent.† ¹⁴ This is just a little of all he does—what we hear of him is hardly a whisper, so who can understand his thunderous power?”

* **26:4** Clearly in these verses Job is being ironic. In addition some commentators see 26:1-4 as Job interrupting Bildad who continues as speaker of 26:5-14. † **26:6** Sheol and Abaddon are names for the underworld, the place of the dead. The idea in this verse is that nothing is hidden from God. ‡ **26:10** There are echoes of the Genesis account of creation here. § **26:11** According to the ancients, the sky was supported by pillars (identified with certain mountains). * **26:12** Rahab was a legendary sea-monster, and may refer to some creation stories. † **26:13** See Isaiah 27:1.

27

¹ Job began to speak again.* ² “I promise you—as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made my life bitter, ³ for as long as I have life, while the breath of God remains in my nostrils—⁴ my lips will never speak lies, my tongue will never be dishonest. ⁵ I will never agree that you are right; I will insist on my innocence until the day I die. ⁶ I’m convinced I’m right and will never give up believing this; my conscience† will not condemn me as long as I live.

⁷ May my enemy become like the wicked; may those who oppose me become like those who do evil. ⁸ For what hope do those who reject God have when he cuts them down, when God brings their lives to an end? ⁹ When times of trouble come to them, will God hear their cry for help? ¹⁰ Do they have a good relationship with the Almighty? Can they call on God at any time? ¹¹ Let me explain God’s power to you. I will not keep anything back that the Almighty has planned. ¹² If all of you have recognized this, why do you talk such vain nonsense?

¹³ This is what God provides as the destiny for the wicked, this is the inheritance that

* **27:1** Since speakers are introduced before their speeches, it would seem likely that the previous words (e.g. 26:5-14) were not from Job. † **27:6** Literally, “heart.”

the ruthless will receive from the Almighty[†]—
 14 even if they have many children, they will
 experience violent deaths[§] or die of starvation.
 15 Those who survive will die from disease, and
 even their widows will not mourn for them.
 16 Even though they pile up silver like dust,
 and clothes like heaps of clay, 17 those who do
 good will wear the clothes and the innocent will
 divide the silver among them. 18 They build their
 houses like a moth;* like some flimsy shelter
 made by a watchman. 19 They go to bed rich,
 but never again! For when they wake up, it's
 all gone. 20 Waves of panic flood over them;
 in the night a whirlwind snatches them away.
 21 The east wind picks them up and they're gone,
 carried away from where they were. 22 The
 wind blows at them with full force; they try
 desperately to escape. 23 People[†] clap their hands
 at them and hiss at them wherever they are.

28

1 There are silver mines and places where gold
 is refined. 2 Iron is extracted from the earth and
 copper is smelted from its ore. 3 Miners take
 lamps into the darkness underground and search

† 27:13 Verses 13-23 are controversial since they seem to be
 a denial of what Job has already stated. However, he may
 be ironically suggesting that this is what will happen to his
 comforters based on what they themselves believe. § 27:14

Literally, "For the sword." * 27:18 The moth represents
 something weak and fragile. † 27:23 Who is represented here
 as the subject is unclear: the wind, human beings, or God. The
 idea is that the wicked are jeered at and mocked.

for ore as far as they can go in the shadows and the gloom. ⁴ They dig a mineshaft far from where people live or anyone ever goes.* They swing from ropes that hang in the pits. ⁵ Bread comes from the earth, but underneath it looks as if it has been turned upside-down by fire. ⁶ Here the rocks contain lapis lazuli† and the dust contains gold. ⁷ No birds of prey can see these paths, no falcon's eye can perceive.‡ ⁸ No wild beasts have passed that way; the lion has not walked there. ⁹ Miners attack the hard rock; they overturn the roots of mountains. ¹⁰ They tunnel through the rock, looking carefully for every precious stone. ¹¹ They dam the sources of the rivers,§ and bring to light what is hidden.

¹² But where can wisdom be found?* Where is the place to gain understanding? ¹³ Human beings do not know the way to wisdom; it is not found among the living. ¹⁴ The deep waters say, 'It's not here,' and the sea says, 'It's not here either.' ¹⁵ It cannot be bought with gold; nor can it be purchased with silver. ¹⁶ Its value cannot be measured, even with the gold of Ophir;† it is more precious than onyx or lapis lazuli. ¹⁷ Gold

* **28:4** Literally, "forgotten by the foot." † **28:6** Literally, "sapphires," but it seems more likely that the blue stone lapis lazuli is meant here. ‡ **28:7** Hawks and falcons have amazing eyesight, but even their eyes cannot see below ground. § **28:11** Perhaps part of some mining process. * **28:12** The purpose of the long illustration above is to set the scene: while human beings can do amazing things, they can't "mine" wisdom! † **28:16** The most valuable form of gold then known.

or fine glass[†] cannot compare with wisdom; it cannot be exchanged for gold jewelry. ¹⁸ Coral and crystal are not worth mentioning; the price of wisdom is far above rubies. [§] ¹⁹ Topaz from Ethiopia can't compare with it; it cannot be bought with the purest gold.

²⁰ So where does wisdom come from? Where is the place to gain understanding? ²¹ Wisdom is hidden from the sight of all living things, even the birds of the air cannot see it. ²² Abaddon* and Death say, 'We've only heard a rumor of it.'

²³ Only God understands the path to wisdom; he knows where it is found. ²⁴ For he looks to the very end of the earth; he sees everything under heaven. ²⁵ He decided how strong the wind should blow, and regulated the waters. ²⁶ He set a limit for the rain and made a path for the lightning. ²⁷ Then he considered wisdom. He examined it, gave it his approval, and declared it good. ²⁸ He said to humankind, 'To reverence the Lord is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.' ”

29

¹ Job went on speaking. ² “I wish I was back in the old days when God looked after me! ³ His light shone above me and lit my way through the darkness. ⁴ When I was young and strong, God was my friend and spoke to me in my

[†] **28:17** Glass was rare and very valuable at the time. [§] **28:18** The actual gemstone identified here is not known, but is thought to be red in color. * **28:22** Or “destruction.”

home. ⁵ The Almighty was still with me and I was surrounded with my children. ⁶ My herds produced much milk,* and oil flowed freely from my olive presses. ⁷ I went out to the city gate and took my seat in the public square.† ⁸ The young men saw me and moved out of the way; the elders would stand up for me.‡ ⁹ The leaders remained silent and covered their mouths with their hands. ¹⁰ The voices of the officials were hushed; they held their tongues in my presence.

¹¹ Everyone who listened to me praised me; whoever saw me commended me, ¹² because I gave to the poor who called out to me and the orphans who had no one to help them. ¹³ Those who were about to die blessed me; I made the widow sing for joy. ¹⁴ Being true and acting right§ were what I wore for clothing. ¹⁵ I was like eyes for the blind and feet for the lame. ¹⁶ I was like a father to the poor, and I defended the rights of strangers. ¹⁷ I broke the jaw of the wicked and made them drop their prey from their teeth. ¹⁸ I thought I would die at home, after many years.* ¹⁹ Like a tree my roots spread out to the water; the dew rests on my branches

* **29:6** Literally, “My steps were washed with butter.” † **29:7** This was where the city elders met to discuss matters and to judge disputes. ‡ **29:8** Thus showing respect. § **29:14** Literally, “righteousness and justice,” but these terms are dated and sometimes misunderstood. Righteousness for example is the nature of a person rather than some outward show, while justice is not so much concerned with legal aspects but doing what is true and right. * **29:18** Literally, “I shall multiply my days like sand.”

overnight. ²⁰ Fresh honors were always being given to me; my strength was renewed like an unfailing bow.

²¹ People listened carefully to what I had to say; they kept quiet as they listened to my advice.

²² Once I had spoken they had nothing else to say; what I said was enough.† ²³ They waited for me

like people waiting for rain; their mouths wide open for the spring rain. ²⁴ When I smiled at

them they could hardly believe it; my approval meant all the world to them.‡ ²⁵ I decided the

way forward as their leader, living like a king among his soldiers, and when they were sad I comforted them.

30

¹ But now people much younger than me laugh at me; people whose fathers I would not put to work with my sheepdogs. ² They are too weak

to be any use to me; they're all worn-out. ³ Thin through hunger and want, they try to eat the dry

ground in the dark, desolate wilderness. ⁴ There they pick desert herbs and the leaves of bushes,

and eat the roots of broom trees. ⁵ They were driven out of the community. ⁶ People shouted

after them as if they were thieves. They have to live in dangerous ravines, in caves and among

the rocks. ⁷ They shout out like animals among the bushes; they huddle together in the weeds

† 29:22 Literally, “my words dropped on them.” ‡ 29:24 Literally, “the light of my countenance they did not cast down.”

for shelter. ⁸ They are foolish, nameless people that have been driven from the land.

⁹ Yet now they mock me in their songs; I have become a joke to them! ¹⁰ They despise and shun me; they don't hesitate to spit in my face. ¹¹ God has made my bowstring loose* and humbled me. ¹² The rabble rise up against me, they send me running;† like a city under siege they devise ways to destroy me.‡ ¹³ They cut off my way of escape; they bring about my downfall and do this without anyone's help. ¹⁴ They come in through a wide breach; they rush in as the wall comes tumbling down.§ ¹⁵ Terrors overcome me; my honor is blown away by the wind; my salvation vanishes like a cloud.

¹⁶ And now my life is ebbing away; every day despair* grips me. ¹⁷ At night my bones are in agony; the pain gnaws at me and never stops. ¹⁸ God grabs me roughly by my clothes; he pulls me by the collar of my shirt. ¹⁹ He has thrown me in the mud; he has humbled me like dust and ashes. ²⁰ God, I cry to you but you don't answer; I stand before you, but you don't even notice me. ²¹ You have turned cruel to me; you use your power to make me suffer. ²² You pick me up and blow me along in the wind; tossing me

* **30:11** In other words, God has rendered Job powerless.

† **30:12** The Hebrew is unclear. ‡ **30:12** The phrase alludes to the building of ramps to attack a city under siege. § **30:14**

The illustration of a besieged city continues with the image of invaders entering through a city wall that has been brought down. * **30:16** Literally, “days of affliction.”

about in the whirlwind. ²³ I know you're taking me to my death, to the place where all the living go. ²⁴ Who would want to kick a man when he is down, † when they cry for help in their time of trouble? ²⁵ Didn't I weep for those having hard times? Didn't I grieve at what the poor suffered? ²⁶ But when I looked for good, only evil came, and when I waited for the light, all that came was darkness. ²⁷ Inside I am in turmoil,‡ it never stops; I face days of despair. ²⁸ I am so depressed; seeing the sun doesn't help.§ I stand up in the assembly and cry for help. ²⁹ I am like a brother to the jackals, a companion to owls.* ³⁰ My skin turns black on me; and my bones burn within me. ³¹ My lyre only plays sad songs, and my pipe is the voice of those who weep.

31

¹ I vowed to myself never to look with desire at young women. ² What should people expect to receive from God? What reward should the Almighty on high give them? ³ Isn't it disaster for the wicked and destruction for those who do wrong? ⁴ Doesn't God see everything I do—even count every step I take? ⁵ Have I lived a deceitful

† **30:24** More literally, “Surely no one who raise their hand against the needy.” Or “Yet doesn't someone in a heap of ruins reach out their hand?” The Hebrew is unclear. ‡ **30:27**

Literally, “My intestines are boiling.” § **30:28** Literally, “I am blackened, but not by the sun.” This may alternatively refer to some skin disease. * **30:29** Or ostriches. Some believe this

expands on the cries mentioned in the preceding verse—like the mournful calls of animals and birds.

life? Have I been eager to tell lies? * 6 No! Let God weigh me on the scales of his justice and let him discover my integrity.

7 If I have wandered from God's way, if I have let what I see become my desires, † if there's any stain of sin on my hands, 8 then let someone else eat what I have sown, and all that I have grown be uprooted. 9 If a woman has seduced me, or if I have looked for an opportunity to sleep with my neighbor's wife, ‡ 10 then let my wife serve § another, let other men sleep with her. 11 For that would be wicked, a sin deserving punishment, 12 for this sin is like a fire that leads to destruction, * destroying everything I have.

13 If I had refused to listen to my menservants or maidservants when they brought their complaints to me, 14 what would I do when God came to judge me? How would I reply if he investigated me? 15 Didn't the same God make all of us? † 16 Have I refused to give the poor what they needed, or caused widows to despair? 17 Have I even eaten just a piece of bread by myself? Haven't I always shared my food with orphans? 18 From when I was young I was a father to orphans and took care of widows. 19 If

* **31:5** Literally, "If I have walked with falsehood, and my foot has hastened to deceit." † **31:7** Literally, "If my heart has walked after my eyes." ‡ **31:9** Literally, "lain in wait at the doorway of my neighbor." § **31:10** Literally, "grind corn for."

* **31:12** Referring to "Abaddon," the place of destruction. † **31:15** Literally, "Didn't the one who made me in the womb make him; didn't one fashion us in the womb?"

ever I saw someone needing clothes, the poor without anything to wear, ²⁰ they always thanked me for the wool clothing that kept them warm.

²¹ If I raised my hand to hit an orphan, confident that if it came to court the judges would be on my side, † ²² then let my shoulder be pulled from its joint, my arm wrenched out of its socket. ²³ Since I'm terrified of what punishment God may have in store for me, and because of his majesty, I could never do this.

²⁴ Have I put my trust in gold, calling fine gold, 'My security'? ²⁵ Have I delighted in being rich, happy at all my wealth I had gained? ²⁶ Have I looked at the sun shining so brilliantly or the moon moving in majesty across the sky ²⁷ and been tempted to secretly worship them by kissing my hand § to them in devotion? ²⁸ This too would be a sin deserving punishment* for it would mean I had denied God above.

²⁹ Have I ever been happy when disaster destroyed those who hated me, or celebrated when evil took them down? ³⁰ I have never allowed my mouth to sin by putting a curse on someone's life. ³¹ Haven't my family asked, 'Is there anyone who has not eaten as much as they wanted of his food?' ³² I have never let strangers sleep in the street; I have opened

† **31:21** Literally, "because I saw my supporters at the gate."

§ **31:27** "Kissing my hand" apparently refers to pagan worship that involved kissing one's hand—rather like today's practice of "blowing kisses." *

31:28 See Deuteronomy 17 for example, where the death penalty is prescribed for worshipping the sun, moon, and stars.

my doors to travelers. ³³ Have I concealed my sins from others, hiding my wrongdoing deep inside me? ³⁴ Was I afraid of what everybody else would think, scared of the contempt families would show me, so that I kept quiet and didn't go outside?

³⁵ Why won't anyone listen to what I'm saying! I'm signing my name to endorse everything I've said.† Let the Almighty answer me. Let my accuser write down what he is charging me with.

³⁶ I would hold them up high;‡ I would wear them on my head like a crown. ³⁷ I would explain to him everything I'd done; I would hold my head high before him.§

³⁸ If my land has cried out against me; if her furrows have wept over me; ³⁹ if I have taken its crops without payment or if I have caused harm to the farmers; ⁴⁰ then let thorns grow instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley.”* The words of Job are ended.

32

¹ Job's three friends stopped responding to him because he kept on protesting his innocence. ² Then Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, grew angry. He was angry with Job for claiming he was right rather than

† **31:35** Implied. Literally, “Here is my signature.” ‡ **31:36**

Literally, “I would carry them on my shoulder.” § **31:37**

Literally, “I would approach him like a prince.” * **31:40** This concluding statement should be taken to refer to Job as a land owner. He is arguing that he has always acted well.

God. ³ Elihu was also angry at Job's three friends because they made it seem that God was wrong, because they had not been able to answer Job.* ⁴ Elihu had waited to for the other three to speak with Job since they were older than he was. ⁵ But when he saw that they could not answer Job, he grew very angry. ⁶ Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, said, "I am young, and you are old, which is why I was reluctant to tell you what I know. ⁷ I told myself, 'Those who are older should speak—those who are elderly should teach wisdom.' ⁸ However, there is a spirit† in human beings, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding. ⁹ It is not the old who are wise, or the elderly who know what is right. ¹⁰ That's why I'm telling you to listen to me now—let me tell you what I know. ¹¹ Well, I waited to hear what you had to say, listening for your insights as you looked for the right words to speak. ¹² I paid close attention to all of you, and none of you have proved Job wrong or answered his arguments. ¹³ Don't say to yourselves, 'We are so wise,‡ for God will prove him wrong, not a human being. ¹⁴ Job didn't line up his arguments against me, and I won't answer him the way you did. ¹⁵ You sit there speechless§ with nothing left to say. ¹⁶ Should I continue to wait since you're no longer talking, just standing

* **32:3** Or "because they had not been able to answer Job, yet still condemned him." † **32:8** Spirit and breath are closely linked. See for example Genesis 2:7. ‡ **32:13** Literally, "We have found wisdom." § **32:15** Or "dismayed."

there saying nothing? ¹⁷ No—now I'll give my answer too. I'll tell you what I know. ¹⁸ I have so much to say I can't hold the words back! * ¹⁹ Inside I'm like fermenting wine all bottled up; like new wineskins ready to explode! ²⁰ I have to speak before I burst; † I will open my lips to answer him. ²¹ I will not take sides, and I'm not going to flatter anyone. ²² I don't know how to flatter, and if I did my Creator would soon destroy me.

33

¹ Now listen to me, Job. Pay attention to everything I have to say. ² Look, I'm about to speak; my mouth is ready to talk. ³ My words come from my upright heart; my lips speak sincerely of what I know. ⁴ The spirit of God made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. ⁵ Answer me, if you can. Stand in front of me and prepare to defend yourself. ⁶ Look, before God we are both the same. I was also made from a piece of clay. ⁷ See here, you don't need to be frightened of me. I won't be too hard on you.* ⁸ You spoke in my hearing and I have listened to everything you had to say. ⁹ You say, 'I'm clean, I've done nothing wrong; I'm pure, I have not sinned.' ¹⁰ See how God finds fault with me and treats me as his enemy. ¹¹ He puts my feet in the stocks and watches everything I

* **32:18** Literally, "I am full of words, my spirit presses in my belly." † **32:20** Or "I must speak to find relief." * **33:7** Literally, "My hand will not be heavy upon you."

do.’ ¹² But look, you are wrong—let me explain. God is greater than any human being. ¹³ Why are you fighting against him, complaining that God isn't answering your questions? ¹⁴ God speaks over and over again,[†] but people don't notice. ¹⁵ Through dreams and visions in the night, when people fall into deep sleep, resting on their beds, ¹⁶ God speaks to them with solemn warnings[‡] ¹⁷ to turn them away from doing wrong and to stop them from becoming proud. ¹⁸ He saves them from the grave and spares them from violent death. ¹⁹ People are also disciplined on a bed of pain with constant aching in their bones. ²⁰ They have no desire to eat; they do not even want their favorite dishes. ²¹ Their flesh wastes away to nothing; all that's left is skin and bones. ²² They are close to death;[§] their lives approaching the executioner.*

²³ But if an angel appears, a mediator, one of God's thousands of angels, to tell someone the right way for them, ²⁴ he will be gracious to them. He will say, ‘Save them from going down into the grave, for I have found a way to free them.’[†] ²⁵ Then their bodies will be renewed as if they were young again; they will be as strong as when they were in their prime. ²⁶ They will pray to

[†] **33:14** Literally, “once, and twice,” but this is number parallelism which indicates an increasing number. [‡] **33:16** Or

“terrifies them with warnings.” [§] **33:22** Literally, “the pit.”

* **33:22** Literally, “the destroyers,” which could refer to the angels of death or terminal diseases. [†] **33:24** Or “for I have found a ransom.”

God, and he will accept them; they come into God's presence with joy, and he will set things right for them. ²⁷ They sing, and tell others, 'I sinned, I distorted what is right, but it did not do me any good.† ²⁸ He saved me from going down into the grave and I will live in the light.' ²⁹ Look, God does this time and again§ for people; ³⁰ he saves them from the grave so they might see the light of life.

³¹ Pay attention Job, and listen to me! Be quiet—let me speak! ³² But if you have anything to say, then speak up. ³³ If not, listen to me. Keep quiet and I will teach you wisdom.”

34

¹ Then Elihu continued, ² “Listen to my words, you men who say you are wise; pay attention to what I'm saying you who think you know.* ³ The ear distinguishes words just as the palate distinguishes foods.† ⁴ Let us discern for ourselves what is right: let us decide among ourselves what is good. ⁵ Job said, 'I am innocent, and God has denied me justice. ⁶ Even though I'm right, I'm treated like a liar; I am dying from my wounds, even though I've done nothing wrong.†

† **33:27** Or “but I was not paid back (punished) as I deserved.”

§ **33:29** Literally, “twice, three times.” * **34:2** Since Elihu has already criticized them, his words here are surely ironic. † **34:3** This is what Job stated in 12:11. † **34:6** Job stated this in 9:21 and 27:2.

⁷ Has there ever been a man like Job with such a thirst for ridiculing others?[§] ⁸ He keeps company with wicked people; he associates with those who do evil. ⁹ He's even said, 'What benefit is there in being God's friend?'

¹⁰ So listen to me, you men of understanding! It's impossible for God to do evil and the Almighty to do wrong. ¹¹ He pays people back for what they've done, and treats them as they deserve. ¹² It's absolutely sure that God doesn't act wickedly; the Almighty would never pervert justice.* ¹³ Who put him in charge of the earth? Who gave him the responsibility for all the world? ¹⁴ If he were to withdraw† his spirit, if he were to take back his breath, ¹⁵ all living things would immediately die and human beings would return to dust.

¹⁶ If you have understanding then hear this; pay attention to what I'm saying. ¹⁷ Do you really think someone who hated justice could govern? Are you going to condemn Almighty God who always does what is right? ¹⁸ He's the one who tells kings, 'You're useless!' or says to nobles, 'You're wicked!' ¹⁹ He doesn't think more of the rich than the poor, for they are all people he himself made. ²⁰ They die in a moment; at midnight they shudder and pass away; the mighty are gone without effort.

²¹ For he watches what they're doing and sees

[§] **34:7** Literally, "who drinks scorn like water." * **34:12** Elihu is repeating what Bildad said in 8:3. † **34:14** Following the Septuagint reading.

everywhere they go. ²² There is no darkness so deep where people who do evil can hide themselves from him. ²³ God doesn't need to examine anyone in any greater detail that they should come before him for judgment.† ²⁴ He brings down§ the mighty without needing an investigation; he sets up others in their place. ²⁵ Knowing what they've done he overthrows them in a night and destroys them. ²⁶ He strikes them down for their wickedness in public where they can be seen ²⁷ because they turned away from following him, disregarding all his ways. ²⁸ They made the poor call out to him, and he heard the cries of the oppressed. ²⁹ Yet if God wants to remain silent, who can condemn him? If he chooses to hide his face, who can see him? Whether it concerns a nation or an individual, ³⁰ a person who rejects God should not rule so they don't mislead* people.

³¹ If you† were to say to God, 'I have sinned, but I won't do bad things any more. ³² Show me what I cannot see. If I have done wrong, I won't do it again,' ³³ then should God reward you for following your own opinions‡ since you have rejected his? You're the one who has to choose, not me! Tell us what you think. ³⁴ For people who understand—those who are wise who have heard what I said—will tell me, ³⁵ 'Job doesn't

† **34:23** Meaning that God knows the destiny of all based on what they have done. § **34:24** Literally, "shatters." * **34:30** Or "ensnare." † **34:31** Or "anyone." ‡ **34:33** In the context, probably referring to Job's own opinions as to what is right and wrong.

know what he's talking about. What he says doesn't make any sense.' ³⁶ If only Job were thoroughly condemned because he speaks like evil people do. ³⁷ Now he has added rebellion to his sins; he claps his hands at us,[§] making long speeches full of accusations against God."

35

¹ Then Elihu continued, saying, ² "Do you think it's honest to claim you are right before God? ³ And you ask, 'What benefit do I get? What good has it done me by not sinning?'

⁴ I'll tell you, and your friends too! ⁵ Just look up at the sky and see. Observe the clouds high above you. ⁶ If you sin, how does that harm God?* How do your many sins affect God? ⁷ If you do what's right, what good are you doing for him? ⁸ No—your sins only affect people like yourself, and whatever good you do only affects them too.

⁹ People cry out because of terrible persecution; they call for someone to save them from their oppressors. ¹⁰ But no one asks, 'Where is the God my maker, the one who gives songs in the night, ¹¹ who teaches us more than the animals, and makes us wiser than the birds?' ¹² When they call out for help, God doesn't answer because they are proud and evil people. ¹³ God doesn't listen to their empty cries;† the

§ **34:37** An action of ridicule and disrespect (see for example 27:23).

* **35:6** Literally, "what does that accomplish against him?"

† **35:13** Empty in the sense that they are vain and insincere.

Almighty doesn't pay them any attention. ¹⁴ How much less will God hear you when you say he can't see you?[‡] Your case is before him, so you have to wait for him.

¹⁵ You're saying[§] that God doesn't punish people in his anger and pays little attention to sin. ¹⁶ You, Job, are talking nonsense, making long speeches when you know nothing!"

36

¹ Elihu continued speaking. ² "Be patient with me just a little while longer and let me explain. I still have something to say on God's behalf. ³ I will share my extensive knowledge,* and I will prove my Creator is in the right. ⁴ I assure you that what I'm saying are not lies, for I am a man whose knowledge is of the highest order.[†] ⁵ God is mighty, but doesn't despise anyone; he is powerful in strength and understanding. ⁶ He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives justice to the oppressed. ⁷ He always pays attention[‡] those who do right, and places them on thrones with kings, honoring them eternally. ⁸ If they are bound in chains, tied down by ropes of suffering, ⁹ then he explains to them what they've done

[‡] **35:14** Elihu is addressing Job directly and saying that since Job says God doesn't see him, why should God listen to him? **§ 35:15** Implied. *** 36:3** Literally, "I will bring my knowledge from far away." **† 36:4** Literally, "one whose knowledge is perfect is with you." **‡ 36:7** Literally, "he does not withdraw his eyes."

—their arrogant sins. ¹⁰ He makes them pay attention[§] and orders them to stop sinning.

¹¹ If they listen and do what God says they will live out their lives in happiness. ¹² But if they do not listen they will die a violent death,* ignorant of God. ¹³ Those who reject God hold on to their bitterness. Even when he disciplines them they do not cry out to him for help. ¹⁴ They die in their youth; their lives end among the male temple prostitutes.† ¹⁵ Through suffering God saves those who suffer; he gets their attention through their troubles.

¹⁶ God is trying to rescue you from the jaws of trouble to a place of freedom and safety,‡ filling your table full of the very best food. ¹⁷ But you are preoccupied with the fate of the wicked; judgment and justice fill your mind. ¹⁸ But be careful that your anger doesn't seduce you into mockery; and don't let the size of the 'bribe'[§] lead you into sin. ¹⁹ Will your cry for help sustain you when troubles come?* ²⁰ Do not long for the night when people are suddenly taken away.† ²¹ Watch out that you don't turn to evil! For it's

§ **36:10** Literally, “he opens their ears to instruction.” * **36:12**

Literally, “by the sword.” † **36:14** “Male temple prostitutes”: indicative of dying in shameful ways. ‡ **36:16** Or “to an open space free of restriction.”

§ **36:18** Taken together with the first line of this verse, “bribe” could be any kind of “reward” that sin might bring. * **36:19** This could also be translated, “Will God value your wealth or gold or your strength?” However, Job

has already lost all these. † **36:20** Presumably a reference to longing for death to bring an end to suffering.

because of this that you are being tested through suffering.

²² Look how much power God has! What teacher is like him? ²³ Who has instructed him what to do? Who can say to him ‘You have done wrong’? ²⁴ Instead you should praise him for what he has done, as people have done in song.[‡] ²⁵ Everyone has seen God’s creation, though only from a distance.[§]

²⁶ See how great God is—more than we can understand! No one can count his years. ²⁷ He draws up the water and distils it into the dew and the rain. ²⁸ The clouds pour down rain, falling plentifully on humankind. ²⁹ Can anyone understand how the clouds spread out, or how thunder roars from where he lives?* ³⁰ See how he scatters lightning around him, and covers the depths of the sea in darkness. ³¹ By these actions he rules the people, he provides abundant food. ³² He holds lightning in his hands and commands where it should strike. ³³ Thunder declares his presence—even cattle know when a storm is coming.[†]

37

¹ At this my heart trembles, beating rapidly within me!* ² Listen carefully to God’s thunderous voice that rumbles as he speaks. ³ He

[‡] **36:24** In the Psalms, for example. [§] **36:25** Later God asks Job if he was there during creation.

* **36:29** Literally, “the thunderings of his pavilion.” [†] **36:33** The Hebrew is unclear.

* **37:1** “Beating rapidly”: literally, “leaping from its place.”

sends it across the heaven; his lightning flashes to the ends of the earth. ⁴ Then comes the roar of thunder, his majestic voice holding nothing back when he speaks. ⁵ God's thunderous voice is wonderful! We can't comprehend the great things he does!

⁶ He tells the snow to fall and the rain to pour down on the earth. ⁷ By this he stops people working so that everyone can understand what he does. ⁸ Even the animals take shelter and remain in their dens. ⁹ The south wind blows in storms, while the north wind blows in cold weather.† ¹⁰ God's breath produces ice, freezing the surface of water solid. ¹¹ He fills the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning from them. ¹² They swirl around under his control; they move over all the earth as he commands. ¹³ He does this to accomplish his will, either to discipline or to show his goodness.‡

¹⁴ Listen to this, Job! Stop for a moment and consider the wonderful things God does. ¹⁵ Do you know how God controls the clouds, or makes his lightning flash from them? ¹⁶ Do you know how clouds float§ in the sky—the wonderful work of him who knows everything. ¹⁷ You know how your clothes drip with sweat when the south wind brings air that is hot and heavy. ¹⁸ Can you hammer out the sky so it becomes like a molten mirror, as he does?

† **37:9** Literally, “From its chamber comes the whirlwind; and cold from the scattering wind.” ‡ **37:13** The Hebrew is unclear.

§ **37:16** Literally, “balance.”

19 So why don't you teach us what to tell God? We cannot make our case because we are in the dark!*

20 Should God be told that I want to speak? Anyone who wanted to would be destroyed!†

21 After all, we can't look at the sun when it blazes brightly in the sky, after the wind has cleared away the clouds.

22 Out of the north God comes shining like gold, surrounded in awesome majesty.

23 We cannot approach the Almighty for he is far beyond us in power and justice, and doing right.

24 He does not act like a tyrant—no wonder people are in awe of him, though he does not value those who think they're wise.”‡

38

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind,*

2 “Who is this who questions my wisdom by talking so ignorantly?

3 Prepare yourself, be strong,† for I am going to question you, and you must answer me.

4 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have such knowledge!

5 Who decided its dimensions? Don't you know? Who stretched out a measuring line?

6 What do its foundations rest upon? Who laid its cornerstone,

7 when the

* **37:19** Once again Elihu is being ironic. † **37:20** “Destroyed”: or “swallowed up.” Elihu is saying he fears that if he spoke directly to God he would be killed. ‡ **37:24** It's interesting that Elihu who thinks he is so wise should finish his speech with such a comment! * **38:1** “Whirlwind,” or “storm.” † **38:3** Literally, “like a man.”

stars of the morning sang together and all the angels[‡] shouted for joy.

⁸ Who laid down the boundaries of the sea when it was born?[§] ⁹ Who clothed it with clouds, and wrapped it in a blanket of deep darkness?

¹⁰ I set its limits, marking its borders.* ¹¹ I said, ‘You may come here, but no farther. Here is where your proud waves stop.’

¹² During your lifetime, have you ever ordered the morning to begin? ¹³ Have you ever told the dawn where to appear that it might take hold of the corners of the earth and shake the wicked out?[†] ¹⁴ The earth is changed like clay under a seal;[‡] its features stand out like a crumpled garment.

¹⁵ The ‘light’[§] of the wicked is taken away from them; their acts of violence are stopped.

¹⁶ Have you entered the sources of the sea? Have you explored their hidden depths? ¹⁷ Have you been shown where the gates of death are? Have you seen the gates of utter darkness? ¹⁸ Do you know how far the earth extends? Tell me if you know all this! ¹⁹ In which direction does light live? Where does darkness dwell? ²⁰ Can you

[‡] **38:7** Literally, “sons of God” as in 1:6. The parallel there of “the stars of the morning” would similarly apply to heavenly beings.

[§] **38:8** Literally, “who shut in the sea with doors when it burst forth from the womb.” * **38:10** Literally, “I set bars and doors.”

[†] **38:13** This poetic image is meant to convey the idea that when daylight comes the wicked cease their evil. [‡] **38:14** Like a seal impressing an image on a smooth piece of clay.

[§] **38:15** Of course the wicked’s “light” is the reverse—darkness.

take them home? Do you know the way to where they live? ²¹ Of course you know, because you were already born then! You've lived so long!

²² Have you been to where the snow is kept? Have you seen where the hail is held? ²³ I have stored them up for the time of trouble, for the day of war and battle.* ²⁴ Do you know the way to where light comes from, or to where the east wind blows over the earth? ²⁵ Who cuts a channel for the rain to flow? Who creates a path for the thunderbolt?

²⁶ Who brings rain to an uninhabited land, to a desert where nobody lives, ²⁷ to water a parched wasteland to make the green grass grow? ²⁸ Does the rain have a father? Who was the father of the dewdrops? ²⁹ Who was the mother of ice? Does the frost of the air have a mother? ³⁰ Water turns into rock-hard ice; its surface freezes solid. ³¹ Can you tie together the stars of the Pleiades? Can you loosen the belt of the Orion constellation?† ³² Can you guide the stars of Mazzaroth‡ at the right time? Can you direct the Great Bear constellation and its other stars? ³³ Do you know the laws of the heavens?§ Can you apply them to the earth?

* **38:23** Hail is often associated with God's involvement in battle: Joshua 10:11; Exodus 9:22; Isaiah 28:17; Ezekiel 13:13.

† **38:31** God is speaking figuratively regarding the stars in these constellations, previously mentioned in 9:9. ‡ **38:32** A star grouping whose name is not known. It may refer to the 12 constellations of the Zodiac.

§ **38:33** In the context, God is referring particularly to the laws governing heavenly bodies.

34 Can you shout to the clouds and command them to pour rain down on you? 35 Can you send out bolts of lightning and direct them, so that they can answer you saying, 'Here we are'? 36 Who has placed wisdom inside people? Who has given understanding to the mind?* 37 Who is clever enough to count the clouds? Who can turn heaven's water jars on their sides 38 when the dust has baked into a solid mass?†
 39 Can you hunt prey for the lion? Can you feed the lion cubs 40 as they crouch down in their dens and lie in wait in the bushes? 41 Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God, weak from starvation?

39

1 Do you know when the wild goats give birth? Have you watched the birth-pains of the deer? 2 Do you know how many months they carry their young? Do you know the time when they give birth?* 3 They crouch down in labor to deliver their offspring. 4 Their young grow strong in the open countryside; they leave and never return.
 5 Who gave the wild donkey its freedom? Who set it free from its bonds? 6 I have given it the wilderness as its home, the salt plains as a place

* **38:36** The interpretation of this verse is unclear and many possible translations have been suggested. † **38:38** In other words, who can cause the rain to fall when the earth is parched?

* **39:2** In verses 1-2 God is asking Job how much he knows about the natural world, indicating that much is often unobserved.

to live. ⁷ It despises the noise of the city; it doesn't need to listen to the shouts of a driver.[†] ⁸ It hunts in the mountains for pastureland, searching for all kinds of green plants to eat.

⁹ Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will it spend the night at your manger? ¹⁰ Can you tie a wild ox to a plow? Can you make it till your fields for you? ¹¹ Because it's so powerful can you trust it? Can you depend on it to do your heavy work for you? ¹² Are you sure it will gather your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?

¹³ The ostrich proudly flaps her wings, but they are nothing like the flight feathers of the stork.[‡] ¹⁴ The ostrich abandons her eggs on the ground, leaving them to be warmed in the dust. ¹⁵ She doesn't think that they can be crushed underfoot, trampled by a wild animal. ¹⁶ She is tough towards her young, acting as if they didn't belong to her. She doesn't care that all her work was for nothing. ¹⁷ For I, God, made her forget wisdom—she didn't get her share of intelligence. ¹⁸ But when she needs to, she can jump up and run, mocking a horse and its rider with her speed.

¹⁹ Did you give the horse its strength? Did you place a mane upon its neck? ²⁰ Did you make it able to jump like a locust? Its loud snorting is terrifying! ²¹ It paws at the ground, rearing up

[†] **39:7** In contrast to a domestic donkey which is controlled by the shouts of its master. [‡] **39:13** The ostrich is flightless, while the stork is a master of the air. The Hebrew is unclear and many possible translations have been proposed.

with power as it charges into battle. ²² It laughs at fear; it is not frightened at all. ²³ The quiver full of arrows rattles against it; the spear and the javelin flash in the sunlight. ²⁴ Shaking with rage it gallops across the ground; it cannot remain still when the trumpet sounds. ²⁵ Whenever the trumpet calls, it is ready;§ he senses the sound of battle from far away, he hears the commanders shouting.

²⁶ Is it through your wisdom that the hawk soars, spreading its wings towards the south? ²⁷ Do you command the eagle to fly high and make its nest in the summits of the mountains? ²⁸ It lives among the cliffs, and roosts on a remote rocky crag. ²⁹ From there it spies its prey from far away, fixing its gaze on its victim. Its chicks eagerly swallow blood. ³⁰ Where the carcasses are, that's where birds of prey are found.”

40

¹ God continued speaking to Job. ² “Are you still going to fight with the Almighty and try to set him straight?*” Anyone who argues with God must give some answers.”

³ Job answered the Lord, ⁴ “Me—I am nothing at all. I have no answers. I put my hand in front of my mouth. ⁵ I have already said far too much and I won't say anything more.”

⁶ Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, ⁷ “Prepare yourself, be strong, for I

§ 39:25 Literally, “he says, ‘Aha!’ ” * 40:2 Or “Shall a faultfinder contend with God?”

am going to question you, and you must answer me.

⁸ Are you really going to say my decisions are wrong?† Are you going to condemn me so you can be right? ⁹ Are you as powerful as I am? Does your voice thunder like mine? ¹⁰ Why don't you dress yourself with majesty and dignity, and clothe yourself with glory and splendor! ¹¹ Let loose your fierce anger. Humble the proud with a glance. ¹² Bring down the proud with your gaze; tread the wicked underfoot right where they are. ¹³ Bury them in the dust; lock them away in the grave. ¹⁴ Then I will also agree that your own strength can save you.

¹⁵ Consider Behemoth,‡ a creature I made just like I made you. It eats grass like cattle. ¹⁶ Look at its powerful loins, the muscles of its belly. ¹⁷ It bends its tail like a cedar; its thigh sinews are strong. ¹⁸ Its bones are like bronze tubes; its limbs like iron rods. ¹⁹ It is the most important example of what God can do; only the one who made it can approach it with a sword.§ ²⁰ The hills produce food for it, and all the wild animals play there.* ²¹ It lies under the lotus;† it hides in the reeds of the marsh. ²² The lotus covers it with

† **40:8** Or “invalidate my justice.” ‡ **40:15** Some identify Behemoth as the hippopotamus; others with a legendary creature. Behemoth is the plural of the usual word for animal. § **40:19** The Hebrew is unclear. The verse may mean that only its Creator can defeat it. * **40:20** Presumably the other animals are safe from the Behemoth since it is vegetarian. † **40:21** Some identify this with the Lotus plant, others with the Lotus tree.

shade; the willow trees of the valley surround it. ²³ Even if the river is in flood, it is not concerned; it remains calm when the Jordan river surges against it. ²⁴ No one can catch it while it is watching, or pierce its nose with a noose.†

41

¹ Can you pull out Leviathan* with a hook? Can you tie its mouth shut? ² Can you thread a rope through its nose? Can you pass a hook through its jaw? ³ Will it beg you to let it go? Or will it talk softly to you? ⁴ Will it make a contract with you? Will it agree to be your slave forever? ⁵ Will you play with it like a pet bird? Will you put it on a leash for your girls? ⁶ Will your trading partners decide on a price for him, and divide him up among the merchants? ⁷ Can you pierce his skin with many harpoons, its head with fishing spears? ⁸ If you were to grab hold of it, imagine the battle you would have! You wouldn't do that again! ⁹ Any hope to capture it is foolish. Anyone who tries is thrown to the ground. ¹⁰ Since no one has the courage to provoke Leviathan, who would dare to stand up against me? ¹¹ Who has confronted me with any claim that I should repay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.

¹² Let me tell you about Leviathan: its powerful legs and graceful proportions. ¹³ Who can

† **40:24** Or "It can take it with his eyes: it can pierce a snare with its nose." * **41:1** Leviathan: some identify this creature with the crocodile, or a mythical beast. It is also mentioned in 3:8.

remove its hide? Who can penetrate its double coat of armor?[†] ¹⁴ Who can open its jaws? Its teeth are terrifying! ¹⁵ Its pride[‡] is its rows of scales, closed tightly together. ¹⁶ Its scales are so close together that no air can pass between them. ¹⁷ Each scale attaches to the next; they lock together and nothing can penetrate them. ¹⁸ When it sneezes light shines out. Its eyes are like the rising sun. ¹⁹ Flames pour from its mouth, sparks of fire shoot out. ²⁰ Smoke comes from its nostrils, like steam from a kettle on a fire made of reeds. ²¹ Its breath sets fire to charcoal as flames shoot from its mouth. ²² Its neck is powerful, and all who face him shake with terror. ²³ Its body is dense and solid, as if it is made from cast metal. ²⁴ Its heart is rock-hard, like a millstone. ²⁵ When it rises, even the powerful are terrified; they retreat as it thrashes about. ²⁶ Swords just bounce off it, as do spears, darts, and javelins. ²⁷ It brushes aside iron like straw, and bronze like rotten wood. ²⁸ Arrows cannot make it run away; stones from slingshots are like pieces of stubble. ²⁹ Clubs are also treated like stubble; it laughs at the sound made by flying spears. ³⁰ Its underparts are covered with points as sharp as broken pots; when it drags itself through the mud it leaves marks like a threshing sledge.[§] ³¹ It churns up the sea like water in a boiling pot, like a steaming bowl when ointment is mixed. ³² It leaves a glistening wake

[†] **41:13** Or “who can approach it with a double bridle?” [‡] **41:15**

Or “back.” [§] **41:30** Threshing sledge: a board with sharp spikes for threshing grain.

behind it as if the sea had white hair. ³³ There is nothing on earth like it: a creature that has no fear. ³⁴ It looks down on all other creatures. It is the proudest of all.”

42

¹ Then Job answered the Lord. ² “I know you can do anything. No one can prevent you doing what you want. ³ You asked,* ‘Who is this who questions my wisdom by talking so ignorantly?’ I was speaking about things I didn’t understand—things too wonderful for me to know. ⁴ You told me,† ‘Listen to me, I am going to speak. I am going to question you, and you must answer me.’ ⁵ Before, I had only heard about you, but now I’ve seen you for myself. ⁶ That is why I’m sorry for what I said,‡ and I repent in dust and ashes.”

⁷ After the Lord had finished speaking to Job he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends because you have not told the truth about me,§ as my servant Job did. ⁸ So take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job, and you shall offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray on your behalf and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your foolishness, because you have not told the truth about me, as my servant Job did.” ⁹ So Eliphaz the Temanite,

* **42:3** Implied. Job in this verse and the next is referring back to what God previously said. † **42:4** Implied. ‡ **42:6** Or “reject,” “retract.” § **42:7** Or “said of me what is right.”

Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord commanded them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

¹⁰ The Lord restored Job's prosperity when he prayed for his friends, and gave him twice as much as he had before. ¹¹ Then all his brothers and sisters and friends he'd previously known came and ate with him at his home. They showed him sympathy and comforted him because of all the trouble* the Lord had caused him. Each one of them gave him money and a gold ring. ¹² The Lord blessed the last part of Job's life more than the first part. Now he owned 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. ¹³ Job also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ Job called the first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-Happuch. ¹⁵ Nowhere in all the land were there women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and Job gave them the same inheritance as their brothers. ¹⁶ Job lived 140 years after this, seeing his children, and grandchildren, in fact four generations. ¹⁷ Then Job died at an old age, having lived a very full life.

* **42:11** Literally, "evil."

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